



COMMENTARY
ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT

POETICAL BOOKS
JOB TO SONG OF SOLOMON



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THE

OLD TESTAMENT

ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORISED VERSION.

WITH A BRIEF COMMENTARY

BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

[Vol. 3.]

POETICAL BOOKS.

JOB TO SONG OF SOLOMON.

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THE TEXT in this Commentary is a reprint of the last Edition with marginal references, published at the Oxford Press,—with the following differences:

1. Each new paragraph is headed with the sign ¶ and followed by a space.
2. When a verse does not end with a full stop, the succeeding verse is not begun with a capital letter. See, for example, Job i. 19.
3. The "Poetical Books" are printed in "parallel" lines (see General Introduction, § 3).

It is hoped that these features of the printing will to some extent supply the place of a "Paragraph Bible" to those who aim at an accurate study of the Holy Scriptures; while at the same time it will not interfere with the division into verses which is so familiar to readers.

8015

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

THE "Poetical Books" is a convenient title for certain books of the Old Testament, and includes both those contained in this volume, and others, like "Lamentations," placed in English Bibles among the "Prophets."

1. God, Who "giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (Dan. ii. 21.), enriched the Hebrews, above all other nations of the ancient world, with poets and poetical natures. Poetry finds a place in the earliest existing records of their history; and is, from the first, not only eminently original and unaffected by the songs of other lands, but is marked by spiritual characteristics which fitted it for world-wide use. It has been well said that poetry is nurtured in sacred places, and her service noblest when consecrated to the temple, the altar, and religion. This was true of the poets of Scripture in the highest sense. The writers of the "Poetical Books" were holy men of God, who, during many generations, were raised up in Israel, endowed by the Holy Spirit with excellent gifts, and moved by His guiding power to give voice to the feelings of the Church of God in divine songs. Their words form an essential part of that Sacred Volume which has been called "the Book for the cultivation of humanity, and the development of the higher life of every man, by the ministry of the Church through the teaching of the Spirit." The poets of Israel were inspired by God with thoughts which nowhere else in antiquity possessed equal purity, strength, and duration. As poets, they were masters of all the means, resources, powers, and stores of the loftiest poetry; but the spirit of their poetry was instrumental to a far loftier purpose than that which ever animates human genius. Many and diverse were their voices, each uttering itself after its own fashion and following each other through the lapse of more than a thousand years: and yet there is heard throughout the mind of One with Whom is "neither variableness nor shadow of turning," "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" (James i. 17. Heb. xiii. 8.). Just as it was the aim proposed to Israel as a people to consecrate their noblest powers of body and mind to the service of the One true God, so did the national poets count the encouragement of every such effort the most glorious work to which to devote their talents. Of them was it true: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.): their "hearts were inditing a good matter;" they "spake

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

“of the things which they had made touching the King” of kings and Lord of lords (Ps. xlv. 1). Hence, devout minds of every age and land, illumined with the light which flows from the Incarnation, have recognized in their writing words “written altogether for our sakes and for “our learning” (1 Cor. x. 10. Rom. xv. 4).

Of the various kinds of poetry preserved in the sacred writings, the *lyrical* is at once the earliest and the most frequent. It was adapted to the instrument as well as to the voice (Exod. xv. 1, 20.); it included the shortest odes (e.g. Pss. xv.; cxxxi.), as well as the noblest songs of praise and victory (Judges v. Pss. xviii.; lxviii.); it expressed in animated martial strains or in tender softer measures, God’s victories and God’s mercies, the joys and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears, of rich and poor, king and peasant. The names¹ by which its various phases are shadowed, or its adaptation to musical instruments defined, are significant of its richness and elasticity. The Psalter bears as its title the record that it is a book of “praises;” it is not less the casket for “prayers” (e.g. Ps. lxxii. 20.). There are dirges (2 Sam. i. 19, &c. Ps. cxxxvii. Lam.), there are “Songs of loves” spiritual and holy (Ps. xlv.), and there are parental blessings (Gen. xxiv. 60.). “Parables” (Num. xxiii, xxiv. Judg. ix. 7—20.), “taunting proverbs” (Hab. ii. 6. Isa. xiv. 4. margin.), and the “dark saying” (Ps. xlix. 4.) also find their place in this rich collection.

In process of time a second form of poetry, known as *didactic*, i.e. instructive, or *gnomic*, appeared. The simple-minded, enthusiastic, prophet or warrior gave place to the cool, more reflecting, philosopher. Moses and David represent the one stage in the development of Hebrew poetry, Solomon and the seekers after “wisdom” the other. The best-known form of *didactic* poetry is the “proverb.” It sprang from the impulse to be teacher rather than poet strictly so-called. If Prov. i.—ix. be accepted as the most perfect example of this class of poetry, the differences between it and lyrical poetry require no illustration. It is sufficient if the reader be reminded that the witty saying (e.g. Judg. xiv. 12.) as well as the more philosophic thought, the popular “riddle” as well as the deep sententious maxim, claim admittance into this division of Hebrew poetry. It lived even longer than the lyrical song. The Apocryphal books of “Wisdom” of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus, though they are not included in the Hebrew Canon, yet reflect its characteristics so late as a few centuries before the Christian era.

Hebrew literature has no *dramatic* poetry, in the modern sense of the word. The creation of a fiction, or the manipulation of a plot such as

¹ Many of these which occur in the Psalms, such as *mizmor*, *nichtam*, *neginal*, are explained in the notes.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

enters effectively into modern drama, was impossible to men whose work it was to teach the things of God and enjoin the worship of God. Fabrication of any kind, any attempt at mingling or confounding what was real and what was unreal, what was true and what was fictitious, was unworthy of writers who were ministers of God. They spoke and wrote as moved by the God of Truth, and with a consciousness of their obligation to speak and write truth. It is therefore with a true instinct that the Christian Church has regarded the Books of "Job" and "Song of Songs" as something more than tragedy and pastoral drama. They are portions of inspired Scripture, fraught throughout with religious meaning if conveyed in the terms and under the forms of human feeling. The one fixes the thought upon the visible administration of the Divine government in its relation to the earthly well-being of those who fear and serve God; the other is divinely given to teach and illustrate what St. Paul affirms to be "a great mystery." (Eph. v. 32.)

2. This Hebrew Poetry has a history. It is national as well as sacred poetry, which records for the profit of the thoughtful reader the national traits and stages of growth or decay, the grand spiritual tendency or the wasting corrupting influences of each period, the high aim and enthusiasm or the stunted mercenary motives of successive generations. Hebrew poetry reflects Hebrew social, political, scientific, literary, and religious history. Here its *literary* history alone is briefly sketched.

The earliest specimen of Hebrew poetry is the song of Lamech (Gen. iv. 23, 24.); for deep and prophetic as may be the meaning of these enigmatical words, they are certainly cast in a poetical and lyrical form. Lyrical poetry proper, the "song," may however be said to be first seen in its full might and complete beauty in the "triumph-song" of Moses (Exod. xv.), the most ancient and most glorious ode to deliverance ever written. Other poetical fragments of the Mosaic period are (a) the extract from the Soldier's camp-songs (Num. xxi. 14.), (b) the "Song of the Well" (Num. xxi. 17.), (c) the Priestly blessing (Num. vi. 24.), and (d) the Ark-prayers. To these must be added two poems—the "Song of Moses" (Deut. xxxii.), spirited and fiery, and the "Prayer of Moses" (Ps. xc.), imbued with profound melancholy, two poems of striking contrast, yet resembling each other in their summons to look onward and upward for victory or for comfort to the Rock of Ages, the God from everlasting.

The period between the Judges and Samuel was, as recorded in the sacred books, chiefly remembered for rebellion against God, repentant struggles for independence, and silent aspirations after a Deliverer. These phases of the public mind exhibit themselves in two poems, the Song of Deborah (Judg. v.) and the "Magnificat" of Hannah (1 Sam. ii.): the former is the song of "praise for the avenging of Israel" which

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

rose as a shout of victory from the defenceless and oppressed "forty thousand:" the latter is the joyous hymn of "a mother in Israel" on the Advent of God's "anointed."

These earlier poets prepared the way for the "Sweet Singer of Israel." It was David, hero and king, poet and musician, who possessed the power of turning men for their own and for each other's good to seek, love, and praise God in weal and woe; and who expressed this "duty to God and man" in songs or odes whose beauty and excellence have raised Hebrew poetry to the highest rank, and whose reality and truthfulness have found an echo in the hearts of generations. David was born a poet; he solaced his shepherd-life on the hills of Bethlehem with the music of his harp; he developed his genius as musician and songster in the school of the prophets (1 Sam. xix. 19.); but it was from the day that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" that the fuller strength was granted to dedicate those talents to God, and that flow of Hebrew poetry began which is enshrined in the Psalter. And as David was the largest contributor to that "great national collection of religious songs and hymns," so was he followed by other inspired poets, who, either anonymously or under the names of Asaph, Heman, Ethan, and the sons of Korah, have contributed to the Book of Psalms.

The hand of God is visible in the universality of its use. Every branch of the Church Catholic has, by a divine instinct, adopted the Psalter as the centre and kernel of her public devotional forms: it is the most dearly-cherished companion of pious souls in their holiest hours of secret communion with God under every circumstance of trouble or joy; and it is this, because it has ever been and is "the Bible in little," as full of Jesus Christ as is the Gospel of St. John, and fully adequate to meet, to satisfy, and to express the devotional yearnings of every happy or sorrowful heart, "secretly among the faithful and in the congregation" (Ps. exi. 1.).

The age of David was the age of lyrical poetry; it was succeeded by the age of Solomon, the age of didactic poetry. The nation was quiet and in peace; and under the shadow of peace, impassioned song gave place to works of calmer measure and more philosophical cast. Solomon is said to have written 3000 "proverbs" and 1005 "songs" (1 Kings iv. 32.), but it is by the former that he is best known. The "Song of Songs" is essentially a poem; and Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, though not "poems" in the usual sense of the word, are cast in rhythmical form.

The Babylonian Captivity was the judgment upon those national sins which the Hebrew poets and prophets, under the guidance of the Spirit of Jehovah, and not without the support of pious kings, had done

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

their utmost to prevent and reprove. Jehoshaphat, the earnest promoter of Hebrew education (2 Chron. xvii. 7—9.), and Hezekiah, the collector of Hebrew literature (Prov. xxv. 1.), appealed, and not unsuccessfully, to the religious and patriotic feelings of their people. Hymns of praise and thanksgiving were heard once again in the Temple, and Hebrew Psalmody was enriched by many a noble composition of the sons of Korah and of Asaph. It was but for a time: the softer song of the Psalmist gave place to the stern call of the Prophet¹. During the earlier part of the exile but few songs were composed; it was a time for "weeping," for "hanging the harps upon the willows by the rivers of "Babylon" (Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 2.); but it was also the time of travail, and the close of the Captivity gave fresh birth to the children of song. The joyous band which returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel numbered in their company "the singers, the children of Asaph, 128;" and "200 "singing-men and singing-women" (Ezra ii. 41, 65.): and it is no improbable supposition that the Pilgrim-songs (Pss. cxx.—cxxxiv.) were first sung on that joyous march to the city of Zion. The second Temple rose from the ashes of the first, and with it is inseparably connected that series of Psalms which begin or end with the Hallelujah of deliverance, of victory, of thanksgiving (Pss. cxiii.—cxviii.; cxlv., &c.). This was the last fruit of re-awakened melody. As "ancient men" had wept when they saw the foundation of the temple of Zerubbabel and remembered the glories of that of Solomon (Ezra iii. 12.), so all familiar with the freshness and vigour and fire of the earlier poets of Israel saw presently but an imitation of the original. They were thankful and they were sorrowful. Yet even they possessed what their children have never had. A few Psalms of the Maccabaean period have probably survived, but beyond that the history of Hebrew canonical poetry is a blank.

3. What is the nature of this poetry? It is a fact replete with weighty inferences that God has seen fit to convey deep religious truths and principles to the Hebrew people, and through them to all other nations, in poetry, the *form* of which has been a vexed question for ages, and with reference to which a few very broad general laws is all that can be affirmed with certainty. While it possesses every variety of melody and sweetness, it is not influenced by laws of versification to which the English reader is accustomed. Hebrew poetry is distinguished from Hebrew prose not so much by definite metre as by a rhythmical structure of sentences, by peculiarities of diction, and by grammatical inflexions. These distinguishing features are not found exclusively

¹ That the prophets were themselves poets will be seen by reference to Jonah ii., Isaiah xii., Habakkuk iii., and Amos.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

in the "Poetical Books," but are also met with in the poetical sections, hymns, blessings, &c., introduced into the "Historical Books," and into prophetic writings. Nor are they always found in the same degree: there is much, for example, in the Prophets and Ecclesiastes which is hardly to be distinguished from prose. This very peculiarity, this insensible passing from poetry into prose and *vice versa*, marks one characteristic feature of Hebrew poetry.

The examination of the Alphabetical Psalms¹ led Bishop Lowth to the conclusion that the verses or stanzas were regulated by some kind of harmony or cadence, and were marked by measure, numbers, or rhythm. This harmony is due to what is termed "parallelism," or the correspondence of one verse or line with another. The nature of parallelism will be seen from the following instances:—

(a) *Synonymous* parallelism. This consists in expressing the same thought in the various members of the verse, and in such a manner that the thought expressed in the first member shall be repeated or expanded in the second; e.g.

- Ps. cxiv. 1. When Israel went out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
2. Judah was his sanctuary,
and Israel his dominion.
3. The sea saw *it*, and fled:
Jordan was driven back.
4. The mountains skipped like rams,
and the little hills like lambs.

This, expressed in prose, would have been:—"When Israel, the house of Jacob, went out of Egypt, from a people of strange language, &c. When the sea and the Jordan saw it, they fled back. The mountains and the little hills skipped like rams and lambs."

Other instances may be seen in Isa. li. 7, 8; lx. 1, 3. Ps. xxi. 1, 2. This kind of parallelism is most frequent in the Psalter, and is thoroughly characteristic of the naturalness and simplicity of Hebrew poetry.

(b) *Antithetic* parallelism. In this kind, chiefly found in the book of Proverbs, the thought expressed in the second member of the verse is contrasted with the first by an opposition of terms and sentiments; e.g.

- Prov. x. 1. A wise son rejoiceth his father;
but a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

Where "wise" is contrasted with "foolish," and to "rejoice" with to "grieve." Comp. x. 2—5, 7, 8; viii. 8. Ps. xx. 7, 8; xxx. 5. Isa. ix. 10; liv. 10.

¹ xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv.

(c) *Synthetic* parallelism. This affects the form of construction. There is a correspondence between different parts of the verse with respect to the shape and turn of the whole sentence and of the constructive parts; member answers to member, noun to noun, verb to verb, &c. One idea is kept in view, and is modified or developed by accessory ideas; e.g.

Ps. xxxvii. 25. I have been young, and *now* am old;
yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,
nor his seed begging bread.

Here "young" and "old," "have been" and "am," "righteous" and "his seed," "forsaken" and "begging" balance and supplement each other; and the thought in the second line is developed in the third. Comp. also vv. 26—28. Ps. xxvii. 4. Prov. xxxi. 10, &c. Isa. l. 5, 6.

In these, and other, forms of parallelism, rhythm proper attains its greatest perfection when an equal number of words is found in each member. Some of the examples already given illustrate this proposition, but others are found in Job vi. 5. Ps. xix. 8, &c.; ii. 6. In the original texts of Gen. iv. 23, Job xvi. 12, Prov. xi. 3, may be seen specimens of that similarity of sound at the end of each member of the verse, which has been considered the nearest approach in Hebrew poetry to what we understand by rhyme.

Parallelism is usually restricted to two lines, and is (comparatively) simple in character; but instances of parallelism of three lines (Job x. 17.), of four lines (Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2.), of five lines (Job viii. 5, 6.), and of elaborate character, prove the varieties of verse-structure too numerous to be stated. They are more or less introduced in the best periods of Hebrew poetry to express the fluctuation of sense and emotion.

It seems impossible to shew that the verses in Hebrew poetry are themselves subject to the same laws as those which have been pointed out as affecting the members of the verses; but it need not be denied that a strophical division is sometimes found. Pss. xlii. and xliii. together form one song, which is divided by the "refrain" or chorus (xlii. 6, 12; xliii. 5.) into two strophes: Isa. ix. 8—x. 4. consists of four strophes marked by the same refrain (vv. 12, 17, &c.): and certain hymns, as Ps. i., fall into sections or strophes, which stand to each other in antithetical relation.

4. The writers of the "Poetical Books" have enshrined their thoughts in lines subject to such varied and intricate rules as those which have been briefly stated. But let us not think that we have exhausted the significance of these writings when we know, perfectly or imperfectly, poetical niceties of style, date, historical circumstances, and literal meaning of sacred psalmody or philosophy. It is the spirit, not the body, the soul, not the form of Hebrew poetry which concerns us most. There

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

is, first and above all things, to be marked, learned, and inwardly digested that higher spiritual meaning which underlies the whole. These "Poetical Books" have a real and intended spiritual reference to the history of Christ, His Church, and each individual member of His Church, and a fulfilment of them, clearly demonstrable upon consistent principles of spiritual interpretation. But to see and know this, we must be "all taught of God." These books must remain "sealed" to all but those who approach them with secret prayer that their understanding may be opened.

Their writers must be to us not only good poets but good and wise men, believers in God; men who have known life in its heights and depths, and have been inspired by the Holy Ghost to help others to know what it is and how to lead it rightly. "All that they have written," says St. Augustine, "is a mirror to us," in which we may see the perplexities or the happinesses of our own spiritual life reflected back in lines of divine light. Job, "Proverbs," "Ecclesiastes," read in this spirit, will reveal to us the "Wisdom that is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (James iii. 17.): the "Psalter" and "Song of Songs" will speak to us not only the voice of God to man, but "specially the divinely inspired utterance of "the voice of man to God," "the record of the answering voices that go "up from earth to heaven," sometimes deeply prayerful and pathetic, sometimes calmly devotional, sometimes joyful with chastened holy joy. One and all these books take their part in explaining the fitness of Holy Scripture for quickening and unfolding the spiritual life of man.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

INTRODUCTION.

I. General Character and Lesson of the Book.

THE book of Job stands by itself in Holy Scripture in two most important respects. First, it contains no reference to the peculiar revelations, promises and blessings, of the covenant of Abraham. Next, it deals with the great questions of "Natural Religion," which have exercised the thoughts of man as man in all ages. These characteristics are, indeed, in some degree traceable in all those books which are called "Sapiential," or "Books of Wisdom," belonging or referring to the time of Solomon—in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and some of the Psalms. But in these books the detachment of ideas is not complete: the knowledge of all that belongs to the covenant of Israel underlies the current of thought, even when it does not emerge from it. In the book of Job it is otherwise. The book rests on a knowledge of God and of man in communion with God, so absolutely external to that covenant, that ancient Jewish writers wondered why it was admitted into the Canon of the Old Testament at all. There is in it a peculiar originality of style, tone, and subject, which is found in no other book.

(I.) The great question discussed in the book is this, "How far in the course of God's providence on earth can we trace a retribution, which adequately punishes the evil, and rewards the good?" It was a question of infinitely greater importance and difficulty to those who had at best but dim visions of a future judgment and of an everlasting life beyond the grave. To us, to whom this knowledge is brought out in the full light of the Gospel, it is far easier to understand that man's life on earth is but a fragment of his whole being, and that accordingly the manifestation of God's providence in it must necessarily be incomplete, and may easily seem to be defective. And moreover, for the same reason, it is also far easier for us to realize the disciplinary character of this present life as a state of probation, and so to understand that the "light affliction which is but for a moment" is meant to chasten the servants of God—to help them to conquer the flesh, to detach them from the world, to shew them their own weakness, and to throw them upon God—and thus "to work out for them" in the hereafter "a far more exceeding weight of glory."

Even with this knowledge the great question still at times weighs heavily upon us. But when this life alone fell within the bright circle of knowledge—all beyond seeming, if not unreal, at least obscure—it was natural to think that God's righteousness must shew itself so clearly and unmistakeably in this life, that prosperity should be a proof of special goodness, and adversity a proof of special guilt. The servants of God felt like the Psalmist, that "their feet were almost gone, their treadings

INTRODUCTION.

“had well-nigh slipt, because they were grieved at the wicked, and saw “the ungodly in such prosperity” (Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3).

The question is here worked out in the form of a poetical history. Job is the type of a true servant of God, blessed with singular prosperity. On a sudden, first blow after blow of calamity reduce him to poverty and childlessness; and next a loathsome disease, commonly recognised as a punishment of sin, makes life a burden to him. The former visitation he bears with perfect resignation, the latter with at least quiet submission. But when his three friends come to him in his trouble, and scandalized by his complaints against his hard lot, proceed by degrees to urge upon him, as a time-honoured and unquestionable truth, that special affliction must be a special judgment, and that consequently he must have been specially a sinner; and when accordingly they exhort him to repentance and promise renewed blessing to him, if only he will be thus penitent,—then he cannot bear this spiritual trial in silence. There follows a dialogue in which they simply reiterate—what is most true and is often set forth with singular beauty—that God must be perfect in righteousness, and that man’s blindness, weakness, and sin forbid him to stand the extremity of God’s righteous judgment: but they add to it—what is not true—that in this world, constantly and certainly, His perfect righteousness is shewn in the apportionment of good and evil; and at last clench their argument by accusing Job of certain special sins. Job in his answers, acknowledging their first declaration, as not only true but almost a commonplace, utterly rejects both their general conclusion and their unwarrantable application of it to his own case. He will not deny facts; and facts shew that the righteous are not always blessed, or the wicked afflicted, in this life. He resents bitterly their gratuitous accusations against him, and in his turn accuses them of being “false witnesses for God.” In the depth of his heart, he cherishes faith in God, and is quite sure that “the Judge of the world must do right;” and for that reason he refuses to allow that His Almighty power and man’s littleness destroy all right in man to expect to be judged “according to that which he hath.” But in his bewilderment and agony he breaks out into complaints of God’s actual dealing with himself, and of the apparently promiscuous distribution of good and evil, which cannot be cleared of presumption. He has glimpses of a future life, and of an Avenger and Witness in Heaven; but they come few and far between, and the clouds soon close over them again. At last, having silenced his friends, he becomes calmer, and ends by a solemn protestation of his innocence, so far as man can be innocent, a lamentation over the terrible contrast of his past happiness and present suffering, and an appeal from the judgment of men to the judgment of God. Nothing can be more remarkable than the contrast between the speeches of the three friends which, dignified and often beautiful as they are, yet never advance a step beyond the simple reiteration of their one principle, as handed down from all antiquity, and the startling boldness with which Job unfolds one by one before their eyes some of the deepest problems of human life, which have been through ages the perplexity of human thought.

A new personage (Elihu), unmentioned hitherto as present, now interposes. He is expressly noted as of a younger generation than the three friends, representing a wisdom later than theirs; he speaks with professed diffidence, but with real harshness and some extreme positiveness

INTRODUCTION.

in his partial elucidation of the mystery: and his speech is less forcible in style, and less poetical in beauty, than those which have gone before. But still it has at least a glimpse of a far truer explanation than has yet been offered. He sees the disciplinary, as distinct from the merely punitive, character of affliction; he represents it as one of God's methods of teaching, urging Job to accept it, and examine himself to see what its lesson is. On the other hand, he resents the accusations which the three friends have brought against Job, simply to sustain their argument, and is indignant that they should have dwelt on the power, instead of the righteousness, of God. Finally, he sets forth the necessarily inscrutable nature of the counsel of God's Will, which, even in the lower physical sphere, is to us mysterious and transcendent; and his conclusion is that men may know in part, but beyond that knowledge must be content simply to believe.

This speech is unanswered and unnoticed in the dialogue. It has been thought to have been added to the book at a later time. The poem ends with the answer of the Lord "out of the whirlwind." It is to be noted that this answer appeals simply to faith, as the necessary position of a creature towards his Creator, without giving any explanation of what had perplexed Job's understanding. The Lord dwells on the wonders, first of inanimate nature, next of animal instinct, as signs of His infinite wisdom, ordering all things in beauty and harmony for His appointed ends, and asks "Shall he that contendeth with God instruct Him?" Job answers in language of deep humility; he will speak no more; "he lays his hand on his mouth." Then the Lord answers again, this time speaking of the Almighty power needed for the moral government of the world, in contrast with the weakness of human self-sufficiency, which is helpless even before the mere brute strength of a Behemoth and a Leviathan: and asks whether man is fit to supersede God's judgment, and exalt himself to the place of providence. Once more Job answers in still deeper humility. He confesses that a new light has broken upon him; that compared with the knowledge which it gives, his former knowledge of God was but "the hearing of the ear;" and he adds significantly—every shred of his self-confidence being stripped away—"Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." On that confession the Lord, while He rebukes the three friends for "having not spoken of Him the thing that is right," although professing to be His advocates, commends Job for having—in spite of presumption and error,—spoken of Him ultimately "the thing that is right;" and He restores Job to prosperity.

(II.) Such is the question as it is discussed in the dialogue. But the whole is to be read with the knowledge, which neither Job nor his friends possess, but which the prologue of the book supplies—first, that in the sufferings of Job there was an evil power at work, and next, that the working of that evil power was overruled to bring out a yet higher principle of godly life than any which is glanced at in the dialogue.

Satan is permitted by God to bring on Job all the various sufferings which bow him to the earth. In accordance with a principle distinctly to be traced through the whole revelation of Holy Scripture, very little is revealed in this early stage of the character of the great Enemy. His subordination to God's providence, and the impotence of his malice are very plainly marked. His power is confined to the visible sphere; in it, though with different intention, he is, just as much as the holy

INTRODUCTION.

Angels, a minister of God. Still his appearance marks, however slightly, the fact of the existence of evil in the world, as a power still allowed, in evil men and evil angels alike, to mar the apparent perfection of the moral government of God. Without the knowledge of that mysterious fact, no conception of human life, as it is, can accord with the actual conditions of the problem. Because neither Job nor his friends have it, he is led to presumption, they to self-complacent conventionality.

But this intervention of Satan is intended to bring out a higher principle of life than is contemplated in the actual controversy. Satan asks "Doth Job serve God for nought?" The taunt expresses his belief that Job's is simply a servile and selfish obedience. The permission to put that belief to the test seems to imply that Job's uprightness, true though it was, did need some discipline of sorrow, to purge it from anything in it which could even give colour to the taunt. Of course, neither knowledge of human nature, nor acquaintance with the general tenour of the Word of God, allows us to doubt that, as Bishop Butler asserts in his Analogy (Part i. c. 3.), there are visible signs of a moral government of God by retribution in this world, so real, yet so incomplete, as to promise completion in a future life. In the simpler state of society to which the book of Job introduces us, the reality of this moral government would be more obvious, its incompleteness less strongly felt. Hence come the time-honoured assertions of the three friends, represented as handed down from an older and simpler age, and already undermined by the experience of the present. Nor again will any one, unless he be quite carried away by the transcendental theory, deny either that the expectation of retribution is an element of the universal testimony of conscience to God, or that it is in practice a great and necessary aid to human weakness, in its conflict against sin. But yet all this is of "the Law." The higher principle is the principle of the service of the Spirit—"all for love, and nothing for "reward"—which simply trusts God, though it may not understand His ways, and knows that in His hand all works together for good. This conception in its fulness belongs to the Gospel: but it is certainly shadowed out in the book of Job. It has been truly remarked, that in the preparation for the coming of the Messiah, the conception of the righteous man, not, as rewarded with prosperity or clothed in glory, but as suffering under the hand alike of God and man, condemned accordingly by man's judgment as unrighteous, "smitten of God and afflicted," was a necessary, though startling, complement to the other elements of the prophetic picture. How this conception was afterwards worked out, to the no small perplexity of the more carnal-minded of the Jews, in such passages as the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, in the whole tenour of Jeremiah's prophecy, and in Psalms like the 22nd, is well known. The book of Job is, so to speak, an anticipation in typical history of that prophetic revelation. Moreover, with the conception of God's service as a mere law, to be obeyed in fear of punishment and hope of reward, there always goes (as St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians and Romans shew us) an idea that His blessing can be earned by man, "not of grace but of debt," venturing perhaps even on the fancy that the requirements of His will can be perfectly fulfilled, possibly transcended, by human obedience. This is the taint of self-righteousness, which at times seemed to shew itself in Job's utterances, and which needed to be purged away together with the original fallacy whence it sprang.

It is clear to the reader of the book that to purge this away—to make

INTRODUCTION.

Job really "serve God for nought"—is the Lord's merciful purpose in permitting him to be afflicted by the malice of Satan and assailed by the arguments of the friends, so exquisitely irritating in their misapplication of real truths, and their steady refusal to open their eyes to any facts that gainsaid it. And it should be noticed that, for this high purpose, while it might be well that Job should catch (as through the words of Elihu) glimpses of the solution of the mystery, it was essential that his submission to God should be called out, not by any proof of the righteous retribution of God, in this world or in the next, but by a demand of perfect faith in His wisdom, His power, and His goodness. The discipline had not taught Job to know the secrets of God's working. It had done what was of infinitely greater moment: it had made him know God Himself in a directness of knowledge, which is boldly called the "seeing of the eye." This is all-sufficient; all murmurs, questionings, doubts die away; he "abhors himself" for having even for a time admitted them to his soul, and "repents in dust and ashes." Then it is that he is accepted by God; and the prosperity, which it is now safe for him to enjoy, is restored to him in fuller measure.

(III.) Such is clearly the general teaching of this wonderful book. Two remarks, however, may be added.

First, in the chief character which it presents to us there is apparently a strange contrast to the traditional idea, which has passed into a proverb, of "the patience of Job." Instead of what we ordinarily understand as patience, we find in him passionate complaint and longing for death, fierceness of reproach, sarcasm and even contempt, towards his friends, remonstrances closely approaching, if they do not pass, the verge of presumption, addressed to God Himself. But the fact is that the word used for "patience" in the passage of St. James, from which the phrase itself is drawn (James v. 11.) properly means "endurance under suffering." Now of endurance there are two kinds. There is the gentle, placid, childlike spirit, which (so to speak) turns the edge of suffering, and never feels its extremest bitterness. There is the temper, bolder in thought, quicker in feeling, more deeply sensitive of the very appearance of unrighteousness, as a thing hateful both to man and to God, more intolerant of falsehood, especially the falsehood which imposes itself as a sacred truth. Such a temper feels to the utmost both suffering and wrong; and while it can bear the former calmly, cannot help chafing under even the faintest suspicion of the latter. Still by strong efforts of faith it can go through all; and it finds at last a peace and rest proportionate to the greatness of the struggle. Which of these two spirits is the higher may be questioned. There can be, however, no question that the latter spirit is the spirit of Job. In respect of mere suffering there is in him a perfect quietness of patience. In view of the heavier burden of doubt of God's justice, there is the active wrestling of endurance, which at last gains a complete victory. The blessing pronounced upon him is, therefore, full of comfort to those who feel painfully the burden of the doubt and perplexity of life, while they cherish in their inmost hearts the faith which says "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

The other subject, to which some brief allusion is necessary, is the extent to which this book reveals the belief in a future life, and the need of a Mediator between God and man.

In an existence beyond the grave it will be seen (see iii. 13—19; vii.

INTRODUCTION.

7—10; x. 21, 22; xiv. 12, 13, 15; xix. 26.) that Job has a fixed belief. But the conception of it in his mind is generally vague and gloomy. What light he has in its darkness comes to him almost entirely through the conviction (see x. 15.) that in that future state God must in some way "visit," for a more perfect retribution than can be discerned here, both the righteous and the wicked. How powerfully even the expectation of retribution in itself has told on the minds of men, to produce a strong practical belief in some future life, all history tells. When, as in Job's mind, there is a deep consciousness of God's communion with man, and a clear reference of retribution to Him, that strong practical belief assumes an infinitely greater strength. The celebrated passage (xix. 25—27.)—which is explained in its place—seems to carry out this idea to its greatest perfection of solemnity and emphasis. While it was, of course, infinitely far from conveying to the original hearers the truth, which we, in the full light of the Gospel, can see symbolized in it, it certainly contains the germs of the belief now unfolded to us in its full beauty. Accordingly the spiritual attitude of Job is not unlike that of some of the Psalmists: habitually he turns from the unknown future world to the present world, which he knows; but, when here he finds no satisfaction, he is driven (as perhaps it was intended that he should be driven) to the contemplation of the future, as the solemn background never to be forgotten in the knowledge of this present life. Here, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, we have a real but faint dawn of the truth, and we are convinced that it is Jesus Christ, Who has perfectly "brought life and immortality to light" (2 Tim. i. 10.).

Of faith in a Mediator we have in various phases some remarkable indications. Thus (in ix. 33—35.) Job longs for a Daysman, that is, an arbiter, who shall judge in God's stead, and before whom man may plead without being consumed. In ch. xvi. 19—21, he believes that he has a Witness in Heaven, and he prays that God would plead for man with Himself, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour. In ch. xix. 25—27, he "knows that his Avenger (or Redeemer) lives," and "shall stand at the latter day on the earth," and, that through Him "he shall see God "with his own eyes and not another's." To these passages should also be added the singularly beautiful picture in Elihu's speech (ch. xxxiii. 23, 24.) of "the angel ambassador of God," finding for the penitent "a ransom" or deliverance, and shewing him the true way of uprightness. How remarkably these passages shadow out certain parts of the work of the true Mediator—His judgment as Son of Man—His representation of Humanity in Heaven—His manifestation as a Deliverer both from sin and from suffering and death—we, in the full light of the Gospel, cannot fail to see with reverent interest and wonder. But of the truth, which forms the inmost centre of mediation—the atonement for sin in the precious blood of the Mediator—there is but little indication in this book. The ideas which lead up to the conviction of the need of atonement we have, in the confession of the inability of man to stand before the perfect judgment of God, and at the same time the conviction that in some way He Who made us must "be faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Yet still the great inference from these is not yet drawn. The Book of Job, therefore, adds its own peculiar share to the witness of the older Scriptures to the Christ. But of it, as of other books, the truth remains that the Law (i.e. the older revelation) "made nothing perfect."

II. Date and Authorship of the Book.

On these subjects the book itself conveys to us no direct information.

The scene of the history is clearly in the patriarchal life, yet at an advanced stage of considerable wealth, cultivation and knowledge, bearing evident marks of contact with high civilisation, especially the civilisation of Egypt. The characters are men, in whom the knowledge of God is accepted as the supreme principle of their lives, unhesitating in their rejection of all worship of false gods, clothed in all the dignity, strength, and simplicity inspired by an intense Monotheism. The whole book, by its numberless characteristic touches of reality, proves itself to be a real history of real men, although poetically treated, both in the narrative and in the speeches. All the indications of the parentage and habitations of the actors in the history, refer it to an early time, if estimated in comparison with the history of Israel, though not early in relation to the ancient civilisation of Egypt.

But the time of its composition in its present form, and of its introduction into the Hebrew Canon is a matter of conjecture, on which critics have been greatly divided¹. The early tradition (found in the Babylonian Talmud) which ascribed this office to Moses, and so placed the book among the earliest in Holy Scripture, has but little intrinsic authority, and is strongly discredited by internal evidence. The notions, conceived in strong reaction from this, which assigned it to the latest period of the Canon, are, on the evidence of style, thought, and language, now almost invariably rejected. That the example of Job was known to Ezekiel as a typical example of righteousness is clear from Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. It is hard to conceive how it should be so known as to have become typical, except through this book. That the Book of Job itself was known to Jeremiah, Isaiah, and some of the Psalmists, is perfectly evident from coincidences of thought and expression quite unmistakeable, in which a glance will shew that this book was the original². The language, although full of Aramaisms, is still nearer to the Arabic than the Syriac, and differs as entirely from the kind of Aramaism found in the later books, as the mixture of Greek dialects in Homer from the confusion of dialectical forms found in Hellenistic Greek. The force of expression, the freshness of style, the peculiar characteristics of rhythm, the remarkable resemblances to the Psalms and Proverbs—all refer it to a far earlier date. The entire absence of all reference to the Law, the Ritual, and the Covenant of Israel, already referred to, is not at variance with the tone of an early period, but would be inconceivable in the later ages of Israel, when both the history and prophecy after the Captivity shew an intense devotion to all, even to the minutest details.

Perhaps, on the whole, the general character of the book itself and of the subjects treated in it, suits best the time of Solomon. The position assigned to the book in the Jewish *Hagiographa* is possibly significant on this matter. But—what is of far greater importance—

¹ For an excellent sketch of the criticism of the subject, see Canon Cook's Introduction to Job in the "Speaker's Commentary." To this, and to the notes, the writer of this Commentary is greatly indebted.

² The most remarkable instances of such coincidence is found in the comparison of Jer. xx. 14—18 with Job iii.

3, 12; of the passages in the book of Job on the Divine Wisdom (such as xxviii. 20—28.) with Prov. viii.; and of Ps. lxxiii. 1—20 with various passages in Job's lamentation over the prosperity of the wicked. But there are many lesser coincidences, which are noticed in their place.

INTRODUCTION.

the general subject indicates harmony with the leading idea of the writings of that age. There was then, we know, a special search after "Wisdom," that is, after the key to the meaning and purpose of life. Such wisdom was emphatically a godly wisdom; it believed the secret of life to be capable of solution only by those who "lived and moved and had their being" in God. But yet the search for it led (as we see both in Ecclesiastes and in Proverbs) to bold inquiries into the secrets of God's dealing with man as man, independently of the peculiar relation in which he was pleased to stand to Israel. The very circumstances of Solomon's age led, for the first time since the Exodus, to considerable contact with the nations round about, especially Tyre, Egypt, and Arabia. His wisdom is spoken of in comparison and communication with "all the wisdom of the children of the east country and all the "wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kings iv. 30.). All people came to hear it, and to "prove him" (like the Queen of Sheba) "with hard questions" (1 Kings x. 1.). It is to this time and to this class of writings that the Book of Job by its whole style and tenour apparently belongs. We know, indeed, from Prov. xxv. 1, that some of these writings were collected and added to the Canon as late as the days of Hezekiah. At what exact period, therefore, any particular book was so added, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain.

The Greek translation adds to the last chapter a note, declaring that the book was translated from a Syriac or Aramaic original. The authority of such a note, embodying no doubt a far older tradition, although not decisive, is considerable, sufficient at least to indicate that, in some sense, the book had an Aramaic source. The great body of the book is so full of a local colouring belonging to its traditional source, so abounding in allusion to subjects foreign to the Hebrew writers (such as the mines of Idumæa or Egypt in ch. xxviii. 1—11; the customs, the buildings, the animals, even the legends, of Egypt, in many passages; the war-horse, so well-known elsewhere, so little used or known in Palestine, in ch. xxxix. 19—25.), so absolutely separate in thought from the traditions and the religious system of Israelitish life, that the internal evidence also points to a non-Hebraic origin. For (as all critics remark) the attempt to produce these characteristics artificially belongs exclusively to modern days. On the other hand it has been noticed that in the narrative the name *Jehovah* is used (as in ch. i. 6—12, 21; ii. 1—7; xxxviii. 1; xl. 1, 3, 6; xlii. 1, 7, 9, 10, 12.), whereas by the speakers the name *Eloah*, "God," and the name *Shaddai*, "the Almighty," the special name of patriarchal revelation (see Exod. vi. 3.) are regularly employed, and the name *Jehovah* is but once found, and then with distinct reference to its peculiar signification (ch. xii. 9.). Again, in respect of the speech of Elihu it is tolerably obvious, first, that no place for him is found in the narrative, and no notice whatever is taken of his speech; and next, that the style both in idea and in language is markedly different from that of the other parts of the book¹, and that especially it conveys the idea of the disciplinary character of suffering, so beautifully expressed in Prov. iii. 11, 12; which certainly pervades the whole history of Israel, in relation both to the nation and to individual servants of God. It indicates another hand, the work of which, however, does not belong to a wholly different age. These considerations seem to

¹ The same idea is held by some critics | xl., xli., or at any rate to the later por-
as to the descriptions of Behemoth in cc., | tion of this description in xli. 12—34.

JOB, I.

lead to the idea of a Hebrew author, dwelling among the children of the East, taking up some ancient history of the patriarch Job, reproducing it under God's inspiration with the characteristic touches and additions, which might make it fit to be received, under prophetic authority, into the sacred Canon. Such an author, and such a work, would find a natural place in or near the time of Solomon¹.

These questions, however, of date and authorship, while they are of great interest, do not in any degree affect the all-important consideration of the canonical authority, the sublimity, pathos, and beauty, and the unique value, of the book as a part of the teaching of Holy Scripture. It is the object of this Commentary to supply illustrations and explanations of detail, to correct mistranslations, which in this book are unfortunately numerous, but especially to give throughout such a brief analysis of the argument as may enable a reader to follow it as a whole.

¹ The similarity of Ps. lxxxviii. "Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite for the sons of Korah" (see 1 Chron. vi. 33.) to various parts of the book of Job is singularly remarkable.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The holiness, riches, and religious care of Job for his children. 6 Satan, appearing before God, by calumny obtaineth leave to tempt Job. 13 Understanding of the loss of his goods and children, in his mourning he bleaseth God.*

^a Gen. 22. 20,
Jam. 5. 11.

^b Ezek. 14. 14.
Jam. 5. 11.
^c Gen. 6. 9.
& 17. 1.
ch. 2. 3.

^d Prov. 8. 13.
& 16. 6.

1 **T**HERE was a man ^ain the land of Uz, whose name was ^bJob; and that man was ^cperfect and upright, and one that ^dfeared God, and

CHAPTER I.

1. The "land of Uz" is described by the Greek translators (the LXX.) as lying between Idumæa and Arabia, in the region now called the Eastern Hauran. The inhabitants are here designated (in ver. 3.) as "children of the East"—a phrase applied in Gen. xxix. 1, to the descendants of Nahor, and in Judges vi. 3, to the hordes of the Arabian desert, united with Midian and Amalek for the invasion of Palestine. With this agrees the usage of the name Uz elsewhere—in Gen. x. 23, among the sons of Aram; in Gen. xxii. 21, among the sons of Nahor; in Gen. xxxvi. 28, among the descendants of Seir the Horite, the original inhabitants of Idumæa. The country is still a rich pastoral country, open to the savage tribes of the desert, and near the march of the caravans—a border land between barbarism and civilization, especially the civilization of Egypt, to which in this book there are numberless allusions.

The name "Job" is variously derived. Delitzsch gives three derivations: (1) from a Hebrew root, "persecuted;" (2) from an Arabic root, "penitent;" (3) from a Hebrew root, "to shout for joy." Cognate names are "Job," in Gen. xlvi. 13 (a son of Issachar), and "Jobab" (Gen. xxxvi. 33.), an Edomite prince, with whom the Greek Version identifies the Job of this book.

"One that feared God." A phrase used frequently, both in the Old

JOB, I.

- 2 eschewed evil. And there were born unto him
² Or, *cattle.* 3 seven sons and three daughters. His ² substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great ³ household; so that this man was the greatest of all the ⁴ men of the east.
- 4 And his sons went and feasted *in their* houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.
- 5 And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, ^o and offered burnt offerings *according* to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and ^f cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job ⁵ continually.
- 6 Now ^g there was a day ^h when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD,

^e Gen. 8. 20.
ch. 42. 8.

^f 1 Kin. 21.
10, 13.

^g Heb. *all the days.*
g ch. 2. 1.

^h 1 Kin. 22. 19.
ch. 38. 7.

and New Testaments (see e. g. Exod. i. 17, 21. Acts x. 2; xiii. 26.) for a worshipper of the true God, not within the Covenant of Israel. The character of Job is described as “perfect,” i. e. “single-hearted in devotion” (so we read of Noah in Gen. vi. 9, and of Abram in Gen. xvii. 1.), and the words following (“perfect and upright, one that feared “God and eschewed evil”) explain this devotion as manifested in righteousness, godliness, and purity (nearly equivalent to the “godly, “righteous, and sober life” of our General Confession), embracing the duty to man, God, and self.

3. “His substance” (“cattle” in margin), like that of Abraham (Gen. xii. 16.), is measured by his cattle and slaves, as usual in an early pastoral stage of society.

5. “Sanctified them,” i. e. purified them for joining in sacrifice. See Exod. xix. 10, “Sanctify the people, and let them wash their “clothes.” The sacrifice here, as in the history of Abraham and the patriarchs, is the “burnt-offering;” for the sin-offering and trespass-offering proper belong to the Mosaic Law. (Comp. Lev. i., ii., iii., where burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and peace-offerings are taken for granted, with Lev. iv., v., vi., where sin and trespass-offerings are formally instituted.) After their institution the burnt-offering seems to have expressed simple “self-dedication;” here (as in ch. xlii. 8.) the idea of propitiation is clearly involved.

“Cursed God.” An inaccurate rendering. The original word means properly “to bless;” hence, from the habit of benediction at parting (like our “good-bye,” i. e. God be with you!), to “bid farewell to,” or, “to renounce.” So it is used below, i. 11; ii. 9; but here such renunciation is made virtually “in their hearts,” by forgetfulness: there explicitly in open defiance, “to His face.”

6. “Before the Lord.” The name the LORD, i. e. Jehovah, is used

JOB, I.

7 and ²Satan came also ³among them. And the ²Heb. the Adversary, 1 Chr. 21. 1. Rev. 12. 9, 10.
 LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?
 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From ³Heb. in the midst of them.
ⁱgoing to and fro in the earth, and from walking
 8 up and down in it. And the LORD said unto
 Satan, ⁴kHast thou considered my servant Job,
 that *there is* none like him in the earth, ¹a
 perfect and an upright man, one that feareth
 9 God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered
 the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for
 10 nought? ^mHast not thou made an hedge about ^mPs. 34. 7. Isai. 5. 2.

in the narrative, but with one exception (xii. 9.) is not found in the speeches of this book.

“Satan” (see *margin*), “the adversary.” The name occurs elsewhere only in the later books (1 Chron. xxi. 1. Zech. iii. 1.). There it has assumed the character of a proper name; here it is simply a title, corresponding to his action, as the *Diabolus* (the “setter at variance” or “the slanderer”) and the “accuser of the saints” (Rev. xii. 10.). It is to be noted generally that the existence and power of the Evil One are but slightly touched upon in the Old Testament, while they are clearly and repeatedly revealed in the New Testament; probably because it was not well to disclose the nature of the “strong man armed,” lest, as in heathen religions, he might be held to be a god, till He had come Who was “the stronger than he” (St. Luke xi. 21, 22.). To this early book this remark especially applies. Nothing is said of any rebellion of Satan against God, or his power of spiritual temptation of man. He is represented as outcast from heaven, wandering on earth, and the tone of his answers to the Lord is irreverent and half-defiant. But he still presents himself among “the sons of God,” and is the delegated minister of God in that probation of Job, which he intended for evil, but which was overruled by God to good. The fuller and darker revelations were to come.

It should be observed that the whole representation of Heaven here (as in Micaiah's vision, 1 Kings xxii. 19—23.) is, as indeed it must be, figurative, conveyed, as in our Lord's parables, under images drawn from earthly rule and majesty.

9. “Doth Job serve God for nought?” The question introduces the great subject of the book, i.e. how far the good and evil doings of men are met by, and should look to, punishment and reward. But it suggests the consideration of the true position of God's blessings. They are to be accepted thankfully, as manifestations of God's love, and as helps to our weakness. But the chiefest object of life is not to obtain reward, but to do God's will freely and gladly; “all for love and “nothing for reward;” “on earth as it is in Heaven.” If this be forgotten, the taunt of Satan is deserved. From Job's words (xlii. 5.), “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee,” it is possible that he may have rested too much on God's temporal blessings, and that the object of his probation was to correct this, and to throw his soul directly upon God in faith. The true spiritual

JOB, I.

- him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? ⁿ thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his ² substance is increased
- ⁿ Ps. 128. 1, 2.
Prov. 10. 22.
^o Or, *cattle*.
^o ch. 2. 5.
& 19. 21.
^o Heb.
if he curse thee not to thy face.
^p Isai. 8. 21.
Mal. 3. 13, 14.
^q Heb. *hand*,
Gen. 16. 6.
- 11 in the land. ^o But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, ³ and he will ^p curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy ⁴ power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.
- ^q Eccles. 9. 12.
- 13 And there was a day ¹ when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in
- 14 their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:
- 15 and the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped
- 16 alone to tell thee. While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, ⁵ The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.
- ⁵ Or, *A great fire.*
- 17 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and ⁶ fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am
- ⁶ Heb. *rushed.*

order is that of our Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Easter, first "to love the thing that Thou commandest," then "to desire that which Thou dost promise."

13—18. The instrumentality through which Satan is allowed to work is partly physical (the fire and the wind), partly human (the Sabeans and Chaldeans), representing the two different agencies of God's providence.

The "Sabeans" are evidently a plundering tribe of the Arabian desert, from the south. See Isa. xlv. 14, where the Sabeans are connected with Egypt and Cush (Ethiopia), and Ps. lxxii. 10; "The kings of Arabia (Sheba and Seba), shall offer gifts." See also Gen. x. 7; where Seba is a son of Cush. The "Chaldeans" are here the ancient race dwelling to the north, in Assyria or Mesopotamia, in the land out of which Abram came (Gen. xi. 28.), apparently a more distant enemy, and more fully organized for their marauding expeditions.

The "fire of God." Probably the lightning. There seems no indication of any miraculous agency, as in 1 Kings xviii. 38. 2 Kings i. 21.

JOB, II.

- 18 escaped alone to tell thee. While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said,
^r Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and ^{r ver. 4, 13.} drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:
- 19 and, behold, there came a great wind ² from ^{2 Heb. from} the wilderness, and smote the four corners of ^{aside, &c.} the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.
- 20 Then Job arose, ^s and rent his ³ mantle, and ^{5 Gen. 37. 29.} shaved his head, and ^{Ezra 9. 3.} fell down upon the ^{3 Or, robe.} ground, and worshipped, and said,
^{t 1 Pet. 5. 6.}
- 21 ^u Naked came I out of my mother's womb, ^{u Ps. 49. 17.} and naked shall I return thither: ^{Eccles. 5. 15.}
 the LORD ^x gave, and the LORD hath ^y taken ^{1 Tim. 6. 7.} away; ^{x Eccles. 5. 19.}
^{y Matt. 20. 15.} ^{z Eph. 5. 20.} ^{1 Thes. 5. 18.} ^{a ch. 2. 10.}
^{4 Or,} ^{attributed} ^{folly to God.} ^z blessed be the name of the LORD.
- 22 ^a In all this Job sinned not, nor ⁴ charged God foolishly.

CHAPTER II.

¹ Satan appearing again before God obtaineth further leave to tempt Job. ⁷ He smiteth him with sore boils. ⁹ Job reproveth his wife, moving him to curse God. ¹¹ His three friends condole with him in silence.

1 **A** GAIN ^a there was a day when the sons of God ^{a ch. 1. 6.} came to present themselves before the LORD,

21. This verse assumes the character of poetry, with a parallelism similar to that of the Psalms, in the midst of the prose narrative. There is a marked similarity to Eccles. v. 15, "As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came." "Thither" is clearly "to the dust" (see ch. xxi. 26.), in allusion to Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" the connection lying in the idea of the earth, as the mother of all animal being. (See Ps. cxxxix. 15, "when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth.")

The resignation, so beautifully expressed, refers to outward blessings, as the mere clothing of life, not a part of man's true self, given by God and taken away by God, as He sees best for that true self; and therefore in either case "blessed be the name of the Lord."

22. "Charged God foolishly." The passage is interpreted by some "uttered folly against God." But the better interpretation is that of the margin, "attributed folly" (that is, unrighteousness or, at least, carelessness of man) "to God."

The chapter represents Job's first trial—of simple and unaccountable calamity—triumphantly sustained. The heavier trials to the spirit were to come, and to be less patiently borne. Suffering, however great, is far easier to bear than the slightest semblance of injustice at the hand of God, or false accusation from men.

JOB, II.

- and Satan came also among them to present
 2 himself before the LORD. And the LORD said
 unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And
^bSatan answered the LORD, and said, From
 going to and fro in the earth, and from walking
 3 up and down in it. And the LORD said unto
 Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job,
 that *there is* none like him in the earth, ^ca
 perfect and an upright man, one that feareth
 God, and escheweth evil? and still he ^dholdeth
 fast his integrity, although thou movedst me
 against him, ^{2°}to destroy him without cause.
 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin
 for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give
 5 for his life. ^fBut put forth thine hand now,
 and touch his ^gbone and his flesh, and he will
 6 curse thee to thy face. ^hAnd the LORD said
 unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; ³but
 save his life.
 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the
 LORD, and smote Job with sore boils ⁱfrom the
 8 sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took
 him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; ^kand
 he sat down among the ashes.
 9 Then said his wife unto him, ¹Dost thou still

^b ch. 1. 7.

^c ch. 1. 1, 8.

^d ch. 27. 5, 6.

² Heb.
to swallow
him up.

^e ch. 9. 17.

^f ch. 1. 11.

^g ch. 19. 20.

^h ch. 1. 12.

³ Or, *only*.

ⁱ Isai. 1. 6.

^k 2 Sam. 13.
19. ch. 42. 6.
Ezek. 27. 30.
Matt. 11. 21.
¹ ch. 21. 15.

CHAPTER II.

3. "Holdeth fast his integrity." (See ver. 9, and chap. xxvii. 5, 6.), (that is) his single-hearted devotion to God and to righteousness.

4. "Skin for skin." The interpretation of this proverb is given in the remainder of the verse: but it is not certain how it comes to convey that sense. Probably the simplest explanation is, "A man sacrifices his 'skin in part to preserve the whole:' he will give up for life all that seems to make life worth having.

7. "Sore boils." The disease of Job was certainly leprosy of the worst kind (elephantiasis), the pain of which was aggravated, partly by its loathsomeness to others, still more by the fact that it was currently held to be, beyond all other diseases, a sign and a penalty of sin. See the description of the offerings at the cleansing of the leper in Lev. xiv.; including "sin offering," and trespass offering.

8. "He sat down among the ashes," or, as the Greek translation has it, on "the dunghill;" evidently outside the house, as was customary with lepers. The dried dung in the Hauran is stored in great heaps and used for fuel.

9, 10. The second trial of Job lies partly in heavier physical suffering, but still more in reproach and condemnation, from the quarter where

JOB, II.

- ^m retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. ^m ver. 3.
- 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? ⁿ shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? ^o In all this did not Job ^p sin with his lips. ⁿ ch. 1. 21.
Rom. 12. 12.
Jam. 5. 10,
11.
^o ch. 1. 22.
^p Ps. 39. 1.
- 11 Now when Job's three ^q friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the ^r Temanite, and Bildad the ^s Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come ^t to mourn with him and ^u to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and ^v sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground ^x seven days and seven ^q Prov. 17. 17.
^r Gen. 36. 11.
Jer. 49. 7.
^s Gen. 25. 2.
^t ch. 42. 11.
Rom. 12. 15.
^u Neh. 9. 1.
Lam. 2. 10.
Ezek. 27. 30.
^x Gen. 50. 10.

he should most have looked for sympathy, acting as a temptation to him by expressing, with an almost brutal roughness, the secret suggestions of his own human weakness—to give up the integrity which seemed so profitless, and to curse the God who was so cruel, and draw down on himself the final stroke of death.

His answer is decisive. He sees in the suggestion the "foolishness," that is, the senseless recklessness, of the "fool who saith there is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1; liii. 1.). He argues that, from the Hand which sends good, we must patiently bear evil, knowing that it does not causelessly afflict. But we cannot trace here the full beauty and sweetness of his first answer; and there is added significantly the limitation, "Job sinned not with his lips," as though his heart began to waver. The temptation of an evil suggestion, even if resisted, is apt to leave its poison behind.

11. With the entrance of Job's friends begins the third trial (which is the great subject of the book), in the misinterpretation of his calamity, and the attempt to press it into the service of a false view of God's providence, "speaking not of God the thing that is right" (xlii. 7.).

The names of the friends all agree with the scene of the story. "Eliphaz" is a name found in the race of Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 4.); Teman, deriving its name from the son of this Eliphaz, is connected with Idumæa, in Jer. xlix. 7. (Is wisdom no more in Teman?) Shuah is a son of Keturah, settled in "the east country" (Gen. xxv. 2.); Naama is unknown (for it cannot well be the place mentioned in Josh. xv. 41.); the Greek translators render the word by a name, which seems to identify it with Maon in Petra.

12. "They knew him not," because of the hideous change wrought by his disease. The "sprinkling dust on their heads toward heaven," throwing it (that is) in the air so as to fall on them, is here the token of mourning; as in Acts xxii. 23, of grief and indignation. The silence is

JOB, III.

nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

CHAPTER III.

1 *Job curses the day and services of his birth.* 13 *The ease of death.*
20 *He complaineth of life, because of his anguish.*

1 **A**FTER this opened Job his mouth, and
2 **C**ursed his day. And Job ²spake, and
said,

² Heb.
answered.

^a ch. 10. 18, 19.
Jer. 15. 10.
& 20. 14.

3 ¶ ^a Let the day perish wherein I was born,
and the night *in which* it was said, There is a
man child conceived.

^b ch. 10. 21, 22.
& 16. 16.
& 28. 3.

4 Let that day be darkness;—let not God regard
it from above,
neither let the light shine upon it.

Ps. 23. 4. &
44. 19. &
107. 10, 14.
Jer. 13. 16.
Amos 5. 8.

5 Let darkness and ^b the shadow of death ³ stain it;
let a cloud dwell upon it;

³ Or,
challenge it.

⁴ let the blackness of the day terrify it.

⁴ Or, let
them terrify
it, as those
who have a
bitter day,
Amos 8. 10.

6 *As for* that night, let darkness seize upon it;
⁵ let it not be joined unto the days of the year,
let it not come into the number of the months.

⁵ Or, let it
not rejoice
among the
days.

7 Lo, let that night be solitary,
let no joyful voice come therein.

apparently partly the silence of delicacy and sympathy, partly of embarrassment, in the explanation of Job's calamities which they had already conceived. They keep it till it is broken by the bitter cry of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

1, 2. This first utterance of Job is one of simple, intense, despairing lamentation, full (as sorrow often is) of almost fanciful subtlety, but, except in the fact of its utter hopelessness, not complaining against God's will, unless perhaps there be a slight indication of such complaint in ver. 23 ("whom God hath hedged in"). It clearly falls into three sections: (a) vv. 3—10, "O that I had never been born!" (b) vv. 11—19, "O that I had died at once!" (c) vv. 20—26, "why should I live now, when I long for death?" There is an evident reminiscence of this passage, but less touching and less highly poetical, in Jer. xx. 14—18.

(a) 3—10 contain a curse on the day and night of his birth, poured out in the vivid and imaginative language of sorrow long brooding over trouble.

5. "Stain it." The marginal reading is preferable, "challenge it" for their own; properly, "redeem it," as a near kinsman the land which comes to him (see Ruth iv. 4—6.).

The "blackness of the day." That is, "whatever blackens the day," such as "the darkness that might be felt" (Exod. x. 21.); or an eclipse.

7. "Solitary." Rather, "barren" of future offspring, and "the joyful voice" announcing birth.

JOB, III.

- 8 Let them curse it that curse the day,
c who are ready to raise up ² their mourning. c Jer. 9. 17, 18.
- 9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark ;
 let it look for light, but *have* none ;
 neither let it see ³ the dawning of the day : 2 Or, a *leviathan*.
- 10 because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* ³
 womb, 3 Heb. the *eyelids of the morning*, ch. 41. 18.
 nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.
- 11 ¶ ^a Why died I not from the womb ? d ch. 10. 18.
Why did I *not* give up the ghost when I came
 out of the belly ?
- 12 ^e Why did the knees prevent me ? e Gen. 30. 3. Isai. 66. 12.
 : or why the breasts that I should suck ?
- 13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet,
 I should have slept : then had I been at rest,
- 14 with kings and counsellors of the earth,
 which ^f built desolate places for themselves ; f ch. 15. 28.
- 15 or with princes that had gold,
 who filled their houses with silver :
- 16 or ^g as an hidden untimely birth I had not been ; g Ps. 58. 8.
 as infants *which* never saw light.
- 17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling ;
 and there the ⁴ weary be at rest. 4 Heb. *wearied in strength*.
- 18 *There* the prisoners rest together ;
^h they hear not the voice of the oppressor. h ch. 39. 7.

8. "Their mourning." The marginal reading, "Leviathan," here is certainly right. The allusion is to the magicians, who curse days, and "raise up the Leviathan," or Dragon, to swallow the sun (as in eclipses). The legend is common in the East, even in India and China. Possibly it is alluded to in the imagery of Rev. xii. 3.

9. The beautiful image of the original is given in the margin—"the eyelids of the morning" opening to the light.

(b) 11—19 express in a tone, calmer and more pathetic, Job's wish that he had passed at once into the rest of death.

14. "Desolate places," i. e. of burial ; such as the pyramids, of the Egyptian name of which it is thought that there is a trace here. A dweller in the Hauran might easily have heard of them.

15. "That had gold," &c. The verb here may have a present meaning ; if so, allusion is probably made to the gold and silver ornaments, still kept in the royal tombs alluded to above.

17—19. There runs through the whole passage a deep sense, first, of the equality of death, in which the famous prince and the still-born infant, the oppressed and the oppressor, the great and small, are all one ; and next of its restfulness from the troubling of the wicked and the weariness of life. Both come out of the fulness of the heart, which had felt all the inequalities of fortune, and now feels nothing but the burdens of life.

19 The small and great are there ;
and the servant *is* free from his master.

- ¹ Jer. 20. 18. 20 ¶ ⁱ Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
and life unto the ^k bitter *in* soul ;
¹ Sam. 1. 10. 2 Kin. 4. 27. Prov. 31. 6. 21 which ²¹ long for death, but it *cometh* not ;
and dig for it more than ^m for hid treasures ;
² Heb. *wait*. 22 which rejoice exceedingly,
¹ Rev. 9. 6. ^m Prov. 2. 4. 22 and are glad, when they can find the grave ?
23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hid,
ⁿ and whom God hath hedged in ?
ⁿ ch. 19. 8. Lam. 3. 7. 24 For my sighing cometh ³ before I eat,
³ Heb. *before my meat*. and my roarings are poured out like the waters.
⁴ Heb. *I feared a fear, and it came upon me*. 25 For ⁴ the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me,
and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.
26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest,
neither was I quiet ; yet trouble came.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ Eliphaz reproveth Job for want of religion. 7 He teacheth God's judgments to be not for the righteous, but for the wicked. 12 His fearful vision, to humble the excellency of creatures before God.

1 **T**HEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

(c) 20—27. Putting aside vain wishes for a different past, Job, lastly, asks why should death be now withheld from one who longs for rest, and life prolonged to one who has not pleasure or hope in it. The last verses (which should be in the present tense) give a pathetic picture of restlessness and dread—

“ I fear a fear, and it cometh upon me ;

“ All that I dread falleth upon me.

“ No safety have I, no rest, no peace :

“ But trouble cometh upon trouble.”

23. “ Whom God hath hedged in.” So in xix. 8, “ He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass ;” comp. also Lam. iii. 7. The idea is of God's decree, as meeting and thwarting him at every step.

In the sorrow of this chapter there is apparently no sin ; but perhaps in its excess we may trace a repining, and a sense of the oppressive hardness of his lot, which are the seed-plot of sin. Similarly in the impatient longing for death—the more remarkable because of the gloom of the description of it—there is the first indication of a want of trust in God. We note that not till “ all things were accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” did our great Example on the Cross utter the words “ I thirst,” knowing that in the agony of crucifixion to drink would bring the relief of death (see St. John xix. 28.).

CHAPTER IV.

Chh. iv. and v. open in the speech of Eliphaz the great controversy of

JOB, IV.

- 2 *If* we assay ²to commune with thee, wilt thou ²Heb.
be grieved? *a word.*
- But ³who can withhold himself from speaking? ³ Heb.
*who can re-
frain from
words?*
- 3 ¶ Behold, thou hast instructed many,
and thou ^a hast strengthened the weak hands. ^a Isai. 35. 3.
- 4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
and thou ^b hast strengthened ⁴the feeble knees. ^b Isai. 35. 3.
- 5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; ⁴ Heb.
it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. *the bowing
knees,*
Heb. 12. 12.
- 6 *Is not this* ^cthy fear, ^dthy confidence,
thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? ^c ch. 1. 1.
^d Prov. 3. 26.
- 7 Remember, I pray thee, ^ewho *ever* perished, ^e Ps. 37. 25.
being innocent?
or where were the righteous cut off?
- 8 Even as I have seen, ^fthey that plow iniquity, ^f Ps. 7. 14.
Prov. 22. 8.
Hos. 10. 13.
Gal. 6. 7, 8.
and sow wickedness, reap the same.
- 9 By the blast of God they perish,
and ⁵by the breath of his nostrils are they con- ⁵ That is, by
sumed. *his anger:* as
Isai. 30. 33.
See Ex. 15. 8.
ch. 1. 19.
& 15. 30.
Isai. 11. 4.
2 Thess. 2. 8.
- 10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the
fierce lion,
and ⁶the teeth of the young lions, are broken. ⁶ Ps. 58. 6.

the book. Scandalized at the hopeless despondency of Job, in which he traces complaint against God, Eliphaz seeks to defend the ways of Providence by suggesting some sin in Job, which has called down punishment and needs repentance. His speech falls into three sections, (a) ch. iv. 3—11, (b) ch. iv. 12—v. 7, (c) ch. v. 8—27, each of which is subdivided into two parts. In the first (a), after reproaching Job for his excessive sorrow, unworthy of his former wisdom, he announces his main principle, that no innocent man can perish, but that he who sows evil reaps evil. The second (b) contains a sublime description of a spiritual visitation, asking how can man be just before God, and then reiterates the declaration of the sure judgment of the wicked. The third (c) passes on to exhortation of Job to seek God in penitence, and a singularly beautiful description of the blessings of the penitent. The whole speech is full of beauty and of general truth, but is vitiated by the assumption, without any pretence of knowledge, of some special sin in Job (exactly like those rebuked by our Lord in St. Luke xiii. 1—5.)—an assumption which recurs in various phases again and again.

6. The sense is here obscured. It should be—

“Thy piety—was it not thy confidence?

“Thy hope—was it not in the integrity of thy ways?”

10, 11. The lion here is the type of strength and courage, as insufficient without God. So in Ps. xxxiv. 10, “The lions do lack and suffer “hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing “that is good.” But there is also an idea of fierce rapine and cruelty—characteristic of the wicked, and secretly imputed to Job—as checked on

JOB, IV.

- ^b Ps. 34. 10. 11 ^b The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,
and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.
- ² Heb. *by stealth.* 12 ¶ Now a thing was ²secretly brought to me,
and mine ear received a little thereof.
- 1 ch. 33. 15. 13 ¹ In thoughts from the visions of the night,
when deep sleep falleth on men,
³ Heb. *met me.* 14 fear ³ came upon me, and ^k trembling,
^k Hab. 3. 16. which made ⁴ all my bones to shake.
⁴ Heb. *the multitude of my bones.* 15 Then a spirit passed before my face ;
the hair of my flesh stood up :
16 it stood still, but I could not discern the form
thereof :
an image *was* before mine eyes,
⁵ Or, *I heard a still voice.* ⁵ *there was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying,*
1 ch. 9. 2. 17 ¹ Shall mortal man be more just than God ?
shall a man be more pure than his maker ?
- ^m ch. 15. 15. & 25. 5. 18 Behold, he ^m put no trust in his servants ;
² Pet. 2. 4. ⁶ and his angels he charged with folly :
⁶ Or, *nor in his angels, in whom he put light.* 19 ⁿ how much less *in* them that dwell in ^o houses
of clay,
ⁿ ch. 15. 16. whose foundation *is* in the dust,
^o 2 Cor. 4. 7. & 5. 1. *which* are crushed before the moth ?
- ^p Ps. 90. 5, 6. 20 ^p They are ⁷ destroyed from morning to evening :
⁷ Heb. *beaten in pieces.* they perish for ever without any regarding *it.*

the instant by the hand of God ; till, powerless, like the old lion, the oppressor passes away and his offspring are scattered abroad. The metaphor is abrupt, but not obscure.

It is noted by Hebrew scholars as characteristic of the richness of the style of this book, that in these verses five different words are used for "lion."

12—16. The description of this spiritual vision is singularly vivid and true to nature ; first, the mysterious whisper waking from the depth of sleep ; then the sudden shudder of physical terror ; lastly, the deeper horror of the sense of an undefined shadowy presence, out of which comes the voice.

12. "A little thereof." It should be "a light whisper."

17. The comparative "more just" is an error, which spoils the sense. It should be—

"Is a mortal righteous before God ?

"Is man pure before his Maker ?"

The idea is simply "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2).

19. The "houses of clay" signify the lower earthly nature of man contrasted with the angelic nature ; the "foundation in the dust," his instability ; the words "crushed before," or, rather "like the moth," his transitoriness and weakness.

JOB, V.

- 21 ^a Doth not their excellency *which is in them* ^a Ps. 33. 11. & 49. 14.
 go away?
^r they die, even without wisdom. ^r ch. 36. 12.

CHAPTER V.

¹ *The harm of inconsideration.* ³ *The end of the wicked is misery.*
⁶ *God is to be regarded in affliction.* ¹⁷ *The happy end of God's correction.*

- 1 **C**ALL now, if there be any that will answer thee;
 and to which of the saints wilt thou ² turn? ² Or, look?
- 2 For wrath killeth the foolish man,
 and ³ envy slayeth the silly one. ³ Or, indignation.
- 3 ^a I have seen the foolish taking root:
 but suddenly I cursed his habitation. ^a Ps. 37. 35, 36. Jer. 12. 2, 3.
- 4 ^b His children are far from safety,
 and they are crushed in the gate, ^c neither is ^c there any to deliver them. ^b Ps. 119. 155. & 127. 5. ^c Ps. 109. 12.
- 5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,
 and taketh it even out of the thorns,
 and ^d the robber swalloweth up their substance. ^d ch. 18. 9.
- 6 Although ⁴ affliction cometh not forth of the ⁴ Or, iniquity.
 dust,

21. The first half of this verse in the original is metaphorical. "Is not the cord of their tent torn away?" so that the tent, i. e. the tabernacle of the body, collapses at once. The latter is literal, "they die, without (having learnt) wisdom."

With this verse ends the utterance of the spiritual vision; and the latter half of this section (in the next chapter) applies the doctrine covertly to Job's case.

In the lesson of the vision itself there is a profound truth, which the fuller self-knowledge of the New Testament expresses even more clearly, that "no flesh is justified before God." But it does not contain the whole truth, supplied in Ps. cxxx. 4: "There is forgiveness with Thee: that Thou mayest be feared;" and the consequence is that it simply humbles the soul without stirring it to faith and energy. In the New Testament the sternest enforcements of the sin and helplessness of man are always closely connected with the brightest promises of salvation. Thus ch. vii. of the Epistle to the Romans leads on to ch. viii.

CHAPTER V.

1. "Unto which of the saints," i. e. the Angels or holy ones. So in Ps. lxxxix. 5, 7. Dan. iv. 13, 23.

2. The reference is to the tone of Job's speech. "Wrath," that is, sullenness, chafing against God's will, "slays the fool:" "Envy," that is, the longing for any lot but his own, "destroys the silly one." Neither man nor angel can save him.

3—7. The allusion to Job's case becomes more distinct, though still slightly veiled. The death of his children is alluded to; but with vari-

- neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;
 7 yet man is ^eborn unto ²trouble,—as ³the sparks fly upward.
- 8 ¶ I would seek unto God,—and unto God would I commit my cause :
- 9 ^fwhich doeth great things ⁴and unsearchable ; marvellous things ⁵without number :
- 10 ^gwho giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the ⁶fields :
- 11 ^hto set up on high those that be low ; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.
- 12 ⁱHe disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands ⁷cannot perform *their* enterprise.
- 13 ^kHe taketh the wise in their own craftiness : and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.
- 14 ^lThey ⁸meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.
- 15 But ^mhe saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.
- ^e Gen. 3. 17, 18, 19. ¹ Cor. 10. 13. ² Or, labour. ³ Heb. *the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly.* ^f ch. 9. 10. & 37. 5. Ps. 40. 5. & 72. 18. & 145. 3. ^g Rom. 11. 33. ^h Heb. *and there is no search.* ⁱ Heb. *till there be no number.* ^j ch. 28. 26. Ps. 65. 9, 10. & 147. 8. Jer. 5. 24. & 10. 13. & 51. 16. Acts 14. 17. ^k Heb. *outplaces.* ^l 1 Sam. 2. 7. Ps. 113. 7. ^m Neh. 4. 15. Ps. 33. 10. Isai. 8. 10. ⁿ Or, *cannot perform any thing.* ^o Ps. 9. 15. 1 Cor. 3. 19. 1 Deut. 28. 29. Isai. 59. 10. Amos 8. 9. ^p Or, *run into.* ^q Ps. 35. 10.

ation, for “**crushed in the gate**” means condemned in the courts of justice held in the gate (see ch. xxxi. 21. Ps. cxxvii. 5. 2 Sam. xix. 8.). The loss of his substance is glanced at ; but again it is the hungry, who steal it even through the hedge of thorns, and the robber (or rather the ensnarer) who swallows it up by craft. The insinuation of evil against him is clenched by the declaration that “affliction and trouble spring “not up,” causelessly and inscrutably, as by some physical law, “out of “the dust.” “It is man who is born” (by his sinful nature) “to trouble, “as surely as the sparks fly upward.”

8—27. This last section of the speech of Eliphaz, is in itself singularly beautiful and entirely true as to the two principles involved—the wisdom of trust in the Almighty and His blessing of the penitent. For that very reason it provokes Job by its unjust and gratuitous imputation to him of evil-doing, and its assumption of the question at issue, that temporal blessing must always go with God’s favour.

8. The “I” is emphatic. “If I were in thy place, I would commit “my cause unto God.” The idea is that of Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6 : “Commit “thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him. . . . He shall bring forth “thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.”

9—16. Eliphaz starts with the sense of the unsearchable and marvellous providence of God. He then proceeds, first, to refer to His gift of temporal blessings, of which the rain is to him naturally a type (see

JOB, V.

- 16 ⁿ So the poor hath hope,—and iniquity stoppeth ⁿ 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Ps. 107. 42.
her mouth.
- 17 ^o Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth : o Ps. 94. 12.
Prov. 3. 11. 12.
Heb. 12. 5.
Jam. 1. 12.
Rev. 3. 19.
therefore despise not thou the chastening of
the Almighty :
- 18 ^p for he maketh sore, and bindeth up : p Deut. 32. 39.
1 Sam. 2. 6.
Isai. 30. 26.
Hos. 6. 1.
he woundeth, and his hands make whole.
- 19 ^q He shall deliver thee in six troubles : q Ps. 34. 19.
& 91. 3.
Prov. 24. 16.
1 Cor. 10. 13.
yea, in seven ^r there shall no evil touch thee.
- 20 ^s In famine he shall redeem thee from death : r Ps. 91. 10.
s Ps. 33. 19.
& 37. 19.
and in war ² from the power of the sword.
- 21 ^t Thou shalt be hid ³ from the scourge of the 2 Heb. from
the hands.
t Ps. 31. 20.
tongue :
neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when
it cometh. 3 Or, when
the tongue
scourgeth.
- 22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh :
^u neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of u Isai. 11. 9.
& 35. 9.
& 65. 25.
Ezek. 34. 25.
the earth.
- 23 ^x For thou shalt be in league with the stones x Ps. 91. 12.
Hos. 2. 18.
of the field :
and the beasts of the field shall be at peace
with thee.
- 24 And thou shalt know ⁴ that thy tabernacle 4 Or, that
peace is thy
tabernacle.
shall be in peace ;

Ps. lxx. 9, 10 ; civ. 10—13. Acts xiv. 17.), as intended to exalt the humble and the mourners. Contrast with this our Lord's declaration (Matt. v. 45.) : " He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, " and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." Next he goes on to tell (as in the song of Hannah and the *Magnificat*) how He turns the wisdom of the crafty into foolishness, and so saves the helpless and stops the mouth of iniquity (comp. Ps. cvii. 41, 42.). There is a sting here ; for there must be covert reference to Job, else the whole is irrelevant.

17, 18. These verses are closely parallel to the famous passage in Proverbs (ch. iii. 11, 12.) quoted in Heb. xii. 5, 6 : " My son, despise not " thou the chastening of the Lord," &c., and to Hos. vi. 1 : " He hath " torn, and He will heal us ; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." It is difficult to suppose that there is no connection between the two ; and this passage looks undoubtedly like the original.

19—26. The promises are full and distinctive. Safety from man—from violence of hand and " scourge of tongue ;" safety from physical evils—from pestilence, famine, the barrenness of the earth, and beasts of the field ; then, positive blessings—peace, plenty, fruitfulness of offspring, fulness of life and quiet death. There is a singular calmness and beauty of style, corresponding to the subject, and a half-suggested contrast at all points with Job's present lot, which is meant to be persuasive to repentance.

JOB, VI.

- and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt
not ² sin.
- ² Or, *err.*
⁷ Ps. 112. 2. 25 Thou shalt know also that ^v thy seed *shall be*
³ great,
³ Or, *much.*
² Ps. 72. 16. and thine offspring ² as the grass of the earth.
- ^a Prov. 9. 11. & 10. 27. 26 ^a Thou shalt come to *thy* grave in a full age,
⁴ Heb. like as a shock of corn ⁴ cometh in in his season.
- ^a *ascendeth.*
^b Ps. 111. 2. 27 Lo this, we have ^b searched it, so it *is* ;
⁵ Heb. hear it, and know thou *it* ⁵ for thy good.
for thyself,
Prov. 9. 12.

CHAPTER VI.

¹ Job sheweth that his complaints are not causeless. ⁸ He wisheth for death, wherein he is assured of comfort. ¹⁴ He reproveth his friends of unkindness.

- 1 **B**UT Job answered and said,
2 O that my grief were thoroughly
weighed,
and my calamity ² laid in the balances together!
- ² Heb. *lifted up.*

24. "Shalt not sin." Neither the text nor the margin is here correct. It should be "thou shalt miss nothing;" thy cup shall be full to the brim. The whole speech (like many passages in the Prophets and Psalms) describes what should be (so to speak) the natural course of things. The man who rests on God has the true centre of life; the self-wise and self-righteous, being out of harmony with the true law of life, must come to shame; the outward blessing and inward peace should come from obedience to the Creator, the Sustainer of all things. The error of Eliphaz, in applying this principle to human life as it is, lies, first, in ignoring the actual power of evil in the world (of which the malice of Satan here is the type), and, next, in supposing that the whole scope of retribution is on this side of the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

Chh. vi. and vii. contain Job's rejoinder to the first remonstrance of his friends. It is chiefly a justification of his lamentation, a reiteration of his longing for the release of death, and a remonstrance against the heaviness and unceasing oppressiveness of God's hand over him. The implied accusation of Eliphaz he hardly deigns to touch, except by a severe and touching reproach of the treachery of his friends. But it obviously embitters his sorrow, and drives it nearer to presumptuous complaint against God.

The speech is rightly divided by the chapters. In ch. vi. we have (a) (vv. 1—7.), a denial that his lamentation is excessive, considering his suffering; (b) (vv. 8—13.), a prayer for death, on the ground that life is hopeless and helpless; (c) (vv. 14—30.), a bitter reproach to his friends, first, in metaphor, comparing them to brooks dried up in summer, just when need is sorest, next directly, taunting them with refusing him even the cheap offering of sympathy, and challenging them to really righteous judgment. In ch. vii. he turns wholly to God; (a) (vv. 1—10.), lays before Him his unbearable suffering, and the speedy passing away of man into nothingness; then (b) (vv. 11—21.), pleads against

JOB, VI.

- 3 For now it would be heavier ^a than the sand of ^a Prov. 27. 3.
the sea :
therefore ² my words are swallowed up.
- 4 ^b For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me,
the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit :
^c the terrors of God do set themselves in array
against me.
- 5 Doth the wild ass bray ³ when he hath grass ? ³ Heb.
or loweth the ox over his fodder ? ^{at grass.}
- 6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt ?
or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg ?
- 7 The things *that* my soul refused to touch *are* as
my sorrowful meat.
- 8 ¶ O that I might have my request ;
and that God would grant *me* ⁴ the thing that I ⁴ Heb. *my*
long for ! ^{expectation.}
- 9 Even ^d that it would please God to destroy me ; ^d 1 Kin. 19. 4.
that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off !
- 10 Then should I yet have comfort ;
yea, I would harden myself in sorrow : let him
not spare ;
for ^e I have not concealed the words of ^f the ^e Acts 20. 20.
Holy One. ^f Lev. 19. 2.
Isai. 57. 15.
Hos. 11. 9.

the severity and watchfulness of His judgment of such a being as man, and asks why, if he has sinned, his sin should not be done away.

3. "My words are swallowed up." The best rendering is "my words are rash," or, "idle" (as in the Greek Version), wandering in the delirium of pain (see ver. 26.).

5, 6. The sense of these verses is simply, "What natural and instinctive complaint is without a cause? It is either the sharp cry of hunger for the good that we have not, or the duller loathing of disgust for the weariness that we have."

7. The metaphor of the preceding verses is carried on. "So my soul revolteth at these things; they are as loathsomeness in my food." So Ps. xlii. 3: "My tears have been my meat day and night." Similarly Ps. lxxx. 5.

10 is unfortunately mistranslated, so as entirely to lose the true sense, which is—

"Then should it still be my comfort—

"I could exult in this ruthless pain—

"That I had not renounced the words of the Holy One."

The words are singularly pathetic. Job trusts that he has not yet denied God, and knows that in this is the true comfort of sorrow; but if death comes not soon, he distrusts his own power to endure. "He is not wood, "he is not stone, but man" (see ver. 12.).

JOB, VI.

- 11 What *is* my strength, that I should hope?
and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong
my life?
- ² Heb. *brasen?* 12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones?—or *is*
my flesh ² of brass?
- 13 *Is* not my help in me?—and is wisdom driven
quite from me?
- ³ Heb. *To him that melteth.*
⁴ Prov. 17. 17. 14 ¶ ³ ⁵ To him that is afflicted pity *should be shewed*
from his friend;
but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
- ⁵ Ps. 38. 11. & 41. 9. 15 ^h My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
¹ Jer. 15. 18. *and* ¹ as the stream of brooks they pass away;
16 which are blackish by reason of the ice,
and wherein the snow is hid:
17 what time they wax warm, ⁴ they vanish:
⁵ when it is hot, they are ⁶ consumed out of
⁶ Heb. *extinguished.* their place.
- ⁷ Gen. 25. 15. 18 The paths of their way are turned aside;
they go to nothing, and perish.
- ¹ Kin. 10. 1. ¹ Ps. 72. 10. ¹ Ezek. 27. 22, 23. 19 The troops of ^k Tema looked,
the companies of ¹ Sheba waited for them.
- ^m Jer. 14. 3. 20 They were ^m confounded because they had
⁷ Or, *For now ye are like to them.*
⁷ Heb. *to it.* hoped;
they came thither, and were ashamed.
- ⁿ ch. 13. 4. 21 ⁷ For now ⁿ ye are ⁸ nothing;
⁸ Heb. *not.* ye see *my* casting down, and ^o are afraid.
^o Ps. 38. 11.

11. "That I should prolong my life." Rather, "that I should be long suffering in patience."

13. A negative is here omitted. "Is not helplessness in me?" or (as some render), "Is not my inner help departed?" "Is not wisdom?" &c.

14. "But he forsaketh," &c. It should be, "Lest he forsake," &c. The idea of the passage is that the pity and sympathy of man suggest the mercy of God; (as in the *Christian Year, Ash-Wednesday*), "They love us; will not God forgive?"

15—20. The metaphor of these verses is worked out with a vividness and fulness natural in a land where water is a priceless boon. The torrent rushes down in winter, darkened by melting ice and swollen by the snow; but in summer, when it is needed, the caravans turn aside to seek it in vain; they come to where it should be, and gaze in blank despair on its dry bed.

18. This verse, as it stands in our translation, refers to the torrent, wasting its waters in a devious course, in which they are soon dried up. Many modern translations (by a slight difference in the Hebrew vowel points) render—

"The caravans turn out of their way;
"They pass into the waste and perish."

JOB, VII.

- 22 Did I say, Bring unto me?
or, Give a reward for me of your substance?
- 23 or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand?
or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?
- 24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue:
and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
- 25 How forcible are right words!
but what doth your arguing reprove?
- 26 Do ye imagine to reprove words,
and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are as wind?*
- 27 Yea, ² ye overwhelm the fatherless,
and ye ^P dig a pit for your friend.
- 28 Now therefore be content, look upon me;
for *it is* ³ evident unto you if I lie.
- 29 ^a Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity;
yea, return again, my righteousness *is* ⁴ in it.
- 30 Is there iniquity in my tongue?
cannot ⁵ my taste discern perverse things?

² Heb.
ye cause to fall upon.
^P Ps. 57. 6.

³ Heb. *before your face.*
^q ch. 17. 10.

⁴ That is, *in this matter.*

⁵ Heb.
my palate,
ch. 12. 11.
& 34. 3.

CHAPTER VII.

¹ Job excuseth his desire of death. ¹² He complaineth of his own restlessness, ¹⁷ and God's watchfulness.

1 **I**S there not ^{2 a} an appointed time to man upon earth?

² Or,
a warfare.
^a ch. 14. 5, 13,
14. Ps. 39. 4.

22, 23 are bitterly sarcastic. Job asks no solid gift, no real sacrifice from them. He asks but sympathy, and yet has it not.

24—30 challenge his friends to give grounds for their insinuations; instead of carping at the ravings of sorrow, to look him in the face, if they dare, and convict him of a lie.

26. "Which are as wind." Rather, "which are but spoken to the wind," and "scattered into empty air." Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 9: "Ye shall speak into the air."

27. Properly—

"Ye would cast lots for the orphan;

"Ye would make merchandise of your friend."

28, 29. The original is much more forcible—

"Come! be content to look on me;

"See whether I lie to your face.

"Turn to me; let there be no injustice done.

"Turn to me; there is righteousness in my cause."

CHAPTER VII.

1—6 excuse Job's desire of death, as in itself the evening after "the burden and heat of the day," and to him a rest from intolerable restlessness of pain.

1. "An appointed time" of service, generally (as in margin) of

JOB, VII.

*Are not his days also like the days of an hire-
ling?*

- ² Heb. *gapeth after.* 2 As a servant ² earnestly desireth the shadow,
and as an hireling looketh for *the reward* of
his work :
- ^b See ch. 29. 2. 3 so am I made to possess ^b months of vanity,
and wearisome nights are appointed to me.
- ^c Deut. 28. 67.
ch. 17. 12.
³ Heb. *the evening be measured?* 4 ^c When I lie down, I say,
When shall I arise, and ³ the night be gone?
And I am full of tossings to and fro
unto the dawning of the day.
- ^d Isai. 14. 11. 5 My flesh is ^d clothed with worms and clods of
dust ;
my skin is broken, and become loathsome.
- ^e ch. 9. 25.
& 16. 22.
& 17. 11.
Ps. 90. 6.
& 102. 11.
& 103. 15.
& 144. 4.
Isai. 38. 12.
& 40. 6.
Jam. 4. 14.
^f Ps. 78. 39.
& 89. 47.
⁴ Heb. *shall not return.* 6 ^e My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
and are spent without hope.
- ⁵ to see, that is, to enjoy.
^g ch. 20. 9.
⁶ That is, I can live no longer.
^h 2 Sam. 12. 23. 7 O remember that ^f my life *is* wind :
mine eye ⁴ shall no more ⁵ see good.
- 8 ^g The eye of him that hath seen me shall see
me no *more* :
thine eyes *are* upon me, and ⁶ I *am* not.
- 9 *As* the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away :
so ^h he that goeth down to the grave shall come
up no *more*.

warfare, but comparison with ver. 2 rather suggests the service of day labour, longing for the "shadow" of evening.

3. "Months of vanity" (comp. the use of "months" in xxix. 2.), that is, "times of emptiness or unsatisfied craving," corresponding to the "wearisome nights" below. Both are explained in ver. 4. We might rather expect the word "days:" but perhaps the word "months" is suggested by the long time already past in Job's suffering.

4. Comp. Deut. xxviii. 67: "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were evening! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!" But here, as always in sickness, it is the night which is the chief burden.

5 describes with terrible accuracy the symptoms of leprosy. The sores of the skin breed maggots, and dry into hard lumps; then these burst with virulent discharge, and the skin comes off in patches.

7—10 excuse his pleading with God while he lives, before the darkness and forgetfulness of death come upon him.

9. "To the grave," properly to *Sheol* or *Hades* (the "hell" of the Apostles' Creed), the shadowy abode of departed spirits. So in Gen. xxxvii. 35. Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 55. Rev. xx. 13, &c. The idea is not that the spirit is absolutely destroyed, but that it can never return to earth; the conception of another world is vague and even dreary, but it is still a real conception. Compare the gloomier passages of the

JOB, VII.

- 10 He shall return no more to his house,
ⁱ neither shall his place know him any more. i ch. 8. 18.
& 20. 9.
Ps. 103. 16.
- 11 ¶ Therefore I will ^k not refrain my mouth ;
 I will speak in the anguish of my spirit ;
 I will ^l complain in the bitterness of my soul. k Ps. 39. 1, 9.
& 40. 9.
l 1 Sam. 1. 10.
ch. 10. 1.
- 12 *Am* I a sea, or a whale,—that thou settest a
 watch over me ?
- 13 ^m When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
 my couch shall ease my complaint ; m ch. 9. 27.
- 14 then thou scarest me with dreams,
 and terrifiest me through visions :
- 15 so that my soul chooseth strangling,
and death rather ² than my life. 2 Heb. *than*
my bones.
- 16 ⁿ I loathe *it* ; I would not live alway :
^o let me alone ; for ^p my days *are* vanity. n ch. 10. 1.
o ch. 10. 20.
& 14. 6.
Ps. 39. 13.
- 17 ^q What *is* man, that thou shouldst magnify
 him ? p Ps. 62. 9.
q Ps. 8. 4.
& 144. 3.
Heb. 2. 6.
 And that thou shouldst set thine heart upon
 him ?
- 18 And *that* thou shouldst visit him every morning,
and try him every moment ?
- 19 How long wilt thou not depart from me,
 nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle ?

Psalms (as in Ps. lxxxviii. 12, “the dark” and the “land of forgetfulness”). The comparison to the cloud dispersed shews that the reference is to the spirit in Sheol, not to the body in the grave.

11—21 contain Job's remonstrance with God, hard to defend against the charge of presumption, but springing still from the idea of true faith, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” Therefore we find hereafter that it is pardoned and answered.

12. “Am I a sea, or a monster of the deep?” A sea that must be “bounded by a perpetual decree, Thus far, and no further”—a monster to be watched and driven back, lest he ravage the land. Some interpreters, considering the many references to Egypt, apply the word “sea” to the Nile, and the word “monster” to the crocodile.

15. “Strangling,” i.e. the suffocation of disease. “My life,” properly “my bones” (see margin), this mere skeleton of my old self.

17, 18. This verse stands in remarkable contrast with the “What is ‘man?’” of Ps. viii. 4 ; cxliv. 3. Man's littleness is there the ground of wondering thankfulness for God's blessing and love of man ; here of remonstrance that God should think it worth while to judge and to punish him. There is a slight tinge of the same sense of the awfulness of God's constant presence and watchful eye in Ps. cxxxix. 7—13, but there entirely subordinate to higher thoughts.

19. “Till I swallow down my spittle.” A homely metaphor, to us almost grotesque, to express momentary action.

JOB, VIII.

- c Ps. 36. 6. 20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, ^r O
 thou preserver of men?
s ch. 16. 12.
 Ps. 21. 12.
 Lam. 3. 12. Why ^a hast thou set me as a mark against thee,
 so that I am a burden to myself?
 21 And why dost thou not pardon my trans-
 gression,
 and take away mine iniquity?
 For now shall I sleep in the dust;
 and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I
shall not be.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Bildad sheweth God's justice in dealing with men according to their works. 8 He allegeth antiquity to prove the certain destruction of the hypocrite. 20 He applieth God's just dealing to Job.*

- 1 **T**HEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and
 said,
 2 How long wilt thou speak these *things*?
 And *how long shall* the words of thy mouth
be like a strong wind?
a Gen. 18. 25.
 Deut. 32. 4.
 2 Chr. 19. 7.
 ch. 34. 12, 17.
 Dan. 9. 14.
 Rom. 3. 5. 3 ^aDoth God pervert judgment?
 or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

20. "O preserver of men," probably "O watcher of men," with the double idea of providence and of judgment. "A mark against thee," i. e. for the arrows of Thy wrath (see vi. 4.).

20, 21 introduce another thought, which is more fully worked out hereafter. Job denies that he has sinned according to human standards. He grants that before God's perfect judgment he is a sinner: but why should his sin be so heavily visited? Is there not mercy as well as justice in God? Surely "He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are but dust" (Ps. ciii. 14.). In the question there is a gleam of the hope to be fulfilled hereafter.

The whole of the chapter shews how vividly Holy Scripture recognises the restlessness of human sorrow, and pardons the intensity of our wonder that God permits it to darken the lives of His children.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ch. viii. carries on the remonstrance by the mouth of Bildad. Job had passed by the veiled accusation of Eliphaz, Bildad puts it plainly; Job had spoken in despondency, Bildad dwells on the certainty of his hope, if he be righteous; Job had remonstrated with God, Bildad declares such remonstrance an impiety.

The speech has three parts—(a) vv. 2—7. a plain declaration that Job's children have drawn down judgment which is final, and a hardly less plain assumption, that Job has so sinned, but with room for repentance; (b) vv. 8—19. an appeal to the ancient traditions, conveying in various metaphors the short-lived happiness of the wicked; (c) vv. 20—22. the application to Job's case, "If innocent, thou shalt live; if guilty, die." The style is simpler and more concise, the tone harsher and less persuasive

JOB, VIII.

- 4 If ^b thy children have sinned against him,
and he have cast them away ² for their trans-
gression ;
- 5 ^o if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes,
and make thy supplication to the Almighty ;
- 6 if thou *wert* pure and upright ;
surely now he would awake for thee,
and make the habitation of thy righteousness
prosperous.
- 7 Though thy beginning was small,
yet thy latter end should greatly increase.
- 8 ¶ ^d For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, ^d Deut. 4. 32.
and prepare thyself to the search of their ^d 32. 7.
fathers : ^d ch. 15. 18.
- 9 (For ^o we *are but of* yesterday, and know ³ nothing, ^o Gen. 47. 9.
because our days upon earth *are* a shadow :) ¹ Chron. 29.
15. ch. 7. 6.
- 10 shall not they teach thee, *and* tell thee,
and utter words out of their heart ? ^{Ps.} 39. 5.
& 102. 11.
& 144. 4.
- 11 Can the rush grow up without mire ?
Can the flag grow without water ? ³ Heb. *not*.
- 12 ^f Whilst it *is* yet in his greenness, *and* not cut ^f Ps. 129. 6.
down, ^f Jer. 17. 6.
it withereth before any *other* herb.

than that of Eliphaz. Except in directness of application, the speech adds nothing to what Eliphaz had said.

4. "And He have," &c. It should be, "Then He has given them "into the hands of their iniquity," suffered their sin to avenge itself on them. The watchful anxiety of Job over his children, lest their festivity should misguide them (see ch. i. 5.), may have suggested to Bildad this distinction between them and him.

5—7. These verses contain the whole theory and object of the three friends. They urge Job, first to prayer, that is, to submissive faith, then to uprightness, that is, as the context implies, to amendment ; they promise that, on these conditions, his latter end shall be greater and better than his beginning.

8—10. The appeal to antiquity is significant. The theory of the friends is the first and simplest theory, resting on the fundamental idea of retribution ; Job's conviction represents the sad "second thoughts" of one who has felt that life is not simple and easy : the final truth, embracing both, is yet to come. It has been remarked that this appeal to antiquity wears a distinctively Egyptian garb.

11. The "rush" is the papyrus, used only in relation to Egypt (Exod. ii. 3. Isa. xviii. 2 ; xxxv. 7.) ; the "flag," a more general word for all Nile grass, is found also in Gen. xli. 2 (where our Version has "a meadow"). Both words appear to have a Coptic, not a Hebrew, etymology, and so to mark an Egyptian proverb.

- 13 So *are* the paths of all that forget God ;
and the ^g hypocrite's hope shall perish :
- 14 whose hope shall be cut off,
and whose trust *shall be* ² a spider's web.
- 15 ^h He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not
stand :
he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.
- 16 He *is* green before the sun,
and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.
- 17 His roots are wrapped about the heap,
and seeth the place of stones.
- 18 ⁱ If he destroy him from his place,
then *it* shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen
thee.
- 19 Behold, this *is* the joy of his way,
and ^k out of the earth shall others grow.
- 20 ¶ Behold, God will not cast away a perfect *man*,
neither will he ³ help the evil doers :
- 21 till he fill thy mouth with laughing,—and thy
lips with ⁴ rejoicing.
- 22 They that hate thee shall be ¹ clothed with
shame ;
and the dwellingplace of the wicked ⁵ shall come
to nought.

^g ch. 11. 20.
& 18. 14.
& 27. 8.
Ps. 112. 10.
Prov. 10. 23.
² Heb.
*a spider's
house.*
Isai. 59. 5, 6.
^h ch. 27. 18.

ⁱ ch. 7. 10.
& 20. 9.
Ps. 37. 36.

^k Ps. 113. 7.

³ Heb. *take
the ungodly
by the hand.*

⁴ Heb. *shout-
ing for joy.*

¹ Ps. 35. 26.
& 109. 21.

⁵ Heb.
shall not be.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Job, acknowledging God's justice, sheweth there is no contending with him.* 22 *Man's innocency is not to be condemned by afflictions.*

I **T**HEN Job answered and said,
2 I know *it is* so of a truth :
but how should ^a man be just ² with God ?

^a Ps. 143. 2.
Rom. 3. 20.

² Or,
before God ?

14, 15. The metaphor here is changed ; man's life is like a spider's web, and his struggles against fate like the insect's attempts to support itself by the web, and hold it together when broken. Comp. Isa. lix. 5, 6.

16—19 return to the metaphor of vegetable growth, but with change from the slender frail rush to the deep-rooted stately tree, emblem of a prosperity which might hope to defy change, but which is uprooted in a moment. Such is the end of "the joy of his way ;" his place shall know him no more. Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36.

20—22 profess a belief in Job's essential uprightness, but with an undercurrent of warning, if it be unreal.

CHAPTER IX.

Chh. ix. and x. shew how the still ruder injustice of Bildad rouses Job's soul to doubt, rebelliousness, despair, against God, or, at least, against the belief which so justifies God. His answer opens (a) (ch. ix.

- 3 If he will contend with him,
he cannot answer him one of a thousand.
- 4 ^b *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength :* ^b ch. 36. 5.
who hath hardened *himself* against him, and
hath prospered ?
- 5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know
not :
which overturneth them in his anger.
- 6 Which ^c shaketh the earth out of her place,
and ^d the pillars thereof tremble.
- 7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not ;
and sealeth up the stars.
- 8 ^e Which alone spreadeth out the heavens,
and treadeth upon the ² waves of the sea.
- 9 ^f Which maketh ³ Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, ³
and the chambers of the south.

^c Isa. 2. 19, 21.
Hag. 2. 6, 21.
Heb. 12. 26.
^d ch. 26. 11.
^e Gen. 1. 6.
Ps. 104. 2, 3.
² Heb.
heights.
^f Gen. 1. 16.
ch. 38. 31, &c.
Amos 5. 8.
Heb.
*Ash, Cesil,
and Cimah.*

2—20.) with a full acknowledgment of the Almightyness of God, and the impossibility of man's standing up to defy or question His will; but it declares (21—24.) that in that Almighty Power He destroys righteous and wicked alike; for if it is not He, who is it? Next (b), (vv. 25—35.) he goes on to speak of the uselessness of striving to be pure in God's sight, and of his longing for a "Daysman" between man and God, to whom man might dare to plead. (c) Then (ch. x.) he turns again to God, praying to know the reason of his suffering. Can it be that God judges as man judges, ruthlessly and despotically? (vv. 3—7.) Can it be that He has made man and endowed him with all his gifts, only to condemn him, whether he seem to himself guilty or guiltless? (vv. 8—17.) Why, if so, should he have been born? Why should he not have a gleam of comfort before the darkness—the thick darkness of the grave? (vv. 18—22.) Job boldly and sadly fronts all the perplexities of life; and shews how little the commonplaces of his friends explain them, urging that the fact of God's greatness and man's littleness does not take away the obligation of His righteousness to the creature who is what He made him. The faith in this last truth, troubled and even presumptuous in its inferences, is yet "the thing that is right" as to God, which He approves at last (ch. xlii. 7.).

3. "One of a thousand." Once (that is) in a thousand times.

5—8 trace simply the power of God over earth and sky and sea; vv. 9—11. add to this the inscrutable wisdom of His laws and His providence; and vv. 12, 13 dwell on His irresistible judgment.

9. "Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades" (see ch. xxxviii. 31, 32 and Amos v. 8, "the seven stars and Orion"). The Hebrew word for Arcturus is uncertain in derivation; some take it for "Lion;" others for a "bier" and mourners following. For Orion the word is "the fool-hardy" (the same idea as in the Greek name, of a giant madly defying God). For the "Pleiades" the word is a "cluster," describing their appearance in the sky. The constellations chosen are naturally prominent, Arcturus as marking the North, and as all but unchangeable in

JOB, IX.

- ^g ch. 5. 9. Ps. 71. 15. 10 ^g Which doeth great things past finding out ;
yea, and wonders without number.
- ^h ch. 23. 8, 9. & 35. 14. 11 ^h Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not :
he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
- ⁱ Isai. 45. 9. Jer. 18. 6. Rom. 9. 20. 12 ⁱ Behold, he taketh away, ² who can hinder him ?
Who will say unto him, What doest thou ?
- ² Heb. *who can turn him away ?* ch. 11. 10. 13 *If* God will not withdraw his anger,
^k the ³ proud helpers do stoop under him.
- ^k ch. 26. 12. Isai. 30. 7. 14 How much less shall I answer him,
and choose out my words *to reason* with him ?
- ³ Heb. *helpers of pride, or, strength.* 15 ¹ Whom, though I were righteous, *yet* would I
not answer,
but I would make supplication to my judge.
- 16 If I had called, and he had answered me ;
yet would I not believe that he had hearkened
unto my voice.
- ^m ch. 2. 3. & 34. 6. 17 For he breaketh me with a tempest,
and multiplieth my wounds ^m without cause.
- 18 He will not suffer me to take my breath,
but filleth me with bitterness.
- 19 If *I speak* of strength, lo, *he is* strong :
and if of judgment, who shall set me a time *to*
plead ?
- 20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me :
if I say, I *am* perfect, it shall also prove me
perverse.

its position, Orion as the vastest of constellations, and the Pleiades as the stars of navigation. The "chambers of the south" are the hidden regions of the southern sky, unseen in the northern hemisphere.

13. "The proud helpers," properly, "the helpers of Rahab (pride)." Rahab, as a proper name, is used for "Egypt" (Ps. lxxxvii. 4 ; lxxxix. 10.) ; and in one place joined with "the Dragon" (see Isa. li. 9.), the emblem of subtlety and enmity against God. Comp. iii. 8. The phrase, therefore, may be general, the "helpers of pride ;" but probably there is allusion to some legendary impersonation of the powers of evil, possibly represented in some constellation.

15—18 are words indicating unwarrantable doubt of the absolute righteousness of God, wrung from Job by his suffering and the unjustifiable insinuations of his friends. Clearly they must be among the things of which Job afterwards declares his repentance.

19. The true sense seems to be—

"If I ask of strength—(God answers) 'It is I' (who am strong) ;

"If of judgment—'Who can challenge Me?'"

20. The meaning is that Job's tongue would falter and so condemn him before the awfulness of God.

JOB, IX.

- 21 ¶ *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul :*
I would despise my life.
- 22 *This is one thing, therefore I said it,*
ⁿ he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. n Eccles. 9.
2, 3.
Ezek. 21. 3.
- 23 If the scourge slay suddenly,
he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.
- 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked :
^o he covereth the faces of the judges thereof ;
if not, where, *and who is he ?* o 2 Sam. 15.
30. & 19. 4.
Jer. 14. 4.
- 25 ¶ Now ^p my days are swifter than a post :
they flee away, they see no good. P ch. 7. 6, 7.
- 26 They are passed away as the ²³ swift ships :
^q as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey. 2 Heb. *ships of desire.*
3 Or, *ships of Ebel.*
- 27 ^r If I say, I will forget my complaint,
I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort ^r
myself : q Hab. 1. 8.
r ch. 7. 13.
- 28 ^s I am afraid of all my sorrows,
I know that thou ^t wilt not hold me innocent. s Ps. 119. 120.
t Ex. 20. 7.
- 29 *If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain ?*
- 30 ^u If I wash myself with snow water,
and make my hands never so clean ; u Jer. 2. 22.

21 is really an assertion, "I am innocent, yet I know not myself," (i.e. am bewildered), and "care not for life."

22. "This is one thing," i.e. "It is all one." So Eccles. ix. 2 : "All things come alike to all ; there is one event to the righteous and the wicked." The trial of Job was felt by the Psalmist, but he "went into the sanctuary "of the Lord" (Ps. lxxiii. 17.), and there gained light in his darkness.

23, 24. Ver. 23 refers to the indiscriminate action of physical scourges ; ver. 24 to the triumph of moral evil ; and draw the terrible inference that God cares not for the trial of men's faith in the one, and bewilders conscience in the other. For Job asks, "If it be not God Who does this, "Who is it?" and so touches the mystery of mysteries—the permission of suffering and evil under an all-righteous and all-loving God.

25—28. Job passes next to the fleeting character of his days (of prosperity), passing like the swift runner ("a post") or the light ships of reed (see margin, "ships of Ebel,") or the flight of the eagle—types of swiftness in earth and sea and sky. They are gone, and now his sorrow and terror allow him no gleam of comfort for heaviness.

29—31 express the despairing feeling that, since man can in no case stand before God's searching judgment, it is useless to strive for a righteousness which differs only from unrighteousness in degree, and is proved before God to be foulness.

30. "Never so clean" should be "clean with soap," i.e. potash (see Jer. ii, 22, and the Hebrew of Isa. i. 25.).

- 2 Or, *make me to be abhorred.*
 3 Eccles. 6. 10. Isai. 45. 9. Jer. 49. 19. Rom. 9. 20.
 4 ver. 19. 1 Sam. 2. 25.
 5 Heb. *one that should argue.*
 6 Or, *umpire.*
 7 ch. 13. 20, 21, 22. & 33. 7. Ps. 31. 10.
 8 Heb. *but I am not so with myself.*
- 31 yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch,
 and mine own clothes shall ² abhor me.
 32 For ^x *he is* not a man, as I *am*, that I should
 answer him,
 and we should come together in judgment.
 33 ^y Neither is there ³ any ⁴ daysman betwixt us,
 that might lay his hand upon us both.
 34 ^z Let him take his rod away from me,
 and let not his fear terrify me :
 35 *then* would I speak, and not fear him ;—⁵ but *it*
 is not so with me.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Job, taking liberty of complaint, expostulateth with God about his afflictions. 18 He complaineth of life, and craveth a little ease before death.*

- a 1 Kin. 19. 4. ch. 7. 16. Jonah 4. 3, 8.
 2 Or, *cut off while I live.*
 b ch. 7. 11.
- 1 **M**Y ^a soul is ² weary of my life ;
 I will leave my complaint upon myself ;
^b I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
 2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me ;
 shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.
 3 *Is it* good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress,
 that thou shouldst despise ³ the work of thine
 hands,
 and shine upon the counsel of the wicked ?
 4 Hast thou eyes of flesh ?—or ^c seest thou as man
 seeth ?

31. The idea is that Job is plunged naked in the mire, till his own clothes refuse again to clothe one so foul.

32—35 express the longing for a “Daysman,” that is, an arbiter between God and man, before whom man could plead without terror. (Several MSS. and Versions read even more expressly, for “Neither is there a Daysman,” “O that there were a Daysman!”) This does not grasp that full idea of the Mediator, which is naturally suggested to us by such passages ; but it is a rudimentary indication of the need, which only a true Mediator can supply (in this respect not unlike the request of Israel at Sinai, Deut. v. 24—29.), by implying at once the sense that we ought to face God’s judgment, and yet cannot face it alone in our own strength. The thought leads us on to our Lord’s own declaration (St. John v. 27.) : The Father “hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” Human life being what it is, the Law of God’s Providence, by its very severity and inscrutableness, is “the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ” (Gal. iii. 24.).

CHAPTER X.

1. “I will leave,” i.e. “I will give free course to my complaint.”

4—7 express the true conviction that God’s judgment must be at once clearer-sighted (ver. 4.), more long-suffering (ver. 5.), less arbitrary (ver. 7.) than man’s judgment ; but it is a conviction shaken by doubt.

JOB, X.

- 5 *Are thy days as the days of man?—are thy*
 years as man's days,
- 6 that thou enquirest after mine iniquity,
 and^a searchest after my sin?
- 7 ^{2d} Thou knowest that I am not wicked;
 and *there is* none that can deliver out of thine hand. ² Heb. It is
upon thy
knowledge.
d Ps. 130. 1, 2.
- 8 ¶ ^eThine hands ³have made me
 and fashioned me together round about;
 yet thou dost destroy me. ^e Ps. 119. 73.
³ Heb.
took pains
about me.
- 9 Remember, I beseech thee, that ^fthou hast made^f
 me as the clay;
 and wilt thou bring me into dust again? ^f Gen. 2. 7.
& 3. 19.
Isai. 64. 8.
- 10 ^gHast thou not poured me out as milk,
 and curdled me like cheese? ^g Ps. 130. 14,
15, 16.
- 11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
 and hast ⁴fenced me with bones and sinews. ⁴ Heb.
hedged.
- 12 Thou hast granted me life and favour,
 and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.
- 13 And these *things* hast thou hid in thine heart:
 I know that this *is* with thee.
- 14 If I sin, then ^hthou markest me,
 and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. ^h Ps. 130. 1.
- 15 If I be wicked, ⁱwoe unto me;
^kand *if* I be righteous, *yet* will I not lift up my
 head. ⁱ Isai. 3. 11.
^k ch. 9. 12,
15, 20, 21.
- I am full of confusion; therefore* ^lsee thou mine ^l
 affliction; ^l Ps. 25. 13.
- 16 for it increaseth. ^mThou huntest me as a fierce ^m
 lion: ^m Isai. 38. 13.
Lam. 3. 10.

8—12 work out the idea of ver. 3, pleading against God's severity to "the work of His own hands" (exactly repeated in Ps. cxxxviii. 8.), "Thine hands made me . . . as the clay." (Comp. Ps. cxix. 73 and Isa. lxiv. 8.) "yet thou dost destroy me . . . and bring me to dust again."

10 (like Ps. cxxxix. 14—16.) refers to the formation in the womb; ver. 11 to the wonderful bodily frame; ver. 12 to the gift of life and nurture of life.

13. "And these things," &c., i.e. "and yet all the while it was to "this that Thou didst purpose to bring me."

14—16. There is a threefold antithesis here. "If I sin, Thou art extreme to mark it. If I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. If I do lift up my head, I am overwhelmed with double sufferings (as for presumption)."

15, 16. The last clause of ver. 15 should be rendered, "I am sated with misery, seeing my own affliction;" and ver. 16 (which should run as one sentence) thus—

JOB, XI.

and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.

² That is, thy plagues, Ruth I. 21.

17 Thou renewest ² thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me ; changes and war *are* against me.

ⁿ ch. 3. 11.

18 ¶ ⁿ Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb ?
Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me !

19 I should have been as though I had not been ; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

^o See ch. 7. 6, 16, & 8. 9. Ps. 39. 5.
^p Ps. 39. 13.
^q ch. 7. 16, 19.

20 ^o *Are* not my days few ? ^p cease *then*, and ^q let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

^r Ps. 88. 12.
^s Ps. 23. 4.

21 before I go *whence* I shall not return, ^r *even* to the land of darkness ^s and the shadow of death ;

22 a land of darkness, as darkness *itself* ; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and *where* the light is as darkness.

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Zophar reproveth Job for justifying himself. ⁵ God's wisdom is unsearchable. ¹³ The assured blessing of repentance.

1 **T**HEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

“ If I lift up my head, Thou springest on me like a lion ;
“ Thou shewest again thy marvellous judgments on me.”

18—21 reiterate the desire of ch. iii. 11, and the despondency of vii. 9, but with greater deliberation and intensity. No gloomier picture of the world beyond the grave could be painted. It is a land, not only of physical “darkness,” but of the awful “shadow of death” (see Ps. xxiii. 4 ; xlv. 19, and observe the blessing of St. Luke i. 79 ; a land “without any order,” a chaos “without form and void as the earth “before creation ;” a land “the very light of which is the darkness of “midnight,” “not light but darkness visible.” But as before (in ch. vii. 9.) the picture is not merely physical ; it implies a spiritual existence by its very terrors, unchequered even by the legends of the Greek Hades ; it is a realm of future consciousness, although cheerless and shadowy realm. The parallelisms with Pss. xxxix. and lxxxviii. are very striking. It is obvious that, with only this vision beyond death, the burden of sorrow and the trial of perplexity in this life must have been such as we cannot well conceive. For if we see the darkness, we have the light beyond.

CHAPTER XI.

In Ch. xi. the speech of Zophar is rather a curt, harsh reiteration of

JOB, XI.

- 2 Should not the multitude of words be answered?
 And should ² a man full of talk be justified? ² Heb. a man
of lips.
- 3 Should thy ³ lies make men hold their peace?
 And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee
 ashamed? ³ Or, devices.
- 4 For ^a thou hast said, My doctrine is pure,
 and I am clean in thine eyes. ^a ch. 6. 10.
& 10. 7.
- 5 But oh that God would speak,—and open his
 lips against thee;
- 6 and that he would shew thee the secrets of
 wisdom,
 that *they are* double to that which is!
 Know therefore that ^b God exacteth of thee *less* ^b Ezra 9. 13.
 than thine iniquity *deserveth*.
- 7 ¶ ^c Canst thou by searching find out God?
 canst thou find out the Almighty unto per-
 fection? ^c Eccles. 3. 11.
Rom. 11. 33.
- 8 *It is* ⁴ as high as heaven; what canst thou do?
 deeper than hell; what canst thou know? ⁴ Heb.
the heights
of heaven.

the views of his two friends than any rejoinder to the arguments of Job's last utterance. In fact, to him they seem (vv. 2, 3.) a mere "multitude of empty words," or presumptuous boastings, to be cut short (in the spirit of Eccles. xii. 12, 13.) by (a) (vv. 4—6.) a direct charge of guilt, not (as from Bildad) against Job's children, but against himself; (b) (vv. 7—12.) by the same reference to the unsearchable wisdom and power of God, and (c) (vv. 13—20.) by a promise of happiness on condition of submission and repentance.

3. "Lies" should be "idle talking," i.e. boasting. Zophar notes pithily the two faults of Job's tone, over-confidence and scornfulness.

6. "That they are double of what is," probably, "double in respect of reality," as opposed to mere seeming. The meaning is that in the secret knowledge of God, there is a side of the truth which neither outward facts can shew, nor human wisdom see. If all could be seen, then Job, who has said that his punishment (if punishment it be) is excessive, would know that God "forgets for him part of his guilt." This is the severest accusation yet made against him, and made with an unfeeling harshness. Yet the idea itself is profoundly true; we can see, but we cannot see all. Hence we may often be able to trace the reasons of God's doings; but if we cannot, we must not infer that there are none.

7. More literally, "Canst thou find out the searching wisdom of God?" an allusion to the previous verse.

8. Compare a similar figure in Ps. cxxxix. 8, 9; and note St. Paul's description (in Eph. iii. 18, 19.) of the "knowing that which passeth knowledge," as a comprehending "what is the breadth and length and depth and height," and so being "filled with all the fulness of God."

- 9 The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth,
and broader than the sea.
- 10 ^d If he ² cut off, and shut up, or gather together,
then ³ who can hinder him?
- 11 For ^e he knoweth vain men :
he seeth wickedness also ; will he not then con-
sider *it* ?
- 12 For ⁴ ^f vain man would be wise,
though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.
- 13 ¶ ^g If thou ^h prepare thine heart,
and ⁱ stretch out thine hands toward him ;
14 if iniquity *be* in thine hand, put it far away,
and ^k let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.
- 15 ^l For then shalt thou lift up thy face without
spot ;
yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear :
16 because thou shalt ^m forget *thy* misery,
and remember *it* as waters *that* pass away :
17 and *thine* age ⁵ ⁿ shall be clearer than the noon-
day ;
thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the
morning.
- 18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope ;
yea, thou shalt dig *about thee*, and ^o thou shalt
take thy rest in safety.
- 19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make
thee afraid ;

10 is a description of arrest and judgment. "If He fall on the guilty, and imprison, and call him to trial, who shall gainsay?"

12. The exact sense is here obscure. It seems to be either a description of the effect of God's judgment, that by its teaching "an empty-headed man is made wise; an ass's colt born again, to be a man;" or a taunt. "Yet an empty-headed man is made wise, only when an ass's colt is born a man." The former sense lends itself best as a transition to the next verse.

17. "Thou shalt shine forth," &c. A mistranslation, spoiling the force and rhythm of the passage. It should be—

"Thy life shall arise brighter than the noonday,

"Thy darkness shall be as the light of the morning."

So in Prov. iv. 18: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But the figure is here more vivid: "The sunrise shall be brighter than the noonday, the darkness shall be bright as morning." There is evidently an allusion to Job's frequent complaint of the darkness of his lot.

18. "Thou shalt dig." Rather, "Thou shalt search" and find all safe.

JOB, XII.

yea, many shall ² make suit unto thee.
 20 But ^p the eyes of the wicked shall fail,
 and ³ they shall not escape,
 and ⁴ their hope shall be as ⁴ the giving up of
 the ghost.

² Heb. *intreat thy face*, Ps. 45. 12.
^p Lev. 26. 16. Deut. 28. 65.
³ Heb. *flight shall perish from them*.
⁴ ch. 8. 14. & 18. 14.
 Prov. 11. 7.
⁴ Or, *a puff of breath*.

CHAPTER XII.

1 Job maintaineth himself against his friends that reprove him. 7 He acknowledgeth the general doctrine of God's omnipotency.

1 **AND** Job answered and said,
 2 **A** No doubt but ye *are* the people,
 and wisdom shall die with you.
 3 But ^a I have ² understanding as well as you ;
³ I *am* not inferior to you :
 yea, ⁴ who knoweth not such things as these ?
 4 ^b I am *as* one mocked of his neighbour,
 who ^c calleth upon God, and he answereth him :

^a ch. 13. 2.
² Heb. *an heart*.
³ Heb. *I fall not lower than you*.
⁴ Heb. *with whom are not such as these ?*
^b ch. 16. 10. & 17. 2, 6. & 21. 3. & 30. 1.
^c Ps. 91. 15.

20. " Their eyes shall fail " with looking in vain for succour : their hope shall be vain as the last faint gasp of death. In these last words there is again a covert reference to Job's frequent longing for death.

CHAPTER XII.

Chh. xii.—xiv. give Job's answer to the harsh reproof of Zophar. Towards his friends it is more scornful than ever, charging them with telling him only what he knows, and what even the brute creation could tell, of the might and wisdom of God ; towards God it is still more urgent in pleading to know the reason of His doings, but far more subdued and pathetic in tone, with gleams of trust amidst his dependency, and of insight through all his perplexities.

The speech has three parts, as before.

First (ch. xii. and xiii. 1, 2.), it taunts his friends for their fancied wisdom (on the strength of which they mock at his trouble) (xii. 1—6.), as that which even the brute instinct knows, and man's reason learns (vv. 7—11.) ; and then passes on to describe the strength and wisdom of God, so as to shew that he knows it as well as they (xii. 12—xiii. 2.).

Next (vv. 3—19.) he boldly rejects their false pleas for God, which God Himself would condemn, and declares that he will plead before God only, even though it be his death.

Lastly (xiii. 20—xiv. 22.), he enters on that plea—prays that God will shew him his sins (vv. 20—23.), remonstrates against the severity of His hand on the creature of a day, born as he is unclean,—now dwelling on the speedy and final end of death, now having hope that God will call him in his due time (xiii. 24—xiv. 16.) ; and finally turns back to the present, complaining of the extreme judgment of God, and His destruction of the hopes of men (vv. 16—22.).

4—6. The Authorised Version is here obscure, and probably in some parts inaccurate. The passage may better be rendered thus—

" Must I be a mockery to my friends—
 " I, who called upon God and He heard me ?
 " Must I—the just and upright—be scorned ?

JOB, XII.

- the just upright *man* is laughed to scorn.
- ^d Prov. 14. 2 5 ^d He that is ready to slip with *his* feet
is as a lamp despised in the thought of him
that is at ease.
- ^e ch. 21. 7. 6 ^e The tabernacles of robbers prosper,
Ps. 37. 1, 35. and they that provoke God are secure ;
& 73. 11, 12. into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.
& 92. 7.
Jer. 12. 1.
Mal. 3. 15.
- 7 ¶ But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach
thee ;
and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee :
8 or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee :
and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
9 Who knoweth not in all these
that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this ?
- ^f Num. 16. 22. 10 ^f In whose hand is the ² soul of every living
Dan. 5. 23. thing,
Acts 17. 28. and the breath of ³ all mankind.
- ² Or, *life*.
³ Heb. *all*
flesh of man. 11 ^g Doth not the ear try words ?—and the ⁴ mouth
^f ch. 34. 3. taste his meat ?
⁴ Heb. *palate*,
ch. 6. 30.
^h ch. 32. 7.
- 12 ¶ ^h With the ancient is wisdom ;
and in length of days understanding.
- ⁵ That is,
With God. 13 ⁵ⁱ With him is wisdom and strength,
ch. 9. 4. he hath counsel and understanding.
& 36. 5.
^k ch. 11. 10.
- 14 Behold, ^k he breaketh down, and it cannot be
built again :

“Contempt to misfortune is the thought of the prosperous ;

“It dogs the feet of those who are ready to slip.

“Yet the tents of the destroyers are in peace,

“They are safe who provoke God,

“Even every man, whose God is in his right hand !”

The last phrase appears to mean, “who makes a god of his own right
“hand,” and worships nothing but his sword. The whole passage comes
in (between vv. 2, 3 and vv. 7—12.) as a burst of reproach on the cruel
judgment of men, trampling on misfortune, as misfortune, and wor-
shipping the most unrighteous success.

9. In this passage alone of the dialogue is the name “Jehovah” used,
evidently with an allusion to the idea which it embodies, of God as the
eternal source of all being—an idea which is fully expressed in the next
verse, that in Him “all live, and move, and have their being.”

11, 12 seem a link between the two passages. Man’s wisdom learns
by observation and grows by experience ; thus it stands between the
unerring instinct of the brute and the perfect intuition of God, in some
sense rebuked for its insufficiency by both.

14—25 are a description, first, of God’s mastery over all physical

JOB, XII.

- he ¹shutteth ²up a man, and there can be no ¹Isai. 22. 22.
 opening. Rev. 3. 7.
- 15 Behold, he ^mwithholdeth the waters, and they ^mdry up: ² Heb. *upon*.
 also he ⁿsendeth them out, and they overturn ^m 1 Kin. 8. 35.
& 17. 1.
 the earth. ⁿ Gen. 7. 11,
&c.
- 16 ^oWith him *is* strength and wisdom: ^o ver. 13.
 the deceived and the deceiver *are* his.
- 17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
 and ^pmaketh the judges fools. P 2 Sam. 15. 31.
& 17. 14, 23.
- 18 He looseth the bond of kings,
 and girdeth their loins with a girdle. Isai. 19. 12.
& 29. 14.
1 Cor. 1. 19.
- 19 He leadeth princes away spoiled,—and over-
 throweth the mighty.
- 20 ^qHe removeth away ³the speech of the trusty,
 and taketh away the understanding of the aged. ^q ch. 32. 9.
Isa. 3. 1, 2, 3.
- 21 ^rHe poureth contempt upon princes,
 and ⁴weakeneth the strength of the mighty. ³ Heb. *the
lip of the
faithful*.
- 22 ^sHe discovereth deep things out of darkness,
 and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. ^r Ps. 107. 40.
Dan. 2. 21.
- 23 ^tHe increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: ⁴ Or, *looseth
the girdle of
the strong*.
 he enlargeth the nations, and ⁵straiteneth them ^t Dan. 2. 22.
Matt. 10. 26.
1 Cor. 4. 5.
again. ⁵ Ps. 107. 38.
Isai. 9. 3.
& 26. 15.
- 24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the ⁵ Heb.
leadeth in.
 people of the earth,
 and ^ucauseth them to wander in a wilderness ^u Ps. 107. 4, 40.
where there is no way.
- 25 ^xThey grope in the dark without light, ^x Dent. 28. 29.
ch. 5. 14.

changes (vv. 14, 15.); next (in greater detail), of His putting to shame all the skill of the counsellor, the power of the king, the dignity of the priest, the wisdom of the aged (vv. 16—21.); then of His ordaining change in all human things (vv. 22, 23.); but, as the final result, of His leaving men in darkness as to His inscrutable will (vv. 24, 25.).

16. "The deceived and the deceiver" (alike) "are His." That is, exist by His permission. (Comp. Prov. xvi. 4.) The distinction, true but mysterious, between God's Will for good and permission of evil (see Rom. ix. 22, 23.) is not yet grasped.

18. "He looses the belt"—the emblem of power; and "girds with the cord" of captivity. For the context requires that the two clauses should not be antithetical, but parallel, both describing the humiliation of the mighty.

19. "Princes." It should be "priests;" but under the patriarchal system king and priest were one.

24, 25. The similarity of expression to Ps. cvii. (see especially vv. 4, 27, 40.) can hardly be accidental; it is the more striking because of the

JOB, XIII.

^a Heb.
wander.
y Ps. 107. 27.

and he maketh them to ²y stagger like a drunken
man.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Job reproveth his friends of partiality.* 14 *He professeth his confidence in God: 20 and intreateth to know his own sins, and God's purpose in afflicting him.*

1 **L**O, mine eye hath seen all *this*,
mine ear hath heard and understood it.

^a ch. 12. 3.

2 ^a What ye know, *the same* do I know also :
I *am* not inferior unto you.

^b ch. 23. 3.
& 31. 35.

3 ¶ ^b Surely I would speak to the Almighty,
and I desire to reason with God.

^c ch. 6. 21.
& 16. 2.

4 But ye *are* forgers of lies,—^c ye *are* all physicians
of no value.

^d Prov. 17. 28.

5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace!
And ^d it should be your wisdom.

6 Hear now my reasoning,
and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

^e ch. 17. 5.
& 32. 21.
& 36. 4.

7 ^e Will ye speak wickedly for God?
and talk deceitfully for him?

8 Will ye accept his person?—will ye contend for
God?

9 Is it good that he should search you out?
Or as one man mocketh another, do ye *so* mock
him?

10 He will surely reprove you,—if ye do secretly
accept persons.

difference of tone between the two passages—the passage here being an expression of despair, while the Psalmist's words are words of thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XIII.

4. “Physicians of no value,” because they cannot “minister to a mind diseased.”

5. See Prov. xvii. 28. “Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise.” Probably Job also means seriously that in real perplexity “silence is golden,” if it be the silence of humility and faith.

8. “Will ye accept His person?” This is the only place where this phrase is applied to God. In itself it is common (see ch. xxxii. 21; xxxiv. 19. Ps. lxxxii. 2. Prov. xviii. 5. 1 Sam. xxv. 35. St. Luke xx. 21. Gal. ii. 6.), meaning to accept not a cause on its merits, but the person, that is the character or dignity, of him who pleads it,—to argue *ad hominem*, not *ad rem*. Here it means similarly to plead for God, with a view to what seems reverent and saves perplexity as to His justice, rather than what is true.

9—11. See the fulfilment of this prediction in ch. xlii. 7, 8.

JOB, XIII.

- 11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid?
and his dread fall upon you?
- 12 Your remembrances *are* like unto ashes,
your bodies to bodies of clay.
- 13 ¶ ² Hold your peace, let me alone,
that I may speak, and let come on me what
will. ² Heb.
Be silent
from me.
- 14 Wherefore ^f do I take my flesh in my teeth,
and ^g put my life in mine hand? ^f ch. 18. 4.
^g 1 Sam. 28. 21.
Ps. 119. 103.
- 15 ^h Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:
ⁱ but I will ³ maintain mine own ways before
him. ^h Ps. 23. 4.
Prov. 14. 32.
ⁱ ch. 27. 5.
³ Heb. *prove*,
or, argue.
- 16 He also *shall be* my salvation:
for an hypocrite shall not come before him.
- 17 Hear diligently my speech,—and my declaration
with your ears.

12. This verse should be rendered thus—

“Your old maxims are of ashes (see ch. viii. 8.),
“Your defences are defences of clay.”

14. The phrase “to put my life in my hand” is common for to “set life upon a cast” (see Judges xii. 3. 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21. Ps. cxix. 109.). On the other hand, to “take my flesh in my teeth,” seems to mean to cling to life, as a wild beast to its prey. Compare the phrase “thy life shall be given thee for a prey” (Jer. xxi. 9; xxxix. 18; xlv. 5.). Hence, although the parallelism is thereby broken, it seems that we must render—

“Why should I cling to life with my teeth?
“Nay! I will take my life in my hand.”

15. This verse is one of certain well-known passages (of which the most celebrated is Isa. ix. 3.), where the Hebrew in most MSS. has a negative; making the sense to be, “I do not wait for him.” But some MSS., most ancient Versions, and the authoritative marginal direction to the Hebrew reader (*Keri*) have the reading in the text, “I wait for Him.” Taking this as in all probability the true reading, the verse runs thus, “Behold, He may slay me: I wait for Him.” Now as to the sense, it is clear that it may be an expression of hope or of hopelessness, according as “to wait for Him” means to trust in Him or to await His stroke. Interpreters are divided. But the balance is turned in favour of our Version (which is also that of the Targums, the Vulgate, and the Peshito or old Syriac), first, by the undoubted sense of the next verses, and next by the constant use of “to wait for” in the sense of trustfulness (see ch. iii. 21; vi. 19; xxx. 26, and Psalms *passim*). The sense so interpreted is exactly in accordance with the more hopeful tone of this speech. Job will wait upon God; he is still sure, that before Him right is right, and that he shall be justified, as against the accusations of his friends. The words are rightly taken as the model of an undying and unconquerable trust.

JOB, XIII.

- 18 Behold now, I have ordered *my* cause ;
I know that I shall be justified.
- ^k ch. 33. 6. ^k 19 *Who is he that* will plead with me ?
^{Isai.} 50. 8. For now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up
the ghost.
- ^l ch. 9. 34. [¶] ¹ 20 Only do not two *things* unto me :
& 33. 7. then will I not hide myself from thee.
- ^m Ps. 39. 10. ^m 21 Withdraw thine hand far from me :
and let not thy dread make me afraid.
- 22 Then call thou, and I will answer :
or let me speak, and answer thou me.
- 23 ¶ How many *are* mine iniquities and sins ?
make me to know my transgression and my sin.
- ⁿ Deut. 32. 20. ⁿ 24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
Ps. 13. 1. & 44. and ^o holdest me for thine enemy ?
24. & 88. 14. ^{Isai.} 8. 17.
- ^o Deut. 32. 42. ^p 25 Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro ?
Ruth 1. 21. and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble ?
ch. 16. 9. & 19. 11. & 33. 10.
- ^p Isai. 42. 3. 26 For thou writest bitter things against me,
& ^q makest me to possess the iniquities of my
^q ch. 20. 11. youth.
Ps. 25. 7.
- ^r ch. 33. 11. ^r 27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks,
and ² lookest narrowly unto all my paths ;
thou settest a print upon the ³ heels of my
feet.

19. "For now," &c. The true sense is, "For then I will hold my peace and die;" if (that is) he is proved in fair pleading to be guilty, he "refuses not to die" in silence.

20. "Only two things," viz. that God will not crush him, either by suffering, or by fear of His majesty, that he may see God and yet not die.

23. "How many," &c. Job denies not that he is a sinner, if judged by the perfect standard of righteousness; but he asks, What is his sin above all others, that he should be so especially visited above other men? There must be some special reason; will God shew it him? In this prayer we have the natural utterance of the soul in trouble: for, only when we know the meaning of trouble, is it a true chastening and training of the soul.

24—28 accumulate pathetic images of suffering. Now Job is helpless, as a leaf driven by the wind or the dry chaff (Ps. i. 4.); now hopeless, as a criminal, seeing the dark record of crime from his youth up (comp. Ps. xxv. 7.); now in terror, as a condemned prisoner in the stocks (see Acts xvi. 24.), watched and kept within the limits of his chain; now dying in suffering, as one mouldering and rotting away (i.e. allusion to his leprosy) like a moth-eaten garment.

27. "Thou settest," &c., i. e. "Thou drawest a line round the soles of my feet" which I may not overstep.

JOB, XIV.

28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth,
as a garment that is moth eaten.

CHAPTER XIV.

¹ Job intreateth God for favour, by the shortness of life, and certainty of death. ⁷ Though life once lost be irrecoverable, yet he waiteth for his change. ¹⁶ By sin the creature is subject to corruption.

- 1 **M**AN that is born of a woman is ² of few days, ² Heb. *short of days.*
and ^a full of trouble. ^a ch. 5. 7. Eccles. 2. 23.
- 2 ^b He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: ^b ch. 8. 9. Ps. 90. 5, 6. 9. & 102. 11. & 103. 15. & 144. 4. Isai. 40. 6. Jam. 1. 10, 11. & 4. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 24.
- 3 And ^c dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,
and ^d bringest me into judgment with thee? ^c Ps. 143. 3. ^d Ps. 143. 2.
- 4 ^e Who ^e can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. ^e Heb. *Who will give.*
- 5 ^f Seeing his days are determined,
the number of his months are with thee,
thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;
^f Gen. 5. 3. Ps. 51. 5. John 3. 6. Rom. 5. 12. Eph. 2. 3.
- 6 ^g turn from him, that he may ^g rest,
till he shall accomplish, ^h as an hireling, his day. ^g ch. 7. 1. ^h ch. 7. 16, 19. & 10. 20. Ps. 39. 13.
- 7 ¶ For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,
ⁱ that it will sprout again, ⁱ Heb. *cease.* ^h ch. 7. 1. ⁱ ver. 14.

28. The change of person is here merely verbal, as we use the phrase "I am one who is," &c., in English.

CHAPTER XIV.

1, 2. These verses are quoted in our Burial Service at the point when the grave first suggests mortality, and before the breaking upon us of the "sure and certain hope of Resurrection." In them accordingly there is but half the truth.

"Born of woman"—apparently an allusion to Gen. iii. 16.

4. "Who can," &c. This verse introduces into the context, which tells simply of mortality, a fresh idea, suggesting the cause of sorrow and death in sin. The same thought is fully expressed in Ps. li. 5, and symbolized under the Mosaic Law by the purification after childbirth (Lev. xii.). The existence of inborn sin is a truth declared (without revelation) by all human observation and consciousness; in all religions the conviction of it is intensified in proportion to the distinctness of the recognition of God; but with the deepening of the darkness comes a light on the horizon which reason cannot discover.

6. "Turn from him." That is, take thy judgment from him for a time. The idea is, as in Ps. xxxix., a sense of the awfulness of God's increasing watchfulness over us.

7—9. The metaphor is drawn from the palm-tree of the desert, never growing except where there is a spring (comp. Ex. xv. 27.), cut down

and that the tender branch thereof will not
cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
and the stock thereof die in the ground ;

9 *yet* through the scent of water it will bud,
and bring forth boughs like a plant.

² Heb. *is
weakened,
or, cut off.*

10 But man dieth, and ² wasteth away :
yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he ?

11 *As* the waters fail from the sea,
and the flood decayeth and drieth up :

12 so man lieth down, and riseth not :

^k Ps. 102. 26.
Isai. 51. 6.
& 65. 17.
& 66. 22.
Acts 3. 21.
Rom. 8. 10.
² Pet. 3. 7,
10, 11.
Rev. 20. 11.
& 21. 1.

^k till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not
awake,

nor be raised out of their sleep.

13 ¶ O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,
that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy
wrath be past,
that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and
remember me !

14 If a man die, shall he live *again* ?

¹ ch. 13. 15.

All the days of my appointed time ¹ will I wait,
^m till my change come.

^m ver. 7.

ⁿ ch. 13. 22.
^o ch. 10. 6, 14.
& 13. 27.
& 31. 4.
& 34. 21.
Ps. 56. 8.
& 139. 1, 2, 3.
Prov. 5. 21.
Jer. 32. 19.

15 ⁿ Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee :
thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine
hands.

16 ^o For now thou numberest my steps :
dost thou not watch over my sin ?

when old, propagating itself by sprouts and suckers ("tender branches") from the root. Comp. Isa. vi. 13; xi. 1. The contrast of the revival of vegetation in the spring with the hopelessness of Resurrection from the grave is found in all poetry. Clearly the darker thought of despondency is here predominant in the mind of Job, but the succeeding verses shew that it is not without gleams of light. Man cannot return; Job asks in vain where is he? But he does not think that he is not. To us the very phrase of despondency, "till the heavens are no more," suggests the time when "the heavens shall pass away like smoke," because the Resurrection is come.

13—15. Accordingly in these verses is certainly implied the idea that "the grave" (i.e. properly Sheol or Hades) may well be a place simply of rest, till the "set time" shall come, which (in ver. 14.) is represented under the image of the time of relief to a soldier on guard), when God shall call and man answer, because the Creator shall have "desire" in love for His creature. Job longs that it may be so with him, now that life is unbearable, and God's searching judgment so incessant in its vigilance (vv. 16, 17.).

JOB, XV.

- 17 ^P My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,
and thou sewest up mine iniquity. ^P Deut. 32. 34.
Hos. 13. 12.
- 18 ¶ And surely the mountain falling ² cometh to ² Heb.
nought, *fadeth*.
and the rock is removed out of his place.
- 19 The waters wear the stones :
thou ³ washest away the things which grow *out* ³ Heb. *over-*
of the dust of the earth ; *flowest*.
and thou destroyest the hope of man.
- 20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he
passeth :
thou changest his countenance, and sendest him
away.
- 21 His sons come to honour, and ⁴ he knoweth *it* not ; ⁴ Eccles. 9. 5.
and they are brought low, but he perceiveth *it* ^{Isai. 63. 16.}
not of them.
- 22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain,
and his soul within him shall mourn.

CHAPTER XV.

¹ *Eliphaz reproveth Job of impiety in justifying himself. 17 He proveth by tradition the unquietness of wicked men.*

1 **T**HEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and
said,

17. The sense is clear, that God treasures up every sin for punishment, sealing it up, as in a bag. In the latter clause the words "sew up" may mean to "sew on," in the sense of adding iniquity to iniquity.

18, 19 express metaphorically the effect of God's extreme and unceasing judgment. All power and hope of man fade slowly and surely away; as the mountain undermined falls in, as the rock crumbles gradually, as the waters at last wear out the stones, and wash away the soil of the earth. The metaphors are all drawn from such a country as that in which the scene of the book is laid.

21, 22. There is clearly a reference to the words of Eliphaz in ch. v. 25. "Thou shalt know that thy offspring shall be great." It is curious to notice how modern philosophy is like ancient tradition, in vainly offering an "immortality in the life of the race," as a satisfaction to the craving of man for individual immortality. Job's words most truly express the utter insufficiency of this so-called immortality, to a being who cannot throw off his own individuality, and who suffers for himself both in body and in spirit.

CHAPTER XV.

Ch. xv. The speech of Eliphaz, less gentle, courteous, and persuasive than his former speech, adds nothing to its argument, except that, whereas before he had only inferred that Job had in some way specially sinned, he here declares that by the tone of his own words, and his presumption against God, he is condemned out of his own mouth. Like Bildad, he

- ² Heb. *knowledge of wind.* 2 Should a wise man utter ² vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?
- 3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
- ³ Heb. *thou makest void.* 4 Yea, ³ thou castest off fear,—and restrainest ⁴ prayer before God.
- ⁴ Or, *speech.* 5 For thy mouth ⁵ uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.
- ⁵ Heb. *teacheth.* 6 ^a Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.
- ^a Luke 19. 22. 7 ¶ *Art* thou the first man *that* was born? ^b Or wast thou made before the hills?
- ^b Ps. 90. 2. Prov. 8. 25. 8 ^c Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?
- ^c Rom. 11. 34. 1 Cor. 2. 11. 9 ^d What knowest thou, that we know not? *What* understandest thou, which *is* not in us?
- ^d ch. 13. 2. 10 ^e With us *are* both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.
- ^e ch. 32. 6, 7.

appeals to the wisdom of antiquity, and ignores all the deeper questions raised by the pleadings of Job.

It begins (vv. 2—6.) with a reproof of the impetuosity and presumption of Job, as carrying with them his condemnation; next (vv. 7—16.), reproaches him with proudly claiming to know the secrets of God, setting aside the wisdom of man, and attempting the impossible task of self-justification before God; lastly (vv. 17—37.), appeals to the time-honoured belief that the wicked is doubly cursed, by the foreboding of evil in time of seeming prosperity, and by the certainty of downfall before the time of his ripeness is come.

2. “Vain knowledge” (see *margin*), “knowledge of wind,” that is, “knowledge which puffeth up” (1 Cor. viii. 1.). “His belly,” used (as the word “bowels” in the New Testament) for “the heart,” as the seat of emotion.

4. “Prayer,” that is, the spirit of seriousness and humility, which accords with prayer.

5. “Uttereth,” that is, betrays thy iniquity. “The tongue of the crafty” refers to the sophistical reasonings by which, as Eliphaz thinks, Job attempts to obscure or fritter away the great principle of retribution in this life.

7—10. The ironical question here is twofold. (a) “Hast thou heard the secret”—that is, the creative design—“of God?” Probably there is some rudimentary allusion to the conception so fully worked out in Proverbs viii. 22—30, of Wisdom as being “with God” in creation, “from the beginning,” “brought forth before the hills;” certainly the question is the same as the question asked in Isa. xl. 13. Jer. xxiii. 18, and repeated in Rom. xi. 34. 1 Cor. ii. 16, “Who hath known the mind of the Lord” &c. It is made hereafter the basis of the Lord’s rebuke to Job. (b) “Dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?” so as to rise

JOB, XV.

- 11 *Are* the consolations of God small with thee?
Is there any secret thing with thee?
- 12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away?
And what do thy eyes wink at,
- 13 that thou turnest thy spirit against God,
and lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth?
- 14 ^f What *is* man, that he should be clean?
And *he which is* born of a woman, that he should
be righteous?
- 15 ^g Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints;
yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.
- 16 ^h How much more abominable and filthy *is* man,
ⁱ which drinketh iniquity like water?
- 17 ¶ I will shew thee, hear me;
and that *which* I have seen I will declare;
18 which wise men have told
^k from their fathers, and have not hid *it* :
- 19 unto whom alone the earth was given,
and ^l no stranger passed among them.
- 20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all *his* days,
^m and the number of years is hidden to the ⁿ oppressor.
- 21 ² A dreadful sound *is* in his ears :
^o in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.
- 22 He believeth not that he shall return out of
darkness,
and he is waited for of the sword.

^f 1 Kin. 8. 46.
2 Chr. 6. 36.
ch. 14. 4.
Ps. 14. 3.
Prov. 20. 9.
Eccles. 7. 20.
1 John 1. 8,
10.
^g ch. 4. 18.
& 25. 5.
^h ch. 4. 19.
Ps. 14. 3.
& 53. 3.
ⁱ ch. 34. 7.
Prov. 19. 28.

^k ch. 8. 8.

^l Joel 3. 17.

^m Ps. 90. 12.

² Heb.
A sound of
fears.
ⁿ 1 Thess. 5. 3.

superior to the knowledge of the wisest, and the experience of the oldest, of men?

11. should be rendered, "Are the consolations of God," that is, given in the name of God, "small with thee, and the word gently spoken to "thee" by us?"

12. "Wink at," or "roll," in sign of anger.

16. The word "man" here seems to be used with purposed ambiguity. It may mean "man" in the abstract, or "the man who," &c., with covert insinuations against Job. The use of a similar phrase by Elihu (ch. xxxiv. 7.), with distinct reference to Job, suggests the latter sense here also.

19. The natural boast of the desert tribe, whose tradition was unbroken by foreign admixture, growing, generation by generation, into the far-famed "wisdom of the children of the East."

20—24. A vivid description of the terrors of conscience—a vague foreboding of future evil (vv. 21, 22.), and a present sense of dissatisfaction and unrest (vv. 23, 24.).

22. "He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness." The

- ° Ps. 59. 15. & 109. 10. 23 He ° wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where *is it?*
- p ch. 18. 12. He knoweth that p the day of darkness is ready at his hand.
- 24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid ; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.
- 25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.
- 26 He runneth upon him, *even on his neck*, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers :
- q Ps. 17. 10. 27 a because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on *his flanks*.
- 28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, *and* in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.
- 29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.
- 30 He shall not depart out of darkness ; the flame shall dry up his branches, and r by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.
- r ch. 4. 9. s Isai. 59. 4. 31 Let not him that is deceived s trust in vanity : for vanity shall be his recompence.

“darkness” may be (as in ver. 23.) the shadow of death, or the hiding-place by which he seeks to avoid it.

26 should be—

“For he runneth against God with stiff neck,
“and with the thick bosses of his shield” (uplifted).

27. The reference (as in Deut. xxxi. 20 ; xxxii. 15. Jer. v. 23.) is to the insolence of overgrown prosperity against God and man.

28. The exact sense of this verse is doubtful. The phrase “ready to become heaps” may be simply an anticipation of what the dwellings of the evil-doers shall be hereafter ; or it may refer to desolate cities under the curse of God, such as Jericho in Jewish history, or some of the Petraean cities among the Arabs of the present day, which no one will inhabit who has any fear of God.

29. “Neither shall he prolong,” &c. Probably, “Neither shall his substance press heavy on the earth,” or “bow” (like a fruit-laden bough) “down to the earth.” The latter suits best the following verses.

30. “Of his mouth,” i.e. of God’s mouth.

31. The first clause should be rendered, “Let him not trust in
“vanity—he is deceived.”

JOB, XVI.

- 32 It shall be ²accomplished ^tbefore his time,
and his branch shall not be green. ² Or, *cut off.*
^t ch. 22. 16.
Ps. 55. 23.
- 33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the
vine,
and shall cast off his flower as the olive.
- 34 For the congregation of hypocrites *shall be*
desolate,
and fire shall consume the tabernacles of
bribery.
- 35 ^uThey conceive mischief, and bring forth ^uPs. 7. 14.
³vanity, Isai. 59. 4.
Hos. 10. 13.
and their belly prepareth deceit. ³ Or,
iniquity.

CHAPTER XVI.

¹ Job reproveth his friends of unmercifulness. ⁷ He sheweth the pitifulness of his case. ¹⁷ He maintaineth his innocency.

- 1 **T**HEN Job answered and said,
I ²I have heard many such things :
^{2a} miserable comforters *are* ye all. ² Or,
troublesome.
^a ch. 13. 4.
- 3 Shall ³vain words have an end?
Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest? ³ Heb. *words*
of wind.
- 4 I also could speak as ye *do* :
if your soul were in my soul's stead,
I could heap up words against you,
and ^bshake mine head at you. ^b Ps. 22. 7.
& 109. 25.
Lam. 2. 15.

32. "Before his time." Contrast the promise of Eliphaz to the righteous (v. 26.).

34, 35 suggest insinuations of hypocrisy and corruption (see Job's solemn declaration in ch. xxxi.) in addition to the open charges of insolence and presumption.

CHAPTER XVI.

In xvi.—xviii., giving Job's answer to the last speech of Eliphaz; the contrast in tone between his address to his friends, and his attitude towards God is still more distinct. His feeling towards them as shallow "miserable comforters," and unmerciful in their wanton accusation of the afflicted, becomes more and more scornful. Towards God, while the consciousness of His afflicting hand is as bitter as ever, there are constant gleams of the hope that, after all, He will be the surety and justifier of Job His servant, and will not crush his plea of innocence.

In it Job first ironically warns his friends (ch. xvi. 2—5.) that, if their cases were reversed, he could give, if he thought it worth while, just such poor comfort as they; and then (vv. 7—17.) he bewails the double burden of God's affliction and man's cruelty. But (xvi. 18—xvii. 9.), looking up to a witness in Heaven, he prays that God Himself will take up his plea before death comes, and be a surety for him. As for them (he says) (vv. 10—16.), their wisdom is folly and all human comfort vain, in the presence of the dark hopelessness of life as it actually is.

JOB, XVI.

5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth,
and the moving of my lips should assuage *your*
grief.

6 ¶ Though I speak, my grief is not asswaged :
and *though* I forbear, ² what am I eased ?

² Heb.
what goeth
from me?

7 But now he hath made me weary :
thou hast made desolate all my company.

8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, *which* is
a witness *against* me :
and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness
to my face.

^c ch. 10, 16, 17. 9 ^c He teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me :
he gnasheth upon me with his teeth ;

^d ch. 13, 24.

^d mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

^e Ps. 22, 13.

10 They have ^e gaped upon me with their mouth ;

^f Lam. 3, 30.
Micah 5, 1.

they ^f have smitten me upon the cheek re-
proachfully ;

^g Ps. 35, 15.

they have ^g gathered themselves together against
me.

^h ch. 1, 15, 17.

11 God ^h ³ hath delivered me to the ungodly,
and turned me over into the hands of the
wicked.

³ Heb.
hath shut
me up.

12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder :
he hath also taken *me* by my neck, and shaken
me to pieces,

ⁱ ch. 7, 20.

and ⁱ set me up for his mark.

5. The insertion of "but" in this verse seems an error. The emphasis is laid on the word "mouth" and "lips," and the sense is "I also could offer you words for comfort, and the moving of the lips for "consolation."

6 evidently refers to the reproach of his friends against his utterance of sorrow. Speech he knows to be vain ; but is silence better ?

8. This verse is rendered by some, "Thou hast bound me fast, in "weakness of guilt : my falsehood riseth up to convict me to my face." But the rendering of our Version is probably correct, for there is evidently a reference to the actual order of Job's troubles ; "Thou hast "exhausted me," i.e. of wealth ; "Thou hast desolated my household ;" "Thou hast wrinkled my skin" (with disease) ; "My wasted body is a "witness against me."

9—11 bring into alternate prominence the affliction from God's wrath and the cruelty of man, ready to devour, ready to insult, ready to overwhelm (comp. Ps. xxii. 12, 13. Lam. iii. 30. Mic. v. 1. Isa. l. 6.) ; but lastly, as the bitterest drop in the cup of bitterness, acknowledge that to this very cruelty God has given him up.

12—16. The imagery of these verses (repeated from chh. vi. 4 ; vii. 20.) is reproduced by Jeremiah (Lam. iii. 11, 12.). Comp. also Ps.

JOB, XVI.

13 His archers compass me round about,
he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not
spare ;

he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach,
he runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,
and ^k defiled my horn in the dust.

^k ch. 30. 19.
Ps. 7. 5.

16 My face is foul with weeping,
and on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death ;

17 not for *any* injustice in mine hands :
also my prayer *is* pure.

18 ¶ O earth, cover not thou my blood,
and ^l let my cry have no place.

^l ch. 27. 9.
Ps. 66. 18, 19.

19 Also now, behold, ^m my witness *is* in heaven,
and my record *is* ² on high.

^m Rom. 1. 9.
² Heb. *in the high places.*

20 My friends ³ scorn me :

³ Heb. *are my scorners.*

but mine eye poureth out *tears* unto God.

21 ⁿ O that one might plead for a man with God,
as a man *pleadeth* for his ⁴ neighbour !

ⁿ ch. 31. 35.
Eccles. 6. 10.
Isai. 45. 9.
Rom. 9. 20.

22 When ⁵ a few years are come,

⁴ Or, *friend.*
⁵ Heb. *years of number.*

xxxviii. 2. (“His archers” should be “His arrows.”) On the one hand is described, first, the sudden crushing shock of calamity; then the successive pangs, piercing the heart; finally, the accumulative effect of blow upon blow. On the other, the effect on the soul itself—humiliation, shame, weeping, and despair.

17—21 mark the change. In consciousness of innocence and sincerity of prayer, he will trust in God. “Though He slay him,” God will not reject his plea, or crush it by His power.

18. “O earth, cover not my blood” (so in Isa. xxvi. 21. Ezek. xxiv. 7, 8.); “let my cry have no place,” i.e. no place of rest till my blood be avenged. So in Gen. iv. 10: “Thy brother’s blood crieth to me “from the ground.” Comp. Rev. vi. 10.

21. This striking verse loses its force in our translation. It should be—
“O that God would plead for (i.e. justify) a man with God!”

It carries on the desire (of ch. ix. 33.) for a “Daysman” between man and God to the deeper conviction that God alone can be the Mediator between man and Himself, pleading man’s cause and shielding his imperfection. Note the carrying out of the metaphor in ch. xvii. 3. To us it is a striking example of the “unconscious prophecies” of the true Mediator, Who is both God and man. Comp. the famous passage in ch. xix. 25—27.

The latter clause may be rendered as in our translation, or, “And “plead for the son of man against his neighbours,” i.e. justify him visibly in the sight of his unmerciful fellow-men.

22 must be taken with the first verse of the next chapter, as a cry for the speedy interposition of God before life passes away. The idea is

JOB, XVII.

° Eccles. 12.
5.

then I shall ° go the way *whence* I shall not return.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Job appealeth from men to God.* 6 *The unmerciful dealing of men with the afflicted may astonish, but not discourage the righteous.* 11 *His hope is not in life, but in death.*

² Or, *spirit is spent.*
a Ps. 88. 3, 4.

1 **M**²Y² breath is corrupt, my days are extinct,
a the graves *are ready* for me.

³ Heb. *lodge.*
b 1 Sam. 1.
6, 7.

2 *Are there* not mockers with me ?

And doth not mine eye ³ continue in their ^b pro-
vocation ?

° Prov. 6. 1.
& 17. 18.
& 22. 26.

3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee ;
who *is he that* ° will strike hands with me ?

4 For thou hast hid their heart from understand-
ing :

therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.

5 He that speaketh flattery to *his* friends,
even the eyes of his children shall fail.

d¹ ch. 30. 9.

⁴ Or, *before them.*

° Ps. 6. 7.
& 31. 9.

⁵ Or, *my thoughts.*

6 He hath made me also ^d a byword of the people ;
and ⁴ aforetime I was as a tabret.

7 ^e Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow,
and all ⁵ my members *are* as a shadow.

8 Upright *men* shall be astonied at this,
and the innocent shall stir up himself against
the hypocrite.

that of Ps. xxxix. 13: "O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen."

CHAPTER XVII.

3. This verse connects itself with the prayer of xvi. 21, drawing its metaphor still from the law court.

"Lay down," the money of bail for me ; "put me in a surety with me," that is, be my surety or advocate, "with Thyself." "Who else will strike hands," that is, pledge himself to be my surety, and take my part ?

4, 5 declare the desertion, implied in the previous verse, to be due to the blindness and the heartlessness of men.

"He that speaketh flattery" is a mistranslation. It should probably be, "He that maketh spoil of his friends," that is, betrays them.

6. "And aforetime I was as a tabret." It should be, "and I am one in whose face they spit." See xxx. 10. The Greek Version has, "I became a laughing stock unto them." So Isa. l. 6, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." He describes himself (in words which would apply to a greater Sufferer) as exposed to taunt and insult, his eye dimmed with pain, and his limbs wasting away to a shadow.

8, 9. The sight of his suffering, while the hypocrite prospers, will be an "offence" to the upright and innocent. See Ps. lxxiii. 2—13. But still he has confidence, for himself and them, that the offence shall be surmounted. The righteous will still "hold on his way," and "go on from

JOB, XVIII.

- 9 The righteous also shall hold on his way,
and he that hath ^fclean hands ²shall be stronger ^fPs. 24. 4.
and stronger. ² Heb. *shall add strength.*
- 10 ¶ But as for you all, ^gdo ye return, and come now: ^g ch. 6. 29.
for I cannot find *one wise man* among you.
- 11 ^hMy days are past, my purposes are broken off, ^h ch. 7. 6.
even ³the thoughts of my heart. ³ Heb. *the possessions.*
- 12 They change the night into day:
the light *is* ⁴short because of darkness. ⁴ Heb. *near.*
- 13 If I wait, the grave *is* mine house:
I have made my bed in the darkness.
- 14 I have ⁵said to corruption, Thou *art* my father: ⁵ Heb. *cried,*
to the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister. ^{or, called.}
- 15 And where *is* now my hope?—as for my hope,
who shall see it?
- 16 They shall go down ⁱto the bars of the pit,
when *our* ^krest together *is* in the dust. ⁱ ch. 18. 13.
^k ch. 3. 17, 18,
19.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *Bildad reproveth Job of presumption and impatience. 5 The calamities of the wicked.*

“strength to strength” (Ps. lxxxiv. 7.). There is beneath the surface of sorrow an undercurrent of firm faith.

10. “Do ye return.” That is, “try once again” for better reasons.

12. The true rendering here appears to be, “They (i. e. my friends) “try to make out night to be day, and call light near, when darkness “sets in.”

13—16. Revolting from these unreal consolations, he ends despondently by turning once more to death. For his soul he desires the darkness of Sheol; for his worn and suffering body he expresses, with startling vividness of language, his willingness to moulder into corruption.

16. “They,” &c. That is, according to almost all interpreters, “my “hopes shall go down to the prison-house of Hades,” content, “if only “there be rest for us together in the dust.” The hopes of this life, at any rate, are buried wjth him; but still he has hope of a rest which is not extinction.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The speech of Bildad in this chapter, like the speech of Eliphaz in chap. xv., is made to harp still on the one string. The only distinction from his former utterances lies in a more indignant tone, and in an exclusive reference to the doom of the wicked, as if it alone concerned Job, without any implied promise of deliverance on condition of repentance. It opens with a remonstrance against the obstinacy and scornfulness of Job (vv. 2—4.), and then plunges at once into a description of the danger, the wretchedness, and the destruction of the evil-doer (vv. 5—21.). To Job's speech it is no answer at all.

JOB, XVIII.

1 **T**HEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
 2 How long *will it be ere ye* make an end of words?

Mark, and afterwards we will speak.

^a Ps. 73. 22. 3 Wherefore are we counted ^a as beasts,
and reputed vile in your sight?

^b ch. 13. 14. 4 ^b He teareth ² himself in his anger :
² Heb. *his soul.* shall the earth be forsaken for thee?
 And shall the rock be removed out of his place?

^c Prov. 13. 9. 5 ¶ Yea, ^c the light of the wicked shall be put out,
 & 20. 20. and the spark of his fire shall not shine.
 & 24. 20.

^d ch. 21. 17. 6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle,
 Ps. 18. 28. ^d and his ³ candle shall be put out with him.

³ Or, *lamp.* 7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
 & ^e his own counsel shall cast him down.

^f ch. 22. 10. 8 For ^f he is cast into a net by his own feet,
 Ps. 9. 15. and he walketh upon a snare.
 & 35. 8.

^g ch. 5. 5. 9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel,
⁴ Heb. *hidden.* *and* ^g the robber shall prevail against him.

^h ch. 15. 21. 10 The snare *is* ⁴ laid for him in the ground,
 & 20. 25. and a trap for him in the way.
 Jer. 6. 25. & 20. 3.

& 46. 5. 11 ^h Terrors shall make him afraid on every side,
 & 49. 23.

2. The use of the plural "ye" in this verse is curious. But in the word "ye" Bildad addresses Job, and those who are like him. The controversy grows more general; Job is looked on as pleading the cause of the wicked.

3. The reference is to Job's words in xii. 7, 8. Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 22, "So foolish was I, and ignorant; even as a beast before thee."

4. The idea is, "Shall the fixed laws of God in the world be changed for thy senseless anger?" The phrase "he" (i. e. Job) "teareth himself" (like a wild beast), may be a retort of the accusation of the previous verse.

5—21 form a climax. First, the light of the wicked (the joy and glow of life) is put out (vv. 5, 6.) to the last spark; then his own steps lead him into snares, and restless fear of worse evil to come (vv. 7—11.); next, the plagues of God waste him away, and the fire of heaven scorches him up (vv. 12—16.); lastly, he and his seed perish; his name only remains for warning and astonishment (vv. 17—21.). The picture is terribly true to the life, and drawn (as often in the Psalms and Proverbs) with a stern delight in the punishment of sin. The error lies in the wanton application of it to Job.

6. The latter clause is, more exactly, "the lamp over him" (hanging in his tent) "shall go out."

9. The word rendered "robber" is a word for a trap, set in the way. In every clause a fresh word for "snare" is used, accumulating the ideas of various dangers at every step.

JOB, XVIII.

- and shall ² drive him to his feet. ² Heb.
scatter him.
- 12 His strength shall be hungerbitten,
and ¹ destruction *shall be* ready at his side. i ch. 15. 23.
- 13 It shall devour the ³ strength of his skin :
even the firstborn of death shall devour his
strength. ³ Heb. bars.
- 14 ^k His confidence shall be rooted out of his taber- * ch. 8. 14.
& 11. 20.
Ps. 112. 10.
Prov. 10. 28.
nacle,
and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.
- 15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because *it is*
none of his :
brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.
- 16 ¹ His roots shall be dried up beneath,
and above shall his branch be cut off. i ch. 29. 19.
Isai. 5. 24.
Amos 2. 9.
Mal. 4. 1.
- 17 ^m His remembrance shall perish from the earth,
and he shall have no name in the street. * Ps. 34. 16.
& 109. 13.
Prov. 2. 22.
& 10. 7.
- 18 ⁴ He shall be driven from light into darkness,
and chased out of the world. ⁴ Heb.
They shall
drive him.
- 19 ⁿ He shall neither have son nor nephew among
his people,
nor any remaining in his dwellings. * Isai. 14. 22.
Jer. 22. 30.
- 20 They that come after *him* shall be astonished at ⁵
^o his day,
as they that ⁵ went before ⁶ were affrighted. * Ps. 37. 13.
⁵ Or, lived
with him.
⁶ Heb.
laid hold
on horror.

11. "Shall drive him to his feet." The text gives a good sense, but the more probable meaning is "scare him at every step."

12. "His strength," &c. Many interpreters render, "His calamity glares hungrily on him," which fits in far better with the metaphor of the next verses.

13, 14. "The first-born of death" is the fiercest and worst of the evils that bring death, "the king of terrors," of the next verse. The phrase is metaphorical, but it obviously is intended to glance at the disease which is literally eating away the skin and the life of Job. The notion of identifying the king of terrors with Satan (on the strength of such passages as Heb. ii. 14.), is quite out of place in this book, especially as Satan was expressly forbidden to touch Job's life.

14. "His confidence," &c. More probably, "He shall be rooted out of the tent which is his confidence," i. e. his shelter from the pursuing plague; and that plague shall "bring him to the king of terrors."

15. "It" (that is, the plague) "shall dwell in the tent" whence he is driven out, and which is now "none of his." In the word "brimstone" (see Gen. xix. 24.) there may be allusion, again, to the destruction of Job's flocks and shepherds.

19. "Nephew," i. e. grandson. So in Judg. xii. 14. Isa. xiv. 22. 1 Tim. v. 4.

20. "They that come after," &c. The phrase, as it stands, must be explained (awkwardly enough) as "distant posterity," and "they that went before," as their fathers, Job's contemporaries or immediate de-

JOB, XIX.

21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,
and this *is* the place of *him that* ^p knoweth not
God.

^p Jer. 9. 3.
& 10. 25.
¹ Thess. 4. 5.
² Thess. 1. 8.
Titus 1. 16.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *Job, complaining of his friends' cruelty, sheweth there is misery enough in him to feed their cruelty. 21, 28 He craveth pity. 23 He believeth the resurrection.*

- 1 **T**HEN Job answered and said,
2 How long will ye vex my soul,
and break me in pieces with words?
3 These ^a ten times have ye reproached me:
ye are not ashamed *that* ye ² make yourselves
strange to me.
4 And be it indeed *that* I have erred,
mine error remaineth with myself.
^b Ps. 38. 16. 5 ¶ If indeed ye will ^b magnify *yourselves* against me,
and plead against me my reproach:
6 know now that God hath overthrown me,
and hath compassed me with his net.

^a Gen. 31. 7.
Lev. 26. 26.
² Or, *harden yourselves against me.*

scendants. Probably the true rendering is, "They of the evening land, "the West," and "they of the morning land, the East."

CHAPTER XIX.

The speech of Job seems to disdain all reply to the accusations of Bildad, except an indignant remonstrance against the judgment of his friends, and a claim to be left to God alone (vv. 2—4.). It first (vv. 5—22.) (a) renews the protestation that it is God's inscrutable providence, not his own known sin, which has so grievously afflicted him. (b) Then (vv. 23—27.) in words to which he desires to give a special solemnity, he declares his firm conviction that for him, even in death, there shall arise "a Redeemer," and that he himself, in his own distinct personality, shall "see God;" and (c) (vv. 28, 29.) warns his friends of the judgment that shall wait on the persecutors of one who has the root of the matter in him.

These words of Job form the climax of previous expressions of hope, and are a turning point in his pleadings for himself before man and God. From this time onwards, his grief and repining seem to have spent their greatest force, and comfort dawns on him more and more.

3. "These ten times," used (as in Gen. xxxi. 7.) simply for "over and over again." Similar is the use "for three times and for four," as in Amos i. 3, 6, and the "seven times" of St. Matt. xviii. 21. The numbers three, seven, and ten, were all for different reasons marked numbers to the Hebrews.

"Make yourselves strange to me." Probably, ye "astound or "bewilder me" with your unjust accusations.

4—6. Job clearly implies that, if left to himself, he would not deny his own weakness and sin; but that, if they will condemn him, from their conviction that his special suffering implies special sin, he is driven to reply that it is God Who by His own will has overthrown him, and drawn him into that net, which Bildad had described as woven by his own sin

JOB, XIX.

- 7 Behold, I cry out of ²wrong, but I am not heard: ²Or, violence.
 I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.
- 8 ^c He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, ^c ch. 3. 23.
 and he hath set darkness in my paths. Ps. 88. 8.
- 9 ^d He hath stripped me of my glory,
 and taken the crown *from* my head. d Ps. 89. 44.
- 10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am
 gone:
 and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.
- 11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me,
 and ^e he counteth me unto him as *one of* his ^e ch. 13. 24.
 enemies. Lam. 2. 5.
- 12 His troops come together, and ^fraise up their ^f ch. 30. 12.
 way against me,
 and encamp round about my tabernacle.
- 13 ^g He hath put my brethren far from me,
 and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from ^g Ps. 31. 11.
 me. & 38. 11.
& 69. 8.
& 88. 8, 18.
- 14 My kinsfolk have failed,
 and my familiar friends have forgotten me.
- 15 They that dwell in mine house, and my maids,
 count me for a stranger:—I am an alien in their
 sight.
- 16 I called my servant, and he gave *me* no answer;
 I intreated him with my mouth.
- 17 My breath is strange to my wife,
 though I intreated for the children's *sake* of
³ mine own body. ³ Heb.
my belly.

(see xviii. 8—10.). He shews more and more clearly that he is pleading not against God, but against their representation of Him.

10. "Removed." Torn up root and branch like a tree.

12—19. To the description of the suffering under God's own hand in the previous verse, Job adds the bitterer anguish of the cruelty of men, made the instruments of His wrath. Brethren and friends forsake him, his servants despise and neglect him, his own wife and children loathe him, and—worst of all—not content with desertion, persecute him as one smitten of God.

17. The latter clause is difficult. A version, like that of the text, may stand, "I cried (in vain) to the children of my body," and, if this be so, this may be, as some interpret it, a yearning for the dead. Probably however, the version adopted by most interpreters, and preserving the parallelism of the passage is "I am offensive to the children of my body." To get over the difficulty of the allusion to those who are dead, this last phrase has been interpreted "children of my womb," that is, the womb that bare me, or in reference to the next verse "children of my house." But this seems forced and needless. Job is speaking of the cruelty of those

JOB, XIX.

- ² Or, *the wicked.* 18 Yea, ^{2h} young children despised me ;
^b 2 Kin. 2. 23. I arose, and they spake against me.
- ⁱ Ps. 41. 9. 19 ⁱ All ³ my inward friends abhorred me :
 & 55. 13, 14, and they whom I loved are turned against me.
 20.
- ³ Heb. *the men of* 20 ^k My bone cleaveth to my skin ⁴ and to my flesh,
my secret. and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.
^k ch. 30. 30.
- 21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my
 Pa. 102. 5.
 Lam. 4. 8.
⁴ Or, as. friends ;
⁴ ch. 1. 11. ¹ for the hand of God hath touched me.
 Ps. 38. 2.
- ^m Ps. 69. 26. 22 Why do ye ^m persecute me as God,
 and are not satisfied with my flesh ?
- ⁵ Heb. *Who* 23 ¶ ⁵ Oh that my words were now written !
will give, &c. oh that they were printed in a book !
- 24 That they were graven with an iron pen
 and lead in the rock for ever !
- 25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth,

nearest and dearest, and the reference to his wife suggests the idea of children, without reference to the actual facts of his condition.

19. "My inward friends," i.e. as in the margin, "The men of my "secret" counsel. The expression is similar to those used in Ps. xli. 9 ; lv. 13, 14, but not identical with them.

20. "With the skin of my teeth." The proverbial sense in which this phrase is commonly used is probably correct ; "with no skin left, except "the skin (the *periosteum*) of the teeth," i.e. all else consumed by disease.

23, 24. The solemnity of this exordium warns us to fix our attention as on words that express the one main thought of Job's mind. Whatever else perishes as "spoken to the wind," this is to be recorded in the roll of a parchment, and, as if this were not enough, to be graven on a rock, with characters filled up with lead, after the manner of the ancient inscriptions.

25—27. In dwelling on this famous passage, it will be well first to examine the exact wording. (a) In ver. 25 the word "Redeemer" is the word which is used for "a deliverer," and applied to God in Ps. xix. 14. Isa. lix. 20 in that sense. Especially however it is used in Num. xxxv. 12, for the "Avenger of blood," i.e. (according to the universal Oriental custom, which the Mosaic Law simply accepted and limited) the nearest kinsman, whose duty it was to vindicate the dead, either by accepting the atonement for his death, or by avenging him. This sense, rather than the general sense of "Deliverer," or the derivative sense of "Redeemer," seems to suit both the context in which Job desires not deliverance or ransom, but vindication, and his previous utterances of longing for a Daysman (ix. 33.), of confidence of a witness in heaven (xvi. 19.), of prayer to God to be a witness for Him before Himself (xvi. 21.); and especially his entreaty that his blood may not be covered (xvi. 18.). It is notable that, while Job looks to God only as his witness, he here uses a phrase which implies kinship between his Avenger and himself. While it would be an anachronism to attribute to him anything like the fulness of the sense in which we use this passage, it is clear, first,

- and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon ² the earth :
 26 ² and *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*,
 yet ^a in my flesh shall I see God :
 27 whom I shall see for myself,
 and mine eyes shall behold, and not ³ another ;
⁴ *though* my reins be consumed ⁵ within me.

² Or, *After I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God.*
^a Ps. 17, 15,
 1 Cor. 13, 12.
¹ John 3, 2.
³ Heb.
a stranger.
⁴ Or, *my*
⁵ Heb. *in my bosom.*

reins within me are consumed with earnest desire [for that day.] ⁵ Heb. *in my bosom.*

that even he grasps the rudimentary elements of the truth revealed fully in the Incarnation of a Mediator, who must be in some mysterious way both God and man, and next, that this is a passage in which the Spirit of God speaks to after-ages in words to be unfolded by further knowledge.

(b) "**Upon the earth,**" appears to mean "over the dust" of the grave, to vindicate the dead.

(c) The insertion of the word "**worms**" is unwarranted. The sense simply is "after my skin, though torn to pieces," that is, "after it has been "destroyed by wasting disease." Then comes the only important ambiguity in the whole passage. In the phrase "**Out of my flesh shall I see God,**" the words "out of my flesh," may mean "released from the flesh," or, "looking from out of a body," i. e. as in our Version, "in my flesh." It seems clear from this passage, and from Job's constant longing for death and looking on beyond it, that the "**latter day**" is after death ; the one question is whether the future vision of God is looked forward as to be given in, or out of, the body. Probably to Job the question, solved to us by fuller revelation, was an insoluble mystery. The passage shews a fixed conviction of his own personal identity in the hereafter, agreeing with the belief underlying even the gloomiest pictures of Sheol already drawn, and this conviction is seldom vividly realized without some belief in a bodily resurrection. But, looking to such passages as xvii. 14—16, and to the desire so constantly expressed to be released from the flesh, it seems doubtful, whether the idea of being "out of the body," taken by most modern critics, is not more probable, than the idea of "in the body," adopted by the Vulgate and the Targums, perhaps transferring to this passage the knowledge derived from other sources.

(d) "**Though my reins,**" &c. The word "though" should not be inserted. The sense is, "my reins are consumed in me," with longing for that glorious day (see *margin*).

The passage, therefore, taken as a whole, clearly contains, first, a conviction of the arising of an Avenger, or witness, for man, akin to him, and yet identified with God ; next, a belief in a future vision of God, after death, "whether in or out of the body we cannot tell ;" lastly, an earnest longing for the latter day, as a day in which God will justify His servants. Hence our reading of it in the full light of the Gospel (as in its use, side by side with John xi. 25, in the Burial Service) appears, in all points except the knowledge of the Resurrection of the body, not to bring in absolutely new truth, but simply to unfold what in the original is implied with more or less of clearness. In it, as in so many other passages of the Old Testament, God speaks to us more fully than to those who first received or uttered it.

JOB, XX.

^o ver. 22.

² Or, and what root of matter is found in me?

^p Ps. 58. 10, 11.

- 28 ¶ But ye should say, ^o Why persecute we him, ² seeing the root of the matter is found in me?
- 29 Be ye afraid of the sword :
for wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword,
^p that ye may know *there is* a judgment.

CHAPTER XX.

Zophar sheweth the state and portion of the wicked.

1 **T**HEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for *this* ² I make haste.

3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

4 ¶ Knowest thou *not* this of old,—since man was placed upon earth,

5 ^a that the triumphing of the wicked *is* ³ short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?

6 ^b Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the ⁴ clouds;

^a Ps. 37. 35, 36.

³ Heb. from near.

^b Is. 14. 13, 14.

⁴ Obad. 3, 4.

⁴ Heb. cloud.

28, 29. The sense probably is—

“If ye shall say, ‘How shall we persecute him?’

“And if the root of the matter be found in me,

“be afraid of the sword.

“For wrath bringeth the vengeance of the sword,

“that so ye may know that there is a judgment.”

Job retorts on his friends the threat of God’s judgment, which they had so freely used against him, for their unfair and unmerciful judgment of him.

CHAPTER XX.

The speech of Zophar here given (as in the case of his former utterance), seems to follow exactly in the track of Bildad, except that the style is somewhat harsher, and the picture, both of the prosperity and the fall of the wicked, coarser and more material. It is equally regardless of Job’s pleadings, equally incapable of going beyond the old common-places, on which the friends have relied from the beginning.

After a short indignant opening (vv. 2, 3.), it depicts first (vv. 4—11.) the short-lived emptiness of the greatness of the wicked; next (vv. 12—22.), the hollowness of his prosperity, even while it lasts, at once unsatisfying and sickening to his soul; lastly (vv. 23—29.), the vengeance of God on him, and the shameful revelation of his iniquity before heaven and earth.

2. “Therefore.” This beginning is purposely abrupt. The reference clearly is to the threat contained in the last words of Job, which he calls (in ver. 3.) the “check of my reproach;” that is, the reproach meant to close his lips. To defy this, Zophar will speak.

JOB, XX.

- 7 *yet* he shall perish for ever ^e like his own dung : ^c P^{s.} 83. 10
 they which have seen him shall say, Where is
 he ?
- 8 He shall fly away ^d as a dream, and shall not be ^d found : ^d P^{s.} 73. 20.
 & 90. 5.
 yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the
 night.
- 9 ^e The eye also *which* saw him shall *see him* no ^e more ; ^e ch. 7. 8, 10.
 & 8. 14.
 neither shall his place any more behold him. ^e P^{s.} 37. 36.
 & 103. 16.
- 10 ² His children shall seek to please the poor,
 and his hands ^f shall restore their goods. ² Or, *The
 poor shall
 oppress his
 children.*
- 11 His bones are full of ^g *the sin* of his youth,
^h which shall lie down with him in the dust. ^f ver. 18.
^g ch. 13. 26.
^h P^{s.} 25. 7.
^h ch. 21. 26.
- 12 ¶ Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,
though he hide it under his tongue ;
- 13 *though* he spare it, and forsake it not ;
 but keep it still ³ within his mouth :
- 14 *yet* his meat in his bowels is turned,
it is the gall of asps within him. ³ Heb. *in
 the midst of
 his palate.*
- 15 He hath swallowed down riches,
 and he shall vomit them up again :
 God shall cast them out of his belly.

7. "Like his own dung." The speaker points to the dunghill on which Job sat. But the reference is not to the foulness of the dung, but to the fact that, when dried, it is used for fuel. See Ezek. iv. 12, "Thou shalt bake it with dung . . . in their sight." For this (see Ezek. iv. 15.) cow-dung is ordinarily used, and this is probably intended here. Hence the figure is less coarse than it seems to us, and signifies (just as in 1 Kings xiv. 10. Ps. lxxxiii. 10. Zeph. i. 17.), transitoriness and vileness of use.

10. "His children shall seek to please." That is, humble themselves before "the poor," whom he has made poor. The marginal reading, however, "the poor shall oppress his children," has some authority, and is simpler, though less forcible.

11. The insertion of the words "of the sin," in which our Version follows the Vulgate, is inadmissible ; it appears to arise from putting together two different meanings of the Hebrew word, one (as in Ps. xc. 8.) signifying "secret things," taken for "secret sins," and the other meaning "of his youth." The latter is probably the correct reading. Hence the sense is, "His bones are full of youth ; it shall go down with him into "the dust," by sudden fall in his prime.

13. "Though he spare it," &c. The metaphor of the previous verse is continued, "though he gloat over his wickedness, and make it last" in his mouth.

JOB, XX.

- 16 He shall suck the poison of asps :
the viper's tongue shall slay him.
- ¹ Ps. 36. 9. Jer. 17. 6. 17 He shall not see ¹ the rivers,
² the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.
- ² Or, *streaming brooks.*
^k ver. 10, 15. 18 That which he laboured for ^k shall he restore,
and shall not swallow *it* down :
³ according to *his* substance *shall* the restitution
be,
and he shall not rejoice *therein*.
- ³ Heb. *according to the substance of his exchange.*
⁴ Heb. *crushed.* 19. Because he hath ⁴ oppressed *and* hath forsaken
the poor ;
because he hath violently taken away an house
which he builded not ;
- ¹ Eccles. 5. 13, 14. 20 ¹ surely he shall not ⁵ feel quietness in his belly,
he shall not save of that which he desired.
- ⁵ Heb. *know.* 21 ⁶ There shall none of his meat be left ;
therefore shall no man look for his goods.
- ⁶ Or, *There shall be none left for his meat.* 22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in
straits :
every hand of the ⁷ wicked shall come upon him.
- ⁷ Or, *troublesome.* 23 ¶ *When* he is about to fill his belly,
God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him,
and shall rain *it* upon him ^m while he is eating.
- ^m Num. 11. 33. Ps. 78, 30, 31. 24 ⁿ He shall flee from the iron weapon,
and the bow of steel shall strike him through.
- ⁿ Isai. 24. 18. Jer. 48. 43. Amos 5. 19. 25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body ;

16. The true sense is, (As) "He sucked in the poison of asps," (so) "the viper's tongue shall slay him." As he has sown, so shall he reap.

17. The figure is well known as the emblem of prosperity given by God. See Exod. iii. 8, 17. Deut. vi. 3. Jer. xi. 5. Ezek. xx. 6, 15. &c.

18. "According to his substance," &c. i. e. All that he has amassed he shall have to restore.

20, 21. The sense is obscured by confusion of tenses in our Version. It should run thus—

- "He knew no rest in his belly ;
- "he shall not save what he cherishes most.
- "he left nothing safe from his greediness ;
- "his prosperity shall not endure."

22. "The wicked." The marginal reading is nearer the sense : "the troublesome or importunate," that is, "the needy" (whom he has made needy, vv. 10, 19.).

23. The original is, "It shall be, that in order to fill his belly, God," &c. There is a bitter sarcasm here. He shall have his fill of one thing only, and that is the wrath of God.

25 should run thus, "He draws it out ; it" (the arrow) "comes out of

JOB, XXI.

- yea, ° the glittering sword cometh out of his gall : ° ch. 16. 13.
^p terrors *are* upon him. p ch. 18. 11.
- 26 All darkness *shall be* hid in his secret places:
^q a fire not blown shall consume him ; q Ps. 21. 9.
 it shall go ill with him that is left in his taber-
 nacle.
- 27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity ;
 and the earth shall rise up against him.
- 28 The increase of his house shall depart,
and his goods shall flow away in the day of his
 wrath.
- 29 ^r This *is* the portion of a wicked man from God, r ch. 27. 13.
 and the heritage ² appointed unto him by God. & 31. 2, 3.
2 Heb. of
his decree
from God.

CHAPTER XXI.

¹ Job sheweth that even in the judgment of man he hath reason to be grieved.
⁷ Sometimes the wicked do so prosper, as they despise God. ¹⁶ Sometimes
 their destruction is manifest. ²² The happy and unhappy are alike in
 death. ²⁷ The judgment of the wicked is in another world.

- 1 **B**UT Job answered and said,
 2 Hear diligently my speech,
 and let this be your consolations.
 3 Suffer me that I may speak ;
 and after that I have spoken, ^a mock on. a ch. 16. 10.
& 17. 2.

“his body,” &c. The “terrors” are the terrors of death. See xviii.
 14.

26 should be—

“Darkness (i. e. destruction) is kept for his treasures.

“A fire, not blown by man, shall consume them.”

27 is evidently a taunting reference to Job’s call for a witness in
 heaven (xvi. 18, 19.). Both heaven and earth shall bear witness against him.

CHAPTER XXI.

In ch. xxi. Job, with calmer and more determined assertion, dealing
 with his friends more in disdain than in anger, and towards God assum-
 ing an attitude of perplexed but not uprooted faith, reiterates his state-
 ment, that facts prove the falsity of the idea of perfect retribution on
 earth, and rejects the vain explanation which takes refuge in the visita-
 tion of the sins of the father on the children. Why this is, who can tell ?
 Still, “May the counsel of the wicked be far from me !”

After an entreaty to listen really to what he has to say (vv. 2, 3.),
 (1) he states, as a perplexity which bewilders him (vv. 4—6.), the un-
 doubted fact of the prosperity of the wicked, of which he draws a picture
 purposely contrasted with the one previously drawn by the friends (vv.
 7—18.), and scorns as unreal the fictitious punishment of a man in
 his children (vv. 19—21.). (2) All is (he adds) inscrutable, except to
 God ; one has sorrow, another happiness, and both die alike (vv.
 22—26.). (3) The assertions of the friends are contradicted by facts,
 which he who runs may read. What avail either their accusations or
 the hopes they hold out ? (vv. 27—34.)

4 As for me, *is* my complaint to man?
And if *it were so*, why should not my spirit be
 ²troubled?

² Heb. shortened?

5 ³Mark me, and be astonished,
 ^band lay *your* hand upon *your* mouth.

³ Heb. Look unto me.
^b Judg. 18. 19.
ch. 23. 9.
& 40. 4.
Ps. 33. 9.

6 Even when I remember I am afraid,
and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

^c ch. 12. 6.
Ps. 17. 10,
14.
& 73. 3, 12.
Jer. 12. 1.
Hab. 1. 16.

7 ¶ ^cWherefore do the wicked live,
become old, yea, are mighty in power?

8 Their seed is established in their sight with them,
and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses ⁴are safe from fear,
 ^dneither *is* the rod of God upon them.

⁴ Heb. are peace from fear.
^d Ps. 73. 5.

10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not;
their cow calveth, and ^ecasteth not her calf.

11 They send forth their little ones like a flock,
and their children dance.

12 They take the timbrel and harp,
and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

^f ch. 36. 11.
⁵ Or, in mirth.

13 They ^fspend their days ⁵in wealth,
and in a moment go down to the grave.

^g ch. 22. 17.

14 ^gTherefore they say unto God, Depart from us;
for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

^h Ex. 5. 2.
ch. 34. 9.

15 ^hWhat *is* the Almighty, that we should serve
 him?

ⁱ ch. 35. 3.
Mal. 3. 14.

And ⁱwhat profit should we have, if we pray
 unto him?

16 ¶ Lo, their good *is* not in their hand:

4. "Is my complaint to man?" Some read, "of man," meaning that it is the bitterest part of Job's trouble that he complains of God. But our Version seems right. The sense is, "If my complaint be before 'the tribunal of mere human knowledge' (as in the common phrase 'after the manner of men'), how shall I fail to be in despair?"

6, 7. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3, &c.: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone: my steps had well-nigh slipt. For I was envious at the foolish; when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

13. So again in Ps. lxxiii. 4 (and Isa. lviii. 6.), "There are no bands in their death." Sudden painless death is naturally, in Job's longing for the rest of the grave, looked upon as a blessing.

14. Compare in ch. i. 5, 11; ii. 9, the phrase "Bid farewell to God" in the time of prosperity. They care not to know God, to serve Him, or to pray to Him. They give Him (that is) neither their thought, their action, nor their devotion.

16. "Their good is not in their hand," or, "by their hand." The

JOB, XXI.

- ^k the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
- 17 ¹ How oft is the ² candle of the wicked put out!
and *how oft* cometh their destruction upon them!
God ^m distributeth sorrows in his anger.
- 18 ⁿ They are as stubble before the wind,
and as chaff that the storm ³ carrieth away.
- 19 God layeth up ⁴ his iniquity ^o for his children:
he rewardeth him, and he shall know *it*.
- 20 His eyes shall see his destruction,
and ^p he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
- 21 For what pleasure *hath* he in his house after him,
when the number of his months is cut off in the
midst?
- 22 ¶ ^q Shall *any* teach God knowledge?
Seeing he judgeth those that are high.
- 23 One dieth ⁵ in his full strength,—being wholly
at ease and quiet.
- 24 His ⁶ breasts are full of milk,
and his bones are moistened with marrow.

* ch. 22. 18.
Ps. 1. 1.
Prov. 1. 10.
¹ ch. 18. 6.
² Or, *lamp*.
^m Luke 12.
46.
ⁿ Ps. 1. 4.
& 35. 5.
Isai. 17. 13.
& 29. 5.
Hos. 13. 3.
³ Heb. *steal-
eth away*.
⁴ That is,
*the punish-
ment of his
iniquity*.
^o Ex. 20. 5.
^p Ps. 75. 8.
Isai. 51. 17.
Jer. 25. 15.
Rev. 14. 10.
& 19. 15.
^q Isai. 40. 13.
& 45. 9.
Rom. 11. 34.
1 Cor. 2. 16.
⁵ Heb.
*in his very
perfection,
or, in the
strength of
his perfec-
tion*.
⁶ Or,
milk pails.

connection is difficult. Some consider this as a question, "Is not their "good actually grasped and enjoyed?" But probably the whole verse is parenthetical, and the sense expresses Job's abhorrence of the presumption of the previous verses: "Lo! I know that their good is not their "own," but God's gift; "May the thoughts of the wicked be far from "me!" In any case, the latter clause is a gleam of faith in perplexity,—one of the signs that Job is coming to his true self.

17, 18 are really interrogative, and their sense is therefore directly opposed to that which our Version suggests: "How often does it really "happen (as you say) that the candle of the wicked is put out . . . that "God sendeth sorrows on them . . . that they are as stubble before "the wind?"

19, 20 are again misunderstood in our Version. The true sense is the offering of a plea by the friends, and Job's rejection of it.

"God (you say) layeth up iniquity for His children."

"Let Him repay it to himself, that he may know it!"

"Let his own eyes see his destruction;

"Let him drink himself the wrath of the Almighty!"

Job does not deny—what all observation proves—that the sins of fathers in their effect are visited on their children. He denies that this is a substantial punishment of the dead father.

22. "Those that are high." That is, the Angels of heaven. Comp. iv. 18; xv. 15.

24. "His breasts." This is certainly wrong. The margin, his "milk pails," or troughs, may be right; but another rendering "his "belly is full of milk" has some probability, and fits in better with the second clause.

JOB, XXI.

- 25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul,
and never eateth with pleasure.
- ^r ch. 20. 11. 26 They shall ^r lie down alike in the dust,
Eccles. 9. 2. and the worms shall cover them.
- 27 ¶ Behold, I know your thoughts,
and the devices *which* ye wrongfully imagine
against me.
- ^s ch. 20. 7. 28 For ye say, ^s Where *is* the house of the prince?
² Heb. *the tent of the tabernacles of the wicked.* And where *are* ² the dwelling places of the
wicked?
- 29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way?
And do ye not know their tokens,
- ^t Prov. 16. 4. 30 ^t that the wicked is reserved to the day of de-
2 Pet. 2. 9. struction?
- ³ Heb. *the day of wraths.* They shall be brought forth to ³ the day of
wrath.
- ^u Gal. 2. 11. 31 Who shall declare his way ^u to his face?
And who shall repay him *what* he hath done?
- ⁴ Heb. *graves.* 32 Yet shall he be brought to the ⁴ grave,
and shall ⁵ remain in the tomb.
- ⁵ Heb. *watch in the heap.* 33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him,
and ^x every man shall draw after him,
³ Heb. 9. 27. as *there are* innumerable before him.
- 34 How then comfort ye me in vain,
⁶ Heb. *transgression?* seeing in your answers there remaineth ⁶ false-
hood?

27. "The devices." That is, the false pretences, on which to ground accusations.

29, 30. In the latter of these verses, the substitution of the word "to" for "in" reverses the sense. Job appeals to what even a careless passer-by must see, viz. that "the wicked is spared in the day of destruction, and "taken out of the way in the day of wrath." In the excitement of his argument he goes beyond even what he himself had said of the indiscriminating fate of good and evil, and exaggerates on the opposite side.

31. "His way." That is, the way of the wicked. "Who shall expose "his sin to his face?"

32. "Shall remain," &c. A striking metaphor is here lost. The original has "shall watch over his tomb." There is an allusion either to the effigy, as on an Egyptian sarcophagus, or to the Arab custom of burying a chief on high ground near the camp, that "his eye may see "his people."

33. "The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him." The grave (that is) shall be honoured and restful. "Every man shall draw after "him," &c. His children shall be gathered to him, as he to his fathers.

JOB, XXII.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *Eliphaz sheweth that man's goodness profiteth not God. 5 He accuseth Job of divers sins. 21 He exhorteth him to repentance, with promises of mercy.*

1 **W**HEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 ^a Can a man be profitable unto God,

² as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

3 *Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?*

Or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee?

Will he enter with thee into judgment?

5 ¶ *Is not thy wickedness great?—and thine iniquities infinite?*

6 For thou hast ^b taken a pledge from thy brother for nought,

^a ch. 35. 7.
Ps. 16. 2.
Luke 17. 10.
² Or, if he may be profitable, doth his good success depend thereon?

^b Ex. 22. 26, 27.
Deut. 24. 10, &c.
ch. 24. 3, 9.
Ezek. 18. 12.

CHAPTER XXII.

In ch. xxii. Eliphaz, after reproving Job for claiming merit before God, as though his service could profit Him, is driven (by what seems to him a logical necessity) to accuse Job, without proof, of having committed definite sins in the past, which God's searching judgment has now unexpectedly found out; and from this he passes once more to urge repentance, and promise blessing to the penitent.

In vv. 2—4, (a) he deals with the nothingness of man's service; (b) in vv. 5—11, enumerates Job's supposed sins; (c) in vv. 12—20, accuses him of supposing, like the evil men of old, that God is too high to see man's evil deeds, and tells how the righteous rejoice when they see the vengeance; (d) in vv. 21—30 (as in his first speech), he draws a beautiful picture of the restored wealth and peace which await penitence.

In his speech there is again much general truth, especially in the rebuke of any claim of human merit before God. In this, indeed, it comes near Job's actual error; but it is utterly vitiated by gratuitous imputation of special sins to him.

2. "As he that is," &c. It should be, "No, he that is wise profits "but himself."

4. "For fear of Thee." The sense here is doubtful; it may be as in our Version, or (as some modern interpreters give it) "For thy "fear of Him," or, "thy piety." In the former case, the verse is connected with ver. 3, "Is it for fear of thee" (lest thou shouldst be too great) "that He overthrows thee?" as the heathen fancied that their gods acted through envy of man's greatness and happiness. In the latter case, the verse is a transition to the next verse, "It cannot be for thy "goodness; it must therefore be for thy evil-doing."

6—9. The sins thus imputed to Job (which in ch. xxxi. he indig-

- ² Heb. *stripped the clothes of the naked.*
^c See chap. 31. 17.
 Deut. 15. 7, &c.
 Is. 58. 7.
 Ezek. 18. 7, 16.
 Matt. 25. 42.
³ Heb. *the man of arm.*
⁴ Heb. *eminent, or, accepted for countenance.*
 d ch. 31. 21.
 Isai. 10. 2.
 Ezek. 22. 7.
^e ch. 18. 8, 9, 10, & 19. 6.
^f Ps. 63. 1, 2, & 124. 4.
 Lam. 3. 54.
⁵ Heb. *the head of the stars.*
⁶ Or, *What.*
^g Ps. 10. 11. & 59. 7. & 73. 11. & 94. 7.
^h Ps. 139. 11, 12.
ⁱ ch. 15. 32. Ps. 55. 23. & 102. 24.
 Eccles. 7. 17.
⁷ Heb. *a flood was poured upon their foundation,* Gen. 7. 11. 2 Pet. 2. 5.
- and ² stripped the naked of their clothing.
 7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink; and thou ^c hast withholden bread from the hungry.
 8 But *as for* ³ the mighty man, he had the earth; and the ⁴ honourable man dwelt in it.
 9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of ^d the fatherless have been broken.
 10 Therefore ^e snares *are* round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;
 11 or, darkness, *that* thou canst not see; and abundance of ^f waters cover thee.
 12 ¶ *Is* not God in the height of heaven? And behold ⁵ the height of the stars, how high they are!
 13 And thou sayest, ^{6g} How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud?
 14 ^h Thick clouds *are* a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.
 15 Hast thou marked the old way—which wicked men have trodden?
 16 Which ⁱ were cut down out of time, ⁷ whose foundation was overflown with a flood:

nantly repudiates), are exactly those most unworthy of an Eastern chief. First (ver. 6.), unmercifulness and extortion in exacting the pledge of a debtor, so as to strip the last rag from the naked. On this subject see the merciful provisions of the Mosaic law (Exod. xxii. 26, 27. Deut. xxiv. 6, 10—13, 17.). Next (ver. 7.), want of charitable hospitality to the starving. Thirdly (ver. 8.), connivance at the oppression of the strong and the noble, which drives the poor out of the land. Lastly, refusal to help or protect the widow and the orphan in their distress (ver. 9.).

11. Our Version loses the vividness of the original:

“What! seest thou not the darkness,
 and the overflowing of waters that cover thee?”

13. There is again a strong resemblance to Ps. lxxiii. 11: “And they say, How doth God know?” The clouds round God’s mysterious Presence, as they prevent man from seeing God, so are looked upon as hiding from Him the little deeds of man.

15, 16. It seems almost impossible to doubt that there is here an allusion to the old and universal tradition of the Flood, as the special and typical manifestation of God’s judgment on the godless enjoyers of worldly prosperity (found, as it certainly is, in the records of representatives of all the three great races of mankind). In that sense it is referred to by our Lord Himself (in St. Matt. xxiv. 37—39.), and by St. Peter (2 St. Pet. iii. 4—6.).

JOB, XXII.

- 17 ^k which said unto God, Depart from us : ^k ch. 21. 14.
 and ^l what can the Almighty do ² for them ? ^l Ps. 4. 6.
- 18 Yet he filled their houses with good *things* : ² Or, *to them* ?
 but ^m the counsel of the wicked is far from me. ^m ch. 21. 16.
- 19 ⁿ The righteous see *it*, and are glad : ⁿ Ps. 53. 10.
 and the innocent laugh them to scorn. & 107. 42.
- 20 Whereas our ³ substance is not cut down,
 but ⁴ the remnant of them the fire consumeth. ³ Or, *estate*.
- 21 ¶ Acquaint now thyself ⁵ with him, and ^o be at ⁵ peace : ⁴ Or, *their excellency*.
 thereby good shall come unto thee. ⁵ That is, *with God*.
- 22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,
 and ^p lay up his words in thine heart. ^o Isai. 27. 5.
- 23 ^q If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be ^q built up,
 thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy taber- ^p Ps. 119. 11.
 nacles. ^q ch. 8. 5, 6.
- 24 Then shalt thou ^r lay up gold ⁶ as dust,
 and the *gold* of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. & 11. 13, 14.
- 25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy ⁷ defence,
 and thou shalt have ⁸ plenty of silver. ^r 2 Chr. 1. 15.
- 26 For then shalt thou have thy ^s delight in the ^s Almighty,
 and ^t shalt lift up thy face unto God. ⁶ Or, *on the dust*.

18. The latter clause should be, "May the counsel of the wicked be "far from me," the same exclamation of pious abhorrence, even in perplexity, which Job had used in ch. xxi. 16. Possibly it was a familiar exclamation; possibly Eliphaz takes it up, as if Job were unworthy to use it.

19, 20. The idea is exactly as in Ps. lii. 6; lviii. 10, 11. The rejoicing over the fall of the wicked, as shewing the righteousness of God, is a constant idea in the Old Testament; in the New, it is Christianized by tempering all rejoicing over the punishment of the sin with unflinching pity for the sinner. Ver. 20, which contains the words of the righteous in this their rejoicing, should be translated—

"See! our adversaries are cast down!

"The fire devours the last remnant of them."

21. "Acquaint," i. e. Reconcile thyself with God.

24 appears to be mistranslated. It should probably be an exhortation to cast away trust in earthly riches, and seek the true gold (betraying, perhaps unconsciously, some secret love of the riches thus disclaimed).

"If thou throw away the gold into the dust,

"and the gold of Ophir among the pebbles of the brooks,

"and if the Almighty shall be thy gold,

"and silver of the purest strength," &c. &c.

JOB, XXIII.

- ^u Ps. 50. 14, 15.
 Isai. 58. 9.
- 27 ^u Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him,
 and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy
 vows.
- 28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be
 established unto thee :
 and the light shall shine upon thy ways.
- ^x Prov. 29. 23.
 James 4. 6.
 1 Pet. 5. 5.
- 29 When *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say,
There is lifting up ;
 and ^x he shall save ² the humble person.
- ² Heb. *him that hath low eyes.*
³ Or, *The innocent shall deliver the island,*
 Gen. 18. 26,
 &c.
- 30 ³ He shall deliver the island of the innocent :
 and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

CHAPTER XXIII.

¹ Job longeth to appear before God, 6 in confidence of his mercy. 8 God, who is invisible, observeth our ways. 11 Job's innocency. 13 God's decree is immutable.

- 1 **T**HEN Job answered and said,
 2 Even to day *is* my complaint bitter :
² my stroke is heavier than my groaning.
- 3 ^a Oh that I knew where I might find him !
that I might come even to his seat !
- 4 I would order *my* cause before him,
 and fill my mouth with arguments.

² Heb.
my hand.
^a ch. 13. 3.
 & 16. 21.

29, 30 add to the promises of restoration (ver. 23.), of peace with God (ver. 24.), of prayer and vows accepted (ver. 25.), and of success in all resolves (ver. 26.), the crowning blessings of ability, by God's blessing, to exalt the cast down, and even (for so ver. 30 should be rendered) "to save the not guiltless, to save him by the purity of thy "hands."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Chh. xxiii. xxiv. contain Job's next utterance. It is hardly an answer to Eliphaz, for Job seems to disdain to notice his gratuitous accusations ; unless, perhaps, in the picture drawn (in ch. xxiv.) of the prosperity of the wicked, there may be an ironical parallel to Eliphaz's description of the blessing of the righteous. He turns wholly to God, first (in ch. xxiii.), longing in vain to find Him, that he might plead with Him in confidence of right doing, but sinking down despondently before His inscrutable arbitrary decree ; then (in ch. xxiv.) describing vividly and bitterly all the forms of wrong-doing which prosper on earth, and refusing to account even the sudden passing away of ill-deserved prosperity, in that death which is common to all, as a sufficient retribution.

In ch. xxiii. vv. 2—7, (*a*) Job expresses his confidence that, face to face with God, he might yet plead ; in vv. 8—14, (*b*) he describes the inscrutable mystery of His ways, and the arbitrary fixity of His decree ; in vv. 15—17 (*c*) he pours out his consequent despair. Then (*d*) in xxiv. vv. 1—13, he dwells on the open oppression and misery, against which men cry to God in vain ; in vv. 14—17 (*e*) he adds the description of secret sin successfully carried out ; in vv. 18—21 (*f*) he allows the truth of that sudden passing away of the wicked (on which his friends

JOB, XXIII.

- 5 I would know the words *which* he would answer
me,
and understand what he would say unto me.
- 6 ^b Will he plead against me with *his* great power? ^b Is. 27. 4, 8.
& 57. 16.
No; but he would put *strength* in me.
- 7 There the righteous might dispute with him;
so should I be delivered for ever from my
judge.
- 8 ¶ ^c Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*; ^c ch. 9. 11.
and backward, but I cannot perceive him:
9 on the left hand, where he doth work, but I can-
not behold *him*:
he hideth himself on the right hand, that I can-
not see *him*:
- 10 but he ^d knoweth ² the way that I take: ^d Ps. 139. 1,
2, 3.
when ^e he hath tried me, I shall come forth as ² Heb. the
way that is
with me.
gold.
- 11 ^f My foot hath held his steps,
his way have I kept, and not declined. ^f Ps. 17. 3.
& 66. 10.
Jam. 1. 12.
r Ps. 44. 18.

had dwelt); but in vv. 22—25 (*g*) he denies that it is a sufficient explanation of the mystery of imperfect retribution.

6. "No; but He would," &c. It should probably be, "No; He "would (deign to) regard me."

6—14. Job's friends had dwelt simply on the Almightyness of God, as a sufficient reason to enforce utter submission, and to forbid all pleading for justice. Job feels that this is "false witness for God;" that, if he could but be brought before Him, "the Judge of all the "earth must do right." But he searches on all sides in vain; he only finds God's ways and nature inscrutable; he only sees that his efforts to serve Him alter not His decree. Therefore he is in despair. So the prophet cries out, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O Lord "God of Israel" (Isa. xlv. 15.).

7. "There," &c. It should be, "There would a just man (i. e. Job "himself) be pleading before Him," and (he adds) "I should be ac-
quitted by my judge."

10. "But He knoweth," &c. The use of the word "but" greatly obscures the sense. It is, "Indeed He knoweth," &c. For Job's terrible idea is that his innocence is known, and, if tried, will come out as gold from the furnace; but yet (ver. 13.) that this changes not God's will towards him, because it is simply an inexorable fate. In that idea lies the sorest temptation to "curse God and die." Whenever men hold that "of God's will there is no reason except His will," because they cannot tell how His Almighty power can be at any point resisted, they must (except by a noble inconsistency) turn to obduracy and despair. In proportion as they recognise a living God, they have a sense of injustice, which to the mere fatalist is unknown. Note here the wise caution of our seventeenth Article.

JOB, XXIV.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips ;

² Heb. *I have hid, or, laid up.*
^g John 4. 32, 34. ² I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than ³ my necessary *food*.

13 But he *is* in one *mind*, and ^h who can turn him? And *what* ⁱ his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.

³ Or, *my appointed portion.*
^h ch. 9. 12, 13. & 12. 14. Rom. 9. 19. ⁱ Ps. 115. 3. ^k 1 Thes. 3. 3.
 14 For he performeth *the thing that is* ^k appointed for me :

and many such *things are* with him.

15 ¶ Therefore am I troubled at his presence : when I consider, I am afraid of him.

^j Ps. 22. 14. 16 For God ^l maketh my heart soft,—and the Almighty troubleth me :

17 because I was not cut off before the darkness, *neither* hath he covered the darkness from my face.

CHAPTER XXIV.

¹ *Wickedness goeth often unpunished.* 17 *There is a secret judgment for the wicked.*

^a Acts 1. 7. 1 **W**HY, seeing ^a times are not hidden from the Almighty,

^b Deut. 19. 14. & 27. 17. Prov. 22. 23. & 23. 10. Hos. 5. 10. do they that know him not see his days?

2 *Some* remove the ^b landmarks ; they violently take away flocks, and ² feed *thereof*.
² Or, feed them.

12. "More than my necessary food." It should be, "more than my own set will."

14. "Many such things," &c. That is, either, "much more is yet to come on me," or, "such is the ordinary lot of man." Probably the latter sense is preferable.

16. "Soft." That is, crushed, or melting away, in trouble (see Ps. cvii. 26.).

17 is much disputed, but the sense of our Version seems good. Job's great trouble (as in ch. vii.), is that he was not taken away before the darkness of trouble came, and that the worse darkness of perplexity as to God's justice is allowed to veil his face and blind his eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. This verse should run thus :

"Why are not fixed times reserved by the Almighty ?

"Why do not they, who know Him, see His days ?"

The "times" and "days" (as in the familiar phrase "the day of the Lord"), mean appointed times of manifest judgment, to which man can look with calm and certain expectation.

2—8 describe the oppressor of the open country, taking away lands and flocks, driving the poor out of the way, forcing them to wander and gather food as they can, naked and hungry.

JOB, XXIV.

- 3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
they ^c take the widow's ox for a pledge. ^c Deut. 24. 6,
10, 12, 17.
ch. 22. 6.
- 4 They turn the needy out of the way :
^d the poor of the earth hide themselves together. ^d Prov. 23. 28.
- 5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert,
go they forth to their work ; rising betimes for
a prey :
the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for
their children.
- 6 They reap *every one* his ² corn in the field :
and ³ they gather the vintage of the wicked. ² Heb. *min-
gled corn,
or, dredge.*
- 7 They ^e cause the naked to lodge without clothing,
that *they have* no covering in the cold. ³ Heb.
*the wicked
gather the
vintage.*
- 8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains,
and ^f embrace the rock for want of a shelter. ^e Ex. 22. 26,
27.
Deut. 24. 12,
13.
ch. 22. 6.
- 9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast,
and take a pledge of the poor. ^f Lam. 4. 5.
- 10 They cause *him* to go naked without clothing,
and they take away the sheaf *from* the hungry :
- 11 *which* make oil within their walls,
and tread *their* winepresses, and suffer thirst.
- 12 Men groan from out of the city,
and the soul of the wounded crieth out :
yet God layeth not folly *to them*.
- 13 ¶ They are of those that rebel against the light ;
they know not the ways thereof,
nor abide in the paths thereof.

5. "They." That is, the victims of oppression, homeless as the wild ass, snatching food from the desert as they can (apparently by pilfering from the superior races).

6. The sense is difficult. The words are—

"They cut their fodder in the tilled field ;

"they glean the vineyard of the evil-doer."

This may describe either the pilfering forced on the poor, or their engagement by their oppressors in the lowest and commonest work.

7 should be, "They pass the night naked, without a garment."

9—12 describe the oppressors of the city or the encampment, enslaving and ruining the poor, pressing him into their service, and letting him starve in the midst of their abundance.

10, 11 should be—

"Naked, without clothing, they" (i. e. the poor) "slink away,

"hungry, they bear the sheaves" (of others) ;

"within the walls" (of their tyrants) "they press oil,

"they tread the winepress, and themselves have thirst."

13—17 pass on to others "of those who shun the light" (the mur-

- g Ps. 10. 8. 14 ^g The murderer rising with the light—killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.
- h Prov. 7. 9. 15 ^h The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight,
ⁱ saying, No eye shall see me :—and ² disguiseth *his* face.
- ¹ Ps. 10. 11.
² Heb. *setteth his face in secret.* 16 In the dark they dig through houses, *which* they had marked for themselves in the daytime :
- k John 3. 20. ^k they know not the light.
- 17 For the morning *is* to them even as the shadow of death :
 if *one* know *them*, *they are in* the terrors of the shadow of death.
- 18 ¶ He *is* swift as the waters ;—their portion is cursed in the earth :
 he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.
- ³ Heb. *violently take.* 19 Drought and heat ³ consume the snow waters :
so doth the grave *those which* have sinned.
- 20 The womb shall forget him ;
 the worm shall feed sweetly on him ;
- ¹ Prov. 10. 7. ¹ he shall be no more remembered ;
 and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.
- 21 He evil entreateth the barren *that* beareth not :
 and doeth not good to the widow.

derer, the adulterer, the housebreaker), as contrasted with the shameless oppressor.

16 is mistranslated in the latter clauses, which should be :

“ In the day they shut themselves up,

“ they know nothing of the light.”

17. The latter clause is literally, “ They know the terrors of the “ shadow of death,” that is, the darkness. The sense is ambiguous ; it may be a simple repetition of the previous clause, that light is to them destruction ; or it may be antithesis : The terrors of darkness, so awful to others, they know and care not for.

18—21 describe the speedy passing away of the wicked, like foam on the water, or the snow in summer. Some consider this as an answer of the friends, supposed by Job, and replied to in the verses which follow. If it be not so, it is at least his anticipation of their answer, as a thing which he himself knows as well as they.

18 is properly, “ He (the wicked man) is light on the waters,” like foam or a straw hurried away ; “ His heritage is cursed ; ” “ He returns “ not to the way of his vineyard,” i. e. He dies and leaves all that he has gotten together.

21 is the description of the evil-doer : “ He who,” &c.

JOB, XXV.

- 22 ¶ He draweth also the mighty with his power :
 he riseth up, ²and no *man* is sure of life. ² Or, *he trusteth not his own life.*
- 23 *Though* it be given him to be in safety, whereon
 he resteth ;
 yet ^m his eyes *are* upon their ways. ^m Ps. 11. 4.
Prov. 15. 3.
- 24 They are exalted for a little while,
 but ³are gone and brought low ;
 they are ⁴taken out of the way as all *other*,
 and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn. ³ Heb.
are not.
⁴ Heb.
closed up.
- 25 And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar,
 and make my speech nothing worth ?

CHAPTER XXV.

Bildad sheweth that man cannot be justified before God.

- 1 **T**HEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
 2 Dominion and fear *are* with him,
 he maketh peace in his high places.
- 3 Is there any number of his armies ?
 And upon whom doth not ^ahis light arise ? ^a Jam. 1. 17.
^b ch. 4. 17.
&c. & 15. 14,
&c.
Ps. 130. 3.
& 143. 2.
- 4 ^bHow then can man be justified with God ?
 Or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman ?

22—24 are clearly in some sense a rejoinder to vv. 18—21. The translation of vv. 22, 23, seems to be—

- “Yet He” (i. e. God) “preserves the mighty” (evil-doers) “by
 “His power ;
 “they rise up again, even when despairing of life,
 “he giveth them to be in safety ; they are holden up ;
 “his eyes are over their ways.”

The sense is that, if they at last pass away, God has sustained them till that appointed time ; and (see ver. 24.) when they do pass away, it is suddenly, cut down like all others, as all the ears of corn are reaped together. Therefore this is no sufficient explanation of the mystery. Job (see ver. 25.) cries out for such an explanation in vain.

CHAPTER XXV.

The speech of Bildad (in ch. xxv.), short and trenchant as usual, but even more impressive in style than before, marks the entire inability of the friends to meet Job's inquiry, except by simply reiterating sentiments, and even expressions, already used and rejected. See ch. iv. 17—21 ; xv. 14—16.

He harps once more on God's greatness (before which even the glories of heaven are imperfect), and man's littleness—both points true, and both beside the mark. He will not, or dares not, reiterate the accusations against Job.

2. The idea is, as in Hab. ii. 20, “The Lord is in His holy temple, “let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

3. “His armies,” that is, The host of heaven.

“Upon whom doth not His light arise ?” i. e. Who does not enjoy and simply reflect His light ?

JOB, XXVI.

- 5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not ;
 yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.
 c Ps. 22. 6. 6 How much less man, *that is* a worm ?
 And the son of man, *which is* a worm ?

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *Job, reproving the uncharitable spirit of Bildad, 5 acknowledgeth the power of God to be infinite and unsearchable.*

- 1 **B**UT Job answered and said,
 2 How hast thou helped *him that is* without power ?
How savest thou the arm that hath no strength ?
 3 How hast thou counselled *him that hath* no wisdom ?
 And *how* hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is ?
 4 To whom hast thou uttered words ?
 And whose spirit came from thee ?

CHAPTER XXVI.

From this point the dialogue ceases, and Job alone speaks in the next six chapters. His words fall into two chief divisions: (a) ch. xxvi.—xxviii. ; and (b) ch. xxix.—xxxi. Of these, the latter division presents no difficulty. It is simply a contrast of his past blessings and present affliction, and a solemn protestation of his integrity. The sense is clear, and the connection of thought simple. The former division, on the contrary, has in it much that is difficult and abrupt. After the exordium addressed to Bildad (xxvi. 2—4.), it passes suddenly to a poetical description of the perfect wisdom and power of God (vv. 5—14.). Then, after again protesting his integrity (xxvii. 2—10.), Job breaks out into a description of the righteous judgment of the wicked, which it is hard, although not impossible, to reconcile with his previous utterances (vv. 11—23.). Finally, with still greater abruptness, he passes to the magnificent description of the search after wisdom, and the declaration of it by God, Who alone really knows it (ch. xxviii.).

Some have thought that there is here some corruption of the text, and that ch. xxvii. 13—23 contains the third speech of Zophar, who, as the text now stands, remains unexpectedly silent ; others, that there is some dislocation of the text. Certainly, as it stands, while the sense of each portion is plain, and the two poetical passages (xxvi. 5—14 and xxviii.) are among the grandest in the book, the connection of the whole presents such difficulty as is found in no other part of it.

2—4 are a bitter and ironical answer to Bildad, taunting him with the pretension and emptiness of his speech. The transition from these to ver. 5 is exceedingly abrupt. In the rest of the chapter, Job, as on former occasions, takes up the description of God's great power, manifested to man in creation, although it is but a small part that can be manifested.

3. "The thing as it is" (not "as it seems;") i. e. the plain solid truth.

4 implies that Bildad's speech comes home to no one, and that it is void of all inspiration of God.

- 5 ¶ Dead things are formed
from under the waters, ² and the inhabitants ² Or,
thereof. *with the in-*
habitants.
- 6 ^a Hell is naked before him,—and destruction ^a Ps. 139. 8,
hath no covering. 11.
Prov. 15. 11.
- 7 ^b He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, ^b Heb. 4. 13.
and hangeth the earth upon nothing. ^b ch. 9. 8.
Ps. 24. 2. &
104. 2, &c.
- 8 ^c He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; ^c Prov. 30. 4.
and the cloud is not rent under them.
- 9 He holdeth back the face of his throne,
and spreadeth his cloud upon it. ^d ch. 38. 8.
Ps. 33. 7.
& 104. 9.
- 10 ^d He hath compassed the waters with bounds,
³ until the day and night come to an end. ³ Prov. 8. 29.
Jer. 5. 22.
- 11 The pillars of heaven tremble—and are aston-
ished at his reproof. ³ Heb. *until*
the end of
light with
darkness.
- 12 ^e He divideth the sea with his power,
and by his understanding he smiteth through
⁴ the proud. ^e Ex. 14. 21.
Ps. 74. 13.
Isai. 51. 15.
Jer. 31. 35.
⁴ Heb. *pride.*

5. "Dead things are formed," &c. The true sense probably is, "The shades of the dead tremble under the waters and the dwellers therein." The word here used is "Rephaim," found as the name of an extinct giant race (in Gen. xiv. 5; xv. 20; Isa. xvii. 5.), probably used simply for the dead, possibly for the dead as giant rebels destroyed by God's wrath.

6. "Destruction," properly, "the abyss" (so xxviii. 22; xxxi. 12.), open to the eye of God alone.

7. "The north" seems here undoubtedly to mean the vault of heaven, revolving round the north, i. e. the pole. *Polus* is used thus in Latin as a poetical name for the heaven.

"He hangeth the earth on nothing." It seems impossible to doubt that here the true conception of the earth, as poised on its own centre, is firmly grasped.

8. "He bindeth up," &c. The meaning simply is, "He stores up rain in the clouds and it does not break through" (i. e. till He wills).

9. "He holdeth back," that is, "veils His throne." So in Ps. xviii. 11, "He made darkness his secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds."

10. "Until the day and night come to an end," is an erroneous explanation of the original (preserved in the marginal reading), "until the end" (boundary) "of light with darkness." This boundary is the horizon, looked upon as the great circle of the firmament, "dividing the waters from the waters."

11. "The pillars of heaven," i. e. the mountains, on which the sky seems to rest, tremble at the thunder of His reproof. See again Ps. xviii. 7: "The foundations of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth."

12. "He divideth the sea." That is, stirs it into waves, breaking up its surface.

- † Ps. 33. 6. 13 ^f By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; ^g his hand hath formed ^g the crooked serpent.
- g Isai. 27. 1. 14 Lo, these *are* parts of his ways :
but how little a portion is heard of him ?
But the thunder of his power who can understand ?

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 Job protesteth his sincerity. 8 The hypocrite is without hope. 11 The blessings which the wicked have are turned into curses.

- ² Heb. added to take up. 1 **M**OREOVER Job ² continued his parable, and said,
- a ch. 34. 5. 2 As God liveth, ^a who hath taken away my judgment ;
and the Almighty, *who* hath ³ vexed my soul ;
- ³ Heb. made my soul bitter, Ruth 1. 20. 2 Kin. 4. 27. 3 all the while my breath *is* in me,
and ⁴ the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils ;
- ⁴ That is, the breath which God gave him, Gen. 2. 7. 4 my lips shall not speak wickedness,
nor my tongue utter deceit.
- ^b ch. 2. 9. & 13. 15. 5 God forbid that I should justify you :
till I die ^b I will not remove mine integrity from me.

“He smiteth through the proud.” That is, “Rahab” (as in ix. 13.), evidently here some monster of the deep, the type of brute force and hugeness.

13. This verse should be rendered—

“By His breath the heavens are made bright:

“His hand has pierced the flying dragon.”

Probably the dragon here (like the leviathan of iii. 8.) is the legendary dragon, the emblem of evil and darkness, striving to swallow up the light; this harmonizes exactly with the previous line.

14. “These are but the edges” (or skirts) “of His ways:

“How little a whisper of them is heard!

“The full thunder of His presence who can take in?”

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. The word here rendered “parable” properly signifies (like the word “parable” itself), a “likening” or “comparison;” it then passes on to mean “a maxim,” or “a proverb,” probably because often couched in a metaphorical or antithetical form (in which sense it supplies the title to the book of Proverbs); lastly, a didactic discourse, of a poetical character and of antithetic form, such as Balaam’s utterances in Num. xxiii. and xxiv. The last sense clearly belongs to this passage.

2—7 form the first section of the chapter, in which Job protests his innocence still, before God and man.

2. “As God liveth.” The ordinary adjuration of the believer, but here with the pathetic addition “who hath taken away my judgment.” The idea is like that of “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (xiii. 15.).

5. “Justify you,” i. e. “acknowledge you to be in the right.”

- 6 My righteousness I °hold fast, and will not °ch. 2. 3.
let it go:
d my heart shall not reproach me 2 so long as d Acts 24. 16.
I live. a Heb. from
my days.
- 7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked,
and he that riseth up against me as the un-
righteous.
- 8 ° For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though ° Matt. 16. 26.
he hath gained, Luke 12. 20.
when God taketh away his soul ?
- 9 f Will God hear his cry—when trouble cometh f ch. 35. 12.
upon him ? Ps. 18. 41.
& 109. 7.
Prov. 1. 28.
& 28. 9.
- 10 g Will he delight himself in the Almighty ? Isai. 1. 15.
Jer. 14. 12.
Ezek. 8. 18.
Mic. 3. 4.
John 9. 31.
James 4. 3.
g See ch. 22.
26, 27.
- 11 ¶ I will teach you 3 by the hand of God :
that which is with the Almighty will I not
conceal. 3 Or,
being in the
hand, &c.
- 12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it ;
why then are ye thus altogether vain ?
- 13 h This is the portion of a wicked man with h ch. 20. 29.
God,
and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall
receive of the Almighty.

6. "My heart," &c., should be, "My heart reproaches me not for one of my days;" that is, brings not to my consciousness one day misspent.

8. "Though he hath gained." The passage, as it stands, naturally suggests (see marginal references) our Lord's question in St. Matt. xvi. 26, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Some critics, however, render this, "When God cuts off and takes away his soul." When that dread hour comes (he asks), "Will God hear his cry? Will he even dare to call on God?"

11—23 introduce Job's conviction that death is the termination of the prosperity of the ungodly, which (see ver. 12.) his friends themselves had seen, although they had been "altogether vain" in their inferences from it. He describes fully and vividly the fall of the wicked, under the wrath of God and amidst the vengeful rejoicing of man. In these words Job seems to speak the language of his opponents; but it is with this difference, that he has learnt now to look on, however vaguely, beyond death, and to see that in the end it shall be evil for the evil-doer. Still even so, this argument from his mouth is unexpected, standing as it does entirely in opposition to what he has so often expressed or implied. On this see the note at the beginning of ch. xxvi.

11. "By the hand," should be, "concerning the hand" (i. e. the dispensation) of the Lord.

JOB, XXVII.

- ⁱ Deut. 28. 41. ¹⁴ ⁱ If his children be multiplied, *it is* for the sword :
^{Esth. 9. 10.}
^{Hos. 9. 13.} and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
- ¹⁵ Those that remain of him shall be buried in death :
^k Ps. 78. 64. and ^k his widows shall not weep.
- ¹⁶ Though he heap up silver as the dust,
 and prepare raiment as the clay ;
¹⁷ he may prepare *it*, but ¹ the just shall put *it* on,
¹ Prov. 23. 8. and the innocent shall divide the silver.
^{Eccles. 2. 26.}
- ¹⁸ He buildeth his house as a moth,
 and ^m as a booth *that* the keeper maketh.
^m Isai. 1. 8.
^{Lam. 2. 6.}
- ¹⁹ The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered :
 he openeth his eyes, and he *is* not.
- ⁿ ch. 18. 11. ²⁰ ⁿ Terrors take hold on him as waters,
 a tempest stealeth him away in the night.
- ²¹ The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth :
 and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.
- ²² For *God* shall cast upon him, and not spare :
² he would fain flee out of his hand.
- ²³ *Men* shall clap their hands at him,
 and shall hiss him out of his place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

¹ *There is a knowledge of natural things.* ¹² *But wisdom is an excellent gift of God.*

14—18. The whole idea of the passage that follows is of the transitoriness of the prosperity of the wicked, though it may be (as Job has previously said) real, while it lasts. His posterity pass away or come to poverty ; his memory is not wept over ; his treasures and his garments are seized on by strangers ; his house itself crumbles away.

15. “*In death*” should be “*By death.*” Clearly the idea is, in these two verses, of the sword, the famine, and the sudden death, as of pestilence—the three great judgments. Comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 13 ; and the “*four judgments*” in Ezek. xiv. 13—21.

18. “*A booth,*” &c. The reference is to the light booth or tent set up by the watcher in a vineyard or garden during fruit time, soon to be struck when its use is over. See Isa. i. 8 ; xxiv. 20.

19—23 express the same truth more vividly. The man passes away ere he can open his eyes, swept away as in a flood or in a whirlwind, God’s hand raining wrath from above, men’s hands clapping in derisive joy around him.

19. “*But he shall not be gathered.*” Probably, “*But he doeth it not again,*” i. e. “*it is for the last time.*”

JOB, XXVIII.

- 1 **S**URELY there is ² a vein for the silver, ² Or, *a mine.*
 and a place for gold *where they fine it.*
- 2 Iron is taken out of the ³ earth, ³ Or, *dust.*
 and brass is molten *out of* the stone.
- 3 He setteth an end to darkness,
 and searcheth out all perfection :
 the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.
- 4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant ;
even the waters forgotten of the foot :
 they are dried up, they are gone away from men.
- 5 *As for* the earth, out of it cometh bread :
 and under it is turned up as it were fire.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The transition to this magnificent chapter is singularly abrupt. In its style it has far more affinity with the latter part of chapter xxvi. (5—14.), as chapter xxvii. with the earlier portion (vv. 2—4.).

1—11 contain a remarkable description, with all the vividness of an eye-witness, of the process of mining, and of melting and fining the metals drawn from the mine. There are certainly ancient copper-mines in the Sinaitic peninsula; iron is found in the desert east of Bashan (and was worked as late as 1839.); gold is said to have been found in the mountains of Edom, and was certainly worked in very ancient times in Egypt. All these any one dwelling in Job's country, and visiting Egypt, might have seen. The accuracy of description is most striking, even in details; the first opening of the mine, the working, the blasting, the draining, all are vividly painted.

1. The word for "to fine" here is the technical word for "washing" gold.

2. "Brass (that is, copper) is molten out of the stone," (that is) smelted from the ore.

3. "He (that is, the miner) setteth an end to darkness," i.e. makes an end of it by letting in light.

"And searcheth out all perfection," i.e. goes to the farthest depths, there to find the "stones of (that is buried in) darkness, and the shadow of death." The shadow of death is simply the expression for the grossest and blackest darkness, like that of the tomb (comp. x. 22.).

4. In this verse our Translation appears entirely to miss the sense, and is itself obscure. There is some difficulty as to the text; but the original is a vivid description of the mining process. It seems to run thus—

"He sinks shafts, far away from those above,
 "forgotten (unknown) by every foot,
 "they swing and hang far away from men."

The picture is of the miner far below, swung from above, to work at the sides of the shaft.

5. The earth, which yields bread above, "under it is turned up as it were fire," that is, "as by fire," probably an allusion to literal blasting (see ver. 9.), but it may be only a symbol of the confusion and destruction caused below.

- ² Or, *gold ore.* 6 The stones of it *are* the place of sapphires :
and it hath ² dust of gold.
- 7 *There is* a path which no fowl knoweth,
and which the vulture's eye hath not seen :
- 8 the lion's whelps have not trodden it,
nor the fierce lion passed by it.
- ³ Or, *flint.* 9 He putteth forth his hand upon the ³ rock ;
he overturneth the mountains by the roots.
- 10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks ;
and his eye seeth every precious thing.
- ⁴ Heb. *from weeping.* 11 He bindeth the floods ⁴ from overflowing ;
and *the thing that is hid* bringeth he forth to
light.
- ^a ver. 20.
Eccles. 7. 24. 12 ¶ ^a But where shall wisdom be found ?
And where *is* the place of understanding ?
- ^b Prov. 3. 15. 13 Man knoweth not the ^b price thereof ;
neither is it found in the land of the living.
- ^c ver. 22.
Rom. 11. 33,
34. 14 ^c The depth saith, *It is* not in me :
and the sea saith, *It is* not with me.
- ⁵ Heb.
Fine gold shall not be given for it.
^d Prov. 3. 13,
14, 15. &
8. 10, 11, 19.
& 16. 16. 15 ⁵ It ^d cannot be gotten for gold,
neither shall silver be weighed *for* the price
thereof.

6. The "dust of gold" is a literally accurate description of the form in which gold is found.

7. The "path" is the way in the mine to the earth's treasures, which man only finds ; no bird or beast can pass it.

9, 10. "He (the miner) lays his hand on the rock" (the granite or quartz-rock) ; "he overturneth mountains by the roots," undermines them (blasting by fire and vinegar poured on the heated stone, according to ancient descriptions), till they fall and reveal their treasures ; "he cutteth out channels among the rocks," to drain off the springs on which he comes ; then, when the water is drained off, "his eye sees every precious thing," the richest veins being always near the spring ; "he binds the streams from overflowing," that is, prevents his water-courses from leaking ; and then, as the result of all, "every hidden thing he brings to light."

12—22 contrast the successful search of the miner with the vain search of a man for wisdom, which is the spiritual treasure, unknown to all living things, only heard of even in the depths of Sheol.

12. "Wisdom" is here, as in the book of Proverbs, the knowledge of the end, or meaning, of life, in relation to self, to man, and to God ; while "Understanding" is the lower power of discerning or distinguishing between true and false, good and evil, in special things. The personification of the Wisdom of God, so grandly worked out in the Proverbs (see especially Prov. viii.), is faintly (if at all) indicated here.

12, 13: Man knoweth not the price of wisdom : nor can he find it by search through the earth, the sea, or the abyss under the earth.

JOB, XXVIII.

- 16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,
 with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.
- 17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it:
 and the exchange of it *shall not be for* ² jewels ² Or, *vessels of fine gold.*
- 18 No mention shall be made of ³ coral, or of pearls: ³ Or, *Ramoth.*
 for the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.
- 19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
 neither shall it be valued with pure gold.
- 20 Whence then cometh wisdom? e ver. 12.
 And where *is* the place of understanding?
- 21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
 and kept close from the fowls of the ⁴ air. 4 Or, *heaven.*
- 22 ^f Destruction and death say, f ver. 14.
 we have heard the fame thereof with our ears.
- 23 God understandeth the way thereof,
 and he knoweth the place thereof.
- 24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
 and ^g seeth under the whole heaven; g Prov. 15. 3.
- 25 ^h to make the weight for the winds;
 and he weigheth the waters by measure. h Ps. 135. 7.
- 26 When he ⁱ made a decree for the rain,
 and a way for the lightning of the thunder: i ch. 38. 25.
- 27 then did he see it, and ⁵ declare it;
 he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. 5 Or, *number it.*

16. The mention (as in xxii. 24.) of "Ophir," which is almost certainly India, seems to mark the time of Solomon's traffic with the East (see 1 Kings ix. 28; x. 11.); the subsequent attempt of Jehoshaphat failed (1 Kings xxii. 48. Comp. Ps. xlv. 9.).

16—19. The minute and graphic description of all these precious stones, shews a familiarity with the magnificence of Eastern kings or great chiefs, who delighted in them, both for their value and beauty, and for the mystic properties assigned to each. Comp. in Ezek. xxviii. 13, the description of the prince of Tyrus, and note the imagery of the Apocalypse (especially xxi. 18—21.).

22. "Destruction (i.e. the abyss) and death" represent the unseen world beyond the grave, where wisdom, undiscovered on earth, is known vaguely, as by "the hearing of the ear."

23—27 express the idea, more fully worked out in Prov. viii. 22—29, of wisdom, as embodied and determining the scheme of creation. There wisdom is personified, and in that personification there is a preparation for the revelation of the "Word of God." Here wisdom is simply the "counsel of God's will," in which lies at once the origin and the object of all things. It is represented (ver. 27.) as first contemplated by the Divine Mind, next as declared in His creative Word, then, as made the pattern of creation, and lastly, as tested by actual

28 And unto man he said,
Behold, ^k the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom ;
and to depart from evil *is* understanding.

^k Deut. 4. 6.
Ps. 111. 10.
Prov. 1. 7.
& 9. 10.
Eccles. 12.
13.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Job bemoaneth himself of his former prosperity and honour.

² Heb. *added to take up.*

1 **M**OREOVER Job ² continued his parable, and said,

^a See ch. 7. 3.

2 Oh that I were ^a as *in* months past,
as *in* the days *when* God preserved me ;

^b ch. 18. 6.

³ Or, *lamp*,
Ps. 18. 28.

3 ^b when his ³ candle shined upon my head,
and when by his light I walked *through* darkness ;

^c Ps. 25. 14.

4 as I was in the days of my youth,
when ^c the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle ;

5 when the Almighty *was* yet with me,
when my children *were* about me ;

embodiment in created things. By God, and by Him alone, is it seen as it is.

28. By man "wisdom" (i.e. the knowledge of the end of life) is known not independently, but in the fear of the Lord, in obedience (that is) to God's Will; "understanding" (that is, the power of discernment) is found not in speculation, but in moral action.

"To depart from evil," &c. It is interesting to compare this passage with Eccles. xii. 13, and with Prov. i. 7; ix. 10. The half-despondent conclusion of the searcher after wisdom in Ecclesiastes, is that to fear and obey is "the end of the whole matter;" in Proverbs it is more hopefully and profoundly described as "the beginning of wisdom," the means of entering into the true knowledge of God.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The "parable" of Job in chh. xxix—xxx. is marked by a calmness of tone, even in the pathos of its lamentation, an equable and unbroken style, with no ruggedness or bursts of passion, and a remarkable fulness and picturesqueness of detail, combined with an extreme simplicity of plan. In the first chapter (xxix.) is the picture of his prosperity in days gone by; in the second (xxx.) the contrast of his present misery and contempt; in the third (xxx.) the protestation of his uprightness towards man and God. In this "the words of Job are ended;" clearly the passion of his grief and perplexity has spent itself, and he leaves his cause to the judgment of God.

4. "Of my youth," literally, "of my harvest," which signifies not youth, but manhood in its full maturity.

The "secret of God," that is, the unseen presence of God.

5, 6 describe his material prosperity, on which, however, he lays little stress, compared with the honour and reverence which once he enjoyed. This corresponds to his patience under the loss of the one, and his impatience under the loss of the other.

JOB, XXIX.

- 6 when ^d I washed my steps with butter,
and ^e the rock poured ² me out rivers of oil ;
- 7 when I went out to the gate through the city,
when I prepared my seat in the street !
- 8 ¶ The young men saw me, and hid themselves :
and the aged arose, *and* stood up.
- 9 The princes refrained talking,
and ^f laid *their* hand on their mouth.
- 10 ³ The nobles held their peace,
and their ^g tongue cleaved to the roof of their
mouth.
- 11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ;
and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me :
- 12 because ^h I delivered the poor that cried,
and the fatherless, and *him that had* none to
help him.
- 13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish
came upon me :
and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
- 14 ⁱ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me :
my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.
- 15 I was ^k eyes to the blind,—and feet *was* I to
the lame.
- 16 I *was* a father to the poor :
and ^l the cause *which* I knew not I searched ¹ out.
- 17 And I brake ^m ⁴ the jaws of the wicked,
and ⁵ plucked the spoil out of his teeth.
- 18 ¶ Then I said, ⁿ I shall die in my nest,
and I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.

^d Gen. 49. 11.
^e Deut. 32. 13.
& 33. 24.
ch. 20. 17.
^e Ps. 81. 16.
² Heb.
with me.

^f ch. 21. 5.

³ Heb.
*The voice of
the nobles
was hid.*
^g Ps. 137. 6.

^h Ps. 72. 12.
Prov. 21. 13.
& 24. 11.

ⁱ Deut. 24. 13.
Ps. 132. 9.
Isai. 59. 17.
& 61. 10.
Ephes. 6. 14,
&c.
¹ Thess. 5. 8.
^k Num. 10. 31.

¹ Prov. 23. 7.

^m Ps. 58. 6.
Prov. 30. 14.

⁴ Heb.
*the jaw-
teeth, or, the
grinders.*

⁵ Heb. *cast.*
ⁿ Ps. 30. 6.

7. "Through the city." It should be, "up to the city." Job is a dweller among his own people : but he goes up to the city, to the "gate" and the "street" or market-place, the places of judgment and of council.

8.—17, and afterwards vv. 21—25, describe the honour in which Job was held, first, as a righteous and merciful judge, then as a councillor and a kingly chief. On this, more than on other blessings, he dwells emphatically, for the sake of contrast with the treatment of him by his friends and by others, as described in the next chapter. The picture is singularly vivid and painted by stroke after stroke of detail.

18. "I shall multiply my days as the sand." This version gives an excellent sense, and accords well with the Hebrew. But ancient Jewish interpretation, borrowing, it would seem, the word as well as the legend from Egypt, renders it, "as the phoenix"—a rendering

JOB, XXX.

- ^o ch. 18. 16. 19 ° My root *was* ² spread out ^p by the waters, ()
² Heb. opened. and the dew lay all night upon my branch.
^p Ps. 1. 3. 20 My glory *was* ³ fresh in me,
³ Heb. new. and ^q my bow was ⁴ renewed in my hand.
^q Gen. 49. 24. 21 Unto me *men* gave ear,
⁴ Heb. changed. and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.
 22 After my words they spake not again ;
 and my speech dropped upon them.
 23 And they waited for me as for the rain ;
 and they opened their mouth wide *as* for ^r the
^r Zech. 10. 1. latter rain.
 24 *If* I laughed on them, they believed *it* not ;
 and the light of my countenance they cast not
 down.
 25 I chose out their way, and sat chief,
 and dwelt as a king in the army,
 as one *that* comforteth the mourners.

CHAPTER XXX.

¹ *Job's honour is turned into extreme contempt. 15 His prosperity into calamity.*

- ² Heb. of fewer days than I. 1 **B**UT now *they. that are* ² younger than I have
 me in derision,

according well with the previous clause, and accepted by some of the best modern commentators. The use of the legend of the Phoenix (consumed with its nest by fire from heaven, to rise from its ashes in renewed youth) as a type of the Resurrection, in the Apostolic Fathers, is well known. In this passage the reading of the Greek and Latin translations ("like a palm tree") seems to have arisen out of a reading corresponding to this interpretation ; for the same Greek word signifies the palm tree and the phoenix. Comp. Ps. ciii. 5 : " Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

19, 20. The future tense should be continued through these verses, which still express the words of Job's former confidence: " My root shall be," &c. For the metaphor comp. viii. 16 ; and Ps. i. 3 ; and note Jer. xvii. 8, which seems drawn from this passage. The confidence itself is like that of the Psalmist (Ps. xxx. 6) : " In my prosperity I said, I shall never be removed. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong."

22. " Dropped upon them," like the gentle rain (see Deut. xxxii. 2). Comp. the next verse.

24. " If I laughed on them, they believed it not," i. e. as some think, " they thought it too good to be true ;" or, as others take it, " I smiled on them, even if they were in despair." In any case the following clause means: " The light of my countenance they cast not down," i. e. they enjoyed it, and did not cloud it over by want of sympathy.

CHAPTER XXX.

1—8 evidently describe a degraded and inferior race, wandering

whose fathers I would have disdained
to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands
profit me,

in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine *they were* ²solitary ;
fleeing into the wilderness

² Or, *dark as
the night.*

³ in former time desolate and waste.

³ Heb. *yester-
night.*

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes,
and juniper roots *for* their meat.

5 They were driven forth from among *men*,
(they cried after them as *after* a thief ;)

6 to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys,
in ⁴caves of the earth, and *in* the rocks.

⁴ Heb. *holes.*

7 Among the bushes they brayed ;
under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 *They were* children of fools, yea, children of
⁵base men :

⁵ Heb. *men
of no name.*

they were viler than the earth.

9 ¶ ^a And now am I their song,—yea, I am their
byword.

^a ch. 17. 6.
Ps. 35. 15.
& 69. 12.
Lam. 3. 14,
63.

over the desert to gain food as they might, dwelling only in caves, hardly tolerated by the superior race to which Job belonged, hardly used for even the meanest service. Such races are still found in the desert; and in the Hauran there are many caves fit to be the habitation of this Troglodyte race. Job does not, of course, in these describe his friends, who were clearly his equals, but the vagabonds, whom their cruelty encouraged to join the outcry against him.

2 gives the reason why he "would have disdained" them.

"Old age." Should probably be, "ripe age," "maturity of strength," to which these weaklings never attained.

3. "Solitary." It should be, "benumbed" or paralysed.

"In former time," &c. The Hebrew (yesternight) is given in the margin. The meaning may be simply, "the dark land" of desolation, or perhaps better, the "old worn-out land of desolation"—the land whose day is past.

"Fleeing into the wilderness." This rendering misrepresents the forcible original, "gnawing the desert," that is, as explained in the next verse, cutting down whatever grows wild, however poor and tasteless, for food.

7. "They brayed." The phrase is designed to imply a comparison of them to the wild asses of the desert—the type of all that is wild and untameable.

8. "They were viler than the earth." It should be, "they were driven as outcasts from the land."

9—15 dwell on the cruelty of men, in insult (vv. 9—11.), in annoyance (vv. 12, 13.), in overwhelming fury (vv. 14, 15.); in the

- 10 They abhor me, they flee far from me,
² and spare not ^b to spit in my face.
- 11 Because he ^c hath loosed my cord, and afflicted
 me,
 they have also let loose the bridle before me.
- 12 Upon *my right hand* rise the youth;
 they push away my feet,
 and ^d they raise up against me the ways of their
 destruction.
- 13 They mar my path,—they set forward my
 calamity,
 they have no helper.
- 14 They came *upon me* as a wide breaking in of
waters:
 in the desolation they rolled themselves *upon me*.
- 15 Terrors are turned upon me:
 they pursue ³ my soul as the wind:
 and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.
- ³ Heb. *my principal one*.
- ^c Ps. 42. 4. 16 ¶ ^e And now my soul is poured out upon me;
 the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.
- 17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season:
 and my sinews take no rest.
- 18 By the great force of *my disease* is my garment
 changed:
 it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

remaining verses (16—31.) Job complains of the heavy hand of God upon him, bringing anguish of body and mind.

11. This verse is variously rendered. Our Version gives a good sense, which may well be drawn from the original. "Because God "has loosed my cord" of life (the metaphor drawn from the cords which keep up the tent. Comp. iv. 21.), "therefore they loose the bridle "(of restraint) before my face." Some translate, "Because he has loosed "his bowstring against me." The Greek and Latin Versions have "opened His quiver against me."

12. "The youth," or rather, "the rabble." "The ways of their "destruction" (by a metaphor drawn from a siege) are the ways by which they advance to destroy me.

13. "They have no helper." If this reading is correct, the meaning must be, "Helpless themselves, they insult my helplessness." But the Vulgate reads, "and there was (for me) no helper," which gives a far simpler sense.

17. "My sinews." It should be, "my gnawers," that is, "my "gnawing pains."

18. The sense seems to be that Job's garment cleaves to his diseased body, till it is like a disguise, and "binds him (chokes him) as the "opening of the tunic" close round the throat.

- 19 He hath cast me into the mire,
and I am become like dust and ashes.
- 20 ¶ I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me :
I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.
- 21 Thou art ² become cruel to me :
with ³ thy strong hand thou opposest thyself
against me. ² Heb. *turned to be cruel.*
³ Heb. *the strength of thy hand.*
- 22 Thou liftest me up to the wind ;
thou causest me to ride *upon it*,
and dissolvest my ⁴ substance. ⁴ Or, *wisdom.*
- 23 For I know *that* thou wilt bring me *to death*,
and *to the house* ^f appointed for all living. ^f Heb. 9. 27.
- 24 Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the
⁵ grave,
though they cry in his destruction. ⁵ Heb. *heap.*
- 25 ¶ ^g Did not I weep ⁶ for him that was in trouble ?
Was *not* my soul grieved for the poor ? ^g Ps. 35. 13, 14.
Rom. 12. 15.
- 26 ^h When I looked for good, then evil came *unto*
me : ⁶ Heb. *for him that was hard of day ?*
and when I waited for light, there came dark-
ness. ^h Jer. 8. 15.
- 27 My bowels boiled, and rested not :
the days of affliction prevented me.
- 28 ⁱ I went mourning without the sun :
I stood up, *and* I cried in the congregation. ⁱ Ps. 38. 6. & 42. 9. & 43. 2.
- 29 ^k I am a brother to dragons,—and a companion
to ⁷ owls. ^k Ps. 102. 6.
Micah 1. 8.
⁷ Or, *ostriches.*

20. "Thou regardest me not." The negative is not in the original. The passage should be, "Thou lookest upon me," un pitying.

22. "Thou dissolvest my substance," i. e. "scatterest my very being "to the winds."

24 is difficult, but our Version can hardly stand. Probably it should be :

"And yet in falling, does not a man stretch out his hand ?

"In his troubles, does he not cry out against them ?"

And this leads on to the declaration in ver. 25. He wept for others, should he not weep for himself ?

27. "My bowels." That is (as usual), "my heart." "The days of affliction prevented me," i. e. came upon me suddenly, before I could escape. See Ps. xviii. 5, 18.

28. "I went mourning." The phrase really is, "in mourning," or "in black." Hence the whole clause is, "I go about blackened, but not "by the sun" (see ver. 30.).

29. The "dragon" is the jackal ; for "the owls" (as in *margin*)

JOB, XXXI.

- ¹ Ps. 119. 83. **30** ¹ My skin is black upon me,
Leam. 4. 8.
 & 5. 10. and ^m my bones are burned with heat.
^m Ps. 102. 3. **31** My harp also is *turned* to mourning,
 and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Job maketh a solemn protestation of his integrity in several duties.

- ^a Matt. 5. 23. **1** ¶ **I** MADE a covenant with mine ^a eyes ;
 why then should I think upon a maid ?
^b ch. 20. 21. **2** For what ^b portion of God *is there* from above ?
& 27. 13. And *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on
 high ?
3 *Is* not destruction to the wicked ?
 And a strange *punishment* to the workers of
 iniquity ?
^c 2 Chr. 16. 9. **4** ^c Doth not he see my ways,—and count all my
ch. 34. 21.
 Prov. 5. 21.
 & 15. 3.
 Jer. 32. 19. steps ?
5 ¶ If I have walked with vanity,
 or if my foot hath hasted to deceit ;

read “the ostriches.” The howl of the one and the screech of the others, “make night hideous” in the desert.

30. “Is black upon me.” The original is “from me,”—a condensed expression for “is blackened and falls from me.”

31. “My organ,” that is, “my pipe.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

Ch. xxxi. contains Job's solemn protestation of innocence, called out in part by the past accusations, to which at the time he disdained to reply. It deals almost entirely with duties towards man, such as made up the life of a patriarchal chief. Only in vv. 26—28 does he disclaim idolatry (in its most ancient form), and in vv. 33, 34 possibly refers to the concealment of sin before God. Otherwise it is on purity, integrity, consideration of the weak, charity, forgiveness, hospitality, candour, that he dwells, and on all these he defies accusation, and longs for the judgment of God. The pure and lofty tone of the whole, frequently corresponding to the teaching of the New Testament, is very striking.

1—4 are a profession of chastity, preserved by the thought of God's eye over him.

1. Comp. St. Matt. v. 28. Job interprets the duty of purity as strictly as our Lord interprets the seventh Commandment of the Law.

2. The sense is—

For (in that case) what would be my portion of God above ?

And what inheritance of the Almighty from on high ?

Comp. Gen. xxxix. 9 : “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin “against God ?”

5—8 are a profession of integrity, calling down on himself otherwise the curse of ver. 8 ; while ver. 6 appears to be parenthetical, containing

- 6 ² let me be weighed in an even balance,
that God may know mine integrity.
- 7 If my step hath turned out of the way,
and ^d mine heart walked after mine eyes,
and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands ;
- 8 *then* ^e let me sow, and let another eat ;
yea, let my offspring be rooted out.
- 9 ¶ If mine heart have been deceived by a woman,
or *if* I have laid wait at my neighbour's door ;
- 10 *then* let my wife grind unto ^f another,
and let others bow down upon her.
- 11 For this *is* an heinous crime ;
yea, ^g it is an iniquity to be punished by the
judges.
- 12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction,
and would root out all mine increase.
- 13 ¶ If I did despise the cause of my manservant
or of my maidservant, when they contended with
me ;
- 14 what then shall I do when ^h God riseth up ?
And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ?
- 15 ⁱ Did not he that made me in the womb make
him ?
And ³ did not one fashion us in the womb ?
- 16 If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire,
or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ;
- 17 or have eaten my morsel myself alone,
and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof ;

² Heb.
Let him
weigh me
in balances
of justice.

^d See Num.
15. 39.
Eccles. 11. 9.
Ezek. 6. 9.
Matt. 5. 29.
^e Lev. 26. 16.
Deut. 28. 30,
38, &c.

^f 2 Sam. 12. 11.
Jer. 8. 10.

^g Gen. 38. 24.
Lev. 20. 10.
Deut. 22. 22.
See ver. 28.

^h Ps. 44. 21.

ⁱ ch. 34. 19.
Prov. 14. 31.
& 22. 2.
Mal. 2. 10.
³ Or, did he
not fashion
us in one
womb ?

the expression of his desire for a righteous and searching judgment. In ver. 5 "vanity" is falsehood.

7. "After mine eyes" is clearly, "considering my own profit."

9—12 disclaim adultery, as a sin to be visited by man, and by God's judgment of utter destruction. With the curse of ver. 10 compare the punishment denounced against David (2 Sam. xii. 11, 12.).

13—22 disclaim (1) all oppression of the slave, as being of the same nature, and made by the same God—evidently shewing that the harsh logic, which makes the slave a living chattel having no rights, had then no place ; (2) all want of charity and hospitality to the poor ; (3) all oppression of the helpless. The curse invoked (in ver. 22.) is graphic ; it is the withering of the unrighteous arm by the consuming wrath of God.

14. Comp. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1 : "Masters, do the same things unto them . . . knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with Him."

- 18 (for from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided ²her from my mother's womb;)
- ² That is, the widow. 19 if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;
- ^k See Deut. 24. 13. 20 if his loins have not ^k blessed me, and *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
- ^l ch. 22. 9. 21 if I have lifted up my hand ^l against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:
- 22 *then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from ³the bone.
- ³ Or, the chancelbone. ^m Isai. 13. 6. Joel 1. 15. 23 For ^m destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.
- ⁿ Mark 10. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 17. 24 ¶ ⁿ If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;
- ^o Ps. 62. 10. Prov. 11. 28. 25 ^o if I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because mine hand had ⁴ gotten much;
- ⁴ Heb. found much. ^p Deut. 4. 19. & 11. 16. & 17. 3. Ezek. 8. 16. 26 ^p if I beheld ⁵ the sun when it shined, or the moon walking ⁶ in brightness;
- ⁵ Heb. the light. 27 and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or ⁷ my mouth hath kissed my hand:
- ⁶ Heb. bright. ⁷ Heb. my hand hath kissed my mouth. 28 this also *were* ^q an iniquity *to be punished by* the judge: for I should have denied the God *that is* above.
- ^q ver. 11. ^r Prov. 17. 5. 29 ¶ ^r If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,

21. "In the gate," that is, in the court of justice, where the rich has many friends (comp. Ps. cxxvii. 5.).

23. For the word "was" supplied here, perhaps "would be" might better stand. The passage then describes the withering of his arm as the destruction from God.

24—28 disclaim, in a connection singularly instructive, and exactly corresponding to the doctrine of the New Testament (Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5.), first, the subtle idolatry of wealth; next, open idolatry in the simplest and most natural form—the worship of the sun and moon—belonging, as mythology shews, to the remotest antiquity, and (as Job infers) punished by man under the stern Monotheism of his time.

27. "My mouth hath kissed my hand." The phrase seems to denote a secret worship, in place of the direct kiss to any idol (see 1 Kings xix. 18. Hos. xiii. 2.).

29, 30 again breathe the spirit of the New Testament (see St. Matt.

- or lifted up myself when evil found him :
- 30 ^s neither have I suffered ² my mouth to ^s sin
by wishing a curse to his soul. ^s Matt. 5. 44.
Rom. 12. 14.
- 31 If the men of my tabernacle said not,
Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be
satisfied. ² Heb.
my palate.
- 32 ^t The stranger did not lodge in the street :
but I opened my doors ³ to the traveller. ^t Gen. 19. 2. 3.
Judg. 19. 20,
21.
Rom. 12. 13.
Heb. 13. 2.
1 Pet. 4. 9.
- 33 If I covered my transgressions ⁴ ^u as Adam,
by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom :
- 34 did I fear a great ^x multitude,
or did the contempt of families terrify me,
that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the
door? ³ Or,
to the way.
⁴ Or, *after
the manner
of men.*
^u Gen. 3. 8, 12.
Prov. 28. 13.
Hos. 6. 7.
^x Ex. 23. 2.
^y ch. 33. 6.
- 35 ¶ ^y Oh that one would hear me!
⁵ Behold, my desire *is*, ^z *that* the Almighty would
answer me, ⁵ Or,
*behold, my
sign is that
the Almighty
will answer
me.*
^z ch. 13. 22.

v. 43, 44.). Even in Prov. xxiv. 17, 18; xxv. 21, 22, there is the idea of simply acting so as to give scope to the vengeance of God. In the Psalms (such as lxix. and cix.) we find a far fiercer strain of thought.

31, 32 claim the cardinal Arab virtue of hospitality. For the latter clause of ver. 31 seems properly to run thus: "Who can shew one, "who was not filled with his meat?" i. e. with the food freely given by Job to the poor.

33, 34 claim the credit of candour in confession of sin, before God and man.

33. "As Adam." The marginal reading ("after the manner of "men") may be correct; but it takes away much from the force of the passage. As it stands, the allusion (which is natural and probable enough) is singularly happy; the other interpretation is comparatively tame. So in Hos. vi. 7.

34. "Did I fear," &c. Probably, "Because I feared," &c. The picture is of a guilty man, dreading the judgment of the families (i. e. of his tribe), and skulking accordingly to his tent.

35—40. In these verses it is thought by many that there has been some transposition; that vv. 38—40 should follow ver. 34, and that vv. 35—37 form a more natural ending of the whole. The order is certainly easier. On the other hand, there is a natural and unstudied connection between the disclaiming of cowardly concealment in vv. 33, 34, and the profession of unshrinking boldness in vv. 35—37; and the abruptness of the present conclusion is not without a certain vividness of effect.

35. "Behold my desire is." The marginal reading is more nearly correct, "Behold my sign," that is, my mark or signature before the Judge. "May the Almighty answer me!" The "book" in the next sentence is the act of accusation or indictment, which Job declares he would openly "take on his shoulder," and wear it as a crown of glory.

JOB, XXXII.

and *that* mine adversary had written a book.

36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,
and bind it *as* a crown to me.

37 I would declare unto him the number of my
steps ;
as a prince would I go near unto him.

38 If my land cry against me,

² Heb. *weep*.

or that the furrows likewise thereof ² complain ;

^a Jam. 5. 4.

39 if ^a I have eaten ³ the fruits thereof without
money,

³ Heb. *the strength thereof*,

^b 1 Kin. 21. 19.

or ^b have ⁴ caused the owners thereof to lose
their life :

⁴ Heb. *caused the soul of the owners thereof to expire*, or,

breathe out.

^c Gen. 3. 18.

⁵ Or, *noisome weeds*.

40 let ^c thistles grow instead of wheat,
and ⁵ cockle instead of barley.

The words of Job are ended.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1 *Elihu is angry with Job and his three friends.* 6 *Because wisdom cometh not from age, he excuseth the boldness of his youth.* 11 *He reproveth them for not satisfying of Job.* 16 *His zeal to speak.*

² Heb. *from answering*.

^a ch. 33. 9.

1 **S**O these three men ceased ² to answer Job,
because he *was* ^a righteous in his own
eyes.

37. "Unto Him." That is, unto God. Before Him Job leaves his cause.

"As a prince," i. e. (see Ps. li. 12.) in "a free spirit," with "the princely heart of innocence."

38—40 are a protest that Job had never taken either land or the fruits of the land by violence, "removing his neighbour's landmark," and a desire that, if so, it may be smitten with barrenness.

40. "The words of Job are ended." Some take this as the note of the narrator, as in Ps. lxxii. 20. But they appear to be his own words, declaring that his pleading is complete.

CHAPTER XXXII.

On the introduction of Elihu, and the place occupied by him in the book, see Introduction. His discourse seems to be divided into four parts by the interposition of the phrases, "Furthermore Elihu answered," and the like.

Chaps. xxxii., xxxiii. contain the first section. The former chapter (xxxii.) is simply his apology for attempting, young as he was, to supply what the wisdom of old age in the friends had failed to suggest to Job; he cannot (he says) but speak what is put into his heart, in sincerity as before God. In chap. xxxiii. he addresses Job, representing himself a humble spokesman for God (such as Job had desired), and urges upon him that suffering is a discipline, awakening by sharp pain those who had hitherto neglected God's voice, and

- 2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel ^b the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: ^b Gen. 22. 21. against Job was his wrath kindled, because he
- 3 justified ² himself rather than God. Also against ² his three friends was his wrath kindled, because ² Heb. *his soul.* they had found no answer, and yet had con-
- 4 demned Job. Now Elihu had ³ waited till Job had spoken, because they *were* ⁴ elder than he. ³ Heb. *expected Job in words.*
- 5 When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, then his wrath
- 6 was kindled. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said,
- I am ⁵ young, ^c and ye are very old; ⁵ Heb. *few of days.*
 wherefore I was afraid, and ⁶ durst not shew ^c ch. 15. 10. you mine opinion. ⁶ Heb. *feared.*
- 7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.
- 8 But *there is* a spirit in man: ^d 1 Kin. 3. 12. & 4. 29. ch. 35. 11. & 38. 36. Prov. 2. 6. Eccles. 2. 26. Dan. 1. 17. & 2. 21. Matt. 11. 25. James 1. 5. and ^d the inspiration of the Almighty giveth ^e 1 Cor. 1. 26. them understanding.
- 9 ^e Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

needing but an angelic intercessor to shew man the true ransom of the soul, and so to bring out God's blessing hidden beneath His chastisement. In this he strikes on a new line of thought; for both by Job and his friends suffering had been viewed as retribution, not as discipline. Yet even he sees not the whole truth, and there is a certain half subdued arrogance of wisdom in the conclusion of his speech.

2. Elihu, hitherto unnoticed, is described as a younger man, possibly of less dignity, than the three. He is called a "Buzite." Buz is described in Gen. xxii. 21 as a son of Nahor; in Jer. xxv. 23 the name is joined with Dedan and Tema, and "all the kings of Arabia." Evidently, like the three friends, he is of a tribe kindred to Israel, but beyond the Abrahamic covenant.

3, 4 represent Elihu's view, unquestionably the true one, that Job erred in his strong self-righteousness—right, perhaps, before men, but certainly wrong before God; and that the three friends had erred in gratuitously condemning Job for unknown sins, instead of trying to answer his perplexities.

8. The exact sense seems to be, "It is the Spirit in man, and the "inspiration of God which giveth him understanding." The "Spirit" here is the Spirit of God (as is seen by comparison of xxxiii. 4.). His "inspiration," "the breath of God" (see Gen. ii. 7.), is the source of human thought, which is therefore unable to be silent when He would have it speak.

- 10 Therefore I said, Harken to me;—I also will shew mine opinion.
- 11 ¶ Behold, I waited for your words;—I gave ear to your ² reasons, whilst ye searched out ³ what to say.
- 12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job,
or that answered his words:
- 13 ¹lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.
- 14 Now he hath not ⁴ directed *his* words against me:
neither will I answer him with your speeches.
- 15 ¶ They were amazed, they answered no more:
⁵ they left off speaking.
- 16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, *and* answered no more;)
- 17 *I said*, I will answer also my part,—I also will shew mine opinion.
- 18 For I am full of ⁶ matter,
⁷ the spirit within me constraineth me.
- 19 Behold, my belly *is* as wine *which* ⁸ hath no vent;
it is ready to burst like new bottles.
- 20 I will speak, ⁹ that I may be refreshed:
I will open my lips and answer.

13, 14. The sense of the whole passage seems to be, "Do not say, "we have found wisdom," and yet "God must thrust him down, and "not man" (i. e. because he will not listen to man). "Though he has "not directed his words to me, I can answer him in other words "than you have done." Human wisdom has (so Elihu thinks) not yet said its say on the matter.

15. The change of person is curious, but gives life to the passage. Elihu turns to Job, "See! they are amazed;" and for the rest addresses him.

18—20. "The belly," like "the bowels," is here the seat of emotion, as we make the heart to be.

"New bottles." That is, "bottles of new wine" (comp. St. Matt. ix. 17.), still fermenting, and liable to burst the skins in which it is contained. "That I may be refreshed" is in the original, "that "I may get air," be able to breathe again. With this vivid description of over-mastering impulse, compare the more frequent metaphor of fire (Ps. xxxix. 2. 3. Jer. xx. 9.).

JOB, XXXIII.

- 21 Let me not, I pray you, ^saccept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. ^s Lev. 19. 15.
Deut. 1. 17.
& 16. 19.
Prov. 24. 23.
Matt. 22. 16.
- 22 For I know not to give flattering titles ;
in so doing my maker would soon take me
away.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1 *Elihu offereth himself instead of God, with sincerity and meekness, to reason with Job. 8 He excuseth God from giving man an account of his ways, by his greatness. 14 God calleth man to repentance by visions, 19 by afflictions, 23 and by his ministry. 31 He inciteth Job to attention.*

1 **WHEREFORE**, Job, I pray thee, hear my
speeches,
and hearken to all my words.

2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth,
my tongue hath spoken ² in my mouth.

² Heb. *in
my palate.*

3 My words *shall be of* the uprightness of my
heart :
and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

4 ¶ ^a The Spirit of God hath made me,
and the breath of the Almighty hath given me
life.

^a Gen. 2. 7.

5 If thou canst answer me,
set *thy words* in order before me, stand up.

^b ch. 9. 34, 35.
& 13. 20, 21.
& 31. 35.

6 ^b Behold, I *am* ³ according to thy wish in God's
stead :
I also am ⁴ formed out of the clay.

³ Heb. *ac-
cording to
thy mouth.*

⁴ Heb. *cut out
of the clay.*

21. To "accept any man's person" is (from the old sense of "person" for external appearance) to accept outward dignity, privilege, or rank. This is the general sense (with varieties of application) in Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. 2 Sam. xiv. 14. St. Matt. xxii. 16. Acts x. 34. St. James ii. 1. Gal. ii. 6.

22. "My Maker," &c. Elihu indicates here that the only safeguard against the fear of man is the fear of God. Compare Acts iv. 19: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

2. The "palate" (see *margin*) is used here with significance, as the taster or discerner between good and evil (see vi. 30; xxxiv. 3.).

3. "Utter knowledge clearly," that is, "utter sincerely what I know."

6. There is clearly an allusion to Job's repeated desire (see the marginal references) for a Daysman between him and God, to whom he might speak without terror. But the reference to it in our Version here is incorrect in form. The verse seems to run thus, "Behold! I am, like thee, a creature of God," &c.

- c ch. 9. 34. & 13. 21. 7 ° Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.
- 2 Heb. *in mine ears.* 8 Surely thou hast spoken ² in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of *thy* words, *saying*,
- d ch. 9. 17. & 10. 7. & 11. 4. & 16. 17. & 23. 10, 11. & 27. 5. & 29. 14. & 31. 1. 9 ^d I am clean without transgression, I *am* innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me.
- e ch. 13. 24. & 16. 9. & 19. 11. 10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me; ^e he counteth me for his enemy,
- f ch. 13. 27. & 14. 16. & 31. 4. 11 ^f he putteth my feet in the stocks,—he marketh all my paths.
- 12 ¶ Behold, *in* this thou art not just : I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.
- g Isai. 45. 9. 13 Why dost thou ^g strive against him ? for ³ he giveth not account of any of his matters.
- 3 Heb. *he answereth not.* h ch. 40. 5. Ps. 62. 11. 14 ^h For God speaketh once,—yea twice, *yet man* perceiveth it not.
- i Num. 12. 6. ch. 4. 13. 15 ⁱ In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed ;
- k ch. 36. 10, 15. 16 ^k then ⁴ he openeth the ears of men,—and sealeth their instruction,
- 4 Heb. *he revealeth, or, uncovereth.* 17 that he may withdraw man *from his* ⁵ purpose, and hide pride from man.
- 5 Heb. *work.*

9—11. See the various passages (in the marginal references) in which Job had protested his innocence, and complained of the severity of God. The true sense of this passage probably runs thus—"I will answer thee. For God is too high for man," that is, to dispute with man. "Why dost thou plead against Him, saying that He giveth no account of His matters?" For (he adds in ver. 14.) God does speak to man "once, yea twice."

14—18 describe God's first dealing with the soul, by simple vision and revelation, to keep him from self-will and pride, and so from destruction. But "man perceiveth it not."

15. See the sublime description in Eliphaz's first speech (iv. 12—16.). The revelation by dreams (as being true, but imperfect) is especially represented in Scripture as given to men outside the covenant of Israel. See Gen. xx. 3—7 (Abimelech), xxxi. 24 (Laban), xl. 5 ; xli. 1—8 (Pharaoh and his officers); Dan. ii. 1 ; iv. 10 (Nebuchadnezzar). Note also St. Matt. ii. 12 ; xxvii. 19. Within the covenant it belongs mostly to the earlier stages, before the gift of prophecy came in, except in the case of Daniel (Dan. ii. 19 ; vii. 1.).

16, 17. "Sealeth," that is, "completes and ratifies."

"Purpose" is clearly "self-will." To "hide pride" is to put it away from man's thoughts by the revelation of what is higher than himself.

- 18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit,
and his life ² from perishing by the sword.
- 19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
and the multitude of his bones with strong *pain*:
- 20 ¹ so that his life abhorreth bread,—and his soul ¹ Ps. 107. 18.
³ dainty meat. ³ Heb. *meat of desire.*
- 21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be
seen ;
and his bones *that* were not seen stick out.
- 22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave,
and his life to the destroyers.
- 23 If there be a messenger with him,
an interpreter, one among a thousand,
to shew unto man his uprightness :
- 24 then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
deliver him from going down to the pit :
I have found ⁴ a ransom. ⁴ Or, *an atonement.*

19—22 describe God's second course of dealing by chastisement (with obvious allusions to Job's special case) when the first fails through the heedlessness of man. Pain, disgust, wasting away, bring him to death's door.

19. "The multitude," &c. This clause should probably run thus, "and with the constant struggle (i.e. convulsive pain) of his bones."

22. "The destroyers." The word "the destroyer" is used in Exod. xii. 23 and 1 Cor. x. 10, for the "destroying angel" (of 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17.)—the angel of death. This seems to be the sense of the phrase here (though used in the plural), in contrast with the angelic messenger of the next verse.

23—30 describe with singular force and beauty the intervention of the Angel of God to deliver the penitent, and the ransomed soul's joy and songs of praise.

23 The "messenger," "an interpreter." The phrase appears, almost without doubt, to mean "an angel-ambassador" between God and man, and in that sense, an "intercessor."

"One among a thousand," that is an Angel, exalted above others, "the Angel of God." Whether there is here such clear sense of a manifestation of a Divine Presence, as is found in the history of the chosen family (as in Gen. xvi. 7, 13; xxii. 11; xxxi. 11—13; xlvi. 15, 16.) may be doubted; but the Angel is at least acknowledged as the special messenger of God revealing Him to man.

"To shew unto man his uprightness," is to shew him the way to justification before God.

24. "He is gracious unto him, and saith." The words following are clearly the words of the Angel; but whether the subject "He" in the former clause refers to God or to the Angel is doubtful.

"A ransom." Lit. a "covering" or "hiding" of sin (comp. Ps. xxxii. 1.), not necessarily by what we properly call "redemption" or "atonement." In fact, the idea of the passage seems rather to

JOB, XXXIV.

- ² Heb. *than childhood.* 25 His flesh shall be fresher ² than a child's :
he shall return to the days of his youth :
- 26 he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him :
and he shall see his face with joy :
for he will render unto man his righteousness.
- ³ Or, *He shall look upon men, and say, I have sinned, &c.* 27 ³ He looketh upon men, and *if any* ^m say,
I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right,
and it ⁿ profited me not ;
- ^m 2 Sam. 12. 13. 28 ⁴ he will ^o deliver his soul from going into the pit,
and his life shall see the light.
- ^{13.} Prov. 28. 13. 29 ¶ Lo, all these *things* worketh God—⁵ oftentimes
with man,
- ^{15.} Luke 15. 21. 30 ^p to bring back his soul from the pit,
to be enlightened with the light of the living.
- ¹ John 1. 9. 31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me :
hold thy peace, and I will speak.
- ⁿ Rom. 6. 21. 32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me :
speak, for I desire to justify thee.
- ⁴ Or, *He hath delivered my soul, &c. and my life.* 33 If not, ^q hearken unto me :
hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.
- ^o Isai. 38. 17. ⁵ Heb. *twice and thrice.* ^p ver. 28. Ps. 56. 13.
- ^q Ps. 34. 11.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

¹ *Elihu accuseth Job for charging God with injustice.* ¹⁰ *God omnipotent cannot be unjust.* ³¹ *Man must humble himself unto God.* ³⁴ *Elihu reproveth Job.*

1 **F**URTHERMORE Elihu answered and said,

point to forgiveness on repentance. The whole is to us, like other passages in this book (ix. 33—35 ; xvi. 19—21 ; xix. 25—27.) a wonderful foreshadowing of the true Mediator ; but whether conscious or unconscious in the writer, it is hard to say.

26. “Render unto man his righteousness.” That is, “give back to man his innocence.”

27, 28. These verses are, most unfortunately, mistranslated. They should run thus—

“He singeth before men, and saith,
“I have sinned and perverted the right,
“and it was not requited to me.
“God delivered my soul from the pit ;
“my life rejoiceth still in the light.”

(See Ps. xxx. 3.)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The second speech of Elihu, in this chapter, turns more distinctly against Job, on the ground of his accusation of God's righteousness

- 2 Hear my words, O ye wise *men* ;
and give ear unto me, ye that have know-
ledge.
- 3 ^a For the ear trieth words,—as the ² mouth ^a ch. 6. 30.
tasteth meat. & 12. 11.
² Heb. *palate*.
- 4 Let us choose to us judgment :
let us know among ourselves what *is* good.
- 5 For Job hath said, ^b I am righteous : ^b ch. 33. 9.
and ^c God hath taken away my judgment. ^c ch. 27. 2.
- 6 ^d Should I lie against my right ? ^d ch. 9. 17.
³ My wound *is* incurable without transgression. ³ Heb. *mine*
arrow,
- 7 What man *is* like Job,—^e *who* drinketh up ^e ch. 6. 4.
scorning like water ? & 16. 13.
^e ch. 15. 16.
- 8 Which goeth in company with the workers of
iniquity,
and walketh with wicked men.
- 9 For ^f he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing ^f ch. 9. 22, 23,
that he should delight himself with God. 30. & 35. 3.
Mal. 3. 14.
- 10 ¶ Therefore hearken unto me, ye ⁴ men of under- ⁴ Heb. *men*
standing : *of heart*.
⁵ far be it from God, *that he should do* wicked- ⁵ Gen. 18. 25.
ness ; Deut. 32. 4.
and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* 2 Chr. 19. 7.
iniquity. ch. 8. 3.
& 36. 23.
Ps. 92. 15.
Rom. 9. 14.

(vv. 1—9.), urging (it seems) the simple lesson of faith, that, let appearances be what they may, God cannot be unrighteous (vv. 10—12.) ; His free origination of all things (vv. 13—15.) ; His actual judgment of the world (vv. 16—20.) ; His omniscience (vv. 21—23.) ; His omnipotent disposal of all men (vv. 24—30.), forbid the thought. Prayer that we may read the lesson of His chastisement is the only wisdom (vv. 31—33.) ; if Job accept not this as wisdom, his trial must go on to the end (vv. 34—37.). Again the right key is struck, but with a touch somewhat harsh.

2. Job remaining silent, Elihu turns from him, and appeals to the thoughtful conscience of wise men.

6. “Should I lie against my right?” that is, Should I falsely confess an unrighteousness which I do not feel ?

7, 8. Elihu does not, like the friends, accuse Job of “drinking iniquity like water” (see xv. 16.), or of being himself godless, but of delighting in scorn against man and God, and “going with,” that is, using the same language with, wicked men, so as to encourage them. There is a fine and true distinction here.

10—12 are simply equivalent to Abraham’s conviction in Gen. xviii. 25, and St. Paul’s question in Rom. iii. 5, 6. Elihu here simply asserts the truth ; he does not profess to explain all God’s dealings.

JOB, XXXIV.

- ^h Ps. 62. 12. 11 ^h For the work of a man shall he render unto
^{Prov. 24. 12.} him,
^{Jer. 32. 19.} and cause every man to find according to *his*
^{Ezek. 33. 20.} ways.
^{Matt. 16. 27.}
^{Rom. 2. 6.}
^{2 Cor. 5. 10.}
^{1 Pet. 1. 17.} 12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly,
^{Rev. 22. 12.} neither will the Almighty ⁱ pervert judgment.
^{i ch. 8. 3.}
- 13 ¶ Who hath given him a charge over the
earth?
Or who hath disposed ² the whole world?
- ² Heb. ³ Heb. 14 If he set his heart ³ upon man,
all of it?
upon him.
^k Ps. 104. 29. ^k if he ^k gather unto himself his spirit and his
breath;
- ¹ Gen. 3. 19. 15 ¹ all flesh shall perish together,
^{Eccles. 12. 7.} and man shall turn again unto dust.
- 16 ¶ If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this:
hearken to the voice of my words.
- ^m Gen. 18. 25. 17 ^m Shall even he that hateth right ⁴ govern?
² Sam. 23. 3. ⁴ Heb. *bind?* And wilt thou condemn him that is most
just?
- ⁿ Ex. 22. 28. 18 ⁿ *Is it fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* wicked?
and to princes, *Ye are* ungodly?
- ^o Deut. 10. 17. 19 *How much less* to him that ^o accepteth not the
² Chr. 19. 7. ^o persons of princes,
^{Acts 10. 34.} nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?
^{Rom. 2. 11.} for ^p they all *are* the work of his hands.
^{Gal. 2. 6.}
^{Eph. 6. 9.}
^{Col. 3. 25.}
¹ Pet. 1. 17. 20 In a moment shall they die,
^{p ch. 31. 15.} and the people shall be troubled ^q at midnight,
^q Ex. 12. 29, ^q and pass away:
^{30.}

13—15 argue that in God alone all created being has its rise and its continuance. Can He deal unjustly with His own creatures? Like this is the appeal of the Psalmist (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.): "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever. Despise not, then, the work of Thine own hands."

14. The supplying here of the word "man" seems to be wrong. The sense is, "If He set His heart on Himself (alone);" if (that is) He could forget His creatures (comp. Ps. civ. 29, 30.).

17—20 are a call to reverence the King of kings, and Judge of judges, presuming, at least, that, whatever may seem, He must do right; vv. 21—23 appeal to our sense of His all-searching knowledge.

17. "Shall even He that hateth right govern?" that is, Can the sovereignty of the world belong to an unrighteous being?

20. "At midnight," dying by "the pestilence that walketh in darkness" (so in our Lord's parable, St. Luke xii. 20.). There may be,

and ²the mighty shall be taken away without hand. ² Heb. *they shall take away the mighty.*

21 ¶ ^r For his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. ^r 2 Chr. 16. 9. ch. 31. 4. Ps. 34. 15. Prov. 5. 21. & 15. 3. Jer. 16. 17. & 32. 19.

22 ^s *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. ^s Ps. 139. 12. Amos 9. 2, 3. Heb. 4. 13.

23 For he will not lay upon man more *than right*; that he should ³enter into judgment with God. ³ Heb. *go.*

24 ¶ ^t He shall break in pieces mighty men ⁴without number, and set others in their stead. ^t Dan. 2. 21. ⁴ Heb. *without searching out.*

25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth *them* in the night, so that they are ⁵destroyed. ⁵ Heb. *crushed.*

26 He striketh them as wicked men—⁶in the open sight of others; ⁶ Heb. *in the place of beholders.*

27 because they ^uturned back ⁷from him, and ^xwould not consider any of his ways; ^u 1 Sam. 15. 11. ⁷ Heb. *from after him.*

28 so that they ^ycause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he ^zheareth the cry of the afflicted. ^x Ps. 28. 5. Isai. 5. 12. ^y ch. 35. 9. ^z Jam. 5. 4. ^z Ex. 22. 23.

29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?

And when he hideth *his* face, who then can behold him?

Whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only:

though there need not be, some covert reference to the history of the Exodus (Exod. xi. 4, &c.).

23 is mistranslated. It should be—

“He needeth not to look twice on a man,

“in order that man should come unto judgment before God.”

24—30 contain the last appeal to our experience of God's Almighty disposal of all things—the putting down the mighty, the hearing the cry of the poor, the exposure of the hypocrite.

24. “Without number.” The marginal reading is right, “without searching out,” by intuition of righteous judgment.

29. The two clauses are opposed—

“If God give peace (that is, pardon), who can trouble?”

“If He hide His face (in wrath), who can see Him?”

JOB, XXXV.

- ^a 1 Kin. 12. 28, 30.
² Kin. 21. 9. 30 that the hypocrite reign not,—lest ^a the people
be ensnared.
- ^b Dan. 9. 7,—
14. 31 ¶ Surely it is meet to be said unto God,
^b I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend *any*
more :
- 32 *that which* I see not teach thou me :
if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.
- ² Heb. Should
it be from
with thee ? 33 ² *Should it be* according to thy mind ? He will
recompense it,
whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose ;
and not I :
therefore speak what thou knowest.
- ³ Heb.
of heart. 34 ¶ Let men ³ of understanding tell me,
and let a wise man hearken unto me.
- ^c ch. 35. 16. 35 ^c Job hath spoken without knowledge,
and his words *were* without wisdom.
- ⁴ Or, My fa-
ther, let Job
be tried. 36 ⁴ My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end
because of *his* answers for wicked men.
- 37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,
he clappeth *his hands* among us,
and multiplieth his words against God.

CHAPTER XXXV.

¹ Comparison is not to be made with God, because our good or evil cannot extend unto him. 9 Many cry in their afflictions, but are not heard for want of faith.

1 **E**LIHU spake moreover, and said,
2 Thinkest thou this to be right,

30 seems to depend mainly on the words "against a nation." God's judgment on the nation is to overthrow the unrighteous ruler, cloaking his ill-doing by authority, and so ensnaring the people.

31—33 (although interpreters vary) seem, as in our Version, to convey the final counsel to Job, to confess blindness and ask for light.

31. "Surely it is meet." The original is less distinct, "Surely one saith unto God."

33 is an indignant question to Job. The sense appears to be this—

"Shall God recompense, according to thy mind

"in that thou refuseth (His judgment) ?

"That chooseth thou and not I ;

"therefore speak what thou knowest."

34—37 appeal from Job, as obstinate, to the men of understanding, and express a desire not unrighteous, but somewhat harsh, that the trial may go on till Job's presumption be cast down.

CHAPTER XXXV.

In the third speech of Elihu, in this chapter, he denounces the thought

that thou saidst, My righteousness *is* more than God's?

3 For ^a thou saidst, What advantage will it be ^a ch. 21. 15. & 34. 9. unto thee?

And, What profit shall I have, ² *if I be cleansed* ² Or, by it more than by my sin? from my sin?

4 ³ I will answer thee,—and ^b thy companions ³ Heb. I will return to thee words. with thee. b ch. 34. 8.

5 ¶ ^c Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds *which* are higher than thou. c ch. 22. 12.

6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou ^d against him? ^d Prov. 8. 36. Jer. 7. 19. Or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

7 ^e If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? ^e ch. 22. 2, 3. Ps. 16. 2. Prov. 9. 12. Rom. 11. 35. Or what receiveth he of thine hand?

8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

9 ¶ ^f By reason of the multitude of oppressions they ^f Ex. 2. 23. ch. 34. 28. make *the oppressed* to cry:

of human merit before God, as if it could claim from Him reward by a kind of barter (vv. 1—8.), and suggests that in trouble the prayer of a heart, still unsubdued and untrusting, cannot be heard (vv. 9—13.). Job (he concludes) must wait for God's judgment, and not, because it is delayed, give the rein to presumption. Here possibly he comes near to the truth, underlying the taunt of Satan, "Doth Job serve God "for nought?"

2. "My righteousness is more than God's," that is, "I am (in this "controversy) more in the right than God."

3. The marginal reading in the latter clause is correct: "What "profit shall I have (by righteousness) more than by sin?"

5—8. Repeating the argument of Eliphaz in chap. xxii. 2—4, but without his false inference succeeding it, Elihu urges that the relations between God and man are not those of barter, as if He needed anything from us, or as if we had a right to ask, "What shall we "have therefore?" (Compare our Lord's parable in St. Matt. xx. 1—16, answering this question). See below xli. 11, and note the conclusion of St. Paul's examination of a similar question (Rom. xi. 33—36.).

5. "Look unto the heavens." Comp. Isa. lv. 9, "As the heavens "are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways."

8. We have a striking comment on this verse in the well-known lines—

"For merit lives from man to man,
"And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

9—13 describe the fruitlessness of prayer in trouble, if uttered by

they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

- g Isai. 51. 13. 10 But none saith, g Where *is* God my maker,
h Ps. 42. 8. & 77. 6. & 149. 5. Acts 16. 25. i Ps. 94. 12. h who giveth songs in the night ;
 11 who ⁱ teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,
 and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven ?
k Prov. 1. 23. 12 ^k There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.
l ch. 27. 9. Prov. 15. 23. Isai. 1. 15. Jer. 11. 11. 13 ^l Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.
m ch. 9. 11. 14 ¶ ^m Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him,
n Ps. 37. 5, 6. yet judgment *is* before him ; therefore ⁿ trust thou in him.
o Ps. 89. 32. 15 But now, because *it is* not so, ^o he hath ^o visited in his anger ;
p ch. 34. 35, 37. & 38. 2. yet ^p he knoweth *it* not in great extremity :
 16 ^p therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain ; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

a soul which does not yet realise in faith God's comfort and God's teaching, but even in sorrow is proud and self-conscious. Such a prayer is but "vanity."

9. "They make the oppressed to cry." The true sense appears to be "men utter a cry."

10. "Songs in the night"—the night (that is) both literal and metaphorical. See the marginal references to the Psalms, and to the history of the prison-house at Philippi.

11. The instinct of beasts (keen as it is) judges only in the region of sense, and therefore by what seems rather than by what is. Man should be better than the "beasts which have no understanding" of what is above sense. There is possibly an allusion to Job's words in xii. 7.

14—16 though difficult in detail, are clear as to general drift, warning Job against impatience and presumption as to the judgment of God. "Though it tarry, wait for it."

14. "Thou shalt not see Him." See ix. 11 ; xxiii. 8, 9. "Judgment," that is, thy cause, "is before Him."

15 seems to run thus—

"But now, because He hath not yet visited in His anger,

"and because He takes not heed of rebelliousness, therefore," &c.

The meaning of the last clause is obscure ; but the reference is apparently to sin and rebellion generally, not to Job's sin, which had certainly been visited ; "because God's judgments are slow-footed, therefore Job opens his mouth in foolishness."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1 *Elihu sheweth how God is just in his ways. 16 How Job's sins hinder God's blessings. 24 God's works are to be magnified.*

- 1 **E**LIHU also proceeded, and said,
 2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee
 2 that *I have* yet to speak on God's behalf.
 3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
 and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
 4 For truly my words *shall* not be false :
 he that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.
 5 ¶ Behold, God *is* mighty, and despiseth not
any :
 a *he is* mighty in strength and ³ wisdom.
 6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked :
 but giveth right to the ⁴ poor.
 7 ^bHe withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous :
 but ^cwith kings *are they* on the throne ;

² Heb. *that there are yet words for God.*

^a ch. 9. 4.
 & 12. 13, 16.
 & 37. 23.
 Ps. 99. 4.

³ Heb. *heart.*

⁴ Or, *afflicted.*

^b Ps. 33. 18.
 & 34. 15.

^c Ps. 113. 8.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The last speech of Elihu (in xxxvi., xxxvii.) seems intended simply to resume and to apply the points, which he has already urged, viz., the disciplinary character of punishment, the certainty of the righteousness of God, and the nothingness of the merits of man.

After a brief preface (xxxvi. 1—4.) (*a*) he dwells on God's righteousness, both in His blessing (vv. 5—7.), and in the affliction, which is intended to teach and to discipline, and which only to the impenitent is destruction (vv. 8—15.). Next (*b*) he applies this to Job, urges him to submissive teachableness, deprecates his complaints and presumptuous desires, calls him to glorify God's wisdom (vv. 16—25.). Then (*c*) pursuing a train of thought, often touched upon already, he appeals to the unsearchable wisdom of God in Nature's laws (vv. 26—33.), and (warned apparently by the rise of a storm-wind), dwells (xxxvii. 1—13.) especially on the thunder, the cold, and the rain, as exemplifying that wisdom. Lastly, (*d*) (vv. 14—24.) reminding Job of his ignorance of all these laws, he concludes that we cannot search out God, but we know that He is righteous and doth not willingly afflict.

4. "He that is perfect in knowledge," that is, Elihu himself; confident in his cause, but with some touch of over-confidence in himself.

5. In this verse Elihu (like Job) rejects the idea of arbitrary Omnipotence, apart from mercy and wisdom.

"He is mighty in strength and wisdom." His omnipotence, that is, is spiritual and moral in its very nature. He can do all things; but He cannot do folly or wrong.

7. See the marginal reference to the Psalms. The righteous (says Elihu) is, even in affliction, yet in the sight of God, exalted to a spiritual royalty.

yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

- d Ps. 107. 10. 8 ¶ And ^d if *they* be bound in fetters,
and be holden in cords of affliction ;
9 then he sheweth them their work,
and their transgressions that they have exceeded.
- e ch. 33. 16, 23. 10 ^e He openeth also their ear to discipline,
and commandeth that they return from iniquity.
11 If they obey and serve *him*,
they shall ^f spend their days in prosperity,
and their years in pleasures.
- f ch. 21. 13. Is. 1. 19, 20. 12 But if they obey not,—² they shall perish by the
sword,
and they shall die without knowledge.
- g Rom. 2. 5. 13 But the hypocrites in heart ^g heap up wrath :
they cry not when he bindeth them.
- h ch. 15. 32. & 22. 16. Ps. 55. 23. 14 ^h ³ They die in youth,—and their life *is* among
the ⁴ unclean.
- i Heb. Their soul dieth. 15 He delivereth the ⁵ poor in his affliction,
and openeth their ears in oppression.
- j Or, sodomites, Deut. 23. 17. 16 ¶ Even so would he have removed thee out of the
strait
ⁱ into a broad place, where *there is* no strait-
ness ;
and ⁶ ^k that which should be set on thy table
should be full of ¹ fatness.
- k Ps. 23. 5. l Ps. 36. 8.

9. "That they have exceeded," that is, in vain glory or self-confidence. Here He touches the special object of God's chastisement, to humble those who are exalted in their own eyes. Compare with these verses the celebrated passage (Prov. iii. 11, 12, quoted in Heb. xii. 5, 6.), in which the view of affliction as discipline is brought out, more pathetically, though not more clearly.

11—15 describe three classes of men under affliction, viz., the humble (vv. 11, 15.) who find its blessing; the thoughtless (ver. 12.) who perish in simple folly; the godless (or hypocrite) (vv. 13, 14.) who steel themselves against it, and die in their sins by premature decay.

14. "The unclean." See the marginal reading. The original word refers to the consecration of this abomination to heathen worship (see Deut. xxiii. 17. 2 Kings xxiii. 7.).

16. On this verse there is great difference of interpretation, chiefly turning on the tense of the principal verb. Some will have it describe Job's past state as a snare to him; others, what would be his future state in case of penitence. The latter, which is the idea of our Version, seems on the whole best to suit the context.

- 17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked :
- ² judgment and justice take hold *on thee*.
- 18 Because *there is* wrath, beware lest he take thee away with *his* stroke :
- then ^m a great ransom cannot ³ deliver thee. ² Or, judgment and justice should uphold thee.
- 19 ⁿ Will he esteem thy riches ? ^m Ps. 49. 7.
- No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength. ³ Heb. turn thee aside.
- 20 Desire not the night,—when people are cut off in their place. ⁿ Prov. 11. 4.
- 21 Take heed, ° regard not iniquity :
- for ^p this hast thou chosen rather than affliction. ^o Ps. 66. 18.
- 22 Behold, God exalteth by his power :—^q who teacheth like him ? ^q Isai. 40. 13, 14.
- 23 ^r Who hath enjoined him his way ? ^r Rom. 11. 34.
- Or ^s who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity ? ^s I Cor. 2. 16.
- 24 Remember that thou ^t magnify his work,—which men behold. ^t Ps. 92. 5.
- 25 Every man may see it ;—man may behold *it* afar off. ^u Rev. 15. 3.
- 26 ¶ Behold, God *is* great, and we ^u know *him* not, ^u 1 Cor. 13. 12.

17. "Thou hast fulfilled." Rather, "thou art full of the judgment of the wicked;" self-chosen by thy attitude towards God. In the next clause the marginal reading must be rejected. The sense is as in the text, or, "judgment and justice hold close together," i.e. follow each other.

18. The rendering of this verse seems to be—

"Because there is wrath (in thy mind) let it not seduce thee
"to vehemence ;

"let not the greatness of ransom cause thee to err."

The sense of this "greatness of ransom" is somewhat obscure. It probably means "the greatness of the suffering, or the submission, which is the atonement for thy sin."

19. This verse is very difficult. The rendering of our Version is hardly applicable to any words or ideas of Job (though in itself it may stand), unless indeed it refers to the munificence in which he had gloried. Some render—

"Shall thy outcry place thee beyond distress,
"and all the efforts of thy strength?"

20. "Desire not the night." The allusion is to Job's longing for sudden death.

22. "Exalteth," rather, "is sublime" in His power.

"Who teacheth like Him?" The phrase conveys the idea, peculiar to Elihu, of God not as merely punishing, but as teaching by punishment.

26. The transition here, as in some other passages, seems abrupt.

- ^x Ps. 90. 2.
& 102. 24, 27.
Heb. 1. 12.
- ^y Ps. 117. 8. 27 For he ^y maketh small the drops of water :
they pour down rain according to the vapour
thereof :
- ^z Prov. 3. 20. 28 ^z which the clouds do drop
and distil upon man abundantly.
- 29 Also can *any* understand the spreadings of the
clouds,
or the noise of his tabernacle ?
- ^a ch. 37. 3. 30 Behold, he ^a spreadeth his light upon it,
and covereth ² the bottom of the sea.
- ² Heb.
the roots.
^b ch. 37. 13. 31 For ^b by them judgeth he the people ;
& 38. 23. he ^c giveth meat in abundance.
- ^c Ps. 136. 25.
Acts 14. 17. 32 ^d With clouds he covereth the light ;
^d Ps. 147. 8. and commandeth it *not to shine* by *the cloud* that
cometh betwixt.
- ^e 1 Kin. 18.
41, 45. 33 ^e The noise thereof sheweth concerning it,
³ Heb.
that which
goeth up. the cattle also concerning ³ the vapour.

But in the earlier ages, when revelation of God in His Word and in man's history was less perfect, the turning at all times to His works in nature was almost a necessity in thought. Here it is especially the rain, which suggests itself, as an instrument of God's rule over man, in bounty or in judgment (comp. the climax in xxviii. 26, and see Acts xiv. 17.). Then (suggested by what is before their eyes) comes the awful sense of God in the thunder.

27, 28. These verses are obscured in our translation. They should run thus—

“ He draweth to Him the drops of water :
“ they distil as rain with its mist (that is, as a rain mist),
“ which the clouds drop down,
“ and make fall on the multitudes of men.”

The idea is first of the drawing of the moisture (from the sea ?) ; then of its forming a mist of rain, lastly condensing itself into clouds, and from them watering the earth.

29. “ The noise,” &c. The thunder is the sound of the moving of the tent of the King of Heaven.

30. “ His light,” i. e. His lightning.

“ Upon it.” This should be, “ over Himself.” The image is of the lightning playing round the cloud of God's Presence, and “ covering,” that is, clothing in sudden radiance even the depths of the sea.

31. “ By them,” that is, by the thunder clouds. God (says Elihu) sends the rain, both for judgment on evil and for bounty to all the earth.

32, 33 seem mistranslated ; the latter is hardly intelligible. The passage (which is very difficult) should probably run thus—

“ He covereth (i. e. armeth) His hands with the lightning ;
“ He directeth it against the adversary (or against the mark).

JOB, XXXVII.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1 *God is to be feared because of his great works. 15 His wisdom is unsearchable in them.*

- 1 **A**T this also my heart trembleth,
and is moved out of his place.
- 2 ² Hear attentively the noise of his voice,
and the sound *that* goeth out of his mouth. 2 Heb. *Hear in hearing.*
- 3 He directeth it under the whole heaven,
and his ³ lightning unto the ⁴ ends of the earth. 3 Heb. *light.*
- 4 After it ^a a voice roareth :
he thundereth with the voice of his excellency ;
and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. 4 Heb. *wings of the earth.*
- 5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice ;
^b great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend. a Ps. 29. 3. & 68. 33.
- 6 For ^c he saith to the snow, Be thou *on* the earth ;
⁵ likewise to the small rain,
and to the great rain of his strength. b ch. 5. 9. & 9. 10. & 36. 26. Rev. 15. 3.
- 7 He sealeth up the hand of every man ;
^d that all men may know his work. c Ps. 147. 16, 17. 5 Heb. *and to the shower of rain, and to the showers of rain of his strength.*

d Ps. 109. 27.

“The noise of His moving announces Him ;
“the very cattle tell of His approach.”

The last line is by some otherwise translated ; but the very simplicity of the image commends it as true. The allusion to the brute instinct, conscious of the presence of God, even sooner than men, suits well the ideas of pastoral life.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. Connects itself with xxxvi. 33. The beasts tremble by instinct, man by thought. There is the same connection in *Virg. Georg.* i. 330, “*fugere feræ ; et mortalia corda, Per gentes humilis stravit pavor*” (Beasts flee ; and mortal hearts, through all the lands Fear humbles to the dust).

4. “He will not stay them” (the lightnings) “when His voice is heard” in the thunder.

5. “Great things doeth He,” &c. The awfulness of immeasurable power in the storm suggests the mysterious greatness of God’s works generally.

6—13. From the thunderstorm Elihu passes on to all the kindred exhibitions of God’s majesty. There is apparently a series ; first, the heavy rainstorms beginning in the stormy period of the year (ver. 6.), then the snow, the frost, the ice of the winter (vv. 7—10.), then the renewed rains of the spring (vv. 11—13.).

6. “Small rain” is an error. It should be the “downpour of rain,” even the “great rain of His strength,” describing the sudden beginning of the rainy season in the South.

7. “He sealeth up,” &c. That is, He stays every hand from work.

JOB, XXXVII.

- Ps. 104. 22. 8 Then the beasts ^e go into dens,—and remain in their places.
- ² Heb. *Out of the chamber.* 9 ² Out of the south cometh the whirlwind : and cold out of the ³ north.
- ³ Heb. *scattering winds.* 10 ^f By the breath of God frost is given : and the breadth of the waters is straitened.
- ^f ch. 38. 29, 30. 11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud : he scattereth ⁴ his bright cloud :
- Ps. 147. 17, 18. 12 and it is turned round about by his counsels : that they may ^g do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.
- ^h Ex. 9. 18, 23. 13 ^h He causeth it to come, whether for ⁵ correction, or ⁱ for his land, or ^k for mercy.
- ¹ Sam. 12. 18, 19. 14 ¶ Hearken unto this, O Job : stand still, and ^l consider the wondrous works of God.
- Ezra 10. 9. ch. 36. 31. 15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine ?
- ⁵ Heb. *a rod.* ⁱ ch. 38. 26, 27. 16 ^m Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of ⁿ him which is perfect in knowledge ?
- ^k 2 Sam. 21. 10. 17 How thy garments *are* warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south *wind* ?
- ¹ Kin. 18. 45. ^l Ps. 111. 2. ^m ch. 36. 29. ⁿ ch. 36. 4.

9. "Out of the South," should be, "out of the secret chamber" of God (comp. ix. 9.).

"Out of the North," is properly, from the "cloud-sweeping," or, "cloud-scattering winds" (see *margin*).

10. "Is straitened," that is, "ice-bound."

11 should be rendered—

"Again He loadeth the cloud with vapours,

"He spreadeth abroad the cloud of His lightning ;"

referring clearly to the storms of the vernal equinox, when the cold is giving way.

13. Elihu recognises three objects. On the one hand, correction of men, on the other hand, mercy to men ; between the two, the rain sent simply to fertilize the earth, as it were for its own sake.

14. "Stand still, and consider," is the burden of Elihu's appeal. Unlike the three friends, he acknowledges perplexity ; unlike Job, he would bear it in patience.

16. "The balancings of the clouds," that is, the poisoning of the clouds in the air, and forbidding them to discharge on the earth.

17. "How thy garments are warm." This effect seems purposely chosen, as the slightest and homeliest effect of the laws of God's Hand in the changes of the seasons. If this is unintelligible, how much more the rest !

- 18 Hast thou with him ^o spread out the sky,
which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? ^o Gen. 1. 6.
Isai. 44. 24.
- 19 Teach us what we shall say unto him;
*for we cannot order our speech by reason of
darkness.*
- 20 Shall it be told him that I speak?
If a man speak; surely he shall be swallowed up.
- 21 And now *men* see not the bright light which *is*
in the clouds:
but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.
- 22 ² Fair weather cometh out of the north: ² Heb. *Gold*.
with God *is* terrible majesty.
- 23 *Touching* the Almighty, ^p we cannot find him ^p 1 Tim. 6. 16.
out: ^q *he is* excellent in power, ^q ch. 36. 5.
and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he
will not afflict.
- 24 Men do therefore ^r fear him: ^r Matt. 10. 28.
he respecteth not any *that are* ^s wise of heart. ^s Matt. 11. 25.
1 Cor. 1. 26.

18. The word for "sky" is the same as "firmament" in Gen. i. 6, signifying "the expansion," "the vault of heaven." It is compared in Exod. xxiv. 10 to a "clear sapphire," here to a mirror" (metallic, of course, not of glass) for its brightness, from which the clouds melt, as breath from a polished mirror.

19 is, of course, ironical, alluding to Job's frequent desire to plead before God. "We (says Elihu) cannot order our speech by reason of "darkness. Wilt thou teach us what to say to Him?"

20. "If a man speak," &c., should be, "Or did a man ever wish to "be swallowed up?" (as he would be, if he confronted the majesty of God).

21, 22 seem to draw a metaphor from the storm-cloud then before their eyes.

"At this moment we see not the bright light,
the light which is behind the clouds;
let a wind pass by; it cleareth them away;
the golden light comes from the North wind.
So with God is terrible majesty;

"as for the Almighty we cannot find Him out," &c.

Just as the bright sky is bright still, though hidden by the clouds, yet seen in gleams, as the wind of fair weather blows; so in God is awful majesty; we see Him not as He is, but we see by glimpses that "He is "excellent in power," &c.

23. "He will not afflict." Some render "Justice He will not "pervert."

23, 24 sum up the whole matter. However inscrutable God's ways, He is excellent in judgment and righteousness; He will not wantonly afflict. But godly fear becometh men before Him, and him who is wise in his own conceit, God will not regard.

With these words end Elihu's speeches, which remain unanswered and

JOB, XXXVIII.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1 *God challengeth Job to answer.* 4 *God, by his mighty works, convinceth Job of ignorance, 31 and of imbecility.*

a So Exod. 19, 16, 18.
1 Kin. 19, 11.
Ezek. 1, 4.
Nab. 1, 3.
b ch. 34, 25.
& 42, 3.
c 1 Tim. 1, 7.
d ch. 40, 7.
2 Heb. *make me know.*
e Ps. 104, 5.
Prov. 8, 29.
& 30, 4.

- 1 **T**HEN the LORD answered Job ^a out of the whirlwind, and said,
2 ^b Who is this that darkeneth counsel by ^c words without knowledge?
3 ^d Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and ² answer thou me.
4 ¶ ^e Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

unnoticed in the dialogue by God or man. In spite of much difficulty of detail their general sense is clear; in spite of some harshness and excess of dogmatism, they seem to contain the root of the matter.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. contain the answer of the Lord "out of the whirlwind" to the often-repeated desire of Job, that God would plead with him. But it is to be observed, that the answer is in no sense a solution of the difficulties which had perplexed Job, even though (in xlii. 7.) it is implied that to feel them was natural and not inconsistent with right. It is a simple call for faith, on the ground of man's ignorance of the laws of God's providence—a call enforced by reference, first to the laws of inanimate nature, next, to the wonders of animal instinct.

In xxxviii, 4—38, we have the former subject, dwelling, (a) on the creation of the earth (vv. 4—7.); on the creation and limitation of the sea (vv. 8—11.); on the creation of light (12—15.); next, (b) on the mysterious laws ruling the sea and earth, the light, the rain, the snow, and the hail (vv. 16—30.); lastly, (c) on the laws of the stars, and the seasons which they regulate (vv. 31—38.).

In xxxviii. 39—xxxix. 30, we have the latter subject, the wonderful instincts and powers of the lion and the raven, the wild goat, the wild ass, the "unicorn," the stork and the ostrich, the heron, the hawk, and the eagle.

The argument throughout is of the unsearchable wisdom of God. It is unsearchable in these lower kingdoms of force and animal life; how much more in the higher kingdom of humanity!

1. "Out of the whirlwind." The words are most easily explained by reference to the close of Elihu's speech. The Greek translation actually begins the chapter, "Now, after that Elihu had ceased speaking, the Lord answered Job," &c. But the answer of the Lord is called forth by the last words of Job (xxxi. 35.), "My desire is that the Almighty would answer me." "The whirlwind" here is the storm. God's manifestation in it here is as in Exod. xix. 16—18 (with which contrast the more spiritual revelation in 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.); and it suits well the answer of the Lord, dwelling as it does on the wonders of nature.

2. "Counsel." That is, the counsel or providence of God.

4—6 (with which comp. Ps. civ. 5, 6, 9.) describe the foundation of

JOB, XXXVIII.

- Declare, ² if thou hast understanding.
- 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
- 6 Whereupon are the ³ foundations thereof ⁴ fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
7 when the morning stars sang together,
and all ^f the sons of God shouted for joy?
- 8 ¶ ^g Or *who* shut up the sea with doors,
when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of
the womb?
- 9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
10 and ^h brake up for it my decreed *place*,
and set bars and doors,
11 and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no
further:
and here shall ⁶ thy proud waves ⁱ be stayed?
- 12 ¶ Hast thou ^k commanded the morning since thy
days;
and caused the dayspring to know his place;
13 that it might take hold of the ⁷ ends of the
earth,

² Heb. *if thou knowest understanding.*

³ Heb. *sockets.*

⁴ Heb. *made to sink?*

^f ch. 1. 6.

^g Gen. 1. 9.
Ps. 33. 7.
& 104. 9.
Prov. 8. 29.
Jer. 5. 22.

^h Or, *established my decree upon it.*
h ch. 26. 10.

⁶ Heb. *the pride of thy waves.*

ⁱ Ps. 89. 9.
& 93. 4.

^k Ps. 74. 16.
& 148. 5.

⁷ Heb. *wings.*

the earth, under the likeness of the commencement of a building, planned by measure and line, "made to sink" into its foundations, and squared by the corner-stone. All this is of the solid surface of the earth, from beneath (see ver. 9.) which the sea breaks out. For the subtler conception of the earth itself, as poised on nothing, see xxvi. 7.

7. The song of praise is from the "morning stars," the brightest of inanimate things, and the "sons of God," i. e. the Angels, as the highest spiritual beings. From the former clause probably comes the fancy of the "music of the spheres," of which Shakespeare has made use in the *Merchant of Venice*, Act v., Sc. I, and Milton in the *Hymn on the Nativity*. The general idea is, of course, simply that which runs through the *Benedicite*, expanded (as it would seem) from Ps. cxlviii.

8—11. In these verses we have the grand conception of the sea breaking out (from the "water under the earth") as from the womb of the earth, wrapped in the swaddling-clothes of cloud, and suddenly kept from overflowing all by the word of God (see Jer. v. 22. Ps. civ. 9.).

12—15. The light is here spoken of not in itself (as in Gen i. 3.), but in the succession of morning to night, as bearing on the earth and on human life. It comes, therefore, after the formation of the earth and sea.

13. The metaphor is an unusual one. Light rushes over the earth,

JOB, XXXVIII.

- ¹ Ps. 101. 35. that ¹ the wicked might be shaken out of it ?
- 14 It is turned as clay *to* the seal ;—and they stand
as a garment.
- ^m ch. 18. 5. 15 And from the wicked their ^m light is withholden,
ⁿ Ps. 10. 15. and ⁿ the high arm shall be broken.
- ^o Ps. 77. 19. 16 ¶ Hast thou ^o entered into the springs of the sea ?
Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth ?
- ^p Ps. 9. 13. 17 Have ^p the gates of death been opened unto
thee ?
Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of
death ?
- 18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth ?
Declare if thou knowest it all.
- 19 ¶ Where *is* the way *where* light dwelleth ?
And *as for* darkness, where *is* the place thereof,
- ² Or, at. 20 that thou shouldst take it ² to the bound thereof,
and that thou shouldst know the paths *to* the
house thereof ?
- 21 Knowest thou *it*, because thou wast then born ?
Or *because* the number of thy days *is* great ?
- ⁴ Ps. 135. 7. 22 ¶ Hast thou entered into ⁴ the treasures of the
snow ?

seizing it at once at either end, and shaking the evil-doers from the face of it.

14 should be, "It (the earth) changes like clay under the seal," i. e. what was before vague and shapeless in the dark, flashes into definite forms of beauty ; "and all things stand out like a garment," plain in texture and colour under the light.

15. "Their light." The darkness, which is to them as the light (comp. xxiv. 16, 17.).

16—21 pass from the consideration of the earth, the sea, and the light themselves, to the mysterious laws which rule them, determining the deep sources of the sea, the limit of the earth, and the law of alternate light and darkness.

16. "In the search." It should be, "in the far recesses" of the depth.

17. The connection of the sea and the abyss is found in ch. xxviii. 14. The Sheol is looked upon as far below the foundations of the earth and sea. The Greek translation has a curious reading, "Did the gatekeepers "of the shadow of death cower before thee?"

18—20. The breadth (or compass) of the earth, the far horizon, leads naturally on to the light and darkness between which it is the boundary, and the spheres or "houses" of their habitation.

21. The ironical question implies that, to know this, Job must have been born before creation, and witnessed its evolution.

22—30 regard the mysterious coming and going of the snow, the

JOB, XXXVIII.

- Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,
 23 ^r which I have reserved against the time of ^r Ex. 9. 13.
Josh. 10. 11.
Isai. 30. 30.
Ezek. 13. 11,
13.
Rev. 16. 21.
 trouble,
 against the day of battle and war?
 24 By what way is the light parted,
which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?
 25 Who ^s hath divided a watercourse for the over- ^s ch. 23. 26.
 flowing of waters,
 or a way for the lightning of thunder;
 26 to cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no
 man *is*;
 on the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man;
 27 ^t to satisfy the desolate and waste *ground*;
 and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring
 forth?
 28 ^u Hath the rain a father?
 Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?
 29 Out of whose womb came the ice?
 And the ^x hoary frost of heaven, who hath ^x Ps. 147. 8.
Jer. 14. 22.
 gendered it?
 30 The waters are hid as *with* a stone,
 and the face of the deep ² is ^y frozen. 2 Heb.
is taken.
y ch. 37. 10.
z ch. 9. 9.
3 Or, The
seven stars.
4 Heb. Cimah.
5 Heb. Cesil?
 31 ¶ Canst thou bind the sweet influences of ^z ³ ⁴ Pleiades,
 or loose the bands of ⁵ Orion?

hail, and the rain, partly, as designed for God's judgment on man (ver. 23.); partly, as for the blessing of the earth, even where untenanted, (vv. 26, 27.) (so in xxxvii. 13.). As for their sources, who can tell them? (vv. 28—30.)

23. "Against the day of battle and war." The connection is here strange, unless there be some reference to the hail-stones sent from Heaven in the battles of Israel (see Josh. x. 11.).

24. The "light" here is (as shewn by the context) the lightning, unless the reading of the Greek translation, "the hoar frost," be adopted.

30. "Hid as with a stone," more exactly, "are made hard as a stone."

31, 32. The constellations are the same as in ix. 9, except "Mazza-roth," the meaning of which is doubtful, but which is usually considered as a peculiar form of the word signifying "zodiac;" and then the words "in its season" must refer to the successive signs of the zodiac, which mark the "seasons."

31. "The sweet influences." It should probably be, "the chains" of the clustered stars of the Pleiades, by which they are bound in one constellation.

The "bands of Orion" allude to the idea that he is a great rebel bound in the sky.

- ² Or. *The twelve signs.* 32 Canst thou bring forth ² Mazzaroth in his season?
 Or canst thou ³ guide Arcturus with his sons?
³ Heb. *guide them.* 33 Knowest thou ^a the ordinances of heaven?
^a Jer. 31. 35. Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?
 34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?
 35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, ⁴ Here we *are*?
⁴ Heb. *Behold us?* 36 ^b Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?
^b ch. 32. 8. Or who hath given understanding to the heart?
 Ps. 51. 6. Eccles. 2. 26.
 37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom?
⁵ Heb. *who can cause to lie down.* Or ⁵ who can stay the bottles of heaven,
⁶ Or, *When the dust is turned into mire.* 38 ⁶ when the dust ⁷ groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?
⁷ Heb. *is poured.* 39 ¶ ^c Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?
^c Ps. 104. 21. Or fill ⁸ the appetite of the young lions, & 145. 15.
⁸ Heb. *the life.* 40 when they couch in *their* dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?
^d Ps. 147. 9. 41 ^d Who provideth for the raven his food?
 Matt. 6. 26. When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

32. "Arcturus" is "the Bear;" and "his sons" (or in the original "her sons") are the three stars, which we call the tail.

33. The "ordinances of Heaven" are evidently the seasons, suggested by the mention of the stars which mark them, and especially connected with the early and the latter rain.

36 seems abrupt and unconnected with the context, unless indeed it be closely joined to the next verse, "Who has given man wisdom enough "to number the clouds?" &c.

37. "Stay" is a mistranslation. The sense (see marginal reading) is to "overturn," that is, "to empty." "The bottles of Heaven." The clouds are compared to the water skins, in which water is stored up. The next verse describes the effect of rain on the loose dusty soil.

39 (which should begin a new chapter) leads on to the consideration of animal instinct and the providence, which at once guides it and satisfies it by the laws of nature. No doubt intentionally, the instances chosen are all of wild creatures (except the war-horse), as being unguided by man, and therefore uninfluenced by the reflection of his intelligence.

39—41. Comp. Ps. civ. 21, "The young lions roar for their prey, and seek their meat from God," and Ps. cxlviii. 9, "He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him." See St. Luke xii. 24. The connection between the two here is probably suggested by the roar of the one, and the hoarse cry of the other, both equally fierce and importunate.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1 *Of the wild goats and hinds.* 5 *Of the wild ass.* 9 *The unicorn.* 13 *The peacock, stork, and ostrich.* 19 *The horse.* 26 *The hawk.* 27 *The eagle.*

- 1 **K**NOWEST thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?
 Or canst thou mark when ^a the hinds do calve? ^a Ps. 29. 9.
- 2 Canst thou number the months *that* they fulfil?
 Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?
- 3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones,
 they cast out their sorrows.
- 4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn;
 they go forth, and return not unto them.
- 5 ¶ Who hath sent out the wild ass free?
 Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?
- 6 ^b Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the ² barren land his dwellings. ^b ch. 24. 5.
Jer. 2. 24.
Hos. 8. 9.
- 7 He scorneth the multitude of the city,
 neither regardeth he the crying ³ of the driver. ² Heb. salt places.
- 8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,
 and he searcheth after every green thing. ³ Heb. of the exactor,
ch. 3. 18.
- 9 ¶ Will the ^c unicorn be willing to serve thee,—or ^c Num. 23. 22.
 abide by thy crib? Deut. 33. 17.
- 10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow?

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1—4 refer to the secret laws of animal generation, as xxxviii. 39—41 to the instinct which guides each to its appointed food.

4. "With corn" is an error; it should be in "the desert."

5—12 pass on to the types of speed and strength in brute creatures, untameable by man, whose uses therefore he knows not.

5. The original has two different words for "wild ass," the former denoting its speed, the latter its untameable wildness. Comp. Prov. xxvi. 3, "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass."

9. The "unicorn" seems to be here, not the rhinoceros (as in the Vulgate), or the buffalo (as many interpreters have it), but the oryx. The original word has nothing to do with the idea of "one-horned," which was introduced in the Greek translation; whether there is, or is not, a one-horned variety of the oryx, is uncertain. The word is found in Num. xxiii. 22. Deut. xxxiii. 17. Ps. xcii. 10 (under slight variations of form), everywhere with the idea of fierce untameable strength, not (see vv. 11, 12.) to be "trusted or believed" in by man as an instrument of his will.

Or will he harrow the valleys after thee ?

11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great ?

Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him ?

12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed,
and gather *it into* thy barn ?

13 ¶ *Gavest thou* the goodly wings unto the peacocks ?
or ² wings and feathers unto the ostrich ?

² Or, the
feathers of
the stork
and ostrich.

14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth,
and warmeth them in dust,

15 and forgetteth that the foot may crush them,
or that the wild beast may break them.

^d Lam. 4. 3.

16 She is ^d hardened against her young ones, as
though *they were* not her's :

her labour is in vain without fear ;

17 because God hath deprived her of wisdom,
neither hath he ^e imparted to her understanding.

^e ch. 35. 11.

18 What time she lifteth up herself on high,
she scorneth the horse and his rider.

19 ¶ Hast thou given the horse strength ?

13—17 present an example of instinct, defective and to us unnatural, but yet ordained by God.

13. Our Version is here in error. The original contains a contrast between the ostrich and the stork, in respect of carelessness and carefulness of their young.

“ The pinion of the ostrich beats joyously,

“ is it, in wing and feather, fond (like the stork) ? ”

The Hebrew name for the stork, here alluded to, is the “ pious,” “ the fond mother ”—her tenderness to her young being as conspicuous as the apparent neglectfulness of the ostrich.

16. “ Her labour is in vain without fear ” or “ distress ; ” that is, her labour in laying the eggs is vain, and yet she cares not. Whether she actually sits on her eggs at all is doubtful ; it is certain that she constantly deserts them, and, if the nest is disturbed, she occasionally crushes them herself.

19—25 contain the magnificent description of the war-horse (possibly suggested by the allusion in ver. 18 to the power of the ostrich to outstrip the horse of its pursuer), notable as standing almost alone in the Old Testament, where the horse is but little dwelt upon, because little used by Israel (see Deut. xvii. 16.), except during the brief magnificence of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 26 ; x. 28.). Here it is the only creature named which is not absolutely wild, although even the horse is described in the wild and terrible impetuosity of his war-instinct.

19. “ Thunder.” This grand translation must be given up. The

- Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder ?
 20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper ?
 The glory of his nostrils *is* ² terrible. ² Heb. *terror.*
 21 ³ He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* ³ strength : ³ Or, *His feet dig.*
^f he goeth on to meet ⁴ the armed men. ^f Jer. 8. 6.
 22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted ; ⁴ Heb. *the armour.*
 neither turneth he back from the sword.
 23 The quiver rattleth against him,
 the glittering spear and the shield.
 24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and
 rage :
 neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the
 trumpet.
 25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha ;
 and he smelleth the battle afar off,
 the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
 26 ¶ Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
 and stretch her wings toward the south ?
 27 Doth the eagle mount up ⁵ at thy command,
 and ⁵ make her nest on high ? ⁵ Heb. *by thy mouth.*
 28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock,
 upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. ⁶ Jer. 49. 16.
 29 From thence she seeketh the prey,—and her Obad. 4.
 eyes behold afar off.
 30 Her young ones also suck up blood :
 and ^h where the slain *are*, there *is* she. ^h Matt. 24. 28.
Luke 17. 37.

original means "trembling or quivering;" it may be, literally, the "tossing mane," or, metaphorically, "terror;" the latter is more probable in so poetical a passage.

20. "Canst thou make him afraid," should be, "Canst thou make "him spring" like a grasshopper?"

24. "Neither believeth he," &c. The idea is, "he believes not" (for joy) that the note he has been longing for has sounded. But the more probable translation is, "He holdeth not in," "cannot restrain himself," when the trumpet sounds.

25. "Among the trumpets." Rather, "at every blast of the "trumpet."

26—30 carry on the idea of fierceness of instinct to the birds of prey—the migratory hawk, "stretching her wings toward the South," and the solitary eagle watching continually from her fixed eyrie, with the keen sight, "beholding afar off."

30. Compare the marginal references. The idea especially conveyed is the marvellous eye-sight, which from an inconceivable distance marks and pounces upon the prey.

CHAPTER XL.

1 Job humbleth himself to God. 6 God stirreth him up to shew his righteousness, power, and wisdom. 15 Of the behemoth.

- 1 **M**OREOVER the LORD answered Job, and said,
- ^a ch. 33. 13. 2 Shall he that ^a contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him* ?
He that reproveth God, let him answer it.
- 3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
- ^b Ezra 9. 6. ch. 42. 6. Ps. 51. 4. 4 ^b Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ?
^c I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.
- ^c ch. 23. 9. Ps. 39. 9. 5 Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer :
yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further.
- ^d ch. 33. 1. 6 ¶ ^d Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
- ^e ch. 38. 3. 7 ^e Gird up thy loins now like a man :
- ^f ch. 42. 4. 8 ^f I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
- ^g Ps. 51. 4. Rom. 3. 4. 9 ^g Wilt thou also disannul my judgment ?
wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous ?
- 10 ^h Hast thou an arm like God ?
or canst thou thunder with ^h a voice like him ?
- ⁱ Ps. 93. 1. & 104. 1. 10 ⁱ Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency ;

CHAPTER XL.

The first verses of this chapter (1—5.) merely clench the appeal of the previous chapters to the ignorance of man, in respect to the laws of the physical and animal world, as preventing him from being fit to “instruct” and to “reprove” God in His dealing with the higher world of humanity. Job acknowledges the appeal, and is silenced. Then follows a second appeal to the power of God, as a needful instrument of His moral government. Till man can wield the power, can he determine its right use? (6—14.) To this appeal is appended a remarkable description of two types of brute force, the behemoth and leviathan, as laughing to scorn the powers of man (ch. xl. 15—24; and xli.). Job’s answer to it is contained in xlii. (1—6.).

4, 5. The answer of Job is as yet one of simple acknowledgment of the presumption of his own pleading ; an answer in itself implying nothing but bewilderment and fear. It is not sufficient, and therefore God speaks again.

8. This verse introduces the subject at once. Job had implicitly claimed not only to know better than God what should be, but also to resist and defy His judgment as unrighteous.

9, 10 describe simply God’s physical power and majesty ; the next verses (11—13.) His uses of it in the moral government of the world. The

and array thyself with glory and beauty.

- 11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath :
and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase
him.
- 12 Look on every one *that is* ^k proud, and bring ^k Isai. 2. 12.
Dan. 4. 37. him low ;
and tread down the wicked in their place.
- 13 Hide them in the dust together ;—*and* bind
their faces in secret.
- 14 Then will I also confess unto thee
that thine own right hand can save thee.
- 15 ¶ Behold now ² behemoth, which I made with ² Or, the
elephant, as
some think. thee ;
he eateth grass as an ox.
- 16 Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins,
and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.
- 17 ³ He moveth his tail like a cedar :
the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. ³ Or, He
setteth up.
- 18 His bones *are as* strong pieces of brass ;
his bones *are* like bars of iron.
- 19 He *is* the chief of the ways of God :

great sin—the source of all other sin—is self-will and pride : and it is therefore the especial characteristic of the divine government to “ abase “ the proud and exalt the humble.” (So 1 Sam. ii. 4—8. Isa. ii. 11, 12, 17. St. Matt. xxiii. 12. St. Luke ii. 51, 52, &c.) The one demand of God is for the faith which rests on Him, not only for blessing, but also for righteousness and salvation. The temper of pride places the first source of salvation and goodness in man ; faith places it in God, and bids man simply receive it, and, under God’s grace, work it out.

13. “ Bind their faces in secret.” That is, cover their faces in darkness. Possibly there may be allusion to the custom of veiling the faces of the condemned (see Esther vii. 8.).

14. This verse implies that the individual cannot be separated from the whole race ; whatever power saves any individual soul must be the same which governs the world.

15. “ Behemoth.” The word, if really Hebrew, means simply a great beast (the “ plural of majesty” of the word *beast*) ; but there is doubt whether it has not an Egyptian origin (*P-ehe-mout*, the “ water “ ox”). In any case it is universally acknowledged to denote the hippopotamus of the Nile.

16, 17. The “ navel” should be the “ sinews :” in ver. 17 the latter clause should be, “ the muscles of his thighs are knit together.” The tail is compared to a cedar, for its strength and toughness.

18. Two words are used for “ bones.” The former probably refers to the hollow bones, compared to “ pieces (or tubes) of brass,” the latter to the solid ribs, which are as “ bars of iron.”

19. “ The chief of the ways,” that is, “ The greatest of the works

he that made him can make his sword to approach
unto him.

- ¹ Ps. 104. 14. 20 Surely the mountains ¹ bring him forth food,
where all the beasts of the field play.
- 21 He lieth under the shady trees,
in the covert of the reed, and fens.
- 22 The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow ;
the willows of the brook compass him about.
- ² Heb. *he oppresseseth.*
³ Or, *Will any take him in his sight, or, bore his nose with a gin?*
ch. 41. 1, 2. 23 Behold, ² he drinketh up a river, *and* hasteth not :
he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his
mouth.
- 24 ³ He taketh it with his eyes :—*his* nose pierceth
through snares.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of God's great power in the leviathan.

- ² That is, *a whale, or, a whirlpool.*
^a Ps. 164. 26.
Isai. 27. 1. 1 CANST thou draw out ² ^a leviathan with an
hook ?

“of God.” The latter clause is difficult. The version of the text gives a good sense: “Only his Maker can make a sword to pierce him.” Others render, “His Maker has given him his sword” (the sharp tusk of the hippopotamus).

21. The “shady tree” is the lotus-tree. The beast is represented as sometimes on the rising ground among other beasts, which fear him not (as he is not carnivorous), sometimes couching by the river side under the trees and reeds.

23, 24, are inaccurately translated. They should run thus—

“If the river makes havoc, he trembles not ;

“he is fearless, if a whole Jordan burst upon his mouth.

“Let them catch him (if they can) before his eyes !

“Let them pierce through his nose with cords !”

The first line seems to refer to the overflow of the Nile, naturally enough. But the use of the Jordan in the next appears somewhat out of harmony with the context, although to one inhabiting Job's country the Jordan would be a well-known and typical stream. The name “Jordan” is simply a “descending stream” (from its geographical peculiarity), perhaps from this comes its use here to denote a rushing torrent. With the last line compare Isa. xxx. 28 ; xxxvii. 29. That the hippopotamus is represented as actually captured on some of the Egyptian monuments does not interfere with the appropriateness of the passage, as addressed to the dwellers in the desert, to whom it would be simply a huge and terrible monster.

CHAPTER XLI.

This chapter divides itself into two sections. The first (vv. 1—11.) briefly refers to the huge strength and invulnerability of Leviathan, and draws the inference, which underlies the whole passage, of the might of Him Who made it. The latter adds a vivid detailed description, poetically wrought out, of the characteristics of the creature, as a king over beasts (vv. 12—34.).

1. “Leviathan.” The word itself signifies “a creature, wreathed or

JOB, XLI.

- or his tongue with a cord ² *which* thou lettest ² Heb. *which thou drownest?*
 down?
- 2 Canst thou ^b put an hook into his nose?
 Or bore his jaw through with a thorn?
- 3 Will he make many supplications unto thee?
 Will he speak soft *words* unto thee?
- 4 Will he make a covenant with thee?
 Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?
- 5 Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird?
 Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?
- 6 Shall the companions make a banquet of
 him?
 Shall they part him among the merchants?
- 7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons?
 or his head with fish spears?
- 8 Lay thine hand upon him,—remember the
 battle, do no more.
- 9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain:
 shall not *one* be cast down even at the sight of
 him?
- 10 None *is so* fierce that dare stir him up:
 who then is able to stand before me?
- 11 ^c Who hath prevented me, that I should repay ^c Rom. 11. 35.
him?

“folded.” In iii. 8 (*margin*), and in Isa. xxvii. 1, it means a serpent; in Ps. civ. 26, it is some monster of the sea; here it is allowed by all to be the crocodile of the Nile, as probably in Ps. lxxiv. 14, where it is the emblem of Egypt. The description in the first section of the chapter is simple and literally applicable; in the latter it is poetical. The latter clause of this verse should be rendered, or “fasten his tongue “with a cord.”

2 refers to the practice of keeping large fish alive for future sale, by putting a cord of rushes through the gills, and leaving the fish so bound in the river.

4. There seems to be allusion here to some covenant of perpetual service, corresponding to the ceremony ordained in Exod. xxi. 6.

6. “The companions.” The guild of fishermen (probably some Egyptian caste). The word for “merchants” is “Canaanites;” that is, Phœnician traders in Egypt.

“Make a banquet,” should be, “traffic in him.”

8. “Remember the battle, do no more,” should be, “Think no “further of the battle.”

9. “The hope of him,” is the hope of his capture.

10, 11, draw the final inference, as if the whole description was coming to an end. The recommencement in the next verse is strange and unexpected.

^d Ex. 19. 5.
Deut. 10. 14.
Ps. 24. 1.
& 50. 12.
1 Cor. 10. 26,
28.

^d *Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.*

² Or, *within.*

³ Heb. *strong pieces of shields.*

⁴ Heb. *sorrow rejoiceth.*

- 12 ¶ I will not conceal his parts,
nor his power, nor his comely proportion.
- 13 Who can discover the face of his garment?
Or who can come *to him* ² with his double bridle?
- 14 Who can open the doors of his face?
His teeth *are* terrible round about.
- 15 *His* ³ scales *are* his pride,
shut up together *as with* a close seal.
- 16 One is so near to another,—that no air can
come between them.
- 17 They are joined one to another,
they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.
- 18 By his neesings a light doth shine,
and his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
- 19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps,—*and*
sparks of fire leap out.
- 20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,
as *out* of a seething pot or caldron.
- 21 His breath kindleth coals,—and a flame goeth
out of his mouth.
- 22 In his neck remaineth strength,
and ⁴ sorrow is turned into joy before him.

13, 14. "Who can discover," &c. The meaning is, "Who can lift up the front of his coat of mail?" The "double bridle" is, of course, the double row of his teeth, called in the next verse "the doors of his face," both jaws moving. The latter clause of ver. 14 and former clause of ver. 15 are inadequately rendered; it should be, "Round his teeth dwelleth terror;" "Pride is the furrow between his shields" [scales]. The two points dwelt upon are the strength of his armour and the terror of his jaw.

18—21 describe with poetical amplification the glare of the eyes and the snorting breath of the crocodile. "By his neesings" (sneezings) "a light doth shine," clearly refers to the effect of the spray thrown up in the sunlight by the crocodile basking on the shore; and vv. 19—21 must simply refer to the same or a similar phenomenon, attendant on the sudden and violent rush of the long-suppressed breath, when the creature rises after long submergence.

"His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning" (see iii. 9.). It has been noted as a curious coincidence, that the eyes of the crocodile, rising out of the water, are an Egyptian hieroglyphic for the dawn.

22—30 are a picture of his strength and invulnerability.

22 is inadequately rendered. It should be—

"On his neck dwelleth strength;
"terror exulteth" (danceth) "before him."

JOB, XLI.

- 23 ²The flakes of his flesh are joined together : ² Heb. *The fallings.*
they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.
- 24 His heart is as firm as a stone ;
yea, as hard as a piece of the nether *millstone*.
- 25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid :
by reason of breakings they purify themselves.
- 26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold :
the spear, the dart, nor the ³ habergeon. ³ Or, *breastplate.*
- 27 He esteemeth iron as straw,—*and* brass as rotten wood.
- 28 The arrow cannot make him flee :
slingstones are turned with him into stubble.
- 29 Darts are counted as stubble :
he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.
- 30 ⁴ Sharp stones *are* under him : ⁴ Heb. *Sharp pieces of potsherd.*
he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.
- 31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot :
he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.
- 32 He maketh a path to shine after him ;
one would think the deep *to be* hoary.
- 33 Upon earth there is not his like,—⁵ who is made without fear. ⁵ Or, *who behave themselves without fear.*

25. The latter clause of this verse, “**they purify themselves,**” is certainly wrong. It should be, “they lose themselves,” or “they miss their aim.” The word “**breakings**” may be either taken literally, of “the havoc” spread by the monster, or metaphorically, of “the terror” engendered in the heart.

26. The “**habergeon,**” or breastplate, seems out of place in the midst of offensive weapons. The original word is simply derived from “to glitter,” and therefore is not itself distinctive. It has been suggested, by comparison with the Arabic, that the word may mean “a broad-headed dart” or harpoon.

30 refers to the sharp scales under the belly, which in other creatures is the most vulnerable part. It should run—

“Sharp sherds” (i. e. scales) “are under him ;

“He spreads a threshing sledge on the mire” (in the bed of the river).

31, 32 describe his swift rush through the water.

31. “He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment,” is thought to be suggested by the peculiar musk odour of the crocodile.

32. “One would think the deep to be hoary,” is literally, “to have hoary hair.” The white furrows in the wake of the crocodile are strikingly compared to long flowing white hair.

JOB, XLII.

- 34 He beholdeth all high *things*:
 he is a king over all the children of pride.

CHAPTER XLII.

1 *Job submitteth himself unto God. 7 God, preferring Job's cause, maketh his friends submit themselves, and accepteth him. 10 He magnifieth and blesseth Job. 16 Job's age and death.*

- 1 **T**HEN Job answered the LORD, and said,
 2 I know that thou ^a canst do every *thing*,
 and *that* ² no thought can be withholden from
 thee.
 3 ^b Who is he that hideth counsel without know-
 ledge?
 Therefore have I uttered that I understood not;
^c things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
 4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak:
^d I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto
 me.
 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear:
 but now mine eye seeth thee.
 6 Wherefore I ^e abhor *myself*,—and repent in dust
 and ashes.
 7 ¶ And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken
 these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz
 the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee,

^a Gen. 18. 14.
 Matt. 19. 26.
 Mark 10. 27.
 & 11. 36.
 Luk. 18. 27.

^b Or, *no thought of thine can be hindered.*

^c ch. 38. 2.

^e Ps. 40. 5.
 & 131. 1.
 & 139. 6.

^d ch. 38. 3.
 & 40. 7.

^e Ezra 9. 6.
 ch. 40. 4.

CHAPTER XLII.

In vv. 1—6 are contained the final confession and humiliation of Job, ending the long controversy; in vv. 7—10, the condemnation of the friends, and the acquittal of Job; in vv. 11—17, the history of the restoration of more than his old prosperity.

In vv. 2, 3, Job, convinced, first of the omnipotent power, then of the omniscient wisdom of God, quotes the rebuke of the Lord, “**Who is he that hideth counsel**” (of God) “**without knowledge?**” and adds the confession that he had deserved that rebuke for speaking and judging of His providence, the whole scheme of which is far beyond his ken.

Next, in vv. 4—6, again repeating the call with which the opening of the answer of the Lord summoned him before His presence, he confesses that, though in former days he thought that he knew God, it was but as at second-hand, by “**the hearing of the ear;**” now he realizes God as in vivid direct vision, the “**seeing of the eye;**” he knows that His hand, His power, His goodness, are around man’s path; and accordingly, throwing off the self-righteousness which was possible in the days of comparative ignorance, he “**abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes.**”

7. In this verse it is declared that the three friends had not spoken of God the thing which was right. They had spoken truly of His un-

JOB, XLII.

- and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my
- 8 servant Job *hath*. Therefore take unto you now ^f seven bullocks and seven rams, and ^g go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall ^h pray for you: for ² him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my
- 9 servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted ³ Job.
- 10 ¶ ⁱ And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD ⁴ gave Job ^k twice as much as he had before.
- 11 Then came there unto him ¹ all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

^f Num. 23. 1.

^g Matt. 5. 24

^h Gen. 20. 17.

Jan. 5. 15,

16.

¹ John 5. 16.

² Heb.

his face, or,

person,

¹ Sam. 25.

35.

Mal. 1. 8.

³ Heb. *the*

face of Job.

ⁱ Ps. 14. 7.

& 126. 1.

⁴ Heb. *added*

all that had

been to Job

unto the

double.

^k Isai. 40. 2.

¹ See chap.

19. 13.

searchable greatness and wisdom, and of the duty of submission; so far they were right. But in declaring that such retribution as we see here is an adequate expression of God's perfect righteousness, and in imputing to Job sins without evidence, simply to justify their theory, they had been false witnesses for God. It is also said that Job had spoken the thing that was right,—not, of course, in the complaints and questionings, of which he has just confessed the sinfulness, but in the confident belief that God must be just, even to His weak creatures, and that the retribution which takes place here is inadequate to His perfect justice. It is notable that, just when Job gives up all self-praise, then he receives the praise of God.

8. The sacrifice (as in i. 5.) is the burnt offering. For the number of the victims, compare Num. xxiii. 1, 14, 29 (seven being a mystic number).

10. "When he prayed for his friends." His prayer, as being the sign at once of acceptance with God and reconciliation with man, is made the end of his trial, and the first dawn of his new prosperity.

11. "A piece of money." The word, signifying "what is weighed out," is used only here and in Gen. xxxiii. 19 (and Josh. xxiv. 32, which repeats the former passage). It denotes money in its most ancient form.

JOB, XLII.

- ^m ch. 8. 7. 12 So the LORD blessed ^m the latter end of Job
 Jam. 5. 11. more than his beginning: for he had ⁿ fourteen
ⁿ See ch. 1. 3. thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a
 thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.
- ^o ch. 1. 2. 13 ° He had also seven sons and three daughters.
 14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima ;
 15 and the name of the second, Kezia ; and the
 16 name of the third, Keren-happuch. And in all
 the land were no women found so fair as the
 daughters of Job : and their father gave them
 inheritance among their brethren.
- ^p ch. 5. 26. 16 After this ^p lived Job an hundred and forty
 Prov. 3. 16. years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even*
- ^q Gen. 25. 8. 17 four generations. So Job died, *being* old and ^q full
 of days.

14. The three names signify "a dove," "a cassia plant," "a horn of pigment for the eyes." The giving to the daughters a share of the inheritance is mentioned as something unusual, a tribute to their surpassing beauty.

17. The age of Job marks the patriarchal period and life. His latter days singularly fulfil the promise of the first speech of Eliphaz (v. 24—26.). Now that he has learnt to "serve God for nought," temporal blessing is given him, out of the free bounty of God. So our Lord's words (in St. Matt. vi. 33.) promise that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all other things shall be added to us."

At the close of the book the Greek translators have added, "But it is written, that he shall rise again, with those whom the Lord raiseth up." They also state that the book was translated from the Syriac (or Aramaic), identify Job with Jobab (see Gen. xxxvi. 33.), declare him to have been the son of Zerah, of the sons of Esau, and, therefore fifth from Abraham, place his habitation on the confines of Idumea and Arabia, and subjoin the list of Edomite princes found in Gen. xxxvi. 31—35. I Chron. i. 43—46.

THE BOOK OF
P S A L M S.

INTRODUCTION.

THE title "The Book of Psalms" is probably taken from St. Luke xx. 42. Acts i. 20. In the Hebrew it is simply "*Tehillim*," "praises" or "songs of praise." The word Psalm is a Greek word (Col. iii. 16.), meaning a song with a musical accompaniment; it is therefore a somewhat more correct appellation for the book so called than the Hebrew name *Tehillim*, as many of the Psalms are not strictly songs of praise. Indeed only one Psalm (cxlv.) bears the title "Praise-song" which, in the plural form, is given to the whole book. In the other titles, when the name Psalm occurs, it represents another Hebrew word, which answers more strictly to the Greek word Psalm, being derived from a verb which means "to make music." Still the name *Tehillim*, "songs of praise," is instructive, as shewing that the purpose of the whole collection is to glorify God—the mournful Psalms by appealing to Him as the one refuge in trouble, and the didactic Psalms by setting forth His mighty deeds.

The Psalms are divided in the Hebrew text into five books, which can be traced in the Authorised Version by the doxology with which each book closes. Thus the first book (Pss. i.—xli.) ends "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen;" the second book (xlii.—lxxii.) "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen;" the third book (lxxiii.—lxxxix.) "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen;" the fourth (xc.—cvi.) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord." The last Psalm is a prolonged doxology to the last book (cvii.—cl.), as well as to the whole collection. It is impossible to say whether these benedictions were added to the respective Psalms where they are found, in order that each book might end with an ascription of praise, or whether, being integral parts of the several Psalms, those Psalms were designedly placed at the end of the books, because they closed with a blessing.

The Psalter was doubtless of gradual formation. The first book, which consists almost exclusively of Psalms of David, was, perhaps, first collected by David himself. The second book, besides eighteen of David's Psalms, has eight Psalms inscribed to the sons of Korah; one to Asaph, one to Solomon, while three are anonymous. It closes with the remarkable words, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," which seem to imply that the two first books contained all the Psalms, which, at

INTRODUCTION.

the time those collections were made, were supposed to be David's. Some of the Psalms of this book belong to the time of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah. It would seem therefore that we must fix on one or other of those periods as the date of the second collection, unless we take the later Psalms to be subsequent insertions; in which case the collection may be fairly attributed to Solomon. The third book consists first of a group of Psalms, called "Psalms of Asaph," then of a group of Korahite Psalms, with one only of David's. It is with great probability assigned to the time of Hezekiah. In support of this supposition it may be observed that in the great Passover kept by Hezekiah, which filled Jerusalem with joy, it is expressly said, that Hezekiah appointed the Levites "to praise Jehovah in the words of David and of *Asaph the seer.*" If, however, the third book was collected in Hezekiah's time, we must suppose that some of the Psalms (e.g. lxxiv. and lxxix.) were inserted later. The fourth book is made up of anonymous Psalms, with the exception of one attributed to Moses and two to David. One of the Psalms (cii.) belongs undoubtedly to the Captivity. It may therefore have been collected during, or soon after, the Exile. The fifth book, which contains thanksgivings for the restoration, may have been compiled by Ezra or Nehemiah. Among a mass of anonymous Psalms there are fifteen which bear the name of David. It is probable that the compiler of the last book revised, and to a certain extent re-arranged, the previous collections.

The inscriptions are generally accounted of later date than the Psalm to which they are prefixed. It is not known when or by whom they were written; but there can be little doubt that they represent an old tradition respecting the origin of the Psalm; and, speaking generally, it may perhaps be laid down that, if the contents of the Psalm are not obviously at variance with the title, the title may be considered as giving at least the most probable account of the occasion and writer of the Psalm. The circumstance that so many of the Psalms are without inscription is a proof that the collector who added the titles was careful to follow well-authenticated tradition, and not private conjecture. The Hebrew titles ought, however, to be compared with those given in the Greek or Alexandrine Version; for that Version sometimes corrects the Hebrew title, on the authority, doubtless, of a different tradition—the tradition, that is, of the Jews of Alexandria as distinguished from those of Palestine.

With regard to the names with which some of the Psalms are inscribed, it is to be observed that the preposition prefixed to them (it consists only of one letter, *l*), does not necessarily imply authorship, but merely some kind of relation; it may therefore be translated "to" or "for," as well as "of." In the case of David it is almost universally allowed that it means to ascribe the Psalm to him as its author; and the same is probably true as regards the Psalms assigned to Moses and Solomon. But it may be different when prefixed to the names of musicians or singers, such as Asaph, Heman, Ethan, or the sons of Korah. Of these, Asaph, we know, was a writer of Psalms (2 Chron. xxix. 30.), and it is therefore possible that some of the Psalms inscribed "to" or "of" Asaph were actually composed by him, as, e.g. Ps. l.; but many of the Asaphic Psalms are plainly of a later date than Asaph, the contemporary of David. It has therefore been supposed that they are so inscribed, either because they were written on the model of Psalm l.; or, more probably,

INTRODUCTION.

“Asaph” stands for an Asaphic school of musicians, to whom the Psalms were given to be set to music. Something of the same kind may be said with regard to the Psalms inscribed to the sons of Korah, who are especially mentioned as singers in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 19.).

Of the seventy-three Psalms ascribed to David, while it is impossible to fix with certainty the particular period of his life to which each belongs, it may be allowable to point out that each period will be found to be illustrated, more or less fully, by the following Psalms: the first period, comprising his early life, by Pss. viii., xix., xxiii., xxix.; the second, which embraces his persecution by Saul and his wanderings in the desert, by Pss. vii., xi., xii., xiii., xvi., xvii., xxxi., xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi., liv., lvi., lvii., cxlii.; the third, from his accession to the throne to his great sin, by Pss. ix., xv., xviii., xx., xxi., xxiv., xxvii., xxx., lx., lxxviii., ci., cxxxviii., cxliv.; the fourth, from his fall to his flight from Jerusalem, by Pss. v., vi., xxxii., xxxviii., xxxix., xl., li., lviii., lxii., cxl., cxli.; and the fifth, from his flight to his death, by Pss. iii., iv., xxv., xxvi., xxviii., lv., lxi., lxxiii., lxxiv., lxxv., lxxix., cix., cxliii.

Turning to the subject-matter of the Psalms, it is remarkable what a unity of thought and feeling pervades the book, in spite of the differences of author, style and circumstances. Amid all these differences, there is everywhere the same intense realization of the personality of God, the same consciousness of sin, the same ardent affection for the holy law of God, the same aspiration after an eternal life in God and with God. A strong vivid belief in God as a living Person, answering to but far exceeding man's highest conception of all that is good and true and great and lovely, is perhaps the chief characteristic of the Psalms. This Being is the Psalmist's friend, his rock, his stay, his only refuge; always near him, always accessible, with an absolute claim on his obedience and love. To Him therefore he trusts himself unreservedly, and feels his whole happiness to be in Him, thus anticipating those well-known words of St. Augustine, “Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our heart hath no rest until it rest in Thee.”

At the same time we perceive everywhere the deep sense of the heinousness of sin, which the writers entertained—of sin, that is, in its relation to God, as the transgression of His holy will. Sin is a burden weighing down the soul—a burden which can only be removed by the free mercy of God. This view of sin is indeed the necessary consequence of a belief in God, as a living personal Being. Wherever God, instead of being absent from our thoughts is ever feelingly realized, the effect must be to intensify the sense of sin, as sin, as being committed against a holy and merciful Father and Friend. The many assertions of uprightness and freedom from transgression which meet us in the Psalms might seem indeed inconsistent with any true consciousness of sin, and almost savour of a self-righteous spirit. But this self-righteousness is only apparent. The Psalmist nowhere asserts his entire freedom from sin, but only the uprightness and guilelessness of his heart towards God. His will is on God's side; he is no hypocrite, no dissembler with God; he is not consciously doing wrong; he appeals to the heart-searching God to bear him witness, that his desire is to do right and to avoid every kind of unholiness. There is not wanting in other passages, as Delitzsch has pointed out, an acknowledgment of the innate sinfulness of his nature, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive

INTRODUCTION.

“me”—of his inability to stand before God, apart from His gracious pity, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified;”—of his many unperceived sins, “Who can understand his errors; cleanse Thou me from my secret faults;”—of an ever-abiding consciousness that God looks at the heart, and not merely at the outward act, “The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins:”—of the grace of God as his only plea, “Remember not the sins of my youth; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness’ sake, O Lord;”—of the forgiveness of sins as a fundamental condition of happiness, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered;”—of the necessity of a new divinely-created heart, “Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;” an acknowledgment in short of the Gospel way of salvation, which consists in penitential contrition, pardon, and newness of life.

Together with this consciousness of sin, there is, throughout the Psalter, culminating in Ps. cxix., a most loving appreciation of, and true delight in, the holy law of God. The Psalmist longs to be taken out of himself, away from his many sins and weaknesses, and to be holy after God’s likeness. And so his one prayer, repeated again and again in various forms, is, that God would teach him to know and do His will.

With regard to a future life, while there is abundant evidence that the writers had no certain knowledge, no clear revelation, of the condition of soul or body in the other world, it is also plain that in spite of this absence of express revelation, they not only hoped for, but believed in, immortality; they trusted in God and they were satisfied; they were sure that they should be with Him, and should live for ever, because He is eternal.

But we are instructed to regard the Psalms, not only as the expression of the personal religious feelings of the writers, but as containing prophetic intimations of the promised Messiah. Our Lord has taught us that there are things written in the Psalms concerning Himself; and it is right and natural that we should endeavour to discover what those things are. What meaning did our Lord put on the Psalms, when He made use of them in His public devotions? What meaning did He teach His disciples to put on them, when He opened their understandings to understand them? These are questions which every devout reader of the Psalms must fain ask. But it is by no means easy to answer them. It is generally allowed indeed that the anticipations of the great Prophet and Redeemer Who was to come, which prevailed among the Jews in later times, are to be traced in great measure to the Psalms. But while *some* reference to the Messiah in the Psalms cannot be disputed, the extent and nature of that reference is a question of great difficulty, and one on which very different opinions are held. The early fathers e. g. commonly held that almost, if not quite, every Psalm contained some direct prophetic reference either to Christ Himself, to the circumstances of His life and sufferings, or to His Church. Among English divines the most common view perhaps is that which is called the double sense. Bishop Horne, e. g. while he allows (in opposition, as it would seem, to the Fathers) that very few of the Psalms are simply and directly prophetic, and belong only to Christ, without reference to any other person, considers that most of them have a double meaning, which stands (he says) on this ground and foundation, that the

INTRODUCTION.

ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices, and in the most remarkable passages of their lives, in their extraordinary depressions, and miraculous exaltations; foreshadowing Him Who was to arise, as the Head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. But allowing this principle to be generally true, there is still room for considerable difference in the application of it. There are many Psalms in which we can find no trace from beginning to end of Messianic prophecy. The writer is absorbed in the events of his own time, and in his own personal feelings; and to interpret his circumstances or to attribute his feelings to Christ is simply to put a meaning of our own into the Psalm, instead of—which is the only wise and reverent method—endeavouring to get out of it the meaning which it naturally conveys.

There are other Psalms again which contain in some parts plain reference to the Messiah, while in others they exhibit no less plainly marks of the mere personal feelings of the writer; perhaps of feelings, such as sorrow for sin, which cannot be attributed to our Lord. The question then arises, If part of a Psalm may be applied to Christ, and part belongs to the writer alone, how are we to know which portions to ascribe to each? The difficulty may perhaps be solved in part by regarding the Psalms as typical of Christ much in the same way as we regard those persons as typical who are generally recognized as types of Him. It is the very nature of a type to be imperfect. No man can be a perfect type of Christ; he is a type in some part of his history, not in all; there are some of his actions which are strictly personal, and have no relation to the great Antitype. And it is the same with the Psalms. They are the words of men who were types of Christ; but just as all their actions were not typical, so neither are all their words. As we read the Psalms therefore which seem, in some parts at least, to refer to Christ, while we recognize in the sufferings, and in the faith and hope and joy of the Psalmist, the sufferings and aspirations of One greater than the Psalmist, we should be careful not to regard them as necessarily the direct utterances of the Messiah from first to last, but only as the words of one, who, as far as a frail man could be, was a type of Him. (*Perovne.*)

PSALMS, I.

PSALM I.

1 *The happiness of the godly.* 4 *The unhappiness of the ungodly.*

^a Prov. 4. 14,
15.
² Or, *wicked.*

^b Ps. 26. 4.
Jer. 15. 17.
^c Ps. 119. 35,
47, 92.
^d Josh. 1. 8.
Ps. 119. 1, 97.

- 1 **B**LESSED ^a *is* the man that walketh not in
the counsel of the ² ungodly,
nor standeth in the way of sinners,
^b nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2 But ^c his delight *is* in the law of the LORD ;
^d and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

PSALM I.

The Condition of the Righteous and Ungodly contrasted.

Much stress has been laid on the supposed unity of thought in the first and second Psalms, as betokening identity of authorship, and as the second Psalm is ascribed to David in the New Testament (Acts iv. 25.), it has been thought that this Psalm also was written by him. (Some MSS. of Acts xiii. 33, have "in the first Psalm.") But the connexion between the two Psalms can scarcely be said to be sufficiently clear to decide the question in this way. The more common, and perhaps the more probable, opinion is, that the Psalm is a kind of introduction to the Psalter, and was written by Solomon, or by the compiler of the first book, whoever he was.

1. The character of the godly man is described, first, negatively, as one who shrinks from every kind of evil, and then, positively, as one who delights in, and feeds upon, the holy law of God.

Three special steps or degrees of evil are marked, each of which the godly man shuns. He does not walk "in the counsel of the ungodly;" much less does he stand "in the way of sinners;" and even still less does he sit "in the seat of the scornful." There is a threefold contrast here; first, in regard to the degree of guilt represented by the words "ungodly," "sinners," "scornful;" secondly, in regard to the form in which these different degrees of guilt are exhibited, as represented by the words "counsel," "way," "seat;" and thirdly, in regard to the degree of intimacy with evil represented by the words "walketh," "standeth," "sitteth."

"The ungodly" are the wicked generally. The primary idea of the word is that of restlessness; and to walk in the counsel of the ungodly means to suffer the heart to become disturbed and restless, no longer fixed steadfastly upon God and holiness. "The sinners" are those who have missed their way, and are therefore in the wrong way; to stand in their way is to take part, as on friendly terms, with those who are living openly at a distance from God. Departure from God in heart is the first step in wickedness; unreserved intercourse with open sinners is a further step; while fellowship with scorners and participation in their work marks the last stage in the downward path of evil. There is a growth in evil as in good: alienation of heart leads to deeds of wickedness; and boldness in transgression may end in scoffing and blasphemy. Well therefore may the Psalmist proclaim the blessedness of the man who has no fellowship with the ungodly, and does not even begin to enter on evil ways.

2. Here is the secret of the godly man's aversion to evil: he is wholly

PSALMS, I.

- 3 And he shall be like a tree ^eplanted by the ^e Jer. 17. 8.
Ezek. 47. 12.
 rivers of water,
 that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ;
 his leaf also shall not ²wither ; ² Heb. *fade*.
 and whatsoever he doeth shall ^fprosper. ^f Gen. 39. 3, 23.
Ps. 123. 2.
Isai. 3. 10.
- 4 ¶ The ungodly *are* not so :
 but *are* ^glike the chaff which the wind driveth ^g Job 21. 18.
Ps. 35. 5.
Isai. 17. 13.
& 29. 5.
Hos. 13. 3.
 away.
- 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the
 judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

taken up with the law of the Lord: his delight is in it, not merely in studying and meditating upon it, but in the law itself, in its purity and holiness (Ps. xix. 7—10.). And it is because he thus cleaves to that which is good, that he abhors evil (Rom. xii. 9.). He does not so much seek what the law promises, or fear what it threatens, as delight in it, “as holy and just and true.” He loves God’s law, and because he loves it, he studies it; it is ever in his thoughts (cp. Deut. vi. 4—9.), his guide amid the difficulties and temptations of the day, and his solace in hours of darkness and sorrow.

3. The effect of his devotion to the holy law and will of God is seen in the transparent purity and integrity of his daily life. See Jer. xvii. 7, 8, where there is a reference to the image here used.

“Planted.” It is not a self-sown tree, springing up of itself; it is planted, and firmly planted, in a spot specially chosen—possibly in some well-watered garden—so that neither the wind can disturb nor the sun wither it. A tree thus carefully tended and answering to the grateful moisture,—how fitting an image of the man who, deriving life and vigour from the fountain of God’s Word, exhibits in all their loveliness the fruits of holiness! God’s manifest blessing rests upon him, as upon Joseph in Egypt (Gen. xxxix. 23.), and whatsoever he does, God makes it to prosper. Fresh with the life of God in his own soul, he is a blessing to all around him; his light shines, and men glorify God in him. See Josh. i. 8. Isa. iii. 10.

4. The ungodly are not merely like drooping trees in a parched soil; their instability is more fitly represented by the figure of chaff, caught up and scattered by the wind on some exposed threshing-floor. They are not merely dry and withered and unfruitful, but empty and unstable, the sport of temptation, liable to be carried no one knows whither (comp. Isa. lvii. 20.).

5. “Therefore.” That is, because they are thus worthless and unstable, the ungodly shall not be able to rise up and maintain their own cause, when God visits them. Having withdrawn their hearts from God, they have no plea to advance in arrest of judgment: they must bow their heads and confess that they are justly condemned, whether in the final judgment, or in those present calamities which are anticipations of the Last Day, and have the effect of dividing and separating men. The righteous Judge does not slay the righteous with the wicked; it is not His will that the righteous should be as the wicked (Gen. xviii. 25.). A

PSALMS, II.

ⁿ Ps. 37. 18. 6 For ^h the LORD knoweth the way of the right-
 Nah. 1. 7. eous :
 John 10. 14. but the way of the ungodly shall perish.
 2 Tim. 2. 19.

PSALM II.

^a Ps. 46. 6.
 Acts 4. 25, 26.

² Or, *tu-
 multuously
 assemble.*

³ Heb.
meditate.

1 *The kingdom of Christ.* 10 *Kings are exhorted to accept it.*

1 **W**HY ^a do the heathen ² rage,
 and the people ³ imagine a vain thing?

time will come, possibly in this world, certainly in the world to come, when God will separate outwardly those who are inwardly distinct. St. Matt. iii. 12.

6. "Knoweth." That is, views with approbation, watches over and directs. He not only knows who are righteous, but He regards them with watchful care and love (Job xxiii. 10. St. Matt. vii. 23.). He knows that their way is the way everlasting (Ps. cxxxix. 24.), in contrast to the way of the ungodly, which perishes, is lost, without reaching the goal set before it.

PSALM II.

The Kingdom of God's Anointed established on Mount Zion, before which everything must bow.

This Psalm is ascribed to David by the Apostles (Acts iv. 25, 26.), and it is possible that it refers in the first instance to the coalition of the previously-subdued (2 Sam. viii. 3, 12.) Syrians and Ammonites, when they roused themselves to a great struggle for their independence (2 Sam. x. 15—19. 1 Chron. xix. 16—19.). To rebel against a Divinely appointed king was to rebel against God, David therefore might well anticipate that the confederate nations would be dashed to pieces against the invincible power of the kingdom which God had established on Mount Zion. See 2 Sam. vii. 12—16.

But his own enemies fade away from David's view, as his eye rests on One Who is no mere earthly King, but the Son of God. They are *His* enemies, the enemies of the Great Messiah, of whom he speaks, and he foresees their ultimate and complete discomfiture. This is the fundamental thought of the Psalm, the irresistible power of Christ's kingdom; and this thought is brought out with the vividness of dramatic representation.

In the beginning and at the close the Psalmist speaks in his own person. First, he expresses his wonder at the conspiracy which he sees gathering; he hears the proud but empty boasts of the rebels, and he sets over against them the calm supremacy of God and His settled purpose to maintain the kingdom of His anointed. Then the anointed King Himself proclaims the Divine utterance by virtue of which He reigns; and the Psalm concludes with an appeal to the rebels to submit themselves.

The structure of the Psalm is very regular, consisting of four stanzas of three verses each.

1. The rising movement of revolt among the nations stirs the Psalmist's wonder: "What is the cause of their noisy gathering? What are they 'thinking of, that they undertake so vain a task? It is against Jehovah

PSALMS, II.

- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD, and against his ^b anointed,
saying,
- 3 ^c Let us break their bands asunder,
and cast away their cords from us.
- 4 ¶ ^d He that sitteth in the heavens ^e shall laugh :
the Lord shall have them in derision.
- 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
and ² vex them in his sore displeasure.

^b Ps. 45. 7.
John 1. 41.

^c Jer. 5. 5.
Luke 19. 14.

^d Ps. 11. 4.
^e Ps. 37. 13.
& 59. 8.
Prov. 1. 26.

² Or, *trouble.*

“and against the King whom He has solemnly set on the throne, that
“these kings of the earth are really conspiring. They may gather their
“troops in martial array; they may meet, themselves, in secret conclave;
“but it will be of no avail.”

To whatever hostile gathering the Psalmist refers in the first instance, we have Apostolic authority for understanding his words of the rising up of the powers of the world against Christ (Acts iv. 27, 28.). As the Psalm spoke of “heathen,” and “people,” of “kings,” and “rulers,” rising up against Jehovah and His anointed, so the Apostles explain that the “Gentiles and the people of Israel,” Herod the king and Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, had banded together against Jesus, the Lord’s Anointed. But the Psalmist’s words have their further fulfilment in the efforts of the powers of the world to the end of time to oppose and overthrow Christ’s sway in the world. As the faithful ever pray that His kingdom may come, both in the world at large and in their own hearts, so the men of the world, whether people or individuals, are ever refusing His yoke and shaking off their allegiance.

3. These are the words of the rebels fretting under the yoke and banding together to throw it off. The metaphor is from unruly oxen striving to break the straps and ropes by which the yoke is fastened (Isa. x. 27. Jer. xxx. 8. Nah. i. 13.). “We will not have this man to reign over “us” (St. Luke xix. 14.) is the language, not only of open enemies, but too often of our own hearts, unwilling to submit ourselves to God’s holy will.

4—6. On earth there is confusion and passion; in heaven there is the awful throne of God, and the yet more awful contempt with which He looks down on man’s presumption.

4. The utter folly of man’s puny attempts at rebellion against the One Sovereign Lord, Whom they are really opposing in resisting His chosen Servant and Son, is expressed in human language: He laughs at them, He derides them. The second word is an advance on the first (Prov. i. 26.). Man’s opposition to God is not only matter for ridicule, because it is so impotent, but for mockery, because it is so base. God’s enemies are like the swelling waves of the sea, which make as though they would break down the shore, but subside and melt away before they reach it, or else spend themselves in harmless noise upon the beach. (*Luther*). In spite of all their malice and enmity, they do but accomplish that which the eternal will of God determined before to be done (Acts iv. 28.).

5. “Then.” That is, when He has laughed and mocked at them. He

- ² Heb. *anointed.*
³ Heb. *upon Zion the hill of my holiness.*
¹ 2 Sam. 5. 7.
⁴ Or, *for a decree.*
⁵ Acts 13. 33. Heb. 1. 5. & 5. 5.
^h Ps. 22. 27. & 72. 8. & 89. 27. Dan. 7. 13, 14. See John 17. 4, 5. & 19. 15.
ⁱ Ps. 89. 23. Rev. 2. 27. & 12. 5.
- 6 Yet have I ²set my king ³f upon my holy hill of Zion.
- 7 ¶ I will declare ⁴the decree :
the LORD hath said unto me, ⁵Thou art my Son ;
this day have I begotten thee.
- 8 ^h Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance,
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 9 ⁱ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

will go on from thoughts of scorn to words and deeds of terror. The thunder of His anger will fall upon them, and they will learn what it is to fight against Him.

6. As the first stanza closed with the words of the rebels, so this stanza ends with the words of Jehovah. The pronoun is emphatic ; “ **And as for Me, I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.** ” It is as if He said, “ Ye may rage and plot as ye please, yet have I, the Almighty King, set My vice-gerent upon the throne, and I will maintain Him there. His kingdom is established, and no power of men or devils shall overthrow it.”

7—9. The Anointed One Himself now speaks, and declares God's decree respecting Himself. He has constituted Him His Son, and promised Him universal dominion.

7. In a lower sense David may be understood as celebrating God's declared purpose of establishing his kingdom, and subduing the nations to his sway (Ps. lxxxix. 20, 26, 27.). But in their fulness his words apply only to Him Who is the true Son of God and King of the Church. “ **Thou art My Son,** ” the Father declares, “ I, I Myself, have this day begotten Thee, declared and constituted Thee My Son, and given Thee dominion over the nations.” We learn from Rom. i. 4. and Acts xiii. 33, that it was at His Resurrection that Christ was emphatically manifested to be the Son of God ; then it was that He became “ the First-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence ” (Col. i. 18.) ; then it was that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth, and He was made heir of all things (Heb. i. 2.).

8. Christ had but to desire it, and His dominion should be extended over all peoples. And we know that He did desire it. It is His will, as well as His prerogative, to draw all men unto Him. And what He wills, in accordance with His Father's promise, should be very near to our hearts also. What prayer can we offer more acceptable to Him, than that He would take to Himself His great power and reign ?

9. God will not only give to Christ those who are willing to be His, but He will enable Him to chastise those who resist. In either case, Christ's sovereign power is displayed, whether in making men willing, or in punishing the unwilling. Those who will not suffer Him to make them vessels of honour He will dash in pieces. His sceptre is either a shepherd's staff, or a rod of iron (see Rev. ii. 27 ; xii. 5 ; xix. 15.).

PSALMS, II.

- 10 ¶ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings :
 be instructed, ye judges of the earth. k Heb. 12. 28.
 l Phil. 2. 12.
- 11 ^k Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice ^l with
 trembling. m Gen. 41. 40.
 n Sam. 10. 1.
 o John 5. 23.
- 12 ^m Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
 and ye perish *from* the way,
 when ⁿ his wrath is kindled but a little. p Rev. 6. 16,
 17.
 q Ps. 34. 8.
 r & 84. 12.
 s Prov. 16. 20.
 t Isai. 30. 18.
 u Jer. 17. 7.
 v Rom. 9. 33.
 w & 10. 11.
 x 1 Pet. 2. 6.
- ° Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in
 him.

10—12. In this last stanza the Psalmist turns to the rebels, whose fruitless efforts he had been watching, and counsels them to be wise in time, and allow themselves to be persuaded. He addresses especially the kings and judges, who, though they were the representatives of rightful authority and justice, had set themselves at the head of the insurrection.

11. "Serve." That is, do not cast off His yoke, as ye have resolved to do; be willing to be His servants.

"Rejoice;" at being permitted to be the servants of so great and gracious a God; but rejoice with trembling.

12. The kiss to a superior was a well-known act of fealty (1 Sam. x. 1.) or of worship (Hos. xiii. 2.).

"The Son." There is no article in the original. "Son" is used almost as a proper name: "Kiss Him Who is Son," to Whom the title "Son" belongs, as it belongs to none other. So in Ps. xxi. 1. "The King" is in the Hebrew simply "King."

"Lest he be angry." It is most natural to take "the Son" as the subject; in which case it will be observed that His wrath is deprecated as being as dreadful as the wrath of God. But it is possible that Jehovah Himself may be intended, He having so identified Himself with His anointed, that all who do not acknowledge His vice-gerent provoke Him.

"From the way." There is no "from" in the Hebrew. The meaning is "as to the way," "in the way." It is equivalent to saying that their way should perish (Ps. i. 6.).

"When his wrath is kindled," &c. Rather, "For His wrath may kindle quickly." Long-suffering as God is, there are acts and circumstances which may cause a sudden outburst of His anger.

"Blessed," &c. Well it is with those who have nothing to fear from the outburst of His wrath, because they have hid themselves in Him as their sure refuge.

This Psalm is fitly appointed for Easter Day; for at His Resurrection Christ entered on His kingdom. When He burst the bands of the grave, He not only brought to nought the counsels of His enemies, whether men or devils, but He purchased for Himself an universal dominion. Henceforth His kingdom has been established in Zion, and all people of the earth will be subdued either to His love or to His wrath. What remains for us but to yield ourselves reverently to His sway, not merely fearing before Him because He is so great, but rejoicing in Him because He is so good? Blessed are they who fly to Him for refuge, before it is too late: they need not fear the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. vi. 16.).

PSALMS, III.

PSALM III.

The security of God's protection.

A Psalm of David, ² when he fled from Absalom his son.

² 2 Sam. 15, & 16, & 17, & 18.

^a 2 Sam. 15. 12. & 16. 15.

1 **L**ORD, ^a how are they increased that trouble me!

Many *are* they that rise up against me.

^b 2 Sam. 16. 8. Ps. 71. 11.

2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, ^b *There is* no help for him in God. Selah.

^c Gen. 15. 1. Ps. 28. 7.

& 119. 114.

³ Or, *about*.

^d Ps. 27. 6.

3 But thou, O LORD, *art* ^c a shield ³ for me; my glory, and ^d the lifter up of mine head.

PSALM III.

David's Morning Hymn on the day after his flight from Jerusalem.

Of all the sad days in David's life, that was to outward appearance the saddest, when the news of Absalom's open rebellion was brought to him, and unable to raise at the moment a sufficient force to oppose the insurgents, and unwilling to expose Jerusalem to the miseries of a siege, he was constrained to fly, 2 Sam. xv. 14. The close of the day found him some four or five miles probably from Jerusalem. Sorrow had followed upon sorrow. His once faithful friend and counsellor Ahitophel had openly deserted him: not only had Shimci, a kinsman of Saul, come out and charged him falsely with cruelty to Saul's family, and loaded him with insults, but even Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, whom he had specially befriended, was reported to him as ungrateful. Still, though broken-hearted with grief and disappointment, banished from his home and from the visible presence of God, in the depth of his heart there was peace, because God was with him and against his foes. As he lay down that night and slept in safety, confident in God's protecting love, so his first thoughts in the morning, even when he awoke to the full consciousness of the perils that surrounded him, were thoughts of hope and trust.

1. "How are they increased." The same expression is used in the historical narrative (2 Sam. xv. 12.). The conspiracy seemed to be but of a few days' growth, and yet what multitudes had it gathered. See also 2 Sam. xvi. 15.

2. "Of my soul." Rather, "to my soul," which is not simply equivalent to "to me:" it means that their words penetrated to his very soul. He had deserved that his enemies should think and say that God had cast him off, and that there was no help, no salvation, for him; but the circumstance that he had been forewarned and knew what he might expect (2 Sam. xii. 10.) kept him from despair. His cause was not lost, nor the precious gift of pardon withdrawn, because the threatened punishment was falling.

"Selah." A musical direction, the purport of which probably is, that there should be a pause, the music continuing alone. The nature of the interlude varies; but it is mostly of a *forte* character.

3. The reproaches of his enemies were untrue. God will not only

PSALMS, III.

- 4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice,
and ^e he heard me out of his ^f holy hill. Selah. ^o Ps. 34. 4.
^f Ps. 2. 6. &
43. 3. & 99. 9.
- 5 ^g I laid me down and slept;
I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. ^g Lev. 26. 6.
Ps. 4. 8.
- 6 ^h I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
that have set *themselves* against me round about. ^h Prov. 3. 24.
Ps. 27. 3.
- 7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God:
ⁱ for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon*
the cheek bone;
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. ⁱ Job 16. 10.
& 29. 17.
Ps. 58. 6.
Lam. 3. 30.
^k Prov. 21. 31.
Isai. 43. 11.
Jer. 3. 23.
Hos. 13. 4.
Jonah 2. 9.
Rev. 7. 10.
& 19. 1.
- 8 ^k Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD:
thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

protect, but honour him; He who raised him from obscurity to the throne will lift him from his present degradation. With covered head, and weeping, he had made his way over Mount Olivet; but those tears would be dried, and the dejected head crowned with joy.

4. "I cried." Rather, "I cry" or "I call," expressing the habit of his life. Again and again his voice had gone up to God, and as often as he cried an answer came from the holy mount, where was the Ark, the special symbol of His presence. The priests in their anxiety for David's safety, had brought the Ark to share his exile, but he sent it back to Jerusalem as its rightful home (2 Sam. xv. 24, 25.). God had made special choice of Zion as His abode: David would not run the risk of forfeiting His protection by venturing beyond His instructions. He needed not that the symbol of God's presence should accompany him in his wanderings: from His chosen habitation He would follow him with His protection.

5. His preservation during the past night was a pledge that God's Eye was watching over him, that "His Arm was his pillow" (*Delitzsch*). Though Israel with its myriads had risen up against him,—though he knew not what the day might bring forth, he would not fear.

7. "Arise." See Num. x. 35. It is the prayer of perfect confidence, founded on God's past deliverances. He Who on former occasions had crushed the power of his enemies, like wild beasts whose teeth and jawbones were broken, would, he was sure, smite them again as completely and as ignominiously.

8. His enemies may taunt him by saying, that there is no salvation for him in his God; his answer is, that salvation belongeth to the Lord, and therefore he is safe; it rests entirely with Him, therefore he is sure of it, for He is his God. But as a true king, David cannot but connect his people with himself: the deliverance which he claims for himself he would share with them. "Upon Thy people be Thy blessing!" he exclaims. There is no word of reproach for their rebellion. They were still not only *his* people, but God's people; and therefore he prayed that God's blessing might be upon them;—a prayer which finds its counterpart in that more wonderful intercession of One greater than David; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" (St. Luke xxiii. 34.) Indeed throughout this Psalm we may well remind ourselves of Him Who once trod in sorrow the very path which David

PSALMS, IV.

PSALM IV.

1 *David prayeth for audience.* 2 *He reproveth and exhorteth his enemies.*
6 *Man's happiness is in God's favour.*

² Or,
overseer,
Hab. 3. 19.

To the ² chief Musician on Neginoth,
A Psalm of David.

1 **H**EAR me when I call, O God of my righteousness:

thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress;

³ have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame?

³ Or,
be gracious
unto me.

traversed on the Mount of Olives; Who, like David, was taunted with being abandoned by His God (St. Matt. xxvii. 43.); Who, amid the persecutions of cruel enemies and the desertion of His friends (St. John xvi. 32.), nevertheless reposed in calm faith and patience on His Father's love; Who prayed to Him at all times, and was assured that His prayer was heard (St. John xi. 42.), and Whose unquenchable love made Him "forget that He was dying *by* His murderers, and remember only "that he was dying *for* them."

PSALM IV.

A Companion Psalm to the preceding, being David's Evening Hymn on the same day.

David and his companions had crossed the Jordan on their way to Mahanaim: before lying down for the night, he lifts up once more his heart and voice, partly in prayer to his unseen but ever-present Guardian and Friend, partly in words of warning and counsel to his fellow-men. Though foes reproach and friends despond, he rejoices peacefully, even in the darkest hour, in the light of God's countenance.

The first and last verses of the Psalm evidently stand by themselves; in the first, the Psalmist, surrounded by dangers, prays to God for help; in the last he hushes himself to rest, fully persuaded that his prayer is heard. In the intervening verses, under the form of an appeal to his enemies, he indicates the grounds of this persuasion. He is God's chosen servant, and his enemies, in assailing him, were in truth fighting against God.

"To the chief musician." This title is an instruction to the conductor of some part of the Temple music; and the addition "on Neginoth" shews that it is the leader of those who played upon stringed instruments, such as the harp, psaltery, or viol, who is here addressed. Cf. Pss. vi.; liv.; lv.; lxvii.; lxxvi. Hab. iii. 19.

1. "O God of my righteousness," i.e. God of my righteous cause, Who knoweth my uprightness, and will assuredly uphold my right. I place my cause in Thy hands; do Thou bear witness to my integrity. In times past when I have been in straits, Thou hast made wide room for me; Thou hast opened a way of deliverance. Have pity on me and hearken to my prayer.

2. "O ye sons of men." The word here used for "men" is generally supposed to mean great men, men of station and importance, as opposed to common men, who are lost in the multitude. It is rendered

PSALMS, IV.

How long will ye love vanity, *and* seek after leasing? Selah.

3 But know that ^athe LORD hath set apart him ^a2 Tim. 2. 19.
that is godly for himself: ²Pet. 2. 9.
the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

4 ^bStand in awe, and sin not : ^bEph. 4. 26.
^ccommune with your own heart upon your bed, ^cPs. 77. 6.
and be still. Selah. ²Cor. 13. 5.
^dDeut. 33. 19.

5 Offer ^dthe sacrifices of righteousness, ^dPs. 50. 14.
and ^eput your trust in the LORD. ^ePs. 51. 19.
²Sam. 15. 12.
^ePs. 37. 3.
& 62. 8.

“high” in Ps. xlix. 2, and “men of high degree” in Ps. lxii. 9, in contrast to the “low” and “men of low degree” (see Isa. ii. 9.). David therefore is to be understood as addressing the men of rank among the rebels. As in the Psalms connected with his persecution by Saul, David makes no mention of Saul himself, so here it is not Absalom, but Absalom’s supporters and (as he perhaps persuaded himself) his instigators that he rebukes.

“My glory,” i. e. my kingly estate, the honour which God has given me. When will ye cease to attack and dishonour the Lord’s anointed? Your projects are mere emptiness; they are founded on lies, and will end in disappointment. It was by lying that the conspiracy was fostered and brought to a head (2 Sam. xv. 1—9.).

“Leasing,” i. e. lying, falsehood; from an Anglo-Saxon word, which means “empty,” “false.”

3. “But know.” As much as to say, However ye may despise and reproach me, rest assured that God has chosen and will uphold me.

“Has set apart;” has separated marvellously, as He made a difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians. And the reason why God has thus distinguished him is that he loved and worshipped Him. Thus chosen and thus devoted, David was sure of a ready hearing when he prayed. The designs of his enemies must fail, because they run counter to the plainly manifested will of God.

4. “Stand in awe;” tremble at the thought of opposing God, and beware of sinning against Him; commune with your own hearts in the stillness of the night, and cease your scornful and slanderous words. To David, accustomed as he was to holy thoughts during the night, it was natural to hope that the restless passions of his enemies might be stayed, if they would allow the solemn silence of the night to have its proper effect on them.

Or it may be that David here turns to address his friends, and warns them not to suffer their natural indignation against the rebels to hurry them into any act of rash or sinful vengeance. This explanation accords with the Greek translation, “Be ye angry, and sin not,” which is quoted by St. Paul (Ephes. iv. 26.); but the Apostle’s use of the text does not necessarily imply that the rendering of the Greek is correct; he may only quote the words as containing a wise and salutary precept. They were doubtless well known, and had almost passed into a proverb.

5. The stress lies on the two words “righteousness” and “the Lord.” Let the sacrifices which you offer be offered with clean hands and pure hearts (Isa. i. 11—16. St. James iv. 8.). False and hypocritical

PSALMS, V.

6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?*

f Num. 6. 26.
Ps. 80. 3, 7,
19. & 119.
135.

^f LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast put ^s gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

h Job 11. 18,
19. Ps. 3. 5.
i Lev. 25. 18,
19. & 26. 5.
Deut. 12. 10.

8 ^h I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep :
ⁱ for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

PSALM V.

1 David prayeth, and professeth his study in prayer. 4 God favoureth not the wicked. 7 David, professing his faith, prayeth unto God to guide him, 10 to destroy his enemies, 11 and to preserve the godly.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth,
A Psalm of David.

1 **G**IVE ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

sacrifices (such as Absalom's, 2 Sam. xv. 7, 9.) can be of no avail. Cast away all trust in yourselves and in earthly helps, and submit yourselves to the Lord.

6. Here David seems to pass to the despondency of his friends. He answers their faithless fears by a prayer, "LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." Though at a distance from the house and worship of God, and out of hearing of the great priestly benediction (Num. vi. 25, 26.), they were not shut out from the blessing itself. The light of God's countenance might still rest on them, and be their comfort and support.

7. David answers the desponding thought of his companions not only by a prayer, but by his own experience. The gladness which God had put into his heart was a far nearer and more precious token of favour than any worldly prosperity.

"More than in the time." That is, "more than their gladness in the time when," &c. The reference is probably to David's enemies, who had abundant stores of corn and wine at their disposal, while he and his followers had to be thankful for any chance gifts that reached them (2 Sam. xvi. 1, 2.). But David was far happier than his foes, notwithstanding their material advantages; what he possessed in his heart was a richer treasure than all they had in their barns and cellars. Or the pronoun may be understood indefinitely: "their corn and their wine," that is, "the corn," &c., of men in general (as in Ps. lxxv. 9.). David's joy in God far surpassed the joy which men feel in the abundance of material blessings, of the vintage or the harvest.

8. "I will both." Lit. "together," that is, at once; as soon as he lies down, he will sleep in peace.

"Thou, Lord, only." This may mean, "Thou, Lord, alone," as in Deut. xxxii. 12; or, "Thou, Lord, makest me dwell alone," undisturbed by tumults, and therefore in serenity; as in Num. xxiii. 9. Mic. vii. 14. Jer. xlix. 31.

PSALMS, V.

- 2 Hearken unto the ^a voice of my cry, my King, ^a Ps. 3. 4.
and my God :
for ^b unto thee will I pray. b Ps. 65. 2.
- 3 ^c My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O ^c Ps. 30. 5.
LORD ; & 88. 13.
& 130. 6.
- in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto
thee, and will look up.
-

PSALM V.

A Morning Prayer of David against the Machinations of his Enemies.

David is in great trouble, but not as in the two last Psalms, banished from God's house ; in the stillness of the early morning, and looking forward with joy to the public service of the sanctuary, he addresses an earnest supplication to his God and King, Who is ever on the side of the godly, and hateth iniquity, to deliver him from his enemies.

If the Psalm belongs, as it may, to the time of Absalom's rebellion, it must have been written when the general disaffection, which at last burst into a flame, was smouldering in secret.

The Psalm falls into two main divisions : in the first (vv. 1—7.), we hear the Psalmist's fervent entreaty, grounded on the holiness of God, that his prayer may be heard ; in the second (vv. 8—12.), we have the substance of his prayer, namely, that, surrounded as he was by difficulties and dangers, God would guide him aright, overthrowing his enemies, and shedding joy and blessing on himself and on all who loved His Name.

Title. "Upon Nehiloth." Rather, "to Nchiloth," i. e. to the accompaniment of flutes.

1, 2. In his deep earnestness the Psalmist repeats the same entreaty under three forms ; first, in the simplest way, he prays God to give ear unto his words ; then he makes mention of two different kinds of prayer, first, his "meditation," that is, according to the exact meaning of the word, his silent, indistinct murmuring, like that of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 13.), or of Hezekiah in his sickness, when sorrow checked his utterance, and he "mourned" like a dove (Isa. xxxviii. 14.) ; secondly, "the voice of his cry," the loud, earnest entreaty into which his low "dove-like mournings" gradually rose.

"My King, and my God." David was only the vicegerent and representative of the invisible King. To Jehovah, the true King of himself and his people, and Whom his enemies were really opposing in plotting against him, he makes his supplication ;—to Him and to none other will he pray.

3. "In the morning." Emphatic and twice repeated. As soon as he awakes, his first thought is of God. He begins the day with prayer.

"Will I direct." The word is used of laying in order the wood for the altar and the victims (Lev. i. 7, 8 ; vi. 12.). The lamb for the morning sacrifice was slain before sunrise, and as soon as the day began to dawn, the ministering priest laid it on the altar. David compares himself to the priest ; his morning prayer is the sacrifice which he pre-

PSALMS, V.

- 4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness :
 neither shall evil dwell with thee.
- 5 ^d The foolish shall not stand ² in thy sight :
 thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
- 6 ^e Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing :
^f the LORD will abhor ³ the bloody and deceitful man.
- 7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy :
and in thy fear will I worship ^g toward ⁴ thy holy temple.

^d Hab. 1. 13.

² Heb. *before thine eyes.*

^e Rev. 21. 8.

^f Ps. 55. 23.

³ Heb. *the man of bloods and deceit.*

^g 1 Kin. 8. 29,

30, 35, 38.

Ps. 23. 2.

& 132. 7.

& 138. 2.

⁴ Heb. *the temple of thy holiness.*

parens and offers to God; and having offered it, he looks up, or rather he looks out, as a watchman (Hab. ii. 1. Micah vii. 7.), anxiously expecting an answer. It was this faith in God as the God that heareth prayer, which drew David forth so early to his prayers. He not only offered the appointed sacrifice of devotion, but he expected that that sacrifice would be accepted, and his prayer heard.

4—6. The Psalmist's expectation of a gracious answer is based on the holiness of God. He Who hates unrighteousness will assuredly befriend the upright. There is also a tacit reference to the real object of his prayer, though not yet expressly named, the destruction of his enemies. He Who has no pleasure in wickedness must needs take judgment on those who are steeped in sin.

Observe in how many forms God's abhorrence of wickedness is expressed: He cannot take pleasure in wickedness; evil cannot abide in His presence (the light of His countenance will consume it); the foolish vainglorious boasters cannot maintain themselves before Him; He hates all the workers of iniquity; He will destroy all who speak lies; He abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful. The great stress laid on God's abhorrence of sin may well be a warning to us, what sort of persons we ought to be, or at least what sort of persons we ought not to be, if we desire that our prayers should rise up with acceptance before Him.

7. "But as for me." David separates himself off from the wicked, of whom he had just spoken. God would not suffer them to approach Him; but *he* had access to His sanctuary, and was about personally to repair thither. It is only however by God's rich mercy that he was permitted to draw near; hence he adds "*in Thy fear.*" He will enter into God's house with boldness, because God's favour gives him liberty of access; but he will come with awe and reverence, because of his own unworthiness.

"*Thy house.*" So the tabernacle is called "the house of the Lord" in Josh. vi. 24. 2 Sam. xii. 20.

"*Thy holy temple.*" Strictly, "Thy holy palace," the dwelling-place of God, the great King, and therefore a palace. In the outer court of the tabernacle David will prostrate himself before the Holy of Holies in lowly fear. Comp. 1 Sam. iii. 3.

PSALMS, V.

- 8 ¶ ^h Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness be- ^h Ps. 25. 5.
cause of ² mine enemies ;
¹ make thy way straight before my face.
- 9 For *there is* no ³ faithfulness ⁴ in their mouth ; ⁱ Ps. 25. 4.
their inward part *is* ⁵ very wickedness ; & 27. 11.
^k their throat *is* an open sepulchre ;
^l they flatter with their tongue.
- 10 ⁶ Destroy thou them, O God ;
^m let them fall ⁷ by their own counsels ;
cast them out in the multitude of their trans- ⁵ Heb. wick-
gressions ; ednesses.
for they have rebelled against thee. ^k Luke 11. 44.
Rom 3. 13.
^l Ps. 62. 4.
- ⁶ Or, *Make them guilty.* ^m 2 Sam. 15. 31. & 17. 14, 23. ⁷ Or, *from their counsels.*

8. Here the special supplication of the Psalm begins. David prays for guidance for himself and destruction for his enemies.

“Lead me” (as a shepherd, Ps. xxiii. 2, 3; xxxi. 3.) “in Thy righteousness,” that is; either, “according to Thy righteousness,” as Thou art righteous and faithful, take me under Thy protection and guide me safely; or, “in the way of Thy righteousness,” shew me the way of holiness and enable me to walk therein.

“Because of mine enemies.” In order that their malicious purposes may be frustrated.

“Make Thy way straight” before my face. *Thy* way, the way in which Thou wouldst have me walk; make it straight before me, so that I may neither wander from it, nor stumble in it.

9. The character of his enemies is such as to make him stand in special need of God’s guidance. There is nothing steadfast, nothing to be depended on, no sincerity in the mouth of any one of them: “their inward part,” that is, their heart, is a foul abyss; “their throat,” which by means of speech reveals the state of the heart, is a yawning, and therefore pestilential grave (Jer. v. 16.), though they make smooth the tongue in order to conceal their mischievous purposes under specious words.

10. “Destroy Thou them.” Rather, as in margin, “Make or hold them guilty,” make them to bear their iniquity, punish them.

“By,” that is, through, because of, “their own counsels,” or devices; let their boasted wisdom be their destruction. Or the meaning may be, as given in the margin, “Let them fall from their counsels,” that is, let them come to nought.

“Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions.” Steeped as they are in sin, let them in that condition be cast away. Comp. St. John viii. 24.

“For they have rebelled against Thee.” It is because their treason is not against man, but against God; because they are sinners, rather than mere rebels, that the Psalmist prays so earnestly for their punishment. They are obstinately set against God and do not deserve mercy. The honour of God therefore calls for their removal. It would tend also to the peace and joy of God’s people; and this consequence is plainly in the mind of the Psalmist in the next verse.

PSALMS, VI.

- 11 But let all those that put their trust in thee
n rejoice :
2 Heb. *thou coverest over, or, protectest them.* let them ever shout for joy, because 2 thou defendest them :
 let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.
- o Ps. 115. 13. 12 For thou, LORD, o wilt bless the righteous ;
3 Heb. *crown him.* with favour wilt thou 3 compass him as *with* a shield.

PSALM VI.

1 David's complaint in his sickness. 8 By faith he triumpheth over his enemies.

- 2 Or, upon the eighth : See 1 Chron. 15. 21.
3 Ps. 12, title.
a Ps. 38. 1. Jer. 10. 24. & 46. 28.
- To the chief Musician on Neginoth 23 upon Sheminith, .
 A Psalm of David.
- 1** **O** a LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger,
 neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

11. "Because Thou defendest them." Rather, "And do Thou "shelter them ;" lit. "cover them," like a sheltering tent, or, according to our Lord's simile, as a hen gathering her chickens under her wings (St. Matt. xxiii. 37.).

12. "For." It is God's way, as all experience shews, to bless the righteous, and to cover them with His gracious favour, as with a large protecting shield. The word used for "shield" means a shield of the largest dimensions (1 Sam. xvii. 7, 41.), covering the whole body.

PSALM VI.

A Prayer to be chastised in Mercy, not in Anger.

The latter part of this Psalm shews that the special trouble which wrung from David this cry of anguish came from the hatred and hostility of men. His bodily health was affected by the intensity of his anxiety ; with strength impaired and spirit broken, the grave seemed to be opening her mouth for him, and his only relief through long nights of sorrow was in strong crying and tears. Though there is no express mention of his sins, we cannot doubt that he saw God's chastising hand in the malice of his enemies. The Psalm is penetrated with the spirit which breathed in his answer to the curses of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.).

There is nothing to mark the date of the Psalm. The deep undertone of self-abasement, combined with an earnest clinging to God's mercy in spite of his unworthiness, stamps it as David's ; and it may, not improbably, be assigned to the same time as the preceding, namely, just before the final outbreak of Absalom's rebellion. It is possible that the neglect of his public duties, of which Absalom took advantage, may have been caused by the prostration of his bodily health, as here described. 2 Sam. xv. 1—6.

Title. "On Neginoth." See on Ps. iv.

"Upon Sheminith." See Ps. xii. 1 Chron. xv. 21. The meaning is

PSALMS, VI.

- 2 ^b Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* ^b Ps. 41. 4.
 weak :
- O LORD, ^c heal me; for my bones are vexed. ^c Hos. 6. 1.
- 3 My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD,
^d how long? ^d Ps. 90. 13.
- 4 ¶ Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: ^e Ps. 30. 9.
& 88. 11.
& 115. 17.
& 118. 17.
 Oh save me for thy mercies' sake.
- 5 ^e For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: Isai. 38. 18.
-

very uncertain; it is supposed to denote a certain air known as the eighth, or a certain key in which the Psalm was to be sung. It may mean "in bass, or with a bass accompaniment."

1. The emphasis, as appears from the order of the words in the original, lies on "in Thine anger," "in Thy hot displeasure." It is not every kind of chastisement that David deprecates, only chastisement in wrath. The severity of his trouble makes him fear that God is visiting him in anger. Comp. Jer. x. 24.

2. "Have mercy on me." Recognizing in all humility the justice of his sufferings, he entreats the Divine compassion.

"For I am weak." Lit. "I am languishing," "fading away," like a drooping plant, or desolate field. He deals with God as with a tender father, and puts forth his weakness and desolation as a plea for pity.

"My bones are vexed," "terrified," "affrighted:" his whole bodily frame was shattered by the anguish of his soul. Comp. Job iv. 14. Isa. xxxviii. 13. Luther has remarked on the sympathy of the body with the sorrows or joys of the mind. "When the heart is troubled the whole body is faint and broken, and when the heart is full of gladness the body becomes so much the stronger and more agile."

3. "My soul also is sore vexed," "exceedingly terrified and disturbed." His soul was more disturbed than his body. "Has God taken His love away from me?" that was the thought which was wearing him out; nevertheless he still appeals to that love. Comp. St. John xii. 27, where our Lord employs the word adopted by the Greek Version in this passage.

"But Thou, O Lord, how long?" How long dost Thou delay? how long will it be before Thou returnest? See Ps. lxxiv. 9, 10; lxxix. 5; lxxxix. 46. Rev. vi. 10. Isa. vi. 11.

4. "Return, O Lord." It seemed to him as if God had deserted him; therefore he entreats Him to return. He is so wretched, in soul and body, that he believed himself to be near death: therefore He begs God to restore him. He rests his plea, not merely on the piteousness of his condition, still less on any merit of his own, but simply on God's free mercy; "Oh, save me for thy mercies' sake."

5. Another reason why God should deliver him; in the other world he would no longer be able to praise God—an employment which as it was his own highest delight, so was it, he believed, most acceptable to God as redounding to His glory. Though not without hope for the future, the Psalmist seems to have regarded the condition of a disembodied spirit as inferior to life on earth. If we have reason to be thankful for the light which the Gospel has thrown on the state of the

PSALMS, VI.

in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

6 I am weary with my groaning ;
² all the night make I my bed to swim ;
 I water my couch with my tears.

² Or,
every night.

7 ^f Mine eye is consumed because of grief ;
 it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

^f Job 17. 7.
 Ps. 31. 9.
 & 38. 10.
 & 88. 9.
 Lam. 5. 17.
^g Ps. 119. 115.
 Matt. 7. 23.
 & 25. 41.
 Luke 13. 27.

8 ¶ ^g Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ;
 for the LORD hath ^h heard the voice of my
 weeping.

^h Ps. 3. 4.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication ;
 the LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore
 vexed :

let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

departed, it may well humble us to reflect on the earnestness with which the Psalmist and other ancient saints desired life for this only reason, that they might shew forth the praises of God.

“In the grave.” In Sheol, or Hades, the unseen world.

6, 7. This description of his grief shews that it was not bodily pain, but anguish of mind arising from the fear of God’s displeasure, that oppressed him.

7. “Is consumed.” Eaten away, as by a moth fretting a garment (Ps. xxxix. 11.).

“Grief.” The word especially means the grief arising from unjust treatment, to which the Psalmist refers in the next clause.

8—10. What a sudden change! His complaint is scarcely uttered before light is poured into his heart. The mention of his enemies has inspired him with boldness. It is impossible that they should be allowed to prevail over one who has thrown himself unreservedly on God’s mercy. His hope has become assurance. The Lord has heard his supplication, and having heard, He will accept and answer it.

10. “Let all,” &c. Rather, “All mine enemies shall be ashamed; “they shall turn back.” What he had suffered himself shall be their lot (see ver. 3.).

This is the first of the seven penitential Psalms, which for many ages have helped God’s people to express and to quicken their penitence. We are told that S. Augustine had them written on tablets and hung round his bed, that they might ever meet his eyes.

The particular case for which this Psalm is suited seems to be that of one whose sins rise up before him with overwhelming force, displaying themselves either in outward calamities or in the enslaving power of evil habits, and who is oppressed with a sense of God’s displeasure and the fear of everlasting punishment. Nevertheless in spite of his fear, he remembers and he hopes in God’s mercy. His one desire is to be set free from his spiritual enemies and to serve God truly: and this he knows cannot be in the other world, to which he is hastening. But the mastery which his sins have gained over him makes him almost fear that God has abandoned him. It is against this abandonment and its con-

PSALMS, VII.

PSALM VII.

¹ David prayeth against the malice of his enemies, professing his innocency. ¹⁰ By faith he seeth his defence, and the destruction of his enemies.

² Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, ² Hab. 3. 1.
³ concerning the ⁴ words of Cush the Benjamite. ³ 2 Sam. 16.

1 **O** LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: ⁴ Or, ^{business.}
^a save me from all them that persecute ^a Ps. 31. 15.
me, and deliver me:

2 ^b lest he tear my soul like a lion, ^b Isai. 38. 13.
^c rending it in pieces, while *there is* ⁵ none to ^c Ps. 50. 22.
deliver. ⁵ Heb. not ^{a deliverer.}

sequences that he prays so earnestly. Even the strong language which David employs to describe his anguish does not exaggerate the intensity of his fear. Continual prayer however at length brings relief. His enemies are God's enemies also: therefore they will not be allowed in the end to prevail; God will hear him and give him the victory.

PSALM VII.

An Appeal to the Righteous Judge against Calumny and Slander.

Nothing more is known of Cush; he was probably one of Saul's adherents, who had slandered and calumniated David. That there were such calumniators we know from the history (1 Sam. xxiv. 9; xxvi. 19.); and the name of Cush, as one of the most offensive of them, one perhaps who had sought the friendship of David for the purpose of rendering evil to him who was at peace with him, may have been preserved by tradition. It is generally supposed that the Psalm belongs to the time of David's persecution by Saul (1 Sam. xxiv.—xxvi.); though some identify Cush with Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 5—13.).

The first five verses are an introduction, "a kind of vestibule leading into the proper building of the Psalm," which opens at ver. 6. Then follows the Psalmist's appeal to God to judge his cause (vv. 6—9.); an emphatic declaration of God's righteousness in judgment (vv. 10—13.); and lastly, a vivid description of the way in which the devices of the wicked recoil on themselves,—which is interrupted in order that the Psalm may close with thanksgiving (vv. 16, 17.).

Title. "Shiggaion." Derived from a word which means "to wander;" it is supposed to be a poem set to music expressive of strong emotion (see Hab. iii. 1.).

1. "In Thee do I put my trust." Lit. "In Thee have I taken refuge;" which is equivalent to "in Thee do I trust." This is the key-note to the whole Psalm, and to David's character generally. Beset with enemies, whose malicious slanders stung him to the quick, he turns to the Lord his God; he sets him "as a bank against his persecutors," that they may not overwhelm his faith (*Calvin*). Several Psalms (xi., xvi., xxxi., lxxi.) begin with the same "word of faith, hope, and love."

2. He singles out one of his persecutors, probably the Benjamite men-

PSALMS, VII.

- d 2 Sam. 16.
7, 8.
e 1 Sam. 24.11.
- 3 O LORD my God, ^d if I have done this ;
if there be ^e iniquity in my hands ;
- 4 if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at
peace with me ;
(yea, ^f I have delivered him that without cause
is mine enemy :)
- 5 let the enemy persecute my soul, and take *it* ;
yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth,
and lay mine honour in the dust. *Selah.*
- 6 ¶ Arise, O LORD, in thine anger,
g lift up thyself because of the rage of mine
enemies :
h and ^h awake for me to the judgment *that* thou
hast commanded.

tioned in the inscription, as prominent among the rest, whom he likens to a wild beast tearing and rending its prey.

3. "If I have done this." That is, the special crime laid to his charge, probably that which he mentions immediately.

"If there be iniquity in my hands." Comp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 11: "There is neither evil nor transgression in my hand;" xxvi. 18: "What evil is in my hand?" As he had already protested his innocence to Saul, so now he pleads it before God; and to make his protestation more solemn, he offers to submit to the severest punishment, if he can in any way be proved to be guilty (comp. Job xxxi. 5, &c.).

4. This verse may be taken as in the English Version, the second clause being a parenthesis, and the meaning will be, "So far from doing evil to my friend, I have delivered one who was without cause my enemy." Or, as the word rendered "delivered" admits of the sense of *spoiling*, we may understand the passage, "If I have requited evil to one who was on a friendly footing with me, or if I have plundered one who was my enemy without a cause." So far from rendering evil to a friend, he had not injured even an enemy. This last rendering seems to suit exactly with the incident in the cave (1 Sam. xxiv. 4—7.).

5. If the slightest foundation can be found for the accusations of his enemies, David willingly offers himself even to a shameful death.

"Mine honour." That is, my soul, the noblest part of my being. Comp. Ps. xvi. 9; xxx. 12; lviii. 8. Gen. xlix. 6.

"Selah." See iii. 2. Here the music is to strike up, to give emphasis to his solemn assertion of his innocence.

6. He calls upon God to come down from heaven and hold a solemn judgment upon earth for the vindication of his innocence and the overthrow of his oppressors.

"Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger." He takes it for granted that if God comes forward to assume visibly the government of the world, it must be to take vengeance on his enemies, who were the enemies of right; he begs Him therefore to gird Himself with wrath against their ragings and to awake to help him.

"Awake for me," &c. The clause might be rendered, "Awake for me; Thou hast commanded judgment;" and now the time is come.

PSALMS, VII.

- 7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about :
for their sakes therefore return thou on high.
- 8 The LORD shall judge the people :
judge me, O LORD, ¹ according to my righteousness,
and according to mine integrity *that is* in me.
- 9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end ;
but establish the just :
^k for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.
- 10 ¶ ² My defence *is* of God,
which saveth the ¹ upright in heart.
- 11 ³ God judgeth the righteous,
and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

¹ Ps. 18, 20.
& 35, 24.

^k 1 Sam. 16. 7.
1 Chr. 28. 9.
Ps. 139. 1.
Jer. 11. 20.
& 17. 10.
& 20. 12.
Rev. 2. 23.

² Heb. *My buckler is upon God.*

¹ Ps. 125. 4.

³ Or, *God is a righteous judge.*

7. Or, "And let the congregation of the people compass Thee about, "and above it (i.e. above the congregation) do Thou return on high." The Psalmist's vision widens, and he pictures to himself the throne of God with the nations gathered round Him: then, when the judgment is over, he sees Him soaring aloft over the assembly, and returning to heaven like a victor.

8. "The Lord shall judge the people." In expectation of this universal judgment he prays that God will do justice to him, according to his consciousness of innocence.

9. "O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end." The prayer of the Psalmist is therefore not directed against the individuals as such, but against the wickedness that is in them. This Psalm is the key to all Psalms which contain prayers against one's enemies. God's knowledge of the heart enables Him to be righteous both in anger and in mercy.

"Reins." That is, the kidneys, supposed to be the seat of the desires; as the heart is the seat of the thoughts and will.

10—13. As usual, the Psalmist gathers confidence with prayer. He not only prays that God will do him justice, but he is sure that He will. In these verses he declares his confidence in God as the defender of the innocent and the avenger of the wicked.

10. "My defence is of God." Margin, "My buckler (shield) is upon God." He bears it; He has taken my protection upon Himself, as He is in general the Saviour of all who are devoted to Him with an upright, that is, a sincere and guileless, heart.

11. "God judgeth the righteous." Better, as in margin, "God is a righteous judge." This is the rendering of the Greek, which adds "both strong and patient," as in our Prayer Book. Most probably the inserted words occurred in the MS. from which the Greek translation was made; at all events they express what is plainly implied in the passage. The righteous Judge must needs be angry with sinners; if they do not at once feel His anger, it is because He is strong and patient,

PSALMS, VII.

- ^m Deut. 32. 41. 12 If he turn not, he will ^m whet his sword ;
 he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
- 13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments
 of death ;
ⁿ he ordaineth his arrows against the perse-
 cutors.
- ^o Heb. *He hath digged a pit.* 14 ¶ ^o Behold, he travaileth with iniquity,
 and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth
 falsehood.
- ^p and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made. 15 ² He made a pit, and digged it,
 and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.
- 16 ^a His mischief shall return upon his own head,
 and his violent dealing shall come down upon
 his own pate.

patient as being strong. He is not the less truly angry, because He is long-suffering. By reason of His Almighty power He can afford to wait, notwithstanding men's continual provocation.

12. "If he" (that is, the wicked man) "turn not, He" (that is, God) "will whet His sword." The sharpened sword, the arrow already on the string;—thus God teaches us how entirely the sinner lives upon His forbearance; at any moment the just judgment may fall (St. Matt. iii. 10.).

13. Rather, "Yea for Him He hath prepared the instruments of "death; His arrows He maketh burning arrows." Some think the allusion is to arrows wrapped round with blazing tow, much used in sieges, like the "fiery darts" (Eph. vi. 16.). But God's arrows elsewhere mean the lightnings (Ps. xviii. 14; lxxvii. 17; cxliv. 6. Zech. ix. 14.).

14—17. His faith taking a still higher flight, the Psalmist seems to see with his own eyes the destruction of the wicked, and he summons all to look upon it as upon a great spectacle.

14. However long-suffering God may be, sin will bring its punishment. The sinner will reap what he has sown. The two clauses of this verse answer to each other; what is said generally in the first, is more fully described in the second.

15, 16. The disappointment and deception mentioned in the last verse are more fully explained here. Not only are the wicked designs of the wicked unsuccessful, but they issue in a result the very contrary of that which he contemplated. This is set forth, first, under the figure of a man digging a pit for himself; and then, more simply, the mischief or destruction, which the sinner designed for others, falls on his own head.

16. "Such—under the rule of the All-righteous—is the final issue of "impenitent wickedness. Evil is made to recoil with ruinous force on "the head of him who puts it in motion. So it was with Absalom and "Ahitophel. So it had been with Pharaoh. Must we not ascend higher "yet? So shall it be with the Arch-enemy. The heel which he wounds "shall wound his head. His temporary triumph over man shall issue in "his own final and utter discomfiture" (*Kay*). See 1 Sam. xxv. 39. 1 Kings ii. 44.

PSALMS, VIII.

17 ¶ I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness:
and will sing praise to the name of the LORD
most high.

PSALM VIII.

God's glory is magnified by his works, and by his love to man.

To the chief Musician ² upon Gittith, A Psalm of David. ² P^s. 81, & 84, title.

1 **O** LORD our Lord,
how ^a excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! ^a P^s. 148. 13.
^b P^s. 113. 4.
Who ^b hast set thy glory above the heavens. ^c See Matt.
11. 25.
& 21. 16.
1 Cor. 1. 27.
2 ^c Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast
thou ³ ordained strength
because of thine enemies, ³ Heb.
founded.

17. With the thought of God's righteousness in punishing the ungodly and delivering the innocent strong in his mind, the Psalmist closes with a fervent burst of praise and thanksgiving. He begins with trust and ends with thankfulness.

PSALM VIII.

The great Creator's condescending Love for Man.

Probably one of the earliest of David's Psalms, carrying us back to his solitary life on the hill-sides of Judah. With the brilliant star-lit heavens before his eyes, or at least with the picture of them vividly impressed upon his mind, David wonders that He Whose glory is thus manifested in heaven should condescend to shew forth that glory also on earth and to man.

Title. "Upon Gittith." Rather, "upon the Gittith;" supposed to be a kind of harp which David brought from Gath (*Targum*), or a peculiar and joyous melody introduced from Gath (see Pss. lxxxii.; lxxxiv.).

1. "O Lord our Lord;" Jehovah our sovereign Lord. The pronoun "our" suits well with the circumstances of the Psalm. David is contemplating God's mercy to the whole race of man; there is no special reference to himself or his own concerns.

"How excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" How have Thy marvellous acts of creation and salvation made Thy Name glorious throughout the world! The whole earth bears witness to the glory and perfection of Him Who has made Himself known to Israel as Jehovah their sovereign Lord.

"Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens." Or rather, upon the heavens: Who hast chosen the heavens as the place on which Thou hast especially laid Thy glory.

2. He Who has set the stamp of glory upon the heavens does not disdain the praise even of tender infants. "Babes" ("children," Jer. xlv. 7. Lam. ii. 11; iv. 4.) "and sucklings;" not children only, but sucklings. Out of the mouth even of lisping children Thou hast founded strength; Thou hast made them a bulwark or defence against those who

PSALMS, VIII.

- d Ps. 44. 16. That thou mightest still ^d the enemy and the avenger.
- e Ps. 111. 2. 3 ¶ When I ^e consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
- f Job 7. 17.
 Ps. 144. 3.
 Heb. 2. 6. 4 ^f what is man, that thou art mindful of him?
 and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
- 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
 and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
- g Gen. 1. 26,
 28. 6 ^g Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
- h 1 Cor. 15. 27.
 Heb. 2. 8. ^h thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

rebel against Thee; with their praises and confessions Thou puttest to silence the malicious slanders of Thy enemies. "Even the faith of a little child is bulwark enough against the folly of men of corrupt heart and perverted intellect" (*Perowne*).

"The avenger." Rather, "the revengeful man," one who thirsts for vengeance (Ps. xlv. 16.).

Our Lord appeals to this verse as fulfilled, when the children in the Temple cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David!" He quotes the translation, or paraphrase, of the Greek Version: "Thou hast prepared or perfected praise." The praises of those children were His defence against the calumnies and malice of His enemies (St. Matt. xxi. 15, 16.).

3. As there is no mention of the sun, some have thought that the Psalm was composed at night, or at least that David was recalling past midnight meditations. As often as he gazes on the boundless heavens, with the moon walking in brightness and the innumerable stars, the thought rises at once, How small and insignificant is man! This is not the thought, however, to which he gives utterance, but the further thought, that He Who hung the stars on high remembers and cares for frail man.

4. "Man." The Hebrew word signifies man in his weakness and mortality; and there is the same idea in the expression "son of man," son of Adam.

"Visitest." Watchest kindly over him (Ps. lxxv. 9; lxxx. 14. Jer. xv. 15.). God does not forget man, or leave him to himself, but enters into personal intercourse with him. Man is the object to which His eye is ever turning (Ps. xxxiii. 13, 18; xxxiv. 15; cxliv. 3. 2 Chron. xvi. 9.).

5. "A little lower than the angels." Better, "a little lower than God," i.e. than the Divine nature, with reference to his creation in the image of God (Gen. i. 27.).

"Thou sett'st him where is little space,
 "Twixt him and powers divine" (*Keble*).

The English Version is taken from the Greek, which is followed in Heb. ii. 9; but the original word, *Elohim*, never occurs in the sense of "angels."

PSALMS, IX.

- 7 ² all sheep and oxen,
 yea, and the beasts of the field ;
 8 the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the
 seas.
 9 ¹ O LORD our Lord,
 how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth !

² Heb. *Flocks
 and oxen
 all of them.*

¹ ver. 1.

PSALM IX.

- 1 *David praiseth God for executing of judgment.* 11 *He inciteth others to praise him.* 13 *He prayeth that he may have cause to praise him.*

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben,
 A Psalm of David.

- 1 **I** WILL praise *thee*, O LORD, with my whole
 heart ;

Three special marks of honour to man are commemorated. First, by creating him in His own image God has made him a little lower than Himself. However vast the distance between the Almighty God and impotent man, he has that within him which associates him with God Himself. Secondly, this image of God is like a royal crown upon his head, marking him out with distinguishing honour above God's other creatures. And thirdly, the world is placed under his feet; the creatures far and near are his dominion.

9. The Psalm closes as it began, shewing that the manifestation of God's glory on earth and to man is its main subject. There does not seem to be anything in the words themselves which points to any further reference. But special light is thrown on the Psalm in the New Testament. In the Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul appeals to it as asserting that Jehovah had put all things under the feet of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 27.). And in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 8.), the writer, after saying that it was not to angels that God had subjected the world to come, quotes this Psalm to prove that the coming world has been subjected to man in the person of Jesus. The Psalm shews (he seems to say) that God had destined man to be lord over all things, but this lordship has not been realized in mankind in general. But we see Jesus, Who in becoming man was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, because He endured the suffering of death. Thus we learn that the lordship of which the Psalm speaks is only fully realized in Him, Who in human form has been exalted to the right hand of God. It was, pre-eminently, at His Ascension that Christ was crowned with glory and honour: therefore the Church has appointed this Psalm as one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension Day, the day, as it were, of His coronation. On that day especially we see by faith the Son of man, One born of a woman, set upon the throne of the world, and all things placed in subjection under Him.

PSALM IX.

- A Thanksgiving for some signal display of God's
 righteous vengeance.

As the Psalm was evidently (vv. 11—14.) written after the Ark had

PSALMS, IX.

- I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.
- ^a Ps. 5. 11. 2 I will be glad and ^arejoice in thee :
- ^b Ps. 56. 2. & 81. 13. I will sing praise to thy name, O ^bthou most High.
- ² Heb. *thou hast made my judgment.* 3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.
- ³ Heb. *in righteousness.* 4 For ²thou hast maintained my right and my cause ;
thou satest in the throne judging ³ right.
- ^c Deut. 9. 14. Prov. 10. 7. 5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast ^cput out their name for ever and ever.
- ⁴ Or, *The destructions of the enemy are come to a perpetual end: and their cities hast thou destroyed, &c.* 6 ⁴O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end :

been brought to Zion, and while David's throne was standing, it has been supposed to belong to his victories over Syria, Edom, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek, referred to in 2 Sam. viii. The tone of triumphant thankfulness which pervades the Psalm would suit well with the solemn dedication of the silver and gold of the conquered nations (2 Sam. viii. 11.).

This is the first of the nine alphabetical Psalms (ix., x., xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., xli., cxii., cxix., cxlv.), but the arrangement is not fully carried out. In the first two verses, each line, that is, each half verse, begins with the first Hebrew letter (*aleph*); verse 3. begins with the second letter (*beth*), verse 5. with the third (*gimel*); the fourth (*daleth*) is omitted; at verse 6. we have the fifth (*he*), at verse 7. the sixth (*vau*), at verse 11. the seventh (*zain*), at verse 13. the eighth (*cheth*), at verse 15. the ninth (*teth*), and at verse 17. the tenth (*yod*). The Psalm consists of ten equal stanzas of two verses, or four lines each.

Title. "Muth-labben" is interpreted "die for the son," or "death is for the son," which are supposed to be the first words of a song, now lost, to the tune of which this Psalm is to be sung.

1, 2. The Psalm begins with a solemn burst of praise. With joyful heart and exulting voice David will recount the wonders which God has wrought for him.

3—6. The reason for the thanksgiving; not only has God overthrown his enemies and maintained his righteous cause, but the Psalmist sees in this present deliverance the pledge of complete and lasting triumph.

3. This verse should be connected with the preceding. David will praise God *while*, or *because* his foes are being driven back, stumbling and confounded, before God's angry countenance.

"For why? my foes are turn'd to flight ;

"They fall, they stumble in Thy light" (*Keble*).

4. It is as a just and righteous Judge that God hath interfered to maintain the cause of His servant.

6. "O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end."

PSALMS, IX.

and thou hast destroyed cities ;
their memorial is perished with them.

- 7 ^d But the LORD shall endure for ever : d Ps. 102. 12
26.
Heb. 1. 11.
he hath prepared his throne for judgment.
- 8 And ^e he shall judge the world in righteousness, e Ps. 96. 13.
& 98. 9.
he shall minister judgment to the people in
uprightness.
- 9 ^f The LORD also will be ² a refuge for the f Ps. 32. 7. &
37. 39. &
46. 1. & 91. 2.
oppressed,
a refuge in times of trouble. 2 Heb. an
high place.
- 10 And they that ^g know thy name will put their g Ps. 91. 14.
trust in thee :
for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that
seek thee.
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in
Zion :
- ^h declare among the people his doings. h Ps. 107. 22.
- 12 ⁱ When he maketh inquisition for blood, he i Gen. 9. 5.
remembereth them :

Rather, "As for the enemy, they are destroyed, they are ruins for ever," laid waste in perpetual desolation.

"The haughty foe!—their end is come:

"Eternal wasting their dread doom" (*Keble*).

"**Their memorial is perished with them.**" Literally, "Their memorial is perished; even they themselves;" which brings out strongly the contrast with the next verse: while all trace of the enemies is blotted out, the Lord sits enthroned for ever; everything that is opposed to Him will come to an end, but He lives and reigns eternally, and that as a righteous Judge. The expression "their memorial is perished" recalls the judgment denounced on Amalek (Exod. xvii. 14. Deut. xxv. 19.). After the victories of Saul and David over the Amalekites, they disappear from history; but see 1 Chron. iv. 42, 43.

9, 10. He Who as the righteous Judge is the destroyer of the wicked is the sure refuge of those who trust in Him.

9. "A refuge." Lit. as in the margin, "a high steep place"—a figure familiar to David from the experience of his time of persecution.

10. "They that know Thy name." To know God's name is to call to mind His manifestations of Himself, to remember all that He has done. "His name is the focus in which all the rays of His actions meet" (*Hengstenberg*).

11. Here the second part of the Psalm begins, and the Psalmist breaks forth again into exultation, calling on all men everywhere to praise the Lord. The Ark, God's earthly abode, was for the present fixed on Zion; but David foresees that His kingdom will reach beyond the limits of Judæa, and embrace the whole world (see Ps. xviii. 49.).

12. "When He maketh." Rather, "For He that maketh inquisition

PSALMS, IX.

² Or,
afflicted.

- he forgetteth not the cry of the ² humble.
- 13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD ;
consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that
hate me,
thou that liftest me up from the gates of death :
- 14 that I may shew forth all thy praise
in the gates of the daughter of Zion :
I will ^k rejoice in thy salvation.
- ^l Ps. 13, 5. &
20, 5. & 35, 9.
¹ Ps. 7, 15, 16.
& 35, 8. & 57.
6. & 94, 23.
Prov. 5, 22.
& 22, 8.
& 26, 27.
- 15 ¹ The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that*
they made :
in the net which they hid is their own foot
taken.
- ^m Ex. 7, 5. &
14, 4, 10, 31.
- 16 The LORD is ^m known *by* the judgment *which* he
executeth :
the wicked is snared in the work of his own
hands. ³ⁿ Higgsaion. Selah.
- ³ That is,
Meditation.
- ⁿ Ps. 19, 14,
& 92, 3.
- 17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,
and all the nations ^o that forget God.
- ^o Job 8, 13.
Ps. 50, 22.
- 18 ^p For the needy shall not alway be forgotten :
^q the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish
for ever.
- ^p ver. 12.
Ps. 12, 5.
- ^q Prov. 23, 18.
& 24, 14.
- 19 Arise, O LORD ; let not man prevail :

“for blood,” He Who requires satisfaction for bloodshed (Gen. ix. 5). Tell it out among the nations, that the Avenger of blood shed by violence remembers the sufferers, and will hear their cry (see 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.).

13, 14. These verses seem out of keeping with the thankful and triumphant character of the Psalm. Hence they are probably best taken, not as the prayer of the writer, but as the cry of the afflicted before the deliverance was vouchsafed ; they might therefore fitly be printed within inverted commas.

14. “In the gates of the daughter of Zion.” That is, in the most public place of resort,—equivalent therefore to “before all God’s people.” The afflicted pray for deliverance from death, in order that they may praise God in life. To the Hebrew mind the abode of the dead was not only dark, but silent (see Ps. vi. 5.).

15, 16. The Psalmist goes on with the “doings” of the Lord (ver. 11.), which he would have published abroad.

16. Rather, “The Lord hath made Himself known ; He hath executed “judgment ; the wicked doth He snare in the work of His own hands.”

“Higgsaion. Selah.” This is probably a musical direction, perhaps suggesting “a forte burst of joyous music.”

17. Rather, “The wicked shall (or must) be turned back (or return) “into Hades, the unseen world.”

19. “Arise.” Observe the contrast to the cry of the afflicted in ver. 13. The Psalmist not only hopes that God *will* hear him, but He knows that He *has* heard him, and therefore urgently calls on Him to manifest

PSALMS, X.

let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD :

that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

PSALM X.

1 *David complaineth to God of the outrage of the wicked. 12 He prayeth for remedy. 16 He professeth his confidence.*

1 **W**HY standest thou afar off, O LORD?
Why hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

Himself as the Great Judge of the world and reprove the arrogance of men.

“Let not man prevail.” There is a special contrast between “man” and “Lord;” let not weak, frail man be proud and defiant, as if he were strong.

20. “Put them in fear.” Lit. “place an object of terror before them;” “set Thy power and majesty and holiness in array before them, that they may learn reverence and awe.”

“Lord, range Thy fear along their way,

“Till haughtiest heathens know, e’en they

“Are frail and mortal Man” (*Keble*).

If we understand vv. 13, 14 as the cry of the afflicted soul, oppressed and harassed by temporal or spiritual sorrow, and praying for relief in order that she may give thanks to her deliverer, we seem to have the key to the purport of the Psalm. The prayer has been heard; He Who had seemed to sit apart and take no heed of the affliction of His people has shewn that He was watching and caring for them all along.

He has wrought wonderfully for them; their trouble is removed; the temptations which assailed them have been successfully encountered; the evil designs of their adversaries have been frustrated. And what remains, but that they in whose behalf the righteous Lord has so graciously interposed should praise Him, and tell abroad His wonderful acts? The Psalm therefore is the thanksgiving of the Church, or of the individual Christian, exulting in signal mercies already vouchsafed, and looking forward to still more complete deliverance in the end.

PSALM X.

A mournful cry for help against the oppression of the wicked.

In the Greek Version this Psalm is joined with the preceding as one Psalm; in outward form it is certainly connected with it, the alphabetical arrangement of Psalm ix. being so far continued in Psalm x. that, whereas the earlier letters occur in Psalm ix., the last four letters are found at the close of Psalm x. (vv. 12, 14, 15, 17.). At the same time the character of the two Psalms is different; the one being a hymn of thanksgiving, the other a plaintive supplication. The former Psalm seems to refer rather to outward enemies, the latter to internal troubles. Those troubles are described in detail in the first part of the Psalm;

PSALMS, X.

² Heb. *In the pride of the wicked he doth persecute.*

^a Ps. 7. 16. & 9. 15, 16. Prov. 5. 22.

^b Ps. 94. 4.

³ Heb. *soul's.*

2 ²The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor :

^a let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the wicked ^b boasteth of his ³ heart's desire,

wickedness is triumphant, and God's people are oppressed; the Psalmist complains that deceit, cruelty, and violence prevail everywhere, and he entreats God to interfere to check them.

On the whole it seems natural to suppose that Psalm x. is a pendant to Psalm ix., though composed probably at a different time and under different circumstances. David fastens on the concluding verses of Psalm ix., "Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail," and writes a new Psalm with these words for its key-note, completing, though loosely, the alphabetical arrangement. This will account for each Psalm being complete in itself, as well as for the similarity of language. David had Psalm ix. distinctly before him in writing Psalm x. (comp. Ps. ix. 9., "the oppressed," with Ps. x. 18; Ps. ix. 9, "in times of trouble," with Ps. x. 1; Ps. ix. 12, "the humble," with Ps. x. 12; Ps. ix. 19, "Arise, O Lord," with Ps. x. 12.).

The Psalm consists of two parts; in the first (vv. 1—11.) there is a vivid description of the ungodly; in the second (vv. 12—18.) an earnest appeal to God to interpose for the vindication of His honour and the relief of the oppressed.

1. The language of the earlier part of the Psalm points to a time of great disorder, which David was unable to repress. There are indications of like lawlessness in the reign of Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 2.) and of Solomon, the character of which is described in such passages as Prov. i. 10—19; ii. 12—15; iv. 14—17.

While the trial lasts, God seems to stand afar off, and to refuse to take notice. So also in Ps. xxii. 2, 11, 19; xxxv. 22; xxxviii. 21.

"Why hidest Thou Thyself?" That is, Why dost Thou cover Thine eyes, so as not to see the desperate condition of Thy people (Isa. i. 15.), and Thine ears, so as not to hear their cry? (Lam. iii. 56.)

2. A rendering of the first clause preferred by some is: "Through the pride of the wicked, the poor is set on fire," that is, cast into the furnace of affliction. Comp. "fiery trial" (1 St. Pet. iv. 12.).

"Let them be taken." That is, according to the above rendering of the first clause, "they (i. e. the poor) are taken in the "devices which "they (the wicked) have imagined."

3. "Boasteth of." Lit. "sings praises over;" instead of praising God, he exults in his own shameful desire; he makes his own lust his God (Hab. i. 11, 16.). The second clause may be rendered either, "he blesseth the plunderer, he despiseth Jehovah," i. e. he not only rejoices in his own successful rapacity, but he commends it in others (see marg. refl.); or "the covetous blesseth" (i. e. either "himself," congratulates himself, Deut. xxix. 18, 19, or "God," as in Zech. xi. 5; he says "Thank God," but really takes no account of Him), "he despiseth "Jehovah."

What a terrible warning against covetousness; it begins by supplanting God in the heart, it ends by rejecting Him with scorn. Everything in time gives way to the love of gain (see 1 Tim. vi. 10.).

PSALMS, X.

and ^c 2 blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD ^c Prov. 28. 4.
abhorreth. Rom. 1. 32.

4 The wicked, through the pride of his counte- ² Or,
nance, ^d will not seek *after God*: *the covet-*
ous blesseth
himself, he
abhorreth
the LORD.

³ God *is* not in all his ^e thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous; ^d Ps. 14. 2.
^f thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: ³ Or, *all his*
thoughts
are, There
is no God.

6 ^h He hath said in his heart, I shall not be ^e Ps. 14. 1.
moved: & 53. 1.

ⁱ for *I shall* ⁴ never *be* in adversity.

7 ^k His mouth is full of cursing and ⁵ deceit and ^f Ps. 12. 5.
fraud: ^h Ps. 30. 6.
^g Eccles. 8. 11.
ⁱ Isai. 56. 12.

¹ under his tongue *is* mischief ^m and ⁶ vanity. ⁱ Rev. 18. 7.
^l Ps. 12. 2.

⁴ Heb. *unto generation and generation.* ^k Rom. 3. 14. ⁵ Heb. *deceits.* ¹ Job 20. 12. ^m Ps. 12. 2.
⁶ Or, *iniquity.*

4. "Will not seek after God," i.e. will not inquire into God's will. "The principle of right action lies in such inquiry, in not allowing ourselves to be carried away by our temper or our passions, but seeking reverently to know the will of God" (*Calvin*). See Acts ix. 5. 2 Cor. v. 9. The clause however may be rendered, "the wicked in his scornful-ness," lit. "the height of his nostril" (saith), "He (i.e. God) will not require" (as in ver. 13.). This agrees better with the next clause, which should be translated according to the margin, "All his thoughts are, There is no God." The belief that God will not judge the world, leads on to the further belief that there is no God. To deny the existence of a living, acting, all-punishing (in one word, a personal) God is equivalent to denying the existence of any real and true God whatever.

5. "His ways are always grievous." Rather, "firm, strong, sure, prosperous." The same word occurs in Job xx. 21, where the first clause should be rendered, "therefore his prosperity shall not endure." He suffers nothing to disturb his happiness, neither God's judgments, which are so far removed from him, that he does not care for them or expect to suffer from them, nor his enemies, whom he regards with utter contempt.

"Far above out of his sight." Comp. Job xxii. 12, 13. Isa. v. 12. Ps. xxviii. 5; and for the opposite Ps. xviii. 22: "All his judgments were before me."

"Puffeth at." Bloweth upon, sniffeth at them with contempt; as in Mal. i. 13, and perhaps Hag. i. 9.

6. What the believer says in humble trust, "I shall not be moved" (Ps. xvi. 8.), the ungodly says here in boastful confidence.

7—10. A further representation of the wicked man. The spirit of worldliness, unbelief and self-confidence which possesses him must needs issue in actual guilt—of word (ver. 7.) and of deed (vv. 8—10.).

"Under his tongue." Always ready for use, like a serpent's poison (see Ps. cxl. 3.). The expression is used in a good sense (Ps. lxxvi. 17.), "praise was under my tongue," always at hand.

PSALMS, X.

- 8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages :
n Hab. 3. 14. ⁿ in the secret places doth he murder the innocent :
o Ps. 17. 11. ^o his eyes ² are privily set against the poor.
- 9 ^p He lieth in wait ³ secretly as a lion in his den :
p Ps. 17. 12. he lieth in wait to catch the poor :
Mic. 7. 2. he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.
- 10 ⁴ He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself,
q Heb. He breaketh himself. that the poor may fall ⁵ by his strong ones.
- 11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten :
r Or, into his strong parts. ^q he hideth his face ; he will never see *it*.
- 12 ¶ Arise, O LORD ; O God, ^r lift up thine hand :
q Job 22. 13. forget not the ⁶ humble.
Ps. 73. 11.
& 94. 7.
Ezek. 8. 12.
& 9. 9.
- 13 Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God ?
r Mic. 5. 9. He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*.
- 14 Thou hast seen *it* ; for thou beholdest mischief
6 Or, afflicted. and spite,
7 Heb. leaveth. to requite *it* with thy hand :
8 2 Tim. 1. 12. the poor ^{7 s} committeth himself unto thee ;
1 Pet. 4. 19. ^t thou art the helper of the fatherless.
t Ps. 68. 5.
Hos. 14. 3.

8. The ungodly are like robbers lying in wait for their victims (comp. Hos. vi. 9.), and murdering unobserved those who have never provoked them ; nay more, they are like wild beasts.

9. "In his den." Rather, "his covert, or lair" (Job xxxviii. 40. Jer. xxv. 38.), the thicket in which he lurks.

There is a change in the figure, the ungodly being compared in the first clause to the lion watching for his prey, in the second, to the hunter catching the lion in his net.

10. That is, crouching down as low as possible he lies on the watch, and the feeble fall by his strong ones. Or the whole verse may be understood of the poor ; "crushed, he sinks down, and falls, helpless, by his strong "ones."

"By his strong ones." His claws, or his teeth, or his servants.

11. The Psalmist here returns (see ver. 4.) to the cause of the recklessness and presumption of the ungodly : he satisfies himself that God does not concern Himself with the affairs of men.

12. In this second part of the Psalm David calls earnestly upon God to shew Himself to be a God of justice, delivering the afflicted, and destroying the oppressor, and then declares his confident belief that his prayer is heard.

"The humble." The same word which in ver. 9 is rendered "poor."

13. "Contemn." The same word is rendered "abhorreth" in ver. 3, but should rather be "despiseth, contemneth."

14. In strong contrast to the vain imaginations of the ungodly (ver.

PSALMS, XI.

15 ^a Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil ^a Ps. 37. 17.

man :

seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

16 ^x The LORD is King for ever and ever :
the heathen are perished out of his land.

^x Ps. 29. 10.
& 145. 13.
& 146. 10.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble :
thou wilt ^{2y} prepare their heart,
thou wilt cause thine ear to hear :

Jer. 10. 10.
Lam. 5. 19.
Dan. 4. 34.
& 6. 26.
1 Tim. 1. 17.

18 to ^z judge the fatherless and the oppressed,
that the man of the earth may no more ³ oppress.

² Or,
establish.
^y 1 Chr. 23. 18.
^z Ps. 82. 3.
Isai. 11. 4.
³ Or, *terrify.*

PSALM XI.

1 *David encourageth himself in God against his enemies.* 4 *The providence and justice of God.*

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David.

1 ^a **I**N the LORD put I my trust :

^a Ps. 56. 11.

^b how say ye to my soul, Flee *as* a bird to ^b your mountain ?

^b See 1 Sam. 26. 19, 20.

11.), the Psalmist declares emphatically that God *has* seen, and does see, the cruel acts of the wicked. He beholds, that is, He considers and takes notice of, the trouble and vexation which His people suffer; and He will requite them (Jer. xvii. 10; xxxii. 19.). Rightly therefore may the helpless commit all their burdens to Him; He Who has ever been the helper of the orphan will not overlook those who are destitute of human aid.

15. "Seek out." That is, search out and punish, until it has wholly vanished.

16. The Psalm closes in triumphant confidence that evil will be overthrown and God's rule fully established. In the contemplation of His universal kingdom, the Psalmist passes from the thought of internal enemies to the heathen without, and sees the Holy Land purified from all oppressors.

17. What he had prayed for at the end of Ps. ix. he now in full faith sees accomplished.

"Thou wilt prepare." Or, as in the margin, "establish," make firm, strengthen, allaying their fears and inspiring them with confidence.

18. "The man." Frail, mortal man; as in Ps. ix. 19, 20.

"Of the earth." Not as being formed out of the earth, but as having the earth for his home, having no strength but such as comes from the earth.

The Psalm is the supplication of the Church under persecution. She calls on God to remember the poor and afflicted, and to put down their enemies, and by faith she anticipates the time when Christ's kingdom shall be established, and the power of Antichrist finally crushed.

PSALM XI.

The Song of firm faith in a time of anarchy and danger.

Whether this Psalm is to be referred, as is most probable, to the time of David's persecution by Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 14; xxiv. 2; xxvi. 20.),

PSALMS, XI.

- the LORD's ^g throne is in heaven :
^h his eyes behold,—his eyelids try, the children
of men.
- 5 The LORD ⁱ trieth the righteous :
but the wicked and him that loveth violence his
soul hateth.
- 6 ^k Upon the wicked he shall rain ² snares,
fire and brimstone, and ³ an horrible tempest :
¹ *this shall be* the portion of their cup.
- 7 For the righteous LORD ^m loveth righteousness ;
ⁿ his countenance doth behold the upright.
- ¹ See Gen. 43. 34. 1 Sam. 1. 4. & 9. 23. Ps. 75. 8. ^m Ps. 45. 7. & 146. 8.
ⁿ Job 36. 7. Ps. 33. 18. & 34. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 12.
- ^g Ps. 2. 4.
Isai. 66. 1.
Matt. 5. 34.
& 23. 22.
Acts 7. 43.
Rev. 4. 2.
- ^h Ps. 33. 13.
& 34. 15, 16.
& 66. 7.
- ⁱ Gen. 22. 1.
Jam. 1. 12.
- ^k Gen. 19. 24.
Ezek. 38. 22.
- ² Or,
*quick burn-
ing coals.*
- ³ Or, *a burn-
ing tempest.*

xxix. 9.). Elsewhere it means the temple or tabernacle on earth (Ps. v. 7; xxvii. 4.).

“His eyelids try.” Properly, “test,” as metals are tested by fire (Ps. vii. 9.). It denotes a fixed and penetrating look, for which purpose the eyelids are drawn together.

5. God not only beholds, but He distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. He “trieth the righteous;” He puts them to the test, and proves them, suffers them to be afflicted for the strengthening and purification of their character (St. Jam. i. 12.). But “His soul hateth the wicked;” that is, He abhors them with all the energy of His essentially holy nature; He may suspend punishment, but He hates nevertheless.

6. “He shall rain snares.” That is, a destructive shower from which there is no escape, either the lightning, or the fire and brimstone mentioned immediately. Others take it, as in the margin, “burning coals,” arranging the verse thus, “upon the ungodly He raineth coals of fire and brimstone; a burning wind is the portion of their cup.” The wicked are represented (i) as overthrown by fire from heaven, and (ii) as compelled to drink in the pestilent air of the simoom.

“Fire and brimstone.” See Gen. xix. 24. If, as is likely, this Psalm was written during David's wanderings in the neighbourhood of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiii. 29; xxiv. 1.), on the borders of the Dead Sea, it would be natural for him to recall the fate of the cities of the plain.

“A horrible tempest.” See margin, “a burning tempest,” a fiery wind, the deadly simoom.

God's judgments on the wicked are compared to storms, which are not constant, but dependant on His will Who sends them when and how He pleases.

7. We gather God's dealings from His character; being righteous Himself, He must needs discern between the righteous and the wicked, loving those who are like Himself and taking vengeance on the others.

“His countenance doth behold the upright.” Or rather, “the upright shall behold His countenance,” shall see Him even now looking down in love, and see Him hereafter as He is (Ps. xvii. 15.).

“The just with open eye

“His face shall ever see” (Kemble).

When sin and mischief abound, this Psalm will supply thoughts and

PSALMS, XII.

PSALM XII.

1 *David, destitute of human comfort, craveth help of God. 3 He comforteth himself with God's judgments on the wicked, and confidence in God's tried promises.*

² Or, upon the eighth.

³ Ps. 6, title.

⁴ Or, *Save.*

^a Isai. 57. 1.
^b Mic. 7. 2.

^b Ps. 10. 7.

^c Ps. 28. 3.
& 62. 4.
Jer. 9. 8.
Rom. 16. 18.

⁵ Heb. *an heart and an heart,*
1 Chr. 12. 33.

To the chief Musician ^{2 3} upon Sheminith,
A Psalm of David.

1 ⁴ **H**ELP, LORD; for ^a the godly man ceaseth;
for the faithful fail from among the
children of men.

2 ^b They speak vanity every one with his neighbour:

^c *with flattering lips and with* ⁵ *a double heart*
do they speak.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips,

words of comfort. We dare not hope for safety or rest on earth; but we must not on that account fly away from duty, or sit down in despair. God in heaven sees all, and holds the thread which can unravel all that seems strange to us. God's love for the righteous and His hatred of sin are unchanging and unchangeable. Though for the trial of their faith He may permit the righteous to suffer, He still watches over them unseen, and will one day admit them to the full revelation of Himself.

PSALM XII.

A lament over prevailing corruption, and the promise of redress.

There is nothing specially to mark the date of this Psalm. It may be referred to the secret malice which David had to encounter in the court of Saul, or to the treachery of Saul himself and his friends (see especially 1 Sam. xxiii. 19—23.), or to the condition of things before Absalom's rebellion, or to the conduct of Absalom and Ahitophel. In truth there is scarcely any period of Jewish history to which it might not apply. Similar complaints are to be found in Micah vii. 2. Jer. vii. 28. Isa. lvii. 1.

The Psalm consists of two parts; first, the complaint (vv. 1—4.), then the consolation (vv. 5—8.).

“Upon Sheminith.” See Ps. vi.

1. “The godly man.” One who practises loving-kindness, who loveth tenderly and piously God and man.

“The faithful.” Those whose word and character can be thoroughly relied on.

2. What the Psalmist specially bewails is the prevailing untruthfulness. “Vanity.” That is, falsehood, “deceitful tales,” *Keble* (Ps. xli. 6; cxliv. 11. See Eph. iv. 25. Zech. viii. 16.).

“With a double heart.” Heb. “with a heart and an heart:” they seem to have two hearts, one to speak fair words, and the other to invent mischief (comp. 1 Chron. xii. 33, 38. St. James i. 8.).

3. “The Lord will cut off.” The form of the verb implies a wish; “the Lord will surely cut off,” “may He cut off!”

“Flattering lips” and “the tongue that speaketh proud things”

PSALMS, XII.

- and* the tongue that speaketh ^{d 2} proud things : ^d 1 Sam. 2. 3.
Ps. 17. 10.
Dan. 7. 8, 25.
- 4 who have said, With our tongue will we prevail ; ² Heb. *great things.*
our lips ³ are our own : who is lord over us ? ³ Heb. are
with us.
- 5 ¶ For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing
of the needy,
^e now will I arise, saith the LORD ; ^e Ex. 3. 7, 8.
Isai. 33. 10.
I will set *him* in safety *from him that* ^{4 f} puffeth ⁴ Or,
*would en-
snare him.*
at him. ^f Ps. 10. 5.
- 6 The words of the LORD are ^g pure words : ^g 2 Sam. 22. 31.
Ps. 18. 30.
& 19. 8.
& 119. 140.
Prov. 30. 5.
as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified
seven times.
- 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,

belong to one and the same person, inasmuch as the boaster becomes a flatterer, when it serves his own selfish interest.

4. A specimen of the proud things mentioned in the preceding verse. "With our tongue will we prevail." Lit. "we will give strength to our tongue;" we will give force and emphasis to our tongues, we will make them speak boldly.

"Our lips are our own." Lit. as in margin, "are with us;" they are on our side (2 Kings vi. 16 ; ix. 32.), our confederates. If any should attempt to lord it over them, their tongues would soon browbeat them and put them down.

5. As in Ps. ii. 6, the Psalmist seems to hear the voice of God Himself. Hitherto He has been silent and forbearing, and has appeared to take no notice of the affliction of His people; now the time is come for Him to interpose: He will arise and save them.

"For." That is, "because of:" it gives the reason for God's action.

"I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." Rather, "I will set in safety him that longeth for it;" I will grant him the deliverance which he desires. "E'en as he breathes to Me for rest" (Keble).

6. "The words of the Lord." With special reference to the foregoing promise. This verse has been called the Psalmist's Amen to the Divine announcement. The words of the Lord (he says) are "pure," that is, true, words; without any mixture of falsehood in them; like silver, which has passed seven times through the smelting furnace, and is entirely purged from dross. "The history of "God's people is the crucible" in which His promises are tried, and they have always borne the test" (Kay).

"Of earth." More lit. "to the earth," with reference to the pure metal flowing down to the ground. As "silver" is the emblem of every thing pure and precious, so "seven" indicates completeness.

Men will echo David's praise of God's faithfulness, when things prosper with them; how few, like David, magnify His truth in the very hour of trial!

7. From complaint (vv. 1, 2.) the Psalmist rose to earnest desire (ver. 3.); now, relying on the Divine promise, he is confident of the Divine protection.

PSALMS, XIII.

² Heb. *him* :
that is, every
one of them.

thou shalt preserve ² them from this generation
for ever.

³ Heb. *the*
vilest of the
sons of men
are exalted.

8 The wicked walk on every side,
when ³ the vilest men are exalted.

PSALM XIII.

1 *David complaineth of delay in help.* 3 *He prayeth for preventing grace.* 5 *He boasteth of divine mercy.*

² Or,
overseer.

To the ² chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

^a Deut. 31. 17.
Job 13. 24.
Ps. 44. 24.
& 88. 14.
& 89. 46.
Isai. 53. 2.

1 **H**OW long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for
ever?

^a How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

“Them.” That is, the poor and needy of ver. 5.

“This generation.” The proud and persecuting world around; the men imbued with the spirit of the age (comp. Deut. xxxii. 5, 10, 20. Prov. xxx. 11—14.).

8. “Walk on every side.” They range everywhere, unopposed, with an arrogant and vaunting mien. When the worthless and profligate are in high places, it must needs be that wickedness is puffed up.

If the Psalmist seems to return in this last verse to the gloom and despondency of the beginning of the Psalm, it is not that he has lost his faith and confidence in God; rather, as has been said, the Psalm is like a ring, of which the promise in ver. 5 is the precious stone. This last verse is a description of “this generation” in ver. 7.

There will be occasions in the life of every Christian, when the growth of evil, and especially of hollowness and hypocrisy, will be brought so forcibly before him, that he will be tempted to think that all truth has vanished, and that he is left alone in the midst of a false and overbearing people. It will be a help and comfort to him at such times to kindle his faith at David’s lamp, and learn from him to believe, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, that there is a remnant, whose afflictions God sees, and whose prayers He hears. Let wickedness be ever so wide-spread and triumphant, God will not suffer it to go on for ever unchecked.

PSALM XIII.

The sigh of despair relieved by the prayer of faith.

There is here the same tone of sadness as in the preceding Psalm; but instead of a general lamentation over the sinfulness of the times, we have rather a cry of distress on account of personal troubles.

The Psalm naturally divides itself into three parts:—first (vv. 1, 2.), a cry of weariness and despair, with its four times repeated “How long?” then (vv. 3, 4.) the more gentle and half-calm prayer for help; and lastly (vv. 5, 6.), the expression of believing, joyous trust. “The song as it were casts up constantly lessening waves, until it becomes still as the sea when smooth as a mirror, and the only motion “discernible at last is that of the joyous ripple of calm repose.”

1. “How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?” This is really one question, and should be so pointed, as in the Prayer Book

PSALMS, XIII.

- 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
having sorrow in my heart daily?
 How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
- 3 ¶ Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God :
^blighten mine eyes, ^clest I sleep the *sleep of* ^b Ezra 9. 8.
 death ; ^c Jer. 51. 39.
- 4 ^dlest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against ^d Ps. 25. 2.
 him ; & 35. 19.
& 38. 16.
and those that trouble me rejoice when I am
 moved.
- 5 ¶ But I have ^etrusted in thy mercy ; e Ps. 33. 21.
 my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

Version : "How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord, for ever?" (So in Ps. lxxiv. 10 ; lxxix. 5 ; lxxxix. 46.) How long wilt Thou shew Thyself as if Thou hadst entirely forgotten me? The self-contradiction of the question marks the inward conflict. In his dejection the Psalmist thinks that God has forgotten him for ever ; but faith checks the desponding thought, and changes the question into a form which shews that he is sure that the trial, though protracted, will not be for ever. How often, when men are pressed down by calamity, do they conclude that God has forsaken them : faith alone enables them to recognize God's over-ruling Providence, and to acknowledge that all things, instead of being against them, as they are apt to imagine, are really working together for their good.

2. "Daily." Rather, "by day." It would seem as if we should supply "by night" in the first clause. "In the night I am devising plans, but they are fruitless ; the day brings only disappointment and sorrow." His enemy was still in the ascendant, and his life was a series of perils and projects of escape. This describes so truly David's life in the wilderness, when persecuted by Saul, that it has been reasonably supposed that the Psalm belongs to that time (see 1 Sam. xix. 11 ; xxiii. 14 ; xxvi. 2 ; xxvii. 1.).

3. "Consider." Look upon me (Isa. lxiii. 15.). God had hidden His face ; therefore he prays that He would look upon him. He had forborne to help him ; therefore he prays that He would answer his entreaty. He had permitted his enemy to triumph over him ; therefore he prays that He would revive him with the light of His countenance.

"Lighten mine eyes." That is, give me fresh life and spirits (1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29. Ezra ix. 8.).

"Lest I sleep the sleep of death." Comp. Jer. li. 39. It seemed to him as if he must needs lie down and die, unless God revived him ; his sufferings must end in death. Comp. our Saviour's words, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 38.).

4. The honour of God was concerned in His servant's safety ; therefore he prays God to protect him from the mockery of the wicked, not only on account of the extremity of his need, but in order to vindicate His own character.

5, 6. As the lamentation with which the Psalm opens passes (ver. 3.)

PSALMS, XIV.

6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath
dealt bountifully with me.

† Ps. 116. 7.
& 119. 17.

PSALM XIV.

1 *David describeth the corruption of a natural man. 4 He convinceth the wicked by the light of their conscience. 7 He glorieth in the salvation of God.*

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David.

* Ps. 10. 4.
& 53. 1, &c.

1 **T**HE ^a fool hath said in his heart, *There is no*
God.

into prayer, so prayer begets trust and hope. As for him, however his enemies might exult, he would cling fast to God; nay, God's gracious dealings with him would make him rejoice and sing. "In his storm-tossed "soul all has now become calm. Though it still rage without as much "as ever, peace reigns in the depth of his breast." He had not yet indeed obtained the deliverance which he desired; but he was confident that it would come; and in that confidence he desires to give thanks. The verbs do not however so much express a resolution as a wish.

This is another Psalm of encouragement for those whose patience is sorely tried, and who are ready to faint through weariness and disappointed hope. How long is this to last? (they say); one trial follows another; will they never come to an end? Let their sorrow and disappointment lead them, as they led David, to prayer; and prayer, if it bring not deliverance, will bring peace.

PSALM XIV.

**A cry to Jehovah to turn back the tide of wickedness
and oppression.**

The overpowering sense of the evil of the times which drew forth the lament of Psalm xii. appears again in this Psalm, and is expressed in still stronger terms.

It might be inferred from the last verse that the Psalm belongs to the time of the captivity, but the expression "to turn the captivity" is sometimes used simply for deliverance from affliction, and it may therefore be as fitly applied here to the troubles of David's reign as to the time of the exile (see note there).

The three verses inserted in the Prayer Book Version after ver. 3 do not occur in the Hebrew, nor in the Alexandrian MS. of the Greek Version; they are found in the Vatican MS., in the Vulgate, and some other Versions. It is generally supposed that they have found place here from Rom. iii. 13—18, where St. Paul introduces them as a series of quotations from various parts of Scripture.

The Psalm appears again with some variations as Psalm liii.

1. "The fool." That is, the empty-headed, hollow-minded man, described more particularly in Isa. xxxiii. 6, where the word translated "vile" is the same as "fool" here. The meaning is not so much, that he who says in his heart "There is no God" is a fool, as that such is the language of the foolish, good-for-nothing, wicked man: such is really the language of his heart and will: he may or may not deny God with his lips; his silly, thoughtless life shews that he does not

PSALMS, XIV.

- ^b They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,
there is none that doeth good.
- 2 ^c The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
 to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.*
- 3 ^d They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become ² filthy :
there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- 4 ¶ Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?
 Who ^e eat up my people *as they eat bread,*
 and ^f call not upon the LORD.

^b Gen. 6. 11,
12. Rom. 3.
10, &c.

^c Ps. 33. 13.
& 102. 19.

^d Rom. 3. 10,
11, 12.
² Heb.
stinking.

^e Jer. 10. 25.
Amos 8. 4.
Mic. 3. 3.
^f Ps. 79. 6.
Isai. 64. 7.

recognize His presence or His sway. See Ps. x. 4, where it is said, that the sum of all his thoughts is "There is no God."

"**Hath said.**" The perfects in this and the following verses express the result of universal experience, and might almost be more accurately rendered in English by the present.

"**They are corrupt.**" Lit. "They have made corrupt, they have made abominable, their doings." See Gen. vi. 11, 12. Zeph. iii. 7.

"All marr'd and foul is all they wrought" (*Keble*).

It seems doubtful whether the subject is men in general, or the foolish atheists of the first clause; if the latter, we are taught how thoughtlessness leads to practical atheism, and the denial of God to foul and shameful living.

2. In confirmation of the last words, "**There is none that doeth good,**" the Psalmist appeals to God Himself: he introduces Him as looking down from heaven to see whether it was really so: "Is there any who shews true understanding by seeking after God, and counting communion with Him as the highest good?" This is God's question, and in the next verse we have His answer.

3. "**All.**" Lit. "the whole." The Psalmist heaps together words to express the universality of the corruption; "the whole mass;" "**together,**" i. e. all alike; "not even one." And yet in this very Psalm he makes mention of the people of God (ver. 4.), and of a righteous generation (ver. 5.); but these are comparatively very few. Though there is at all times a remnant according to the election of grace (Rom. xi. 5.), they are lost sight of in view of the great mass. Besides, as it is God's grace alone that sets men free from the general corruption, we may understand Almighty God as speaking here of mankind as they are in and by themselves; all of them, without exception, have gone astray from God. Hence St. Paul quotes this verse (Rom. iii. 12.) to prove that Jews and Gentiles are all included under sin.

4. Almighty God still speaks: "Have they no knowledge, all the workers of iniquity?" Are they utterly devoid of understanding? (see Isa. i. 2, 3.)

"**Who eat up My people as if they would eat bread.**" Lit. "eating My people, they eat bread;" that is, in plundering God's

PSALMS, XV.

² Heb. *they feared a fear,*
Ps. 53. 5.

^g Ps. 9. 9.
& 142. 5.

³ Heb. *Who will give, &c.*
See Rom. 11. 26.

^h Ps. 53. 6.

ⁱ Job 42. 10.
Ps. 126. 1.

- 5 There ²were they in great fear :
for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.
- 6 Ye have shamed the council of the poor,
because the LORD *is* his ^g refuge.
- 7 ^{3 h} Oh that the salvation of Israel *were* come out
of Zion!
- ⁱ When the LORD bringeth back the captivity of
his people,
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

PSALM XV.

David describeth a citizen of Zion.

A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 21. 3, &c.

² Heb. *sojourn.*

^b Ps. 2. 6.
& 3. 4.

- 1 LORD, ^a who shall ² abide in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in ^b thy holy hill?

people (Prov. xxx. 14. Lam. ii. 16.), they do not think that they are doing anything more blameworthy than if they were eating bread. This seems to be spoken especially with reference to the leaders of Israel; as in Micah iii. 1. Comp. also Jer. x. 25. Hos. vii. 7. Isa. iii. 12—15.

5. "There," i. e. where God visits them in His anger. The Psalmist sees a time and place, when judgment shall fall on the workers of iniquity for their persecution of God's people. It is as if he said, "See there; behold their terror; God is in the generation of the "righteous."

"Generation." So Ps. xxiv. 6; lxxiii. 15; cxii. 2.

6. "Ye have shamed," &c. Rather, "Ye may put to shame . . . yet "the Lord," &c.; ye may, if ye will, seek to frustrate the design of the poor, all that he attempts to do for God; but it is of no avail, for the Lord is His refuge.

7. This may be a prayer for deliverance from captivity (comp. Ps. exxvi. 1, 4. Joel iii. 1. Jer. xxx. 18; xxxi. 23. Ezek. xxxix. 25.), or it may be an addition made at the time of the exile. But we gather from such passages as Job xlii. 10. (where Job's restoration to prosperity is spoken of as a return from captivity), and Ezek. xvi. 53. (where the miserable state of Sodom, "imprisoned beneath a crust of salt and "sulphur," is called her captivity), that the expression here used may merely mean, "When the Lord turns the misfortunes of His people," when He sets them free from the troubles which now enthrall them. And in this sense the verse may be taken as belonging to the time of Absalom. David prays that salvation may come forth from the Holy City, where was the Ark of God's presence, and declares that when that happy time of restoration should come, Jacob would rejoice and Israel would be glad. It is the cry of the faithful remnant under the oppression of the world, that God would return to them and give them salvation and joy. It is the cry also of the faithful soul groaning under the power of sin, in itself and in the world, and longing for release (Rom. viii. 23.).

PSALM XV.

The true worshipper.

It is uncertain whether this Psalm was written on the occasion of the

PSALMS, XV.

- 2 ° He that walketh uprightly, and worketh c Isai. 33. 15.
 righteousnes,
 and ^d speaketh the truth in his heart.
- 3 ° He that backbiteth not with his tongue,
 nor doeth evil to his neighbour,
^f nor ² taketh up a reproach against his neigh- f Ex. 23. 1.
 bour. ² Or, re-
 ceiveth, or,
 endureth.
- 4 ^g In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ;
 but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. g Esth. 3. 2.

removal of the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 12—19.), or whether it belongs to a somewhat later time. Whenever it was written, it describes the condition of acceptable approach to God, and not only answers the question, Who is the true worshipper of God on earth? but, Who will be admitted into His presence in heaven? See Isa. xxxiii. 13—16. St. Matt. vii. 21.

1. "Abide." Lit. as in margin, "sojourn," i.e. as a guest. The other verb "dwell" denotes permanent abode. We are not inmates of God's house by right; but by His grace we are permitted not only to sojourn, but to abide there continually.

2. "That walketh uprightly." Lit. "that walketh uprightness," i.e. who maketh perfectness his way, his mode of action. See Prov. xxviii. 18, where the same expression occurs. Gen. xvii. 1.

"In his heart." The language which he holds with himself, as distinguished from that which he holds with others, is perfectly true. There are three characteristics here mentioned,—thorough conscientiousness; conduct regulated by the will of God; inward truth.

3. "Backbiteth." The first meaning of the word is to "go about," thus bearing witness to the too common course of things; wandering about from house to house, gossip, slander (see Lev. xix. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 11.). If a good name is a special treasure (Prov. xxii. 1. Eccles. vii. 1.), to rob a man of it is the greatest of injuries.

"Neighbour . . . neighbour." The two words are different in the original. They occur together also in Exod. xxxii. 27, where they are rendered respectively "companion" and "neighbour;" and the first of the two words would be more appropriately rendered "companion" here and in Ps. xii. 2. The true worshipper does not go about with false and malicious tales, nor does he in any way injure those to whom he is bound by the ties of friendship or society.

"Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." He will not listen to it too eagerly when brought by others; he will not take it up and fasten it upon the person accused; he will be silent and incredulous. Reproach is a burden more easily put on than cast off.

4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned." This is the rendering of the Greek and Latin Versions, and many modern commentators. "The vile man in his eyes is vile" (*Keble*). But some Jewish authorities take it, "despised he is in his own sight, rejected." So the Prayer Book Version. Comp. 2 Sam. vi. 22. Humility and self-abasement are extolled in the Old Testament as well as in the New (Ps. cxxxi. 1. Isa. lvii. 15; and, for the contrast, Prov. xxvi. 12.). The more humble any man is, and the more conscious he is of his own short-

PSALMS, XVI.

^b Judg. 11. 35.

He that ^bswareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

ⁱ Ex. 22. 25.
Lev. 25. 36.
Deut. 23. 19.
Ezek. 18. 8.
& 22. 12.

5 ⁱ *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, ^knor taketh reward against the innocent. ;
He that doeth these *things* ^lshall never be moved.

^k Ex. 23. 8.
Deut. 16. 19.

^l Ps. 16. 8.
² Pet. 1. 10.

PSALM XVI.

² Or,
A golden
Psalm of
David.

1 *David, in distrust of merits, and hatred of idolatry, fleeth to God for preservation.* 5 *He sheweth the hope of his calling, of the resurrection, and life everlasting.*

²³ Michtam of David.

³ So Ps. 56,
& 57, & 58,
& 59, & 60.
^a Ps. 25. 20.

1 **P**RESERVE me, O God: ^afor in thee do I put my trust.

comings, the more will he esteem others, and the standard by which he will regulate his esteem will be the fear of God (Rom. xii. 10. Philip. ii. 3.).

“*He that swareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*” The reference, as in Lev. v. 4, is to oaths uttered in recklessness or passion, and then forgotten. He does not shrink from his oath, even when he finds that he has sworn to his own hurt; he does not attempt to change it for something else; he will rather submit to injury than break his word.

5. The law strictly forbade interest to be taken for a loan to any poor person, either in the shape of money or of produce; and the practice was strongly denounced by the prophets (Jer. xv. 10. Ezek. xviii. 13; xxii. 12.). It appears to have grown up among the Jews during the captivity, and was corrected by Nehemiah, who exacted an oath to ensure its discontinuance (Neh. v. 3—13.). Every kind of bribe also was forbidden. What we are especially warned against in this verse is taking advantage of any man’s necessity in order to enrich ourselves, or committing an act of injustice for the sake of gain.

“*Shall never be moved.*” He does not say, “Such an one shall abide in the house of the Lord,” but, as every one who dwells in God’s presence must needs be safe, he changes the form of expression, “He shall never be moved:” hidden in God’s fellowship, no harm can reach him.

“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. xii. 14.); and in this Psalm we are taught wherein true holiness consists;—not in mere outward acts of religion, not in a barren faith without works, but in a spotless, sincere, humble, unselfish life. Are we ordering our lives according to the will of God? Do we love and speak the truth? Do we steadily refuse to believe in and to propagate slander? Are we lowly in our own eyes? and do we treat with special honour all, of whatever degree, who fear the Lord? Are we strict in fulfilling all our engagements, in spite of the trouble or loss which they may involve? Are we ready to forego worldly advantage, rather than commit a cruel or unjust act? These are the fruits of holiness which God delights to see in those who draw near to His sanctuary on earth: this is the sort of character, in which we must strive to array ourselves, if we hope to be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

PSALMS, XVI.

2 *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou
art my Lord :

^b *my goodness extendeth* not to thee ;

3 *but* to the saints that *are* in the earth,

and *to* the excellent, in whom *is* all my delight.

^b Job 22. 2, 3.
& 35. 7, 8.
Ps. 50. 9.
Rom. 11. 35.

PSALM XVI.

The Lord David's portion, in this world and the next.

In this Psalm we have the outpouring of David's joy and trust in God as his highest good. Even in the presence of danger and death, he utters no complaint; his cry for help is immediately swallowed up in the confidence that in God he has everything he can desire for the present and for the future.

Though there is no manifest reference to special circumstances in the Psalm, it would seem, as has been suggested, that some of its leading thoughts were undoubtedly in David's mind when he was in the wilderness of Ziph. His complaint to Saul, that his persecutors had driven him out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.), finds its echo here (vv. 4, 5.), where he declares that no banishment could shake his abhorrence of idols, or his perfect rest in God as his portion and inheritance.

“**Michtam.**” This word occurs in the titles of five other Psalms, viz. lvi.—lx.; and the kindred term *michtâv* is applied to the “writing” of Hezekiah in Isa. xxxviii. 9. By some it is translated, as in the margin, “golden;” i. e. a poem peculiarly precious; by others, “graven,” a poem carved upon stone, which deserves to be preserved as a monumental inscription. But the meaning is very doubtful. If it is not equivalent to *michtâv*, it is most probably a musical term, the origin and application of which are unknown.

1. This first verse is an epitome of the whole Psalm, which is, in part, the prayer of faith in anticipation of death, as appears in the close of the Psalm; in part, an earnest and frequently repeated assertion of his refuge being in God.

2. The words “**O my soul**” are not in the Hebrew. Either they may be inserted, as in the English Version, which follows the Targum; or we may adopt the rendering, probably correct, of the Greek, Latin, and Syriac Versions, “**I said to the Lord**” (see Ps. xxxi. 14; cxl. 6.).

“**My Lord,**” i. e. my supreme ruler and Lord, to Whom I and all I have belong.

“**My goodness extendeth not to Thee.**” The word translated “goodness” means worldly prosperity, well-being; and the word “extendeth” is not in the original. The general sense appears to be, “My good [my happiness, that which makes me happy] is not beyond (or beside) Thee; i. e. is nothing compared to Thee, is nothing without Thee.” Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 25.

3. This is a very difficult verse. It may be translated, “As for the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent, all my delight is in them.” Or, by transposition of “and,” it may be connected with the preceding verse in this way, “I said to the Lord . . . and (I said) to the saints that are in the earth, These are the excellent, all my delight is in them.” Or the connection may be this: “I have no good beyond

PSALMS, XVI.

² Or,
give gifts
to another.

^c Ex. 23. 13.
Josh. 23. 7.
Hos. 2. 16, 17.

^d Deut. 32. 9.
Ps. 73. 26.
& 119. 57.
& 142. 5.

Jer. 10. 16.
Lam. 3. 24.

4 ¶ Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* ² hasten
after another god :

their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,
^c nor take up their names into my lips.

5 ^d The LORD is the portion ³ of mine inheritance
and ^e of my cup :

³ Heb. of my part. ^e Ps. 11. 6.

“Thee, belonging as I do to the fellowship of the saints and the excellent, “in whom is all my delight.” Or, on the other hand, the connection may be with the verse following, “As for the saints which are in the “land and the nobles, in whom is all my delight, they multiply their idols “and run after other gods,” that is, they follow the example of the heathen in worshipping strange gods.

On the whole, however, in whatever way we interpret the words, the meaning would seem to be clear. As the Psalmist looks to God alone for happiness, so does he delight in God’s saints, and he contrasts his own condition, and that of those who are likeminded with himself, with the sorrows which press upon idolaters.

4. “Their sorrows.” Some take the word to mean “idols,” and render “they multiply their idols, and run after another God:” but the English Version is probably right. Idolatry in any form is the parent of untold sorrows: whoever forsakes God and takes in exchange another, be it who or what it may, will not only find his hopes misplaced, but God’s judgments will fall upon him.

“Hasten,” or “take in exchange,” according to the meaning of a cognate word in Ps. cvi. 20. Jer. ii. 11. The marginal rendering, “give gifts to another,” comes probably from the use of the word in Exod. xxii. 15, the only place where it occurs exactly in the same form, and where the English Version has “endow her to be his wife,” that is, purchase her by a dowry.

“After another god.” “God” is not in the original. The Psalmist speaks in the broadest way of everything which is not God (comp. Isa. xlii. 8; xlvi. 11.). They who take up with anything short of Him pierce themselves through with many sorrows (1 Tim. vi. 10.). From such unfaithfulness the Psalmist shrinks with abhorrence; he will have nothing to do with false worship, nor even “make mention of the name “of other gods” (Exod. xxiii. 13.).

“Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer.” There is no mention elsewhere in Scripture of “drink offerings of blood.” It is possible that among the heathen the blood of the victim was sometimes actually poured out on the altar, but probably the meaning here is simply, that the offerings were made with blood-stained hands and guilty consciences.

“Their names.” That is, the names of the false gods. Even the mention of their names seemed to him treason against the true God. See marg. ref.

5. This verse gives the reason why David shuns with such horror all participation with idolaters and their worship. Whatever he desires he has in God; and what he has in Him, he has securely.

“The portion of my inheritance.” There is a reference to the apportionment of the land among the tribes. As it was specially ordered

PSALMS, XVI.

thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places* ;
yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me
counsel :

^fmy reins also instruct me in the night seasons. ^f Ps. 17. 3.

8 ¶ ^gI have set the LORD always before me :

because ^hhe is at my right hand, ⁱI shall not
be moved. ^g Acts 2. 25, &c. ^h Ps. 73. 23. & 110. 5. & 121. 5. ⁱ Ps. 15. 5.

that the tribe of Levi should have no inheritance, because the Lord was their inheritance (Num. xviii. 20.), so David takes up the word and applies it to himself spiritually. He might be driven forth from the land of promise, the earthly inheritance of God's people, but, wherever he was, he had the presence and protection of God Himself, and with that he was satisfied.

“**And of my cup.**” The figure may be taken from the cup handed by the father of the family to every member seated at the table. The Lord is David's portion, both of the conquered land and of the paternal cup. “It is as if David had said, God is mine, both in respect of pro-
“**perty and enjoyment**” (*Calvin*).

“**Thou maintainest my lot.**” God not only gives Himself to His people, but He makes the possession sure to them; He will not suffer either man or devil to rob them of their treasure.

6. “**The lines.**” Lit. the measuring lines or cords, by which a man's property was marked out, then the property itself (see Josh. xvii. 5. Deut. xxxii. 8, 9. Amos vii. 17. Micah ii. 5.). The possession and enjoyment of God are to the Psalmist a very garden of delight; in the sunshine of His presence he basks as in a pleasant land.

7. The Psalmist's joy in his goodly heritage naturally turns to thanksgiving; for He Who is his heritage is Himself the giver of it. While therefore rejoicing *in* Him, he gives thanks *to* Him.

“**Who hath given me counsel.**” David thanks God not merely for offering Himself to be his inheritance, but also, and especially, for giving him grace to receive and acknowledge Him as such. It is He Who has counselled (Ps. lxxiii. 24.) him to choose the good part, the one thing needful.

“**My reins.**” That is, apparently, “my inmost thoughts, my heart.” Even in the night, when men in general are asleep, but when the deepest and truest thoughts take possession of the hearts of the faithful, David is admonished to thank God and to rejoice in Him.

8. “**I have set.**” In Acts ii. 25, St. Peter, quoting this passage, uses the word “I foresaw,” meaning “I looked up to, fixed my attention
“steadfastly upon.”

He who has learnt to realize that the Lord is his portion dwells continually in His presence; he will see Him and think of Him at all times. And no wonder; because at all times He is close to him, a real living Being ever at his right hand, so near that it seems to him as if, were he to raise his hand, he would touch Him. With so close and mighty a Protector, he may say with confidence, “**I shall not be moved.**”

- ^k Ps. 30. 12. & 57. 8. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, ^k and my glory rejoiceth :
² Heb. *dwell confidently.* my flesh also shall ² rest in hope.
¹ Ps. 49. 15. Acts 2. 27, 31. & 13. 35. 10 ¹ For thou wilt not leave ^m my soul in hell ;
^m Lev. 19. 28. Num. 6. 6. neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
ⁿ Matt. 7. 14. 11 Thou wilt shew me the ⁿ path of life :
^o Ps. 17. 15. & 21. 6. ^o in thy presence *is* fulness of joy ;
 Matt. 5. 8. ^p at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for ever-
 1 Cor. 13. 12. 1 John 3. 2. more.
^p Ps. 36. 8.

9. "Therefore." Because God is ever at his right hand: in the abiding sense of His nearness.

"My heart . . . my glory (i. e. my soul, Ps. lvii. 8.) . . . my flesh." So in Ps. lxxxiv. 2. See also Ps. lxiii. 1; lxxiii. 26. The same three-fold division is found in 1 Thess. v. 23. The whole man rejoices, body, soul, and spirit, in the presence and protection of God.

"Shall rest in hope." See Acts ii. 26. Feeling himself safe in God's hands, he was confident that he should not fall utterly into the power of death.

10. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in (or rather "to") hell." That is, Hades; Thou wilt not abandon my soul to its power (comp. Ps. xlix. 15.).

"Corruption." Some commentators think that it should be rendered "pit" or "grave," as in Ps. vii. 15. Job xxxiii. 18, 22, 30. But the Hebrew word has the sense of "corruption" or "destruction" in Ps. lv. 25, "pit of destruction;" and in Job xvii. 14 it is parallel to "the worm." In the New Testament (Acts ii. 27; xiii. 35.) the rendering "corruption" is retained from the Greek Version of the Psalms. So far as David speaks of himself, he does not of course mean to say that he should not die, but that united as he was to the living God, that union was an abiding union, which death could not sever. But his words do not strictly belong to himself, for, as St. Peter and St. Paul remind us, his soul not only passed into the unseen world, but continued there, and his body was not only laid in the grave, but like other bodies it saw corruption. David is here carried out of himself, and led to employ language which is true only of Christ. St. Peter says expressly, that being a prophet he looked forward to Him Who should be born of his seed, and Who though submitting to death for a short time was not really abandoned to it, and never saw corruption, did not abide in death. David saw the resurrection of Christ, and was confident that in and through Him he too should rise and live for ever. His words therefore are first and fully realised in Christ; and then, through Christ, they are personally realised in himself also.

11. The Psalmist looks beyond death: death itself shall not remove him from the pathway of life on which he has entered, and which will issue in fulness of joy in the everlasting vision of God. He felt that in the true sense of the words he should not see death (St. John viii. 51.).

The path of life begins in this world. The soul that is united to God is truly alive, even here: as death cannot break that union, so it cannot

PSALMS, XVII.

PSALM XVII.

¹ *David, in confidence of his integrity, craveth defence of God against his enemies. 10 He sheweth their pride, craft, and eagerness. 13 He prayeth against them in confidence of his hope.*

A Prayer of David.

- 1 **H**EAR ²the right, O LORD, attend unto my ² Heb. justice.
cry,
give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* ³ not out of ³ Heb. without lips
feigned lips. of deceit.
- 2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence ;
let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

rob us of our true life. That life is described in the latter part of the verse: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." In the light of God's countenance, in which the Psalmist walked, there is a satisfying fulness of joy; and in the inexhaustible fountain of His right hand are all kinds of pleasant things. And all this is for ever.

PSALM XVII.

Prayer for safety in the midst of cruel and prosperous enemies.

The situation of the Psalmist, sorely beset by enemies, but staying himself in the thought of God's presence and protection, corresponds precisely with the position of David in the wilderness of Maon, hiding on one side of a mountain, while Saul scoured the other side (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.). His expostulation with Saul, that there was neither evil nor transgression in his hand (1 Sam. xxiv. 11.), shews that the consciousness of uprightness, which is so strongly expressed in this Psalm; was a prominent feeling with him at that time.

"A prayer of David." This Psalm is a "prayer" in the strictest sense (see ver. 1.), and the same may be said, generally, of Pss. lxxxvi., xc., cii., cxlii., where the same word occurs: but it has a more comprehensive sense in Ps. lxxii. 20. Hab. iii. 1. Habakkuk's "prayer" is mainly a hymn of praise, composed for music; and Hannah is said to have "prayed" (1 Sam. ii. 1.), whereas her song is wholly thanksgiving.

1. "Hear the right." Lit. "hear righteousness." Not only was his cause just, but he was righteous in regard to God. This is no self-righteous boast; for doubtless David ever felt what he expresses in Ps. cxliii. 2, that of himself he could not stand in God's sight.

"Not out of feigned lips." Not only is his prayer sincere, but there is no deceit in his heart. All prayer pre-supposes this sincerity. If we come before God with a conscious clinging to sin, we are hypocrites, and cannot expect to be heard (see Ps. lxvi. 18. Prov. xv. 29; xxviii. 9. St. John ix. 31. 2 Tim. ii. 19.).

2. "My sentence," i. e. the judgment in my favour. David does not doubt that the righteous Lord is on his side; he prays that He will make His judgment known. The latter clause should be rendered as expressing a wish; "Thine eyes behold uprightness, i. e. uprightly, "according to truth and justice."

PSALMS, XVII.

- O thou ²that savest by thy right hand them ² which put their trust *in thee*
 from those that rise up *against them*.
- 8 ^fKeep me as the apple of the eye,
^ghide me under the shadow of thy wings,
 9 from the wicked ³that oppress me,
 from ⁴my deadly enemies, who compass me
 about.
- 10 ^hThey are inclosed in their own fat :
 with their mouth they ⁱspeak proudly.
- 11 They have now ^kcompassed us in our steps :
^lthey have set their eyes bowing down to the
 earth ;
- ⁿDeut. 32. 15. Job 15. 27. Ps. 73. 7. & 119. 70. ⁱ1 Sam. 2. 3. Ps. 31. 18. ^k1 Sam. 23. 26.
¹Ps. 10. 8, 9, 10.
- ² Or, *that savest them which trust in thee from those that rise up against thy right hand.*
³ Deut. 32. 10. Zech. 2. 8.
⁴ Ruth 2. 12. Ps. 36. 7. & 57. 1. & 61. 4. & 63. 7. & 91. 1, 4. Matt. 23. 37.
⁵ Heb. *that waste me.*
⁶ Heb. *my enemies against the soul.*

remembering how God with His strong right hand saves from their enemies all who seek refuge in Him. Prov. xiv. 26. Heb. vi. 18.

“Thou that savest by Thy right hand.” The rendering of the margin, with which the Prayer Book Version agrees, has the authority of the Greek Version in its favour. Another rendering has been suggested: “Thou helper of those who seek refuge from their adversaries in Thy right hand.”

8. “Keep me as the apple of the eye.” More literally, “Keep me as the little man, the daughter of the eye.” The pupil is called the little man of the eye, because a picture of the person looking into the eye is seen in the pupil; it is called also, by a climax of tenderness, “the daughter of the eye.” No figure could express more exquisitely David’s sense of his preciousness in the sight of God.

“Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.” There is a double figure here. God’s wings are the spreadings out or manifestations of His love, and the shadow of those wings is the refreshing rest and security which the fellowship of His love affords to those who hide themselves beneath it, from the heat of outward or inward conflict.

9. “My deadly enemies.” Lit. “enemies in soul, or with the soul,” that is, enemies who with deep and bitter hatred, &c.; “from souls on fire with hate” (*Keble*).

“Who compass me about.” This represents accurately the persecution which David underwent from Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.).

10. “They are inclosed in their own fat,” in the presumption which is bred of prosperity. Or, taking the passage quite literally, “they have shut up their fat,” that is, their heart, which is turned into fat; they have closed their heart against all feeling of tenderness and compassion. Self-indulgence has made them hard-hearted.

11. “They have set their eyes bowing down to the ground.” Rather, “to cast me down to the ground.”

“Even now, no step of mine, but they

“Are waiting close around;

“Their eyes they order, every glance,

“To bow me to the ground” (*Keble*).

- ² Heb. *The likeness of him (that is, of every one of them) is as a lion that desireth to ravin.* 12 ² like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion ³ lurking in secret places.
- ³ Heb. *sitting.* 13 ¶ Arise, O LORD, ⁴ disappoint him, cast him down : deliver my soul from the wicked, ^m ⁵ *which is thy sword :*
- ⁴ Heb. *prevent his face.* 14 ⁶ from men *which are thy hand*, O LORD, from men of the world, ⁿ *which have their portion in this life*, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure :*
- ^m Isai. 10. 5. ⁵ Or, *by thy sword.* ⁶ Or, *From men by thine hand.* ⁿ Ps. 73. 12. Luke 16. 25. James 5. 5. ⁷ Or, *their children are full.* ⁷ they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

12. Lit. "his likeness is as a lion greedy to ravin." The use of the singular may be explained as in margin ; David may mean to represent each of his enemies as a lion ; or he may view the whole host as one person ; or he may be singling out one in particular, as the chief. Christians cannot fail to be reminded here of their great spiritual enemy (1 St. Peter v. 8.).

13. The more relentless his enemies, the more earnestly does the Psalmist cry to God to come forth at once to help him.

"Disappoint him." Lit. "go before his face," "prevent" him, go forth to meet him. As his enemy was ready to spring on him like a lion, so David prays that the Lord would cross the lion's path and intercept him, and make him crouch before Him.

"From the wicked, which is Thy sword." Rather, as in margin, "by Thy sword ;" and in the next verse "by Thine hand." These are the instruments by which the rescuing was to be effected.

14. "Men of the world." Men of this world, which soon passes away, who have no other home than this world ; "the children of this world" (St. Luke xvi. 8.). This transitory life is their portion ; they prize it as if there were no other higher life ; they have no care for that communion with God, which is the portion of the godly (Ps. xvi. 5.). "The contrast is not so much between this life and the life to come, as "between the world and God." They mind earthly things, instead of the things above (Phil. iii. 19. Col. iii. 1.).

"Thy hid treasure," i. e. material prosperity, abundance of God's earthly gifts. They desire to have their good things in this life, and God grants them their desire (see Job xxi. 7—16.).

"They are full of children." Lit. they are satisfied with children, they have a rich store. Elsewhere (Ps. cxxvii. 4 ; cxxviii. 3.) children are spoken of as a blessing ; when received without thought of the Giver, they only minister to pride.

"The rest of their substance." Rather, "their substance," "their abundance." They are rich and have a numerous progeny to inherit their riches ; and with this they are satisfied ; they do not care to be rich towards God.

PSALMS, XVIII.

15 As for me, ° I will behold thy face in righteous-ness : ° 1 John 3. 2.

° I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. ° Ps. 4. 6, 7.
& 16. 11.
& 65. 4.

PSALM XVIII.

David praiseth God for his manifold and marvellous blessings.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, ² the servant of the ² LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of ³ this song in ³ the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

1 I ^a WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength. ° Ps. 144. 1.
2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ;

15. "I will behold . . . I shall be satisfied." Rather, "I would fain behold . . . I would fain be satisfied." "Be mine" (*Keble*).

The likeness of God does not mean the "likeness and image" of Gen. i., nor does it mean any emblematic representation, as in Ezek. i. 16, but a real manifestation such as was vouchsafed to Moses, of whom God said that He would speak to him "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude (the same word here rendered "likeness," i.e. form) of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 8). See also Exod. xx. 4. Deut. iv. 12, 15, 23; v. 8.

Thus, although no distinct revelation of the resurrection had been vouchsafed to David, such was his faith in God and in the indissoluble nature of fellowship with Him, that he looked forward with hope to the time when, awaking from the sleep of death, he should see God and be satisfied with the manifestation of His glory.

PSALM XVIII.

David's hymn of thanksgiving for the deliverances of his chequered life.

The position of this Psalm in the Second Book of Samuel (ch. xxii.) might lead to the conclusion that it was written towards the close of David's life; but the strong assertions of innocence which it contains and the absence of any reference to domestic troubles, certainly point to a date previous to his great sin. It was probably composed for a great festival of thanksgiving, after the victories mentioned in 2 Sam. viii., when David had not only completely triumphed over the house of Saul, but the surrounding nations had become his tributaries. Within ten years of the capture of Jerusalem, David had reduced the Philistines on the west (2 Sam. viii. 1. 1 Chron. xviii. 1.), the Moabites on the east (2 Sam. viii. 2.), the Syrians on the north (2 Sam. viii. 3.), and the Edomites on the south (2 Sam. viii. 14.). By these conquests the kingdom was extended from Egypt to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean.

We may divide the Psalm into five parts. There is the introduction (vv. 1—3.), in which David sets forth his subject, namely, the praise of God as his Great Deliverer, and the conclusion (vv. 46—50.), when he

PSALMS, XVIII.

² Heb.
my rock.
^b Heb. 2. 13.

my God, ² my strength, ^b in whom I will trust ;
my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and
my high tower.

^c Ps. 76. 4. 3 I will call upon the LORD, ^c *who is worthy* to be
praised :
so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

ends as he began with joyful thanksgiving. In the middle he first recounts in glowing language his perils and his deliverance, with especial reference to his danger from the hand of Saul (vv. 4—19.); then he declares the ground of the special mercies shewn to him, namely, his cleanness of hands in God's sight, Who protects all who walk with Him in truth and uprightness (vv. 20—30.); and lastly, he proclaims the power and victory which God had given him over foreign enemies (vv. 31—45.). The whole Psalm is a joyous retrospect of his past life, crowned as it had been with signal mercies.

“The servant of the Lord.” A title specially given to Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 5. Josh. i. 1, &c. 2 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Chron. i. 3; xxiv. 6. Comp. also 1 Chron. vi. 49. 2 Chron. xxiv. 9. Neh. x. 29. Dan. ix. 11. Rev. xv. 3.); and twice to Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 29. Judges ii. 8.). It is a title of office, and its application to David (here and in the title of Ps. xxxvi.) would seem to mark that a fresh epoch in the history of the chosen people began with David, as before with Moses and Joshua. It is a frequent title of the Messiah; see Isa. xlii. 1, 19; xliii. 10; xlix. 3, 5, 6; l. 10; lii. 13; liii. 11. Acts iv. 27 (where “child” should be rendered “servant”).

1. “I will love Thee.” That is, according to the meaning of the word, with a tender, fervent love. As he looks back on all God's goodness to him, David bursts out into the expression of his grateful affection; and then heaps, one upon another, endearing epithets, setting Jehovah forth as his defence in battle, his deliverance in persecution, his refuge in trouble.

2. We may understand these epithets as so many vocatives. David invokes God three times, as “Jehovah,” “Jehovah,” “my God,” and at each mention of the Divine Name, he goes on to declare, with increased fulness, all that He has been to him.

“My strength, in Whom I will trust.” More properly, as in the margin, “my rock” (Deut. xxxii. 4, 37.). The word translated “rock” in the beginning of the verse means properly a cleft in the rock, and gives the idea of a safe hiding place; the second “rock” is a hard mass, and expresses immutability and impregnable strength.

“My buckler, and the horn of my salvation.” That is, the weapons of defence and offence. The “horn,” which is an ancient figure of strength and victorious power (Deut. xxxiii. 17.), is here applied to the Lord, as coming forward in His servant's defence, and saving him.

The figures are taken from the experience of David's life, when he found refuge from Saul amid the rocks and crags of Palestine: he seems to say that it was not so much the mountains that protected him as God.

3. “I will call.” Some prefer, “I call;” i. e. it is my wont to call on the Lord, and He delivers me. The proof that his calling on God brings deliverance forms the subject-matter of the rest of the Psalm.

PSALMS, XVIII.

- 4 ¶ ^aThe sorrows of death compassed me, d Ps. 116. 3.
 and the floods of ²ungodly men made me afraid. ² Heb. *Belial*.
- 5 The ³sorrows of hell compassed me about : ³ Or, *cords*.
 the snares of death prevented me.
- 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
 and cried unto my God :
 he heard my voice out of his temple,
 and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.
- 7 ^eThen the earth shook and trembled ; e Acts 4. 31.
 the foundations also of the hills moved
 and were shaken, because he was wroth.
- 8 There went up a smoke ⁴out of his nostrils,
 and fire out of his mouth devoured : ⁴ Heb. *by his*.
 coals were kindled by it.

4, 5. These verses set forth the greatness of his peril. He gathers together in one description the whole period when he was subject to Saul's persecution.

"The sorrows of death." In the next verse, where the same word occurs for "sorrows," the margin rightly suggests "cords." Death is represented as a hunter, with a cord and net (comp. Ps. xci. 3.). The English Version follows the Greek, which has "pains," "throes." In 2 Sam. xxii. 5 the word corresponding to "sorrows" is "waves."

"The floods of ungodliness." Lit. "floods of Belial," which means "worthlessness, villany." Under one figure death seems to throw his net over David, and there is no escape ; under another his wicked enemies come pouring round him like a flood.

5. "Hell." Hades, the place of departed spirits.

"Prevented me." Got beforehand with me, took me by surprise (Ps. xvii. 13.).

6. "I called . . . cried." The present tense would perhaps better express the peculiar vividness of the original.

"Out of His temple," i. e. out of His palace in heaven, as in xi. 4.

7. Here follows a grand description of God's interposition on behalf of His servant. He is represented as coming down with storm and thunder to deliver him. It is not unlikely that David has in his mind some special disturbances of nature which he had witnessed, and which he here idealizes. As at the passage of the Red Sea (Ps. lxxvii. 14—20.), and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16. Ps. lxxviii. 7, 8.), so here, when God descends to deliver His servant, nature is moved. See also Amos ix. 5. Micah i. 3, 4. Hab. iii.

"The foundations of the hills." That is, the bases of the mountains; as the pillars on which they rest. In 2 Sam. xxii. 8, "the foundations of heaven," i. e. the mountains (comp. Job xxvi. 11.). They shake and tremble ; the first impulse being given, they continue to shake of themselves.

8. The wrath of God is represented as fire, sending forth smoke and flame, consuming by the intensity of its heat whatever it lays hold of. It is especially the lightning that is compared to the blazing up of burning coal.

- f Ps. 144. 5. 9 ^f He bowed the heavens also, and came down :
and darkness *was* under his feet.
- g Ps. 93. 1. 10 ^g And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly :
h Ps. 104. 3. yea, ^h he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his secret place ;
i Ps. 97. 2. ⁱ his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters
and thick clouds of the skies.
- k Ps. 97. 3. 12 ^k At the brightness *that was* before him his thick
clouds passed,
hail *stones* and coals of fire.
- 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens,
i Ps. 29. 3. and the Highest gave ¹ his voice ;—hail *stones*
and coals of fire.
- m Josh. 10. 10. 14 ^m Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;
Ps. 144. 6. and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
Isai. 30. 30.
- n Ex. 15. 8. 15 ⁿ Then the channels of waters were seen,
Ps. 106. 9. and the foundations of the world were discovered
at thy rebuke, O LORD,
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
- o Ps. 144. 7. 16 ^o He sent from above, he took me,
2 Or, *great*
waters. he drew me out of ² many waters.
- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,

9. Thus breathing forth anger and destruction, God comes down, the clouds sinking beneath Him, and seeming to touch the earth.

“Darkness.” That is, black, low-hanging clouds (see ver. 11.).

10. “He rode upon a cherub.” The cherubim appear to bear the living and moving throne of God (see Ezek. x. 1.). And this cherub-throne floats upon the wings of the wind (Ps. civ. 3.).

11. “Darkness.” Expanded into “dark waters, thick clouds of the “skies.” In Job xxxvi. 29 the thunder-clouds are called God’s “tabernacle ;” the same word is here rendered “pavilion ;” in the midst of them He sits unseen.

12. The glory of the Lord breaks through and disperses the clouds, and the hail and the thunder and the lightning burst forth.

“Coals of fire.” That is, flashing and kindling lightning.

14. “Them.” That is, David’s enemies. The Lord hurls his lightnings upon them, as arrows.

14. “Discomfited.” See Exod. xiv. 24, where the same word, rendered “troubled,” is used of the discomfiture of the Egyptians.

15. At the same time the fierce tempest, which is as it were the breath of His anger, lays bare the beds of the rivers and rends the earth to its very centre ; so that he who was nearly engulfed in the abyss (see ver. 6.) is rescued.

16. “He drew me.” The word only occurs elsewhere in Exod. ii. 10. As Moses was taken up out of the river, so God stretched forth His hand from heaven, and drew David out of the engulfing waters.

PSALMS, XVIII.

and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

- 18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.
- 19 ^p He brought me forth also into a large place; ^p Ps. 31. 8. & 118. 5.
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 ¶ ^a The LORD rewarded me according to my ^q 1 Sam. 24. 19.
righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 22 For all his judgments *were* before me,
and I did not put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright ² before him, ² Heb. *with*.
and I kept myself from mine iniquity.
- 24 ^r Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me ac- ^r 1 Sam. 26. 23.
cording to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands ³ in his ³ Heb. *before his eyes*.
eyesight.
- 25 ^s With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself ^s 1 Kin. 8. 32.
merciful;

17. "For" gives the reason for the Divine interposition. Our helplessness without God is a most prevailing plea on which to rest our entreaties (see St. Matt. viii. 25; xiv. 30. St. Mark ix. 22. 2 Cor. xii. 9.).

18. "They prevented me." They (mine enemies) came upon me, and cut off all means of safety; but the Lord was my staff (Ps. xxiii. 4.).

19. "A large place." A place of freedom, in contrast to the narrow abyss in which he had lain (comp. Ps. xxxi. 8.).

"Because He delighted in me." These words mark the transition from the account of God's deliverance to the reason of that deliverance, on which the Psalmist enlarges in what follows.

20—24. David does not claim the Divine protection as a right; he only declares with the simplicity of truth, that his heart and will were on the side of God; he had not wickedly departed from his God. Though he may have fallen into sin through weakness, he had never abandoned God's service; and he appeals to Him to testify to his sincerity. He does but say what St. Paul says (Acts xxiii. 1. 1 Cor. iv. 4.). See 1 Kings xiv. 8; xv. 5. 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, 24.

22. He had God's commandments always before him as his rule of conduct; he did not put them away, in order that he might be able to sin with less compunction.

23. "From mine iniquity." A tacit acknowledgment of indwelling sin, against which nevertheless he struggled. Comp. Heb. xii. 1: "The sin which doth so easily beset."

25. "Thou wilt shew thyself." It is not merely that men's concep-

with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;

- 26 with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure ;
and ^t with the froward thou wilt ² shew thyself froward.
- 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people ;
but wilt bring down ^u high looks.
- 28 ^x For thou wilt light my ³ candle :
the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness,
- 29 For by thee I have ⁴ run through a troop ;
and by my God have I leaped over a wall.
- 30 *As for* God, ^y his way is perfect :—^z the word of the LORD is ⁵ tried :
he is a buckler ^a to all those that trust in him.
- 31 ¶ ^b For who is God save the LORD ?—or who is a rock save our God ?

^t Lev. 26. 23,
24, 27, 28.
Prov. 3. 34.

² Or, *wrestle*.

^u Ps. 101. 5.
Prov. 6. 17.

^x Job 18. 6.

³ Or, *lamp*,
Job 23. 3.

⁴ Or, *broken*.

^y Deut. 32. 4.
Dan. 4. 37.
Rev. 15. 3.

^z Ps. 12. 6.
& 119. 140.
Prov. 30. 5.

⁵ Or, *refined*.

^a Ps. 17. 7.

^b Deut. 32. 31,
31.

1 Sam. 2. 2.
Ps. 86. 3.
Isai. 45. 5.

tion of God corresponds with their own characters, but God actually deals with men according to their behaviour towards Him (1 Sam. ii. 30 ; xv. 23.). The kindly affectionate man He treats with confiding love ; with the upright (the man of undivided devotion) He deals uprightly ; to him who is purifying himself (1 St. John iii. 3.) He exhibits "an unclouded charity;" him that is wilfully perverse He gives up to his perverseness (Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. Ps. lxxxi. 12. Rom. i. 28.).

"Froward . . . froward." Two different words ; the first might be rendered "wilful," the second "perverse."

27. In like manner those who are bowed down by affliction He stoops to succour ; the proud and haughty He humbles.

28. "My candle." Rather, as in margin, "lamp." The lamp, lighted up and burning, is an image of life and prosperity (Job xviii. 6 ; xxix. 3.) ; its extinction is an image of misfortune. David's life and dominion, as the covenant king, is the lamp which God's favour had lighted for the well-being of Israel, and His power would not suffer this lamp to be quenched (2 Sam. xxi. 17.). The darkness which breaks in upon David and his house is always lighted up again by Jehovah (see 1 Kings xi. 36 ; xv. 4. 2 Kings viii. 19.).

29. "I have run through a troop." The word translated "troop" is used three times in 1 Sam. xxx. 8, 15, of the army of the Amalekites who burned Ziklag ; it has been suggested that David has his victory over them especially in his mind in this place ; while in the last clause he may allude to his getting possession of the fortress of Zion (2 Sam. v. 6—9.). With God's help he can overcome all enemies, and triumph over all obstacles (comp. Phil. iv. 13. 2 Cor. ii. 14.).

30. "His way is perfect." See marg. *reff.*

"Is tried," and has stood the test : margin, "is refined ;" it is not rough ore, but pure gold. Whoever takes refuge in God's promise is shielded from all harm.

PSALMS, XVIII.

- 32 *It is* God that ° girdeth me with strength,
and maketh my way perfect. c Ps. 91. 2.
- 33 † He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
and ° setteth me upon my high places. d 2 Sam. 2. 13.
Hab. 3. 19.
- 34 † He teacheth my hands to war,
so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. e Deut. 32. 13.
& 33. 29.
f Ps. 144. 1.
- 35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy
salvation :
and thy right hand hath holden me up,
and ² thy gentleness hath made me great. 2 Or, with thy
meekness
thou hast
multiplied
me.
- 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
³ that ³ my feet did not slip. g Prov. 4. 12.
h Heb. mine
ancles.
- 37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken
them :
neither did I turn again till they were consumed.

32. "Maketh my way perfect." Like his own way (see ver. 30. Comp. St. Matt. v. 48.). "Guides me along the perfect way" (*Keble*).

33. See marg. reff. Swiftmess in attack and pursuit was much accounted of in ancient warfare.

"My high places." Those commanding positions, which would secure possession of the whole land, and from whence he could rule far and wide (see marg. reff. and Isa. xxxvii. 24 ; lviii. 14.).

34. "So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms." Rather, "so that mine arms can bend a bow of brass" or bronze, as a proof of strength.

35. "Yet it is not the brazen bow that makes David victorious, but the helpful strength of God" (comp. 2 Cor. x. 3—5.).

"Thy gentleness." Lit. "Thy lowliness," Thy condescension, in that Thou hast stooped to make me great. The great God Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth (Ps. cxiii. 6.), had chosen the shepherd boy to be king over His people (Ps. lxxviii. 70, 71.), and had given him a wide dominion. We may apply the words to the Incarnation, when "the Lord Jesus Christ" humbled Himself to become Man, that man might be exalted (comp. 2 Cor. viii. 9.).

36. "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me." Thou hast given me room for freedom of motion, removing all obstacles out of my way, and steeling my ancles (marg.), so that they stand firm in fight.

37. Though the whole of this passage is a retrospect, the scene is described in the original as actually present.

"I speed me where my foes have fled,

"And win the race, by Thee.

"I turn not, till their might is o'er,

"I dash them on the ground,

"And there they lie, to rise no more,

"Beneath me there lie bound" (*Keble*).

See Exod. xv. 9. 1 Sam. xxx. 8.

As David is a type of Christ, so his enemies are the enemies of Christ and His Church. In Christ's kingdom there is perpetual warfare ; but

PSALMS, XVIII.

- 38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise :
they are fallen under my feet.
- 39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle :
thou hast ²subdued under me those that rose up against me.
- 40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies ;
that I might destroy them that hate me.
- 41 They cried, but *there was* none to save *them* :
^b *even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
- 42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind :
I did ⁱcast them out as the dirt in the streets.
- 43 ^kThou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ;
and ^lthou hast made me the head of the heathen :
^m a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.
- 44 ³As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me :

if we look away from our own weakness to His strengthening might, it is always victorious warfare.

40. "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies." Rather, as in Exod. xxiii. 27, where the same expression occurs, "Thou madest "mine enemies turn their backs before me."

41. "They cried." At first they pray to their own false gods ; then to the Lord : but neither prayer avails, because their cause is not His cause, the cause of truth and uprightness. On the other hand, the mariners in Jonah's time called first upon their own gods and then upon the Lord ; and they were heard (Jonah i. 5, 14.). Ignorance alone, if it be not associated with sin, does not shut out men's prayers from God.

42. "Cast them out." Contemptuously, as one throws out dirt.

43. "The strivings of the people." In 2 Sam. xxii. 44, "my people," which shews that David is here speaking of conflicts among his own people ; of which we have a conspicuous example in 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

"Thou hast made me." In 2 Sam. xxii. 44: "Thou hast kept me "to be head of the heathen." God had preserved David from domestic troubles in order to establish him, according to His promise, as Head of the nations. The words look beyond David to Him to Whom the nations were given as an inheritance (Ps. ii. 8.). See also Ps. xxii. 27. Isa. lv. 5.

44. "As soon as they hear of me." Lit. as in margin, "At the "hearing of the ear." The mere report of his victories brought them to submission. See, for an example of this, 2 Sam. viii. 9.

PSALMS, XVIII.

- ² the strangers ⁿ shall ^{3 4} submit themselves unto ² Heb. *the sons of the stranger.*
me.
- 45 ^o The strangers shall fade away,
and be afraid out of their close places. ⁿ Deut. 33, 29.
Ps. 66. 3.
& 81. 15.
- 46 ¶ The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock;
and let the God of my salvation be exalted. ³ Or, *yield feigned obedience.*
- 47 *It is* God that ⁵ avengeth me,
^p and ⁶ subdueth the people under me. ⁴ Heb. *lie.*
^o Mic. 7. 17.
- 48 He delivereth me from mine enemies:
yea, ^q thou liftest me up above those that rise up ⁵ Heb. *giveth avengements for me.*
against me: ^p Ps. 47. 3.
- thou hast delivered me from the ⁷ violent man. ⁶ Or, *destroyeth.*
- 49 ^r Therefore will I ⁸ give thanks unto thee, O ^q Ps. 59. 1.
LORD, among the heathen,
and sing praises unto thy name. ⁷ Heb. *man of violence.*
- 50 ^s Great deliverance giveth he to his king;
and sheweth mercy to his anointed,
to David, and to his seed ^t for evermore. ^r Rom. 15. 9.
⁸ Or, *confess.*
- ^s Ps. 144. 10.
^t 2 Sam. 7. 13.

“Shall submit themselves.” Better, “submit themselves.” The first meaning of the word is “to lie, feign” (see marg.); it is here used of the cringing servile homage of a forced obedience (see reff.).

45. “Be afraid out of their close places.” Lit. “tremble,” come tremblingly, out of the strongholds where they have hid themselves (see Micah vii. 17.).

46. The Psalm closes with a renewed expression of praise and thanksgiving for all God’s mighty deeds.

47. David would not avenge himself, but left it to God to take vengeance for him (see 1 Sam. xxiv. 12. 2 Sam.) iv. 9, 10.).

49. David declares that he will not confine his praise of the Lord within the limits of Israel; he will proclaim His Name among the heathen nations whom he had conquered. And as his victories over these nations opened the way for the knowledge of the true God among them, they were in truth a proof of God’s mercy to the heathen. Fitly therefore does St. Paul (Rom. xv. 9.) adduce this passage (together with Deut. xxxii. 43. Ps. cxvii. 1.) as foreshewing God’s purpose of mercy to the Gentiles.

50. The only passage where David names himself. There is plainly a reference here to the promise made to David in 2 Sam. vii. 12—16; that promise looked beyond the house of David to the kingdom of Christ (St. Luke i. 32, 33.), in Whom alone the throne of David has any lasting continuance, and to Whom therefore the promises made to the seed of David belong in truth and reality.

PSALMS, XIX.

PSALM XIX.

1 *The creatures shew God's glory.* 7 *The word his grace.* 12 *David prayeth for grace.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

^a Gen. 1. 6.
Isai. 40. 22.
Rom. 1. 13,
20.

² Or, *without these their voice is heard.*

³ Heb. *without their voice heard.*

^b Rom. 10. 18.

⁴ Or, *Their rule, or, direction.*

1 **T**HE ^a heavens declare the glory of God ;
and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech,
and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 *There is* no speech nor language,
^{2 3} *where* their voice is not heard.

4 ^{b 4} Their line is gone out through all the earth,

PSALM XIX.

Praise to God for the manifestation of His glory in the heavens and in the law.

As the eighth Psalm was called forth by the aspect of the heavens at night, so here we have the Psalmist's burst of praise in contemplating the glorious dawn. His heart bounds within him as he considers how all creation, and especially the sun in its majestic course, tell out to the whole world the greatness of the Creator ; and then he bethinks him how to himself and His own people God had vouchsafed another, clearer and closer, witness of Himself in His revealed will. God's voice in nature, speaking to man through his outward senses, is grand and elevating and soul-inspiring : His voice in the Law speaks more directly to man's inner being, awakens and instructs his conscience, comforts, strengthens, and purifies his heart.

1. The two clauses of this verse run into one another ; the heavens (that is, the outstretched vault on high) declare that they are the work of the mighty God, and thereby proclaim His glory (Rom. i. 20.).

2. "Uttereth." Lit. "pours forth," as from an unfailing fountain. The testimony of day and night to the glory of God never ceases ; each succeeding day takes up the witness of its predecessor. The testimony of a single day, or of a single night, might suffice to manifest God's wondrous power, but the unbroken succession of day and night speaks with irresistible force.

"Knowledge." That which may be known of God, as in Rom. i. 19.

3. The word "*where*," which is in italics, does not occur in the Hebrew, and should be left out. The meaning is, that the discourse of the heavens by day and night is silent and speechless, heard not by the outward but the inward ear.

"No sound, no converse ; all unheard

"The solemn voice they send" (*Keble*).

If "where" is retained, the meaning is, that amid the variety of languages upon the earth, the preaching of the heavens is everywhere understood. What the sun and moon tell us of God can be understood by people of every tongue.

4. "*Their line*." The measuring line of the heavens (Jer. xxxi. 39.) ; it is said to have gone forth through the whole earth, that is, to have

PSALMS, XIX.

and their words to the end of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
5 which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,

^c *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ^c Eccles. 1. 5.

6 His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven,
and his circuit unto the ends of it :
and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. ^d Ps. 111. 7.

7 ¶ ^d The ² law of the LORD *is* perfect, ³ converting ² Or, *doctrine.*
the soul : ³ Or, *restoring.*

taken entire possession of the earth ; their proclamation of the Divine glory is not limited to one region, but reaches as far as the earth itself. St. Paul applies to the preaching of the Gospel what is here said of the preaching of the heavens, namely, that it is co-extensive with the whole earth. Some translate "chord," "note;" and so St. Paul has "their sound," from the Greek Version. Others again take it, "their writing," as in Isa. xxviii. 10, "line upon line." In the English Geneva Bible the marginal note in explanation is, "The heavens are as a line of great capital letters, to shew unto us God's glory." And so Calvin : "The glory of God is not written in obscure letters, but richly engraven in large and bright characters, which all men may read, and read with the greatest ease."

"In them." That is, in the heavens. The heavens are the abode, the royal pavilion, of the sun (Hab. iii. 11.).

5. The morning sun is compared to a bridegroom, the desire of whose heart is satisfied, who stands as it were at the beginning of a new life. As at its rising it is like a bridegroom, so in its rapid course it is like a strong man, inasmuch as it marches boldly on its way, light-giving and triumphant (comp. Judg. v. 31.).

6. From one end of heaven, the extreme east, is its going forth, its rising ; and its circuit is unto the other end. In the prophet Malachi (iv. 2.) Christ is called "the Sun of righteousness:" hence ancient writers commonly apply the words of this Psalm to Him ; especially they speak of the Word made flesh as coming forth from the Virgin's womb as from a bridal-chamber, and henceforth halting not in His course. It is probably on account of the ancient interpretation of this verse, that the Psalm is appointed for use on Christmas Day. Christ's life-giving, cheering grace is for all the world, according to the angelic song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men" (St. Luke ii. 14.).

7. From the teaching of God's works in nature, the Psalmist passes to the teaching of His Word. The outward light in the heavens, which cheers men's bodies, not unnaturally suggests to him the inward light of Revelation, by which He instructs their souls. The teaching of the one is addressed to all mankind, of the other especially to the Jews. Hence, while in the first part of the Psalm only the name "God" occurs, in the second part David speaks of Him by His covenant name "Jehovah." The word of nature declares *God* to us ; the word of Scripture declares *Jehovah* ; the one, God's creative might and majesty ; the other, His counsel and will.

PSALMS, XIX.

the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise
the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the
heart :

^e Ps. 12. 6.

^f Ps. 13. 3.

^e the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, ^fen-
lightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever :
the judgments of the LORD *are* ²true and
righteous altogether.

² Heb. *truth*.

The difference of style in the latter portion marks the increased emotion which the subject awakens: the heart of the poet beats with redoubled joy, as he comes to speak of God's Word, the Revelation of His will.

7—9. In these three verses twelve glories of the Law are mentioned, every two being related to each other as cause and effect. The two members of each verse are parallel to one another; first we have a simple epithet of the Law, declaring its character, then a statement of its effects on the hearts of men. In the ninth verse, though the parallelism remains, the second part of the sentence dwells, like the first, on the nature of the Law itself, rather than on its effects.

The first commendation of the Law is, that it is "**perfect**," complete and unerring as a guide to men in the way in which they should go (St. James i. 25.); and as such it "converts" or restores the soul; it brings back the man who follows it from the paths of sin to holiness and peace.

"**The testimony**." The name most frequently used in the Pentateuch for the Decalogue (Exod. xxv. 16, 21, 22; xxxi. 18, &c.). It signifies something "strongly affirmed," lit. "something spoken again and again." The Law was so called as being the testimony or witness of God against man's tendency to sin (Deut. xxxi. 26, 27.).

"**Sure**." That is, faithful, raised above all doubt, entirely to be depended on; and therefore "**making wise the simple**," i. e. the open-hearted, willing to be taught. The witness of God's Word is so clear, that the teachable cannot go astray (comp. Isa. xxxv. 8. 2 Tim. iii. 15.).

8. "**The statutes**." Precepts intrusted to, or deposited with, men as a charge; they are "**right**," i. e. straight, leading men on in the straight path; and therefore "**rejoicing the heart**," filling those who obey them with a joyful consciousness that they are in the right way to the right goal.

"**The commandment of the Lord is pure**," clear, bright, like the light of the sun (Cant. vi. 10.); and therefore it enlightens the eyes; teaches the understanding; refreshes and elevates the whole man (see Prov. vi. 23. Ps. cxix. 105. Ezra ix. 8. Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. i. 18.).

9. "**The fear of the Lord**." Not the feeling of fear itself, but the precept of the Law which enjoins it, the teaching which inculcates the fear of God, His revealed religion (Deut. xvii. 19. Ps. xxxiv. 11.). It is "**clean**," pure from all mixture with error, like pure gold (Ps. xii. 6.); and as such endures for ever, containing the treasure of everlasting happiness (comp. Ps. cxii. 1, 6.).

"**The judgments of the Lord**." His decisions, all that He has laid

PSALMS, XIX.

- 10 More to be desired *are they* than gold, ^g yea, ^g Ps. 119. 72.
 than much fine gold: ^{127.} Prov.
^h sweeter also than honey and ² the honeycomb. ^{8. 10, 11, 19.}
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: ^h Ps. 119. 103.
and ¹ in keeping of them *there is* great reward. ² Heb. *the*
dropping of
honeycombs.
ⁱ Prov. 29. 15.
- 12 ¶ ^k Who can understand *his* errors? ^k Ps. 40. 12.
^l cleanse thou me from ^m secret faults. ^l Lev. 4. 2, &c.
^m Ps. 90. 8.
- 13 ⁿ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous ⁿ Gen. 20. 6.
 sins; ¹ Sam. 25. 32.
^o let them not have dominion over me: ^{33, 34, 39.}
 then shall I be upright, ^o Ps. 119. 133.
 and I shall be innocent from ³ the great trans- ³ Or, *much.*
 gression. ^{14.}
- 14 ^p Let the words of my mouth, ^p Ps. 51. 15.

down as right. These are true and righteous altogether, one and all, without exception, based on a foundation of perfect truth and justice.

10. Not merely is the reward of obedience desirable, but the act of obedience is delightful and sweet beyond all thought (see marg. reff.).

11. David's own experience bears witness to the blessedness of obedience. As God's Law instructed him, so obedience to it brought an abundant recompense.

12. "Who can understand his errors?" The order of the words in the original is, "as for errors, who can understand them?" David had no sooner spoken of himself in the preceding verse as keeping God's commandments, than he bethought him how imperfect his obedience was; his sins of ignorance and infirmity he could not estimate. For the Law of God is "not only a copy of the Divine will, but a mirror of "self-knowledge:" a man cannot really look into it without perceiving his imperfection. Therefore David prays that God will cleanse him, pronounce him innocent, hold him guiltless from secret faults—from those sins which were hidden not only from others, but from himself.

13. The prayer for justification and pardon is followed by a prayer for sanctification.

"From presumptuous sins." Lit. "wilful, insolent;" sins which cast a man out of a state of grace (see Num. xv. 30, 31.). Such sins, persisted in, lead to habits of sin which enslave the soul. Observe the climax:—involuntary, secret sins; presumptuous, wilful sins; habitual sins, the tyrants of the soul.

"Then." That is, if Thou preserve me from wilful sin, I shall be innocent from "great transgression," such transgression as shall cut me off from God.

14. We may take these words as if David said, "I beseech Thee, "O Lord, not only to keep me from acts of wilful transgression, but also "to enable me to frame my tongue and heart in obedience to Thy Law;" or we may refer them to the prayer of the preceding verse, "Let my "prayer, in which both heart and mouth accord, be acceptable in Thy "presence."

PSALMS, XX.

² Heb.
my rock,
Ps. 18. 1.

^q Isai. 43. 14.
& 44. 6.
& 47. 4.

¹ Thes. 1. 10.

and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in
thy sight,
O LORD, ² my strength, and my ^a redeemer.

PSALM XX.

1 The church blesseth the king in his exploits. 7 Her confidence in God's succour.

^a Prov. 18. 10.

² Heb. set
thee on an
high place.

³ Heb.
thy help.

^b 1 Kin. 6. 16.
² Chr. 20. 8.
Ps. 73. 17.

⁴ Heb. sup-
port thee.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 **T**HE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble ;
^a the name of the God of Jacob ² defend thee ;
2 send ³ thee help from ^b the sanctuary,
and ⁴ strengthen thee out of Zion ;
3 remember all thy offerings,

“Be acceptable.” The expression commonly used in the Law of God’s acceptance of sacrifices offered to Him, as in Exod. xxviii. 38. Lev. i. 4.

There is peculiar force and beauty in the Psalm closing with a three-fold calling upon God. The Lord is not only David’s rock (see margin), his stay and support in all peril, but His Redeemer (Gen. xlviii. 16.), Who alone could deliver him from guilt.

PSALM XX.

Prayer for the king going forth to battle.

This and the following Psalm manifestly form a pair, the one being the intercession of the nation for the king on the eve of a great enterprise, the other its thanksgiving. They were intended for liturgical use, being sung alternately by the congregation and the priest.

In vv. 1—5 the people pray for the success of the king, in full assurance of victory. Then, in vv. 6—8, the priest takes up the strain, declaring that their faith has triumphed. And the Psalm closes with the renewed prayer of the people.

It may be that this Psalm was written at the time when the Ammonites and Syrians were in arms against David (2 Sam. x. 6.); and Psalm xxi. may be the thanksgiving for the final conquest of Ammon (2 Sam. xii. 26—31.).

1. The scene is in the sanctuary : the king is offering sacrifices, and the people pray that they may be accepted.

“The day of trouble.” This might apply doubtless to other occasions, but it is very appropriate to the Syro-Ammonitish war, which was one of the most severe of David’s wars.

“The Name of the God of Jacob.” That manifestation of His grace and power which caused Him to be especially called “the God of Jacob” (Ps. xlv. 7 ; lxxv. 9 ; lxxvi. 6 ; lxxx. 1, 4.). May He Who, as Jacob’s history shews, hears and answers in the day of distress, hear thee ! (Gen. xxxv. 3.)

“Defend thee.” Lit. as in margin, “set thee on an high place,” bear thee aloft above thy foes unto a place of safety.

2. The people pray that from the sanctuary on Mount Zion, where the sacrifices and prayers were being offered, help might go forth to fight the king’s battles.

3. “Thy offerings.” The word here used is generally rendered

PSALMS, XX.

- and ² accept thy burnt sacrifice ; Selah.
- 4 ^c Grant thee according to thine own heart,
and fulfil all thy counsel.
- 5 We will ^d rejoice in thy salvation,
and ^e in the name of our God we will set up *our*
banners :
the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.
- 6 ¶ Now know I that the LORD saveth ^fhis anointed;
he will hear him ³from his holy heaven
⁴with the saving strength of his right hand.
- 7 ^gSome *trust* in chariots, and some in horses :
^hbut we will remember the name of the LORD
our God.

² Heb. *turn to ashes* : or, *make fat*.
c Ps. 21. 2.

^d Ps. 9. 14.

^e Ex. 17. 15.
Ps. 60. 4.

^f Ps. 2. 2.

³ Heb. *from the heaven of his holiness*.

⁴ Heb. *by the strength of the salvation of his right hand*.

^g Ps. 33. 16, 17.
Prov. 21. 31.
Isai. 31. 1.

^h 2 Chr. 32. 8.

“meat-offering” (see Lev. ii. 1, *note*) : “meal-offering” would be a more correct translation ; it consisted of fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense. A small portion was burnt on the altar “for a memorial,” and the remainder given to the priests (Lev. ii. 2, 9, 16.). The word “re-member” is therefore peculiarly applicable to this kind of sacrifice.

“Accept.” Lit. “make fat ;” may He regard thy burnt-offering as fat ; may it be to Him an odour of a sweet smell.

“Selah.” The music is intensified, to mark that the offering of this prayer by the congregation is simultaneous with the royal sacrifices.

4. “All thy counsel.” That is, all his plans and schemes for the present war.

5. “In thy salvation.” That is, “in thy safety,” in the success which God would vouchsafe to the king. Or it may mean, “in the salvation achieved by thee.” We see from 1 Sam. x. 27 how much the Israelites looked to the king as their deliverer.

“Set up our banners.” Rather, “wave,” in token of joy. The Prayer Book rendering “triumph” comes from the Greek Version.

6. “Now” marks the turning-point. The change too from the plural to the singular marks the division between the words of the people and those of the priest. “After a lengthened pause a voice “is heard, conveying the cheering assurance that the sacrifice has been “accepted.”

“Saveth.” Lit. “hath saved ;” is sure to save. In the certainty of faith, he declares that the prayer is heard and the victory already gained.

“From His holy heaven.” The prayer (ver. 2.) had been, that God would send help out of Zion ; now it is looked for from heaven. The help out of Zion is the help of Him Who dwelleth in heaven. His throne on earth is the vestibule, as it were, of His throne in heaven.

7. “Trust.” There is no corresponding word in the Hebrew. The verb must be supplied from the latter clause : “some remember, make mention of, horses ; some of chariots.” The military strength of the Syrians, the allies of the Ammonites, consisted largely of chariots and horses (2 Sam. x. 18.).

PSALMS, XXI.

8 They are brought down and fallen :
but we are risen, and stand upright.

9 ¶ Save, LORD :—let the king hear us when we
call.

PSALM XXI.

1 *A thanksgiving for victory. 7 Confidence of further success.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 **T**HE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD ;
and ^a in thy salvation how greatly shall he
rejoice !

8. "They are brought down." As above, in ver. 6, the past tense is used in the full assurance of faith. It is "a song of triumph before the victory." The enemies of Israel might at the present moment be in the ascendant, but the writer sees the condition of things reversed; those who are standing are brought down, the prostrate are raised up.

9. The Psalm is closed, as it was opened, by the prayer of the whole congregation.

"The king," i. e. God, their true King (Deut. xxxiii. 5. Ps. xlviii. 2.); as in the Prayer Book Version, "O King of heaven." But the Greek and some other Versions render the verse thus: "O Lord, save the king; may He hear us in the day we call," where, however, the change of persons is very abrupt.

As the cause and kingdom of David, struggling through suffering to complete victory, are always a figure of the Church of Christ, we may understand this Psalm as a prayer for the triumphal progress of the Church. May the sacrifice of our King and His continual intercession be heard! And we may be sure that they will prevail; in spite of drawbacks and apparent failures, the cause of the Church will prosper in the world.

Or we may apply the Psalm to the case of the individual Christian, going forth as Christ's soldier to combat with temptations and dangers. We may pray for such an one; and we may be confident that if he pray for himself and trust in God, he will prevail. The prayers of his people were doubtless a source of strength to David: so the faithful, praying Christian may comfort himself with the thought that his prayers are not alone; they are accompanied and supported by the intercessions of his brethren.

PSALM XXI.

Thanksgiving for the king, when the battle is over.

As in the last Psalm the people interceded in behalf of their king, so here they give thanks for the blessings bestowed on him. In the one Psalm they pray, "The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart;" in the other they say joyfully, "Thou hast given him his heart's desire."

If the Psalm is to be connected, like the last, with the conquest of the Ammonites, we may find in vv. 3 and 9 a remarkable allusion to 2 Sam. xii. 30, 31.

PSALMS, XXI.

2. ^b Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
and hast not withholden the request of his lips.
Selah. ^b Ps. 20. 4, 5.
- 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of
goodness :
thou ^c settest a crown of pure gold on his head. ^c 2 Sam. 12. 30.
1 Chr. 20. 2.
- 4 ^d He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him,
^e *even* length of days for ever and ever. ^d Ps. 61. 5, 6.
^e 2 Sam. 7. 19.
Ps. 91. 16.
- 5 His glory *is* great in thy salvation :
honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. ² Heb. *set*
him to be
blessings,
Gen. 12. 2.
- 6 For thou hast ² made him most blessed for ever : Ps. 72. 17.

This is one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension Day, and may be understood as celebrating, under a figure, the glory of our Blessed Lord, and the great love of the Father in hearing His prayer and raising Him from the Cross and grave to His own right hand in heaven.

1. The first seven verses are an address of the people to Almighty God, acknowledging and rejoicing in His goodness to the king.

"Thy strength . . . Thy salvation." That is, "the strength and succour which Thou hast afforded him." If David rejoiced in the deliverances vouchsafed to him and the victories he was permitted to achieve, what was the joy of the great Son of David in the conquest of Satan and the salvation of His people! His heart's desire was to fulfil the will of God for the salvation of mankind: when that desire was accomplished, and He could say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (St. John xvii. 4.), then He rejoiced, returning again to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

3. "Thou preventest him." That is, "givest him gifts before he asketh Thee," or "beyond his request."

"Blessings of goodness." Rather, "of good," of prosperity (Prov. xxiv. 25.); the abundance of all good things.

"A crown of pure gold." There may be a reference here to the crown of the king of Ammon, which was very remarkable both for weight (about a hundred pounds) and beauty (being set with precious stones), and which was set on David's head (2 Sam. xii. 30. 1 Chron. xx. 2.). Comp. Ps. viii. 5 (also an Ascension-Day Psalm), "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour." See also Heb. ii. 9.

4. Again and again in times of danger David had prayed for life, and latterly, in consequence of his great sin, he had especially deserved death, according to his own sentence (2 Sam. xii. 5.), but God had preserved him and established him on the throne, with the prospect of a long life for himself and the hope of transmitting his kingdom to his posterity (2 Sam. vii. 13, 16.). So was Christ raised from humiliation, ignominy, and death, to the height of glory in heaven: "I am "He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18.).

5. "In Thy salvation." That is, "through Thy saving health."

6. "Most blessed." Lit. as in margin, "blessings," that is, blessed himself and a channel of blessing to others (comp. Gen. xii. 2.).

- ^f Ps. 16. 11.
& 45. 7.
Acts 2. 28.
- ² Heb. *glad-
ded him
with joy.*
- ^e Ps. 16. 8.
- ^h 1 Sam. 31. 3.
- ⁱ Mal. 4. 1.
- ^k Ps. 56. 1, 2.
- ^l Ps. 18. 8.
Isai. 26. 11.
- ^m 1 Kin. 13.
34. Job 18.
16, 17, 19.
Ps. 37. 28.
& 109. 13.
Isai. 14. 20.
- ⁿ Ps. 2. 1.
- ^o Or, *thou
shalt set
them as a
butt*: See
Job 7. 20.
& 16. 12.
Lam. 3. 12.
- ^p Heb.
shoulder.
- ^f thou hast ² made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.
- 7 For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he ^g shall not be moved.
- 8 ¶ Thine hand shall ^h find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
- 9 ⁱ Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall ^k swallow them up in his wrath, ^l and the fire shall devour them.
- 10 ^m Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against thee: they ⁿ imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able to perform.
- 12 Therefore ^o shalt thou make them turn their ^p back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine* arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

“With Thy countenance,” i.e. in close and intimate fellowship with thee (Ps. xvi. 11.).

7. This verse gives the reason why such blessing and honour should be vouchsafed to the king, viz. because he trusted in the Lord.

8. Here the people, or, it may be, as in the preceding Psalm, a single priest or Levite, turn and address the king. As the first part of the Psalm may be understood as a hymn of praise to God the Father for the exaltation of Christ, so the latter part may be taken as addressed to the exalted Saviour Himself, commemorating His triumph over His enemies.

9. “In the time of thine anger.” Lit. “of thy countenance,” in the time of Thy presence, when Thou appearest. In other places the countenance of the Lord is spoken of as bringing destruction to His enemies (Ps. xxxiv. 16. Lev. xx. 6. Lam. iv. 16.); here a like effect is ascribed to the personal appearing of the king. There may be a special reference to the fall of Rabbah, for we know that it was after the arrival of David that vengeance was taken on its inhabitants, some of whom seem to have been burnt alive (2 Sam. xii. 31.).

10. “Their fruit.” That is, their offspring (Lam. ii. 20. Hos. ix. 16.).

11. “For they intended evil.” The punishment which fell on them was but the deserved vengeance for their mischievous designs.

“They imagined,” &c. Rather, “they imagined a mischievous device; they achieve nothing.”

PSALMS, XXII.

13 ¶ Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength :
so will we sing and praise thy power.

PSALM XXII.

1 *David complaineth in great discouragement. 9 He prayeth in great distress. 23 He praiseth God.*

To the chief Musician upon ² Aijeleth Shahar,
A Psalm of David.

² Or, *the hind of the morning.*

1 **M**Y ^a God, my God, why hast thou forsaken
me? ^a Matt. 27. 46.
Mark 15. 34.

13. The Psalm ends, like the preceding, with a cry from the whole congregation to the Lord. They turn from the king, and pray that the Lord's power and glory, through Whom alone the king has been victorious, may be manifested throughout the world, and in anticipation of this exaltation they promise a joyous gratitude.

PSALM XXII.

The prayer of the servant of God in deepest anguish, rising into thanksgiving for deliverance and joy in the blessings which his sufferings would bring to all the world.

Whatever may have been the circumstances which drew forth from David the complaint of this Psalm, it is plain that he sees in himself a type of the One Who was to come, Who would sink to a depth of affliction far below his own experience, but would also rise to a height of glory far exceeding anything which he could venture to anticipate for himself. The sufferings and exaltation of the Messiah are brought so vividly to the Psalmist's mind by the Divine Spirit, that he is conscious that his language, both of complaint and of thanksgiving, is really fulfilled only in the future Christ.

The Psalm divides itself into two parts: the first (vv. 1—21.), beginning with a cry of disconsolate anguish, ends in earnest prayer; in the second (vv. 22—31.), the prayer is heard, and the sufferer breaks forth into praise, and declares his confident belief that the deliverance which he had experienced would redound to God's glory throughout the world.

By adopting the first words of this Psalm when hanging upon the Cross, our Lord seems to appropriate, so far as is possible, the whole to Himself. The desolate condition of the sufferer, the taunting words and scornful gestures of those who witness his sufferings, the parting of his garments, the spreading out of the limbs of his naked body, the torturing pain in hands and feet, and the burning thirst,—have their exact counterpart in the history of the crucifixion; while the application of one of the later verses of the Psalm (ver. 22.) to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 11.) shews that the joy and thanksgiving belong to Him as well as the complaint.

“Upon Aijeleth Shahar,” i. e. “Upon the hind of the dawn” (see marg.). This may simply have reference to the first words of some song, to the tune of which the Psalm was to be sung (as in Pss. ix.; xlvi.; lvi.; lvii.; lx.). But many see in it a reference to the subject of the Psalm.

^z Heb.
from my
salvation.
^b Heb. 5. 7.

Why art thou so far ² from helping me, and from
^b the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou
hearest not ;

³ Heb. there
is no silence
to me.

and in the night season, and ³ am not silent.

3 But thou art holy,

^c Deut. 10. 21.

O thou that inhabitest the ^c praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee :

they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

The hind is the emblem of persecuted innocence, while the dawn betokens light and deliverance. The combination describes the sufferings and triumph which are the subject of the Psalm.

1. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" There is no impatience or despair in this cry, only a strong yearning for the deliverance which has been delayed. Though God seems to have forgotten him, the sufferer retains his hold upon Him as *his* God. He does not believe that God has really turned away from him, though the anguish of continued suspense is almost beyond endurance. It was under the pressure of this mingled feeling of suffering unrelieved and of faith and love unwavering, that our Blessed Lord took these words on His lips. The latter clause of the verse explains how it was that God had forsaken him, namely, by being far from helping him: he cried unceasingly, but there was no response. Several words of this clause are not in the original; it might be rendered, "far from my salvation" (see marg.), "are the words of my roaring," meaning that there was a great gulf between God's help and his cry for help. Or "my salvation" may mean God Himself (Ps. xxxv. 3.). God, his preserver, was far from his prayer; He heard it not.

2. "Am not silent." Rather, as in margin, "there is no silence to me;" that is, his complaint does not cease, because it is not heard: if an answer came, he could be silent. The prayer of anguish in Gethsemane was probably only the climax of the prayers of many preceding nights and days (see St. Luke xxi. 37. Heb. v. 7.).

3. "But Thou art holy." The sufferer refuses any explanation of God's silence, which would seem in any way to dishonour Him. Though He declined to interpose in His servant's behalf, He was absolutely and perfectly holy: there must be some wise and good and merciful purpose in the delay.

"Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." Rather, "dwest among, art enthroned upon." Elsewhere (Ps. xcix. 1; lxxx. 1. 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2.) God is spoken of as "dwelling between the cherubim." Here the songs of praise, in which His people extol His deeds of deliverance, are said to be like the wings of the cherubim over which His presence hovered.

4, 5. God had justified the faith of those of old by delivering them. The stress is laid upon their trust; three times it is said "they trusted;" only once that "they cried." They did not trust without prayer; but it was their trust that gave efficacy to their prayer. David in like manner trusted and prayed;—indeed his professed trust was turned to his reproach (ver. 8.); but no answer came.

PSALMS, XXII.

- 5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered :
^d they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. d Ps. 25. 2, 3. & 31. 1. & 71. 1. Is. 49. 23. Rom. 9. 33.
- 6 But I *am* ^e a worm, and no man ;
^f a reproach of men, and despised of the people. e Job 25. 6. Isai. 41. 14.
- 7 ^g All they that see me laugh me to scorn :
 they ^h shoot out the lip, ⁱ they shake the head,
saying, g Matt. 27. 39. Mark 15. 20. Luke 23. 35.
- 8 ⁱ ^h He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver
 him : h Job 16. 4. Ps. 103. 25. i Matt. 27. 43.
- ^k let him deliver him, ^l seeing he delighted in
 him. k Heb. He rolled himself on the LORD. l Ps. 91. 14.
- 9 ^m But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb :
 thou ⁿ didst make me hope *when I was* upon my
 mother's breasts. m Or, if he delight in him.

¹ Ps. 71. 6. ⁵ Or, *keptest me in safety.*

6. "I am a worm, and no man." Christ humbled Himself to become "a son of man, which is a worm" (Job xxv. 6).

"A reproach of men, and despised of the people." See Isa. lii. 14: "His visage was so marred more than any man." Lit. "So marred" as not to be like a man" (xlix. 7; l. 6; liii. 3).

7. "Laugh me to scorn." The word used by the Greek translators here is employed by St. Luke in his history of the Passion (St. Luke xxiii. 35.). The actual fact could not be more fitly expressed than by the words of the prophecy.

"They shoot out the lip." Lit. "they open with the lip:" comp. Lam. ii. 15, 16, where contemptuous shaking of the head is also mentioned. Job xvi. 10. Ps. xxxv. 21.

How little did those who passed by the Cross imagine that their very gestures had been recorded in prophecy hundreds of years before (St. Matt. xxvii. 39.).

8. "He trusted on the Lord." Lit. "Roll upon the Lord;" i. e. commit (it or thyself) unto the Lord, let Him deliver him. The sufferer had probably often spoken of casting his burden upon the Lord: his enemies bid him do so now (Ps. xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3).

"They part the lip, they shake the head ;

"Now lean on God, and let Him save ;

"The man He loves is sore bestead ;

"Tis time to win him from the grave" (*Kelle*).

9. "But." Lit. "For." The connection seems to be "Yes, it is true that I put my trust in Thee; for Thou art He that took me out of the womb." His enemies might mock at his trust, but he knew all that God had been to him, and he would trust Him nevertheless.

"That took me out of the womb." It might appear at first sight remarkable, that so much prominence should be given to that which is common to all; but as Calvin says, "If ingratitude had not blinded our eyes, we should be filled with amazement at any birth, and at the preservation of tender infants, exposed as they are to death in a hundred forms" (comp. Isa. xlix. 1—5.).

"My mother's breasts." It has been noticed that throughout the

PSALMS, XXII.

- 10 I was cast upon thee from the womb :
^m thou *art* my God from my mother's belly.
^m Isai. 46. 3. & 49. 1.
- 11 Be not far from me ; for trouble *is* near ;
 for *there is* ² none to help.
- 12 ⁿ Many bulls have compassed me :
 strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.
ⁿ Deut. 32. 14. Ps. 68. 30. Ezek. 39. 18. Amos 4. 1.
- 13 ^o They ³ gaped upon me *with* their mouths,
 as a ravening and a roaring lion.
^o Job 16. 10. Ps. 35. 21. Lam. 2. 16. & 3. 46.
- 14 I am poured out like water,
^p and all my bones are ⁴ out of joint :
^q my heart is like wax ;
 it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
³ Heb. *opened their mouths against me.*
^p Dan. 5. 6.
^q Or, *sundered.*
- 15 ^r My strength is dried up like a potsherd ;
 and ^s my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ;
 and thou hast brought me into the dust of
 death.
^r Prov. 17. 22.
^s Job 23. 10. Lam. 4. 4. John 19. 28.
- 16 For ^t dogs have compassed me :
 the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me :
^t Rev. 22. 15.

Old Testament, there is never any mention made of a human father, or begetter, of the Messiah, but always only of His mother, or her who bare Him.

11. Having strengthened his faith by the remembrance not only of what God had done for others, but of His relation to himself, he at length utters the prayer which has been all along deep in his heart, "Be not far from me" (with reference to ver. 1.); do not any longer seem to forsake me or leave me alone.

"Trouble is near." There are enemies on every side ; they possess the outer circle of the sufferer's being ; therefore he prays that the Lord would be present with him in the inner region of his heart, where His nearness is to be known, to support and strengthen him.

12. "Bulls." So he speaks of his fierce relentless persecutors. The pastures of Bashan were very rich, and the animals fed there were among the strongest and fattest (see marg. ref.).

13. Comp. Lam. ii. 16 ; iii. 46. The figure is changed : the enemies are compared to a lion, which, as soon as it sights its prey, begins to roar (Amos iii. 4.).

14. Meanwhile the sufferer is in a condition of utter weakness. The picture of the crucifixion is vividly set before us—the body in the very act of dissolution, the bones disjointed, like one stretched on the rack ; the nerves unstrung, the strength dried up (Ps. xxxii. 4.), while from intense thirst the tongue cleaves to the jaws.

15. "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." He feels that he is in the sure way to death and the grave ; and it is God Himself Who has laid him low. So the death and sufferings of the servant of God are set forth in Isa. liii. as not only permitted, but decreed, and therefore happening in accordance with the Divine will.

16. "Dogs." In comparing his enemies to dogs, the Psalmist seems to refer specially to their propensity to bite and worry.

PSALMS, XXII.

- ^u they pierced my hands and my feet.
 17 I may tell all my bones :
^x they look *and* stare upon me.
 18 ^y They part my garments among them,
 and cast lots upon my vesture.
 19 But ^z be not thou far from me, O LORD :
 O my strength, haste thee to help me.
 20 Deliver my soul from the sword ;
^a ² my darling ³ from the power of the ^b dog.
 21 ^c Save me from the lion's mouth :
^d for thou hast heard me from the horns of the
 unicorns.

^u Matt. 27. 35.
 Mark 15. 24.
 Luke 23. 33.
 John 19. 23,
 37. & 20. 25.
^x Luke 23. 27,
 35.
^y Luke 23. 34.
 John 19. 23,
 24.
^z ver. 11.
 Ps. 10. 1.
^a Ps. 35. 17.
² Heb. *my*
only one.
³ Heb. *from*
the hand.
^b ver. 16.
^c 2 Tim. 4. 17.
^d Isai. 34. 7.
 Acts 4. 27.

“They pierced.” The word so rendered is now found only in two MSS.; but it was the reading apparently of the ancient Versions, and there is other evidence that it was formerly found in MSS. of good authority. On the whole therefore it is most likely to be correct. The reading of the great majority of MSS. now extant is slightly different, and may be translated “as a lion,” as in Isa. xxxviii. 13, in which case the meaning is “they beset me, lion-like, about my hands and feet,” that is, so that he cannot stir hand or foot. Or, by a change of vowels, while retaining the letters as they now stand in the MSS., we may render the word by a participle, “piercing.” The word translated “wounded” in Isa. liii. 5 properly means “pierced” (comp. also Zech. xii. 10.). Others again render “they bound”—a rendering which would not destroy the typical character of the passage, the ordinary custom in crucifixion being to fasten the extremities to the cross by ropes.

17. “I may tell all my bones.” His body is so strained and distorted, that the bones stand out prominently (Job xxxiii. 21.); and in this condition he is a gazing-stock and mockery to his foes; they look and stare upon him (see St. Luke xxiii. 35. St. Matt. xxvii. 36.).

18. See St. John xix. 23, 24.

19. Once more he takes up his former prayer (vv. 1, 11.). He was entirely in the hands of his enemies, weak, helpless, and suffering. But from the persecuting crowd around him he turns to God, and fixes his eyes on Him.

20. “My darling.” That is, as we see from the parallel clause here and from Ps. xxxv. 17, “my soul.” The word means “an only one” (see margin); here and in Judg. xi. 34, it is feminine, “an only daughter:” in Gen. xxii. 2, it is “an only son.” The Psalmist speaks of his soul as his “only one;” he has no second to love; it cannot be replaced, and therefore it is proportionately dear and precious.

21. “The horns of the unicorns.” Rather, “of the wild oxen.” Though no wild oxen are now found in Palestine, it is not unlikely that they formerly existed there; lions were undoubtedly once met with, but they have disappeared.

“Dog . . . lion . . . unicorns.” The Psalmist had before (vv. 12, 13, 16.) spoken of his enemies under these figures; now he prays to be delivered from them. With this prayer, comp. St. Matt. xxvi. 39. St. John xii. 27. Heb. v. 7. Calvin says, “Should any one ask, How can

PSALMS, XXII.

- ^e Ps. 40. 9. 22 ¶ ^e I will declare thy name unto ^f my brethren :
 Heb. 2. 12. in the midst of the congregation will I praise
^f John 20. 17. thee.
 Rom. 8. 29.
- ^g Ps. 135. 19, 23 ^g Ye that fear the LORD, praise him ;
 20. all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him ;
 and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
- 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the
 affliction of the afflicted ;
 neither hath he hid his face from him ;
 but ^h when he cried unto him, he heard.
- ^h Heb. 5. 7.
ⁱ Ps. 35. 18.
 & 40. 9, 10.
 & 111. 1. 25 ⁱ My praise *shall be* of thee in the great con-
^k Ps. 66. 13.
 & 116. 14. gregation :
 Eccles. 5. 4. ^k I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

“this apply to Christ, seeing that the Father did not deliver Him from death, I answer in one word, that He was more mightily delivered than if the danger had been averted ; just as much more so, as to raise from the dead is a mightier act, than to heal from sickness. Wherefore the death of Christ did not prevent His resurrection from testifying that “He was delivered.” On the lion as a figure of earthly and spiritual enemies, see 2 Tim. iv. 17. 1 St. Pet. v. 8.

Observe the change in the middle of this verse from prayer to thanksgiving : one moment the sufferer prays, “Save me from the lion’s mouth ;” the next he exclaims, “Thou hast answered me.” It almost seems as if the Psalmist began the clause with the intention of saying, “From the horns of the unicorns do Thou answer me ;” but as he wrote, the prospect of deliverance burst so brightly upon him, that he was led to speak of it as an accomplished fact. Even while he was yet sending up his cry from amid the horns of the oxen, while his enemies closed him in on every side, he was heard and answered ; his unshaken trust in God was justified ; his experience was not different from that of the fathers to whom he had referred ; and the rest of the Psalm is praise of God’s faithfulness and truth.

22. The suffering Messiah is heard here, contemplating with thanksgiving the results of His suffering. He will extol throughout the Church the greatness of His salvation. This verse is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 11, 12.) as shewing forth the human brotherhood of Christ ; He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

23, 24. In these two verses we have the very words of the thanksgiving. Though God seemed for a time to turn a deaf ear to His prayer, He was really all along looking upon His affliction, and when all was finished, He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory.

25. “My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation.” Rather, “From with Thee cometh my praise ;” comp. Ps. cxviii. 23, where the literal rendering is, “from with the Lord doth this occur.” God is not only his deliverer, but the inspirer of his thanksgiving.

“My vows.” That is, the thank-offerings which he vowed in his extreme peril. Such offerings ended in a sacrificial feast (Deut. xii. 18.), to which the poor and meek would be invited, and of which they would partake with joy.

PSALMS, XXII.

- 26 ¹The meek shall eat and be satisfied :
 they shall praise the LORD that seek him :
 your heart ^m shall live for ever.
- 27 ⁿ All the ends of the world shall remember and
 turn unto the LORD :
^o and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship
 before thee.
- 28 ^p For the kingdom *is* the LORD's :
 and he *is* the governor among the nations.
- 29 ^q All *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and
 worship :
^r all they that go down to the dust shall bow
 before him :
 and none can keep alive his own soul.

¹ Lev. 7. 11,
 12, 15, 16.
 Ps. 69. 32.
 Isai. 65. 13.
^m John 6. 51.

ⁿ Ps. 2. 8.
 & 72. 11. &
 86. 9. & 98. 3.
 Isai. 49. 6.
^o Ps. 96. 7.

^p Ps. 47. 8.
 Obad. 21.
 Zech. 14. 9.
 Matt. 6. 13.
^q Ps. 45. 12.

^r Isai. 26. 19.
 Phil. 2. 10.

26. "Your heart shall live for ever." Or rather, "May your heart live or rejoice for ever." The clause is the prayer of the sacrificer, that the feast may impart lasting refreshment to all who partake of it.

The words look far beyond any material feast. The salvation which Christ accomplished by His sufferings is continually set forth as a feast, at which the poor in spirit are the most honoured guests. And so we may understand here a reference to the Holy Eucharist, whereby Christ imparts to us the fruits of His passion, satisfies the hunger of the soul, and is to us the food of immortality. The last clause is His welcome to those who draw near to His blessed feast: "May your souls live for ever" (St. John vi. 51, 54—56.).

27. "All the ends of the earth." The sufferer expects the conversion of the heathen as the result of his sufferings and deliverance. The heathen nations of the world, having been alienated from the true God, will remember themselves and return (Jer. xvi. 19.). The knowledge of Christ and of His saving work spread with great rapidity, and Gentiles from all parts of the earth were brought into the Church; but the full accomplishment of the prophecy is yet to come (Rev. xi. 15.).

29. "Shall eat and worship." Rather, "have eaten and worshipped." As before (ver. 26.), it is a spiritual feast that is spoken of, a feast which satisfies the soul, to which men of all classes, both rich and poor, are invited.

"All they that be fat upon earth." That is, the rich and great. Instead of delighting merely in their temporal goods, they will sit down, as humble, adoring guests, at Christ's table.

"All they that go down to the dust," i. e. of death, those who are already almost dead from care and want. These also, as well as the great and prosperous, will fall down before Christ, in thankful acknowledgment of His mercy in inviting them to His feast.

"And none can keep alive his own soul." Rather, "he who cannot keep alive his own soul," who by reason of his poverty can scarcely support life. Or the verse may be explained thus: "All, from the richest downwards, alike sinking into dust, alike unable to save their souls, crowd to the banquet given by Him Who had risen from the dust of death" (ver. 15.). *Kay.* Comp. Isa. xxv. 6.

PSALMS, XXIII.

- 30 A seed shall serve him ;
s Ps. 87. 6. ^s it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.
- ^t Ps. 78. 6. & 86. 9. & 102. 18. Isai. 60. 3. See Rom. 3. 21, 22. 31 ^t They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

PSALM XXIII.

David's confidence in God's grace.

A Psalm of David.

^a Isai. 40. 11. Jer. 23. 4. Ezek. 34. 11, 12, 23. John 10. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 25. Rev. 7. 17. ^b Phil. 4. 19.

1 **T**HE LORD is ^a my shepherd ;—^b I shall not want.

30. "A seed," i.e. a never-failing posterity. The blessings purchased by Christ's death and Resurrection shall be not only universal, but unceasing.

"It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Rather, "it shall be told concerning the Lord to the generation (to come) ;" it shall be spoken of as the Lord's doing ; the story of the Lord shall be handed on through successive generations (Ps. cii. 21.).

31. "They shall come." That is, come into being (Ps. lxxi. 18.).

"His righteousness," i.e. His faithfulness in rescuing His suffering servant.

"That He hath done this." The Hebrew is simply, "that He hath done" (as in Ps. lii. 9. Isa. xlv. 23.); the indefiniteness expresses the completeness of the work. What He designed and took in hand He has accomplished (St. John xix. 30.). As He led David safely through great adversity to the throne, so He brought Christ by means of His death and passion to the glory of the Resurrection, making the cross a ladder leading to heaven.

As in the first part of the Psalm we see the depth and intensity of the trial of Christ's trust in God, and His victory over the trial, seeing that in utter weakness and in the midst of enemies He still held fast His faith, so in the latter part we see the results of that trial and that victory, in that He thereby reveals God to us as a loving Father, and draws all men unto Him.

PSALM XXIII.

The Lord is my Shepherd.

This Psalm may be ascribed, with almost equal probability, to the early or the later part of David's life. We may think of him as a shepherd boy, singing these words as he watched his flock. As he knew that he loved his sheep and led them into pleasant pastures and by running streams ; as he brought them back when they wandered and guided them through danger, and they felt sure of his love and protection ; as at night he folded them carefully and they rested in peace, so he rejoices in the thought that he too had a Shepherd, Who loved and cared for him, and was to him even more than the most tender earthly shepherd could be to his flock. He had no want, no fear : his

PSALMS, XXIII.

- 2 ° He maketh me to lie down in ² green pastures : ^c Ezek. 34. 14.
^d he leadeth me beside the ³ still waters. ² Heb.
³ He restoreth my soul : ^{pastures of tender grass.}

^d Rev. 7. 17. ³ Heb. *waters of quietness.*

watchful Guardian would not suffer him to stray; He would recall, strengthen, and comfort him; He would be with him in the hour of death, and at length bring him in safety to Himself.

Or it may be that David is here recounting his life-long experience of God's goodness. Under all the varying circumstances of his life, the good Lord had kept watch over him; He had brought him back when wandering, so that even in the valley of the shadow of death he would trust and not be afraid: the lovingkindness which had ever loaded him with blessings, and had made even times of special danger to be times of abundance and joy, would cause him to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

We have in this Psalm the song of the Christian pilgrim, looking up to God in loving confidence, notwithstanding the perils and weariness of the way. He is not only perfectly safe, but supremely happy and joyful in the hands of the Good Shepherd.

1. "The Lord is my shepherd." Jacob uses the same image, when he says, "The God which fed me (properly, 'fed me like a shepherd') "all my life long" (Gen. xlviii. 15.). Later writers speak of a visible coming of the Divine Shepherd (Isa. xl. 10, 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.). And so the way was prepared for Christ's application of the title to Himself, "I am the Good Shepherd." It has often been observed, that to appreciate the full force of this image, we must remember the loneliness, hardships, and perils of a shepherd's life in Palestine. David knew from his own experience the tender attachment of the shepherd to the dumb and helpless creatures that were his only companions; and he knew also their trust in his sympathy and protection.

"I shall not want." See Deut. ii. 7; viii. 9. Ps. xxxiv. 10. He who has the Lord, the possessor of all things, can want nothing.

2. "He maketh me to lie down." Specially at noon-tide (see Cant. i. 7. Jer. l. 6.).

"Green pastures." Specially some rich and verdant spot in the midst of the desert.

"Leadeth." The idea is of gentle leading, expressed in Isa. xl. 11.

"Still waters." Lit. "water of resting-places," well-watered, quiet spots. The green meadows near the water serve another purpose beside that of pasturage; they form a pleasant place of repose when the heat is at its height.

So Christ offers rest and refreshment to all who are weary and heavy-laden. Let the world be ever so barren and unsatisfying, let the fire of temptation be ever so overwhelming, He has the inward consolations of His Spirit, the promises and encouragements of His Word, the blessed gift of His own Presence in Holy Communion, with which He refreshes the weary soul, and permits it to enjoy, even in the wilderness, a foretaste of the perfect rest and peace of heaven. The prominence here given to rest as the first of the blessings which the shepherd provides for his sheep points to the severity of the journey of life, and man's constant need of refreshment by the way.

3. "He restoreth my soul." That is, revives (Ps. xix. 7.), brings

PSALMS, XXIII.

e Ps. 5. 8.
& 31. 3.
Prov. 8. 20.
f Job 3. 5.
& 10. 21, 22.
& 24. 17.
Ps. 44. 19.
g Ps. 3. 6. &
27.1. & 118 6.
h Isai. 43. 2.
i Ps. 104. 15.

- he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of ^fthe shadow of death,
^gI will fear no evil: ^hfor thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 ⁱThou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

back to itself, imparts to it again the life and strength which had been impaired by contact with the world. The language of figure is dropped for a while.

"Paths of righteousness." Which are also paths of happiness and peace. Blessedness is a sure fruit of righteousness (Ps. xxiv. 5.).

"For His Name's sake," i. e. "not for any merit of mine, but that His Name may be glorified for this proof of His faithfulness."

4. The Lord is not only his refreshment in weariness, but his safety in danger.

"The valley of the shadow of death." A valley dark and gloomy as death. In the first instance, the reference is probably to some natural valley. The wilderness begins only a few miles to the east of Bethlehem (*Kay*), and David may have had in his mind some dark ravine, the haunt, as he knew from experience, of the lion and the bear. It was not that the dreary region had no terrors for him, but that the thought of God's presence enabled him to overcome them. The expression "the shadow of death" is used by Jeremiah (ii. 6.) of the desert through which the Israelites were led; of Hades by Job (x. 21, 22; xxxviii. 17.).

"Thy rod and Thy staff." That is, the shepherd's rod (the second word being only an explanation of the first), sometimes held up to guide the flock, sometimes planted on the ground for the shepherd to lean on, sometimes wielded as a staff to drive off enemies. As the sight of the shepherd's rod assures the sheep, so David calms his fears, when he thinks of God's watchful, guiding, protecting presence.

5. The figure is changed. The food with which the shepherd nourishes his sheep, does not satisfy the Psalmist's conception of the richness and abundance of God's provision for His people. He is therefore no longer a shepherd, but a bountiful host, satisfying His beloved with His dainties, and cherishing him as a favoured guest in His own house. He anoints him with sweet perfumes, as at a joyous and magnificent banquet, and fills his cup to running over (see Ps. xcii. 10; xlv. 7. Eccles. ix. 8. St. Luke vii. 46.).

"In the presence of mine enemies." His enemies can but look on quietly, and see the table spread; they cannot hinder or spoil the feast. If this Psalm belongs to David's early life, we must understand him as looking forward to persecution, but confident nevertheless that God would bless him abundantly, and that his whole life would be spent in close communion with Him. The goodness and mercy which would follow him all the days of his life would make every place a house of God to him. If on the other hand the Psalm was written at the close of his life, there may be here a special remembrance of the time when,

PSALMS, XXIV.

thou ² k anointest my head with oil; my cup ² Heb. *makest fat.*
runneth over. ^k Ps. 92. 10.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD ³ for ³ Heb. *to length of*
ever. ^{days.}

PSALM XXIV.

1 *God's lordship in the world.* 3 *The citizens of his spiritual kingdom.*
7 *An exhortation to receive him.*

A Psalm of David.

^a Ex. 9. 23.
& 19. 5.
Deut. 10. 14.
Job 41. 11.
Ps. 50. 12.
1 Cor. 10. 26,
28.

1 **T**HE ^a earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness
thereof;

wearied and weak-handed in his flight from Absalom, and his people hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, his wants were liberally supplied by Barzillai (2 Sam. xvii. 27—29.); and he may be understood as comforting himself with the thought that God's goodness would attend him even more constantly than his enemies, and he would be restored to the worship of God in His sanctuary, from which for the time he had been cut off.

But doubtless they are spiritual blessings, which David chiefly speaks of, under the figure of the feast. God vouchsafed him the richest consolations in this life and the hope of more abiding blessedness in His heavenly sanctuary.

As in the Gospel Christ sets Himself before us, not only as the Good Shepherd, Who gives His life for the sheep, but as the Good Shepherd Who knows His sheep and is known of them, so here He graciously encourages each one of His sheep to claim Him as their Shepherd. Each one may look up to Him and say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." In His hands he is safe; in Him and with Him he has all things. Amid the sorrows and weariness of life He offers him rest; when He sees him straying, forgetting Him and deaf to His voice, He seeks him and brings him back, and leads him once more in the narrow path of holiness and peace. When trouble or danger assails, He is still at his side, to uphold him in the hour of temptation and in the agony of death. Yea, he has in Him not only protection, strength, and guidance, but fulness of joy. Communion with Him in prayer and in His holy Word, and in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood is a perpetual feast. Not only is he safe from his foes, but in spite of all their efforts, they see that he has an abundance of consolation and a brightness of joy, which they cannot touch. The Christian's experience of unfailing mercy and goodness in the past encourages him to believe that they will follow him to the end, when, all enemies shut out, he will be gathered into the Good Shepherd's fold in heaven, and dwell there for ever (Rev. vii. 16, 17.).

PSALM XXIV.

The King of Glory entering Zion.

It was a great and glorious day for David, the greatest perhaps in his life, when he brought up the Ark of God from Kirjath-jearim, where it

PSALMS, XXIV.

- the world, and they that dwell therein.
- ^b Gen. 1. 9. 2 ^b For he hath founded it upon the seas,
 Job 38. 6. and established it upon the floods.
 Ps. 104. 5.
 & 136. 6.
 2 Pet. 3. 5. 3 ^c Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?
 c Ps. 15. 1. or who shall stand in his holy place?
- ^d Is. 33. 15, 16. 4 ^d ² He that hath ^e clean hands, and ^f a pure
 2 Heb. heart;
The clean
of hands. who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
 e Job 17. 9. nor ^g sworn deceitfully.
 1 Tim. 2. 8.
 f Matt. 5. 8. 5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,
 g Ps. 15. 4. and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
-

had been neglected for nearly fifty years, and placed it with great pomp in the new Tabernacle which he had prepared for it on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12—19.). This twenty-fourth Psalm is one of several Psalms composed especially for the services of that day; but it transcends the occasion for which it was written, and celebrates the Ascension of our Lord, and is therefore appropriately chosen as one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension Day. It consists of two parts; the first part, sung most probably by the vast assembly as they began to ascend the hill, sets forth the character of those who may venture to draw near to the sanctuary of God; and the second, which belongs to the time when the procession had reached the top of the hill, calls on the gates of Zion to open to receive the great Lord of the whole earth.

There is an addition to the inscription in the Greek Version, "For the first day of the week," and we learn from the Talmud that this Psalm was chanted in the Temple every Sunday.

1. The Psalm opens with an acknowledgment of the greatness and majesty of Him Who was on that day taking possession of an earthly dwelling-place. The more glorious He is, the greater His condescension in choosing Zion.

"The fulness thereof." That is, everything that is to be found therein.

2. The earth belongs to the Lord, for it is He Who caused it to emerge from the midst of the waters (Gen. i. 9, 10. Ps. cxxxvi. 6.), and keeps it in its place, so that it is not overwhelmed by the water beneath it and around (Prov. viii. 29. Jer. v. 22.).

3. This great Owner and Sustainer of the universe has chosen the hill of Zion for His special dwelling-place. Who shall venture to ascend where He dwells? of what sort must the worshipper be who can stand in His presence, and with whose worship He will be pleased?

4. The question in ver. 3 is answered. The clean of hands and pure of heart, whose actions are innocent, and whose thought and inward principles are pure; who has not in any way allowed his desires to go after what is vain and evil, nor taken a false oath for the purpose of deceiving another (comp. Ps. xv. 1, &c. Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16.).

"Hath not lifted up his soul," i. e. hath not longed after, set his desires upon (Ps. xxv. 1. Deut. xxiv. 15. Hos. iv. 8.).

5. The answer to the question in ver. 3 is continued. The man who is worthy to worship God in His sanctuary is one on whom God's bless-

PSALMS, XXIV.

6 This *is* the generation of them that seek him,
that ^hseek thy face, ²O Jacob. Selah.

7 ¶ ⁱLift up your heads, O ye gates ;
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ;
^kand the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who *is* this King of glory?—The LORD strong
and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors ;
and the King of glory shall come in.

^h Ps. 27. 8.
& 105. 4.

² Or, O God
of Jacob.

ⁱ Isai. 26. 2.

^k Ps. 97. 6.

Hag. 2. 7.

Mal. 3. 1.

1 Cor. 2. 8.

ing rests, and to whom He imparts of His own righteousness; he hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and God bestows it.

6. "The generation." Not those who are living at the same time, but who are of like disposition (Ps. xiv. 5; lxxiii. 15; cxii. 2.).

"That seek thy face, O Jacob." "Jacob" should not be taken as a vocative, but in apposition with what went before: "such is the character of those that seek the face of God; they are the true Jacob" (Ps. lxxiii. 1.); others may approach outwardly, but they are not Israelites indeed.

"The seekers of Thy glorious face,
"Thy chosen Israel" (*Keble*).

Jacob is used collectively, as in Num. xxiii. 10, 23. Deut. xxxii. 9. Ps. xlv. 4; xlvii. 4.

The margin of our Bibles, following the Greek Version, suggests that the word "O God" has been lost, and translates "O God of Jacob."

"Selah." Here the singing may be supposed to cease for a time, and the musical instruments alone are heard, until the procession has reached the gates of the citadel.

7. The choir of priests, standing before the gates, demand admission for the Ark of God. The gates of Zion are to lift up their heads, that is, expand and enlarge themselves, that their height may be worthy to receive the King of glory.

"Ye everlasting doors." Lit. "doors of old;" like "ruins of old" in Isa. lviii. 12, where the same word occurs (comp. Gen. xlix. 26.).

"The King of glory." That is, the Ark of God, "upon which is called the Name, the Name of the Lord of hosts, Who sits upon the cherubim" (2 Sam. vi. 2.).

8. The question comes from the warders of the gates of Zion: "Who is this King of glory?" And the answer is given, "It is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," the God by Whom Israel had now wrested Zion from the Jebusites, and by Whom he had always been victorious in times past.

9. The summons to the gates of Zion is repeated, and once more the question, "Who is this King of glory?" is asked and answered; only the second time He is not merely the Conqueror in earthly battles, but the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of heaven.

The magnificent procession which accompanied the Ark to its new abode was an image of the glory of Christ's Ascension: and the exulting

PSALMS, XXV.

10 Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory.
Selah.

PSALM XXV.

1 *David's confidence in prayer. 7 He prayeth for remission of sins, 16 and for help in affliction.*

A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 86. 4.
& 143. 8.
Iam. 3. 41.

^b Ps. 22. 5. &
31. 1. & 34. 8.
Isai. 23. 16.
& 49. 23.
Rom. 10. 11.

^c Ps. 13. 4.

1 UNTO ^a thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I ^b trust in thee :

let me not be ashamed,

^c let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed :

song of David and his attendants, as they wound up the steep and reached the height of Zion and called on the ancient gates to open, was an echo of the song of the Angels who waited on Christ, and who called on the gates of heaven to be removed out of the way, to make a high and glorious entrance for their Lord. The guardians of those golden gates inquire, "Who is the King of glory?" and the attendant Angels cry, "It is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle;" it is the Son of God, returning victorious from His conflict with the prince of evil. And it has been suggested, that the repetition of the summons in the Psalm may put us in mind that our Saviour's Ascension will be repeated. Inasmuch as Christ, ascending the first time, is called "The Lord mighty in battle," and Christ, ascending the second time, is "The Lord of hosts," this points to the circumstance that in His first Ascension, after His victory over His enemies, He went up to heaven, as far as men could see, alone, but when He returns again, He will be attended by all the angelic host.

PSALM XXV.

A prayer for protection, pardon, and guidance.

The second of the Alphabetical Psalms, taking the ninth and tenth, which are connected in their alphabetical arrangements, as one. The order of the Hebrew letters is not however perfectly observed. There is a curious likeness between this Psalm and Ps. xxxiv. (also an alphabetical Psalm); in both the sixth letter (*Vau*) is omitted, and a verse is added at the end, after the alphabet has been completed.

The steadfast trust in God in the midst of much trouble, the deep sense of sin, and the earnest desire for pardon and for guidance which breathe through this Psalm, confirm the inscription which ascribes it to David. It belongs probably to the latter part of his life.

1. "Do I lift up." In the sense of desiring and longing after, as in Ps. xxiv. 4.

2. See Ps. xxxi. 1, 14. The persuasion, on which this prayer is founded, that his trust in God will not be disappointed, is expressed as a general truth in the next verse.

3. This verse should not be rendered as a prayer: it asserts a truth.

"Nay, none are sham'd who Thee adore,

"And wait Thy sure relief" (*Keble*).

"Wait on Thee." See Ps. xxxiv. 22. Isa. xlix. 23. Comp. Rom.

PSALMS, XXV.

let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>4 ^d Shew me thy ways, O LORD ;
teach me thy paths.</p> <p>5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me :
for thou <i>art</i> the God of my salvation ;
on thee do I wait all the day.</p> <p>6 Remember, O LORD, ^e thy tender mercies and
thy lovingkindnesses ;
for they <i>have been</i> ever of old.</p> <p>7 Remember not ^f the sins of my youth, nor my
transgressions :
^g according to thy mercy remember thou me
for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.</p> <p>8 Good and upright <i>is</i> the LORD :
therefore will he teach sinners in the way.</p> <p>9 The meek will he guide in judgment :
and the meek will he teach his way.</p> | <p>^d Ex. 33. 13.
Ps. 5. 8.
& 27. 11. &
86. 11. & 119.
& 143. 8, 10.</p> <p>^e Ps. 103. 17.
& 106. 1.
& 107. 1.
Isai. 63. 15.
Jer. 33. 11.</p> <p>^f Heb.
<i>thy bowels.</i>
^f Job 13. 26.
& 20. 11.
Jer. 3. 25.</p> <p>^g Ps. 51. 1.</p> |
|---|--|

v. 5, "Hope maketh not ashamed." With those who wait hopefully upon God are contrasted those who act treacherously, whether towards God or man, and that without cause.

4. "Shew me Thy ways." The will of God is revealed to us in His word, but we need His special grace to enable us to understand and to obey it.

5. "Lead me in Thy truth." Make me to walk, let me live, in the full experience of Thy faithfulness (Ps. xxvi. 3 ; lxxxvi. 11 ; cxix. 35.).

6. David founds his prayer on the character of God. He cannot be unlike Himself; mercy and loving-kindness have been His attributes from eternity; He will not withhold them from him who trusts entirely on Him.

7. The mention of God's mercy brings before him at once his need of that mercy; he entreats God therefore not to remember either the faults of his youth, or the more wilful transgressions of his later life; he begs Him to turn His remembrance to him, not according to His anger, which he deserves, but according to His loving-kindness; to think of him, and not of his sins, and to think of him in the light of His mercy.

8. "Sinners." God's great goodness is shewn in His condescension towards sinners. Even those who have erred from His way He will guide and teach.

"The Lord is good and right,

"Else how, with His kind lore imbued,

"Should sinners find the light?" (*Keble.*)

9. "The meek" here are "the sinners" of the preceding verse. We learn therefore what sort of sinners are meant, viz. those who are humbled for their sins and ready to be led, those who no longer resist the leading grace of God.

PSALMS, XXV.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

^h Ps. 31. 3.
& 79. 9.
& 103. 21.
& 143. 11.

11 ^h For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity ;

ⁱ See Rom. 5. 20.

ⁱ for it *is* great.

^k Ps. 37. 23.

12 ¶ What man *is* he that feareth the LORD ?

^l Prov. 19. 23.

^k Him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

² Heb.

shall lodge in goodness.

^m Ps. 37. 11, 22, 29.

13 ¹ His soul ² shall dwell at ease ; and ^m his seed shall inherit the earth.

ⁿ Prov. 3. 32. See John 7. 17. & 15. 15.

14 ⁿ The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him ;

³ Or, *and his covenant to make them know it.*

³ and he will shew them his covenant.

^o Ps. 141. 8.

15 ¶ ^o Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD ;

⁴ Heb.

bring forth.

for he shall ⁴ pluck my feet out of the net.

10. "The paths of the Lord." That is, His ways with men, His dealings. They are loving-kindness, because His one purpose is of grace and mercy; and they are truth, because at every step they shew how faithful He is to His purpose.

11. The mention of those who keep God's covenant suggests to the Psalmist his own shortcomings, and he prays earnestly for pardon, resting his plea on God's manifestation of Himself as merciful and true. The consciousness that his load of sin is very heavy makes him feel that he can appeal only to Him Who has proclaimed His name to be "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6.). See Jer. xiv. 7. Isa. xliii. 25.

12. "What man," &c. That is, wherever there is such an one.

"The way that he shall choose." The pronoun may refer to God: "God will guide him who fears Him in the way in which He takes delight;" or it may refer to the God-fearing man himself: "God will shew him the way that he should choose, and guide him in it" (Ps. cxix. 30, 173.).

13. "Shall dwell." Lit. (as in margin), "lodge," pass the time of its sojourning (Ps. xci. 1.).

"At ease." That is, in outward and inward prosperity.

"The earth." In the first instance, the land of Canaan, which was promised as the lasting possession of those that fear God and of their posterity (Exod. xx. 12.). But the words have also a Christian meaning (St. Matt. v. 5. Rev. v. 10.).

14. "The secret." The word means both "confidential intercourse" (Prov. iii. 32. Job xxix. 4. Ps. lv. 14.), and the result of that intercourse, the "confidential communication," "secret" (Amos iii. 7.). See Gen. xviii. 17. St. John xiv. 29.

"His covenant." The deep and glorious character of His covenant-relation to them.

15. He is ever praying inwardly (1 Thess. v. 17.); and he is confident

PSALMS, XXVI.

- 16 ^p Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me ; ^p Ps. 69. 16.
for I *am* desolate and afflicted. & 86. 16.
- 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged :
O bring thou me out of my distresses.
- 18 ^a Look upon mine affliction and my pain ; ^q 3 Sam. 16. 12.
and forgive all my sins.
- 19 Consider mine enemies ; for they are many ;
and they hate me with ² cruel hatred. ² Heb. *hatred of violence.*
- 20 *O* keep my soul, and deliver me :
^r let me not be ashamed ; for I put my trust in ^r ver. 2.
thee.
- 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ;
for I wait on thee.
- 22 ^s Redeem Israel, *O* God, out of all his troubles. ^s Ps. 130. 8.

PSALM XXVI.

David resorteth unto God in confidence of his integrity.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 **J**UDGE ^a me, *O* LORD ; for I have ^b walked in ^b ver. 11.
mine integrity : ² Kin. 20. 3.
Prov. 20. 7.

that, however complicated the net of outward circumstances in which he may be entangled, God will deliver him. "Just as birds have wings given them, that they may avoid snares, so men have the power of prayer, that they may avoid the temptations of the devil" (*St. Chrys.*).

16. As he ever turns his eyes to God, so he entreats Him to turn to him ; isolated and afflicted on earth, rejected of men, he can only look to God for sympathy.

17. "The troubles of my heart are enlarged." The meaning seems to be, that his troubles have rushed in like a flood of water and overwhelmed him. But there is a difficulty about the translation, and it has been proposed, by a slight change of reading, to render the verse, "My heart is troubles (i. e. nothing but troubles, full of troubles) ; *O* set "it at liberty, and out of my distresses deliver me."

21. "Integrity." Thorough sincerity, as opposed to half-heartedness ; "uprightness," as opposed to all wanderings in by-paths (see Job i. 1.).

22. Though ver. 21 begins with the last letter of the alphabet, another verse is added ; probably, in order to adapt the Psalm to public worship. The change in the name of God favours the supposition. The rest of the Psalm is intensely personal ; they are his own sins and troubles that the Psalmist deploras, and his own trust in God that he professes. Hence few Psalms adapt themselves more readily to the lips of the Christian, conscious of his sin, and struggling to cast himself, with all his hopes and fears, on the mercy and loving-kindness of God.

PSALM XXVI.

The prayer of one unjustly persecuted, to be separated from the ungodly, and allowed to worship in God's house.

The turn of thought in this Psalm is different from that of the pre-

PSALMS, XXVI.

c Ps. 28. 7.
& 31. 14.
Prov. 29. 25.
d Ps. 7. 9. &
17. 3. & 66.
10. & 139. 23.
Zech. 13. 9.
e 2 Kin. 20. 3.

- ° I have trusted also in the LORD ; *therefore*
I shall not slide.
- 2 ^d Examine me, O LORD, and prove me ;
try my reins and my heart.
- 3 For thy lovingkindness *is* before mine eyes :
and ° I have walked in thy truth.

ceding : there David accuses himself, here, on the contrary, he strongly asserts his uprightness. And yet the two Psalms are linked together ; they both open with a declaration of trust in God ; there is the same cry for mercy and deliverance (comp. xxvi. 11 with xxv. 16, 22.). In the one David prays that integrity may preserve him (xxv. 21.), and that God would lead him in His truth (ver. 5.) ; in the other he declares that he had walked in his integrity and in the truth of God (vv. 1, 3.). The two Psalms were therefore probably written at the same time ; they must be read together, as giving when combined the full picture of the Psalmist's mind. The touching confessions of sin contained in Ps. xxv. are not forgotten in Ps. xxvi. ; while the consciousness of sincerity expressed in Ps. xxvi. is present throughout Ps. xxv., though only appearing dimly at the end in the form of a prayer (ver. 21.).

If the two Psalms are thus connected, there is no difficulty in assigning them both to the time of Absalom's revolt. His partisans were hypocrites, who, now that they had agreed together in their rebellion, had thrown off their disguise and were won over by flattery, perhaps by bribery, to their new master (2 Sam. xv. 6.). The longing for God's house which is expressed in this Psalm agrees entirely with what we know of David's state of mind during his banishment (see 2 Sam. xv. 25.). On the supposition that the Psalm belongs to the latter part of David's life, it is instructive to observe, together with the consciousness and acknowledgment of sin, a return to something like the assertion of sincerity of purpose which appears in his earlier Psalms.

1. "Judge me." Do me right, vindicate my cause, that it may be seen that I have done nothing to provoke the enmity with which I am assailed. He alleges two pleas for a favourable answer, that he had walked in singleness of heart, and that he had trusted in the Lord without wavering. He does not pretend that he is morally perfect, but that his aim and endeavour have been right.

"I shall not slide." According to the Hebrew idiom, these words should be joined with the preceding, in the sense of "without being moved, without wavering" (comp. Ps. xxxv. 8, marg.). Observe how David's consciousness of innocence is combined with unswerving trust in God. His confidence in his own uprightness is, as far as possible, removed from self-confidence. He did not for one moment relax his hold on God, and therefore he was enabled to maintain his integrity.

2. "Examine me." Look deeply into (Ps. xi. 5 ; xvii. 3.) my true character, put it to the test, purify (Ps. xli. 6 ; lxvi. 10.) my reins and my heart. The Psalmist begs that if he is not as sincere and simple-minded as he believes himself to be, God will shew it to him (comp. Ps. cxxxix. 23.).

3. Though conscious of entire sincerity, his eyes were always fixed on the loving-kindness of God, and his whole course of life was regulated

PSALMS, XXVI.

- 4 ^f I have not sat with vain persons,
neither will I go in with dissemblers.
- 5 I have ^g hated the congregation of evil doers ;
^h and will not sit with the wicked.
- 6 ⁱ I will wash mine hands in innocency :
so will I compass thine altar, O LORD :
- 7 that I may publish with the voice of thanks-
giving,
and tell of all thy wondrous works.
- 8 LORD, ^k I have loved the habitation of thy
house,
and the place ² where thine honour dwelleth.
- 9 ^{3l} Gather not my soul with sinners,
nor my life with ⁴ bloody men :
- 10 in whose hands is mischief,
and their right hand is ⁵ full of ^m bribes.

^f Ps. 1. 1.
Jer. 15. 17.
^g Ps. 31. 6.
& 139. 21, 22.
^h Ps. 1. 1.
ⁱ See Exod.
31. 19, 20.
Ps. 73. 13.
1 Tim. 2. 8.
^k Ps. 27. 4.
² Heb. of the
tabernacle of
thy honour.
³ Or, Take
not away.
¹ See 1 Sam.
25. 29.
Ps. 28. 3.
⁴ Heb. men
of blood.
⁵ Heb.
filled with.
^m Ex. 23. 8.
Deut. 16. 19.
1 Sam. 8. 3.
Isai. 33. 15.

by a firm persuasion of His faithfulness (Ps. xxv. 5). He did not trust in his own uprightness, but in God's mercy.

4. As he looked steadfastly towards God, so he kept aloof from sinful men.

"Vain persons." Unreal, worthless, wicked men. The same word is used in Ps. xxiv. 4.

"Will I go in with." More fully, "go in and out with," have intercourse with (Prov. xxii. 24.).

6. A further reason why God should avenge his cause; viz. his love for His house and worship. Though now in his persecuted condition removed from the sanctuary, he longed to approach it. And as the priests before they drew near to minister at the altar were commanded to wash their hands and their feet (Exod. xxx. 17—21.), so the Psalmist declares his desire to cleanse his conscience, and put away all sin, as the best preparation for the solemn worship of God.

"So will I compass." Rather, "so would I compass:" it expresses a wish rather than a resolution. This passage suggests that it was the custom for the priests, when they sacrificed, to go round the altar, with the accompaniment, as may be gathered from the next verse, of singing. As the priests represented the people, the Psalmist seems to himself to take his part in the act of the priests. But perhaps the word only means "approach."

7. The spiritual nature of public worship is here plainly set forth; the reason why David desired to draw near to God's altar was, that he might recount with thanksgiving all God's wondrous works.

8. Having recalled the familiar scene in the court of the tabernacle (comp. Ps. xlii. 4.), he breaks out into a fervent exclamation of his love for the sanctuary; it is his home, where he delights to settle (Ps. xxvii. 4.); and that, because it is the dwelling-place of God's glory, the throne of the Shekinah.

9. He explains how he would have God judge him and do him right (ver. 1.), namely, by not uniting him in one common lot (Ps. xxviii. 3.) with those whose fellowship he had shunned.

PSALMS, XXVII.

ⁿ ver. 1.

^o Ps. 40. 2.

^p Ps. 27. 11.

^q Ps. 22. 22.

& 107. 32.

& 111. 1.

- 11 But as for me, I will ⁿ walk in mine integrity :
redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
- 12 ^o My foot standeth in an ^p even place :
^q in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVII.

1 David sustaineth his faith by the power of God, 4 by his love to the service of God, 9 by prayer.

A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 84. 11.

Is. 60. 19, 20.

Mic. 7. 8.

^b Ex. 15. 2.

^c Ps. 62. 2, 6.

& 118. 14, 21.

Isai. 12. 2.

- 1 **T**HE LORD is ^a my light and ^b my salvation ;
whom shall I fear ?
- ^c The LORD is the strength of my life ;
of whom shall I be afraid ?

11. In contrast to his enemies, who were violent, crafty, and unscrupulous men, the Psalmist protests once more his own integrity. At the same time he prays for mercy, shewing that his whole trust was in the free grace of God, and not in himself.

12. His prayer is changed into thanksgiving: he is confident that the answer will come. "Hitherto shut in, as it were, in deep trackless gorges, he now feels himself standing in a wide open plain, and blends his grateful praise of God with the song of the worshipping congregation."

"Redeem me, love me, Lord!—'tis done; I stand in even ways,

"High in Thy courts my place is won, I sing Jehovah's praise."

There is both encouragement and instruction in this Psalm to all who are in trouble, especially if their trouble come from the evil conduct of others. First of all, it teaches us to be very strict with ourselves, and careful that our hearts are right with God. And secondly, it suggests, that the sacred presence of God in His house and His solemn worship are our best and sufficient refuge in trouble. There, in the contemplation of the glory and goodness of God, and amid the thanksgivings of the faithful, we may forget our sorrows and hide ourselves from our enemies.

PSALM XXVII.

The fearlessness of perfect trust changed into the prayer of faith and patience and hope.

In some of the ancient Versions this Psalm is said to be a Psalm of David before he was anointed. David was anointed three times; once by Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 13.); and twice at Hebron (2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 3.). The last anointing is probably here meant. The Psalm therefore may be referred to the close of David's life at Hebron, when the voice of the whole people invited him to be their king. The thankful remembrance of past protection, and the confident expectation of further triumphs, which the Psalm breathes, seem to mark a crisis in his life; while the earnest desire he expresses to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, accords well with what we know to have been his first chief wish after he was anointed king, namely, to provide a permanent home and suitable resting-place for the Ark of God (2 Sam. vi. 2; vii. 1, 2.).

PSALMS, XXVII.

- 2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my
foes,
² came upon me to ^deat up my flesh, they ² Heb.
stumbled and fell. *approached*
against me.
- 3 ^e Though an host should encamp against me, ^d Ps. 14. 4.
my heart shall not fear : ^e Ps. 3. 6.
though war should rise against me, in this *will*
I *be* confident.
- 4 ¶ ^f One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that ^f Ps. 26. 8.
will I seek after ;
that I may ^g dwell in the house of the LORD all ^g Ps. 65. 4.
the days of my life, *Luke 2. 37.*
to behold ^h the beauty of the LORD, and to ³ Or,
enquire in his temple. *the delight.*
^h Ps. 90. 17.

It may however belong, like the Psalms immediately preceding and following, to the time of Absalom's rebellion ; if so, it should be compared with Ps. iii.

1. "My light." As ever infusing joy and brightness into his lot, however dark in itself ; as in Mic. vii. 8, "If I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." This is the only passage in the Old Testament where this title is directly applied to God. See Ps. xviii. 28 ; xxxvi. 9. Isa. lx. 1. St. John xii. 46.

In the confidence of unwavering faith, David declares that nothing shall appal him. The Lord is his light, his salvation, his life's stronghold ; he need not, he cannot, fear man. So the Apostle (Rom. viii. 31.).

2. Probably this is a reminiscence of the persecution in the time of Saul. There is a special emphasis, by way of opposition, between "mine" and "they ;" "when evil-doers came near me to devour my flesh, my "adversaries and enemies (enemies to none but me)—they (and not I, as "they expected) stumbled and fell." "To eat up my flesh." He conceives of his enemies in their fierceness as wild beasts.

3. Even if they were as numerous as they were fierce, he would not fear. "In this." Or rather, "for all this" (Lev. xxvi. 27.), in spite of this, still will he be trustful and undaunted.

4. In the midst of enemies and trouble, there is one thing which the Psalmist so desires above everything else, that it seems to him the only thing that he cares for, namely, that he may dwell perpetually in the presence of Him Who has His dwelling-place, His palace, in the holy Tabernacle. He almost envies the priests whose whole life is spent in the presence and service of God. And why does he thus desire to dwell in God's presence? In order that he may fix the eye of his soul with wistful longing on the beauty, the attractive loveliness, of the Lord, and meditate on Him Who there reveals Himself.

"Beauty." With reference not so much to the worship of the Tabernacle, as to the graciousness of the Divine character. The word may however mean "grace, favour," as in Ps. xc. 17.

"To inquire." Lit. to examine, look earnestly into a thing ; here,

PSALMS, XXVII.

¹ Ps. 31. 20. &
83. 3. & 91. 1.
Isai. 4. 6.

5 For ¹ in the time of trouble he shall hide me in
his pavilion :

in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ;
he shall ^k set me up upon a rock.

^k Ps. 40. 2.

¹ Ps. 3. 3.

6 And now shall ¹ mine head be lifted up above mine
enemies round about me :

therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices
² of joy ;

² Heb. of
shouting.

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the
LORD.

³ Or, *My
heart said
unto thee,
Let my face
seek thy
face, &c.*
^m Ps. 24. 6.
& 105. 4.

7 ¶ Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice :
have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 ³ *When thou saidst,* ^m Seek ye my face ; my
heart said unto thee,

to consider what God would teach him. Some render it, "to appear
"early."

"**Temple.**" Or palace. In the next verse it is called a tent or
tabernacle (see Ps. v. 7. 1 Sam. iii. 3.).

5. David looks forward to the sanctuary of God as a refuge where he
may shelter himself. Whatever outward troubles may assail him, he will
fly to God and find strength and comfort in His presence : lifted up above
his troubles, he will stand upon a rock ; withdrawn from the outer world,
he will forget himself and all his miseries and anxieties in the thought of
his nearness to God.

6. David perceived that his position, as king of all Israel, was one of
great danger ; there were enemies on every side (2 Sam. v. 17.) ; but he
was satisfied that he should triumph over them, and should one day offer
his thanksgivings in God's house (comp. 1 Chron. xiv. 2.).

"**Mine head be lifted up.**" Comp. Ps. iii. 3.

"**Sacrifices of joy.**" Margin, "of shouting," sacrifices accompanied
with songs of thanksgiving, and perhaps of music. "It is observable
"that the word here used occurs also in 2 Sam. vi. 15 and 1 Chron. xv.
"28, to describe that act of David which followed the composition of the
"Psalm, viz. the bringing up of the Ark to Zion" (*Wordsworth*).

7. The sudden change from strong confidence in God to earnest en-
treaty has led to the suggestion that we have here portions of two
separate Psalms ; and certainly it would be more in accordance with
the usual course of thought and feeling in the Psalms, if the two por-
tions were transposed. But there is nothing in itself unnatural in the
transition, striking as it is. It only represents the varying moods, now
joyous, now desponding, to which God's most faithful servants are
liable. After a triumphant outburst of confidence in the Divine pro-
tection, there creeps over the Psalmist a vivid sense of the greatness
of the dangers that beset him, and fear takes the place of joy ; he does
not lose his confidence, but its character is changed ; there is the same
earnest clinging to God, but it is the clinging of prayer rather than
of thanksgiving ; until at the end all agitation is hushed, and his soul is
enabled to rest in God without alarm.

8. "**When Thou saidst.**" Though these words are not in the origi-

PSALMS, XXVII.

- thy face, LORD, will I seek.
- 9 ⁿ Hide not thy face *far* from me ;
 put not thy servant away in anger :
 thou hast been my help ; leave me not,
 neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
- 10 ^o When my father and my mother forsake me,
 then the LORD ² will take me up.
- 11 ^p Teach me thy way, O LORD,
 and lead me in ³ a plain path, because of ⁴ mine
 enemies.
- 12 ^q Deliver me not over unto the will of mine
 enemies :
 for ^r false witnesses are risen up against me,
 and such as ^s breathe out cruelty.
- 13 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the
 goodness of the LORD
^t in the land of the living.
- ⁿ Ps. 69. 17.
 & 143. 7.
^o Isai. 49. 15.
² Heb. *will gather me*,
 Isai. 40. 11.
^p Ps. 25. 4.
 & 86. 11.
 & 119. 33.
³ Heb.
a way of plainness,
 Ps. 26. 12.
⁴ Heb.
those which observe me,
 Ps. 5. 8.
 & 54. 5.
^q Ps. 35. 25.
^r 1 Sam. 22. 9.
 2 Sam. 16. 7.
 8. Ps. 35. 11.
^s Acts 9. 1.
^t Ps. 56. 13.
 & 116. 9.
 & 142. 5.
 Jer. 11. 19.
 Ezek. 26. 20.

nal, they accurately convey its meaning. The words "Seek ye My Face" are the words of God, quoted, as some think, from Deut. iv. 29, but rather, perhaps, giving the general purport of Scripture, without reference to any particular passage. It is as if he said, "Thou hast invited me to seek Thy Face, my heart bounds at the thought of Thy gracious invitation ; Thy Face, Lord, will I seek."

"My heart in silence talk'd with Thee,
 "Thou spak'st to all ; Thou spak'st to me,
 "Seek ye My Face : " I caught the word,
 "And, lo ! I seek Thy Face, O Lord " (*Keble*).

9. "Hide not Thy Face." He Who invites men to seek His Face will assuredly not hide that Face ; He will suffer them to feel His presence and rejoice in it.

"Put not Thy servant away in anger." The Psalmist seems conscious that he has deserved to be rejected ; and therefore he prays earnestly that He Who had been his help and salvation in times past would not forsake him.

10. "When my father and my mother forsake me." Earthly friends, even the nearest, may change or be removed, but God cannot change ; His love cannot fail. The same truth is taught in the same, almost proverbial, form in the Prophets (e.g. Isa. xlix. 15 ; lxiii. 16.).

"Will take me up." Gather me into His home and family, take me to Himself (Deut. xxii. 2. Josh. ii. 18 ; xx. 4. 2 Sam. xi. 27.).

11. "A plain path." "A road across a level country, as contrasted with steep and rugged rocks" (*Kay*). See Ps. xxvi. 12. Jer. xxxi. 9. But the expression may be used in a moral sense, as in Ps. cxliii. 10, and we may understand the Psalmist's meaning to be, that God would keep him from evil, so that his enemies may not be able to triumph over him.

"Teach me Thy paths, the paths of right" (*Keble*).

13. The words "I had fainted" are supplied by the A. V. The

PSALMS, XXVIII.

^a Ps. 31. 24. 14 ^u Wait on the LORD :
 & 62. 1. 5.
 & 130. 5.
 Isai. 25. 9.
 Hab. 2. 3.

be of good courage, and he shall strengthen
 thine heart :
 wait, I say, on the LORD.

PSALM XXVIII.

1 *David prayeth earnestly against his enemies.* 6 *He blesseth God.*
 9 *He prayeth for the people.*

A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 83. 1.
² Heb.
from me.

1 **U**NTO thee will I cry, O LORD
 my rock ; ^a be not silent ² to me :

sentence in the original is unfinished, but the meaning is brought out all the more forcibly, "Oh! if I had not believed to see the goodness of the "Lord in the land of the living!" Had not his confidence in God remained, he knew not what would have become of him. But his confidence *did* remain; he felt sure that God would not cut him off from the land of the living, but suffer him to enjoy the light of His favour upon earth. And therefore in the next verse he encourages himself to go on waiting patiently upon God.

14. "He shall strengthen thine heart." Rather, "let thy heart be "strong," as in Ps. xxxi. 24.

This verse is perhaps best understood as David's address to himself; but it matters little whether we take the words as spoken by David to himself, or to others, or by Almighty God to David. They sum up the lesson of the Psalm. Be our danger or trouble ever so great, our one duty and happiness is to wait on (or rather, for) the Lord, confident that relief will come at length, though it may be long in coming, and that we shall one day be able to say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for "Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him; "we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. xxv. 9.).

PSALM XXVIII.

An urgent cry for help, followed by joyful thanksgiving.

The Psalm belongs to a time of great danger, when the writer, who is God's anointed, is at a distance from the house of God, to which he turns with earnest longing. It may very well therefore have been written by David during Absalom's rebellion.

The first part of the Psalm (vv. 1—5.) is an urgent entreaty for help. David prays (i.) that he may not be involved in the fate of his ungodly enemies, and (ii.) that they may receive the punishment which they deserve. In the second part (vv. 6—9.) he is so assured of a favourable answer to his prayer, that he gives thanks for deliverance, and concludes with an intercession that God would always be the Helper and Shepherd of His people, as heretofore.

1. The danger is imminent, and God had not yet interposed. Nevertheless He is David's rock, on Whose power and faithfulness he entirely depends.

"Be not silent to me." Rather, as in margin, "from me;" do not so turn away, as not to deign to answer me. Should God continue silent,

PSALMS, XXVIII.

- ^blest, *if* thou be silent to me,
I become like them that go down into the pit.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry
unto thee,
^cwhen I lift up my hands ²^dtoward thy holy
oracle.
- 3 ^eDraw me not away with the wicked,
and with the workers of iniquity,
^fwhich speak peace to their neighbours,
but mischief *is* in their hearts.
- 4 ^gGive them according to their deeds,
and according to the wickedness of their en-
deavours:
give them after the work of their hands;
render to them their desert.
- 5 Because ^hthey regard not the works of the
LORD,
nor the operation of his hands,

^b Ps. 88. 4.
& 143. 7.

^c 1 Kin. 6. 22,
23. & 8. 28,
29. Ps. 5. 7.

² Or,
*toward the
oracle of thy
sanctuary.*

^d Ps. 138. 2.

^e Ps. 26. 9.

^f Pe. 12. 2.

& 55. 21.

& 62. 4.

Jer. 9. 8.

^g 2 Tim. 4. 14.

Rev. 18. 6.

^h Job 34. 27.

Isai. 5. 12.

David declares that he should be on the very brink of destruction (see marg. reff.).

2. God's presence in the Holy of Holies was the special token of His covenant with Israel; therefore, wherever he was, David's eyes and heart turned to that Presence, and in his prayer he lifted up his hands towards it. Solomon besought God's special attention for those who should under any circumstances of peril or distress pray and spread forth their hands towards the Temple (1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 33, 38, 44, 48. See also Dan. vi. 10. Jonah ii. 4.).

"Lift up my hands." The usual attitude of prayer among the Israelites, as symbolical of the lifting up of the heart (see Exod. ix. 29; xvii. 11, 12. 1 Kings viii. 54. Ps. lxxiii. 4; cxli. 2. Lam. ii. 19; iii. 41. 1 Tim. ii. 8.).

"Thy holy oracle." The innermost part of the Tabernacle, where was the Ark of the covenant, the Holy of Holies.

3. Here we have the special purpose of David's prayer, viz. that he might not be dragged away as in the same net (Ps. x. 9. Job xxiv. 22. Ezek. xxxii. 20.) with his ungodly enemies, and involved in their destruction.

"O drag me not in Thy stern net

"With souls on evil set" (*Keble*).

He desires that God would distinguish between him and his treacherous foes, who pretended friendship but cherished enmity in their hearts. There may be a reference to Abitophel, as in Ps. lv. 12—14.

4. This is no request for personal vengeance, only a request that God would deal justly with the righteous and the wicked (Isa. iii. 10, 11.).

5. "The operation of His hands." In opposition to "the works of their hands" in the preceding verse, the same word being used in both places (comp. Isa. v. 12, 19.). They pay no heed to God's providential

PSALMS, XXVIII.

he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

6 ¶ Blessed *be* the LORD,
because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

¹ Ps. 13. 2.

^k Ps. 13. 5.
& 22. 4.

² Or, *his strength.*

³ Heb.
strength of salvations.

¹ Ps. 20. 6.

^m Deut. 9. 29.
¹ Kin. 8. 51,
53.

⁴ Or, *rule.*
Ps. 78. 71.

ⁿ Ezra 1. 4.

7 The LORD *is* ¹ my strength and my shield ;
my heart ^k trusted in him, and I am helped :
therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ;
and with my song will I praise him.

8 The LORD *is* ² their strength,
and he *is* the ³¹ saving strength of his anointed.

9 Save thy people,
and bless ^m thine inheritance :

⁴ feed them also, ⁿ and lift them up for ever.

acts, especially His declared purpose of exalting David and granting him a perpetual throne (2 Sam. vii. 12—16.). The followers of Absalom wilfully rebelled against the Divine appointment; and therefore David declares that they shall experience the very reverse of the promise made to him and his seed; the Lord will pull them down and not build them up.

“He shall destroy.” The confidence expressed in this verse becomes triumphant in the next.

6. The sudden change from prayer to thanksgiving (comp. Ps. vi. 9; xxx. 12.), “like the abrupt introduction of a new and dissimilar key in a “piece of music,” is very effective and emphatic. It has been noticed however that the way was prepared for it by the close of ver. 5.

In ver. 2 David prayed “Hear the voice of my supplications;” now he gives thanks; “Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the “voice of my supplications.” He does not mean merely that God has always heard him in times past: he thanks God for having given him *now* what he prayed for. It is not so much his past experience as his present faith that makes him confident.

The true-hearted believer is not more earnest in prayer for help, than he is in thanksgiving for the answer to his prayer. He does not make haste to go away, but returns to give glory to God.

7. “With my song.” Lit. “out of my song.” The song is as it were the fountain from which the praise goes forth. Deliverance awakens songs of joy; and songs of joy attune the heart for the praise of Him Who has wrought the deliverance. Or it may mean, “out of my store of song” (*Kay*).

8. “Their strength.” Lit. “strength to them,” that is, to Israel His people: it answers to ver. 7: “The Lord is my strength.” It is because Israel is His people, His inheritance, and David their anointed king, that the deliverance which he commemorates has been vouchsafed.

9. The first part of this verse occurs in the daily service of the Church, “O Lord, save Thy people,” “And bless Thine inheritance.” And the whole verse is introduced into the *Te Deum*.

“Thy people . . . Thine inheritance.” There is special emphasis on “Thy” and “Thine” (see marg. reff.).

“Feed them.” Lit. “be their shepherd.” The margin has “rule;” whence “Govern” in the *Te Deum*.

PSALMS, XXIX.

PSALM XXIX.

1 *David exhorteth princes to give glory to God, 3 by reason of his power, 11 and protection of his people.*

A Psalm of David.

1 ^a **G**IVE unto the LORD, O ² ye mighty,
give unto the LORD glory and strength.

^a 1 Chron. 16.
28, 29.
Ps. 96. 7, 8, 9.
² Heb. *ye
sons of the
mighty.*

“Lift them up.” As a shepherd carries a weary lamb (Isa. lxiii. 9).
Comp. Deut. i. 31; xxxii. 11. Exod. xix. 4.

The chief thought of the Psalm is that God is the rock, the strength, the shield of His people; even if He seem to be deaf to their prayers for a time, He does not really disregard them. If their trouble come from the ill-conduct of others, they may pray that the wicked devices of their enemies may be exposed and come to nought, so long as they are careful to guard against any feeling of private revenge. The more earnestly men pray, the more confident will they become that they are heard; as they rise from their knees, their prayers will turn to praise, and out of the depth of a thankful heart they will look up to God as their Shepherd and entreat Him to tend and deal gently with them for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

The Voice of the Lord.

The Psalmist describes in vivid language a great thunderstorm, in its progress from the cedar-forests of Lebanon in the north to the wilderness of Kadesh in the south. The manifested presence of God fills his soul, and he calls on the white-robed Angels in heaven to bow themselves down and do homage to Him Who has revealed Himself so wondrously upon earth.

The Psalm naturally divides itself into three parts; first (vv. 1, 2.), the summons to the Angels to worship God; then (vv. 3—9.), the description of the storm; and lastly (vv. 10, 11.), the conclusion, which takes us back to heaven and reminds us that, amid the commotions of the earth, the Lord sits upon His throne, blessing His people with strength and peace.

In the prelude and the conclusion, each of which consists of four lines, the name Jehovah occurs four times, while in the middle portion of the Psalm “the Voice of the Lord” is repeated seven times, just as the name Jehovah occurs seven times in the second part of the nineteenth Psalm.

The body of the Psalm may be divided into three equal stanzas of five lines each, “marking the successive stages of the storm; first, its distant “gathering, the low faint muttering of the thunder in the far-off unapproachable realms of the sky; second, its sudden advance, seizing the “mountains and crushing the cedars; then in the third, it passes on and “spreads over the plain, bowing the very beasts in the throes of labour “and stripping the forest of its leaves, till it is gradually hushed and “dies away.”

There is an addition to the inscription in the Greek Version, “On the going forth of the Tabernacle,” which is supposed to imply that in the second Temple this Psalm was sung on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

PSALMS, XXIX.

- ² Heb. *the honour of his name.* 2 Give unto the LORD ² the glory due unto his name ;
³ Or, *in his glorious sanctuary.* worship the LORD ³ in ^b the beauty of holiness.
^b 2 Chr. 20, 21. 3 ¶ The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters :
^c Job 37. 4, 5. ^c the God of glory thundereth :
⁴ Or, *great waters.* the LORD *is* upon ⁴ many waters.
⁵ Heb. *in power.* 4 The voice of the LORD *is* ⁵ powerful ;
⁶ Heb. *in majesty.* the voice of the LORD *is* ⁶ full of majesty.
^d Isai. 2. 13. 5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars ;
^e Ps. 114. 4. yea, the LORD breaketh ^d the cedars of Lebanon.
^f Deut. 3. 9. 6 ^e He maketh them also to skip like a calf ;
Lebanon and ^f Sirion like a young unicorn.

Others think that by the Tabernacle is meant the temporary tent in the house of Obed-edom, and they refer the Psalm to the translation of the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to Mount Zion ; while others take the meaning to be simply "departure from the Tabernacle," when the service was over.

Among the Jews of the present day it is appropriated to the first day of the Feast of Pentecost, the anniversary, according to tradition, of the giving of the Law.

1. "Give." Ascribe, as in Deut. xxxii. 3.

"O ye mighty." Margin, "Ye sons of the mighty," which is generally interpreted of the Angels, as in Ps. lxxxix. 6. The Syriac Version, through a misreading, has "Bring unto the Lord young rams." The Greek combines the Syriac with the Hebrew ; "Bring unto the Lord, "O ye sons of God ; bring young rams unto the Lord." Hence our Prayer Book Version.

2. "In the beauty of holiness." That is, in holy apparel. See 2 Chron. xx. 21, where it is said that Jehoshaphat appointed singers that should praise the Lord in the beauty of holiness, that is, "in such rich apparel and ornaments as were suitable to a holy occasion." As the priests put off their usual dress, and clothe themselves in holy garments before engaging in God's service, so must the Angels, His servants, do the same (comp. Ps. cx. 3.).

3. "The Voice of the Lord" denotes not merely the thunder, but the earthquake and the hurricane,—every sound, in fact, by which the great God makes His presence felt in the world. The first clause seems to speak especially of the thunder, rolling over the sea of waters above the heavens (see Gen. i. 7. Ps. xviii. 11.) ; there, in the far-off heavens, beyond the black clouds, the storm has its origin ; it is heard there, at a distance, in its might and majesty. Presently, it bursts forth upon the earth ; the descending lightning cleaves the cedars ; and the mountains rock with the earthquake.

6. "Sirion." The name by which Mount Hermon was known to the Zidonians (Deut. iii. 9.), the southern and highest point of the range of Lebanon. In like manner the rocks of Sinai, which trembled greatly at the descent of the Lord (Exod. xix. 18.), are said to leap like rams (Ps. cxiv. 4.).

PSALMS, XXIX.

- 7 The voice of the LORD ² divideth the flames of ² Heb. *cutteth out.*
fire.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness ;
the LORD shaketh the wilderness of ⁸ Kadesh. ⁸ Num. 13. 26.
- 9 The voice of the LORD maketh ^h the hinds ³ to ^h Job 39. 1,
calve, ^{2, 3.}
and discovereth the forests : ³ Or, to be in
and in his temple ⁴ doth every one speak of *his* ⁴ Or, every
glory. *whit of it*
uttereth, &c.
- 10 ¶ The LORD ⁱ sitteth upon the flood ; ⁱ Gen. 6. 17.
yea, ^k the LORD sitteth King for ever. ^k Job 38. 8, 25.
^k Ps. 10. 16.

“A young unicorn.” Rather, “wild ox” or buffalo.

7. “Divideth the flames of fire.” Lit. “heweth out the flames of “fire ;” that is, sendeth forth divided flames; in allusion to the incessant glaring of the forked lightning.

8. From the lofty mountains in the north the storm passes on in all its fury to the wilderness in the south (comp. Ps. lxxv. 6, where “the “south” is literally “the desert”).

“The wilderness of Kadesh.” The southern frontier of the Holy Land, stretching away to the mountains of Edom. Even the still desert is thrown into confusion, being scoured by the tempest.

9. “Maketh the hinds to calve.” They writhe in terror, and cast their young before the time (comp. 1 Sam. iv. 19.).

“Discovereth the forests.” Strips them of their branches and their foliage.

“In his temple,” or palace (Ps. xi. 4 ; xviii. 6.), that is, in heaven. Everything shouts “glory.” The Psalmist’s thoughts return to heaven, and he hears the Angel hosts doing the very thing, which in the beginning of the Psalm he called upon them to do (comp. Isa. vi. 3.).

10. “The Lord sitteth upon the flood.” Rather, “the Lord sat “enthroned at the flood ;” and from that moment He continues to sit a King for ever. The word here used for “the flood” is applied exclusively to the Deluge (see marg. ref.). As at that great catastrophe the Lord sat on His throne, not only to execute judgment, but to preserve the faithful, so the Psalmist beholds Him still sitting in awful majesty, revealing Himself from time to time in thunder and tempest, but ever watching over His people, enduing them with strength, and blessing them with peace. “The opening of the Psalm shews us the heavens “opened and the throne of God in the midst of the angelic songs of “praise, and the close of the Psalm shews us, on earth, His people victorious and blessed with peace, in the midst of Jehovah’s voice of anger, “which shakes all things. ‘Glory to God in the highest’ is its beginning ; and ‘peace on earth’ its conclusion.”

“O’er the dark flood He sate of yore,

“And so shall sit, Whom we adore,

“A thronèd King for evermore” (*Keble*).

The picture which the Psalm presents, the great King baring His arm in judgments upon earth, while He Himself sits on His throne, high and lifted up, receiving the homage of the Angels, guarding His

PSALMS, XXX.

1 Ps. 23. 8. 11 ¹The LORD will give strength unto his people ;
the LORD will bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXX.

1 *David praiseth God for his deliverance. 4 He exhorteth others to praise him by example of God's dealing with him.*

² Deut. 20. 5. A Psalm and Song ² at the dedication of the house of
² Sam. 5. 11. David.
& 6. 20.

^a Ps. 28. 9.

^b Ps. 25. 2.

& 35. 19, 24.

1 **I** WILL extol thee, O LORD ; for thou hast
^a lifted me up,
and hast not made my foes to ^b rejoice over me.

people, and wrapping them in His own gift of peace, naturally reminds us of what happened to Elijah on Mount Horeb, when after the hurricane and the earthquake God revealed Himself in the still small voice. Wonderful as are the effects of those terrible instruments of His power, the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, they are not to be compared with the mighty miracles of love wrought by the gentle voice of the Spirit in the heart. It is that secret, gentle voice, rather than the voice which speaks in the thunder, which brings down the high thoughts of the proud, and kindles the fire of love, and curbs the wayward will, and shakes the sleeping conscience, strengthens the weak, and sheds a heavenly peace and calm over the soul.

PSALM XXX.

A thanksgiving for deliverance from danger.

The title, "A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house," is supposed by some to refer to the dedication of the site of the Temple on Mount Moriah, when David said, "This is the house of the Lord God" (1 Chron. xxii. 1.) ; in which case the presumption mentioned in ver. 6 would relate to his sin in numbering the people. But the most generally received opinion is, that the house here spoken of is David's own house on Mount Zion, the building of which he looked upon as a pledge of the stability of his kingdom (2 Sam. v. 11, 12.) ; and it is conjectured from the language of the Psalm (vv. 2, 3.) that David had been hindered by some severe illness from taking possession of it for a time. The history makes no mention of any sickness of David at that time, nor indeed at any other. But it records a very serious danger which he incurred from the Philistines. Connecting 2 Sam. v. 17—20 with 2 Sam. xxiii. 8—17 ; xxi. 17, we learn that soon after David had taken Jerusalem, but before he had completed his buildings, the Philistines invaded the country with their whole force, and succeeded in occupying Bethlehem, while David and his men took refuge in the lime-pits of Adullam. The narrative gives the impression of great personal danger, and it is possible that it was for deliverance from this danger rather than recovery from sickness that David gives thanks in this Psalm. With ver. 6 we may compare 2 Sam. v. 10—12.

1. "Extol." In other places the word is rendered "exalt" (Exod. xv. 2. Ps. xxxiv. 3 ; xcix. 5, 9.). As God had lifted up the Psalmist from the deep in which he was sunk, so would he in his turn exalt and praise Him.

"Thou hast lifted me up." As out of a pit. David had been re-

PSALMS, XXX.

- 2 O LORD my God,
I cried unto thee, and thou hast ^chealed me. c Ps. 6. 2.
& 103. 3.
- 3 O LORD, ^dthou hast brought up my soul from
the grave : d Ps. 86. 13.
e Ps. 28. 1.
thou hast kept me alive, that I should not ^ego
down to the pit. f 1 Chr. 16. 4.
Ps. 97. 12.
- 4 ^fSing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his,
and give thanks ^gat the remembrance of his
holiness. g Ps. 103. 9.
Isai. 26. 20.
& 54. 7, 8.
2 Cor. 4. 17.
- 5 For ^hhis anger *endureth but a moment* ; ^hin
his favour *is life* : h Heb.
there is but
a moment in
his anger.
weeping may endure ⁴for a night, ⁱbut ⁵joy ⁴
cometh in the morning. h Ps. 63. 3.
i Heb. in the
evening.
i Ps. 126. 5.
- 6 ¶ And ^kin my prosperity I said,—I shall never
be moved. i Heb.
singing.
k Job 29. 18.

duced to the greatest extremity, whether by sickness or bodily danger, but God had heard his prayer, and denied to his enemies their expected joy in his destruction.

2. "I cried unto Thee." If the reference is to David's danger from the Philistines, we may believe that the inquiry mentioned in 2 Sam v. 19 was preceded by earnest supplication.

"Thou hast healed me." The word does not necessarily refer to bodily healing ; it may mean "delivered, gladdened, interposed in my behalf." In 1 Kings xviii. 30 the word is used of the repaired altar (comp. also Ps. cxlvii. 3. Isa. vi. 10. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, margin).

4. David is not content with praising God Himself ; he calls on all who had like experience of God's lovingkindness to join with him.

"O ye saints of His." Ps. iv. 3 ; xxxi. 23 ; l. 5 ; lxxix. 2. The word means both "those to whom God shews His mercy" and "those who deal lovingly with God."

"At the remembrance of His holiness." Rather, "to His holy memorial," that is, to His holy name ; as He Himself declares, "This is My Name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations" (Exod. iii. 15.). God's Name is His memorial, the revelation of the way in which He wills that men should believe in Him and think of Him (see Ps. xcvi. 12 ; cxxxv. 13. Hos. xii. 5. Isa. xxvi. 8.).

5. "His anger endureth but for a moment ; in His favour is life." Lit. (see margin) "a moment (passes) in His anger ; a (whole) life in His favour." David here states in general terms his experience of God's love : if He punish, it is but for a moment ; His love is everlasting (see marg. ref.).

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." More lit. "at even weeping comes in to pass the night ; but at dawn a shout of joy." Weeping is portrayed as a wanderer, who has a lodging given him for a night ; in the morning he is gone, and another and a very different guest has taken his place. Comp. Isa. xvii. 14 : "And behold at evening-tide trouble ; and before the morning he (the enemy) is not" (comp. St. John xvi. 20—22. 2 Cor. iv. 17.).

6. After praising God for his deliverance, and inviting others to praise

PSALMS, XXX.

² Heb. *settled strength for my mountain.*

¹ Ps. 104. 23.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast ²made my mountain to stand strong :

¹thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD ;
and unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit ?

^m Ps. 6. 5.
& 88. 11.
& 115. 17.
& 118. 17.
Isai. 33. 13.

^m Shall the dust praise thee ? shall it declare thy truth ?

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me :
LORD, be thou my helper.

ⁿ 2 Sam. 6. 14.
Isai. 61. 3.
Jer. 31. 4.

11 ¶ ⁿThou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing :

thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness ;

^s That is, my tongue, or, my soul :
See Gen. 49. 6.
Ps. 16. 9.
& 57. 8.

12 to the end that ³*my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Him, David acknowledges that it was his own self-confidence which had brought judgment upon him. In his prosperity he had begun to be proud, and fancy himself secure (like the wicked man described in Ps. x. 6.) ; he was speedily undeceived ; God withdrew His protection, and in a moment he felt his weakness (Deut. viii. 12—17. Hos. xiii. 3.).

7. “**Hast.**” Most commentators render “*hadst*,” so that the clause, taken literally, would run, “*Thou hadst established strength to my “mountain.”*” Probably the allusion is to the stronghold of Zion, which David had just won from the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 9—11.). David now ascribes his success to God’s free favour ; whereas before he had trusted in himself. In order to shew him that all he had was His gift, God hid His face ; He brought him suddenly to the brink of death, and David was terror-stricken (Ps. civ. 29.), and pleaded for his life.

9, 10. There should be a colon at the end of ver. 8, the next two verses containing the words of his prayer ; “*What advantage wilt Thou gain “from slaying me before the time, for I can render Thee no service in “the grave ?”*” The Psalmist did not desire prolonged life for the sake of worldly pleasure or enjoyment, but for the glory of God. The expression “*in my blood*” favours the idea that the Psalmist had been in danger of a violent death.

11, 12. His prayer was heard. God had changed his mourning into dancing ; and in place of the garment of humiliation had girded him with joy (see Jer. xxxi. 13. Lam. v. 15.). Therefore he would praise Him without ceasing.

12. “**My glory.**” Lit. “*glory*,” that which is glory, that is, his soul (Ps. vii. 5 ; xvi. 9 ; cviii. 1.) ; “*all my best*” (*Keble*).

This Psalm is a model of thanksgiving. Again and again it happens to us as to David, that God sends sickness or trouble to check our self-

PSALMS, XXXI.

PSALM XXXI.

1 David shewing his confidence in God craveth his help. 7 He rejoiceth in his mercy. 9 He prayeth in his calamity. 19 He praiseth God for his goodness.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

1 **I**N^a thee, O LORD, do I put my trust ;

^a Ps. 22. 5. &
25. 2. & 71. 1.
Isai. 41. 23.

let me never be ashamed :

^b deliver me in thy righteousness.

^b Ps. 143. 1.

2 ^c Bow down thine ear to me ; deliver me ^c Ps. 71. 2.

speedily :

² Heb. *to me*
for a rock
of strength.

be thou ² my strong rock,

confidence, and remind us that we are entirely in His hands. Well is it with those who, in the hour of trial, acknowledge that health and prosperity are God's gifts, and are fitly taken away from those who forget Him; and who not only pray earnestly for deliverance, but are careful to give thanks when the deliverance is vouchsafed. Such self-condemning, yet joyous, thankful thoughts find fitting expression in this Psalm.

PSALM XXXI.

Prayer of resignation, brightening into hope and joy.

This Psalm is very generally referred to the time of David's persecution by Saul, and it might well spring out of the outward and inward conflict in which he was then involved. In the Greek Version it is called "a Psalm of ecstasy," probably with reference to ver. 22, where it renders "in my haste" by "in my ecstasy;" the same word occurs in 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, "David *made haste* to get away for fear of Saul." If the consciousness of sin expressed in ver. 10 is to be considered as pointing to a later date (though at no period of his life would it be unnatural for David's sufferings to remind him of his sins), it would fall in with the circumstances of his flight from Absalom.

Some persons attribute the Psalm to Jeremiah, on account of various coincidences of expression, but these resemblances may be only reminiscences. It is evident that Jeremiah was very familiar with this Psalm, and thoroughly imbued with its spirit. The first clause of ver. 13, "I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side," occurs, word for word, in Jer. xx. 10; and the phrase "fear on every side" is found repeatedly in the book of Jeremiah (vi. 25; xlvi. 5; xlix. 29.). Comp. also ver. 17 with Jer. xvii. 18; ver. 22 with Lam. iii. 54. The simile of a broken vessel (ver. 12.) is of frequent occurrence in Jeremiah (xviii. 4; xxii. 28; xxv. 34; xlvi. 38.).

1. As in other Psalms (xxv., xxvii., lxxi.), David does not begin with prayer, but reposes himself on God, and then out of his steadfast trust the prayer bursts forth: "Let it never come to this, that one who trusted in Thee should be disappointed and ashamed:" "let me not be disappointed for ever."

"Deliver me." "Set me free, grant me a means of escape."

"In Thy righteousness," i. e. faithfulness, in accordance with Thy promises. Comp. 1 St. John i. 9, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

2. "My strong rock." Lit. "rock of stronghold, of refuge." "A house

- for an house of defence to save me.
- d Ps. 18. 2. 3 ^d For thou *art* my rock and my fortress ;
 e Ps. 23. 3. therefore ^e for thy name's sake lead me, and
 & 25. 11. guide me.
- 4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid
 privily for me :
 for thou *art* my strength.
- f Luke 23. 46. 5 ^f Into thine hand I commit my spirit :
 Acts 7. 59. thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
- g Jonah 2. 8. 6 I have hated them ^g that regard lying vanities :
 but I trust in the LORD.

“of defence,” lit. a house of fortresses. These expressions might well be suggested by the circumstances of David's life when he was chased hither and thither among the mountains: having no certain place of defence on earth, he turned to God as his stronghold.

3. “For Thou art my rock.” Observe the connection with the preceding verse; “Thou art my rock and fortress; I have long since cast myself wholly upon Thee; be Thou to me what my faith has apprehended Thee, my strength and my stronghold; Thou wilt not put my faith to shame.”

“Therefore . . . lead me, and guide me.” Rather, “And Thou wilt lead me and guide me” as a shepherd (Ps. xxiii. 2, 3.); and in the next verse, “Thou wilt bring me forth out of the net.”

4. “Privily.” None but God, from Whom no secrets are hid, can save from hidden snares.

5. “My spirit.” Not merely his body, or his bodily life, but his true, inner self, the life of his spirit (Isa. xxxviii. 16.), his moral and spiritual being. So entire is his confidence in the love and power of God, that he entrusts himself wholly, body, soul, and spirit, to Him. He will not only save him from death, but He will preserve him from all evil; everything that he has and is must be safe with Him.

“Thou hast redeemed me.” The Psalmist does not so much refer to past deliverances, as express his confidence for the future. Faith sees the future as if it were present; he is as sure of the deliverance as if it were already accomplished. It could not be, but that the God of truth—the “faithful Creator” of Whom St. Peter speaks—would keep safely what was entrusted to Him (2 Tim. i. 12. 1 St. Pet. iv. 19.).

With these words our Blessed Saviour breathed out His Spirit upon the Cross, giving them thereby a deeper meaning (St. Luke xxiii. 46.); for while David's chief thought was, that He to Whom he commended himself would preserve him *from* death, Christ's confidence was, that He would preserve Him *in* death and *through* death. Blessed words, which as they hallowed the death of the Master, so have they formed the last utterance of many of His servants! With similar words the first martyr ended his last struggle (Acts vii. 59.); and “the many instances on record, including St. Polycarp, St. Basil, Epiphanius of Pavia, St. Bernard, St. Louis, Huss, Columbus, Luther, and Melancthon, of Christians using these words at the approach of death, represent how many millions of unrecorded cases!” (Kay.)

6. This verse follows naturally from the preceding; “I commend

PSALMS, XXXI.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy :
 for thou hast considered my trouble ;
 thou hast ^h known my soul in adversities ; ^h John 10. 27.
 8 and hast not ⁱ shut me up into the hand of the ⁱ enemy : ⁱ Deut. 32. 30.
ⁱ Sam. 17. 46.
 & 24. 18.
^k thou hast set my feet in a large room. ^k Ps. 4. 1.
 & 18. 19.

9 ¶ Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in
 trouble :
^l mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul ^l and my belly. ^l Ps. 6. 7.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years
 with sighing :
 my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and ^m my bones are consumed. ^m Ps. 32. 3.
 & 102. 3.

“myself to Thee, the true and faithful God ; therefore I hate all false
 “gods, and those that worship them.”

“I have hated.” The Greek, Syriac and Arabic Versions have
 “Thou hast hated ;” if that is the true reading, “but I” in the second
 clause is emphatic. If, as is probable, the Authorised Version is to be
 retained, “but I” must be taken in contrast with “them that regard
 “lying vanities.”

“Regard ;” or “observe,” as in Jonah ii. 8, i. e. worship. The same
 word is rendered “take heed to” in Hos. iv. 10 ; and “wait upon” in
 Zech. xi. 11.

“Lying vanities.” “Vanities of falsehood,” that is, gods which are no
 gods, which are of no service to their worshippers, and only disappoint
 their expectations (comp. Deut. xxxii. 21. Jer. viii. 19.). But the ex-
 pression includes all earthly objects of desire, which men trust in,
 instead of God.

7. “I will be glad.” Rather, “Let me be glad,” “I would fain be
 “glad.”

“Thou hast considered.” Lit. “seen, regarded” (St. Luke i. 48.).
 This and the following verse might seem inconsistent with his account
 of his condition in ver. 10 ; but see on ver. 21.

“Hast known my soul in adversity.” Or, “hast known, taken
 “special cognizance of, the troubles of my soul.”

8. “Hast not shut me up,” i. e. abandoned me. Comp. 1 Sam.
 xxiii. 12 : “Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver (*Heb.*
 “shut up) me and my men into the hand of Saul ?” (Deut. xxxii. 30.).

“A large room.” A place of liberty, as opposed to the narrow straits
 to which he had been reduced (Ps. xviii. 20 ; xxvi. 12.).

9—13. Having strengthened himself in God, the Psalmist breaks out
 into earnest entreaty, and sets forth his suffering with great vividness, as
 if to move God to have mercy on him by the picture of his misery. The
 grief, which the provocation and spiteful treatment he has undergone
 have caused, is wearing him out before the time, and shortening his
 days.

10. “Because of mine iniquity.” God’s loving purpose in afflicting
Q 2

PSALMS, XXXI.

- ⁿ Ps. 41. 8. 11 ⁿ I was a reproach among all mine enemies,
^o Isai. 53. 4. but ^o especially among my neighbours, and a
^o Job 19. 13. fear to mine acquaintance :
^p Ps. 38. 11. ^p they that did see me without fled from me.
^p & 88. 8, 18. ^p Ps. 64. 8.
^q Ps. 88. 4, 5. 12 ^q I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind :
^r Heb. *a* I am like ² a broken vessel.
^r vessel that 13 ^r For I have heard the slander of many :
^r perisheth. ^s fear *was* on every side: while they ^t took
^r Jer. 20. 10. ^s Jer. 6. 25. counsel together against me,
^r & 20. 3. they devised to take away my life.
^r Lam. 2. 22.
^t Matt. 27. 1.
- 14 ¶ But I trusted in thee, O LORD :—I said, Thou
art my God.
- 15 My times *are* in thy hand :
 deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and
 from them that persecute me.

us is fulfilled when it brings our sins to remembrance, and makes us feel that we need to be tried in the furnace of affliction.

11. The first part of the verse may perhaps be best rendered, "Because of all my enemies I am become a reproach, and unto my neighbours especially, and a fear unto my acquaintance." David's enemies were so numerous and powerful, that they had shaken the loyalty even of his friends; popular opinion, like a violent tempest, carried all before it. The terrible fate of the priests at Nob (1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19.) would naturally make men afraid to have intercourse with him, and David himself was aware of it (1 Sam. xxii. 22.).

"Without," i. e. out of doors, in the street.

"When my path they cross'd,
 "They glanc'd and fled by" (*Keble*).

12. Hence he was like a dead man, whom, as soon as he is borne away to the grave, men are accustomed to put out of mind also (comp. Deut. xxxi. 21, where we have the expression "forgotten out of the mouth"). David doubtless often felt in his exile that he was forgotten by those who once sang his praises.

"A broken vessel." Lit., as in margin, "a vessel that perisheth," that is, being thrown away as worthless. Once he was a pleasant vessel (Jer. xxv. 34.), a chosen vessel (Acts ix. 15.); now he is despised and thrown aside, "a vessel wherein is no pleasure" (Jer. xxii. 28. Hos. viii. 8.).

13. "For I have heard the slander of many." Jeremiah takes up the words, and applies them to himself (Jer. xx. 10, 11.).

14—18. But however men may forsake or scorn him, though foes are powerful and friends are timid, yet he for his part will hold fast his trust in God.

15. "My times." That is, all the changes and chances which time brings with it. The same word is used of the events of David's reign in 1 Chron. xxix. 30. On the firm conviction that his whole life was moulded by the hand of God are grounded the petitions which follow.

PSALMS, XXXI.

- 16 ^u Make thy face to shine upon thy servant :
save me for thy mercies' sake. ^u Num. 6. 25,
26. Ps. 4. 6.
& 67. 1.
- 17 ^x Let me not be ashamed, O LORD ; for I have ^x called upon thee ;
let the wicked be ashamed, *and* ^y ² let them be
silent in the grave. ^y 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Ps. 115. 17.
² Or,
*let them be
cut off for
the grave.*
- 18 ^z Let the lying lips be put to silence ;
which ^a speak ³ grievous things proudly and
contemptuously against the righteous. ^z Ps. 12. 3.
^a 1 Sam. 2. 3.
Ps. 94. 4.
Jude 15.
³ Heb. a hard
thing.
- 19 ¶ ^b Oh how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast
laid up for them that fear thee ;
which thou hast wrought for them that trust in
thee before the sons of men ! ^b Isai. 64. 4.
1 Cor. 2. 9.
- 20 ^c Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy
presence from the pride of man :
^d thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion ^d
from the strife of tongues. ^c Ps. 27. 5.
& 32. 7.
^d Job 5. 21.
- 21 ¶ Blessed *be* the LORD :
for ^e he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness ^e
in a ⁴ strong city. ^e Ps. 17. 7.
^f 1 Sam. 23. 7.
⁴ Or,
fenced city.

16. "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant." The echo of the High-priest's blessing (Num. vi. 25).

17. "Let them be silent." This is better than the margin, "cut off." The meaning is, "Let them be brought to Hades, and then silenced; "let them be brought to the silence of Hades."

19—24. A thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to His own, and an exhortation to all to wait on Him with unshaken faith.

19. David is not satisfied with saying, How gracious has the Lord been to me! He remembers and records with thankfulness His goodness to all His saints.

"Thou hast laid up." Lit. "hidden, stored up." God's goodness is indeed over all His works; but there is a special, secret love in store for the faithful, which love is also manifested from time to time in outward acts, as the Psalmist says, "which Thou hast wrought for them "that trust in Thee before, that is, in the sight of, the sons of men," so that even the world must acknowledge it.

20. "In the secret (lit. hiding-place) of Thy presence." Elsewhere it is said that God hides His trusting ones in "the secret of His "tabernacle" (Ps. xxvii. 5.); or in "the covert of His wings" (Ps. lxi. 4.); or in "His shadow" (Ps. xci. 1.); here it is in the light of His countenance, in the brightness of the radiance which flows from Him. God takes them under His protection, and amid the pride (lit. conspiracies) of men and strife of tongues they rest in peace.

"In a pavilion." Lit. "booth of leafy branches." The protection of the Almighty "spans over the persecuted like an arbour of rich "foliage."

21. The Psalmist passes once more to his own personal experience.

PSALMS, XXXI.

- ^g 1 Sam. 23. 26. 22 For ^g I said in my haste,
^h I am cut off from before thine eyes :
 nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my
 supplications
 when I cried unto thee.
- ⁱ Ps. 34. 9. 23 ¶ ⁱ O love the LORD, all ye his saints :
 for the LORD preserveth the faithful,
 and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
- ^k Ps. 27. 14. 24 ^k Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen
 your heart,
 all ye that hope in the LORD.

The Lord has shewn him wonderful loving-kindness, in that He has given him a fenced city as his abode. It has been suggested that Ziklag is here meant; and the tone of the whole Psalm certainly seems to suit very well with the supposition that it was written during David's stay there. He is still desolate and in banishment, still in the company of wicked men (1 Sam. xxx. 22.), but there is at least partial relief from danger and persecution (1 Sam. xxvii. 4.). After his long wanderings he might well be thankful for having been brought to a place of comparative safety. There he remained a year and four months, until he received the news of Saul's death, and removed to Hebron. His residence there was therefore the turning-point between his time of adversity and his exaltation. If the Psalm was written, as some suppose, during the flight from Absalom, Mahanaim would be intended. But it is possible that "the fenced city" of which David here speaks, may be God Himself; he may simply mean that under His protection he is as safe as in an invincible fortress (comp. Isa. xxxiii. 21, where "the glorious LORD" is spoken of as a "place of broad rivers "and streams").

22. "In my haste." The haste caused by fear, "in my confusion." He had said in his alarm that God would not care for him any more; but his fear and despondency did not keep him from prayer; he still had recourse to God, and God had heard him.

23. God having dealt so graciously with him, he calls on all the godly to love Him, that is, to love Love itself, Who on the one hand preserves the faithful, those who trust in Him, and on the other plentifully rewards those who give way to pride.

24. The Psalm closes with a stirring appeal to the godly to be of good courage, and to wait patiently for the bright sun of peace and joy, which will assuredly at length break through the dark heavens. What he said to himself in Ps. xxvii. 14, he here addresses to the whole body of the faithful.

Though this Psalm is not distinctly prophetic as Psalm xxii., yet the adoption of ver. 5 by our Saviour on the Cross seems to teach us that David is here speaking not only in his own name, but as a type of the future Messiah.

PSALMS, XXXII.

PSALM XXXII.

1 *Blessedness consisteth in remission of sins.* 3 *Confession of sins giveth ease to the conscience.* 8 *God's promises bring joy.*

² A Psalm of David, Maschil.

² Or. A Psalm of David giving instruction.

1 **BLESSED** is he whose ^a transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

^a Ps. 85. 2. Rom. 4. 6, 7, 8.

PSALM XXXII.

The blessedness of forgiveness, and the way to it.

This Psalm, like the fifty-first, is connected with David's great sin. In Ps. li. we have the first outbreak of his penitential confession and earnest entreaty for pardon; here David reveals his distress before Nathan came to him; and he contrasts with his former misery his present happy consciousness of pardon after Nathan's visit.

"**Maschil.**" The title of twelve other Psalms (xlii., xlv., xlv., lii., liii., liv., lv., lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxviii., lxxxix., cxlii.). The margin here has "A Psalm of David, giving instruction;" in Pss. lxxiv., lxxviii., lxxxix., "to give instruction," and in Pss. lxxxviii., cxlii., "giving instruction." The root of the word is found in ver. 8 of this Psalm, "I will instruct thee," and hence the term has been explained "a didactic or instructive poem" (so the Greek Version), but it is applied to Psalms (e.g. xlv. cxlii.) which are not didactic. Others therefore consider that it refers to the manner in which the Psalm was to be sung, rather than to its contents. The word recurs Ps. xvii. 7, where the Authorised Version has "sing ye praises *with understanding*," but the context seems to connect it with music; and it has accordingly been explained "a skilfully constructed song," that is, with elaborate music. In 2 Chron. xxx. 22 the word is applied to the Levite musicians "that taught the good knowledge of the Lord," or rather, as the passage should be rendered, "that were skilled in the knowledge of the Lord," the knowledge intended being chiefly musical.

1, 2. As rest to the weary, health to the sick, relief to those who are racked with pain, so and much more is pardon to the conscience-stricken sinner. Whosoever, having known from his own experience the burden of sin, is enabled to cast that burden upon the Lord, and to take home to himself His free gift of pardon and justification,—such an one can enter into the sense of relief and conscious peace which the opening lines of this Psalm express. "Blessed is the man," as David testifies in Psalm i., "that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners;" but "blessed" also "is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." St. Cyril of Jerusalem hears in this exclamation the chant of the angels over repentant man.

The three words applied in these verses to sin, and which are taken from Exod. xxxiv. 7, "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin" (see also ver. 5 and Ps. li. 1—5.), are joined to three corresponding words expressive of forgiveness. "**Transgression**," which means "breaking loose, open departure, from God," is "lifted up and taken away;" it is a heavy burden of which a man is lightened (see St. John i. 29.). "**Sin**," that is, according to the original meaning of the word, "a coming short of the mark," a violation of God's law, is "**covered**,"

PSALMS, XXXII.

- 2 Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD
^b imputeth not iniquity,
 and ^c in whose spirit *there is* no guile.
- 3 ¶ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
 through my roaring all the day long.
- ^d 1 Sam. 5. 6,
 11. Job 33. 7.
 Ps. 38. 2. 4 For day and night thy ^d hand was heavy upon
 me :
 my moisture is turned into the drought of
 summer. Selah.
- 5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine
 iniquity have I not hid.
^e I said, I will confess my transgressions unto
 the LORD ;
 and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.
 Selah.

so that it becomes invisible to God, and is as though it had never been. "Iniquity," that is, inward depravity, guilt, is "not imputed," not reckoned against the sinner; the record of it is blotted out, and he is accounted righteous (see Rom. iv. 6—9.).

2. "In whose spirit there is no guile." That is, no attempt to stifle the voice of conscience, or trifle with its verdict. There must be entire openness with God, no desire to keep back even a single sin from Him. One sin, wilfully retained, is a hindrance to justification. It is from the want of this inward truth, this Nathanael-like guilelessness, this surrender of ourselves to God without drawback or reserve, that so few attain to that blessedness of forgiveness which David here praises, and which is bestowed on sin acknowledged and repented of.

3, 4. David's own experience bears witness to the misery of endeavouring to hide sin from God. So long as he kept silence and refused to confess, the torture of an accusing conscience wore him away, and he cried aloud in his anguish. He uttered complaints which he had better have restrained; he was silent when it behoved him to speak out. The anguish of his soul affected his bodily health. His bones, the seat of strength, seemed to waste away (Ps. vi. 2; xxxi. 10.).

4. He cried day and night, for God's punishing hand lay heavy upon him; the feeling of His wrath left him no rest. At all times, whether by day he strove to drown all remembrance of his sin in pleasure or in business, or whether he lay tossing on his couch in the stillness of the night, he felt himself under the scourge of God. In the summer heat of anxiety his vital moisture was dried up; the anguish arising from God's displeasure kept him in a constant fever.

"Selah." See on Ps. iii. 2. Here the music becomes louder, and does its part in depicting the torment of a disturbed conscience in a heart still unbroken.

5. "I acknowledged." The verb is not in the past tense in the original; it is a vivid present, or a future. Perhaps, however, the best rendering is, "I proceeded, began to," or possibly, "I resolved."

As there had been, most probably, a decline of watchfulness, a grow-

PSALMS, XXXII.

- 6 ¶ ^fFor this shall every one that is godly ^gpray ^f 1 Tim. 1. 16.
 unto thee ²in a time when thou mayest ^g Isai. 55. 6.
 be found : John 7. 34.
 surely in the floods of great waters they shall ² Heb.
 not come nigh unto him. in a time of
 finding.
- 7 ^hThou art my hiding place ; thou shalt preserve ^h Ps. 9. 9.
 me from trouble ; & 27. 5.
 thou shalt compass me about with ⁱsongs of & 31. 20.
 deliverance. Selah. & 119. 114.
¹ Ex. 15. 1.
² Judg. 5. 1.
² Sam. 22. 1.

ing habit of self-indulgence, which led the way to David's great sin, so was there a gradual movement of his soul towards repentance. Nathan's parable (it has been truly said) was the *occasion* of his confession ; but it could not have produced its effect so instantaneously, had not David previously in his own mind arrived at the very threshold of repentance. Till this crisis was reached, Nathan received no Divine commission to appeal to the king's conscience, but that appeal once made, the long pent-up feeling of contrition burst into unreserved confession (*Kay*).

"I acknowledged . . . I have not hid . . . I said, I will confess." These reiterated expressions shew that David poured out his whole heart ; he concealed nothing ; he made no excuses. Moreover, his confession was his own deliberate act ; he made the resolve (perhaps before Nathan came to him), and he fulfilled it.

"Have I not hid." He only has his sins covered (ver. 1.), who does not cover them himself (Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 St. John i. 9.).

"I will confess my transgressions." Lit. "I will confess against me my transgressions."

"And Thou forgavest." Lit. "didst take away." The absolution was simultaneous with the confession (2 Sam. xii. 13.). Not a moment of time separates the cry of the penitent from the Divine forgiveness.

"The Selah here answers to the former one. There we have a shrill lament over the sinner who tortures himself in vain ; here the clear tones of joy at the blessed experience of one who pours forth his soul to God,—a musical Yea and Amen to the great truth of justifying grace."

6. "For this." That is, "for this cause, therefore ;" on account of this mercy freely offered to every sinner who repents and confesses his sin.

"Shall every one." Rather, "let every one ;" i. e. every godly man ; let such turn in prayer to the Lord at a time when He and His mercy are to be found (see Deut. iv. 29. Jer. xxix. 13. Isa. lv. 6.). The time when God may be found is now (2 Cor. vi. 2.). He who during the season of grace so prays to the Lord, shall be safe when God's judgments are poured on the earth like a flood (Nahum i. 8.).

7. "Thou art my hiding place." David's own experience bears witness to the safety of those who turn to the Lord. He is the Ark in which he hides himself : wherever he turns, he finds occasion for songs of deliverance. St. Chrysostom tells us, that in his time this verse was sung at every funeral, as it is in the Eastern Church to this day.

Selah. The music for the third time becomes *forte*, and that to express the highest feeling of delight.

8 ¶ I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way
which thou shalt go :

² Heb. *I will
counsel thee,
mine eye
shall be
upon thee.*

² I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 ^k Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, *which*
have ¹ no understanding :

^k Prov. 26. 3.
Jam. 3. 3.

whose mouth must be held in with bit and
bridle,

¹ Job 35. 11.

lest they come near unto thee.

^m Prov. 13. 21.
Rom. 2. 9.

10 ^m Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked :

ⁿ Ps. 34. 8.
& 84. 12.
Prov. 16. 20.
Jer. 17. 7.

but ⁿ he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall
compass him about.

^o Ps. 64. 10.
& 68. 3.

11 ^o Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous :
and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in
heart.

8. "I will instruct thee." Some understand this and the following verse as the words of the Psalmist, counselling others. That which David in Ps. li. 15 promises to do, namely, instruct others in the way of salvation, he here takes in hand. But there is good authority for taking this verse as spoken by God. In the silence of his heart the Psalmist hears the voice of God assuring him that he should not be left to his own devices and desires; He himself will teach and guide him.

"I will guide thee with Mine eye." Lit. "I will counsel with "Mine eye upon thee," with sympathizing love taking an interest in thee (Ps. xxxiii. 18; xxxiv. 15.). So unceasingly and so closely does God's eye of love follow His servants, that He never fails by inward suggestion or the dealings of His providence to point out the path of duty. The teaching is so personal, that the servant seems almost to see, as St. Peter did (St. Luke xxii. 61, 62.), the eye which speaks to him.

9. This verse *may* be understood as a continuation of the words of God, but it would rather appear to be the Psalmist's call to himself and others to answer to God's gracious guidance, and to follow it with loving alacrity.

"Lest they come near unto thee." Rather, "otherwise, they will not "come near to thee." As men are obliged to use force in controlling the lower animals, so obstinate sinners must endure the reproaches of conscience and the strokes of the scourge, before they can be brought to obedience. The Psalmist exhorts the persons he is addressing not to render it necessary for God to use the same violence with them which they themselves use with their beasts.

10. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." With reference apparently to the preceding verse. Those who refuse to turn to God must either be driven to repent by the reproaches of conscience, or in the end punished for their obstinacy.

11. Even penitent sinners may be spoken of as righteous, i. e. sincere and true of heart; and if they are really such, without guile before God, they may rejoice.

PSALMS, XXXIII.

PSALM XXXIII.

1 *God is to be praised for his goodness, 6 for his power, 12 and for his providence. 20 Confidence is to be placed in God.*

- 1 **R**EJOICE ^a in the LORD, O ye righteous :
for ^b praise is comely for the upright.
- 2 Praise the LORD with harp :
sing unto him with the psaltery ^c *and* an in-
strument of ten strings.
- 3 ^d Sing unto him a new song ;—play skilfully
with a loud noise.
- a Ps. 32, 11.
& 97, 12.
b Ps. 147, 1.
c Ps. 92, 3.
& 144, 9.
d Ps. 96, 1.
& 98, 1.
& 144, 9.
& 149, 1.
Isai. 42, 10.
Rev. 5, 9.

This is the second of the penitential Psalms. The sixth Psalm teaches us not to despair on account of the power of sin, but to persevere in prayer: this Psalm sets forth the blessedness of confession, as the way to pardon. Miserable is he who is so dead in sin as to be unconscious of his condition, or so hardened as to refuse to confess it. Confession is not the whole of repentance, but when it bursts forth from a truly contrite heart, and is accompanied with a sincere desire of amendment, forgiveness is vouchsafed at once.

PSALM XXXIII.

A call to praise God as the Creator of the world and the Guardian of His people.

One of the few Psalms in the first book which are anonymous. It begins where the preceding Psalm ends, taking up the last words. This may account for its place in the collection; but the subject of the two Psalms is different. The last Psalm was penitential; this is a congregational hymn, celebrating the praise of God as the merciful Creator and powerful Ruler of the world, and the watchful Guardian of His people; and it ends with one short prayer that the mercy of this great and loving God may rest upon His chosen Israel, according to their hope.

1—3. The Psalm opens with a loud call to the righteous and upright, those whose one desire is to live a God-fearing, God-pleasing life, to praise the Lord.

1. "Praise is comely for the upright." It is at once their duty and their delight; it befits *them*, and it befits them alone (Ecclus. xv. 9.).

2. This is the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms. It is as if the infinite glory of God could not be fitly celebrated by the voice alone. Only two instruments are named in the Hebrew, the harp and the ten-stringed lute. The latter part of the verse would be more correctly rendered, "On a ten-stringed lute play unto Him."

3. "A new song." That is, a song which, in consequence of new deliverances (Lam. iii. 23.), springs with a fresh impulse of gratitude from the heart (see also Isa. xlii. 10. Ps. xl. 3; xcvi. 1; xcvi. 1. Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3.).

"Play skilfully." The same expression occurs in 1 Sam. xvi. 17. It has been suggested that the full meaning of the clause is given by the paraphrase, "Smite the harp fitly for Him amid the blare of the trumpets."

PSALMS, XXXIII.

- 4 ¶ For the word of the LORD *is* right ;
and all his works *are done* in truth.
- 5 ^e He loveth righteousness and judgment :
^f the earth is full of the ² goodness of the
LORD.
- 6 ^s By the word of the LORD were the heavens
made ;
and ^h all the host of them ⁱ by the breath of his
mouth.
- 7 ^k He gathereth the waters of the sea together as
an heap :
he layeth up the depth in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD :
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe
of him.

^e Ps. 11. 7.
& 45. 7.
^f Ps. 119. 64.
² Or, *mercy*.

^s Gen. 1. 6, 7.
Heb. 11. 3.
2 Pet. 3. 5.

^h Gen. 2. 1.
ⁱ Job 26. 13.

^k Gen. 1. 9.
Job 26. 10.
& 38. 8.

4. After the summons to praise God come the reasons why He is worthy to be praised ; first, because He is what He is, good and gracious (vv. 4, 5.), the Creator (vv. 6—9.), and Ruler (vv. 10, 11.) of the universe ; and, secondly, because of His special care for His people (vv. 12—19.).

“The word of the Lord.” That is, whatsoever the Lord says, in precept, or in instruction, or in promise (see Ps. xxxvi. 5—7.).

5. The Lord is not only true and righteous in word and deed, but He is loving and gracious ; the earth is full of His mercy.

6. The thought of God’s love as exhibited in His works on earth naturally reminds the Psalmist that the entire work of creation is His.

“By the word of the Lord . . . by the breath of His mouth.” That is, by His Almighty command (see ver. 9.).

Many of the early Fathers understand “the word of the Lord” personally, as referring to our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom St. John says (i. 3.), that “all things were made by Him” (see also Col. i. 16. Eph. iii. 9. Heb. i. 2.). In like manner they take “the breath,” or spirit, “of His mouth” to mean God the Holy Spirit, of Whom it is specially said at the time of the creation, that He moved over the face of the waters (see Gen. i. 2. Job xxvi. 13 ; xxxiii. 4.).

7. The display of His power in the waters consists in His confining them within fixed bounds and keeping them there.

“As an heap.” The convex waters of the sea, being firmly held together, rise apparently above the level of the earth. The same expression is used of the miraculous piling up of the waters of the Red Sea and the Jordan (see Exod. xv. 8. Josh. iii. 13, 16.).

“In storehouses.” While the upper waters continue in an immoveable mass, and do not come down from their elevation to cover the earth, there are lower depths laid up as in a treasury, in the hidden beds of the ocean and rivers.

8. “Fear the Lord.” Lit. “fear from Him,” in the sense of falling back from Him in terror. God’s great power, as manifested in creation, is a reason why all mankind should fear Him (see Jer. v. 22. Rev. xv. 4.). And fearing Him, they should fear none else.

PSALMS, XXXIII.

- 9 For ¹he spake, and it was *done* ;
he commanded, and it stood fast. ¹ Gen. 1. 3.
Ps. 148. 5.
- 10 ¶ ^mThe LORD ²bringeth the counsel of the hea-
then to nought : ^m Isai. 8. 10.
& 19. 3.
he maketh the devices of the people of none ^{maketh}
effect. ² Heb.
maketh
frustrate.
- 11 ⁿThe counsel of the LORD standeth for ever,
the thoughts of his heart ³to all generations. ⁿ Job 23. 13.
Prov. 19. 21.
Isai. 46. 10.
³ Heb. *to gene-*
ration and
generation.
- 12 ¶ ^oBlessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD ;
and the people *whom* he hath ^pchosen for his
own inheritance. ^o Ps. 65. 4.
& 144. 15.
^p Ex. 19. 5.
Deut. 7. 6.
- 13 ^qThe LORD looketh from heaven ;
he beholdeth all the sons of men. ^q 2 Chr. 16. 9.
Job 23. 24.
Ps. 11. 4.
& 14. 2.
- 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh
upon all the inhabitants of the earth. Prov. 15. 3.
- 15 He fashioneth their hearts alike ;
^rhe considereth all their works. ^r Job 34. 21.
Jer. 32. 19.
- 16 ^sThere is no king saved by the multitude of an
host : ^s Ps. 44. 6.
a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- 17 ^tAn horse *is* a vain thing for safety :
neither shall he deliver *any* by his great
strength. ^t Ps. 20. 7.
& 147. 10.
Prov. 21. 31.

9. He has but to speak, and whatever He commands stands forth at once, as an obedient servant (see Gen. i. 3. Ps. cxix. 91. Lam. iii. 37.).

10. The Almighty Creator of the universe is also the irresistible Ruler of men ; He dashes in pieces their counsels and frustrates their plans. His own purposes in the meanwhile are always being accomplished : the history of the world is the development of His will.

11. "Counsel . . . thoughts." The same words as in the preceding verse are rendered "counsel," "devices" (Prov. xix. 21.).

12. The great and good Lord being what He is, and what He has been above declared to be, they must needs be especially blessed whom He chooses for His people (see Deut. xxxiii. 29.).

Their blessedness is still further proved by what follows ; first (vv. 13—15.), because, perfectly acquainted as God is with men's secret hearts, nothing can be undertaken against His people without His cognizance ; and, secondly (vv. 16—19.), because in Him His people have a more sure defence than could be found in any earthly power.

15. "Alike." Or, "altogether," i. e. all without exception ; "one" and all" (*Keble*). See Zech. xii. 1. Heb. xii. 9.

16, 17. The power of the king, the prowess of the strong man, the strength of the war-horse are not really theirs ; they can do nothing without God's will (see Prov. xxi. 31.).

PSALMS, XXXIV.

- ^u Job 36. 7. 18 ^a Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* ^x upon them
 Ps. 34. 15. that fear him,
 1 Pet. 3. 12. upon them that hope in his mercy ;
^x Ps. 147. 11. 19 to deliver their soul from death,
 and ^y to keep them alive in famine.
- ^f Job 5. 20. 20 ¶ ^z Our soul waiteth for the LORD :—^a he *is* our
 Ps. 37. 19. help and our shield.
- ^z Ps. 62. 1, 5. 21 For our ^b heart shall rejoice in him,
 & 130. 6. because we have trusted in his holy name.
^a Ps. 115. 9, 10, 11.
^b Ps. 13. 5. 22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
 Zech. 10. 7. according as we hope in thee.
 John 16. 22.

PSALM XXXIV.

1 *David praiseth God, and exhorteth others thereto by his experience.*
 8 *They are blessed that trust in God.* 11 *He exhorteth to the fear of God.* 15 *The privileges of the righteous.*

- ² Or, *Achish*, 4 *Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before*
 1 Sam. 21. 13. ² Abimelech ; who drove him away, and he departed.
^a Eph. 5. 20.
¹ Thess. 5. 18. 1 **I** WILL ^a bless the LORD at all times :
² Thess. 1. 3. & 2. 13. his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

18. God's people may not have worldly power, but they have that which is of far greater value,—the eye of the Lord is upon them ; the one chief aim of His government of the world is the salvation of those that fear Him and hope in His mercy. None can take them at unawares, for their heavenly Guardian foresees all dangers, and provides against them, feeding both soul and body with all necessary sustenance.

20—22. The Church's response to the former part of the Psalm, which has told of God's greatness in Himself and His care for His people. The Church waits and trusts in the Lord ; and according to her hope she prays, and is content and happy.

22. O valiant prayer, which asks God to measure His mercy according to our trust (*Theodore*). As in the Lord's prayer we pray to be forgiven as we forgive, so here (and in the last verse but one of the *Te Deum*, where this petition occurs) we plead for mercy simply on the ground of our trust.

PSALM XXXIV.

Thanksgiving and instruction of one who has been delivered.

The fact of David's going into the country of the Philistines, and being obliged to save his life by playing the part of a madman (1 Sam. xxi. 13.), shews the straits to which he was reduced. His trust and hope however never left him ; and as soon as he found himself in comparative safety in the cave of Adullam, he thanks God for his deliverance. The double character of the Psalm, partly joyful, partly didactic, would seem to suit exactly with the circumstances. David is anxious to impress on the followers who had gathered round him, and who apparently were conspicuous for fearlessness of man rather than for

PSALMS, XXXIV.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 My soul shall make her ^b boast in the LORD :
^c the humble shall hear <i>thereof</i> , and be glad. | b Jer. 9. 24.
1 Cor. 1. 31.
2 Cor. 10. 17. |
| 3 ¶ O ^d magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together. | c Ps. 119. 74.
& 142. 7.
d Ps. 69. 30.
Luko 1. 46. |
| 4 I ^e sought the LORD, and he heard me,
and delivered me from all my fears. | e Matt. 7. 7.
Luko 11. 9. |
| 5 ² They looked unto him, and were lightened :
and their faces were not ashamed. | 2 Or, <i>They</i>
<i>flowed</i> unto
him. |

fear of God (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2.), that if they would share the protection which God was sure to extend to all His true servants, they must themselves serve and fear Him; and he explains to them in what that service mainly consists (see 1 Sam. xxi. 10—xxii. 1.).

Abimelech is the hereditary title of the kings of Gath, as Pharaoh of the kings of Egypt. The use of this name in the inscription shews that the writer did not derive his information from 1 Sam. xxi., but probably from some ancient tradition.

This is one of the Alphabetical Psalms, the several verses beginning with one of the Hebrew letters in order, except that, as in Ps. xxv., the sixth letter (*Vau*) is omitted.

1. "At all times." Lit. "at every time," of tribulation as well as of wealth. As Paul and Silas sang praises to God in the prison at Philippi (Acts xvi. 25.), so even in the cave of Adullam David's mouth was filled with thanksgiving. And at every communion, under whatever variety of outward circumstances, the devout Christian acknowledges that he is bound at all times and in all places to give thanks to God (see 1 Thess. v. 18.).

"No time but I will find a song
"Of blessing for my God" (*Keble*).

2. "Make her boast." That is, exult with thanksgiving (Ps. xlv. 8; lxxi. 6. 1 Sam. ii. 1. St. Luke i. 46.).

"The humble shall hear." The Psalmist's song of praise will encourage those who have learned patience by affliction; God's mercy to him will be a pledge of deliverance to them.

3. "O magnify." David is not content to praise God by himself; he would have his companions, rough as they were and unused to such employment, to join with him. And in order to persuade them, he sets forth the deliverance he had experienced.

4. In the land of the Philistines, in his extreme peril, David had recourse to God in prayer, and He delivered him. See 2 Chron. xv. 2, 4, 15. Jer. xxix. 13.

5. "They looked unto Him." Spoken generally, in the sense of "men looked unto Him." It is much the same as if it had been "whosoever looketh unto Him."

"Looked." That is, with intense yearning, eager for salvation, as in Num. xxi. 9. Zech. xii. 10.

"Were lightened." That is, "were brightened up with joy."

"On Him a wistful eye they set,
"Their heart grew bright as morn" (*Keble*).

"And their faces were not ashamed." Lit. "And never may, or

PSALMS, XXXIV.

° but they that seek the LORD shall not want ° Ps. 84. 11.
any good *thing*.

- 11 ¶ Come, ye children, hearken unto me :
^p I will teach you the fear of the LORD. P Ps. 32. 8.
- 12 ^q What man *is he that* desireth life,
 and loveth *many* days, that he may see good ? q 1 Pet. 3. 10, 11.
- 13 Keep thy tongue from evil,
 and thy lips from ^r speaking guile. r 1 Pet. 2. 22.
- 14 ^s Depart from evil, and do good ;
^t seek peace, and pursue it. s Ps. 37. 27.
 Isai. 1. 16, 17.
 t Rom. 12. 18.
 Heb. 12. 14.
- 15 ^u The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous,
 and his ears *are open* unto their ^x cry. u Job 36. 7.
 Ps. 33. 18.
 1 Pet. 3. 12.
- 16 ^y The face of the LORD *is* against them that ^z do evil,
^z to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. y Lev. 17. 10.
 Jer. 44. 11.
 Amos 9. 4.
 z Prov. 10. 7.
- 17 *The righteous cry*, and ^a the LORD heareth, a ver. 6, 15, 19.
 Ps. 145, 19, 20.

11. "Ye children." A tender form of address by one experienced in the ways of the Lord ; it occurs frequently in the Book of Proverbs. It may be observed how well suited David's teaching in this Psalm was to the character of the persons who had gathered round him (1 Sam. xxii. 2.).

12. David first throws out the question, and then answers it himself in the following verses. So in Ps. xv. 1 ; xxv. 12. St. James iii. 13. The threefold rule of life here given comes to us with the double authority of the Psalmist and the Apostle (see 1 St. Pet. iii. 10—12.). He who would love life and see good days must (i.) keep his tongue from evil and guile ; (ii.) in his own doings avoid sin and follow good ; and (iii.) in his behaviour to others desire and studiously pursue peace.

13. The first place in the pathway of holiness is given to guarding the tongue and avoiding all sins of speech, especially every kind of falsehood. There can be no holy heart where there is an unholy tongue ; and on the other hand he who governs his lips does at the same time most effectually govern his heart (St. James iii. 2. St. Matt. xii. 34.).

14. "Depart from evil, and do good." We must not only speak good words, but do good deeds. The same precept is repeated elsewhere in different forms (see Isa. i. 16, 17. Rom. xii. 9.).

"Seek peace, and pursue it." That is, follow after it, as the hunter pursues his victim. Be not satisfied to allow peace to come to you, but seek it yourself, when it seems to be escaping ; seek peace and reconciliation, not revenge.

15. The Psalmist further recommends the rule of life which he has been laying down by the contrast between the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the ungodly. On the one hand, the eyes of the Lord are towards the righteous, and His ears towards their cry ; on the other His countenance is set against the evil-doers, until there is no trace of their earthly existence left (see marg. reff.).

17. "The righteous cry." Lit. "they cry." The A. V. is probably

PSALMS, XXXIV.

- and delivereth them out of all their troubles.
- 18 ^bThe LORD *is* nigh ^{c2}unto them that are of a broken heart ;
and saveth such as be ³of a contrite spirit.
- 19 ^dMany *are* the afflictions of the righteous :
^ebut the LORD delivereth him out of them all.
- 20 He keepeth all his bones :—^fnot one of them is broken.
- 21 ^gEvil shall slay the wicked :
and they that hate the righteous ⁴shall be desolate.
- 22 The LORD ^hredeemeth the soul of his servants :
and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

correct in supplying "the righteous;" but the construction may be as in ver. 5; as if it were, "Whosoever crieth unto the Lord, He heareth."

18. The broken-hearted and contrite (lit. crushed) in spirit are not only those who are sorry for sin, but those in whom all pride and self-love are broken at the very root. Such characters are overlooked by their fellow-men, but God is very near to them, saving them from despair, and "raising up in them a new and higher life upon the ruins of the "old" (see marg. reff.).

20. "He keepeth all his bones." That is, a special Providence watches over him; his bones, that is, his inward strength is unimpaired; in all his trials God keeps him safe from his enemies. There may be a reference to this passage, as well as to the law of the Paschal sacrifice, in St. John's account of our Lord's death, when he says (xix. 36.) that His bones were unbroken upon the Cross. He is the true righteous man, and therefore what is said in the Psalm of the righteous applies pre-eminently to Him. Even in death His righteous will and purpose and the indwelling fulness of the Godhead remained unchanged; there was no defeat, but rather majesty and victory, in His sufferings. And His faithful servants in like manner are preserved through their trials: though persecuted they are not forsaken, cast down they are not destroyed, but rise again to a renewed life.

21. While the righteous are watchfully guarded in their afflictions and carried safely through them, the wicked are destroyed; the evil which they loved and cherished becomes their executioner.

"Shall be desolate." Rather, "shall be counted guilty, condemned;" they that hate the righteous must pay the penalty, must undergo punishment as guilty.

22. "Shall be desolate." See on ver. 21.

"Who trust in Him, their guilt is gone" (*Kelle*).

This last verse is, as it were, the sum of the whole Psalm. To be in affliction, and yet to rejoice and give thanks, seems impossible to worldly men; but if they will only make trial of God's goodness and trust in Him, endeavouring at the same time to walk in the way of holiness, they will find that He will not only protect and guard them in many unsuspected ways, but will enable them to rejoice. As the child is content

PSALMS, XXXV.

PSALM XXXV.

1 *David prayeth for his own safety, and his enemies' confusion. 11 He complaineth of their wrongful dealing. 22 Thereby he inciteth God against them.*

A Psalm of David.

1 **P**LEAD ^a *my cause*, O LORD, with them that
strive with me : ^a Ps. 43. 1.
& 119. 154.
Lam. 3. 58.
^b fight against them that fight against me. ^b Ex. 14. 25.

and happy in his father's arms, so the abiding consciousness of God's loving eye and strong right hand will assuredly bring rest and peace to the believer. The root of faith will in due time bear the fruit of rejoicing.

PSALM XXXV.

Prayer to God to do battle against ungrateful persecutors.

This Psalm also belongs to the time of David's persecution by Saul, and would seem especially to be connected with what occurred in the cave of Engedi, when David for the first time spared Saul's life (see 1 Sam. xxiv.).

Though Saul was deeply touched by David's generosity, and acknowledged his fault, and desisted for the time from further persecution, David did not think it safe to leave his hiding place. "Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up into the hold," among the rocks of the wild-goats. This Psalm seems to have been written immediately after this incident; indeed, it is (as has been said) but the lyrical expansion of his expostulation with Saul when he came out of the cave. In the evening of that eventful day David takes up his words, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand," and prays that the Lord would interpose without delay in his behalf. His mind is deeply agitated, from a sense of his desolate condition, and the hatred and ingratitude of his enemies. He prays strongly, even bitterly, for judgment upon them; but his emotion gradually subsides, as he becomes more assured of a favourable answer, and he ends with a vow of thanksgiving. His prayer did not spring from any desire for personal vengeance. He who had just spared the life of Saul, and parted from him with a promise to shew mercy to his children in time to come, could not have retired to his lodging among the rocks to give vent to malice and hatred against his enemy. The Psalm itself shews that his soul was glowing with love and trust in God; there was no place in such a soul for the fire of unholy passion against man. The imprecations therefore in this Psalm must be understood as proceeding from a simple zeal for the honour of God and a righteous indignation against sin. It is true that they are his own enemies on whom David calls down vengeance, but in opposing him they were not only persecuting an innocent man, but they were fighting against God's purpose. In praying therefore that God would overthrow them, he was really praying that God's will might be done, and that sin might be punished. In David's lips the words of the Psalm mean no more than his remonstrance to Saul, "The Lord judge between me and thee; and the Lord avenge me of thee."

PSALMS, XXXV.

- c Isai. 42. 13. 2 ^c Take hold of shield and buckler,
 and stand up for mine help.
 3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way*
 against them that persecute me :
 say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.
 d ver. 26. 4 ^d Let them be confounded and put to shame that
 Ps. 40, 14, 15. seek after my soul :
 & 70. 2, 3. let them be ^e turned back and brought to con-
 e Ps. 123. 5. fusion that devise my hurt.
 f Job 21. 18. 5 ^f Let them be as chaff before the wind :
 Ps. 1. 4. and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.
 & 83. 13. Isai. 23. 5. Hos. 13. 3.

The Psalm may be divided into three parts (vv. 1—10; 11—18; 19—28.), each of which begins with an appeal to God against enemies, and closes with a thanksgiving, grounded on a firm persuasion that the appeal will be heard.

1. "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me." More literally, "strive Thou with them that strive with me." The same word occurs in 1 Sam. xxiv. 15: it is usually applied to judicial trials; but the assistance here sought is that of the sword.

"Fight." In the song of Moses (Exod. xv. 3.) the Lord is spoken of as "a man of war," and in Deut. xxxii. 41, 42, mention is made of His glittering sword and His arrows. The figure is here worked out more fully: the Psalmist has before him the grand spectacle of God armed in his behalf.

2. The "buckler" is the smaller weapon; the "shield" covered the whole body. They could not be used at the same time; but they are both mentioned, in order to express that the Lord was to make Himself felt by the Psalmist's enemies in every possible way as the unapproachable One.

3. "Draw out the spear." Spears as well as swords, when not in use, were kept in cases.

"And stop." Some interpreters take the word thus translated as a noun, and render the verse, "Draw out the spear and the battle-axe against them that pursue me." But the translation in the text follows the old Versions, "Set up a barrier to oppose my persecutors."

"Them that persecute me." The word is continually used of Saul's pursuing David (1 Sam. xxiii. 25, 28; xxiv. 14; xxvi. 18.).

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Make me to feel in my inmost heart that Thou art on my side, and that I must be safe with Thee. David desires that God would reveal not only His power against his enemies, but His love to himself.

4. "Let them be confounded and put to shame." That is, disappointed of their designs.

"That seek after my soul." So David speaks of Saul (1 Sam. xx. 1; xxii. 23.).

5. "As chaff." See marg. reff.

"The Angel of the Lord." That is, as in the last Psalm (ver. 7.), the guardian Angel of God's people, by whom all deliverances were

PSALMS, XXXV.

- 6 Let their way be ^{2g} dark and slippery : ² Heb. *darkness and slipperiness.*
 and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.
- 7 For without cause have they ^h hid for me their ^g Ps. 73. 18.
Jer. 23. 12.
 net *in* a pit, ^h Ps. 9. 15.
which without cause they have digged for my
 soul.
- 8 Let ⁱ destruction come upon him ³ at unawares ; ⁱ 1 Thess. 5. 3.
 and ^k let his net that he hath hid catch himself : ³ Heb. *which he knoweth not of.*
 into that very destruction let him fall. ^k Ps. 7. 15, 16.
& 57. 6.
& 141. 9, 10.
Prov. 5. 22.
- 9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD :
^l it shall rejoice in his salvation. ^l Ps. 13. 5.
- 10 ^m All my bones shall say,—LORD, ⁿ who *is* like ^m See
Ps. 51. 8.
 unto thee, ⁿ Ex. 15. 11.
Ps. 71. 19.
 which deliverest the poor from him that is too
 strong for him,
 yea, the poor and the needy from him that
 spoileth him ? ⁴ Heb.
Witnesses of wrong.
^o Ps. 27. 12.
- 11 ¶ ^{4o} False witnesses did rise up ;

wrought, who (e. g.) “took off the chariot-wheels of the Egyptians, that they drave them heavily” (Exod. xiv. 19, 25.).

“Chase them.” Rather, “thrust, strike, give them the push that shall cause their downfall.”

6. “Dark and slippery.” See marg. reff.

The fearful image of men driven like chaff before the wind, along a path which is utter darkness and slipperiness (such is the exact meaning of the words), is made more terrible by the idea of their being closely pursued by the destroying Angel.

7. “Their net in a pit.” Lit. “pit of their net,” that is, a net concealed in a pit lightly covered over.

The verse becomes more forcible, if by a slight transposition it is made to run thus ; “without cause they have hid for me a net ; without cause they have digged a pit for my soul.” It was the special aggravation of the persecution which David endured, that it was entirely unprovoked (see ver. 19.).

8. “Him.” Not necessarily a particular person ; rather, “each one of his enemies” or “the whole body taken collectively.”

9, 10. These two verses are closely bound to the preceding. The overthrow of his enemies shall call forth joy and thankfulness. The first words might be rendered “So shall my soul be joyful in the Lord.”

10. “All my bones.” The joy of his soul shall throb through every member of his body ; his bones are spoken of as sharing in his joy, as elsewhere the crushing of the bones represents the extreme of anguish (Ps. vi. 2 ; xxxi. 10 ; xxxii. 3 ; li. 8.).

11—18. In this second division the Psalmist complains bitterly of the falsehood and malice of his enemies, and contrasts it with the kindness which he had shewn to them (see 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.). The effect of malicious accusations in embittering Saul against David, and persuading him

- ² Heb. *they asked me.*
^p Ps. 38. 20.
 & 109. 3, 4, 5. **12** ^p They rewarded me evil for good—to the ³ spoiling of my soul.
- ³ Heb. *depriving.*
^q Job 30. 25.
 Ps. 69. 10, 11. **13** But as for me, ^a when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth:
 I ⁴ humbled my soul with fasting;
^r and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
- ⁴ Or, *afflicted.*
^r Matt. 10. 13.
 Luke 10. 6. **14** I ⁵ behaved myself ⁶ as though *he had been* my friend or brother:
 I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his* mother.
- ⁵ Heb. *walked.*
⁶ Heb. *as a friend, as a brother to me.*
⁷ Heb. *halting.*
 Ps. 38. 17. **15** But in mine ⁷ adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together:

of David's treachery is shewn on many occasions (see 1 Sam. xxii. 7, 8, 13; xxiii. 21, 22.).

"They laid to my charge." Lit. as in margin, "they asked me," they demand confession of, and satisfaction for, things which I have never even heard of.

We are reminded of Him against Whom "there arose certain, and "bare false witness" (St. Mark xiv. 57.).

12. "They rewarded me evil for good." So Saul himself confessed (1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 18.).

"To the spoiling (lit. "bereavement") of my soul." By one cause or another all those who were dearest to David had been removed from him; his parents were in the land of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.); Michal had been torn from him (1 Sam. xxv. 44.); Jonathan was afraid to come near him.

13. The servants of Saul and hangers on of his court, who had poisoned Saul's mind against David, had received many acts of kindness from him; he had counted their sickness and sorrow as his own, and joined with them in prayer and humiliation for their recovery.

"My prayer returned into mine own bosom." As much as to say, "If it had no other effect, it brought peace to my own heart" (comp. Ps. lxxix. 12. Isa. lxxv. 6, 7. St. Matt. x. 13. St. Luke x. 6.). Some commentators however think that there is an allusion here to the Eastern custom of allowing the face to drop upon the bosom in earnest prayer; "my prayer returned, fell, upon my bosom."

14. "I behaved myself." Lit. "I walked, I went about."

"As for mine own friend or brother,

"Low I pined and softly went;

"As one mourning for his mother,

"Heavily I droop'd and bent" (*Keble*).

"Heavily." Lit. "mourning," that is, with the outward indications of sorrow, with shorn head (Job i. 20; ii. 8.), and rent garments; or perhaps, as the word more especially signifies, with black or sad-coloured garments (comp. 2 Sam. xiv. 2. Jer. viii. 21; xiv. 2. Ps. xxxviii. 6; xlii. 9; xliii. 2. Mal. iii. 14, margin).

15. "But in mine adversity." Lit. "in my halting" (Ps. xxxviii. 17.). The Psalmist had shewn kindness and sympathy with them in

PSALMS, XXXV.

- yea, ^s the abjects gathered themselves together ^s Job 30. 1,
 against me, and I knew *it* not; 8, 12.
 they did ^t tear *me*, and ceased not: ^t Job 16. 9.
 16 with hypocritical mockers in feasts, ^u they ^u Job 16. 9.
 gnashed upon me with their teeth. Ps. 37. 12.
 17 Lord, how long wilt thou ^x look on? Lam. 2. 16.
 Rescue my soul from their destructions, ^x Hab. 1. 13.
^{2y} my darling from the lions. ² Heb. *my*
 18 ² I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: ^{only one.}
 I will praise thee among ³ much people. ^y Ps. 22. 20.
 19 ¶ ^a Let not them that are mine enemies ⁴ wrong- ^z Ps. 22. 25, 31.
 fully rejoice over me: & 40. 9, 10.
neither ^b let them wink with the eye ^c that hate ^z Ps. 111. 1.
 me without a cause. ³ Heb. *strong.*
 & Ps. 13. 4.
 & 25. 2.
 & 38. 16.
⁴ Heb. *falsely,*
 Ps. 38. 19.
^b Job 15. 12.
 Prov. 6. 13.
 & 10. 10.
 c Ps. 69. 4. & 109. 3. & 119. 161. Lam. 3. 52. John 15. 25.

their trouble; but now, when God's hand was heavy upon him, they rejoiced. The past tense does not imply that the state of things described was past for ever; it was still going on; "they have rejoiced and are rejoicing." Hence the prayer in ver. 17.

"The abjects." Lit. "the smitten;" that is, the poor and worthless, men of the lowest grade, whom the Psalmist goes on to say he knew not, whom he refused to notice, because they were so far beneath him (comp. Job xxx. 8.). Or the word may be taken actively, "the smiters," especially those who smite with the tongue (see Jer. xviii. 18.), who are pitiless and reviling in their speech; in which case the following clause, "and I knew it not," must be taken to mean "without my knowledge," unexpectedly, as in ver. 8.

"They who smite by stealth assemble,

"Rend and crush, and will not cease" (*Keble*).

"They did tear me." This is commonly understood of abusive and slanderous words; but the figure is taken from rending a garment, and the meaning would rather seem to be, that they were constantly raving against him by word and deed (see Job xvi. 9.). The Prayer Book Version, "making mouths at me," seems to be incorrect.

16. "With hypocritical mockers in feasts." Lit. "like jesters for a cake," that is, who for the sake of dainty food lay themselves out to make scornful jokes; "men that scorn for pleasant bread" (*Keble*).

Probably David had had experience of many such among Saul's servants, men who did not hesitate to gnash their teeth at him in hatred and contempt, if they could thereby gain favour with their master.

17, 18. The second part of the Psalm closes, like the first, with prayer and thanksgiving.

17. "My darling." See on Ps. xxii. 20.

19—28. After another description of the deceit and wickedness of his enemies, David prays that God would vindicate his cause, and disappoint his persecutors; and he ends by declaring that he would never cease to praise the righteousness of the Lord.

19. "Wink with the eye." That is, to each other, in malicious congratulations (see marg. reff.).

20 For they speak not peace :
but they devise deceitful matters against *them*
that are quiet in the land.

^d Ps. 22. 13.

^e Ps. 40. 15, &
51. 7. & 70. 3.

^f Exod. 3. 7.

^g Acts 7. 34.

^h Ps. 28. 1.
& 83. 1.

ⁱ Ps. 10. 1.
& 22. 11, 19.

^j & 38. 21.
& 71. 12.

^k Ps. 44. 23.
& 80. 2.

^l Ps. 26. 1.

^m 2 Thess. 1. 6.

ⁿ ver. 19.

^o Ps. 27. 12.
& 70. 3.

^p & 140. 8.

^q Heb. *Ah*,
ah, our soul.

^r Lam. 2. 16.

^s ver. 4.

^t Ps. 40. 14.

^u q Ps. 109. 29.
& 132. 18.

^v r Ps. 38. 16.

^w s Rom. 12. 15.

^x 1 Cor. 12. 26.

^y ³ Heb. *my*
righteous-
ness,

^z Prov. 8. 18.

21 Yea, they ^d opened their mouth wide against me,
and said, ^e Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

22 *This* thou hast ^f seen, O LORD : ^g keep not
silence :

O Lord, be not ^h far from me.

23 ⁱ Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment,
even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

24 ^k Judge me, O LORD my God, ^l according to thy
righteousness ;

and ^m let them not rejoice over me.

25 ⁿ Let them not say in their hearts, ^o Ah, so
would we have it :

let them not say, ^p We have swallowed him up.

26 ^p Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion
together that rejoice at mine hurt :

let them be ^q clothed with shame and dishonour
that ^r magnify *themselves* against me.

27 ^s Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that
favour ³ my righteous cause : .

“That hate me without a cause.” None was ever so hated without a cause as He Who did among His enemies the works which none other man did ; to Him therefore may these words be most fitly applied. See St. John xv. 25.

21. “Aha.” A cry of joy, especially of malignant joy, at another’s trouble.

“Seen it.” That is, his humiliation.

22. David turns abruptly from his enemies to God. If they saw and rejoiced in his calamity, no less surely did God see their malicious exultation.

“This thou hast seen ;” as much as to say, “thou too hast seen.” The Psalmist takes up the word which his enemies had just been represented as using. If they had seen his fall, and had rejoiced over it, their malicious exultation had not escaped the eye of God.

24. “Judge me ;” i. e. “right me,” as in Ps. xxvi. 1.

25. “Ah, so would we have it.” Heb. as in margin, “Ah, Ah, our ‘soul,’ that is, our very wish ; it is just what we desired.

“Aha! our will is won” (*Keble*).

27, 28. Assured of a favourable answer to his appeal, the Psalmist once more betakes himself to thanksgiving ; he calls on all those who favour his cause, which is the cause of right, to praise the Lord for the justice of His government ; and for himself he promises perpetual thanksgiving.

David in all his sufferings, and especially in the false accusations and

PSALMS, XXXVI.

yea, let them ^t say continually, Let the LORD be ^t Ps. 70. 4
magnified,

^u which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his ^u Ps. 149. 4.
servant.

28 ^x And my tongue shall speak of thy righteous- ^x Ps. 50. 15.
ness & 51. 14.

and of thy praise all the day long. & 71. 24.

PSALM XXXVI.

1 *The grievous estate of the wicked.* 5 *The excellency of God's mercy.*
10 *David prayeth for favour to God's children.*

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David the servant
of the LORD.

1 **T**HE transgression of the wicked saith within
my heart,

that ^a there is no fear of God before his eyes. ^a Rom. 3. 18.

cruel ingratitude of his enemies, was eminently a type of Christ. Indeed, our Lord takes up the words of this Psalm, and reminds His disciples how completely they were fulfilled in Himself. But Christ's tone and spirit with regard to His enemies were very different from the Psalmist's. Under the old dispensation, which was a system of temporal rewards and punishments, it was natural for God's saints to invoke vengeance on those who were His enemies as well as theirs, and temporal evil was the only form in which they could conceive of God shewing His displeasure against the wicked; therefore they desired it, and prayed for it with all their hearts. But Christ has taught us, both by example and precept, the new law of love: "I say unto you, Love your enemies . . . and pray "for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

PSALM XXXVI.

The contrast between man's wickedness and God's goodness.

There are no personal allusions to mark definitely the occasion when this Psalm was written; but the main subject of the Psalm, the curse of alienation from God and the blessing of fellowship with Him, suits very well with the tenor of David's thoughts at the time of his persecution by Saul. The last two verses especially are an echo of the prayer and confidence of Ps. xxxv. From contemplating the depravity of the ungodly the Psalmist turns, somewhat abruptly, to celebrate the immeasurable grace, faithfulness, and righteousness of God. He then prays that those attributes may be exhibited for the comfort and protection of the faithful, and the overthrow of the wicked,—a prayer which he is confident will be heard.

"The servant of the Lord." See on Ps. xviii. title. In Ps. xxxv. 27 David speaks of himself as God's servant.

1. "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart." The word translated "saith" means a prophetic utterance, a Divine voice or oracle; as, e. g. Ps. cx. 1, "The Lord's voice to my Lord." It occurs frequently in the formula "Thus saith the Lord." The clause may be

PSALMS, XXXVI.

^b Deut. 29. 19.

^c Ps. 10. 3.
& 49. 18.

² Heb.

*to find his
iniquity to
hate.*

^c Ps. 12. 2.

^d Jer. 4. 22.

^e Prov. 4. 16.
Micah 2. 1.

³ Or,
vanity.

^f Isai. 65. 2.

2 For ^b he flattereth himself in his own eyes,

² until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and
^c deceit :

^d he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

4 ^e He deviseth ³ mischief upon his bed ;

he setteth himself ^f in a way *that is* not good ;

he abhorreth not evil.

rendered more literally, " Thus saith (or, " the oracle of") transgression " to the wicked within my heart," which seems to mean, that there was something in his own heart which caused the Psalmist to bear the suggestion which sin makes to the sinner. From his own experience of the motions of sin he could speak of what was in the mind of the sinner ; as in the Prayer Book Version, " mine heart sheweth me the wickedness " of the ungodly."

Or it may be taken, " The oracle of transgression to the wicked (is) " In the interior of my heart ;" meaning, that in his pride and wilful blindness, the transgressor retires into the recesses of his own heart, and there fancies himself supreme and safe (*Kay*).

But it is more than doubtful whether we should not read, with the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic Versions, " in his heart " instead of " in my " heart : " in which case the meaning would be, " There is an oracle of " transgression to the wicked within his heart ; " that is, sin speaks to his inmost heart and suggests evil thoughts, and hence there is no fear of God before his eyes.

2. " For he flattereth himself." Lit. " he hath made it smooth to " himself in his eyes."

" Until his iniquity be found to be hateful." Lit. " to the discovery " of his sin and to hating (it)." Sin is said to be discovered when it is punished (Gen. xliv. 16. Hos. xii. 8.).

The sinner flatters himself that there is no need to fear God, as regards the punishment of his sin and the discovery of its hatefulness.

Others take " transgression " as the subject to " flattereth ; " in this sense, " transgression flattereth him in his eyes, in order that he may find " guilt (that is, become guilty), and may hate (that is, hate God and man, " instead of loving them, live in hatred as in his own proper element)."

Others again consider that God is the subject : " for He (God) hath " dealt smoothly with the sinner in his own opinion, so far as the " punishment and hatred of his sin is concerned."

On the whole the meaning seems clear, namely, that the sinner by continued transgression becomes persuaded that his sin will not be brought to light and punished. See Isa. xxviii. 15. Deut. xxix. 19.

3. " He hath left off." Rather, " he left off," giving the cause of his ungodliness, rather than its effect. He ceased to act wisely and well, and so in time he lost all fear of God.

4. As his words in the day-time, so his thoughts during the night, run upon iniquity. When he cannot speak evil words, he is thinking evil thoughts. He deliberately takes up his position in a way which leads in an opposite direction to that which is good, a way in which there is no good whatever.

" He abhorreth not evil." " Evil " stands first in the Hebrew, and

PSALMS, XXXVI.

- 5 ¶ Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens ; g Ps. 57. 10. & 108. 4.
and thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds. 2 Heb. *the mountains of God.*
- 6 Thy righteousness *is* like ² the great mountains ; h Job 11. 8. Ps. 77. 19. Rom. 11. 33.
^h thy judgments *are* a great deep : i Job 7. 20. Ps. 145. 9.
 O LORD, ⁱ thou preservest man and beast. 1 Tim. 4. 10. k Ps. 31. 19.
- 7 ^k How ³ excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God ! 3 Heb. *precious.*
 Therefore the children of men ¹ put their trust 1 Ruth 2. 12. Ps. 17. 8. & 91. 4.
 under the shadow of thy wings.
- 8 ^m They shall be ⁴ abundantly satisfied with the m Ps. 65. 4. 4 Heb. *watered.*
 fatness of thy house ;

is therefore emphatic : “ evil he rejects not ; nothing that is evil does he “ turn from ; ” there is not a trace of aversion from it to be found in him.

5. The Psalmist cannot bear to look any longer at the wickedness of man ; it is a melancholy sight, and he turns for comfort to the thought of God and His goodness. Words seem to fail him in speaking of the loving-kindness and truth of God ; heaven and earth are but weak and imperfect symbols of them.

“ **Is in the heavens,** ” i.e. transcends the limits of earth, and reaches to the heavens ; is heaven-high (Ps. ciii. 11.).

“ **Clouds ;** ” the thin veil of vapour which is spread over the heavens ; best rendered “ the sky,” or “ the skies,” as in Job xxxvii. 18. God’s mercy and truth are continually united in the Psalms (Ps. xxv. 10 ; xl. 11 ; lvii. 3 ; lxi. 7 ; lxxxv. 10 ; lxxxvi. 15 ; lxxxix. 14 ; cxv. 1 ; cxxxviii. 2.).

6. “ **Like the great mountains.** ” Unchangeably firm, immovable ; lit. “ the mountains of God,” that is, which He has fixed. Comp. Ps. lxxx. 10 : “ the goodly cedars,” lit. “ cedars of God,” which He has planted.

“ **A great deep.** ” God’s judgments are unsearchable, unfathomable, like the great mass of water, which, while it is visible in the seas and rivers, penetrates to the lower parts of the earth (see Rom. xi. 33.).

“ **Thou preservest man and beast.** ” God’s mercy extends beyond mankind, even to the animal world. He feeds the ravens, and cares for the sparrows, and had compassion on the much cattle of Nineveh (Jonah iv. 11.). See Ps. civ. 21 ; cxlvii. 9. Job xxxviii. 41. St. Luke xii. 24, 25. St. Matt. x. 29.

7. As if lost in the contemplation of God’s mercy and faithfulness, the Psalmist cries out, “ How excellent, how precious beyond all treasures, “ is Thy loving-kindness ! ” Vast as is the distance between God and man, His loving-kindness must needs draw men unto Him ; they seek and find refuge in Him.

“ **The shadow of Thy wings.** ” This figure would have especial force to those who were familiar with the thought of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat with the canopy of their wings.

8. The Psalmist dwells on the unspeakable blessedness of those who have found refuge in God.

“ **They shall be abundantly satisfied.** ” They shall drink full draughts ; they shall satiate themselves.

“ **Fatness of Thy house.** ” Under the figure of the fat sacrifices of the sanctuary, the Psalmist speaks of the abundant spiritual delights with which God entertains those that are His (see Jer. xxxi. 14.).

PSALMS, XXXVI.

- ⁿ Job 20, 17.
^{Rev.} 22, 1.
^o Ps. 16, 11.
^p Jer. 2, 13.
^{John} 4, 10,
 14.
^q 1 Pet. 2, 9.
² Heb.
draw out at
length.
^r Jer. 22, 16.
^s Ps. 7, 10.
 & 94, 15.
 & 97, 11.
^t Ps. 1, 5.
- and thou shalt make them drink of ⁿ the river
 ° of thy pleasures.
 9 ^p For with thee *is* the fountain of life :
^q in thy light shall we see light.
 10 ¶ O ² continue thy lovingkindness ^r unto them
 that know thee ;
 and thy righteousness to the ^s upright in heart.
 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,
 and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.
 12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen :
 they are cast down, ^t and shall not be able to
 rise.

“Of Thy pleasures.” Heb. “of Thy Edens.” As the river which watered Eden, so a stream of spiritual joy ever refreshes the people of God.

9. This verse gives the reason of this spiritual joy. Those who have found refuge in God have come to the very fountain of life and happiness ; and the more truly they are joined to Him, the deeper draughts do they draw from that living Fountain. As God is the fountain of life, so is He also the fountain of light. Out of Him all is darkness ; but they who are taken up into Him are bathed in His light, and illumined with spiritual joy (see 1 St. John i. 5—7.).

10. Here, at the close of the Psalm, after speaking of man’s sinfulness and God’s loving-kindness, the Psalmist prays that God would shew that loving-kindness to them who, like himself, were true of heart.

“Continue.” Lit. “lengthen out, prolong” (see margin).

11. His enemies are proud and wicked ; he prays that they may not be permitted to come suddenly upon him, or to chase him away.

12. While he is praying, the future is unveiled before him. “There,” emphatic, as in Ps. xiv. 5. “From the watch-tower of faith” he sees his enemies lying prostrate, and points to the place where the judgment is executed. Comp. Isa. xxvi. 14, where the Prophet in like manner sees the enemies of the Church changed into a field of corpses, without hope of rising again.

“Are cast down.” The same word which in xxxv. 5 is rendered “chase” in A. V.

The true cause of the wickedness of man is his unbelief ; he does not think of God, or fear Him. Blinded by sin, he lives in a world of his own, and defies God. But whether he give heed to Him or not, there is, at all times, above him and around him, the great God, merciful and just and true, watching over all His creatures ; and blessed are they who live continually in the thought of His presence and shelter themselves under His wings. Theirs is the only true life, life in God, a life of light and peace and joy unspeakable. So long as they are true to Him, no powers of wickedness can separate them from His love.

PSALMS, XXXVII.

PSALM XXXVII.

David persuadeth to patience and confidence in God, by the different estate of the godly and the wicked.

A Psalm of David.

- 1 **F**RET ^a not thyself because of evildoers, ^a ver. 7.
Ps. 73. 3.
Prov. 23. 17.
& 24. 1, 19.
neither be thou envious against the workers
of iniquity.
- 2 For they shall soon be cut down ^b like the ^b Ps. 90. 5, 6.
grass,
and wither as the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good ;
so shalt thou dwell in the land, and ² verily thou ² Heb.
shalt be fed. *in truth, or,
stability.*
-

PSALM XXXVII.

**Let not the righteous envy the prosperity of the wicked,
but trust in God, and wait for the end.**

This Psalm is called by Tertullian "A mirror of providence." David sums up in it his experience of God's providential government of the world. The apparent prosperity of the wicked does not really contradict His righteousness ; if we look to the end, we shall find that, after all, it is well with the righteous, and with them alone. God's just judgments, sooner or later, fall upon the wicked, while the righteous are under His abiding protection.

The Psalm is arranged for the most part in stanzas of four lines or two verses each, the first line of each stanza beginning with one of the Hebrew letters in succession. There is a proverbial character about the Psalm, the same thoughts being expressed in various ways ; the different clauses are "like so many precious stones or pearls strung together upon one thread to form a necklace."

There is a time coming, when the apparent irregularities in God's apportionment of temporal good and evil will be adjusted. In the meanwhile God tries His people thereby, whether they will trust in Him, and keep His way, promising never to forsake them in life or in death, and causing them to find a peace and joy in holy obedience, which drives away discontent.

1. The opening verses strike at once the key-note of the Psalm. "Fret not thyself." Lit. "heat not thyself." See Prov. xxiv. 9, where this verse occurs almost word for word.

2. The judgments of God, like the scythe in the hand of man, will sooner or later cut off the wicked ; or else they will of themselves die away, like the young and tender herb (see Job xxvii. 13—23.).

3. "So shalt thou dwell in the land." Rather, "dwell in the land," that is, in Canaan, the pledge of God's covenant ; enjoy the rich and peaceful habitation which God has given thee. It would be a great mark of faith to abide quietly in the land when iniquity not only abounded, but was prosperous.

"Verily thou shalt be fed." Several renderings have been sug-

PSALMS, XXXVII.

- c Isai. 58. 14. 4 ^c Delight thyself also in the LORD ;
and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
- 2 Heb.
Roll thy way upon the LORD. 5 ^{2d} Commit thy way unto the LORD ;
trust also in him ; and he shall bring *it* to pass.
- d Ps. 55. 22.
Prov. 16. 3.
Matt. 6. 25.
Luke 12. 22.
1 Pet. 5. 7. 6 ^e And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as
the light,
and thy judgment as the noonday.
- e Job 11. 17.
Mic. 7. 9. 7 ^{f 3} Rest in the LORD, ^g and wait patiently for him :
^h fret not thyself because of him who prospereth
in his way,
because of the man who bringeth wicked devices
to pass.
- f Ps. 62. 1. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath :
3 Heb.
Be silent to the LORD. ⁱ fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
- g Isai. 30. 15.
Lam. 3. 26.
h ver. 1. 8.
Jer. 12. 1.
i Ps. 73. 3.
Eph. 4. 26.

gested ; (a) "feed securely," that is, in assured confidence in God's protection ; (β) "cherish faithfulness," that is, the virtue of faithfulness ; (γ) "feed upon faithfulness," that is, the faithfulness of God.

"Trust thou in the Lord, and do thou good ;

"As shepherd in his tent,

"Dwell in the land, and feed on truth" (*Keble*).

4. "And." Rather, "so." This does not mean that the godly shall obtain at once whatever their fancy suggests to them, but that, making God their joy, they will delight only in what God loves, and therefore will desire nothing which God will refuse them.

5. "Commit thy way unto the Lord." Lit. "roll thy way upon the Lord," roll the burden of the cares of thy life's way upon the Lord, leave all to Him (Ps. xxii. 8 ; lv. 22. Prov. xvi. 3. 1 St. Pet. v. 7.).

"He shall bring it to pass." Lit. "He will do," as in Ps. xxii. 31 ; lii. 9 ; i. e. He will accomplish all that has to be done in regard to thee.

6. "He shall bring forth," &c. Thy righteousness shall not always remain hidden, but shall come forth as the sun cometh forth in the morning, breaking through the darkness (Job xi. 17.).

7. "Rest." Lit. "be silent to the Lord." Prayer Book Version, "hold thee still in the Lord." This does not of course mean that we should cease from prayer, but from complaint and self-vindication. To be silent to the Lord is to place our troubles and fears in His hands, and to leave them there (Ps. lxii. 1, 5.).

"Because of him that prospereth in his way ;" "because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." These two clauses represent one and the same person, namely, him who goes on prosperously in his perverseness.

"But grieve not at the prosperous man,

"The man of counsels dark" (*Keble*).

8. "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." Rather, "fret not thyself ; (it tends) only to evil-doing" (as in Prov. xi. 24 ; xxi. 5.), it will only end in thy involving thyself in sin, and sharing the fate of the evil-doers.

PSALMS, XXXVII.

- 9 ^k For evildoers shall be cut off :
 but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall
^linherit the earth. k Job 27. 13,
14.
- 10 For ^myet a little while, and the wicked *shall*
 not *be* :
 yea, ⁿthou shalt diligently consider his place,
 and it *shall* not *be*. l ver. 11, 22,
23.
Isai. 57. 13.
m Heb. 10. 36,
37.
n Job 7. 10.
& 20. 9.
- 11 ^oBut the meek shall inherit the earth ;
 and shall delight themselves in the abundance
 of peace. o Matt. 5. 5.
- 12 The wicked ²plotteth against the just,
^pand gnasheth upon him with his teeth. 2 Or,
practiseth.
P Ps. 35. 16.
- 13 ^qThe Lord shall laugh at him :
 for he seeth that ^rhis day is coming. q Ps. 2. 4.
r 1 Sam. 26. 10.
- 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have
 bent their bow,
 to cast down the poor and needy,
 and to slay ³such as be of upright conversation. 3 Heb.
the upright
of way.
- 15 ^sTheir sword shall enter into their own heart, s Mic. 5. 6.

9. "The earth." Rather, the land ; in the first instance, the land of Canaan, but stretching out into the further meaning of "the earth."

10. "A little while." See Isa. x. 25 ; xxix. 17. The longest time is but "a little while," compared with eternity. Soon and for ever, the sinner who has caused so much perplexity, will be gone. "If thou diligently examine his place, he is nowhere" (better than "it," that is, "his place").

11. "The meek." Those who resign themselves to God, and are content to leave all in His hands ; they shall in the end possess the earth (St. Matt. v. 5.). Great is the power of meekness. Not the violent and unscrupulous, but the unresisting and unselfish in the end prevail. It is not only that their indifference to earthly joys and sorrows makes them superior to the world, but they unconsciously gain influence and authority which is denied to others. The absence of all self-assertion seems to bring them into prominence, and the world, from which there was danger of their being excluded, becomes theirs, because they do not seek it. The promise, however, in its fulness looks beyond this present life to the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and in which the meek will have an exalted place.

13. The Lord sees the rage and malice of the wicked, and laughs at them (Ps. ii. 4.), because He Who sees all things knows that the day of retribution is at hand.

"His day." The day of his visitation (1 Sam. xxvi. 10. Ps. cxxxvii. 7. Obad. 12. Jer. l. 27, 31. Job xviii. 20.).

14. "Such as be of upright conversation." Lit. as in marg. "the upright of way." Comp. "undefiled, or perfect of way" (Ps. cxix. 1.).

15. The emphasis is on "their own heart ;" they shall perish by their own weapons.

and their bows shall be broken.

- ^t Prov. 15. 16. 16 ^t A little that a righteous man hath
& 16. 8.
1 Tim. 6. 6. *is* better than the riches of many wicked.
- ^u Job 38. 15. 17 For ^u the arms of the wicked shall be broken :
Ps. 10. 15.
Ezek. 30. 21,
&c. but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.
- ^x Ps. 1. 6. 18 The LORD ^x knoweth the days of the upright :
^y Isai. 60. 21. and their inheritance shall be ^y for ever.
- 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time :
^z Job 5. 20.
Ps. 33. 19. and ^z in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
- 20 But the wicked shall perish,
and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as ² the fat of lambs :
^a Ps. 102. 3. they shall consume ;—^a into smoke shall they consume away.
- 21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again :
^b Ps. 112. 5, 9. but ^b the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

16. The single righteous man, any given righteous man, is contrasted with the multitude of the wicked. His small possessions are preferable to the accumulated treasure of the ungodly. With God's blessing they go further, and they do not bring vexation and trouble.

17. "The arms." Not only the bow, but the arms by which the bow is bent (vv. 14, 15). Or the arms may be here the emblem of strength (Ps. x. 15. Job xxxviii. 15. Ezek. xxx. 21.). What earthly wealth and power cannot do, God does for the righteous ; He upholds them.

18. "Knoweth the days ;" regards them with loving care, watches over them, so that no violence shall be able to shorten them (Ps. i. 6 ; xxxi. 8.). He knows what will befall the upright every day and every hour, and makes all things work together for their good.

20. "As the fat of lambs." That is, as lambs fattened in order to be slaughtered ; or it may refer to the fat consumed on the altar.

"The foes of God decay
"As fat of lambs,—in air they melt,
"In smoke they melt away" (*Keble*).

But the most approved rendering is, "as the glory, or preciousness" (see marg.), of the pastures" (Ps. lxxv. 13. Isa. xxx. 23.) that is, as the grass and flowers are burnt up by the heat and die away, so do the wicked perish.

"Into smoke." Either they vanish into smoke, they are resolved into it ; or, they vanish like smoke, which is at first thick, and then gradually becomes thinner and thinner, until it disappears (comp. Ps. xc. 5, 6. Isa. xl. 6. St. Matt. vi. 30. St. James i. 10, 11. 1 St. Pet. i. 24.).

21. The wicked, through his poverty, is compelled to borrow what he cannot repay ; the righteous, through his prosperity, is able to be charitable ; the promise made to the patriarchs is fulfilled to him (see Deut. xv. 6 ; xxviii. 12, 44.).

- 22 ^c For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the ^c earth ;
 and *they that be* cursed of him ^d shall be cut off. ^d ver. 9.
- 23 ^e The steps of a *good* man are ² ordered by the ^e LORD :
 and he delighteth in his way. ^e 1 Sam. 2. 9.
 Prov. 16. 9.
² Or, *established.*
- 24 ^f Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast ^f down :
 for the LORD upholdeth *him* with his hand. ^f Ps. 34. 19,
 20. & 40. 2.
 & 91. 12.
 Prov. 24. 16.
 Mic. 7. 8.
 2 Cor. 4. 9.
- 25 I have been young, and *now* am old ;
 yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor
 his seed ^g begging bread. ^g Job 15. 23.
 Ps. 59. 15.
 & 109. 10.
- 26 ^h *He is* ³ ever merciful, and lendeth ;—and his
 seed *is* blessed. ^h Deut. 15. 8,
 10.
- 27 ⁱ Depart from evil, and do good ;—and dwell for
 evermore. ⁱ Ps. 112. 5, 9.
³ Heb. *all the day.*
- 28 ^j For the LORD ^k loveth judgment, and forsaketh ^j
 not his saints ; ^k Ps. 11. 7.

22. It is the blessing or the curse of God which makes the difference between the righteous and the wicked.

23. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Lit. "from the Lord are a man's footsteps ordered, or established." The second clause of the verse shews that the good man is here meant, though the word used is of itself suggestive of strength and manliness rather than goodness. The sense is, either, that the Lord establishes the footsteps of the righteous, that is, makes them firm and safe, as in Ps. xl. 2 ; or, that He directs them, as in Prov. xvi. 9 (comp. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Jer. x. 23. 2 Chron. xxvii. 6.). To the course of life of such an one the Lord turns with pleasure.

24. "Though he fall." Either into sin (Prov. xxiv. 16. Micah vii. 8.), or into trouble.

25. David does not mean that the righteous might not be reduced to temporary distress, and even destitution. He himself was obliged to beg for bread from the priests at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 3.), and from Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 8.) ; but the experience of his life had been that neither the righteous nor his seed were utterly forsaken by God, or brought into a condition of absolute penury.

26. "Blessed." Blessed in itself, and a blessing to others, as Ps. xxi. 6 (see ver. 21 ; Ps. cxii. 5.).

27. "And dwell for evermore." This is rather a promise than a precept : "depart from evil, and do good ; and thou shalt dwell for evermore."

28. "Judgment," i. e. justice, equity ; as in vv. 6, 30 ; Ps. xxxiii. 5.

It is commonly supposed that this verse should be divided into two. Verse 27 begins with the fifteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*Samech*), and verse 30 with the seventeenth ; according to the structure of the Psalm the second clause of ver. 28 ought to begin with the sixteenth letter (*Ain*) : it does not actually do so, but the root of the

- they are preserved for ever :
- ¹ but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- ²⁹ ^m The righteous shall inherit the land,
and dwell therein for ever.
- ³⁰ ⁿ The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
and his tongue talketh of judgment.
- ³¹ ^o The law of his God *is* in his heart ;
none of his ² steps shall slide.
- ³² The wicked ^p watcheth the righteous,
and seeketh to slay him.
- ³³ The LORD ^q will not leave him in his hand,
nor ^r condemn him when he is judged.
- ³⁴ ^s Wait on the LORD, and keep his way,
and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land :
^t when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.
- ³⁵ ^u I have seen the wicked in great power,
and spreading himself like ³ a green bay tree.
- ³⁶ Yet he ^x passed away, and, lo, he *was* not :

first word begins with that letter, and it is probable that the letter affixed to the root was meant to go for nothing.

29. Notwithstanding the changes and chances of life, God preserves the righteous under His wings ; they really inherit His earth, because in spite of outward trouble they are safe in God's hands, Who giveth them all things richly to enjoy.

30. "Speaketh." Lit. "meditateth," but the word is used both of meditating and meditative utterance (Ps. i. 2 ; ii. 1.).

31. The law is not merely an external rule, but an inward principle, governing the will and keeping the steps in the right path.

32. "Watcheth." Lieth in wait for (Ps. x. 8, 9.).

33. The wicked may condemn the righteous, and strive to harm him ; but God's judgment does not follow man's, and though He may allow the persecutor to have his way for a time, He will in the end shew that the cause of His servants is His own (comp. 1 Cor. iv. 3. Ps. cix. 31.).

34. That is, "If in spite of thy condemnation by the wicked and their "prosperity, thou wilt look up to God with steadfast trust, and walk in His way, not only will He in time lift thee out of trouble, but He will "make thee possess the land, which now seems in the hands of the "wicked ; thou shalt look with satisfaction on their overthrow, as seeing "therein the discomfiture of God's enemies."

35. "In great power." Lit. "terrible." The idea is that of a terror-inspiring, tyrannical evil-doer. Here again David appeals to his own experience ; and it is possible that he had some special sinner in his mind.

"A green bay-tree." Rather, as in margin, "a green tree that "groweth in his own soil ;" not artificially planted, but indigenous, which in the course of years has become firmly rooted, and thrown out branches in all directions.

36. "He passed away." Prayer Book Version, "I passed by ;" so

PSALMS, XXXVIII.

- yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
- 37 Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright :
for ^y the end of *that man is* peace. y Isai. 32. 17.
& 57. 2.
- 38 ^z But the transgressors shall be destroyed together :
the end of the wicked shall be cut off. z Ps. 1. 4.
& 52. 5.
- 39 But ^a the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD : a Ps. 3. 8.
he is their strength ^b in the time of trouble. b Ps. 9. 9.
- 40 And ^c the LORD shall help them, and deliver them : c Isai. 31. 5.
he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save
them,
- ^d because they trust in him. d 1 Chr. 5. 20.
Dan. 3. 17.
28. & 6. 23.

PSALM XXXVIII.

David moveth God to take compassion of his pitiful case.

A Psalm of David, ² to bring to remembrance. 2 Ps. 70, title.

- 1 **O** ^a LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath : a Ps. 6. 1.
neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

the Greek and Syriac Versions ; but the better rendering perhaps is "one passed by."

37. "Mark." The same word which in ver. 34 is rendered "keep ;" hence the Prayer Book, following the Greek, Chaldee, and other Versions, has "keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right." So Keble, "Keep the pure way." In defence of the Bible Version, it may be said, that the word sometimes means "to mark" (see 1 Sam. i. 12. Ps. lvi. 6 ; cxxx. 3.), and that meaning seems to agree best with the other part of the verse. "Good men are men of mark, and well worth our study."

"The end." The word may be rendered "posterity :—" "the man of peace hath a posterity," whereas the posterity of the wicked (see "end" in next verse) is cut off (see Amos iv. 2 ; ix. 1. Ezek. xxiii. 25.). But probably it is best to take it in the sense of "the future," "the after history" (comp. Numb. xxiii. 10. Deut. viii. 16 ; xxxii. 29. Job viii. 7 ; xlii. 12. Prov. xix. 20 ; xx. 21.), and the passage may be rendered either "there is a future, that is, a life worthy to be called life, to the man of peace" (comp. Prov. xxiv. 20, "There shall be no reward, lit. no future, to the evil man ;" see also v. 14 ; xxiii. 18.), or, as in the Authorised Version, "the hereafter of such a man is peace." So Keble, "peace is in the latter end." The man of integrity has a very different lot from the evil-doer, whose end is that he shall be cut off (Num. xxiv. 20.).

40. "Because they trust in Him." The righteous must needs be safe, because the Lord is their salvation ; they trust in Him and He saves them.

PSALM XXXVIII.

Penitential prayer for relief from suffering and persecution.

The Psalm speaks of severe bodily sickness, of painful wounds and

^b Job 6. 4.

2 For ^b thine arrows stick fast in me,
and ^c thy hand presseth me sore.

^c Ps. 32. 4.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of
thine anger ;

burning fever ; and though some of the expressions here used are applied in Isa. i. 6 to the *moral* condition of the Israelites, it is generally supposed that the Psalmist was suffering from some painful disease, which he felt the more acutely because he saw in it the just punishment of his sin. He has to complain also, not only of affliction of body and soul, but, as in Ps. vi., of cruel enemies, who rejoice in his calamity, and take occasion from his sin to prepare the way for his ruin. Nevertheless, out of the depth of his anguish he looks up to God. The whole Psalm is in truth an earnest cry for help, first, on account of the greatness of his suffering (vv. 1—8.); then, on account of the desertion of his friends and the rejoicing of his enemies (vv. 9—14.); and lastly, in order that his enemies might not have occasion to triumph over him (vv. 15—22.).

Various suggestions have been made as to the date of the Psalm : by some it has been referred to the distressing scene at Ziklag, after the inroad of the Amalekites (1 Sam. xxx. 3—6.); by others, with great probability, to the period preceding Absalom's rebellion ; and by others to David's old age, when Adonijah rebelled, and Joab and Abiathar deserted him.

This is the third of the penitential Psalms. It is the cry of a sufferer deeply conscious that his sufferings are the consequence of his sins. He does not complain or vindicate himself ; he only lays his trouble before God, and prays earnestly for relief. If he is in pain, he bears it ; if he is reproached, he is silent ; God knows all ; he is in God's hands, and in Him he trusts ; he is sure that he will hereafter find that he has not had one trial too many or one pang too severe.

“To bring to remembrance.” Found also in Ps. lxx. The meaning may be simply, that the Psalm is intended to bring the affliction of the writer before God ; but it is supposed by some that there is an allusion to the frankincense, which was offered together with the meat-offering as a memorial, that the ascending smoke might bring the owner of the offering into remembrance with God (Lev. ii. 2.), and it has been suggested that the Psalm was appointed to be recited at the time of the presentation of the memorial.

1. See Ps. vi. 1, where almost the same words occur. Deeply conscious that he had deserved God's displeasure, David does not ask to be wholly spared, but that the severity of the punishment may be mitigated, so that it might seem to be the rod of a pitiful and loving Father rather than of an angry Judge.

2. The “arrows” denote God's chastisements (Deut. xxxii. 23. Job vi. 4.).

“Stick fast . . . presseth.” The same word is used in both cases ; “have sunk deep . . . has sunk heavily.”

3. The Psalmist begins by describing his bodily anguish, which he attributes wholly to his sin. Sin was the cause of God's anger, and God's anger was the cause of his bodily sickness.

PSALMS, XXXVIII.

- ^d neither *is there any* ² rest in my bones because ^d Ps. 6. 2.
of my sin. ² Heb. *peace,*
or, health.
- 4 For ^e mine iniquities are gone over mine head : ^e Ezra 9. 6.
as an heavy burden they are too ^f heavy for ^f Matt. 11. 28.
me.
- 5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt—because of
my foolishness.
- 6 I am ³ troubled ; ^g I am bowed down greatly ; ³ Heb. *wried,*
^h I go mourning all the day long. ^g Ps. 35. 14.
^h Job 30. 28.
- 7 For my loins are filled with a ⁱ loathsome ⁱ Ps. 42. 9.
disease : & 43. 2.
and *there is* ^k no soundness in my flesh. ⁱ Job 7. 5.
^k ver. 3.
- 8 I am feeble and sore broken :
^l I have roared by reason of the disquietness of ^l Job 3. 24.
my heart. ^{Ps. 22. 1.}
^{Isai. 59. 11.}
- 9 ¶ Lord, all my desire *is* before thee ;
and my groaning is not hid from thee.

“Rest.” Lit. “wholeness.” The Hebrew word is commonly rendered “peace,” as in margin, but the original meaning is “perfectness, health, integrity.”

4. “Gone over.” Like the waves of a flood (Ps. xviii. 16 ; lxix. 2, 15 ; cxxiv. 4, 5). He compares sin to waters that threaten to drown him, and to a burden that presses heavily upon him. It was not merely the punishment of his sins that oppressed him, but their number and malignity. Contrast with this Cain’s complaint, “My punishment is greater than I can bear” (Gen. iv. 13).

5. “My wounds stink.” So long had his sickness continued that he was covered with offensive sores.

“Foolishness.” By speaking of his sin as folly, he did not mean to excuse it, but to acknowledge that his state of mind had been that of utter folly and infatuation, when he obeyed the lusts of the flesh rather than God.

6. “I am troubled.” Rather, “I am bent,” as writhing with pain (see margin).

“Mourning.” See on Ps. xxxv. 14.

7. “With a loathsome disease.” Rather, “with burning.” The heat which issues from the inner part of his body spreads itself over the whole.

8. “I am feeble.” Lit. “I have become cold and stiff as a corpse.”

“By reason of the disquietness.” Lit. “groaning.” His loud wail was the outward expression of his deep inward groaning.

9. Here the Psalmist stops for a moment in his complaint to take comfort from the thought that God knew all his sufferings, and every desire which his suffering stirred in him ; even his softer sighing did not escape Him. He Who knows all will surely have pity ; and further to move that pity, he continues the picture of his misery.

PSALMS, XXXVIII.

- 10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me :
m Ps. 6, 7. & 88. 9. as for ^m the light of mine eyes, it also ² is gone
2 Heb. is not with me. from me.
- 11 ⁿ My lovers and my friends ^o stand aloof from
n Ps. 31. 11. my ³ sore ;
o Luke 10. 31, 32. and ⁴ my kinsmen ^p stand afar off.
3 Heb. stroke.
- 12 They also that seek after my life ^q lay snares
4 Or, my neighbours. for me :
p Luke 23. 49. and they that seek my hurt ^r speak mischievous
q 2 Sam. 17. 1, 2, 3. things,
r 2 Sam. 16. 7, 8. and ^s imagine deceits all the day long.
s Ps. 35. 20.
- 13 But ^t I, as a deaf man, heard not ;
t See 2 Sam. 16. 10. ^u and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not
u Ps. 39. 2, 9. his mouth.
- 14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not,
5 Or, they do I wait for. and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.
- 15 ¶ For ⁵ in thee, O LORD, ^x do I hope :
x 2 Sam. 16. 12. Ps. 39. 7. thou wilt ⁶ hear, O Lord my God.
6 Or, answer.

10. "Panteth." Throbs quickly, whirls round in palpitation. The sight of his eyes also has become lost to him by weeping, watching, and fever. So Job speaks of the failure of his eyesight through grief (xvi. 16; xvii. 7.).

11. Here he introduces a fresh aggravation of his trouble: his friends stand aloof, and his enemies become more intent on doing mischief.

"Stand aloof." At a distance, yet within sight (Gen. xxi. 16. Obad. 11.).

"Sore." Lit. "stroke," as in Ps. xxxix. 10, the touch of God's hand of wrath.

"My kinsmen." Lit. "those near to me," whether by neighbourhood or relationship. Job makes the same complaint (Job xix. 13, 14.).

12. While his friends are cold and indifferent, his enemies vigorously bestir themselves to bring about his destruction. In this respect David was a manifest type of Him Who in the day of His affliction was surrounded by bloodthirsty enemies, and forsaken or looked coldly on by His friends (St. Matt. xxvi. 56. St. Luke xxiii. 49.).

13. Conscious of his sin and the justice of his punishment, he is deaf to their reproaches, and silent, and trusts himself to God. Patience and self-surrender are an indispensable condition of deliverance. He who seeks to help himself by passionate words or deeds drives Divine help away. Herein again David was a type of the sinless One, Who was silent before His enemies (Isa. liii. 7. 1 St. Pet. ii. 23.).

14. "Reproofs." Rather, "replies, arguments in self-vindication."

15. This is the real ground of the Psalmist's patience, namely, his trust in God. There can be no patience where there is no hope. He answers not, because he is sure that God will answer.

"Thou wilt hear." Rather, as in margin, "Thou wilt answer;" so the Prayer Book Version, "Thou shalt answer for me."

PSALMS, XXXVIII.

- 16 For I said, *Hear me,* ^y lest *otherwise* they should ^r Ps. 13. 4.
rejoice over me :
when my ^z foot slippeth, they ^a magnify *them-* ^z Deut. 32. 35.
selves against me. ^a Ps. 35. 26.
- 17 For I *am* ready ² to halt,
and my sorrow *is* continually before me. ² Heb.
for halting,
Ps. 35. 15.
- 18 For I will ^b declare mine iniquity ;—I will be ^b Ps. 32. 5.
^c sorry for my sin. ^c Prov. 28. 13.
^c 2 Cor. 7. 9,
10.
- 19 But mine enemies ³ *are* lively, and they are
strong :
and they that ^d hate me wrongfully are mul- ^d Ps. 35. 19.
tplied.
- 20 They also ^e that render evil for good are mine ^e Ps. 35. 12.
adversaries ;
^f because I follow *the thing that good is.* ^f See 1 Pet.
3. 13. &
1 John 3. 12.
- 21 Forsake me not, O LORD :—O my God, ^g be not ^g Ps. 35. 22.
far from me. ⁴ Heb. *for*
my help.
- 22 Make haste ^h to help me,—O Lord ^h my sal- ^h Ps. 27. 1.
vation. & 62. 2. 6.
Isai. 12. 2.

16. Rather, without the words in italics, "For I said, Lest they should rejoice over me." The Psalmist is afraid that if he attempted to defend himself, and did not trust to God's pleading his cause, he should speak amiss, and give occasion of triumph to his enemies.

"When my foot slippeth," &c. Perhaps this clause also should be understood as governed by "lest;" thus, "Lest they rejoice over me; lest, when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me;" or it may be connected with the preceding, as a relative clause, in this way, "Lest they rejoice over me, who, when my foot slippeth, would magnify themselves against me."

17. "For." The third "for" in four consecutive verses gives the reason why he spoke of his foot slipping; he felt himself always ready to fall (Ps. xxxv. 15.); he was in danger of an utter downfall, and therefore in constant trouble, the consequence of his sin.

18. This last "for" accounts for his continual sorrow. He is ever conscious of, and willing to confess, his sin; and this sense of sin is the very sting of his trouble.

19. While he himself is so bowed down with grief, that he is as one dead (ver. 8.), his enemies are numerous and full of life.

20. "Because," &c. By "following that which is good" the Psalmist especially means his acts of kindness to his enemies.

"My wrongful haters crowd and press,
"For good returning ill; they throng
"To vex me whom I sought to bless" (Keble).

21, 22. The Psalm does not rise beyond the language of trust: to the last he cries for help, but it is the cry of faith, though not of triumph. "True repentance despairs of itself, but not of God" (Ps. xxxv. 22; xl. 13; lxx. 1, 5.).

PSALMS, XXXIX.

PSALM XXXIX.

1 *David's care of his thoughts.* 4 *The consideration of the brevity and vanity of life,* 7 *the reverence of God's judgments,* 10 *and prayer, are his bridles of impatience.*

21 Chr. 16. 41.
& 25. 1.
Ps. 62, & 77,
title.

^a 1 Kin. 2. 4.
2 Kin. 10. 31.

³ Heb.
*a bridle, or,
muzzle for
my mouth.*

^b Ps. 141. 3.
James 3. 2.

^c Col. 4. 5.

^d Ps. 38. 13.

⁴ Heb.
troubled.

To the chief Musician, *even* to ² Jeduthun,
A Psalm of David.

- 1 I SAID, I will ^a take heed to my ways,
that I sin not with my tongue :
I will keep ^{3 b} my mouth with a bridle,
^c while the wicked is before me.
- 2 ^d I was dumb with silence,
I held my peace, *even* from good ;—and my
sorrow was ⁴ stirred.
- 3 My heart was hot within me,

PSALM XXXIX.

The prayer of one who, feeling the vanity of all
earthly things, finds hope in God.

This Psalm is plainly connected with the preceding. David is sick, and, as it would seem, in danger of death. God's hand is heavy upon him, and it is but too likely that his enemies will take occasion from his affliction to reproach him with his belief in God's interposition. In their presence he cannot complain; he resolves therefore to bear his trial in silence (vv. 1—3.), but it is too great for him; the anguish of his mind breaks out at last, but it breaks out in the prayer of hope, not in the language of complaint (vv. 4—13.). There is a striking resemblance to Ps. lxii.

“To Jeduthun.” Supposed to be the same as Ethan, the Merarite, one of David's precursors or choir-masters, the other two being Asaph and Heman. The Psalm was probably handed over to Jeduthun to be set to music (1 Chron. xv. 17—19; xvi. 41, 42; xxv. 1—6. 2 Chron. v. 12.). See titles of Pss. lxii., lxxvii., lxxxix.

1. Fearing lest his affliction should draw from him some complaint against God, and thereby give cause of triumph to his enemies, the Psalmist resolves to keep silence (comp. Ps. xxxviii. 13.), and to take heed to all his thoughts and actions, that he may not sin with his tongue.

2. “I held my peace, even from good.” This may be explained, as in the Prayer Book Version, “even from good words:” so Keble—

“Dumb was I then; deep silence fell;
“I shrank from uttering good.”

But neither the Hebrew nor the ancient Versions have “words.” The literal rendering is “I kept silence from good,” which some explain, “I held my peace without taking any note of good,” i. e. of prosperity, the prosperity which the wicked enjoy: the Psalmist would not allow himself to speak of the perplexing problem of the prosperity of the ungodly. Others render, “I held my peace, being far from good,” i. e. without joy or comfort: his silence brought him no comfort.

3. The effort to repress his feelings could not be sustained; the

PSALMS, XXXIX.

while I was musing ^e the fire burned :
then spake I with my tongue,

^e Jer. 20. 9.

4 ¶ LORD, ^f make me to know mine end,
 and the measure of my days, what it *is* ;
that I may know ² how frail I *am*.

^f Ps. 90. 12.
 & 119. 84.

² Or,
what time I
have here.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an hand-
 breadth ;

^g Ps. 90. 4.
 h ver. 11.
 Ps. 62. 9.
 & 144. 4.

and ^g mine age *is* as nothing before thee :

³ Heb.
settled.

^h verily every man ³ at his best state *is* altogether
 vanity. *Selah*.

⁴ Heb.
an image.

6 Surely every man walketh in ⁴ ⁱ a vain shew :
 surely they are disquieted in vain :

¹ 1 Cor. 7. 31.
 Jam. 4. 14.

^k he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who
 shall gather them.

^k Job 27. 17.
 Eccles. 2. 18,
 21, 26. &
 5. 14. Luke
 12. 20, 21.

inward fire was so fierce that it at length blazed forth (see Jer. xx. 9.).
 The next and following verses are the words which he spake.

4. He prays God to set so vividly before him the shortness and uncertainty of life, that he may fully realize that prosperity and trouble are both of comparatively little consequence, because they must soon come to an end (Ps. xc. 12.).

5. "As an handbreadth." Lit. "handbreadths," or palms, of which three make a span. The time allotted to his life was only a few handbreadths.

"Age." Properly, "life-time." The duration of human life is as a vanishing nothing before God the Eternal One.

"Verily." The word so rendered occurs twice in ver. 6 ("surely") and once in ver. 11, and several times in Ps. lxii. (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9.). It may perhaps be best translated "only;" "only utter vanity, a mere breath, is every man, however stable he may seem." Here, as in ver. 11, where the same words are repeated, the "Selah" directs the music to be prolonged, in order to give time for brooding over the sad thought. For the same reason the sentiment is enlarged on in the next verse.

"At his best state." Lit. as in margin, "settled, fixed;" that is, though he stand never so firmly, though he be never so steadfast, he is nothing but mere nothingness.

6. "In a vain shew." Lit. "in image," a mere semblance of reality: he walks to and fro, consisting only of an unsubstantial shadow, like that image of himself in the shadow upon the ground (see Ps. lxxiii. 20.).

"They are disquieted in vain." Lit. "only for a breath (i.e. for "that which is utter vanity, a mere nothing) do they make a loud noise;" all the stir and turmoil of the world are about things which have no reality.

"He heapeth up." The Authorised Version supplies "riches" (see Job xxvii. 16.). He heapeth up treasure, like sheaves of golden grain, but knows not who will reap the benefit of it.

PSALMS, XXXIX.

- ¹ Ps. 38. 15. 7 ¶ And now, Lord, what wait I for?—¹ my hope
^m Ps. 44. 13. *is* in thee.
 & 79. 4.
ⁿ Lev. 10. 3. 8 Deliver me from all my transgressions :
 Job 40. 4. 5. make me not ^m the reproach of the foolish.
 Ps. 38. 13.
^o 2 Sam. 16. 10. 9 ⁿ I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ;—because
 Job 2. 10. ^o thou didst *it*.
^p Job 9. 34.
 & 13. 21.
 2 Heb. ^p Remove thy stroke away from me :
 I am consumed by the ² blow of thine hand.
^q Heb. *conflict.*
³ Heb. *that which is to be desired in him to melt away.*
 11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for
 iniquity,
 thou makest ³ his beauty ^a to consume away like
 a moth :
^r ver. 5. ^r surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.
^s Lev. 25. 23. 12 ¶ Hear my prayer, O LORD,—and give ear
 1 Chr. 29. 15. unto my cry ;
 Ps. 119. 19. hold not thy peace at my tears :
 2 Cor. 5. 6. ^s for I *am* a stranger with thee,
 Heb. 11. 13.
 1 Pet. 1. 17.
 & 2. 11.

7. "And now." This formula generally introduces a transition. "In the midst of this transitory world, what am I to hope!"

It is to be observed that God Himself, rather than the assurance of a future life, is the ground of his hope. His trust in God, however, necessarily carried with it a belief in continued existence after death. Deeply impressed with the vanity of the world, though the present was perplexing, and the future dark, the Psalmist casts himself unreservedly into the arms of God. He is the living One, and the God of the living; and with Him he must be safe.

8. As sin is the root of all evil, David, when desiring the removal of his afflictions, prays rather for deliverance from his sin, that he might not be a butt for ungodly tongues.

9. Here again David silently confesses that his sin was the cause of his suffering; he submits in patience, because it was God Who had dealt with him, and He had but dealt with him according to his sin.

10. Submission is not inconsistent with a prayer for the removal of his suffering, "God's stroke" as he calls it (Ps. xxxviii. 12. St. Matt. xxvi. 39.).

11. A further reason why God should withdraw His hand. It is his own experience that David here recounts in general terms. Just as a moth destroys a beautiful garment, so God's chastening hand changes and shrivels up all that men most delight in (see marg. reff.).

"Surely every man is vanity." Repeated from ver. 5 as a kind of refrain (Eccles. i. 2; xii. 8.).

12. Once more he repeats his entreaty, basing it on the shortness of this earthly pilgrimage. Observe the increasing earnestness: "prayer," "cry," "tears."

A "stranger" is one who travels about as a guest in a country which is not his native land; a "sojourner" is one who settles for a time in a country, but is not a native of it. The whole earth is God's; man

PSALMS, XL.

and a sojourner, ^t as all my fathers *were*.
 13 ^u O spare me, that I may recover strength,
 before I go hence, and ^x be no more.

^t Gen. 47. 9.
^u Job 10. 20,
 21. & 14. 5, 6.
^x Job 14. 10,
 11, 12.

PSALM XL.

1 *The benefit of confidence in God. 6 Obedience is the best sacrifice.*
 11 *The sense of David's evils inflameth his prayer.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

² Heb.
In waiting
I waited.
^a Ps. 27. 14.
 & 37. 7.

1 **I** ^{2a} **WAITED** patiently for the LORD;
 and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

has no natural right there; he only remains so long as God permits (Lev. xxv. 23.).

“As all my fathers were.” See Gen. xxiii. 4; xlvii. 9. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. 1 St. Peter. ii. 11. Though the Israelites, in the Psalmist’s time, were in the possession of a fixed dwelling-place, it was only by the gift of God; and for each individual, it was only during his life, which was but a handbreadth.

13. “That I may recover strength.” Lit. “that I may brighten “up again.” The Psalmist prays that God would turn His look of wrath away from him, in order that he may smile again, before he go hence and it be too late. The several parts of this verse occur in the book of Job; “Spare me;” lit. “look away from me,” (Job vii. 19; xiv. 6.); “that I may recover strength” (x. 20.); “before I go hence” (x. 21.); “and be no more” (vii. 8, 21.).

This Psalm is appointed for the Office of the Burial of the Dead. At such a time life is felt to be but vanity; its pleasant things seem given to us only to be taken away, and we ourselves are passing from them. At such a time too our sins come vividly before us, and we fear that we may be taken away before we are ready to depart. What lesson is more fitting, than that in view of the uncertainty and disappointments of life we should lay firm hold on God, as alone constant and true? and what prayer more suitable, than that God would spare us for a while, that we may recover ourselves before we go hence and are no more seen?

PSALM XL.

The experience of God’s help in the past leads to self-dedication, and to a prayer for the continuance of that help.

The language of thanksgiving with which this Psalm opens, answers in a manner to the language of prayer which was the burden of Psalms xxxviii. and xxxix.

It is possible that this Psalm may be, as some suppose, David’s thanksgiving after his victory over the Amalekites, who had pillaged Ziklag (1 Sam. xxx.). The sight of Ziklag in ruins was one of the bitterest sorrows in David’s life; he and his people lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. Nevertheless in his deep distress he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Two days after the defeat of the Amalekites came the news of the battle of Gilboa and the death of Saul, and David’s wanderings were at an end (2 Sam. i.). Hence this Psalm has been regarded not only as a thanksgiving for the recent victory, but

PSALMS, XL.

- ^a Heb. *a pit of noise.*
^b Ps. 69. 2, 14.
^c Ps. 27. 5.
^d Ps. 37. 23.
^e Ps. 33. 3.
^f Ps. 52. 6.
^g Ps. 34. 8.
 Jer. 17. 7.
^h Ps. 101. 3, 7.
ⁱ Ps. 125. 5.
^k Ex. 15. 11.
 Job 5. 9.
 & 9, 10.
 Ps. 71. 15.
 & 92. 5. &
 139. 6, 17.
- 2 He brought me up also out of ^a an horrible pit,
 out of ^b the miry clay,
 and ^c set my feet upon a rock, and ^d established
 my goings.
- 3 ^e And he hath put a new song in my mouth,
even praise unto our God :
^f many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in
 the LORD.
- 4 ^g Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his
 trust,
 and ^h respecteth not the proud, nor such as
ⁱ turn aside to lies.
- 5 ^k Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful
 works *which* thou hast done,

as David's retrospect of that most eventful portion of his life, now come to a close. But the deeply penitential tone of ver. 12, and the reference to the "great congregation" in vv. 9, 10, seem to point to a later period of David's life; and if the two preceding Psalms may be assigned to the time just before Absalom's rebellion broke out, this Psalm may have been written after his return to Jerusalem.

The Psalm consists of two parts, a thanksgiving for past deliverances (vv. 1—10.), and a prayer for further help (vv. 11—17.). The last five verses re-appear as an independent Psalm (lxx.).

1. The Psalmist, beset with peril, calls to mind how God had formerly delivered him from like trouble. He remembers with what constancy he waited for the Lord, hoping against hope; and how his hope had not deceived him.

2. "An horrible pit." The allusion is thought by some to be to a dungeon similar to that in which Jeremiah was confined (Jer. xxxviii. 6.). But the whole verse is metaphorical. The rock or cliff, on which his feet were set, is contrasted with the pit in its height, and with the miry clay in its solidity. God had delivered him from the danger which surrounded him, and placed him in safety.

3. "A new song." A fresh and special thanksgiving, as celebrating a new and special deliverance.

"Shall see and fear." Ps. lii. 6.

"He to my tongue imparts

"An anthem new and blest,

"Praise to our God"—a thousand hearts

"Shall see, and fear, and rest" (*Keble*).

4. "Maketh." More properly, "made." The Psalmist is referring to his own experience. See Jer. xvii. 7.

"Respecteth not." Rather, "turned not to:" the word is used especially of those who turn from God to idols. The world is full of men who are confident in themselves, and turn aside to lies. The Psalmist proclaims the blessedness of him who shuns the example of such persons, and trusts simply in the Lord.

5. The sense is: "In rich abundance hast Thou, even Thou, O Lord "my God, wrought Thy wonders and Thy thoughts towards us: there

- 1 and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward : 1 Isai. 55. 8.
 2 they cannot be reckoned up in order unto ² Or, *none can order them unto thee.* 2 Or, none can order them unto thee. m
 thee : m 1 Sam. 15. 22, Ps. 50. 8. & 51. 16.
if I would declare and speak *of them*, Isai. 1. 11. & 66. 3.
 they are more than can be numbered. Hos. 6. 6. Matt. 9. 13. & 12. 7. Heb. 10. 5.
 6 ^m Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; 3 Heb. digged, Ex. 21. 6.
 mine ears hast thou ³ opened : n Luke 24. 44.
 burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
 7 Then said I, Lo, I come .
 in the volume of the book *it is* ⁿ written of me,

“ can be no reckoning of them unto Thee (or, ‘ there is no comparison “ with Thee’). I would fain declare them and speak them forth ; they “ are too numerous for me to tell.”

6. The connection would seem to be : “ How can I ever duly give “ thanks to God for His wonderful thoughts and deeds of loving-kind- “ ness ! Outward sacrifices have no value in His sight ; but he Has given “ us ears to hear and obey His word ; therefore, instead of any other “ victim I offer myself.”

“ **Sacrifice and offering.**” The two words express the different material of which the sacrifice consisted ; “ sacrifice ” meaning properly a victim or animal sacrifice, and “ offering ” meaning the Minchah, or meat offering, that is, the bloodless offering of fine flour (Lev. ii. 1.).

“ **Mine ears hast Thou opened.**” Lit. “ ears hast Thou digged for “ me ; ” that is, Thou hast bestowed on me the faculty of hearing, hast given me ears to hear. God desires not sacrifices, but hearing ears, the willing obedience of the man himself. The rendering of the Greek Version, “ a body hast Thou prepared me,” adopted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5.), is rather a paraphrase than a translation. The Psalmist’s saying that God had given him the faculty of hearing and obeying His voice is expanded into the notion of His having prepared a body for self-surrender ; the ears, a part of the body, being put for the whole.

“ But Thou hast pierced Thy servant’s ear,
 “ Prepared my willing frame ” (*Keble*).

“ **Burnt offering and sin offering.**” There is a reference to the different purposes for which offerings were made, the object of the first being to obtain the Divine favour, that of the second to turn away the Divine displeasure (Lev. i., iv.). Remembering how Saul was rejected for disobedience, David echoes the words of Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 22.). The same truth is frequently insisted on in the Old Testament (see marg. reff.).

7. “ **Lo, I come.**” That is, “ behold, here I am,” entirely at Thy service, to do Thy will.

“ In the volume (or roll) of the book (that is, of the law) it is “ written of me.” That is, this is the gist and purport of the law, wherein it is laid down respecting me, that I should do Thy will. The clause may be taken parenthetically, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “ Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy

PSALMS, XL.

- ° Ps. 119. 16, 24, 47, 92.
John 4. 34.
Rom. 7. 22.
- 8 ° I delight to do thy will, O my God :
yea, thy law *is* ² P within my heart.
- 2 Heb. *in the midst of my bowels.*
- 9 ¶ I have preached righteousness in the great congregation :
lo, ^r I have not refrained my lips,—O LORD,
^s thou knowest.
- 2 Cor. 3. 3.
- q Ps. 22. 22, 25. & 35. 18.
- 10 † I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart ;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation :
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
- r Ps. 119. 13.
s Ps. 139. 2.
t Acts 20. 20, 27.
- 11 ¶ Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD :
u let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.
- 12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about :

“ will, O God.” By some interpreters the clause is translated, “Lo, I come, *with* (comp. Ps. lxxvi. 13.) the roll of the book which is written “concerning me.” The Psalmist represents himself as coming before God with the book of the law as his companion (comp. Deut. xvii. 18—20.), and he declares that obedience to that law is his one desire ; the law is not only an outward companion, but inscribed on his heart.

The words in which David declares God’s delight, not in sacrifices, but in obedience, are applied in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5—10.) to Christ, the perfect pattern of conformity to the will of God.

9. The Psalmist will not only yield himself to do God’s will, but he will declare His praise. He appeals to the all-knowing God, that neither from slothfulness nor fear has he restrained his lips from proclaiming His righteousness in the “great congregation,” i.e. to the whole assembly of Israel.

10. Observe how urgent he is in declaring his public recognition of God’s mercy and truth. His knowledge of God’s goodness has not been allowed to slumber in his own breast.

11. Here the second part of the Psalm begins. God’s deliverance in the past is the groundwork of the Psalmist’s plea for help in still-existing trials.

“Withhold not Thou.” “Thou” is emphatic ; “do Thou, on Thy part, not withhold Thy tender mercies, as I have not withheld (it is “the same word) my lips. I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness “and Thy truth ; so let that loving-kindness and truth always protect “me.”

12. He stands in urgent need of protection : evils without number have coiled round him ; his iniquities have overtaken him in their consequences ; he cannot see (rather than “look up,” Ps. xxxi. 9 ; xxxviii. 10. 1 Sam. iii. 2 ; iv. 15. 1 Kings xiv. 4.) ; his sight is gone

PSALMS, XL.

- ^x mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so ^x Ps. 38. 4.
 that I am not able to look up ;
 they are more than the hairs of mine head :
 therefore ^y my heart ^z faileth me. y Ps. 73. 26.
- 13 ^a Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me :
 O LORD, make haste to help me. z Heb. forsaketh.
- 14 ^a Let them be ashamed and confounded together ^a Ps. 35. 4, 26.
 that seek after my soul to destroy it ; & c.
 let them be driven backward and put to shame a Ps. 35. 4, 26.
 that wish me evil. & 70. 2, 3.
- 15 ^b Let them be ^c desolate for a reward of their ^b Ps. 70. 3.
 shame c Ps. 73. 19.
 that say unto me, Aha, aha.
- 16 ^d Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be ^d Ps. 70. 4.
 glad in thee :
 let such as love thy salvation ^e say continually, ^e Ps. 35. 27.
 The LORD be magnified.
- 17 ^f But I *am* poor and needy ; yet ^g the Lord ^f Ps. 70. 5.
 thinketh upon me : g 1 Pet. 5. 7.
 thou *art* my help and my deliverer ;
 make no tarrying, O my God.

from sorrow ; he is driven to despair. Many ancient interpreters, in their desire to apply the whole of the Psalm to Christ, understand Him as crying out here under the burden of human sin ; the transgressions of which He complains (they say) were not of course His own, but He took them upon Himself, in order to atone for them.

13. Under the pressure of his sufferings, the Psalmist renews, more earnestly, his cry for help.

“Be pleased.” “Let it be Thy pleasure ;” he trusts himself entirely to the free mercy and good pleasure of God.

The remaining verses re-appear, with very slight alterations, as Ps. lxx. They have probably been at some time detached from their proper place here, and made into a separate Psalm. Comp. Ps. xxii. 19.

14. See Ps. xxxv. 10, 25—27. “The persecuted one prays that “the purpose of his deadly foes may as it were rebound against the “protection of God, and miserably miscarry” (*Delitzsch*).

17. In this last verse David returns to himself and his own helpless state ; he has one comfort, that the Lord cares for him, and in the confidence which that thought inspires, he cries out for speedy help.

“Thinketh.” Comp. ver. 5, “Thy thoughts.” In Ps. lxx. this clause runs, “Make haste unto me, O God.”

What the Psalmist says in this Psalm of the imperfection of legal sacrifices, and the necessity and acceptableness of self-dedication, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to the sacrifice of Christ. The victims slain on Jewish altars could not of themselves avail with God ; they were effectual only so far as they represented the devotion and self-surrender of the sufferer, and looked forward to the great Sacri-

PSALMS, XLI.

PSALM XLI.

*1 God's care of the poor. 4 David complaineth of his enemies' treachery.
10 He fleeth to God for succour.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

^a Prov. 14. 21.

² Or,

*the weak,
or, sick.*

³ Heb. *in the
day of evil.*

1 **BLESSED** ^a is he that considereth ² the poor :
the LORD will deliver him ³ in time of
trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him
alive ;

and he shall be blessed upon the earth :

^b and ⁴ thou wilt not deliver him unto the will
of his enemies.

^b Ps. 27. 12.

⁴ Or, *do not
thou deliver.*

fice which was to come. Christ's life and death are the one perfect example of self-sacrifice, and therefore the words of the Psalm belong most fitly to Him. From the moment of His Incarnation He was perpetually offering Himself to the Father on man's behalf, and saying in effect, "Thy will be done." And because that offering was fully completed on the Cross, therefore this Psalm is specially appointed to be used on Good Friday.

PSALM XLI.

The complaint of a sick man, surrounded by hard-hearted and treacherous enemies.

There is a close connection between this Psalm and Psalm lv. ; in both David dwells with special sadness on the faithlessness of a friend, in whom he had placed special confidence, commonly supposed to be Ahitophel. The Psalm was probably written shortly before Absalom's rebellion broke out, when David had become aware of his attempt to secure the affections of the people, and of Ahitophel's intimacy with him. David seems to have suffered at that time from dangerous sickness, as appears also from Psalm xxxviii., and in this Psalm he complains of the advantage which his enemies took of his condition.

1. To exhibit more forcibly the baseness and ingratitude of those who surrounded him in his sickness, the Psalmist begins by declaring the blessedness of him who sympathizes with suffering.

"He that considereth." Lit. "deals thoughtfully with," that is, with loving consideration and sympathy.

"The poor." Rather, "the suffering and afflicted." The word embraces various kinds of affliction. It is possible that David is speaking here of one who had been loving to him in his trouble ; or it may be that he refers to his own sympathy with the sick and suffering, and the blessing which had followed. The words apply especially to Him Who pitied us in our low estate, and came to our relief.

2. "Thou wilt not deliver." Rather, as in margin, "do not Thou deliver." The rapid transition from the future to the imperative marks the writer's strong sympathy in the case which he is describing ; "Thou wilt not surely—Oh, do not—deliver him."

"Unto the will of his enemies." See Ps. xxvii. 12 ; lxxiv. 19.

- 3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing :
 thou wilt ² make all his bed in his sickness. ² Heb. *turn.*
- 4 ¶ I said, LORD, be merciful unto me :
 ° heal my soul ; for I have sinned against thee. ^c 2 Chr. 30. 20.
 Ps. 6. 2.
 & 147. 3.
- 5 Mine enemies speak evil of me,
 When shall he die, and his name perish ?
- 6 And if he come to see *me*, he ^d speaketh vanity :
 his heart gathereth iniquity to itself ;
when he goeth abroad, he telleth *it*. ^d Ps. 12. 2. .
 Prov. 26. 24,
 25, 26.
- 7 All that hate me whisper together against me :
 against me do they devise ³ my hurt. ³ Heb.
evil to me.

3. "Strengthen." That is, support, uphold, keep him from sinking into the grave.

"Thou wilt make." More lit. "Thou didst make, or turn." The change of tense shews that the writer's confidence for the future rests on his experience of the past ; perhaps it is best rendered in English by the present, "Thou turnest." Some understand the Psalmist to mean, that Almighty God is like a careful nurse, who shakes and smoothes the patient's pillow. But more probably the meaning is, "Thou changest "his bed of sickness into health ;" Thou so completely turnest his sick bed, that not a vestige of it remains. Comp. St. Luke v. 24, 25.

4. "I said." There is special emphasis on the pronoun. The Psalmist himself is afflicted, and stands in need of sympathy ; but instead of kindness he meets with slander and malice. He contrasts the treatment which he received with the kind consideration which he had just described as so rich in blessing. As for him, while he was humbly confessing his sin, and praying for pardon, his enemies were invoking evil on him. There is a contrast between what *he* says (ver. 4.) and what his enemies say (ver. 5.).

"Even while I pray'd—'Thou, Lord of power,

"'Forgive—my spirit heal,

"'For I have sinn'd to Thee'—that hour

"'Ill words on me they deal" (*Keble*).

"Heal my soul." Conscious that his affliction was the consequence of his sin, David's prayer in his sickness was for forgiveness and inward cleansing, rather than for recovery.

5. This verse implies that the Psalmist is dangerously sick. His enemies say in effect, "How soon will he perish, as perish we hope and "believe he will?"

6. "And if he come to see me." One of his enemies is especially singled out, as visiting him on his sick-bed and pretending kindness, while evil was in his heart. He not only speaks words of "vanity," (i. e. falsehood, as in Ps. xii. 2.), but is all the while gathering materials for misrepresentation, and presently goes forth and publishes the slander.

7. Here he describes what followed on the visit of his deceitful friend ; the report of his critical condition was spread from one to another among his enemies, who maliciously represented it as worse than it really was.

- ² Heb. *A thing of Belial.* 8 ² An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him :
and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.
- ^e 2 Sam. 15. 12. Job 19. 19. Ps. 55. 12, 13, 20. Jer. 20. 10. 9 ^e Yea, ³ mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,
^f which did eat of my bread, hath ⁴ lifted up *his* heel against me.
- ³ Heb. *the man of my peace.* 10 ¶ But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.
- ^r Obad. 7. John 13. 18. 11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.
- ⁴ Heb. *magnified.* 12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and ⁵ settest me before thy face for ever.
- ^g Job 36. 7. Ps. 34. 15.

8. "An evil disease." Lit. "a thing of Belial," that is, of wickedness, evil caused by his iniquity. His sin, that is, the punishment of his sin, was poured out upon him (his enemies said), like metal into a mould, so that he could not get free.

9. "Mine own familiar friend." Lit. (as in margin), "the man of my peace," of my friendship (Jer. xx. 10, margin). If this Psalm belongs to the time of Absalom's rebellion, Ahitophel no doubt is here meant, David's trusted counsellor, as in Ps. lv. 13. See 2 Sam. xvi. 23.

"Which did eat of my bread." Obad. 7. Our Saviour Himself applies these words to Judas (St. John xiii. 18.). David was a type of Christ, as in other respects, so in regard to the treachery of his friends; but the former part of the verse, "mine own familiar friend, in whom "I trusted," could not be spoken by Christ of Judas, for He knew from the beginning what he was: and it is to be observed that He does not quote it.

Over and above the sacredness of the rights of hospitality, it was a special honour to eat at the king's table (see 2 Sam. ix. 10. 1 Kings xviii. 19. 2 Kings xxv. 29.).

"Hath lifted up his heel." Lit. "hath made great his heel;" which may mean, either, hath lifted up his foot to trample upon me as a prostrate foe; or, has thrust out with his heel, so as to give a violent kick (Deut. xxxii. 15. 1 Sam. ii. 29.).

10. "That I may requite them." It would be David's duty to administer punishment to those who rebelled against his authority; and even in the mouth of a private individual such a prayer for retribution would be in entire accordance with the feelings which a sense of justice and zeal for God's honour would naturally and (according to their notions) rightly encourage in the saints of the Old Testament.

11. "By this." Namely, by the fact, of which he was assured, that his enemies would not triumph over him. That their machinations would be frustrated he regarded as evidence that God had delight in him.

"Thou favourest me." See 2 Sam. xv. 26. Ps. xviii. 19; xxii. 8; xxxv. 27.

PSALMS, XLII.

13 ^h Blessed be the LORD God of Israel
from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen,
and Amen.

^h Ps. 106. 48.

PSALM XLII.

1 *David's zeal to serve God in the temple.* 5 *He encourageth his soul to trust in God.* 2 *Or, A Psalm giving instruction of the sons, &c. See 1 Chron. 6. 33, 37. & 25. 5.*

To the chief Musician, ² Maschil, for the sons
of Korah.

1 **A**S the hart ³ panteth after the water brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

³ Heb.
brayeth.

13. These words may not have formed part of the original Psalm. Each of the first four Books of the Psalter ends with a similar doxology.—inserted, perhaps by the person who arranged the Psalms in their present order, to mark the several divisions.

In every kind of sorrow, especially in pain and sickness, the heart of man yearns for sympathy, and is ready to pray earnestly that those who have shewn consideration to others may find support and comfort, when their own hour of affliction comes. How severe the trial therefore, when, instead of sympathy, the sufferer meets, not with coldness only, but with falseness and cruelty! This Psalm suggests two lessons which it would be well for such desolate and disappointed sufferers to lay to heart. On the one hand let them remember that, whatever their sorrows and sufferings may be, they are, more or less directly, the consequence of their sin, and therefore let them school themselves to seek above all things for pardon and renewal; “Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.” And on the other hand let them bear in mind that in whatever degree their sufferings may be aggravated by the ingratitude and hypocrisy of those on whose kindness they had a right to reckon, these ingredients were found in a far larger proportion in the bitter cup which the greatest and holiest of sufferers was content to drink for their sakes. The treachery of Judas touched the heart of Jesus in the very tenderest place. They who will thus bow themselves under God’s afflicting hand in lowly penitence, and at the same time strive to forget their own sorrows in the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, may be assured, if not of relief from trouble, yet of God’s love and favour in this world, and the light of His countenance in the world to come. God will uphold them in their integrity, and set them before His face for ever.

PSALM XLII.

Longing for God’s solemn worship in a strange and hostile land.

The Second Book of the Psalter, which begins here, consists of thirty-one Psalms, eighteen of which are attributed by their titles to David, eight to the sons of Korah (including the forty-third, which has no inscription, but is plainly a continuation of Ps. xlii.), one to Asaph, one to Solomon, while three are anonymous.

One distinguishing feature of this Book, as compared with the first, is the frequent use of the name “Elohim,” translated “God” in our

PSALMS, XLII.

- ^a Ps. 63. 1. 2 ^a My soul thirsteth for God, for ^b the living
 & 84. 2. God:
 John 7. 37. when shall I come and appear before God?
^b 1 Thes. 1. 9.
- ^c Ps. 80. 5. 3 ^c My tears have been my meat day and night,
 & 102. 9. while ^d they continually say unto me, Where is
^d ver. 10. thy God?
 Ps. 79. 10.
 & 115. 2.
- ^e Job 30. 16. 4 When I remember these *things*, ^e I pour out my
 Ps. 62. 8. soul in me:

Version, instead of "Jehovah." In the first Book "Jehovah" occurs 272 times, and Elohim only 15; in the second Jehovah occurs only 30 times, and Elohim 164.

The first eight Psalms of this Book (Pss. xlii.—xlix.) are inscribed "of or for the sons of Korah." The preposition is the same as that which is used in respect of David, and in his case is supposed to express authorship. We know from Num. xxvi. 10, 11, that the sons of Korah did not die in their father's sin. They became afterwards an important branch of the singers in the Kohathite division, and maintained their reputation at least to the time of Jehoshaphat (1 Chron. vi. 22, 31. 2 Chron. xx. 19.).

The writer of Pss. xlii., xliii., whoever he was, finds himself, against his will, at a distance from the sanctuary on Zion, among the hills beyond Jordan, where he pines for the Divine Presence and worship, from which he was debarred. This agrees so well with David's situation at Mahanaim, when driven out by Absalom, and the Psalm itself so resembles Ps. lxxiii. and other of David's Psalms, that it may with great probability be ascribed to him. Delitzsch, who maintains the Korahite authorship of the Psalm, thinks that it was written by one who was in exile with David, and shared his feelings.

1. "Panteth." The word is only used elsewhere in Joel i. 20. Taken literally, it means an audible panting produced by extreme thirst; it implies intense desire and an overwhelming sense of want.

2. "My soul thirsteth." The same figure is found in David's own Psalm (lxxiii. 1.).

"The living God." Not merely as opposed to the lifeless idols of the heathen, but as the fountain of life (xxxvi. 9.), from whence untold blessings are ever welling forth (lxxxiv. 2.); just as flowing water is called "living" (see St. John iv. 10; vii. 37, 38.). It is especially the Presence of God as manifested in the sanctuary and its ordinances, that the Psalmist longs for; "when shall I come and appear in the Presence of God?" This phrase "appear before God," is commonly used of the Israelites going up to the sanctuary (Exod. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16; xxxi. 11. 1 Sam. i. 22.).

3. He describes the circumstances which led to this intense desire for God's Presence: tears have been to him as his daily food; he has had none other to refresh him, while on all sides he heard the bitter taunt that God had forsaken him (Ps. iii. 2. Joel ii. 17. Micah vii. 10.).

4. "When I remember," &c. Rather, "I would fain remember these things, and pour out my soul in me, how I passed on in the throng, how I led them in procession to the house of God." The exiled poet finds relief in tearful recollections of the processions and joyful festivals in God's house, in which he used to take part, and he

PSALMS, XLII.

for I had gone with the multitude, ^f I went with ^f Isai. 30. 29.
 them to the house of God,
 with the voice of joy and praise, with a multi-
 tude that kept holyday.

5 ^g Why art thou ² cast down, O my soul?

And *why* art thou disquieted in me?

^h Hope thou in God: for I shall yet ³ praise
 him

⁴ *for* the help of his countenance.

6 ¶ O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
 therefore will I remember thee from the land of
 Jordan,

and of the Hermonites, from ⁵ the hill Mizar.

^g ver. 11.

Ps. 43. 5.

² Heb. bowed
 down.

^h Lam. 3. 21.

³ Or, give
 thanks.

⁴ Or, his
 presence is
 salvation.

⁵ Or, the
 little hill,
 Ps. 133. 3.

encourages himself with the thought that he shall one day be restored to them.

“Went with them.” The word here used occurs only in Isa. xxxviii. 15, where it is rendered “go softly;” here probably it refers to the solemn march of the procession. The reference is either to the caravans of pilgrims journeying with music and songs to the Holy City, or to the processions in and about the sanctuary itself.

5. The Psalmist’s spirit or nobler part speaks to his weaker and lower self, and he endeavours to encourage himself in this sad contrast between the present and the past; the spiritual man soothes the natural man, and calls on him to hope in God;—not merely to trust, but to hope, to look forward with confidence to the time when he will do as he had done before, namely, praise God for the health of His countenance.

With this verse, which occurs as a refrain at the end of the Psalm, as well as at the end of Ps. xliiii., which is a continuation of Ps. xlii., the first division of the Psalm comes to an end. The Psalmist has endeavoured to check his despondency; but the complaint breaks forth again, and it is not until the next Psalm that he attains to perfect resignation.

“The help of His countenance.” It is probable that the first words of the next verse, “O my God,” should be added at the close of this, and that the true reading is (as in ver. 11 and xliiii. 5.), “Him Who is the “health (salvation) of my countenance, and my God.” This emendation has the support of the Greek and other Versions, and is very generally accepted.

6. **“My soul is cast down within me.”** The same word is used here as in the last verse, “Why art thou cast down?” But the Greek Version translates it differently in the two places; both their renderings being adopted by our Lord to express the anguish of His soul, that of ver. 5 in St. Matt. xxvi. 38, and that of ver. 6 in St. John xii. 27.

The Psalmist takes up his own words, and declares that, in spite of his remembrance with himself, his soul is still cast down within him, and he cannot shake off the burden, but on that very account he will the more think of God. So Jonah ii. 7.

“Of the Hermonites.” Rather, “of the Hermons,” in allusion probably to the peaks of Hermon.

“The hill Mizar.” A mountain unknown to us, but probably near

PSALMS, XLII.

- ⁱ Jer. 4. 20.
Ezek. 7. 26. 7 ⁱ Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts :
- ^k Ps. 88. 7.
Jonah 2. 3. ^k all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
- ^l Lev. 25. 21.
Deut. 28. 8.
Ps. 133. 3. 8 *Yet* the LORD will ^l command his lovingkindness in the daytime,
and ^m in the night his song *shall be* with me,
and my prayer unto the God of my life.
- ^m Job 35. 10.
Ps. 32. 7.
& 63. 6.
& 149. 5. 9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?
- ⁿ Ps. 38. 6.
& 43. 2. ⁿ why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
- ^o Or, *killing*. 10 As with a ^o sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me ;
- ^o ver. 3.
Joel 2. 17.
Mic. 7. 10. ^o while they say daily unto me, Where *is* thy God?
- ^p ver. 5.
Ps. 43. 5. 11 ^p Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him,
who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Hermon, in the northern part of Transjordanic Palestine. The word is derived from a root signifying "smallness:" hence the Prayer Book Version, "the little hill of Hermon." In this country, beyond Jordan, the Psalmist was sojourning; and from thence he looked wistfully towards his home on Mount Zion.

7. Just as at sea, when the waterspout comes down with a great roar from the sky, wave follows upon wave, as if calling to one another, so the Psalmist feels himself overwhelmed by the whirling waters; one calamity succeeds another, and threatens to involve him in utter destruction.

"All thy waves," &c. See Jonah ii. 3, where the same words occur. What was a figure to the Psalmist was a reality to Jonah. Comp. Jonah ii. 5 with Ps. lxxix. 1, and Jonah ii. 2 with Ps. cxx. 1.

8. Nevertheless, in the midst of his despondency, he strengthens himself in God, and is assured that light will break in upon his darkness; God will send His loving-kindness to comfort him by day, and will turn his nights into seasons of thanksgiving (Job xxxv. 10.).

"His song." That is, a song in praise of Him Who is the God of his life, and will not suffer him to come under the dominion of death.

9. "I will say." Rather, "I would fain say." He would fain give free course to his complaint, in order to bring about the accomplishment of his hope; he would expostulate with God for having forgotten and neglected him.

10. "As with a sword in my bones." Rather, "with a breaking in my bones." The reproaches of his enemies were as though his very bones were being crushed and destroyed within him.

PSALMS, XLIII.

PSALM XLIII.

1 *David, praying to be restored to the temple, promiseth to serve God joyfully.* 5 *He encourageth his soul to trust in God.*

- 1 ^a **J**UDGE me, O God, and ^b plead my cause ^a Ps. 26. 1. & 35. 24.
 against an ² ungodly nation: ^b Ps. 35. 1.
- O deliver me ³ from the deceitful and unjust man. ² Or, unmerciful.
- 2 For thou *art* the God of ^c my strength: why ³ Heb. from a man of deceit and iniquity.
 dost thou cast me off? ^c Ps. 28. 7.
- ^d Why go I mourning because of the oppression ^d Ps. 42. 9.
 of the enemy?
- 3 ^e O send out thy light and thy truth: let them ^e Ps. 40. 11. & 57. 3.
 lead me;
- let them bring me unto ^f thy holy hill, and to ^f Ps. 3. 4.
 thy tabernacles.
- 4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God ⁴ Heb. the gladness of my joy.
⁴ my exceeding joy:

PSALM XLIII.

Though complete in itself, and probably used separately, this Psalm is doubtless a continuation of the preceding. Taking the two Psalms as one, the Psalm consists of three parts, each containing five verses, and each ending with the same words. In the third part, which is the present Psalm, the Psalmist rises at length to a confident hope that God would do him justice and restore him to his land, and permit him again to join in the services of the sanctuary.

1. "Judge me." Decide my cause, vindicate my right (Ps. vii. 8; xxvi. 1; xxxv. 1.).

"An ungodly nation." Lit. "not godly," or rather, "not kindly," which does not exhibit towards man the tender mercy of God (see margin); "Against th' unpitying kind" (*Keble*). Ps. iv. 3; xii. 1.

2. The Psalmist beseeches God to do him justice, because he trusts entirely in Him; he loves Him, and looks to Him, and yet He seems to be rejecting him.

"Why go I mourning?" The form of the verb seems to indicate the moving to and fro of one lost in his own thoughts and sorrows.

3. "Send out Thy light and Thy truth." The more usual combination is "loving-kindness and truth;" and perhaps "light" is here used instead of "loving-kindness," in contrast with the picture of gloom suggested by the preceding verse.

"Let them lead me." There is especial emphasis on the pronoun; "Let *them* take me by the hand; let the light of Thy mercy and Thy "faithfulness, like a glorious angel, conduct me to Thy dwelling-place."

"Thy tabernacles." Lit. "Thy dwelling-places," so Ps. xlvi. 4; lxxxiv. 1; cxxxii. 5, 7. In the singular it is the word ordinarily used for the Tabernacle, or sacred tent (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 60.); the plural may signify its outer and inner parts.

4. Anticipating in thought the fulfilment of his prayer, he delights to realize the blessedness of God's presence, and the joy of praising Him.

"Then will I go." Rather, "so would I fain go."

PSALMS, XLIV.

yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God
my God.

ε Ps. 42. 5, 11. 5 ^ε Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him,
who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIV.

1 *The church, in memory of former favours, 7 complaineth of their present evils. 17 Professing her integrity, 23 she fervently prayeth for succour.*

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

^a Ex. 12. 26,
27. Ps. 78. 3. 1 **W**E have heard with our ears, O God,
^a our fathers have told us,

“God my exceeding joy.” Lit. “the God of the joy of my exultation.”

“My God, my joy when visions sweet
“Thrill keenest o’er my mind” (*Keble*).

The highest enjoyment of which our souls are capable is to realize the personal Being and Presence of God, and to feel that He is indeed our God. This joyous sense of communion with Him is often vouchsafed in times of solitude and earthly sorrow; and there are passages in the Psalms which bear witness to it. But here we find the Psalmist in his banishment and persecution solacing himself with the remembrance of the solemn services of God’s house, and cheering his despondency with the hope that he would one day be restored to them. There may be communion with God apart from the ordinances of His house; and there may be participation in those ordinances without communion with Him. But it is instructive to perceive how the Psalmist’s heart yearned for the public worship and services of the sanctuary, as for the very presence of God. If we do not share his feelings, it is because we do not really seek God in them. They are the appointed channels of His grace, the special tokens of His loving Presence. If we will recognize them as such, they will be to us, as to the Psalmist, the joy and delight of our hearts.

PSALM XLIV.

**God’s people, in distress, appeal to God’s former mercies,
and to their own faithfulness.**

Various conjectures have been made as to the date and authorship of this Psalm. Some ascribe it to the time of the Maccabees and the cruel persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when so many thousands fell as martyrs for their country and religion. And because it was felt to be suitable to their circumstances it was much used at that time. There is a tradition that the Levites daily ascended the pulpit, and cried aloud, “Awake, why sleepest Thou?” (ver. 23.) But the Maccabees were, with one exception (1 Macc. v. 55.), victorious in all their battles, whereas the Psalm speaks only of defeat. By others again it is assigned to the time of David, and it is supposed to refer to the condition of things, when the Edomites took advantage of David’s expedition against

PSALMS, XLIV.

what work thou didst in their days, in the times
of old.

2 *How* ^b thou didst drive out the heathen with thy
hand, and plantedst them ;

^b Ex. 15. 17.
Deut. 7. 1.
Ps. 78. 55.
& 80. 8.

how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them
out.

3 For ^c they got not the land in possession by their
own sword,

^c Deut. 8. 17.
Josh. 24. 12.

neither did their own arm save them :

but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light
of thy countenance,

^d because thou hadst a favour unto them.

^d Deut. 4. 37.
& 7. 7, 8.

4 ^e Thou art my King, O God :

^e Ps. 74. 12.

Syria to invade the land (2 Sam. viii.). In that case the Psalm would have its origin in the same circumstances which gave rise to Ps. lx., with which it should be compared. Other conjectures are, that the Psalm belongs to the time of Jehoshaphat, or of Hezekiah, when he and his people were in expectation of Jerusalem being taken, or that it was written during the captivity.

But however difficult it may be to fix the date of the Psalm, the circumstances which gave rise to it are clearly marked. It was a time of great national distress : He Who had wrought such wonders in old times for their fathers had forsaken them ; their armies were overthrown, and the people scattered. And all this in spite of their faithfulness. The writer of the Psalm could say, that they had not forgotten God, or stretched forth their hand to any strange God ; on the contrary they had proved their faithfulness by dying for the truth. It is this assertion of guiltlessness in regard to the worship of God which makes it probable that the Psalm was written either in the time of David or during the captivity. At no intervening time in the history of Israel could they boast that they were free from all false worship.

1. The writer contrasts God's goodness to their fathers, with their present afflicted condition ; what they had heard with their ears was so different from what they saw with their eyes.

"Our fathers have told us." The children of Israel were bound to repeat to their children the story of God's marvellous works (see Exod. x. 2 ; xii. 26 ; xiii. 8, 14. Deut. vi. 20. Judges vi. 13.).

2. "And cast them out." Rather, "didst cause them to spread abroad." The two clauses of the verse answer to one another ; God drove out the heathen, and planted His own people ; He afflicted the heathen, and made His own people to increase. The figure is taken from a vine, which is first carefully planted, and then shoots out her branches (comp. Exod. xv. 17. Ps. lxxx. 8—11.).

3. It was not Israel's own work, but God's ; it was His right Hand, His Arm, the light of His countenance that brought salvation to them ; and all because of His free love and grace (see marg. refl.).

4. Out of the thankful remembrance of the past springs the confident prayer for help and protection in the present.

"Thou" is emphatic ; "Thou, even Thou Thyself," or "Verily Thou."

PSALMS, XLIV.

- command deliverances for Jacob.
- ^f Dan. 8. 4. 5 Through thee ^f will we push down our enemies :
through thy name will we tread them under
that rise up against us.
- ^f Ps. 33. 16.
Hos. 1. 7.
^h Ps. 40. 14. 6 For ^g I will not trust in my bow,
neither shall my sword save me.
- ⁱ Ps. 34. 2.
Jer. 9. 24.
Rom. 2. 17. 7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies,
and hast ^h put them to shame that hated us.
- ^k Ps. 60. 1, 10.
& 74. 1.
& 88. 14. 8 ⁱ In God we boast all the day long,
& 89. 38.
& 108. 11. and praise thy name for ever. Selah.
- ^l Lev. 26. 17.
Deut. 28. 25.
Josh. 7. 8, 12. 9 ¶ But ^k thou hast cast off, and put us to shame ;
and goest not forth with our armies.
- ^m Rom. 8. 36. 10 Thou makest us to ^l turn back from the enemy :
and they which hate us spoil for themselves.
- ² Heb.
as sheep of
meat. 11 ^m Thou hast given us ² like sheep *appointed* for
meat ;
- ⁿ Deut. 4. 27.
& 28. 64.
Ps. 60. 1. and hast ⁿ scattered us among the heathen.
- ^o Isai. 52. 3, 4.
Jer. 15. 13. 12 ^o Thou sellest thy people ³ for nought,
- ³ Heb. *with-*
out riches.

Here and in vv. 6, 15, where the Psalmist speaks in his own name, it is not as an individual, but as one of the covenant people.

“**Command.**” Having named God as his King, he begs that He will put forth His kingly might ; “ issue Thy royal command, and Israel will “ be saved ” (comp. xlii. 8 ; cxxxiii. 3.).

5. “ Will we push . . . will we tread.” Rather, “ do we push, do we “ tread.” The figure is that of a wild beast goring his opponent, and then trampling him down with his hoofs (Deut. xxxiii. 17.).

8. God’s goodness is not only a ground for trust, but for glad thanksgiving.

“ Selah.” The music is prolonged, at the end of this verse, in order to give emphasis to the assertion that God was Israel’s glory and boast. Then, after a pause, the Psalmist begins again ; but in a tone of sad complaint, on account of the contrast between the joyful acknowledgments of the past and the experience of the present.

9. “ But.” That is, “ nevertheless ; ” though Thou wert formerly thus gracious, and we in consequence make our boast of Thee continually, nevertheless Thou hast now cast us off (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 38 ; lx. 1, 10.).

“ Goest not forth.” Instead of leading them forth to victory (2 Sam. v. 24.), He leaves them to themselves, and the enemy smite and spoil them at their will.

11, 12. While some of them were given over to slaughter as sheep appointed for food, others were sold for slaves and so dispersed among the nations. Comp. 2 Macc. v. 11—23, where it is said that Antiochus slew in three days 40,000 Jews, and as many more were sold as captives.

12. “ For nought.” Lit. “ for not riches,” that is, for a very low price, a mere nothing (Jer. xv. 13.). See Joel iii. 3, where mention is made of the selling of Israelites ; but the expression may be figurative, as in Deut. xxxii. 30.

PSALMS, XLIV.

- and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.
- 13 ^pThou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, ^{p Deut. 23. 37.}
a scorn and a derision to them that are round ^{Ps. 79. 4.}
about us. ^{& 80. 6.}
- 14 ^qThou makest us a byword among the heathen, ^{q Jer. 24. 9.}
^ra shaking of the head among the people. ^{r 2 Kin. 19. 21.}
- 15 My confusion *is* continually before me, ^{Job 16. 4.}
and the shame of my face hath covered me, ^{Ps. 22. 7.}
- 16 for the voice of him that reproacheth and
blasphemeth ;
- ^sby reason of the enemy and avenger. ^{s Ps. 8. 2.}
- 17 ¶ ^tAll this is come upon us ; yet have we ^{t Dan. 9. 13.}
not forgotten thee,
neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
- 18 Our heart is not turned back,
^uneither have our ²steps declined from thy ^{u Job 23. 11.}
way ; ^{Ps. 119. 51,}
^{157.}
- 19 though thou hast sore broken us in ^xthe place ^{2 Or, goings.}
of dragons, ^{x Isai. 34. 13.}
and covered us ^ywith the shadow of death. ^{& 35. 7.}
- 20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, ^{y Ps. 23. 4.}

“Dost not increase thy wealth,” i.e. gained nothing. They seem to be given up gratuitously, without profit or necessity.

13. Shame, as is natural, follows on defeat. The nations immediately around Israel (Ps. lxxix. 4.), as the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, are to be distinguished from the more distant people of the earth, spoken of in ver. 14.

14. “A byword.” Or, “taunting proverb.” Israel was held up to scorn as a nation undergoing chastisement (comp. Ps. lxix. 11. Isa. xiv. 4. Jer. xxiv. 9. Deut. xxviii. 37.).

“A shaking of the head.” As in Ps. xxii. 7, a gesture of malicious astonishment (Jer. xviii. 16.).

16. “By reason of.” Lit. “for the face of :” it answers to “for the voice of” in the former clause. The Psalmist says that they were overwhelmed with shame, partly, in consequence of the jeering words, partly, through the angry countenances of their enemies.

17—22. Not only are God’s present dealings with His people at variance with the past, but the change cannot be accounted for by any fault or apostasy on their part. As a nation they were steadfast in their allegiance, and had not justly incurred punishment.

19. “Though,” &c. Perhaps the passage should rather be rendered, “That Thou hast broken us ;” the meaning being, “We have not revolted from Thee, that Thou shouldst have crushed us.”

“The place of dragons” (rather, “jackals”) is the symbol of desolation,—some lonesome wilderness, or dreary ruin, tenanted by jackals (see Jer. ix. 11 ; x. 22. Isa. xxxiv. 13.).

20, 21. This appeal to the omniscience of God must be understood

PSALMS, XLV.

PSALM XLV.

1 *The majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom.* 10 *The duty of the church, and the benefits thereof.*

To the chief Musician ² upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, ³ Maschil, A Song of loves. 2 Ps. 69, & 80, title.

1 **M**Y heart ⁴ is inditing a good matter : 3 Or, of instruction.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the king : 4 Heb. boileth, or, bubbleth up.

my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

2 ¶ Thou art fairer than the children of men :

^a grace is poured into thy lips :

^a Luke 4. 22.

PSALM XLV.

A song in honour of the King and his Bride.

A royal marriage-song, commonly supposed to have reference to the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings iii. 1.); but according to another suggestion, to the marriage of Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, "the second Solomon of the Israelitish history," with Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. Another supposition is, that the Psalm is an ode composed upon the marriage of Hezekiah king of Judah with Hephzibah.

But it is in Christ and in the mystical union between Christ and His Church that the Psalm has its true fulfilment. The beauty and majesty of Christ, His eternal kingship, His espousal with the Church—these are the great subjects of the Psalm.

There are two main divisions; the first, celebrating the bridegroom, and the second the bride.

"**Upon Shoshannim,**" i. e. upon lilies (see Pss. lxi. ; lxxx.). It probably indicates the melody of some song beginning with the word "lilies," or it may refer to some lily-shaped instrument of music. Some persons think that there is an allusion to the subject of the Psalm, the bride and her maidens being likened to lilies, and connect it with what follows in the inscription, "a song of loves," i. e. of lovely things.

1. A kind of introduction, in which the Psalmist declares the greatness of his subject and the fulness of his heart.

"**Is inditing.**" Lit. "bubbling up," overflowing: his heart is full, and gushes over with a good matter, a high and glorious theme. He says to himself, "My work, my song is for a king; and so lofty is my theme, that it makes my tongue eloquent, like the pen of a ready writer" (comp. Ezra vii. 6.).

2. "**Thou.**" That is, the royal bridegroom. The incomparable beauty of his person and the charm of his speech are first praised.

"**Fairer.**" So Isaiah (xxxiii. 17.), speaking of the Messiah, says, "Thine eyes shall behold the king in his beauty." "Thy beauty," says the Chaldee paraphrast, "O King Messiah, is greater than that of the sons of men." There is no necessary contradiction between this passage and Isa. lii. 14; liii. 2. We may well believe that, in spite of the evident traces of sorrow and suffering, Christ's inherent nobleness and sweetness shone plainly in His countenance.

"**Grace is poured into (rather "upon") thy lips.**" Hence men

therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

b Isai. 49. 2.
 Heb. 4. 12.
 Rev. 1. 16.
 & 19. 15.

c Isai. 9. 6.

d Rev. 6. 2.

² Heb. *prosper thou, ride thou.*

3 Gird thy ^bsword upon *thy* thigh, ^cO *most*
 mighty,
 with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 ^d And in thy majesty ²ride prosperously
 because of truth and meekness *and* righteous-
 ness ;
 and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible
 things.

“wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth” (St. Luke iv. 22.).

“Therefore.” From the presence of this outward beauty and grace, it was manifest that God’s blessing was upon him for ever.

The recurrence of this word “therefore” in vv. 7, 17 marks the burden or chorus of the Psalm.

3. The king’s strength and prowess are as conspicuous as his beauty and grace. The praise of them takes the form of a summons to exert them.

“With thy glory and thy majesty.” There is no “with” in the Hebrew. “Thy glory and thy majesty” may be taken in apposition to “sword,” thus :

“Thou mighty warrior, gird
 “Thy sword upon thy side,
 “Thy glory and thy majesty” (*Keble*).

Or, as is perhaps better, the verb may be repeated ; “gird on thy glory and thy majesty.” The king is bidden to array himself in his glittering armour and go forth to war. Such an address might seem inapplicable to Solomon, who is spoken of as “a man of peace ;” but his extended dominion was at least partly due to his own conquests (2 Chron. viii. 3.), and he is everywhere represented in the books of Kings and Chronicles as a great military sovereign. But it is to the glory and majesty of the Messial’s kingdom that the words especially belong (comp. Rev. i. 16 ; vi. 2 ; xix. 11, 15, 16.).

“O most mighty.” Rather, “O mighty one” (comp. Isa. ix. 6.).

4. “Because of.” In behalf of, in order to put a stop to the oppression of righteousness and the suffering of innocence. Other kings make war for the sake of wealth or territory ; this one in behalf of truth and righteousness.

“Meekness and righteousness.” Lit. “meekness-righteousness,” or meekness which is also righteousness, a righteous meekness. See Zeph. ii. 3. Zech. ix. 9. Isa. xi. 4.

“Shall teach thee.” i. e. Shall lead thee forth, and cause thee to see.

“There is much reason to suppose, that the ceremonies with which “the Church fenced admission to the order of knighthood were drawn in “a great measure from this verse. There was the solemn *girding on* of “the sword in front of the altar, the vow to defend the faith—the word “of *truth* ; the cause of widows and orphans—the word of *meekness* ; and “to be loyal, just, and true—the word of *righteousness* ; followed by the “new-made knight mounting a courser, and *riding on*, or caracoling “fully-armed, to display his strength and dexterity” (*Littledale*).

- 5 Thine arrows *are* sharp—in the heart of the king's enemies ;
whereby the people fall under thee.
- 6 °Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever :
the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.
- 7 †Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness : † Ps. 33. 5.
therefore 2^s God, thy God, ^h hath anointed thee ² Or, *O God.*
with the oil ⁱ of gladness above thy fellows. † Isai. 61. 1.
^h 1 Kin. 1. 39, 40.
- 8 ^k All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, ⁱ Ps. 21. 6.
and cassia, ^k Cant. 1. 3.
- out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.
- 9 ^l King's daughters *were* among thy honourable ^l Cant. 6. 8.
women :

5. The original shews how vividly the scene of conflict is present to the eye of the Psalmist: "Thine arrows are sharp" (and therefore fatal to those whom they strike)—"people fall under thee" (so that thou passest over them as they lie on the ground); "in the heart of the enemies of the king;" there the arrows are to be seen. Viewed with reference to the Messiah, the meaning is, that His word pierces the hearts of His enemies; they acknowledge His sway, either by loving obedience (Acts ii. 37.), or by utter powerlessness.

6. The Psalmist is here carried out of himself; he not only recognizes in the King whom he is celebrating a visible representative of God, but he addresses him as "God." He seems to perceive that if the throne of David is to be established for ever, He Who sits on that throne, the Son of David, must be Divine (2 Sam. vii. 13—16.).

7. Because of his righteousness and goodness, God has poured upon him a superabundant joy, above all other kings upon earth. See Phil. ii. 9, where the Apostle says that Christ was highly exalted, on account of His righteousness and hatred of iniquity, as manifested in the Cross. His human nature is endued with an everlasting kingship, and made susceptible of a happiness beyond that which is attainable by man (comp. Isa. lxi. 1—3.).

"Hath anointed." Though this probably does not refer to the customary anointing to the kingly office (as in Ps. lxxxix. 20, comp. with Acts x. 38.), the figure was doubtless suggested by the custom.

8. Lit. "myrrh and aloes-cassia are thy garments."

"All myrrh and spiced gums,

"Thy robes and rich array;

"From balls of ivory tuneful strings

"Shall make thee glad and gay" (*Keble*).

"Whereby." The word so translated may be rendered, "the music of stringed instruments, harp-strings;" in which case the clause will run, "Out of ivory palaces hath music made thee glad."

The garments of the bridegroom are so deeply scented with perfumes, that they seem to be woven out of them, while from the ivory-inlaid palaces (cabinets?) comes forth the sound of entrancing music.

9. "Among thy honourable women." Lit. "among thy beloved

^m See 1 Kin.
2. 19.

^m upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

10 ¶ Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ;

ⁿ See Deut.
21. 13.

ⁿ forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ;

11 so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty :

^o Ps. 95. 6.
Isai. 54. 5.

^o for he *is* thy Lord ; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift ;

^p Ps. 22. 29.
& 72. 10.
Isai. 41. 23.
& 60. 3.

even ^p the rich among the people shall intreat ² thy favour.

² Heb.
thy face.

13 ^q The king's daughter *is* all glorious within : her clothing *is* of wrought gold.

^q Rev. 19. 7, 8.
^r Cant. 1. 4.

14 ^r She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework :

the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

“and precious ones ;” that is, among the ladies of his court. The queen-consort, (Neh. ii. 6.), Pharaoh's daughter, stands in the place of honour at the king's right hand, exalted above the rest.

“Gold of Ophir.” See 1 Chron. xxix. 4. 1 Kings ix. 28 ; x. 11.

10. The poet turns to address the bride, bidding her forget her father's house, and devote herself to the king, her husband ; so shall he delight in her, and the nations do her homage. So the Church, chosen by Christ to be His Spouse, has one duty and desire, to yield herself wholly to Him.

11. “Thy Lord,” i. e. thy master, as Gen. xviii. 12.

12. “The daughter of Tyre.” That is, the people of Tyre, who are named by way of example. Not the Tyrians only, but the richest among the several nations, will court her favour with gifts. In like manner, according as the Church is faithful and devoted to her Lord, will she draw the nations to His love ; and for His sake the kings of the earth will bring their honour and glory unto her.

13. “Within.” That is, in the inner chamber. The Psalmist has, first, a vision of the bride in her own chamber ; then he sees her, richly adorned and with a numerous train, led to the king and entering the palace.

“All glorious.” Lit. “all glory ;” mere splendour, nothing but splendour.

“Of wrought gold.” Of textures interwoven with threads of gold.

14. “In raiment of needlework.” In variegated embroidered garments ; or perhaps, on tapestry of various colours.

For the companions of the bride, see St. Matt. xxv. 1—10. Here, the maidens accompany the bride to the palace of the bridegroom ; in the Parable of the Ten Virgins they attach themselves to the bridal company, when the bridegroom is conducting the bride home (comp. also Rev. xix. 7, 8.).

PSALMS, XLVI.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought :
they shall enter into the king's palace.

16 ¶ Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
^s whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. ^s 1 Pet. 2. 9.
^r Rev. 1. 6. &
5. 10. & 20. 6.

17 ^t I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations :
therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever. ^t Mal. 1. 11.

PSALM XLVI.

1 *The confidence which the church hath in God.* 8 *An exhortation to behold it.* ² Or, of.
³ Ps. 48, & 66.
⁴ 1 Chr. 15. 20.

To the chief Musician ² for the sons of Korah,
³ A Song upon ⁴ Alamoth. ^a Ps. 62. 7, 8.
& 91. 2.
& 142. 5.

1 **G**OD is our ^a refuge and strength,—^b a very present help in trouble. ^b Deut. 4. 7.
Ps. 145. 18.

16, 17. Addressed to the royal bridegroom. If he cannot look back on a long line of ancestors, he shall have an illustrious offspring; the future glory of his race shall surpass the past. So it is said of the children of the kingdom that they shall be kings and priests on the earth, and shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. v. 10.).

Without imposing an allegorical meaning on every verse of the Psalm, as if it were simply a hymn in honour of Christ's union with His Church, we see plainly that the king, whom the Psalm celebrates, was a type of Christ, Who is at once the King and Husband of His Church. And as we repeat the Psalm as one of the Proper Psalms for Christmas Day, our thoughts may well be carried on to the time when the voice of a great multitude shall be heard shouting, "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. xix. 6, 7.).

PSALM XLVI.

Our God a sure stronghold.

This and the two following Psalms are thanksgivings for some signal deliverance wrought unexpectedly for Jerusalem. It has been referred by some to the discomfiture of the united forces of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 1—30.). In their alarm the king and his people assembled in the Temple and prayed earnestly for deliverance; whereupon the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, who promised a miraculous deliverance on the morrow: "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude . . . ye shall not need to fight in this battle . . . for the Lord will be with you." Then the Levite singers, and especially the Korahites, praised the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice. On the next day the Levites went forth in their rich apparel

PSALMS, XLVI.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
and though the mountains be carried into ²the midst of the sea ;

3 ^o *though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

² Heb.
the heart of the seas.

^c Ps. 93. 3, 4.
Jer. 5. 22.
Matt. 7. 25.

^d See Isa. 8. 7.
^e Ps. 48. 1, 8.
Isai. 60. 14.

4 ¶ *There is* ^d a river, the streams whereof shall make glad ^e the city of God,

with songs, in front of the army. In the meanwhile the enemy, seized by a sudden panic, turned their arms against each other ; and when Jehoshaphat's army reached the spot where they were encamped, the field was strewn with corpses. After three days spent in gathering the spoil, the army returned to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. This Psalm gives fitting expression to their thanksgiving on that occasion.

But it is scarcely less applicable to the deliverance from Assyria in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 35.), and the resemblances between these Psalms and passages in Isaiah may be thought to favour that view. On the whole, however, the first reference is perhaps the more probable.

"A song upon Alamothe." The Hebrew word means "virgins;" and the title has been explained "a song for virgin, that is, soprano voices." Comp. "psalteries on Alamothe" (1 Chron. xv. 20.), i. e. psalteries of high pitch, psalteries whose tone resembled the voices of girls.

The Psalm consists of three divisions, each marked by Selah. At the close of the two last divisions comes the refrain, "The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge," which some think should be inserted at the end of the first division.

This is said to have been Luther's favourite Psalm ; one of the best known of his hymns is founded upon it.

1. God's people have ever found Him a sure refuge ; therefore even in the crash of the elements and the destruction of the world, they need not fear.

"A very present help." Lit. "a help in trouble is He found exceedingly," i. e. very easily ; to those who seek Him he reveals Himself at once (2 Chron. xv. 4.).

2. "Though the earth be removed." Lit. "though the earth be changed," whatever changes pass over it.

"Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Though the mountains should sink back into the heart of the sea, from which they emerged at the creation ; even if the universe should fall to pieces, and the former chaos return (Isa. liv. 10.), we will not fear.

3. "Thereof." That is, of the sea. The convulsions of the natural world may be understood as imaging the revolutions of kingdoms, and the wild surging of human passions.

4. "A river." A perennial river—in allusion probably to the spring gushing forth from the Temple-rock, which supplied the two pools of Siloam (Isa. viii. 6.), and in time of drought and siege never failed

PSALMS, XLVI.

- the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.
- 5 God *is* ^f in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
- God shall help her, ² *and that* right early.
- 6 ^g The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, ^h the earth melted.
- 7 ⁱ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* ³ our refuge. Selah.
- 8 ¶ ^k Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.
- 9 ^l He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
- ^m he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
- ⁿ he burneth the chariot in the fire.

^f Deut. 23. 14.
Isai. 12. 6.
Ezek. 43. 7, 9.
Hos. 11. 9.
Joel 2. 27.
Zeph. 3. 15.
Zech. 2. 5,
10, 11, & 8. 3.
² Heb. *when the morning appeareth*:
See Exod. 14. 20, 27.
2 Chr. 20. 20.
Ps. 30. 5.
& 143. 8.
^g Ps. 2. 1.
^h Josh. 2. 9, 24.
ⁱ ver. 11.
Num. 14. 9.
2 Chr. 13. 12.
³ Heb. *an high place for us*,
Ps. 9. 9.
^k Ps. 66. 5.
^l Isai. 2. 4.
^m Ps. 76. 3.
ⁿ Ezek. 39. 9.

to refresh the inhabitants of Jerusalem. As it is said in Gen. ii. 10, that a river went forth out of Eden to water the garden, so this never-failing stream makes Jerusalem as it were a Paradise. It is a type of that river of grace, which is the support and refreshment of God's people in all their troubles. There is a marked contrast between the roaring and surging of the sea described in the last verse and the peaceful stream which waters Zion.

“Let them roar—his awful surges.

“Here is yet one quiet rill,

“Her calm waters,

“Zion's joy, flow calm and still.”

5. “*And that right early.*” Lit. “at the turning of the morning.” The same expression occurs in Exod. xiv. 27. There is only a night of trouble; with the return of morning there is help (comp. Ps. xxx. 5; xlix. 14. Isa. xvii. 14.).

6. “*Raged . . . were moved.*” The same words rendered “roar” and “carried” in vv. 2, 3. Thus the figurative language of the former part of the Psalm is explained.

“*Melted.*” Rather, “*melteth.*” The change of tense marks the instantaneous manner in which the discomfiture of God's enemies follows upon the utterance of His voice.

7. “*The Lord of hosts.*” That is, of the armies of heaven. “*The God of Jacob;*” i. e. the God of the covenant. These two titles remind us of the double support of our faith, viz. God's immeasurable power, by which He is able to subdue all the world under us, and His fatherly love, as manifested in His word (*Calvin*).

“*With us.*” Heb. *immanu* (comp. “Immanuel” Isa. vii. 14; viii. 8.). 8. This invitation will apply either to the destruction of the confederates in the time of Jehoshaphat, or to the desolate condition of the Assyrian camp, after the annihilation of Sennacherib's army.

9. The overthrow of the power of the enemies of His people is a

PSALMS, XLVII.

- 10 Be still, and know that I *am* God :
 ° Is. 2. 11; 17. ° I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be
 exalted in the earth.
 P ver. 7. 11 P The LORD of hosts *is* with us ;
 the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

PSALM XLVII.

The nations are exhorted cheerfully to entertain the kingdom of Christ.

- 2 Or, of. To the chief Musician, A Psalm 2 for the sons of Korah.
 a Isai. 55. 12. 1 O a CLAP your hands, all ye people ;
 shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

prelude to that ceasing of all war which Jehovah will bring about throughout the world (Micah iv. 3. Isa. ii. 4.). The very implements of war will be broken in pieces or burned as useless. Cf. Isa. ix. 5 : "Every greave of the warrior in the battle-tumult, and every garment "rolled in blood, shall be for burning and fuel of fire."

10. "Be still." Lit. "cease ye," cease your efforts, addressed to the nations. Or it may be taken as addressed to His own people ; cease your anxious endeavours (Exod. xiv. 13.).

May we, without presumption, take this Psalm into our lips as a song of triumph and thanksgiving for God's protecting care over the Church at large and over individual Christians ? Assuredly we may. As regards the Church, we have Christ's own promise, that He will be with her always, even unto the end of the world, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her (St. Matt. xxviii. 20 ; xvi. 18.). It is true that her whole history is but one series of troubles and disasters ; the powers of the world seem ever on the point of gaining complete ascendancy over her ; but the Church has hitherto maintained her ground, and will maintain it to the end ; because God is with her, and however furiously the waters may rage, He will bring her safely out of the storm. And so with regard to ourselves. Inasmuch as it is God's will to save His people, not by preserving them from trials and temptations, but by carrying them through them, so with every temptation He will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. See Isa. xliii. 2. Let Immanuel, "God with us," be our watchword. If He be for us, who can be against us ? Greater is He that is in us, than He that is in the world (Rom. viii. 31. 1 St. John iv. 4.).

PSALM XLVII.

Our God the King over all the earth.

A fit sequel to Ps. xlvii., being an expansion of the idea in which that Psalm culminates, that the Lord is exalted above the nations and the King of the whole earth. It may therefore reasonably be referred to the same time ; though some connect it, like Ps. xxiv., with the removal of the Ark to Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 1 Chron. xv. 14—28.). God has come down to fight the battle of His people ; His people therefore should celebrate His return to heaven with joyful praise. Most fitly is this Psalm appointed for Ascension Day. The Church addresses her victorious King ascending into heaven, having triumphed over the powers

PSALMS, XLVII.

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| <p>2 For the LORD most high ^b is terrible ;
 ^c he is a great King over all the earth.</p> <p>3 ^d He shall subdue the people under us,
 and the nations under our feet.</p> <p>4 He shall choose our ^e inheritance for us,
 the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.</p> <p>5 ¶ ^f God is gone up with a shout,
 the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.</p> <p>6 Sing praises to God, sing praises :
 sing praises unto our King, sing praises.</p> <p>7 ^g For God is the King of all the earth :
 ^h sing ye praises ² with understanding.</p> | <p>^b Deut. 7. 21.
 Neh. 1. 5.
 Ps. 76. 12.</p> <p>^c Mal. 1. 14.</p> <p>^d Ps. 18. 47.</p> <p>^e 1 Pet. 1. 4.</p> <p>^f Ps. 68. 24,
 25.</p> <p>^g Zech. 14. 9.</p> <p>^h 1 Cor. 14.
 15, 16.</p> <p>² Or, every
 one that
 hath under-
 standing.</p> |
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of darkness, in the language of the devout Israelite rejoicing in the overthrow of his enemies.

1. The Psalmist calls on all the people of the earth to testify by gestures and by their voices their joy in the Lord on account of the deliverance He has wrought for Israel. The immediate effect of the overthrow of Israel's enemies would doubtless be fear (see the preceding Psalm and 2 Chron. xx. 29.) ; but the Psalmist seems here to anticipate the time when the hearts of the nations would be turned to the Lord, not by constraint, but willingly, and when they would regard His special mercy to Israel as a prelude to His favour to the whole world. In other Psalms also (e.g. lxvi. ; cxvii.), the heathen are called on to praise God on account of His wonderful doings for Israel (see Deut. xxxii. 43.). Such language is especially applicable to the kingdom of Christ, and to the joy of the nations in His triumphs.

3, 4. "He shall subdue . . . He shall choose." It seems best to take both these verbs as presents, describing what God is ever doing for His people, subduing their enemies and protecting them in the inheritance which He has chosen for them.

4. "The excellency of Jacob." His pride or glory, that in which Jacob takes delight, viz. the land which God has given him (comp. Ezek. xx. 15.). So in Isa. xiii. 19 Babylon is called "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

5. "God is gone up." God, having come down to fight His people's battle, is represented as returning to heaven. "Every such withdrawal, after His love and power have been displayed on earth, may be viewed as a prelude of the Ascension" (*Hengstenberg*).

"With a shout." That is, with the people's shout of victory. Shouting and the sound of the trumpet are mentioned in Amos ii. 2 as the accompaniment of God's judgment upon Moab (comp. 2 Chron. xx. 26—30.).

7. It is because He is King of all the earth, and has manifested His kingly power, that the Psalmist calls on all people to praise Him (see Rev. xi. 15—17.).

"With understanding." The Heb. word is "Maschil," which occurs in the titles of several Psalms. Some explain it as "a skilfully-constructed song," to be accompanied with elaborate music ; others take it, as A. V., "with intelligence" (comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 15.).

PSALMS, XLVIII.

¹ Chr. 16. 31.
Ps. 93. 1.
& 96. 10. &
97. 1. & 99. 1.
Rev. 19. 6.
² Or, *The
voluntary
of the people
are gathered
unto the
people of
the God of
Abraham.*
^k Rom. 4. 11,
12.
¹ Ps. 89. 18.

- 8 ⁱ God reigneth over the heathen :
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
9 ² The princes of the people are gathered together,
^k *even* the people of the God of Abraham :
¹ for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God :
he is greatly exalted.

PSALM XLVIII.

The ornaments and privileges of the church.

² Or, of.

A Song and Psalm ² for the sons of Korah.

^a Ps. 46. 4.
& 87. 3.

- 1 GREAT ^a is the LORD, and greatly to be praised
G ^a in the city of our God, *in* the ^b mountain of
his holiness.

^b Isai. 2. 2, 3.
Mic. 4. 1.
Zech. 8. 3.

9. "Even the people of the God of Abraham;" rather, "as the "people." The Psalmist looks beyond the present deliverance, and sees the nations of the world gathered together, and turned to the Lord, so as to be the people of the God of Abraham; they submit themselves to the One true God.

"The shields of the earth." That is, the rulers, who are the defenders of the people. The same word is translated "rulers" in Hosea iv. 18.

God's true and final victory consists, not in the destruction and forced submission of His enemies, but in their change of mind towards Him, so that they become His willing adherents. This is the special joy of the Church in Christ's exaltation, that it is a triumph over men's hearts; He has taken to Himself His great power and reigns, in order that He may draw all men unto Him, and bring many sons unto glory, even "a "great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds "and people and tongues." The anticipations of the Psalm will be fully realized in that day when "the kings of the earth shall bring their glory "and honour" into the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 24.).

PSALM XLVIII.

The glory of Zion the city of God.

Though this and the two preceding Psalms commemorate probably the same deliverance, the leading idea in each of them is different; in the first, it is the greatness of the deliverance itself; in the second, it is the praise of the great Deliverer; here it is the glory of the city which has been delivered. The mention of kings in ver. 4 points to an army of confederates (2 Chron. xx. 1, 2, 10.), while ver. 10 seems exactly to describe Jehoshaphat's prayer in the Temple before the setting forth of the army (2 Chron. xx. 5—7.). The comparison also of the enemy to the shattered ships of Tarshish suits very well with the time of Jehoshaphat (comp. 1 Kings xxii. 48. 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37.).

1. The thanksgiving for the deliverance of Jerusalem takes at first the form of a song in praise of the beauty and security of Jerusalem itself. The Psalmist then goes on to speak of the deliverance which had been vouchsafed. The hostile kings did but look upon her, and they

PSALMS, XLVIII.

- 2 ^c Beautiful for situation, ^d the joy of the whole ^e earth,
^f is mount Zion, ^g on the sides of the north,
^h the city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 4 ¶ For, lo, ⁱ the kings were assembled,—they ^j passed by together.
- 5 They saw *it*, and so they marvelled ;
 they were troubled, and hasted away.
- 6 Fear ^k took hold upon them there,
^l and pain, as of a woman in travail.

^c Ps. 50. 2.
^d Jer. 3. 19.
^e Lam. 2. 15.
^f Dan. 8. 9.
^g & 11. 16.
^h Ezek. 20. 6.
ⁱ Isai. 14. 13.
^j Matt. 5. 35.
^k 2 Sam. 10. 6, 14, 16, 18, 19.
^l Ex. 15. 15.
^m Hos. 13. 13.

were scattered ; it is fitting therefore that God's favour to her should be celebrated through all the world.

2. "Beautiful for situation." Lit. "beautiful in elevation," "a beautifully rising terrace-like height." Jerusalem was emphatically a mountain city, and it is this particular feature which the Psalmist has here in his mind.

"The joy of the whole earth." Jeremiah seems to refer to this passage (Lam. ii. 15.): "Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?"

"Mount Zion, on the sides (i.e. the regions) of the north." The modern Zion is the southern part of Jerusalem, but recent researches have made it appear probable that the ancient Zion, or city of David, is identical with the Akra of Josephus, which lies to the north of the present Zion. The expression "the sides of the north" occurs also in Isaiah xiv. 13, where it is used by the king of Assyria in accordance with the Oriental notion, that the extreme north is the dwelling-place of the gods, the Assyrian Olympus ; and it has been thought by some that the Psalmist here adopts the Eastern conception, and applies to Mount Zion, the real residence of God, the term which the Assyrians were accustomed to use of the divine dwelling-place. But such a supposition is as unnatural as it is unnecessary ; there is no difficulty in interpreting the words with reference to the position of Mount Zion in the northern region of the city.

3. "Is known," i.e. hath made Himself known ; the special event by which He has revealed Himself as a sure refuge for His people is mentioned in the following verses.

4. "The kings," i.e. of Moab, Ammon and Edom. They assembled in the wilderness of Tekoa (2 Chron. xx. 20.), about twelve miles from Jerusalem, and within sight of the Holy City.

"They passed by together." By some this is rendered, "they passed away, vanished, were destroyed," as in xxxvii. 36. But it may mean simply, "they passed on, advanced, marched in battle array" (comp. Isa. x. 29.).

5. "They saw it." Namely, Jerusalem. It would seem that the sight of the city overwhelmed them, and they were panic-stricken : God caused a great terror to fall upon them, and they were unable to escape.

6. "There." That is, on the spot ; as in Ps. xiv. 5.

PSALMS, XLVIII.

- ^k Ezek. 27. 26. ^l Jer. 18. 17. 7 Thou ^k breakest the ships of Tarshish ^l with an east wind.
- 8 As we have heard, so have we seen
^m ver. 1, 2. in ^m the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God :
 God will ⁿ establish it for ever. Selah.
- ⁿ Isa. 2. 2. Mic. 4. 1. 9 ¶ We have thought of ^o thy lovingkindness, O God,
 in the midst of thy temple.
- ^p Deut. 28. 58. ^q Josh. 7. 9. Ps. 113. 3. Mal. 1. 11, 14. 10 According to ^p thy name, O God,
 so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth :
 thy right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Let mount Zion rejoice,—let the daughters of Judah be glad,
 because of thy judgments.
- 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her :

7. The meaning seems to be, that the power of the confederate kings was shattered as completely and suddenly, as ships are wrecked by a storm. The Psalmist addresses Almighty God, and says in effect, "Thou, O God, breakest them, as with the east wind Thou breakest the "ships of Tarshish." There would seem to be a reference here to the signal destruction of the ships of Jehoshaphat at Ezion-geber (1 Kings xxii. 48. 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37.).

"The ships of Tarshish." An expression used in Scripture for the largest and strongest ships, like those, e.g. with which the Phœnicians used to trade to Tarshish (Isa. ii. 16.).

8. The Psalmist exults in the deliverance just wrought in Jerusalem as a palpable proof, manifested to themselves, of the love and power of which their fathers had told them ; and as their own experience confirmed the old tradition, so was it a pledge of perpetual security for the time to come.

9—14. The Psalm closes with joyful thanksgiving for the mercy shewn to Zion.

9. "We have thought of." Pondered over ; pictured to ourselves, and now celebrate with heartfelt joy. As before the army left Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat assembled the people in the Temple and invoked God's help, so now in the same Temple they give thanks for the answer to their prayer (2 Chron. xx. 5—19.).

10. "According to Thy name." According to Thy revealed character ; as Thou hast manifested Thy mercy and righteousness, so art Thou praised throughout the world (see 2 Chron. xx. 29.).

11. "The daughters of Judah." The country towns and villages of Judah, as distinct from the Holy City. So Joshua xv. 45 : "Ekron "with her towns and her villages," lit. with her daughters and enclosures. The cities of Judah are often brought into parallelism with Jerusalem (Isa. xlv. 26. Ps. lxxix. 35. Jer. vii. 17 ; ix. 11 ; xxv. 18.).

12. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had been terror-stricken at the news of the invasion, and probably afraid to leave the city, are now

PSALMS, XLIX.

tell the towers thereof.

- 13 ² Mark ye well her bulwarks,—³ consider her ² Heb. *Set your heart to her bulwarks.*
 palaces ;
 that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.
 14 For this God *is* our God for ever and ever : ³ Or, *raise up.*
 he will ⁴ be our guide *even* unto death. ⁴ Isai. 53. 11.

PSALM XLIX.

1 *An earnest persuasion to build the faith of resurrection, not on worldly power, but on God.* 16 *Worldly prosperity is not to be admired.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm ² for the sons of Korah. ² Or, *of.*

1 **H**EAR this, all *ye* people ;
 give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world :

invited to go forth and make a circuit of the walls, and rejoice in the safety of her bulwarks and palaces.

“**Tell.**” Count and see that they are all safe (comp. Isa. xxxiii. 18, where the enemies of the Jews are represented as counting the towers for destruction).

13. “**Consider.**” Lit. “divide, cut through ;” that is, walk among her palaces and so survey them accurately. “**That ye may,**” &c. This is the purpose of the examination of the defences of Jerusalem, viz. that they may tell to posterity how great a helper their God has been to them.

14. “**Unto death.**” Either, “until we come to death ;” or, “against,” “over” death, in the sense of carrying them safely through death as in Ps. xxiii. 6.

“And yet for ever, even o’er death

“Our Guide and Guard is He” (*Keble*).

The beauty of Zion symbolizes the glory of the Christian Church, and the appointment of this Psalm for Whit-Sunday suggests that we are to understand it as a thanksgiving for the Church, or rather for God’s love for the Church and for all that He has done for her. However fiercely the powers of the world may be leagued against her, her Guide and Guardian will ever manifest Himself in her behalf, and those whose earnest intercessions were offered when evil was at hand, will be permitted to give thanks for His gracious interposition, and to reckon up with delight the several blessings, of which the enemy had sought to rob her, but which still remain to her unimpaired.

PSALM XLIX.

The vanity of earthly prosperity, and the hope of the upright.

Like Ps. xlvii., this Psalm is addressed to “all people ;” otherwise there is no apparent correspondence with the preceding Korahite Psalms ; it is didactic, while they are national and historical. The Psalmist’s purpose is to impress earnestly upon men, that no outward advantages, no wealth or wisdom, nothing in fact but earnest trust in God, can redeem the soul from death, and give hope of everlasting life. After the introduction (vv. 1—4.), the remaining sixteen verses are divided into two equal portions, each ending with the refrain (vv. 12, 20.).

1—4. Deeply convinced of the truth and importance of the lesson

PSALMS, XLIX.

- ^a Ps. 62. 9. 2 both ^a low and high,—rich and poor, together.
 3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom ;
 and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of
 understanding.
- ^b Ps. 78. 2.
 Matt. 13. 35. 4 ^b I will incline mine ear to a parable :
 I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
- ^c Ps. 33. 4. 5 ¶ Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,
when ^c the iniquity of my heels shall compass me
 about ?
- d Job 31. 24,
 25. Ps. 52. 7.
 & 62. 10.
 Mark 10. 24.
 1 Tim. 6. 17. 6 They that ^d trust in their wealth,
 and boast themselves in the multitude of their
 riches ;
 7 none *of them* can by any means redeem his
 brother,

which he has to deliver, the Psalmist calls on all mankind to listen to him ; more especially, because it is no lesson of his own invention, but one which God Himself had taught him. The lesson is of universal interest ; therefore all races and conditions of men are summoned to attend (Micah i. 1, 2.).

1. “**The world.**” Not heaven and earth, and the world of space, but the present state of things, this passing scene (Ps. xvii. 14.).

2. “**Low and high.**” Heb. “sons of Adam and sons of Ish,” two names for man, the one meaning the common people, the other men of rank and distinction.

3. “**Wisdom . . . understanding.**” In the Heb. both words are plural, as in Prov. i. 20 ; ix. 1 ; xxiv. 7 : the meaning is “weighty wisdom,” “profound insight and understanding.”

4. “**I will incline mine ear.**” That is, I will listen reverently to the voice of God, speaking within me. This voice reveals to him “a **parable,**” a saying of deep wisdom and truth ; he declares that he will listen to it, and then make it known, to the accompaniment of his harp, for the benefit of others.

5. In the remainder of the Psalm he unfolds the parable, which has been brought home to him. The prosperity of the wicked need cause no alarm, for it will soon come to an end ; whereas the hope of the righteous being fixed on God, is everlasting like Himself.

“**The iniquity of my heels.**” That is, the iniquity which attacks my heels, pursues me, lies wait in my path to injure me. Similarly, in Ps. xlv. 15, “the shame of my face hath covered me,” is equivalent to “shame hath covered my face.” Iniquity is represented as a serpent lying in wait and biting the heel (comp. Gen. xlix. 17.).

Others render the words, “the iniquity of them that would trip me **up, my supplanters,**” my crafty and malicious enemies.

The Psalmist asks, why he should be afraid even when his own sin is visited upon him : he may be punished in this world, but God will redeem his soul from death and take him to Himself. There is no such deliverance for those who trust in their worldly goods.

7. “**Redeem,**” i. e. from death, or, as it is expressed in ver. 9, ver. 8

PSALMS, XLIX.

- nor ^e give to God a ransom for him : ^e Matt. 16. 26.
 8 (for ^f the redemption of their soul *is* precious, ^f Job 36. 18,
 and it ceaseth for ever :) 19.
 9 that he should still live for ever,—and ^g not see ^g corruption. Ps. 89. 48.
 10 For he seeth *that* ^h wise men die, ^h Eccles. 2. 16.
 likewise the fool and the brutish person perish,
ⁱ and leave their wealth to others.
 11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall*
continue for ever,
 and their dwelling places ² to all generations ; ⁱ Prov. 11. 4.
 they ^k call *their* lands after their own names. Eccles. 2. 18,
 12 Nevertheless ¹ man *being* in honour abideth not : 21.
 he is like the beasts *that* perish. ² Heb. to generation and generation.
 13 ¶ This their way *is* their ^m folly : ^k Gen. 4. 17.
 yet their posterity ³ approve their sayings. 1 ver. 20
 Selah. Ps. 39. 5,
& 82. 7.
^m Luke 12. 20.
³ Heb. delight in their mouth.

being parenthetical, “that he should still live for ever, and not see “corruption.” No man, however wealthy, can purchase immortality for himself, or for his brother man ; it is the gift of God alone.

8. “Their soul.” That is, their life. That which must be paid for man’s redemption is so costly, that it must be given up ; as in the Prayer Book Version, “he must let that alone for ever.”

10. “For he seeth that wise men die.” The meaning rather is, “Nay, he shall see it (corruption)—wise men die :” death is inevitable even for the wise. Observe that it is said of the wise man, that he “dies,” of the fool, that he “perishes.”

11. “Their inward thought.” Some of the ancient Versions, the Greek, Chald. and Syr., seem to have had a different reading, for they render, “their graves are their houses for ever.” But the text as it stands yields a good sense, viz. that the idea of rich men is, that their houses and dwelling-places will last for ever ; accordingly, they solemnly give their own names to their lands, as the names of immortals (see Gen. iv. 17.).

12. “Being in honour,” i. e. in all his honour and magnificence. “Abideth not.” Lit. “does not pass over the night.”

“Yet mortal man in glorious state—
 “Where is he? will his greatness wait
 “Till dew of morning fall?
 “Is he not like each grazing beast?
 “All are cut off” (Kelle).

13—20. The second part of the Psalm. Those who think themselves immortal are brought low in the grave, but those who cleave to God have hope in their death.

13. “This their way is their folly.” Some connect this with ver. 11 ; “this their way, their conduct, is their folly, and those that come “after them find pleasure in their sayings.” But it is more natural to connect it with the verse immediately preceding, “This is the

PSALMS, XLIX.

- ^a Ps. 47. 3. 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ;
 Dan. 7. 22. death shall feed on them ;
 Mal. 4. 3. and ^a the upright shall have dominion over them
 Luke 22. 30. in the morning ;
 1 Cor. 6. 2. ^o and their ² beauty shall consume ³ in the grave
 Rev. 2. 26. from their dwelling.
 & 20. 4. ^o Or, *the*
^o Job 4. 21. 15 But God ^p will redeem my soul ⁴ from the power
 Ps. 39. 11. of ⁵ the grave :
² Or, *strength.*
³ Or, *the grave being an habitation to every one of them.* ^p Ps. 56. 13. Hos. 13. 14. ⁴ Heb. *from the hand of the grave.*
⁵ Or, *hell.*

“way of those whose attribute is folly; this is the way, the lot, of those who are arrogant, and of those who after them delight in their (arrogant) words.” It is difficult to explain the “*Selah*” here; but it may be meant to emphasize the Psalmist’s lament over the arrogant folly of men and the end of such folly; and it will be observed that the description of the end of the wicked and vainglorious, given in ver. 12, is continued in ver. 14, this thirteenth verse being a parenthetical exclamation.

14. As in ver. 12 the Psalmist said of the wicked, that they are like the beasts that perish, so here he says that they are laid down in Hades, as sheep gathered into the fold. Death is their shepherd; fair and stately as they once appeared, they will fall a prey to Hades, and consume away.

“Death shall feed on them.” Properly, “shall feed or tend them as their shepherd.”

“In the morning.” After the night of affliction has passed away, there will break forth a morning for the upright, when they shall find themselves to be lords over their oppressors, like conquerors who put their feet on the necks of the vanquished; good will triumph over evil; or (as the light of the N. T. enables us to interpret the words), in the morning of the Resurrection, when the saints shall share in the triumph of their Head (1 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. xx. 4.).

“Their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.” Lit. “their form, their whole outward shew, is for the devouring “of Hades (that is, Hades is ready to consume it) out of its habitation;” so that there shall no longer remain to it any dwelling-place.

“Even as a flock array’d are they
 “For the dark grave; death guides their way,
 “Death is their shepherd now:
 “The just shall rule them in the morn,
 “The grave will waste their frame forlorn,
 “Nor rest nor home allow” (*Keble*).

15. “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.” Lit. “from the hand, the grasp, of Hades, the unseen world.” Compare the promise in Hosea (xiii. 14.), where the words in the original are the same; “I will ransom thee from the power of the grave.” The word, rendered “redeem” in this passage and “ransom” in Hosea, signifies to rescue by the payment of a price, and describes exactly therefore what our Saviour has done for us, “redeeming us with His precious “blood.” How far the Psalmist entered into the full meaning of the

PSALMS, XLIX.

for he shall receive me. Selah.

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,
when the glory of his house is increased ;

17 ^a for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away : ^a Job 27. 19.
his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though ² while he lived ^r he blessed his soul : ² Heb.
and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well ^r *in his life.*
to thyself. ^r Deut. 29. 19.
Luke 12. 19.

19 ³ He shall ^a go to the generation of his fathers ; ³ Heb. The
they shall never see ^t light. ^s soul *shall go.*
^s Gen. 15. 15.

20 ^u Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, ^t Job 33. 30.
^x is like the beasts *that* perish. <sup>Ps. 56. 13.
^u ver. 12.
^x Eccles. 3. 19.</sup>

words, we cannot say ; only it is plain that, while he saw that the end of wickedness was darkness, for himself he trusted in God, and was confident that He would take him to Himself.

“For He shall receive me.” Not merely, take me under His protection, but “take me to Himself” (Gen. v. 24. 2 Kings ii. 3. Ps. lxxiii. 24.). “The removals of Enoch and Elijah were, as it were, finger-posts which pointed forward beyond the cheerless idea which those who lived under the Old Covenant possessed of the way of all men, into the depth of Hades. Glancing at these, the poet, who here speaks in the name of all upright sufferers, gives expression to the hope, that God will wrest him out of the power of Hades, and take him to Himself. It is a hope that possesses no direct word of God upon which it could rest ; it is not until later on that it receives the support of divine promise, and it is for the present only a bold flight of faith.”

“My soul from touch of deadly doom

“The Lord redeems ; *He takes me home*” (Keble).

16. The Psalmist returns to the sentiment, which he had before expressed, that the righteous have no cause to fear or grudge the prosperity of the wicked ; death will soon strip them of all the glory, and they will be no better than the beasts that perish.

18. “He blessed his soul.” Congratulated himself, counted himself happy (comp. Deut. xxix. 19. St. Luke xii. 19.).

“And men will praise thee, when,” &c. This clause may either be taken as parenthetical ; or as dependent on the preceding, thus, “though men praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.” In either case there should not be a full stop at the end of the verse. The connection is, “though he congratulate himself during his life, and men praise him for enjoying himself, he must pass in the end to the generation of his fathers.”

“Thee.” Equivalent to “him” in the preceding line, but more graphic.

“Doest well to thyself ;” livest in good cheer, as in Eccles. xi. 9 :

“Let thy heart cheer thee.”

19. “He shall go.” Rather, “it,” i. e. the soul.

“Yet to the portion of his sires

“That soul must go, th’ ethereal fires

“Never again to mark” (Keble).

20. “And understandeth not.” Does not distinguish between the

PSALMS, L.

PSALM L.

- 1 *The majesty of God in the church.* 5 *His order to gather saints.* 7 *The pleasure of God is not in ceremonies,* 14 *but in sincerity of obedience.*

² Or,

for Asaph.

See 1 Chron.

15. 17.

& 25. 2.

2 Chr. 29. 30.

^a Neh. 9. 32.

Isai. 9. 6.

Jer. 32. 18.

A Psalm ² of Asaph.

1 **T**HE ^amighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken,
and called the earth from the rising of the sun
unto the going down thereof.

perishable and imperishable, between time and eternity. It is not every rich man therefore that is condemned, but those who abuse God's gifts, or make a boast of them.

St. Paul supplies the best comment on this Psalm, when he says to Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not "high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God" (1 Tim. vi. 17.). Earthly possessions, earthly honours must shortly pass away; but he whose faith and trust are in the living God is joined to Him by an union as eternal as Himself; as St. Augustine says, "Join thy heart to the eternal God, and with Him thou shalt be eternal."

PSALM L.

**God's demand to be worshipped in spirit and in truth—
with the heart and with a holy life.**

Asaph, the Levite, whose name occurs in the inscription, was one of the leaders of David's choir, the other two being Heman and Ethan, representing respectively Kohath and Merari, the sons of Levi, while Asaph belonged to the family of Gershon. In later times he was celebrated as a seer, and ranked with David himself as a writer of Psalms, some of which were extant in the time of Hezekiah (see 2 Chron. xxix. 30.). Eleven other Psalms (lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) are connected with his name.

With regard to this and some other of the Asaphite Psalms, there may be no difficulty in ascribing them to Asaph himself; but there are others which were certainly not written by him. Ps. lxxxiii. belongs to the time of Jehoshaphat, lxxvi. to Hezekiah's, lxxiv. and lxxix. to the Chaldean invasion. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that Asaph stands, in some cases at least, for the family or representatives of Asaph. But there is still a question whether the inscription "A Psalm "of or for Asaph," means that it was written by some member of his family or school, or whether it was merely handed over to him to be set to music. If the inscription implies authorship in some cases, it was probably intended to do so in all. Therefore, on the whole, it is perhaps most likely that those Asaphic Psalms, which were not written by Asaph himself, were supposed by the author of the inscriptions to be due to his representatives in later times, as bearing a certain similarity to the genuine Psalms of Asaph. It has been noticed that in the Asaphic Psalms Almighty God is frequently introduced as speaking (Pss. 1.; lxxv.; lxxxii.); that there is special mention made of Joseph and of the tribes descended from him (lxxvii. 15; lxxviii. 9, 67; lxxx. 2;

PSALMS, L.

- 2 Out of Zion, ^b the perfection of beauty,—^c God hath shined. ^b Ps. 48. 2.
^c Deut. 33. 2.
Ps. 80. 1.
- 3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : ^d a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. ^d Lev. 10. 2.
Num. 16. 35.
Ps. 97. 3.
Dan. 7. 10.
^e Deut. 4. 26.
& 31. 28.
& 32. 1.
Isai. 1. 2.
Mic. 6. 1, 2.
- 4 ^e He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

lxxxi. 5.); and that the figure of a shepherd and his flock is of continual recurrence (lxxiv. 1; lxxvii. 20; lxxviii. 52; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1.). The name Jehovah seldom occurs in the Asaphic Psalms.

The Psalmist sees in a magnificent vision Almighty God coming to Zion, as before to Sinai, summoning the people before Him, and declaring the worthlessness of sacrifices without the devotion of the heart and holiness of life (comp. Ps. xl. 7—9; li. 17—echoes of the great utterance of Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 22.). The first six verses are an introduction, in which the Psalmist describes his vision of judgment; then God Himself is heard, reproving His people, first for their formalism, outward worship without inward devotion, and then for their profligacy, profession without practice.

1. “**The mighty God, even the Lord.**” Heb. El, Elohim, Jehovah. The same combination occurs in Josh. xxii. 22, where the Authorised Version has “The Lord, God of gods;” and so the Greek Version translates here. This conjunction of the Divine names is intended to give solemnity to the summons to all the inhabitants of the earth to be witnesses of His judgment on His own people. There would seem to be a gradation: El is the Almighty One; Elohim is God in all the fulness of His Divine attributes; Jehovah is the One self-existent, eternal Being, Who is also the covenant God of His people.

2. “**Out of Zion.**” As of old Almighty God came from Sinai and shined forth from Mount Paran (Deut. xxxiii. 2.), so now He manifests Himself from Zion, the place of His presence.

“**The perfection of beauty.**” The Prayer Book, following the Greek and Latin Versions, renders this: “Out of Zion hath God appeared in “perfect beauty;” but the Bible rendering is generally believed to be the right one (Ps. xlviii. 2. Lam. ii. 15, where Jeremiah recalls the words of the Psalm, when gazing upon ruined Jerusalem).

3. “**And shall not keep silence.**” Lit. “and let Him not keep “silence,”—an example of the extreme vividness of the Hebrew poetic style. The writer imagines himself as an eager and interested spectator, praying the Deity, already visible in the distance, to come near and declare His will.

Fire and storm are the harbingers of His presence (comp. Ps. xviii. 7—15; lxxvii. 18; xcvi. 2—6. Exod. xix. 16, 18.). So it is said of the future judgment, that the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.).

4. So Moses (Deut. xxxii. 1.) and Isaiah (i. 2.) call heaven and earth as witnesses of God’s justice. Jeremiah (vi. 18, 19.) and Micah (i. 2.) summon the nations and the earth.

“**That He may judge His people,**” i. e. in order that He may judge them in their presence.

PSALMS, L.

- ^f Deut. 33. 3.
Isai. 13. 3.
^e Ex. 24. 7.
- 5 Gather ^f my saints together unto me ;
^e those that have made a covenant with me by
sacrifice.
- ^h Ps. 97. 6.
- 6 And ^h the heavens shall declare his righteous-
ness :
for ⁱ God is judge himself. Selah.
- ⁱ Ps. 75. 7.
- ^k Ps. 81. 8.
- 7 ¶ ^k Hear, O my people, and I will speak ;
O Israel, and I will testify against thee :
ⁱ I am God, even thy God.
- ^l Ex. 20. 2.
- ^m Isai. 1. 11.
Jer. 7. 22.
- ⁿ Hos. 6. 6.
- 8 ^m I will not reprove thee ⁿ for thy sacrifices
or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually
before me.

5. The words of the summons, addressed to God's servants, the angels.

"My saints." My favoured people. The name by which they are summoned is not meant to express their character, but their relation to God. Compare the name Jeshurun, "the upright," applied to Israel (Deut. xxxii. 15). See Ps. lxxix. 2.

"Those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." As God first took His people into covenant with Him with sacrifice (Exod. xxiv. 5—8.), so the continued use of sacrifice on their part was an outward expression of their fidelity to Him.

6. "Shall declare." Rather, "declared," or "have declared." The Psalmist seems to hear the heavens solemnly bearing witness to God's justice.

"Then spake aloud the heavens on high,
"His righteousness revealing" (*Keble*).

The earthly music, as the Selah directs, joins in with the celestial praise.

7. Almighty God delivers His sentence.

"I will speak . . . I will testify." "I would fain speak," "I would fain solemnly warn thee." The form of expression seems to imply that God's desire to have Israel for willing hearers is as strong as His desire to speak and warn (Ps. lxxxix. 8.).

8. "To have been." The insertion of these words weakens the sense, which simply is, that their offerings *were* continually before Him.

It is not of the neglect of outward service that God complains; the appointed sacrifices were duly offered; and if it were otherwise, He did not need sacrifices for the sake of receiving what He did not otherwise possess. His is every wild beast of the forest; His the cattle that dwell by thousands on the hills; He knows every bird that makes its home on the mountains; whatever roams about the fields is within the range of His knowledge and power; if He were hungry, He would not need man's help, but He is far removed from all carnal necessities. It is not outward offerings, but the worship of the heart that He requires. Thanksgiving and prayer are His delight, and they will avail in the day of trouble. "Praise is first mentioned, and this might seem an inversion of the natural order. But in reality it may be ranked first

PSALMS, L.

- 9 ° I will take no bullock out of thy house,
nor he goats out of thy folds. ° Mic. 6. 6.
Acts 17. 25.
- 10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine,
and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains :
and the wild beasts of the field *are* ² mine. ° Heb.
with me.
- 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee :
^p for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof. ° Ex. 19. 5.
Deut. 10. 14.
Job 41. 11.
Ps. 24. 1.
1 Cor. 10. 26,
28.
- 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,—or drink the blood
of goats ?
- 14 ^q Offer unto God thanksgiving ;
and ^r pay thy vows unto the most High :
- 15 and ^s call upon me in the day of trouble :
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt ^t glorify me. ° Hos. 14. 2.
Heb. 13. 15.
° Deut. 23. 21.
Job 22. 27.
Ps. 76. 11.
Eccles. 5. 4, 5.
- 16 ¶ But unto the wicked God saith,
What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,
or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy
mouth ? ° Job 22. 27.
Ps. 91. 15.
& 107. 6, 13,
19, 28.
Zech. 13. 9.
° ver. 23.
Ps. 22. 23.
- 17 ^u Seeing thou hatest instruction,
and ^x castest my words behind thee. ° Rom. 2. 21,
22.
- 18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou ^y con-
sentedst with him, ° Neh. 9. 26.
° Rom. 1. 32.

“without any violation of propriety. An ascription to God of the
“honour due unto His Name lies at the foundation of all prayer, and
“application to Him as the fountain of goodness is the most elementary
“exercise of faith. Testimonies of His goodness await us, ere yet we
“are born into the world, and we may therefore be said to owe the
“debt of gratitude before we are called to the necessity of supplication.
“Could we suppose men to come into the world in the full exercise of
“reason and judgment, their first act of spiritual sacrifice should be that
“of thanksgiving” (*Calvin*).

14, 15. We see from this passage how carefully Almighty God taught
men under the Old Covenant, that it is the worship of Him in spirit
and in truth which alone avails (see Isa. i. 11—15. Micah vi. 6—8.
Hosea vi. 6. Prov. xxi. 3. Jer. vii. 22, 23.). So the book of Deuteronomy
traces back all the requirements of the law to the fundamental command
of love (Deut. vi. 4, 5 ; xxx. 6.).

16. The first warning was addressed to those who were satisfied with
mere outward works of devotion and rested in them ; now Almighty
God addresses those who attempt to conceal a life of profligacy under
a profession of godliness (see Rom. ii. 17—24, where the transgression
of the eighth, seventh, and third commandments is condemned, just as
here special mention is made of the eighth, seventh, and ninth).

17. “Seeing thou.” The pronoun is emphatic ; “whereas for thee,
“thou,” &c.

“Castest My words behind thee,” i. e. instead of setting them before
thee as a guide, thou turnest thy back upon them.

PSALMS, L.

- ² Heb. *thy portion was with adulterers.* 19 ³ Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and ^a thy tongue frameth deceit.
- ² 1 Tim. 5. 22. ³ Heb. *Thou sendest.* 20 Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother ; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
- ^a Ps. 52. 2. ^b Eccles. 8. 11, 12. ^c Isai. 26. 10. & 57. 11. 21 These *things* hast thou done, ^b and I kept silence ; ^c thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself : *but* ^d I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.
- ^e Job 8. 13. ^f Ps. 9. 17. ^g Isai. 51. 13. 22 Now consider this, ye that ^e forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.
- ^f Ps. 27. 6. ^g Rom. 12. 1. ^h Gal. 6. 16. 23 ^f Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me : and ^g to him ⁴ that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.
- ⁴ Heb. *that disposeth his way.*

20. "Thou sittest." This suggests the case of one who takes delight in gossiping company.

21. "And I kept silence." God's forbearance is thought to be indifference: what He does not punish He is supposed not to disapprove. Such as a man is himself, such is his conception of God. But God will not suffer the sinner always to go on with impunity; He will one day open his eyes to see his real character, and will fill him with alarm.

22. "Ye that forget God." Ye that wilfully shut your eyes to God's observance and hatred of sin.

"Lest I tear you in pieces." Hosea v. 14.

23. The rebuke addressed to the hypocrite (vv. 16—23.), closes with the assertion of the same truth as the rebuke to the mere formalist (see vv. 14, 15.), viz. that it is the sacrifice of a grateful heart that God requires.

"Offereth praise." Rather, "sacrifices thanksgiving." The words are the same as in ver. 14.

"Ordereth his conversation aright." Lit. as in margin, "disposeth (or prepareth) his way;" lays down for himself a straight path by the rule of duty. "The two avenues to God's favour are spiritual service and a holy life, as the evils rebuked above are two also, lifeless ceremonial (vv. 7—15.), and worldly hypocrisy" (vv. 16—20.).

God is at all times not only watching but silently passing judgment on mankind—an anticipation and rehearsal of the great final judgment. This Psalm reminds us very forcibly of the nature and strictness of that judgment. No mere external observance will satisfy Him; no mere outward profession can deceive Him. What He looks for is the loving devotion of the heart, and the sincere obedience of the life.

PSALMS, LI.

PSALM LI.

1 *David prayeth for remission of sins, whereof he maketh a deep confession.* 6 *He prayeth for sanctification.* 16 *God delighteth not in sacrifice, but in sincerity.* 18 *He prayeth for the church.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, ² when Nathan ^{2, 2 Sam. 12.} the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to ^{1. & 11. 2, 4.} Bath-sheba.

1 **H**AVE mercy upon me, O God, according
to thy lovingkindness:
according unto the multitude of thy tender
mercies ^a blot out my transgressions.

^a ver. 9.
Isai. 43. 25.
& 44. 22.
Col. 2. 14.

PSALM LI.

David's prayer for forgiveness and cleansing.

We learn from Ps. xxxii. that during the terrible interval between the death of Uriah and the coming of Nathan, though there was no outward expression of penitence, David's conscience allowed him no peace; the sense of guilt and alienation from God made him restless and miserable; but he would not look his sin in the face and confess it to Almighty God. The merciful God however would not allow him thus to shrink from Him. He Who drew Adam forth from the trees of the garden, forced David also to stand before him self-condemned. His sin had disturbed him already, but he refused to repent. The message of Nathan brought him to his knees; the barrier of pride and self-love at length gave way; and, thoroughly humbled and broken-hearted, he poured forth his simple but full confession, "I have sinned against the Lord." Psalm li. is the filling out of that confession. When the prophet had departed and David found himself alone with God, the God against Whom he had sinned so terribly, and hardened himself so obstinately; the God Who nevertheless had sent His prophet to recall him to himself, and had moreover by the mouth of that prophet assured him of full and entire forgiveness, the burning thoughts of love and penitence which filled his heart found utterance in this Psalm.

1. Not in unbelief of God's assurance of forgiveness (2 Sam. xii. 13.), but from an overwhelming sense of the greatness of his sin, and of the exceeding graciousness of the Divine compassion, does David cry thus earnestly for mercy. Free, tender, gracious mercy had been shewn to him; he knew that it was his: nevertheless in his deep self-abandonment his thankfulness finds its most fitting utterance in the prayer of faith. Observe how he dwells on the thought of God's *exceeding* goodness, and grounds on it his only plea: he prays for mercy "according to God's loving-kindness," "according to the greatness of His tender compassion" So sorely as he had tried, he could not exhaust, the depth of the Divine goodness. To that goodness he appeals, knowing that he should not appeal in vain.

"Blot out." Lit. "wipe away," remove utterly, as if they had never been: as tears are wiped away (Isa. xxv. 8.), or clouds swept away by the wind (Isa. xliv. 22.); or as a man wipeth a dish (2 Kings xxi. 13.); or as a writing is wiped away from a tablet (Exod. xxxii. 32.); or as when God wiped away the inhabitants of the earth by

PSALMS, LI.

- ^b Heb. 9. 14.
1 John 1. 7, 9.
Rev. 1. 5.
- ^c Ps. 32. 5.
& 38. 18.
- ^d Gen. 20. 6.
& 39. 9.
Lev. 5. 19.
& 6. 2.
2 Sam. 12. 13.
- ^e Luke 15. 21.
- ^f Rom. 3. 4.
- 2 ^b Wash me throughly from mine iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For ^c I acknowledge my transgressions :
and my sin *is* ever before me.
- 4 ^d Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
and done *this* evil ^e in thy sight :
^f that thou mightest be justified when thou
speakest,
and be clear when thou judgest.

the flood (Gen vi. 7 ; vii. 4.) ; or as the memory of a thing is wiped out of the mind (Exod. xvii. 14.).

2. "Wash me." Sin is here conceived of as deeply ingrained dirt, which laborious washing alone can remove. The stain had penetrated deep into the soul ; it needed not merely to be wiped away, but thoroughly washed out.

"Cleansed me." Make me clean and pure.

"Transgressions . . . iniquity . . . sin." See Ps. xxxii. 1.

3. "For I acknowledge." Rather, "I know, am conscious of my transgressions." "My transgressions." Isa. lix. 12. The Psalmist does not claim to be forgiven because he confesses his sin ; rather, he here gives the reason why he prays for pardon. It is his deep consciousness of sin, his sense of it as a burden pressing him down, that makes him so earnestly entreat God's favour. He is not satisfied to confess his sin and then forget it ; his sin is ever before him, ever present as a source of trouble and unrest. Wherever he looked he saw it, bearing witness against him, and filling him with shame and sorrow.

4. And it was especially his sin as committed against God, against Him Who had been for so many years his stay and comfort, his joy and delight, that disturbed him. Truly if ever any man had sinned against his fellow-man, David had so sinned ; he had sinned against Uriah, against his own family, against his people, against his partner in guilt, but so much more terrible, so much more hideous in its ingratitude was his sin in relation to God, that for the present it filled up the whole field of his view, and seeing the alienation which it caused between himself and his God, he could see nothing else : "against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned ; and that which is evil in Thy sight have I done."

"That." That is, "in order that." At first sight the Psalmist seems to say that God permitted him to sin in order that His own righteousness might be manifested, and so all responsibility would be taken away from the sinner. But such is plainly not David's meaning. He takes the full guilt of his sin upon himself ; only God has overruled that guilt, so as to display His own righteousness. And his mind is so penetrated with the thought of the result of his sin, that he speaks as if it had been God's purpose in allowing it.

"That Thou mightest be justified in Thy speaking." As if he said, If Thou shouldst pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me for my sin, I could not accuse Thee of injustice : Thou wouldest be righteous in passing judgment on me, and no fault could be found with Thy dealings (see Rom. iii. 4.).

PSALMS, LI.

- 5 ^g Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ;
^h and in sin did my mother ² conceive me. g Job 14. 4.
Ps. 58. 3.
John 3. 6.
Rom. 5. 12.
Eph. 2. 3.
- 6 Behold, thou desirest truth ⁱ in the inward
 parts : h Job 14. 4.
2 Heb.
warm me.
 and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to
 know wisdom. i Job 38. 36.
k Lev. 14. 4,
6, 49.
Num. 19. 18.
Heb. 9. 19.
- 7 ^k Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean :
 wash me, and I shall be ^l whiter than snow.
- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness ; l Isai. 1. 18.

5. Here David goes still deeper in his sad confession. Not only had he broken out into open disobedience to God's commands, but the root of the evil had been always within him. As he looks into himself, and traces his whole course, he sees nothing but sin from the beginning. He is unclean himself, and comes from an unclean source (Job xiv. 4.). He says this, not to excuse himself, but to express in the strongest way his sense of his corruption in God's sight. It is in utter self-abasement that he confesses that he has not only done sinful acts, but that he has a sinful nature.

6. In contrast with his own sinfulness David reminds himself of the inward truth and purity which God requires ; for He desires and delights in not merely outward propriety, but a sincere and upright purpose of heart. And observe, David does not dwell on this requirement of truth as if it were a great and impossible thing to ask of sinful men ; but he goes on to comfort himself with the assurance that He Who requires truth in the inward parts, can and will give him the wisdom which he needs and which will lead to such truth. He no sooner declares, "Behold Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," than he adds in the hopeful trust, "and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Thou shalt enable me to know and to do what Thou desirest and delightest in.

"In the inward parts." In the inner depths of the heart ; answering to the hidden inward part of man in the other clause.

7. "Purge me." More literally, as in the Prayer Book Version, "Thou shalt purge me." So the two following clauses should be rendered, "Thou shalt wash me," "Thou shalt make me to hear;" the confidence in God's good-will towards him which the Psalmist expresses in the latter part of ver. 6, is continued throughout the two following verses.

"With hyssop." The hyssop was used in the purification of lepers and leprous houses, and, when dipped in water containing the ashes of the red heifer, it was used for sprinkling on persons and vessels polluted by the touch of a dead body (Lev. xiv. 4. Num. xix. 16—18.). The Psalmist, having in mind this symbolical use of hyssop, applies it to his own case. As the leper and whosoever had come in contact with the dead man were legally unclean, so was he morally unclean. The leprosy of sin had eaten into his soul ; the stain of blood was upon him. But the merciful God could and would cleanse him ; He would remove the guilty stain and make him clean ; He would wash him, and he should be whiter than snow.

8. "Make me." Rather, "Thou shalt make me." Bowed down

PSALMS, LI.

^m Matt. 5. 4. *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken ^m may rejoice.

ⁿ Jer. 16. 17. 9 ¶ ⁿ Hide thy face from my sins,
^o ver. 1. and ^o blot out all mine iniquities.
^p Acts 15. 9. 10 ^p Create in me a clean heart, O God;
Eph. 2. 10. and renew ² a right spirit within me.
² Or, a constant spirit.

and crushed as he was by the consciousness of sin, David anticipates the time when the sense of pardon and cleansing would fill him with "such joy as the poor sufferer feels when he is taken off the rack, and all "his bones set and restored to ease again."

9. "Hide Thy face." The change here from the future to the imperative seems to indicate a pause at the end of the eighth verse. From the earnest entreaty for mercy with which the Psalm begins, David had risen in vv. 6—8 to a tone of assured confidence in God's forgiveness, but the heinousness of his sin and the greatness of his need of mercy return again with overwhelming power; and, not as doubting God's loving mind towards him, but as reiterating the one burning desire of his soul, he breaks forth once more into the language of supplication. There is nothing strange or inconsistent in this mingling of prayer with joyful confidence, because in consequence of the weakness of our faith it is only drop by drop that the true sense of God's overflowing goodness distils into our souls. Hence the penitent sinner often repeats again and again the same petition, not with the view of gradually softening the heart of God to compassion, but because we advance by slow and difficult steps to the requisite fulness of assurance (*Calvin*).

"Hide Thy face from my sin," i. e. do not look upon it; be as though Thou didst not see it (comp. Ps. x. 11.). David here virtually repeats the opening prayer of the Psalm; he beseeches the Merciful One, while He looks with compassion on *him*, not to look upon his sin, but to wipe it away, to blot out (the same word is used in vv. 1 and 9.), all his iniquities, so that they may no longer testify against him.*

10. As above in ver. 2, the prayer for cleansing and sanctification follows immediately on the prayer for pardon. David begs Almighty God not only to turn His face from his sin, but so to cleanse and purify him, as that even His pure eyes may look on him with favour. This cleansing is in truth a new creation, a creation out of nothing; the sinner's heart has become corrupt and desolate, dead in trespasses and sins, he cannot change and renew himself: the Spirit of holiness must needs breathe on him and quicken him to a new and holy life. By using the word "create," David shews his conviction that it is the grace of God alone that can sanctify man and give him a new and clean heart (Jer. xxiv. 7. Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.).

"Renew." Restore what has become decayed by my own fault. "A right spirit." A firm, steadfast spirit: lit. "a spirit firmly fixed, established, steadied;" not steady in itself but steadied by God. It is as if he said, "Let me begin again, renewed in the spirit of my mind, strengthened with might by Thy Spirit in the inner man, so that I "may not fall through my own weakness, or be carried away by temptation, but follow Thee with a steadfast heart" (Ps. lvii. 7; cxii. 7.).

PSALMS, LI.

- 11 Cast me not away ^a from thy presence ;
and take not thy ^r holy spirit from me. ^q Gen. 4. 14.
² Kin. 13. 23.
- 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ;
and uphold me *with thy* ^s free spirit. ^r Rom. 8. 9.
Eph. 4. 30.
- 13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways ;
and sinners shall be converted unto thee. ^s 2 Cor. 3. 17.
- 14 Deliver me from ² bloodguiltiness, O God, thou ² God of my salvation : ² Heb. *bloods.*
² Sam. 11.
17. & 12. 9.
and ^u my tongue shall sing aloud of thy ^u righteousness. ^u Ps. 35. 28.

11. It may be that the meaning of David's prayer here is, that God would not reject him, as He had rejected Saul, nor take the Spirit from him as He had taken it from Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14; xviii. 12; xxviii. 15.). It is again and again said, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon the judges and kings (see Judg. iii. 10; vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 6, 19; xv. 14. 1 Sam. x. 6.), and especially on David (1 Sam. xvi. 13.). But his words must not be restricted to sanctification for his office. Conscious as he was of his sin and weakness, he prayed earnestly that he might not be left to himself, and deprived, as he deserved to be, of the help of God's grace. He did not indeed know the full doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and His mysterious indwelling, but he knew his need of Divine help; he knew that he had fallen because he had not rested on that help; and therefore he prays that he may not be deprived of it. His words are very familiar and very suitable to us, who have been made temples of the Holy Ghost, but are continually grieving Him by our sins, and provoking Him to depart from us.

12. "The joy of Thy salvation." God had saved and guarded David in times past. From spiritual as well as temporal enemies God had delivered him; David knew therefore the joy of His salvation, the comfort of His saving help. He prays that it may be restored, and that he might again have the joy of feeling that he was not left to himself, but that the Lord was his deliverer.

"Uphold me with Thy free spirit," i. e. with a spirit of willing, generous, self-sacrificing devotion. Such willingness of heart can only come by God's gift; and therefore David prays that He would impart it.

13. As in Psalm xxxii., David looks forward to the effect of the favour shewn to him in the conversion of others: he would not keep the history of God's dealings with him a secret in his own bosom; he would make known His ways to the sinners around him, and he was persuaded that they would be reclaimed thereby.

14. Once more David breaks out into prayer. The image of his sin, especially of the foul murder of Uriah, rises up before him, and he cries aloud with all plainness of speech, to be delivered from its stain. "O God, Thou God of my salvation, deliver me from blood-guiltiness." His is not however the cry of despair, or even of anguish; it is the prayer of faith, which, having been assured of God's mercy, is persuaded that He will be as good as His word. The God of his salvation will complete His work; and therefore his tongue will exultingly sing of His righteousness.

"Thy righteousness," or justice. What God has pronounced He

PSALMS, LI.

- 15 O Lord, open thou my lips ;
and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
- ^x Num. 15. 27, 30. Ps. 40. 6. & 50. 8. Isai. 1. 11. Jer. 7. 22. Hos. 6. 6. ² Or, *that I should give it.* 16 For ^x thou desirest not sacrifice ; ² else would I give *it* :
thou delightest not in burnt offering.
- ^y 17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit :
a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
- ^y Ps. 34. 18. Isai. 57. 15. & 66. 2. 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion :
build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
- ^z Ps. 4. 5. Mal. 3. 3. 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with ^z the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering :
then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

will fulfil. "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us our sins" (1 St. John i. 9.).

15. "Open." Rather, "Thou shalt open." God Himself will give him both the will and the power to praise Him ; and then he will praise Him joyfully.

16. "For." David here gives the reason why he is content to offer to God the spiritual sacrifice of praise. Had He required material sacrifices he would have brought them, but He does not delight in them, but in the spiritual offering of praise and thanksgiving (Ps. 1. 14, 23.). This is what we should have expected the Psalmist to say in the following verse, but he goes deeper and makes mention of the penitent heart, out of which the joy and thankfulness spring.

17. "A broken and a contrite heart." When a man's natural pride is broken, his hardness is softened, and his vain-glorious stayed.

18, 19. It has been suggested that the Psalm closes naturally and effectively with ver. 17, and that these two last verses therefore do not belong to the Psalm as written by David, but are a liturgical addition made at the time of the captivity. The penitent exiles in Babylon entreat God's favour for the ruined city, and look forward with hope to the time when the accustomed worship shall be restored to His temple. If the verses are to be considered as part of David's original Psalm, they were probably added, in order to avert from his innocent people God's just anger against himself. That the walls of Jerusalem were not completed in David's time appears from 1 Kings iii. 1 ; ix. 15, 19 ; and it may be that this unfinished condition of the city was in his mind. He prays that notwithstanding his unworthiness, Jerusalem may become all that God designed her to be, His chosen dwelling-place and the seat of His holy worship.

In our lips the prayer may be applied to the spiritual Jerusalem. "Do good in Thy good pleasure to Thy Church ; build her in faith and love ; strengthen what is weak ; fill up what is wanting. So shall we offer to Thee the tribute of our grateful thanks."

The distinguishing feature of this Psalm, as one of the penitential Psalms, is that it is the prayer of true contrition, that is, of sorrow which has its root in love. It is the greatness of God's love which overwhelms

PSALMS, LII.

PSALM LII.

1 *David, condemning the spitefulness of Doeg, prophesieth his destruction.*
6 *The righteous shall rejoice at it.* 8 *David, upon his confidence in God's mercy, giveth thanks.*

To the chief Musician, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David, ² when ² 1 Sam. 22. 9. Doeg the Edomite came and ³ told Saul, and said unto ³ Ezek. 22. 9. him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

1 **W**HY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O ^a mighty man? ^a 1 Sam. 21. 7.

The goodness of God *endureth* continually.

2 ^b Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; ^b Ps. 50. 19.

and breaks the Psalmist's heart, and fills him with such a profound sense of his unworthiness. And have not we had like experience of God's exceeding graciousness, and like reason therefore to be dismayed and confounded on account of our sin? It may be true that repentance such as David's is very rare; but this Psalm bears constant witness to its simplicity. It is no strange out of the way work that God requires of us; only to see and believe in His love, and in the light of that love to learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

PSALM LII.

The judgment that awaits the proud malicious man.

This is one of the eight Psalms (Pss. vii. ; lix. ; lvi. ; xxxiv. ; lii. ; lvii. ; cxlii. ; liv.) which by their inscriptions are assigned to the time of David's persecution by Saul. Driven from court, David after a short sojourn with Samuel at Ramah resolved to leave his own country and find a home among the Philistines. On his way thither, in order to obtain food and weapons, he paid a visit to the Tabernacle, which was at that time at Nob, about two miles north of Mount Zion, where a company of more than eighty priests ministered before the Lord. Ahimelech, the High-priest, gave him the shew-bread and the sword of Goliath, and David went on his way, but not before he had caught sight of one of Saul's servants, the chief of his herdsmen, Doeg the Edomite, who, he was satisfied, would reveal the circumstance to Saul. His fears were realised. Doeg gave information of what had passed between David and Ahimelech, and, when others refused, himself executed the king's order to slay all the priests of Nob with their families. This Psalm is supposed to be the outburst of David's indignation, when the tidings of the massacre of the priests reached him at Keilah in the lowlands of Judah (see 1 Sam. xxi. ; xxii.).

1. David was well aware of Doeg's enmity against him (1 Sam. xxii. 22.), and here he pictures him exulting in the blow which the destruction of the priests would give to his cause. The term "**O mighty man**" is used sarcastically, in derision of the prowess of the man who could slay in cold blood a company of defenceless priests, women, and children. But his enemy might boast himself as he pleased, David's trust in the loving-kindness of God was unshaken. Cruelty and treachery might do their worst: all day long there was the goodness of God watching over him and protecting him; it had not and would not forsake him.

2. "**Mischiefs.**" Lit. "a yawning abyss;" destruction, especially

PSALMS, LII.

- ^c Ps. 57. 4.
& 59. 7.
& 64. 3.
- ^d Jer. 9. 4, 5.
- ² Or, and
the deceitful
tongue.
- ³ Heb. beat
thee down.
- ^e Prov. 2. 22.
- ^f Job 22. 19.
Ps. 37. 24. &
40. 3. & 64. 9.
Mal. 1. 5.
- ^g Ps. 58. 10.
- ^c like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
- 3 Thou lovest evil more than good ;
and ^d lying rather than to speak righteousness.
Selah.
- 4 Thou lovest all devouring words,
² O *thou* deceitful tongue.
- 5 God shall likewise ³ destroy thee for ever,
he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of
thy dwelling place,
and ^e root thee out of the land of the living.
Selah.
- 6 ^f The righteous also shall see, and fear,
^g and shall laugh at him :
- 7 lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his
strength ;

the destruction brought about by wickedness (Ps. v. 9, "very wicked-
ness;" lv. 11, "wickedness").

"Razor." Elsewhere the tongue is compared to a sword, or spear, or
sharp arrow (see Ps. lvii. 4 ; lix. 7 ; lxiv. 3 ; cxi. 3.).

3. "More than good." Instead of good (comp. Hab. ii. 16.).

"Thy hand on ill

"And not on good is set" (*Keble*).

The music is prolonged at the close of the verse, in order to draw special
attention to his love of evil and falsehood ; so the music continues,
without words, after ver. 5 to lay stress on the terribleness of the Divine
retribution.

4. "Devouring words." Words which would swallow up and de-
stroy the life and honour and goods of another without leaving a
trace behind.

5—7. Falsehood and violence may prosper for a time, but there will
be a complete retribution in the end.

5. "Likewise." "In like manner," i. e. as thou hast destroyed others,
the defenceless priests and their families, so God shall destroy thee.
Observe how David heaps one word upon another to express the utter
ruin of his enemy. "God shall destroy thee, take thee away, pluck
"thee out of thy dwelling place, root thee out of the land of the
"living." The images used are those of pulling down from a high
position, seizing as coals are seized with the tongs, tearing away from
home, utterly uprooting as a tree is rooted out of the ground.

6. See Ps. xl. 3. It is with mingled feelings of fear and exultation
that the righteous behold the overthrow of the wicked. While the
manifestation of God's power awes them, they rejoice in the triumph of
justice and the deliverance of those who trusted in God. No sanction is
given to the feeling of joy at the overthrow of personal enemies: such
malignity is as distinctly reprobated in the Old Testament as in the New
(Prov. xxiv. 17. Job xxxi. 29.).

7. We should notice the practical turn which David gives to the
spectacle of the overthrow of the wicked. It is a lesson of trust in God.
He is the only true defence and should be the sole object of desire.

PSALMS, LII.

but ^h trusted in the abundance of his riches, ^h Ps. 49. 6.
and strengthened himself in his ² wickedness. ² Or,

8 But I *am* ⁱ like a green olive tree in the house of God : ⁱ Jer. 11. 16.
^h Hos. 14. 6.

I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it* :

and I will wait on thy name ; ^k for *it is good* ^k Ps. 54. 6.
before thy saints.

PSALM LIII.

1 *David describeth the corruption of a natural man.* 4 *He convinceth*

“Wickedness.” The same word which in the plural is rendered “mischiefs” in ver. 2 ; here it means “evil desire,” “passion for earthly things.”

In contrast to the ungodly who will be rooted out, David declares his hope that he shall abide and flourish. Though at a distance from the Tabernacle, his thoughts return thither and to the green and flourishing olive trees which he remembered as growing within the precincts of God's house. Here the Psalmist may be either recalling what he had seen, or picturing to himself a fair tree growing peacefully in sacred ground. It has been suggested, that as Nob is the northern summit of Mount Olivet, the mention of the olive tree is especially appropriate.

9. “Because Thou hast done it.” Rather, “Thou hast done,” i. e. hast wrought in my behalf (as in Ps. xxii. 31 ; xxxvii. 5.) ; hast overthrown my enemies and wrought deliverance for me. “I thank Thee, for Thine arm hath wrought” (*Keble*).

“I will wait on Thy name.” We, naturally, expect some word expressing praise or acknowledgment such as the saints might witness (Ps. xxii. 25.), and hence some have proposed to read “I will declare Thy name, that it is good ;” but David may well be understood to mean that his rest and trust in God would be so conspicuous, that all God's people will take notice of it. The clause should be rendered, “I will wait on Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of Thy saints.” Here, as elsewhere, David professes to shew forth his thankfulness to God by dwelling continually in His house and waiting on Him in the presence of His saints.

This Psalm, like so many others, proclaims the overthrow of the wicked, and the exultation of the righteous in the just retribution which befalls them. Those who trust in God on the other hand are in peace and safety, like luxuriant trees in some calm retreat ; they wait on God in His sanctuary on earth, and look forward to be admitted into the white-robed choir of His saints hereafter.

PSALM LIII.

A cry to Almighty God to turn back the tide of wickedness and oppression.

This Psalm is a variation, and, it is generally thought, a later variation, of Ps. xiv. The changes may have been made by David himself, but, even if made subsequently, the Psalm might still be fitly called a Psalm

PSALMS, LIII.

the wicked by the light of their own conscience. 6 He glorieth in the salvation of God.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil,
A Psalm of David.

- ^a Ps. 10. 4.
& 14. 1, &c.
- 1 **T**HE ^a fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*
Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity :
- ^b Rom. 3. 10.
- ^c Ps. 33. 13.
- 2 God ^c looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
to see if there were *any* that did understand,
that did ^d seek God.
- ^d 2 Chr. 15. 2.
& 19. 3.
- 3 Every one of them is gone back :
they are altogether become filthy ;
there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- ^e Jer. 4. 22.
- 4 Have the workers of iniquity ^e no knowledge ?
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread :
they have not called upon God.
- ^f Lev. 26. 17,
36.
Prov. 28. 1.
- ^g Heb. *they feared a fear.*
Ps. 14. 5.
- ^g Ezek. 6. 5.
- 5 ^f There ² were they in great fear, *where* no fear was :
for God hath ^g scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee :
thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.

of David. The chief difference between the two Psalms is that, while in Ps. xiv. the name Elohim occurs three times and Jehovah four times, in this Psalm Elohim only is used.

“Upon Mahalath.” The meaning of the words is very doubtful. Three explanations are given : 1. That Mahalath is a musical instrument, a pipe or harp ; 2. that as Mahalath means “sickness,” there is a special reference to the subject of the Psalm, the spiritual malady of the sons of men ; and 3. that it is a direction to the choir as to the manner in which the Psalm was to be sung, “in a sad and sorrowful tone,” answering to the modern term *mesto*.

1. Lit. “They have corrupted and made abominable their iniquity.”

In Ps. xiv. instead of “iniquity” is a word which simply means “doing.” The use of the stronger word would seem to indicate the later version.

4. See Ps. xiv. 4.

5. This verse differs considerably from the corresponding passage in Ps. xiv. There seems a reference to some recent catastrophe, which may be either the overthrow of the confederates in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 22—24.), or the destruction of Sennacherib’s army in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 35.).

The words are addressed to the people of God : their enemies were stricken with fear, when there was no ostensible ground for alarm. And

PSALMS, LIV.

6 ^h 2 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come out* h Ps. 14. 7.
of Zion!
When God bringeth back the captivity of his ² Heb.
Who will
give salva-
tions, &c.
people,
Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

PSALM LIV.

1 *David complaining of the Ziphims, prayeth for salvation.* 4 *Upon his confidence in God's help he promiseth sacrifice.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, *A Psalm of David,* ² when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth ² 1 Sam. 23.
not David hide himself with us? 19. & 26. 1.

- 1 **S**AVE me, O God, by thy name,
S and judge me by thy strength.
- 2 Hear my prayer, O God;—give ear to the words of my mouth.

why? Because God had scattered the bones of those who had encamped against His people, so that they lay unburied on the plain, a prey to the wild beasts. God had despised and rejected them, and therefore Israel was able to put them to shame.

PSALM LIV.

“God is mine helper.”

We learn from the history that when David took refuge in the fastness of Keilah, which he had rescued from the Philistines, Saul himself came down to besiege the place, thinking it impossible that David could escape when he had once trusted himself in a walled city. But before Saul appeared, it was revealed to David that the men of Keilah would betray him, and he therefore withdrew from the ungrateful city and fled to the wilderness of Ziph. The name Zif is still found, attached to a low hill three miles south of Hebron, called *Tell-Zif*. It would appear that in David's time there was a wilderness in the immediate neighbourhood of Ziph, and a wood which has now disappeared. From the hill the Ziphites could see David and his men lurking about in the wood, and they gave information to Saul, who went out with an army, following him to the wilderness of Maon, where he had taken refuge, three or four miles to the south, surrounding the whole district and placing David in great peril. He was providentially saved by a sudden invasion of the Philistines, which obliged Saul to give up the pursuit, and turn his attention to his foreign enemies. It was on occasion of this treachery of the Ziphites that this Psalm was written (see 1 Sam. xxiii.—xxiv. 1.).

The Psalm is divided into two parts by *Selah*. The first half prays for help, the second rejoices in confidence that the help will be given, and offers a vow of thanksgiving.

1. “By Thy name.” By the manifestation of Thyself. The Name of God is not merely the appellation by which we address Him, but His very being and attributes, as they are revealed to us; here it means probably His mercy, answering to strength in the next clause (comp. Ps. xx. 1.).

“Judge me,” i. e. “do me right, vindicate me.”

PSALMS, LIV.

- ^a Ps. 86. 14. 3 For ^a strangers are risen up against me,
and oppressors seek after my soul :
they have not set God before them. Selah.
- ^b Ps. 118. 7. 4 ¶ Behold, God *is* mine helper :
^b the Lord *is* with them that uphold my soul.
- ² Heb.
those that
observe me,
Ps. 5. 8. 5 He shall reward evil unto ² mine enemies :
cut them off ^c in thy truth.
- ^c Ps. 80. 49. 6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee :
^d Ps. 52. 9. I will praise thy name, O LORD ; ^d for *it is*
good.
- ^e Ps. 50. 10.
& 92. 11. 7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble :
^e and mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine
enemies.

3. "Strangers." There is a special taunt in this word, as applied to the Ziphites, who belonged to David's own tribe : though connected by race they were strangers and aliens in conduct. The reason of their persecution was that they had become utterly godless : had it not been so, they would not have so set themselves against one whom God had manifestly favoured.

4. "Behold." David points as it were with the finger to Him to Whom he looked for help ; however men might oppose him, God was on his side.

"With them." Lit. "among," in the number of. The meaning is not, however, that God was one out of many upholders ; the Hebrew phrase implies that God was his one helper, the only representative of the class. When Jephthah tells his daughter that she was one of them that troubled him, he simply meant that she troubled him (Judges xi. 35.).

5. "Evil." Lit. "the evil ;" the wrong which his enemies had done to him.

6. "Freely," i. e. with free-will, impelled (as the word means) by myself alone. The expression occurs in Num. xv. 3, "in a free-will offering," and in Hos. xiv. 4, "I will love them freely."

"It." That is, the Name of God.

7. "He." Or perhaps, "it," the Name of God, that is, God Himself ; as in Isa. xxx. 27.

The past tenses in this verse do not imply that the deliverance was already accomplished ; in the confidence of faith David beheld in the past that which he as yet hoped for.

"Mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies." Lit. "mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies," that is, upon their destruction (see marg. reff.).

This is one of the Psalms appointed for Good Friday. It is intended therefore that we should be led on from David's persecutions and prayers and unshaken confidence in the help of God to think of Him Who was rejected by His own people whom He had come to save, and Who in the midst of His mighty sufferings firmly trusted in God's protection and looked forward to the final triumph, regarding His sufferings as in truth His glorification (St. John xii. 23 ; xiii. 32 ; xvii. 1.).

PSALMS, LV.

PSALM LV.

1 *David in his prayer complaineth of his fearful case. 9 He prayeth against his enemies, of whose wickedness and treachery he complaineth. 16 He comforteth himself in God's preservation of him, and confusion of his enemies.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil,
A Psalm of David.

1 **G**IVE ear to my prayer, O God ;
and hide not thyself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me :

I ^a mourn in my complaint, and make a noise ; ^a Isai. 38. 14.

PSALM LV.

Prayer of distress and indignation at the treachery of a trusted friend.

It is commonly supposed that this Psalm belongs to the time of Absalom's rebellion, and that the complaint of treachery which it contains refers to the unfaithfulness of Ahitophel. We need not suppose that the message which was brought to David after Absalom had set up the standard of revolt at Hebron was his first intimation of the disaffection which had been increasing for four years (see 2 Sam. xv. 7, where "forty" is supposed to be a clerical error for "four"). He could not be ignorant of Absalom's growing popularity, or of the means by which it had been brought about. As however he was not aware of the extent of the mischief, and probably attributed Absalom's conduct not so much to any present intention of rebellion, as to a desire to secure for himself the succession, he made no objection to his visit to Hebron ; but when the conspiracy grew (2 Sam. xv. 12.), and especially when Ahitophel left Jerusalem to join Absalom, his suspicions were fairly roused, though it was not until the messenger brought word that Absalom had actually rebelled, and that the mass of the people were on his side, that he became alarmed and fled. It was probably during the interval between Ahitophel's departure from the city and his own flight, that this Psalm was written. David's misgivings about Absalom and his designs were changed into a conviction that mischief was intended, and the secession of Ahitophel added a special bitterness to his distress and fear.

The Psalm consists of three parts ; in the first (vv. 1—8.) sorrow is the predominant feeling ; in the second (vv. 9—15.) anger prevails, and a desire that vengeance should fall on his enemies, and especially on one of whose treachery he bitterly complains ; in the third (vv. 16—23.), he endeavours to calm his agitated heart with the thought of God's justice ; he is satisfied that God will defend him.

1. "Hide not Thyself." When a man's heart is not right with God, He covers Himself with a cloud, so that prayer cannot pass through (Lam. iii. 44.). David prays that in his case there may be no intervening veil to shut out his prayer (Lam. iii. 8.).

2. Rather, "I wander to and fro, uneasy and restless ; and moan aloud." I must needs cry out, I cannot restrain myself, because I continually hear the voice, and feel the pressure, of the enemy.

PSALMS, LV.

3 because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked :

^b 2 Sam. 16.
7, 8. & 19. 19.

^b for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

^c Ps. 116. 3.

4 ^c My heart is sore pained within me :
and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
and horror hath ² overwhelmed me.

² Heb.
covered me.

6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
For then would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 *Lo, then* would I wander far off,
and remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape
from the windy storm *and* tempest.

^a Jer. 6. 7.

9 ¶ Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues :
for I have seen ^d violence and strife in the
city.

3. The meaning is well given in the Prayer Book Version, "The enemy crieth so, and the ungodly cometh on so fast."

"They cast iniquity upon me." Either, "they hurl, roll down evil (mischief) upon me," or, "they accuse me falsely," load me with false charges.

"In wrath they hate me." Lit. "lay snares for me, persecute me," breathing out anger against one who has only shewn them love and kindness.

4, 5. These verses exactly represent David's inward agitation before his flight; he knew not what to expect. The presentiment of calamity is often more dreadful than the reality (comp. St. Matt. xxvi. 38. St. Mark xiv. 33. St. John xii. 27; xiii. 21.).

7. Comp. Jer. ix. 2.

8. "My escape." The same word is used by David in 2 Sam. xv. 14. "The windy storm and tempest." The spirit of disaffection and a wild agitation in the city made David long to break away and hide himself in the wilderness at a distance from men, like a dove taking refuge from the approaching storm in the cleft of the rock. How often, during the varied trials, sorrows, and temptations of life, is the Christian moved to take up David's cry and to long for rest. Such longings may only be the outpouring of a sense of loneliness and oppression which it is impossible wholly to restrain, and are not inconsistent with a brave determination not to shrink from the duties of our lot; but they must not be indulged and dwelt on, lest they foster an impatient spirit, and impatience lead to sloth.

9—15. In this second portion of the Psalm there is an abrupt transition from fear and depression to a burning feeling of indignation against the wickedness and perfidy of his enemies.

9. "Destroy (lit. "swallow up, devour;" Num. xvi. 30.) and divide their tongues." It is thought, from the words here used, that there is a reference to the confusion of tongues at Babel; "send confusion upon

- 10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof :
 mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.
- 11 Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof :
 deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
- 12 ^e For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me ; ^e Ps. 41. 9.
 then I could have borne *it* :
 neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did
^f magnify *himself* against me ; f Ps. 35. 26.
& 38. 16.
 then I would have hid myself from him : 2 Heb. a man
according
to my rank.
- 13 but *it was* thou, ² a man mine equal,
^g my guide, and mine acquaintance. g 2 Sam. 15.
12. & 16. 23.
Ps. 41. 9.
- 14 ³ We took sweet counsel together,
 and ^h walked unto the house of God in company. Jer. 9. 4.
- 15 Let death seize upon them,
 and let them ⁱ go down quick into ⁴ hell : 3 Heb. Who
sweetened
counsel.
 for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, and among ⁱ h Ps. 42. 4.
i Num. 16. 30.
 them. 4 Or,
the grave.

“them, as at Babel, and let them be punished by dispersion” (Gen. x. 25 ; xi. 1—9.).

Though unable or unwilling to take active measures against the growing disaffection, David was evidently alive to it ; he saw the violence and strife that everywhere prevailed ; he was aware even of the careful watch which the rebels kept upon the walls, while iniquity and guile reigned in the heart of the city.

11. “**Streets.**” Properly, the broad place in front of the city gates, the general place of concourse and of the administration of justice (2 Chron. xxxii. 6.).

12. From the thought of the general deceit, David concentrates his view on the special treachery of one man, Ahitophel.

13. “**But it was even thou.**” Rather, “and thou wast a man on an equality with myself.” There is special force in the expression, “a man,” as shewing that David did not behave towards him as a king, but met him on the ground of a common humanity. And so the Second David, although the Son of God and peerless King, entered into the most intimate human relationship, as the Son of Man, with His disciples, and among them with Judas.

“**My guide.**” Rather, “my associate,” “my familiar friend.”

“**Mine acquaintance.**” “My intimate acquaintance, my confidant.”

14. Not only was their private intercourse friendly and pleasant, but they were publicly associated with each other in the worship of God.

“**In company.**” In the crowd, the festal throng.

15. The stanza closes, as it commenced, with imprecation. Treachery so base deserved signal punishment. The Psalmist even desires that the earth would open its mouth, and swallow up one who had dealt so ungratefully (Num. xvi. 23—34.).

“**Quick,**” i. e. alive, as in Num. xvi. 30 ; Prov. i. 12 ; while life is yet vigorous. Comp. 2 Sam. xvii. 23 ; xviii. 14.

- 16 ¶ As for me, I will call upon God ;
and the LORD shall save me.
- ^k Dan. 6. 10. ^l Luke 18. 1. ^m Acts 3. 1. & 10. 3, 9, 30. ⁿ 1 Thes. 5. 17. 17 ^k Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud :
and he shall hear my voice.
- 18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me :
for ¹ there were many with me.
- ¹ 2 Chron. 32. 7, 8. ^m Deut. 33. 27. 2 Or, *With whom also there be no changes, yet they fear not God.* 19 God shall hear, and afflict them, ^m even he that abideth of old. Selah.
- ² Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.
- ⁿ Acts 12. 1. ^o Ps. 7. 4. ³ Heb. *he hath profaned.* 20 He hath ⁿ put forth his hands against such as ^o be at peace with him :
³ he hath broken his covenant.

16—22. The Psalmist now turns to God, and reposes in confidence on His protection.

17. In ver. 2 he had said, “ I wander to and fro in my complaint, and “ must needs cry out ; ” here he takes up the same words, “ I complain “ and cry out,” and that, not only occasionally, but continually, or at least three times a day, as Daniel prayed in Babylon (Dan. vi. 10.). Before (vv. 1, 2.), he entreated God to hear him ; now he is confident that He will do so.

18. “ He hath delivered my soul in peace,” i. e. “ He hath delivered and brought me into peace ” (Ps. cxviii. 5.).

“ With me.” This translation is literal, but conveys a wrong meaning. The Heb. preposition sometimes means opposition (as “ with ” in “ fight with ”), and should be rendered “ against,” as in Ps. xciv. 16 ; “ in great numbers were they against me.”

19. “ Afflict them.” This is the rendering of the Greek Version, but not the exact translation of the Heb. text, as it stands. The literal translation is, “ God will hear and *answer* them ; ” He will hear the tumult of His enemies, and will answer them in His wrath.

“ Even He that abideth of old.” This clause is parenthetical. The “ Selah,” unusual in the middle of a verse, is a note of triumph, giving emphasis to the praise of God.

“ Because,” &c. Lit. “ who have no changes, and fear not God,” a further description of those who are spoken of in the beginning of the verse, and whom God will answer in His wrath.

“ No changes.” The changes here spoken of *may* refer to character, — they always continue in their ungodliness. But it is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word to take it of a change of circumstances, — they are always prosperous. All things seem to them to continue as they were from the beginning of the world ; the Supreme Ruler does not interfere ; therefore they do not fear Him.

20, 21. The thought of his one chief faithless enemy again comes prominently before him.

“ Covenant,” i. e. the promise of mutual fidelity, which it is profaneness to break. No one would have suspected the enmity of his

PSALMS, LVI.

- 21 ^p *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.
- 22 ^a Cast thy ²burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: ^r he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
- 23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: ^s ³bloody and deceitful men ⁴ ^t shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

^p Ps. 28. 3. & 57. 4. & 62. 4. & 64. 3.
^q Prov. 5. 3, 4. & 12. 18.
^q Ps. 37. 5.
^r Matt. 6. 25.
^r Luke 12. 22.
^r 1 Pet. 5. 7.
² Or, *gift*.
^r Ps. 37. 24.
^s Ps. 5. 6.
³ Heb. *men of bloods and deceit*.
⁴ Heb. *shall not half their days*.
^t Job 15. 32.
^t Prov. 10. 27.
^t Eccles. 7. 17.

PSALM LVI.

1 *David, praying to God in confidence of his word, complaineth of his enemies. 9 He professeth his confidence in God's word, and promiseth to praise him.*

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, ² Michtam of David, when the ³ Philistines took him in Gath.

1 **B**E ^amerciful unto me, O God: for man ^b would swallow me up;

² Or, *A golden Psalm of David*.
³ So Ps. 16.
³ 1 Sam. 21. 11.
^a Ps. 57. 1.

heart from his smooth words, but those words from their untruthfulness were an unsheathed sword.

21. "The words," &c. Lit. "the butters of his mouth were smooth;" smooth the creamy utterances of his mouth.

"War was in his heart." Lit. "his heart was all war."

22. "Thy burden." Lit. that which God hath assigned thee (Ps. xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3. 1 St. Pet. v. 7.). The burden which we cast upon God He will enable us to bear; He will not suffer us to totter under it. It is possible that this verse contains the very words of the smooth-tongued enemy, taunting David with his trust in God. Comp. Ps. xxii. 8.

23. "But I." Rather, "but as for me;" whatever may be the fate of the ungodly, I trust in Thee (Ps. vii. 1; ix. 1).

As kind and sympathizing friends are among the choicest of God's earthly gifts, so is there no trouble so severe to affectionate hearts as when those whom they have loved and trusted turn against them. It is a trial which falls on the servants of God no less heavily than on other men. It was the bitterest ingredient in David's cup of affliction; and it weighed heavily on St. Paul (2 Tim. iv. 10, 11.). It is one means, among others, by which they are brought near, and made like to, Christ. Happy they who, like David, are led by their sense of desolateness and disappointment to seek the presence and consolations of the One true Friend. They dare not indeed follow David's example in calling down vengeance on those who have treated them with treachery and ingratitude. Christ has taught them a nobler revenge, such as that which St. Paul exercised, who, when all men forsook him, only prayed that it might not be laid to their charge (2 Tim. iv. 16.).

PSALM LVI.

Trust in God triumphing over the fear of man.

The history tells us of two occasions when David was with Achish,

- he fighting daily oppresseth me.
- ^a Heb. *Mine observers*, Ps. 54. 5. 2 ^a Mine enemies would daily ^b swallow me up :
 for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou
 most High.
- 3 What time I am afraid,—I will trust in thee.
- ^c ver. 10, 11. 4 ^c In God I will praise his word,
 in God I have put my trust ;

king of Gath: the first, soon after his flight from the court of Saul, when being discovered by the Philistines as their former conqueror, he became alarmed for his safety, and feigned madness (1 Sam. xxi. 10—13.): the second, some time later, when wearied with his wandering life, he again crossed the Philistine frontier with six hundred men, and was settled there for a year and four months (1 Sam. xxvii. 1—7.).

It is to the first of these visits that the Psalm most probably belongs. The title says that it was written "when the Philistines took (more "properly, laid hold of, detained) him in Gath;" and though the history does not expressly speak of his being a prisoner, one or two expressions imply that he was in some sort of confinement; e. g. "he feigned himself mad *in their hands*" (1 Sam. xxi. 13.), and again (xxii. 1.), "David departed thence, and *escaped* to the cave Adullam." The thirty-fourth Psalm belongs to the same time, but was not written probably until he had escaped from Gath, whereas this Psalm is the expression of his thoughts and feelings while still in the Philistine territory.

The first part of the Psalm is divided into two portions by the refrain (vv. 4, 10, 11.): "In God I will praise His word; in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me:" it expresses his steadfast confidence in God in the midst of persecution.

In the latter part (vv. 12, 13.) he pours out his thanksgiving for the deliverance of which he is assured.

"Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim," i. e. to the tune of "the silent dove of far-off lands." It is possible that there is an allusion to David's situation as a wanderer in a strange land; he is described as like a dove in his innocence, silent in his sadness and patience, and at a distance from his home, among the Philistines.

1. God and man are set in contrast; man is his bitter enemy, but, if God is on his side, he is safe. The word used for "**man**" expresses especially man's feebleness; as against the mighty God he is utterly powerless.

"Swallow me up." Lit. "pant after me," as a wild beast panting after his prey.

2. "O Thou most High." The literal meaning of the word thus translated is "on high;" it seems better therefore to render the passage, "there are many who fight against me on high," i. e. proudly, haughtily, as if they were giants, when they are utterly insignificant.

3. Fear and trust might seem to be incompatible; but in truth times of fear are the trial and the triumph of faith. When most oppressed by the number and malignity of his enemies and the greatness of his danger, David was wont to calm his fear by the thought of God.

4. "In God," i. e. through God, by His help, as in Ps. lx. 12. "His

PSALMS, LVI.

- ^d I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. ^d Ps. 118. 6.
Isai. 31. 3.
Heb. 13. 6.
- 5 ¶ Every day they wrest my words :
all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.
- 6 ^e They gather themselves together, they hide ^e Ps. 59. 3.
& 140. 2.
themselves,
they mark my steps, ^f when they wait for my Ps. 71. 10.
soul.
- 7 Shall they escape by iniquity ?
In *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.
- 8 Thou tellest my wanderings :
put thou my tears into thy bottle :
^g *are they* not in thy book ? g Mal. 3. 16.

“word,” that is, His promise. God helping him, he will not only trust in Him, but will praise Him for His promise.

“I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.” This passage should rather be punctuated, “I will not fear: what can flesh do unto me?” Here again is the same contrast as in ver. 1, between the great God and the weakness of flesh (see Isa. xxxi. 3.).

5—11. David returns again to the evil designs of the Philistines around him. The history tells us that the servants of Achish discovered who David was and told their master; and “David laid up their words,” and was afraid. Their communications were probably meant to be secret, but David was aware of them; he was aware of their perversion of his words, their lying in wait, their resolution to take away his life; he prays God to take vengeance on them; then suddenly he calms himself and breaks out into the same expression of unbroken trust as before.

5. “They wrest my words,” i. e. they misrepresent them, and put a false meaning on them, and endeavour to turn them against him.

7. After his vivid representation of their hostility he asks, whether in spite of all this wickedness they should escape; he answers the question by a prayer for their destruction.

“By iniquity.” That is, either, “by means of,” or, “in spite of.” Some propose slightly to change the reading; “for their iniquity, repay them.”

“The people,” i. e. not *his* enemies only, but the enemies of God everywhere. He takes a wider view of God’s judgments; he prays that those who have dealt so cruelly and basely with him may be included in a general overthrow of the ungodly.

8. “My wanderings.” The word is in the singular—“my whole wandering life;” He Who counts all the steps of Job (xxx. 4.), had seen and counted up all David’s secret hiding-places. Some, however, understand it of his inward restlessness and disquiet.

“Thou tellest o’er my fluttering fears,
“Thou hast a cruse to catch my tears” (*Keble*).

“Put Thou.” Or it may be, as some take it, “my tears are put.” David prays God to be mindful of his tears, and treasure them up, as men treasure some costly liquid, or as travellers carefully preserve

PSALMS, LVII.

- 9 When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies
turn back :
ⁿ Rom. 8. 31. this I know ; for ^h God *is* for me.
ⁱ ver. 4. 10 ⁱ In God will I praise *his* word :
in the LORD will I praise *his* word.
 11 In God have I put my trust :
I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
 12 Thy vows *are* upon me, O God :
I will render praises unto thee.
^k Ps. 116. 8. 13 For ^k thou hast delivered my soul from death :
will not thou deliver my feet from falling,
^l Job 33. 30. that I may walk before God in ^l the light of the
living ?

PSALM LVII.

- ² Or,
Destroy not,
A golden
Psalm.
³ 1 Sam. 22. 1.
& 24. 3.
Ps. 142, title.
^a Ps. 56. 1. 1 *David in prayer fleeing unto God complaineth of his dangerous case.*
⁷ *He encourageth himself to praise God.*
 To the chief Musician, ² Al-taschith, Michtam of David,
³ when he fled from Saul in the cave.
 1 **BE** ^a merciful unto me, O God, be merciful
unto me :

water ; or he is confident that He does so. Trouble must needs cause weeping eyes ; but no tear shed before God in prayer is lost (see 2 Kings xx. 5.) ; it is laid up as a precious treasure ; it sparkles like a jewel in the book of God's remembrance (Exod. xxxii. 32. Mal. iii. 16.).

10, 11. Observe the change in the refrain by the repetition of the first clause, marking the triumphant joy of the Psalmist in his assurance of being heard. By using Elohim in the first, and Jehovah in the second clause, he praises first the might and then the covenant faithfulness of God (see Ps. lviii. 6.).

12, 13. In prospect of deliverance the Psalmist promises thanksgiving.

"Praises." These are the subject of his vows. Or it may be that, in addition to the offerings vowed in the time of trouble, praise and thanksgiving shall not be wanting (comp. 2 Chron. xxix. 31.).

"The light of the living." The expression does not mean merely, as in Job xxxiii. 30, the sunlight of this present life. As death is separation from God, so life is His presence, and the light of life is the joyous realization of that presence (comp. St. John viii. 12.).

As fear leads to trust, so trust drives away fear. The dangers and trials of life are a discipline of faith. God's word at all times is, "Fear "not, only believe ;" and our abiding duty is to lean upon that word, and praise Him for it.

PSALM LVII.

The calmness of trust rising into glad and triumphant confidence.

According to the title, this Psalm was written shortly after the preceding, when David, having departed from Gath, escaped to the cave of

PSALMS, LVII.

for my soul trusteth in thee :

^b yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make ^b my refuge,

^c until *these* calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most high ;
unto God ^d that performeth *all things* for me.

3 ^e He shall send from heaven, and save me

² *from* the reproach of him that would ^f swallow
me up. Selah.

God ^g shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

^b Ps. 17. 8.
& 63. 7.

^c Isai. 26. 20.

^d Ps. 138. 8.

^e Ps. 144. 5, 7.

² Or, *he reproacheth him that would swallow me up.*

^f Ps. 56. 1.

^g Ps. 40. 11.

& 43. 3.

& 61. 7.

Adullam (see 1 Sam. xxii. 1.). This view is confirmed by the similarity between the two Psalms. Beginning with the same prayer, they exhibit the same sense of danger and the same steadfast trust in God; they contain the same description of the enemy (comp. lvii. 3 with lvi. 1, 2.); the two chief divisions of each Psalm are closed with a refrain. Some, however, think that the cave of Engedi is meant, on the western shore of the Dead Sea (see 1 Sam. xxiii. 29.).

Applied to Christ, as the Church by appointing this Psalm for Easter Day instructs us to apply it, it sets forth our Lord's abiding trust in God in the midst of the cruel and determined persecution which assailed Him. He foresaw that His sufferings would redound to the glory of God, and He exults in that glory. We seem to see Him breaking forth from the net which devils and evil men had laid for Him, rising in triumph from the grave, and then by means of the Church going forth to publish the glad tidings of His victory and of God's mercy and truth. "Father, glorify Thy Name," is the echo of the refrain of this Psalm.

"*Al-taschith.*" That is, "Destroy not." See the titles of Pss. lviii., lix., lxxv. Some see in these words an allusion to David's answer to Abishai, when he would have slain Saul, "Destroy him not" (1 Sam. xxvi. 9.); while others think that they are a kind of watchword of David's, founded on Deut. ix. 26, "O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance." But it is more probable that they are simply the first words of some song, to the melody of which the Psalm was to be chanted.

1. "My soul trusteth in Thee." Rather, as the verb is in the past tense and occurs again in the future in the next clause, "In Thee hath my soul taken refuge;" not so much in the cave as in God. Observe the change of tenses; in the present and future, as well as in the past, God is his only refuge. The "*shadow*" of God's wings expresses a sense of comfort and refreshment, as well as of security (see Ps. xvii. 8; xxxvi. 7. Deut. xxxii. 11.).

2. It is by prayer that the Psalmist takes refuge in God, and realizes His protecting love.

"That performeth for me." Accomplisheth all that is needful for me (so Ps. cxxxviii. 8.).

3. The literal translation is: "He shall send from heaven and save me; he that would swallow me up hath reproached; God shall send His loving-kindness and truth." The middle clause may be connected either with what goes before, as in the English Version, or with what follows; thus, "Let my enemies reproach as they please, God will send

PSALMS, LVII.

- 4 My soul *is* among lions :
and I lie *even* among them that are set on fire,
even the sons of men, ^h whose teeth *are* spears
 and arrows,
 and ⁱ their tongue a sharp sword.
- ^h Prov. 30. 14.
- ⁱ Ps. 55. 21.
 & 64. 3.
^k ver. 11.
 Ps. 103. 5.
- 5 ^k Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ;
 let thy glory *be* above all the earth.
- ⁱ Ps. 7. 15, 16.
 & 9. 15.
- 6 ¶ ^l They have prepared a net for my steps ;
 my soul is bowed down :
 they have digged a pit before me,
 into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*.
 Selah.
- ^m Ps. 108. 1,
 & c.
² Or,
prepared.
- ⁿ Ps. 16. 9.
 & 30. 12.
 & 108. 1, 2.
- 7 ¶ ^m My heart is ² fixed, O God, my heart is fixed :
 I will sing and give praise.
- 8 Awake up, ⁿ my glory ; awake, psaltery and
 harp :
 I *myself* will awake early.
- ^o Ps. 108. 3.
- 9 ^o I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people :
 I will sing unto thee among the nations.

“from heaven for my protection.” Or we may take the clause as parenthetical, explaining the situation. The “Selah” shews how deeply he felt the reproaches of his enemies (comp. Ps. lv. 19). “Mercy and truth” are, as it were, the good Angels sent forth to save him (Ps. xliii. 3).

4. David’s enemies were worse than wild beasts ; they not only sought to destroy him with spears and arrows, which answered to the teeth of lions ; their malicious words were even more injurious (see marg. ref.).

5. The savage cruelty of his enemies was a dishonour to God, as well as a trouble to himself ; David therefore prays that God would vindicate His honour and overthrow all that opposed Him.

6. Gaining confidence by prayer, the Psalmist sees the destruction which his enemies had prepared for him falling upon themselves (comp. marg. ref.).

7. The music has been prolonged, to mark the triumphant character of the Psalmist’s confidence ; then he declares that in that confidence of faith he is firmly fixed ; nothing can shake him ; and an inward impulse urges him to break forth into song.

8. “My glory.” That is, “my soul,” the noblest part of my being (see Ps. vii. 5 ; xvi. 9 ; xxx. 12).

“Psaltery,” a stringed instrument, supposed to resemble the guitar.

“I myself will awake early.” Or, “I will wake the morning dawn.” The dawn awakes others ; David will awake the dawn.

9. David will not confine his song of praise within the narrow space which its sound can reach at the time ; he will proclaim Jehovah’s glory among all the nations of the world ; as in fact is now done by this Psalm, preserved for all ages. Here we have another token of that “consciousness

PSALMS, LVIII.

- 10 ^p For thy mercy *is* great unto the heavens,
and thy truth unto the clouds. p Ps. 36. 5.
& 17. 19.
& 103. 11.
& 108. 4.
- 11 ^a Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens :
let thy glory *be* above all the earth. q ver. 5.

PSALM LVIII.

1 *David reproveth wicked judges, 3 describeth the nature of the wicked, 6 deroteth them to God's judgments, 10 whereat the righteous shall rejoice.*

To the chief Musician, ²³ Al-taschith, Michtam of David. ² Or,
Destroy not,
A golden
Psalm of
David.

1 **D**O ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation ? ³ Ps. 57, title.

Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men ?

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness ;

^a ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth. ^a Ps. 34. 20.
Isai. 10. 1.

“of a comprehensive mission, which accompanied David from the beginning to the end of his royal career” (see Ps. xviii. 49. Rom. xv. 9.).

10. This verse declares both the motive and the subject of David's discourse among the heathen, viz. God's mercy and truth, which tower to the heavens (Ps. xxxvi. 5.).

PSALM LVIII.

A cry for vengeance upon unrighteous judges.

A bitter lamentation over the corruption that prevailed in the administration of justice. The Psalmist lays bare the wickedness of the judges, and prays God to punish them. At the close he foresees their overthrow and the triumph of the righteous. Some refer the Psalm to the early part of David's reign, the country having been long in a disorganized and lawless condition. In the opinion of others the Psalm belongs to the time of Absalom, and it is supposed that Absalom not only complained that the king neglected his duty as judge of the people (2 Sam. xv. 3, 4.), but undertook himself, with certain associates, to sit in the gate and hear causes. The Psalm may be David's apostrophe to those self-constituted judges.

1. “**O congregation.**” The word so rendered comes from a root signifying “to bind;” hence it has been taken to mean “a bundle,” and then “a band of men,” i. e. a congregation. But the word is elsewhere rendered “silence,” “dumbness;” if it is so taken here, the literal rendering of the passage will be, “Do ye of a truth silently (in “your silence) speak right?” Is it by silence that ye perform the office of speech and administer justice? implying that they are dumb when they ought to speak. Another rendering is, “Do ye indeed utter “the silence of justice?” i. e. long-silent justice. Others suggest a slight change in the word, by which it may mean “O ye gods,” a title not unfrequently given to judges in the Bible (see Ps. lxxxii. 6.).

2. “**Yea.**” “Nay rather,” the answer to the question of the preceding verse; so far from judging uprightly, ye plan evil in your hearts (Mic. ii. 1.); ye are not only carried away at the moment, but ye are

PSALMS, LVIII.

- ^b Ps. 51. 5.
Isai. 48. 8.
² Heb. *from the belly.*
- 3 ^b The wicked are estranged from the womb :
they go astray ² as soon as they be born,
speaking lies.
- ^c Ps. 140. 3.
Eccles. 10. 11.
³ Heb. *according to the likeness.*
- 4 ^c Their poison *is* ³ like the poison of a serpent :
they are like ^d the deaf ⁴ adder *that* stoppeth her
ear ;
- ^d Jer. 8. 17.
⁴ Or, *asp.*
- 5 which will not hearken to the voice of charmers,
⁵ charming never so wisely.
- ⁵ Or, *be the charmer never so cunning.*
- 6 ^e Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth :
break out the great teeth of the young lions,
O LORD.
- ^e Job 4. 10.
Ps. 3. 7.
- ^f Josh. 7. 5.
Ps. 112. 10.
- 7 ^f Let them melt away as waters *which* run
continually :
when he bendeth *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let
them be as cut in pieces.
- 8 As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them*
pass away :
^g *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they
may not see the sun.
- ^g Job 3. 16.
Eccles. 6. 3.

deliberately unjust; ye pretend to hold the scales of justice, but ye mete out violence instead of justice.

3. The order of the Hebrew words shews that the Psalmist is enlarging on the wickedness of those whom he had addressed above: "they are estranged, wicked men, from the womb;" their present ripeness in evil is the result of early depravity unchecked.

4. "Their poison." They are as full of malice as the serpent is full of poison (see Deut. xxxii. 33. Job xx. 14, 16. Isa. xi. 8.). The serpent though deaf to ordinary sounds, is able to hear the shrill voice or flute of the charmer. It is a mistake to suppose that the expression "deaf adder" denotes a species that is incapable of hearing. The explanation of the passage is, that there are some serpents, individuals of the same species, which defy all the attempts of the charmer; to them David compares his enemies, utterly inaccessible as they were to any influence for good, whether their own conscience or the expostulations of others (see Jer. viii. 17. Eccles. x. 11. Comp. Acts vii. 51—57.).

6. The only remedy against enemies so malignant is prayer, that their power for evil may be taken away. The allusion in the first clause probably is to the taking out or breaking off the poison-fangs of the serpent.

7. The Psalmist prays, not only that the power of his enemies may be crushed, but that they themselves may be destroyed; and in this prayer he heaps figure upon figure: let them be like water poured out upon the earth and wasted (2 Sam. xiv. 14.); like broken arrows; like the snail which gradually wastes away; like an abortive birth; like the fire of thorns carried away by the whirlwind.

8. The snail was supposed to consume away by reason of its constantly emitting slime as it crawled along.

"Untimely birth." See marg. reff.

PSALMS, LIX.

- 9 Before your pots can feel the thorns,
 he shall take them away ^h as with a whirlwind, ^h Prov. 10. 25.
² both living, and in *his* wrath. ² Heb. *as living as wrath.*
- 10 ¹ The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the
 vengeance : ¹ Ps. 52. 6.
^k he shall wash his feet in the blood of the ^{& 64. 10.}
 wicked. ^{& 107. 42.}
^k Ps. 68. 23.
- 11 ¹ So that a man shall say, Verily *there is* ³ a ¹ Ps. 92. 15.
 reward for the righteous : ³ Heb. *fruit of the, &c.*
 verily he is a God that ^m judgeth in the earth. ^{Isai. 3. 10.}
^m Ps. 67. 4.
^{& 96. 13.}
^{& 98. 9.}

PSALM LIX.

- ¹ David prayeth to be delivered from his enemies. ⁶ He complaineth of ² Or,
 their cruelty. ⁸ He trusteth in God. ¹¹ He prayeth against them. ² Destroy not,
¹⁶ He praiseth God. ² A golden
 Psalm of
 David.
- To the chief Musician, ²³ Al-taschith, Michtam of David ; ³ Ps. 57, title.
⁴ when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. ⁴ 1 Sam. 19.
¹¹
- 1 **D**ELIVER ^a me from mine enemies, O my ^a Ps. 18. 48.
 God : ⁵ Heb. *set me on high.*
⁵ defend me from them that rise up against me.

9. Literally, "Before your pots feel the thorn (that is, the fire of thorns), whether it be living (green), or burning hot, one shall sweep it away;" that is, it shall be swept away.

"Ere your cauldrons know
 "The thorn, His winds shall sweep away
 "Green wood and brands that glow" (*Kebbe*).

It would not be uncommon in the desert for a fire of thorns, gathered for cooking, to be carried away by a sudden storm. The word translated "wrath" is properly "a burning brand," and is here used of the burning thorn.

10, 11. The swift punishment of the unrighteous judges rejoices the hearts of the godly, who see in it the hand of the supreme Judge. The figure of bathing the feet in the blood of enemies expresses in the strongest way the greatness of the vengeance. Personal hatred and malicious joy in the downfall of enemies, as they had no place in David's heart, so would they be utterly unfitting in a Christian. But as there is a righteous hatred of wickedness, so is there also a righteous exultation in its punishment. "Rejoice over her," it is said, at the fall of Babylon, "thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. xviii. 20.).

PSALM LIX.

Trust in God in spite of lurking enemies.

Saul having given his servants orders to slay David (1 Sam. xix. 1.), it is likely that they dogged his steps and watched his house on other occasions besides that night when his wife entreated him to escape (1 Sam. xix. 11, 12.). This Psalm gives us an insight into the condition of things at Gibeah, how the emissaries of Saul went about the

PSALMS, LIX.

- 2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
and save me from bloody men.
- 3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul :
^b the mighty are gathered against me ;
^c not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O
LORD.
- 4 They run and prepare themselves without *my*
fault :
^d awake ² to help me, and behold.
- 5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God
of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen :
be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.
Selah.
- ^e ver. 14. 6 ^e They return at evening : they make a noise
like a dog,

city with murderous purpose. David meanwhile, conscious of his innocence, places himself night after night with full confidence under God's protection.

The Psalm is divided into two parts by the refrain in ver. 9 ; each of the divisions is again subdivided by Selah. In the first part (vv. 1—9.) the Psalmist cries to God for help against his enemies, and sets forth the greatness of his danger ; in the second (vv. 10—17.), fear is hushed, hope reigns, and anger burns more fiercely.

1—3. His enemies are workers of iniquity and bloodthirsty, plotting and deliberating against him without any offence or fault on his part. He is helpless, but he is innocent,—two pleas for help which are familiar in David's early Psalms. See especially Ps. vii. 3, 4.

4. "They run and prepare (station) themselves." They are both technical words. Certain of Saul's attendants were specially called "runners" (1 Sam. xxii. 17, margin. Comp. also 2 Kings x. 25 ; xi. 4, "the guard," lit. "the runners"); these men, at Saul's bidding, put themselves in position, ready for the attack.

"All unprovok'd they rush to take
"Their murderous station" (*Keble*).

"To help me." Lit. "meet me;" like a relieving army.

"Behold." Come and Thyself behold my danger.

5. "Thou." Especially emphatic, "yea, Thou," "even Thou." "O Lord God of hosts" (see Ps. lxxx. 4, 19 ; lxxxiv. 8.). By this title David appeals to the greatness of God's power ; by "God of Israel" (Isa. xxxvii. 16. Jer. xxxviii. 17.), to the special care pledged to His people ; that is, to His power and His promise. He reckons himself as belonging to an Israel from which he excludes his enemies.

"All the heathen." All those who are alien from the true Israel ; heathen in mind if not by birth.

The "Selah" gives intensity to the cry for judgment.

6. "They return at evening." As surely as the evening comes they return to their hateful task, prowling about like the troops of hungry, savage dogs which infest the streets of Eastern cities (see 1 Kings xiv. 11. 2 Kings ix. 36.).

and go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth :

^f swords *are* in their lips :

for ^g who, *say they*, doth hear ?

8 But ^h thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them ;
thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of* his strength will I wait upon thee :

ⁱ for God *is* ² my defence.

10 ¶ The God of my mercy shall ^k prevent me :

God shall let ¹ me see *my desire* upon ³ mine
enemies.

11 ^m Slay them not, lest my people forget :

scatter them by thy power ; and bring them down,
O Lord our shield.

^f Ps. 57. 4.
Prov. 12. 18.

^g Ps. 10. 11,
13, & 64. 5.
& 73. 11.
& 94. 7.

^h 1 Sam. 19. 16.
Ps. 2. 4.

ⁱ ver. 17.
Ps. 62. 2.

² Heb. *my*
high place.

^k Ps. 21. 3.
¹ Ps. 54. 7.
& 92. 11.
& 112. 8.

³ Heb. *mine*
observers,

Ps. 56. 2.

^m So Gen.
4. 12, 15.

“They make a noise.” Elsewhere the word is used of the growling of the bear (Isa. lix. 11.) and the cooing of the dove (Ezek. vii. 16.). It denotes a noise quite distinct from the bark of a dog, a low snarl which they could not restrain.

7. Murderous, spiteful words come foaming out of their mouths, as if there were no God to hear them.

“Swords are in their lips.” See Ps. lii. 2 ; lv. 21.

8. They think that no one hears them ; but they are mistaken ; God hears them, and laughs them to scorn ; as He does all the heathen, all, that is, who are estranged from Him (see Ps. ii. 4 ; xxxvii. 13.).

9. “Because of his strength.” If this is the correct reading, the meaning probably is, that because of the power of his enemies, and especially of Saul, David would stay himself on God. But most of the old Versions had a different reading, “my strength,” as in ver. 17. In that case we have here the refrain of the Psalm, “O my strength, on Thee “would I wait ; for God is my strong tower ;” which is slightly altered afterwards, “O my strength, unto Thee would I sing ; for God is my “strong tower.”

10. The second part of the Psalm begins here, with renewed confidence in God’s protection and the destruction of his enemies.

“The God of my mercy shall prevent me.” Rather, “God shall “prevent me with His mercy,” i. e. forestall me, giving what I need before I ask (Ps. xxi. 3.).

“My desire.” See Ps. liv. 7.

11. “Slay them not.” We should have expected the contrary prayer, which indeed follows : but David desires that before the men who are persecuting him are entirely rooted out, they may be held up as a spectacle of punishment to the eyes of his people.

“Scatter them.” Or, “make them wanderers.” “The verb is used “of Cain (Gen. iv. 12, 14.), and of the Israelites wandering in the “wilderness (Num. xxxii. 13.). In both these cases life was spared “to make the punishment of sin more exemplary” (Kay). It is usual to apply the verse to the Jews scattered over the world, a living monument of the wrath of God (Deut. xxviii. 64.).

PSALMS, LIX.

- ⁿ Prov. 12. 13. 12 ⁿ For the sin of their mouth *and* the words of
& 18. 7. their lips
let them even be taken in their pride :
and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.
- ^o Ps. 7. 9. 13 ^o Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that
they *may not be* :
^p Ps. 83. 18. and ^p let them know that God ruleth in Jacob
unto the ends of the earth. Selah.
- ^q ver. 6. 14 And ^q at evening let them return ; *and* let them
make a noise like a dog,
and go round about the city.
- ^r Job 15. 23. 15 Let them ^r wander up and down ² for meat,
^s Ps. 109. 10. ³ and grudge if they be not satisfied.
- ² Heb. *to eat.* 16 But I will sing of thy power ;
³ Or, *if they be not satisfied, then they will stay all night.* yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the
morning :
for thou hast been my defence
and refuge in the day of my trouble.
- ^s Ps. 18. 1. 17 Unto thee, ^s O my strength, will I sing :
^t ver. 9, 10. ^t for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my
mercy.

12. Lit. "the words of their lips are the sin of their mouth;" that is, every word they utter is sin. Therefore David prays that in their proud and false and blasphemous words they may be ensnared.

13. "Consume." Make an end. David prays that after they have served as a warning to Israel, they may be destroyed, and may perceive that God is ruler in Jacob; as in fact He rules to the end of the earth (comp. Ezek. xii. 15).

14. "Let them return." Rather, "they return." After the pause, indicated by Selah, the Psalmist recurs (see ver. 6, here repeated) to his present condition, and to the pack of dogs by which he is being hunted.

15. "For meat." Lit. "to devour." David himself is the prey which they are seeking. If they fail to find him, they watch his house all night to take him in the morning.

"And grudge," &c. Rather, as in margin, "if they are not satisfied, they stay all night." Every evening they take up their station at his doors; but every morning brings deliverance, and he exults in God's mercy.

16. "But I." The pronoun is emphatic, answering to "they," also emphatic, in the verse preceding; "as for them," "as for me."

"In the morning." Every morning, parallel to "at evening" (vv. 6, 14).

17. The refrain grows more confident; he not only waits, but sings. This is one of the earliest of David's Psalms, and is marked by that unfaltering trust in God, which was the special characteristic of his youth and early manhood. In the virulent and unceasing opposition of his enemies, and in his own calm repose in extreme peril, David

PSALMS, LX.

PSALM LX.

1 *David, complaining to God of former judgment, 4 now, upon better hope, prayeth for deliverance. 6 Comforting himself in God's promises, he craveth that help whereon he trusteth.*

To the chief Musician ² upon Shushan-eduth, ³ Michtam of ² Ps. 80.

David, to teach; ⁴ when he strove with Aram-naharaim ³ Or, and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of ^{A golden Psalm.} Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.

1 **O** GOD, ^a thou hast cast us off, thou hast ⁵ scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

⁴ 2 Sam. 8. 3,
13. 1 Chr.
18. 3, 12.
^a Ps. 44. 9.
⁵ Heb.
broken.

was a signal type of Christ. Therefore, as we read this Psalm, we may think of the deadly enmity of the evil spirits and their instruments against our Lord, and of His steadfast reliance on His Father's love. If we may not venture without presumption to put the denunciations of the Psalm into our Saviour's mouth, we may perceive that David was guided to use words which applied to the fate of the enemies of One greater than himself, whose dispersion among the nations of the earth should manifest to the whole world God's righteous judgment.

PSALM LX.

A war song in anticipation of victory after defeat.

We gather from the inscription, that while David was engaged in his war with the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. viii.), Joab was despatched to battle with the Edomites. The Psalm implies that the Israelites had met with severe reverses, of which we have no record in the history; and it has therefore been conjectured, with great probability, that while David was prosecuting successfully his war with Aram-naharaim (Aram of the two rivers, i. e. the Syrians of Mesopotamia) and Aram-zobah in the north, the Edomites took advantage of his absence to invade the land in the south, and Joab was sent back to punish them.

The Psalm may have been written before the victory in the valley of salt (1 Chron. xviii. 12.), and in anticipation of it, or in the interval between that victory and the final conquest of Idumæa.

There are three divisions, plainly marked; first (vv. 1—5.), an almost broken-hearted lament over defeat and disaster, with a cry for help; second (vv. 6—8.), an appeal to God's promise assuring Israel of the possession of the whole land, and of victory over the neighbouring nations; and third (vv. 9—12.), confident anticipation that the expedition, which was on the point of starting, would be crowned with success.

“Upon Shushan-eduth.” That is, probably, to the tune of the song, “The lily of the testimony.”

“To teach.” Only found in this inscription. It probably means that the Psalm was intended to be taught: the Greek Version has “for teaching” (see Deut. xxxi. 19.).

1—3. David attributes the disasters which had befallen Israel to God's anger; not only had they been defeated in battle, but they were thoroughly demoralized, trembling and alarmed, as if by the shock of an earthquake. The strong language here used may explain the severity

- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it:
b 2 Chr. 7. 14. ^b heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
e Ps. 71. 20. 3 ^c Thou hast shewed thy people hard things:
d Is. 51. 17, 22. ^d thou hast made us to drink the wine of
Jer. 25. 15. astonishment.
e Ps. 20. 5. 4 ^e Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,
that it may be displayed because of the truth.
Selah.
f Ps. 108. 6. 5 ^f That thy beloved may be delivered;
&c. save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.
g Ps. 89. 35. 6 ¶ God hath ^g spoken in his holiness;
h Josh. 1. 6. I will rejoice, I will ^h divide ⁱ Shechem,
i Gen. 12. 6.

with which the Edomites were at this time treated by Joab (see 1 Kings xi. 15, 16.).

2. "The earth." Rather, "the land."

3. "Wine of astonishment." Lit. "bewilderment." See Isa. li. 17, where the same expression occurs. God had made them drink bewilderment, as men drink wine; they were infatuated with fear.

4. There is a transition here from lamentation to hope; hitherto the Psalmist has spoken only of defeat and its consequences; now he calls to mind, for his encouragement, that God had given His people a banner beneath which to fight; and then, on the double ground of their great necessity and God's favour for them, he prays earnestly that with His strong right hand He would deliver His beloved.

"A banner." That is, the Name of the Lord of hosts (see Exod. xvii. 15.).

"That it may be displayed." Rather, "that men may raise themselves" and muster round it; the banner being a rallying point to the fugitives (Jer. iv. 6.). The word however admits of being rendered "that they may betake themselves to flight;" and therefore some commentators give a different turn to the meaning of the verse, "Thou hast set up a banner for them that fear Thee—not for victory, but for flight." In this case the thought of calamity would be carried on naturally from the preceding verses. But the change to the mention of God's care and favour as a ground for prayer is not unnatural or unlikely.

"Because of the truth." That is, because of God's faithfulness and their covenant relation with Him. Most of the ancient Versions however seem to have had a slightly different reading, which they render "from the bow;" and the meaning then would be, that God had given a banner to them that fear Him, that they might gather round it out of the reach of the archers. The position of the "Selah" seems to favour the rendering "on account of the truth," the music being prolonged to draw attention to the good cause of Israel in opposition to their enemies.

6—8. David further encourages himself by calling to mind the Divine

PSALMS, LX.

- and mete out ^k the valley of Succoth.
 7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine ;
^l Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head ;
^m Judah *is* my lawgiver ;
 8 ⁿ Moab *is* my washpot ;
^o over Edom will I cast out my shoe :
^p Philistia, ² triumph thou because of me.

^k Josh. 13. 27.
^l See Deut.
 33. 17.
^m Gen. 49. 10.
ⁿ 2 Sam. 8. 2.
^o 2 Sam. 8. 14.
 Ps. 108. 9.
^p 2 Sam. 8. 1.
² Or, *triumph
 thou over
 me*: (by an
 irony:) See
 Ps. 108. 9.

promise, which assured him of entire possession of the land ; he claims for himself what God had given, and casts his eye exultingly over the land ; it is all his, to the east and west, and the bordering nations must own his sway. Probably the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 9 was chiefly in his mind ; but there may be a reminiscence of the promise to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18—21.). Some commentators think that we have here the very words of God ; that it is He Who says “ I will rejoice,” &c., thus identifying His people with Himself.

6. “ In His holiness.” Equivalent to an oath by His holiness (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 35. Amos iv. 2.).

“ I will divide . . . mete out.” The partition of land implies entire possession.

“ Shechem . . . valley of Succoth.” If the valley of Succoth is the Succoth mentioned in Josh. xiii. 27. Judg. viii. 8, it lay on the east of Jordan : in that case Shechem and Succoth would represent the land on both sides of the river. But there seems to have been another Succoth on the west of Jordan ; so that it is impossible to determine accurately where the valley of Succoth was.

7. “ Gilead (that is, the mountainous district between Bashan and Moab) and Manasseh ” include the whole trans-Jordanic region, while “ Ephraim ” and “ Judah ” stand for the country on the west of Jordan.

“ The strength (or defence) of mine head,” i. e. his helmet ; or perhaps his horn (see Deut. xxxiii. 17.).

“ My horn, so high and true,
 “ Is Ephraim ” (*Kelle*).

“ My lawgiver.” The word is so rendered in Gen. xlix. 10. Num. xxi. 18. Deut. xxxiii. 21. Isa. xxxiii. 22 ; but some would translate “ sceptre,” “ staff of command.”

8. The surrounding nations are contemptuously defied.

“ Moab is my washpot.” That is, not merely the slave who waits upon his master and washes his feet, but the vessel itself.

“ Cast out my shoe.” The exact point of the comparison is uncertain. It may refer to the custom of throwing the sandals to the slaves, or to that of claiming possession of a property by planting the foot on it, or of setting the foot on the neck of the conquered.

“ Triumph thou because of me.” Rather, “ cry aloud because of me,” that is, wail aloud. Though commonly used of triumph, there are passages where an outcry of sorrow is meant (e. g. Isa. xv. 4. Micah iv. 9.). Or the word may be used ironically ; “ triumph over me now,” i. e. if thou canst. In the parallel passage in Ps. cviii. 9, it is “ Over Philistia will I triumph.”

PSALMS, LXI.

- ² Heb. *city of strength* ?
² Sam. 11. 1. & 12. 26.
^q ver. 1.
^r Ps. 44. 9. & 108. 11.
^r Josh. 7. 12.
^s Ps. 118. 8. & 146. 3.
³ Heb. *salvation*.
^t Num. 24. 18.
¹ Chr. 19. 13.
^u Isai. 63. 3.
- 9 ¶ Who will bring me *into* the ² strong city ?
 Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 10 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* ^a hadst cast us off ?
 And *thou*, O God, *which* didst ^r not go out with
 our armies ?
- 11 Give us help from trouble :—for ^s vain is the
³ help of man.
- 12 Through God ^t we shall do valiantly :
 for he *it is that* shall ^u tread down our enemies.

PSALM LXI.

1 David fleeth to God upon his former experience. 4 He voweth perpetual service unto him, because of his promises.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah, *A Psalm* of David.

1 **H**EAR my cry, O God ;—attend unto my prayer.

9. The Psalmist returns to prayer, but it is to prayer which breathes a bolder courage than before.

“The strong city.” That is, the chief city of Edom, Sela or Petra (2 Kings xiv. 7.).

“Who will lead me ?” Lit. “Who hath led me ?” Who shall have led me ? (comp. Ps. xi. 3. 1 Sam. xxvi. 9 for a like use of the past tense.)

10. More literally, “Hast not Thou, O God, cast us off, and goest not “forth with our armies ?” Though God has hitherto in anger withdrawn His help, David looks to Him as the only source of victory, and he is confident that he will not look in vain.

12. “Do valiantly.” That is, be victorious ; as in Ps. cxviii. 16. Num. xxiv. 18.

The Christian mourning over the power of sin may, like David, not only pray to be set free, but also strengthen himself with the thought that God’s banner is over him, and that if he will go forth under that banner he shall be safe. He will call to mind moreover the special promises of complete deliverance which God has given him ; his bodily appetites are meant to be his slaves, not his masters. Let him gird himself therefore again and again, with ever fresh resolution, for the struggle. God will fight for him and carry him to victory. Utterly powerless as he is in himself, and vain as is all human help, the strongholds of sin will be broken down, and he will be able to do all things through Christ’s indwelling might.

PSALM LXI.

The exiled king prays for, and looks forward to, restoration.

Here, as in other Psalms, David gives expression to the feeling of loneliness which oppressed him, when cut off from the presence of God vouchsafed in His tabernacle. The Psalm appears to belong to the time of Absalom’s rebellion. It consists of two parts ; first, an earnest and

PSALMS, LXI.

- 2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,
 when my heart is overwhelmed :
 lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I .
- 3 For thou hast been a shelter for me,
and ^a a strong tower from the enemy.
- 4 ^b I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever :
^c I will ² trust in the covert of thy wings.
 Selah.
- 5 ¶ For thou, O God, hast heard my vows :
 thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that
 fear thy name.
- 6 ^d ³ Thou wilt prolong the king's life :
and his years ⁴ as many generations.
- 7 He shall abide before God for ever :

^a Prov. 18. 10.

^b Ps. 27. 4.

^c Ps. 17. 8.

& 57. 1.

& 91. 4.

² Or, *make my refuge.*

^d Ps. 21. 4.

³ Heb.

Thou shalt add days to the days of the king.

⁴ Heb. *as generation and generation.*

confident prayer that God would bring him into a place of safety, that is, to His own presence ; second, a further expression of his confidence that God would hear his prayer, and grant him a prolonged life.

“**Upon Neginah.**” Probably, on a stringed instrument (see Ps. iv.).

2. “**From the end of the earth.**” To be cut off from the sanctuary seems to David like being banished to the end of the earth (comp. Ps. xlii. 6.).

“**Is overwhelmed.**” Lit. “fainteth.” Prayer Book, “is in heaviness.”

“**Lead me to the rock.**” The full meaning is, “Thou wilt lead me to, and place me upon, a rock which is too high for me.” This may mean a rock of difficulty, which he cannot surmount without God’s help ; or, more probably, a rock of safety, which he cannot reach unaided (Ps. xl. 2.). Fainting and desolate, he is nevertheless of good courage, for God has ever been to him a refuge and defence. Thus experience is the nurse of faith.

4. “**I will abide.**” Rather, “I would abide.” Oh, that I might abide !

“**I will trust.**” “I would find shelter in the covert of Thy wings.” The reference is to the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat. It is God’s presence in the sanctuary which David longs for, and to which he would fly for refuge. The music is prolonged here, in order that he may dwell upon the thought of that kindly refuge.

5. “**For.**” As if he should say, “Yes, I shall find refuge in Thy presence, for Thou hast heard my mingled prayers and vows, and wilt restore to me my inheritance.”

“**The heritage of those that fear Thy name.**” That is, the possession of Canaan. David already sees the land restored to him, and a new era of his reign commencing.

7. “**He shall abide.**” Lit. “he shall sit,” i. e. on his throne ; he shall reign. God’s promise (2 Sam. vii. 16.) was, that David’s kingdom should be established for ever, a promise fulfilled in Christ (St. Luke i. 32, 33.), and David here passes on from the thought of himself to the great King Who should sit on His throne for ever. The Targum, in

PSALMS, LXII.

^c Ps. 40. 11.
Prov. 20. 28.

O prepare mercy ^o and truth, *which* may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

PSALM LXII.

² 1 Chron. 25.

1, 3.

³ Or, *Only*.

^a Ps. 33. 20.

⁴ Heb.

is silent,

Ps. 65. 1.

^b ver. 6.

⁵ Heb.

high place,
Ps. 59. 9, 17.

^c Ps. 37. 24.

1 *David professing his confidence in God discourageth his enemies. 5 In the same confidence he encourageth the godly. 9 No trust is to be put in worldly things. 11 Power and mercy belong to God.*

To the chief Musician, to ² Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

1 ³ **T**RULY ^a my soul ⁴ waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation.

2 ^b He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my ⁵ defence; ^c I shall not be greatly moved.

accordance with ancient Jewish tradition, explains that the King is the King Messiah.

“O prepare mercy and truth.” Appoint mercy and truth as guardian Angels to the king (Ps. xxv. 10; lxxxv. 10).

8. Unceasing praise will be the continual performance of his vows.

This Psalm may be taken as representing the yearning of the Christian for the rest and peace of heaven. While he is on earth, at home in the body, he is absent from the Lord, for Whom he longs, earnestly desiring to hide himself in His presence. And he confidently trusts that He Who has made him an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven will grant him to dwell with Him for ever, and to sit with Him on His throne. The mercy and truth which have followed him all his life will keep him to the end; and to all eternity he will pour forth his thankful song of praise.

PSALM LXII.

Silent trust in the God of strength the one defence against the attacks of men.

We cannot assign this Psalm positively to any special time in David's life. Enemies who have long opposed him secretly, have now broken through all restraint, and trusting in their power and wealth, are confident of overthrowing him. But as riches are deceitful and power belongs only to God, he commits himself and his cause to Him, and encourages others to follow his example.

For the correspondence between this Psalm and Ps. xxxix., see Ps. xxxix.

“Jeduthun.” See on Ps. xxxix.

1. “Truly.” Translated “only” in vv. 2, 4, 5, 6, and “surely” in ver. 9. The literal rendering of the clause is, “Only towards God, “towards God alone, my soul is silence,” hushed in utter resignation. This is the true and only account of the attitude of his soul. This is the one thing which he has to oppose to his persecutors, namely, quiet submission (Ps. xxxvii. 7; lxxv. 1).

2. Not only does his salvation come from God, but God *is* his salvation.

“Not greatly moved.” He will not so totter as to fall (Ps. xxxvii. 24.).

PSALMS, LXII.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?

Ye shall be slain all of you :

^d as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as a tottering* ^d Isai. 30. 13. fence.

4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency :

they delight in lies :

^e they bless with their mouth, but they curse ^e Ps. 28. 3.

² inwardly. Selah.

² Heb. *in their inward parts.*
^f ver. 1, 2.

5 ¶ ^f My soul, wait thou only upon God ; for my expectation *is* from him.

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation : *he is* my defence ; I shall not be moved.

7 ^g In God *is* my salvation and my glory : ^g Jer. 3. 23.

the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in him at all times ; ye people,

^h pour out your heart before him :

^h 1 Sam. 1. 15.
ⁱ Ps. 42. 4.
Lam. 2. 19.

3. Rather, "How long will ye rush in upon a man? How long will ye break him in pieces all of you, as though he were a bowing wall, a tottering fence?" This is the rendering of most of the ancient Versions. There is a contrast between "a man" and "all of you;" all their malignity was directed against one man, the Psalmist.

4. "Him," i. e. the "man" of the preceding verse, David himself.

"From his excellency." In Ps. iv. 2 David speaks of his enemies as turning his glory (that is, his kingly dignity) into shame, and seeking after leasing; so here he says that they desired to thrust him down from his high position and delighted in lies. This seems to favour the conclusion that this Psalm belongs to the same time as Ps. iv., that is, to Absalom's rebellion.

5. After a pause David returns to the quiet resignation of the beginning of the Psalm; only now he speaks to his soul, rather than of it. Liable as the soul is to continual agitations, it is only by repeated exhortations and soothing that it is hushed to repose.

"Wait thou." Lit. "be silent," as in ver. 1.

6, 7. The various names which David here again, as in ver. 2, applies to God, are, as Calvin says, so many shields against the assaults of Satan, so many pillars by which he supports his own steadfastness, so many checks to the waywardness of the carnal heart, ever disposed to look for support anywhere else rather than to God.

8. "Ye people." David here addresses, not the whole nation, but those who were still faithful to him: as in Ps. iv. 5, he would encourage their feeble faith. For this use of the word "people," see Judg. iii. 18. 1 Kings xix. 21. 2 Kings iv. 42.

"Pour out your heart." Whatever cause they might have for fear or anxiety, instead of locking it up in their own bosoms, let them, pour it

PSALMS, LXII.

¹ Ps. 18. 2.
^k Ps. 39. 5, 11.
 Is. 40. 15, 17.
 Rom. 3. 4.
² Or, *alike*.
^l Job 31. 25.
 Ps. 52. 7.
 Luke 12. 15.
¹ Tim. 6. 17.
^m Job 33. 14.
ⁿ Rev. 19. 1.
³ Or, *strength*.
^o Ps. 86. 15.
 & 103. 8.
 Dan. 9. 9.
^p Job 34. 11.
 Prov. 24. 12.
 Jer. 32. 19.
 Ezek. 7. 27.
 & 33. 20.
 Matt. 16. 27.
 Rom. 2. 6.
 1 Cor. 3. 8.
 2 Cor. 5. 10.
 Eph. 6. 8.
 Col. 3. 25.
 1 Pet. 1. 17.
 Rev. 22. 12.

God is ¹ a refuge for us. Selah.

- 9 ¶ ^k Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, and men of high degree *are* a lie : to be laid in the balance, they *are* ² altogether *lighter* than vanity.
- 10 Trust not in oppression,—and become not vain in robbery : ¹if riches increase, set not your heart *upon* them.
- 11 God hath spoken ^m once ;—twice have I heard this ; that ⁿ ³power *belongeth* unto God.
- 12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* ^o mercy : for ^p thou renderest to every man according to his work.

out before God. The Apostle prescribes the same remedy for trouble (Phil iv. 6. comp. 1 St. Pet. v. 7.).

“For us.” Not only for him (ver. 7), but for them also ; for all who trust in Him.

9. The emptiness of human strength is a further reason for trusting in God alone. If the Psalm belongs to the time of the rebellion, it is implied here that as Absalom and his supporters depended solely on earthly power, they must come to nought.

“Surely,” &c. Lit. “only a breath are the sons of men” (Ps. xxxix. 5, 11.). Here, as in Ps. xlix. 2, the Psalmist uses two different words for man ; “sons of the common man,” “sons of the great man.” In Ps. iv. 2 the partisans of Absalom are addressed as “sons of the great man,” and are said to “seek after leasing,” that is, a lie, the word used here.

“To be laid in the balance.” Rather, “in the scales they go up,” they are sure to rise.

10. “Oppression . . . robbery.” In those lawless times many of the supporters of Absalom had probably risen by dishonesty, and used their power for tyranny. David warns his followers against envying their prosperity.

“Become not vain.” “Do not vainly trust,” or “be not befooled or “blinded by.”

“If riches increase.” This may mean either their own or others’ wealth ; they were not to build upon it, if their own, or envy it, if another’s.

“Riches.” The word means strength and power as well as wealth.

“High be your wealth, your prowess strong,

“Yet turn your heart away” (*Keble*).

11. In contrast with man’s utter weakness, the Psalmist declares God’s Almighty power, and that on the authority of God Himself.

“Once . . . twice,” i. e. often. Comp. Job xxxiii. 14 ; xl. 5.

12. Power is not God’s only attribute : He is a God of mercy also. And the great proof of His mercy is, that He renders to every man

PSALMS, LXIII.

PSALM LXIII.

1 *David's thirst for God.* 4 *His manner of blessing God.* 9 *His confidence of his enemies' destruction, and his own safety.*

A Psalm of David, ² when he was in the wilderness of Judah. ² 1 Sam. 22.

1 **O** GOD, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee;
 "my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee
 in a dry and ³ thirsty land, ⁴ where no water is;

5. & 23. 14, 15, 16.
 a Ps. 42. 2. & 84. 2. & 143. 6.
³ Heb. *weary.*
⁴ Heb. *without water.*

according to his work; He takes strict account of those who oppose and those who yield themselves to His will; the one will feel His power, the other experience His loving-kindness. God's power and mercy are the two wings wherewith we fly to heaven, the two pillars on which we rest securely amid the waves of temptation. Why should we fear, when He Who covers us with the shadow of His wings is the same Who rules the universe, and holds in secret chains all the powers of evil? (*Calvin.*)

"The voice that speaks in thunder
 "Says, 'Sinner, I am thine.'"

PSALM LXIII.

Morning aspirations of one in exile and persecution.

"The wilderness of Judah" is the name given to the uncultivated country on the west of the Dead Sea, which formed the eastern frontier of Judah, and stretched so far to the north that the traveller from Jerusalem to the Jordan had to cross it. The first, if not the second, night of David's flight was spent there, "in the plains of the wilderness" (comp. 2 Sam. xv. 23, 28; xvii. 16.).

The daily public use of this Psalm was enjoined in the so called Apostolical Constitutions, and recognized by St. Athanasius and St. Chrysostom.

1. "O God." From all earthly things David turns to God, *his* God, like the needle to the magnet (comp. Ps. iii. 7; xviii. 2, 28; xxii. 1, 10.).

"Early will I seek Thee." There is no adverb in the Hebrew, and the verb only signifies earnest, diligent seeking (Prov. vii. 15; viii. 17.). But it comes from the same root as the noun "dawn" or "morning;" hence the Greek Version renders it by a word which signifies "to rise early;" and here, as in Isa. xxvi. 9, it seems specially chosen in contrast to the night (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 34. Job vii. 21. Hosea v. 15.).

"My soul . . . my flesh." That is, the whole man (see Ps. xvi. 9; lxxxiv. 2.). David's whole being longed for God: there were no bodily desires drawing him another way; body and soul, he pined for God.

"Longeth." The word seems to mean to be faint or exhausted from intense longing.

"Thirsty." Lit. as in margin, "weary." The word is used repeatedly in the history to describe the condition of David and his people during his flight (2 Sam. xvi. 2, 14; xvii. 29.). The dreary, waterless region, in which David was sojourning, was a fitting image of his spiritual condition, worn out with longing for the One true Fountain of life.

PSALMS, LXIII.

- ^b See 1 Sam. 4. 21.
¹ Chr. 16. 11.
 Ps. 27. 4.
 & 78. 61.
- ^c Ps. 30. 5.
- ^d Ps. 104. 23.
 & 146. 2.
- ^e Ps. 36. 8.
² Heb. *fatness*.
- ^f Ps. 42. 8.
 & 119. 55.
 & 140. 5.
- ^g Ps. 61. 4.
- 2 to see ^b thy power and thy glory,
 so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.
- 3 ^c Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life,
 my lips shall praise thee.
- 4 Thus will I bless thee ^d while I live :
 I will lift up my hands in thy name.
- 5 My soul shall be ^e satisfied as *with* ² marrow
 and fatness ;
 and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips :
- 6 when ^f I remember thee upon my bed,
and meditate on thee in the *night* watches.
- 7 Because thou hast been my help,
 therefore ^g in the shadow of thy wings will I
 rejoice.

“Tow’rd Thee my thirsty soul, tow’rd Thee
 “My wasting frame is borne ;
 “Far in a weary land and dry,
 “Where no cool waters shine ;
 “Even as I gaz’d with longing eye
 “In thine own favour’d shrine” (*Keble*).

2. The English Version has transposed the two clauses of this verse. The literal rendering is, “Thus in the sanctuary have I gazed on Thee, “to behold Thy power and Thy glory.” David means to say, that with the same vehement desire with which he longed after God in the desert, he had formerly contemplated Him in the sanctuary, in order that he might know Him more perfectly. This was the purpose of his gazing on God, viz. to gain an insight into His nature, and to perceive more and more both of His majesty and His loveliness.

3. It would seem better to disconnect the two clauses of this verse, as in the Prayer Book, “For Thy loving-kindness is better than life ; my “lips shall praise Thee.” David gives the reason why he so longed after God, both in the desert and in the Tabernacle : His love was everything to him, more than life itself, the one thing that made life itself desirable.

4. “Thus.” The same word that is translated “so” in ver. 2. “Even so,” with the same fervent devotion with which he longed for God will he bless Him all his life.

5. His inmost soul is as satisfied with the joy of communion with God, as his body would be with a feast of most dainty and nourishing food (see Ps. xxiii. 5 ; xxxvi. 8.).

6. The English Version connects this verse with the preceding : but as there is no “and” in the Heb., it seems better to translate, “When I “have remembered Thee upon my bed, through the night watches I meditate on Thee.” He is not satisfied with any passing remembrance ; through the whole night he is absorbed in meditation. It is not the sense of danger that keeps him awake, but the overpowering consciousness of God’s Presence and protection. God has been his help in time past ; and therefore under His sheltering wings he will exult (Ps. xvii. 8 ; xxxvi. 7 ; lvii. 1.).

PSALMS, LXIII.

- 8 My soul followeth hard after thee :
thy right hand upholdeth me.
- 9 But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it*,
shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
- 10 ² They shall fall by the sword :—they shall be ² Heb. *They shall make him run out like water by the hands of the sword.*
a portion for foxes.
- 11 But the king shall rejoice in God ;
¹ every one that sweareth by him shall glory :
but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be ^h Ezek. 35. 5.
stopped. ⁱ Deut. 6. 13. Isai. 45. 23. & 65. 16. Zeph. 1. 5.

PSALM LXIV.

¹ *David prayeth for deliverance, complaining of his enemies. 7 He promiseth himself to see such an evident destruction of his enemies, as the righteous shall rejoice at it.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

8. "Followeth hard." Lit. "hath cleaved after Thee." On the one hand David clings steadfastly to God, on the other he is enabled to do so, because God's right hand holds him fast, and will not abandon him to his enemies.

9. David turns to his enemies ; they shall not only not prevail over him, but they shall be utterly overthrown. This verse may be taken, "But as for them, they seek my life to destroy it ;" or, "But they—to their own destruction do they seek my life."

"Into the lower parts of the earth." That is, into Hades, the place of departed spirits (Ps. ix. 17 ; lv. 15.).

10. "They shall fall." Lit. "they (men) shall pour him out (give him over) to the power of the sword ;" that is, he shall be given over, every one of them shall be given over.

"The many-edged battle-sword
"Shall meet each feeble breast,
"Weak as a wave" (Keble).

Some, however, think that there is a reference to an individual leader.

"A portion for foxes." Rather, "jackals," ever ready to prey on the dead bodies of the slain. See the account of the slaughter of Absalom's army in 2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8.

11. If even in his persecution David could rejoice in God (vv. 3—7.), much more will he do so when his enemies are beaten down, and he is restored to his throne.

"By him," i. e. by God (Deut. vi. 13. Isa. lxy. 16.). Thus he closes the Psalm by declaring, that not he himself alone, but all who swear by God, that is, acknowledge Him to be the only God and look up to Him with love and reverence, shall glory in like manner. The next Psalm ends similarly.

It was a wise instinct which led in early times to the use of this Psalm in the morning service of the Church. Before the world comes in with its disturbing influence, the soul places itself in God's Presence with eager longing ; it rejoices in His love ; it reposes on His protection ; its life is life in God, and therefore a perpetual feast.

PSALMS, LXIV.

- 1 **H**EAR my voice, O God, in my prayer :
a preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked ;
 from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity :
- 3 ^a who whet their tongue like a sword,
^b *and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even*
 bitter words :
- 4 that they may shoot in secret at the perfect :
 suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
- 5 ^cThey encourage themselves *in* an evil ² matter :
 they commune ³ of laying snares privily ;
^d they say, Who shall see them ?
- 6 They search out iniquities ; ⁴ they accomplish
⁵ a diligent search :

a Ps. 11. 2.

& 57. 4.

b Ps. 58. 7.

Jer. 9. 3.

c See Prov.

1. 11.

2 Or, *speech.*

3 Heb. *to*

hide snares.

d Ps. 10. 11.

& 59. 7.

4 Or,

we are con-

sumed by

that which

they have

thoroughly

searched.

5 Heb.

a search

searched.

PSALM LXIV.

Prayer for protection against the secret plottings of the wicked, and an anticipation of God's judgment upon them.

It is impossible to say to which of the two calamitous periods of David's life this Psalm belongs, whether to his persecution by Saul, or to the rebellion of Absalom. The description of his enemies, as unceasing in their hatred and unscrupulous in their calumny, would apply to either time. If written on the earlier occasion, we may compare it with Pss. vii. ; lvi. ; lvii. ; lix. ; if on the latter, with Pss. lv. ; lviii.

1. "From fear of the enemy." Not only from the enemy himself, but from the fear of him. Comp. the Collect, "that we being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness." Or perhaps, from the terror which proceeds from the enemy, the danger which he has reason to fear from him.

2. "Secret counsel . . . insurrection." The first word conveys the notion of a secret gathering ; the second of an angry, tumultuous throng. If the later date be assigned to the Psalm, we may perhaps discern here David's fear, that the secret consultations, of which he was aware, might issue, as they did, in open rebellion.

3. "Who whet their tongue like a sword." See Ps. lii. 2 ; exl. 3.

"And bend ;" lit. "tread, with the view of bending." The word is here applied to the arrow instead of the bow, as in Ps. lviii. 7. The meaning is, they have stretched or directed their arrows.

5. "They encourage themselves in an evil matter." Lit. "they strengthen for themselves an evil word," that is, the wicked design which they have formed ; they take all the means in their power to carry it out.

"Who shall see them ?" Either, an indirect question, "they ask who will look at them, take any notice of them ;" or more directly, "who will look at them ?" that is, their snares.

6. The word rendered "they accomplish" is found in three other places (Num. xvii. 13. Jer. xlv. 18. Lam. iii. 22.) ; in all these it

PSALMS, LXIV.

both the inward *thought* of every one of *them*,
and the heart, *is* deep.

- 7 ¶ ° But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow ; ° Ps. 7. 12, 13.
suddenly ² shall they be wounded. ² Heb. *their wound shall be.*
- 8 So they shall make ^f their own tongue to fall upon themselves : ^f Prov. 12. 13. & 18. 7.
- ^g all that see them shall flee away. ^g Ps. 31. 11. & 52. 6.
- 9 ^h And all men shall fear,—and shall ⁱ declare ^h the work of God ; ^h Ps. 40. 3. ⁱ Jer. 50. 23. & 51. 10.
- for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

must be understood to be the first person plural. If it is so taken here, the verse may be rendered, “They devise iniquities; we have accomplished (they say) a well-devised device;” the Psalmist introduces them as exulting in the exquisite plans they have formed.

“Full deeply we have wrought our way,
“We wrought with craftiest skill” (*Keble*).

But it is thought by some, that the word which seems to be in the first person is only a different form for the third, and they translate, “they devise iniquities; they have accomplished an exquisitely devised device.”

“Both the inward thought,” &c. This is the Psalmist’s own observation on the depth of their secret wickedness.

7. “Shall shoot.” Rather, “hath shot.” The verbs are in the past tense, shewing what will inevitably follow from the conduct above described. How secretly soever they may lay their plans, God is beforehand with them; while they are whetting their swords, and directing their arrows, concocting their slanders and devising evil, the arrow of God has gone forth and wounded them.

8. Lit. “and they make him to stumble.” The subject of the verb is either men generally, as in Ps. lxxiii. 10, or the powers which are at the service of God, as in St. Luke xii. 20 (margin). The object can only be the enemies of whom the Psalmist had been speaking before, the singular being used, as frequently, for the plural, to signify that what is said belongs to each of them. The meaning therefore will be, “They shall be made to fall, every one of them, (with) their tongues (turned) against them;” their own evil devices will recoil upon themselves (comp. Prov. xviii. 7.).

“Shall flee away.” Rather, “shall shake their heads,” as in Jer. xviii. 16; this being the recognized gesture of satisfaction in the sight of failure or suffering (see Ps. xxii. 7.).

9. The plots of the wicked being thus turned against themselves, all men perceive and rejoice in God’s interposition. While the unbaring of His arm is an object of fear to all, they who can look up to Him in sincerity of heart exult and trust the more in Him.

We may not unfitly read in this Psalm a description of the secret plots and malicious calumnies of the enemies of our Lord, how they whetted their tongues and directed their arrows against the Perfect One; but the righteous God frustrated their designs. They who put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should take away their place and nation, by

PSALMS, LXV.

^k Ps. 32. 11. 10 ^k The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and
 & 58. 10. shall trust in him ;
 & 68. 3. and all the upright in heart shall glory.

PSALM LXV.

1 *David praiseth God for his grace. 4 The blessedness of God's chosen
 by reason of benefits.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David.

² Heb.
 is silent.
 Ps. 62. 1.

1 **P**RAISE ² waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion :
 and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

that very act set God's armies in motion, which destroyed the murderers and burned up their city. And the spectacle which they now present to the world, a nation of wanderers and outcasts, is viewed with fear by all who contemplate it, as a fitting judgment for that day, when they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads.

PSALM LXV.

**Song of thanksgiving for some signal deliverance,
 coincident with an abundant harvest.**

The expression "**Thy courts,**" in ver. 4, as applied to the house of God, is found only in later Psalms (e. g. lxxxiv. 2 ; xcii. 13 ; xcvi. 8 ; c. 4 ; cxvi. 19 ; cxxxv. 2. Comp. also Isa. i. 12 ; lxii. 9. Zech. iii. 7.). The Tabernacle had only one court. But the plural may be used poetically for the singular (comp. "tabernacles" in Ps. xliii. 3 ; xlvi. 4 ; lxxxiv. 1 ; cxxxii. 5, 7 ; and "sanctuaries" in Ps. lxxviii. 35.) ; there is therefore, so far, no sufficient reason for concluding that the Psalm was not written by David (with ver. 4 comp. Ps. xxvii. 4 ; xxxvi. 8.). There is no difficulty in the application of the word "Temple" to the Tabernacle (see 1 Sam. i. 9 ; iii. 3.). Some writers, however, thinking that the title only means that the Psalm was written after the model of David's, refer it to the time of the deliverance from Assyria, in the third year after which the Israelites would again behold the welcome sight of the fields ripening for the harvest (Isa. xxxvii. 30.). If the immediate occasion of the Psalm is uncertain, the circumstances under which it was written are sufficiently plain. The Psalmist is in Zion, in God's holy house, praising Him for the deliverance of Israel from some overwhelming danger, as well as for the blessings of nature poured forth in great abundance.

1. "**Praise waiteth for thee.**" Lit. "To Thee is silence praise," to Thee is silence, i. e. resignation (given or offered) as praise. In Zion the thankful heart praises God in silence, resigning itself calmly to His will, confident that He hears, and careful to perform the promised vow. He is emphatically the hearer of prayer ; and therefore weak man, who can find no help elsewhere, rests not until he makes his way to Him.

"**Waiteth.**" The word is used in the same sense of silent resignation in Ps. lxii. 1, 5 ; which is of itself a strong proof that the Psalm is David's ; and if so, we may note the same tranquil resignation in the day of thanksgiving as in the time of trouble.

PSALMS, LXV.

- 2 O thou that hearest prayer,—^a unto thee shall ^a Isai. 66. 23.
all flesh come.
- 3 ^{b 2} Iniquities prevail against me :
as for our transgressions, thou shalt ^c purge ² Heb.
them away. ^b Ps. 38. 4.
& 40. 12.
- 4 ^d Blessed is the man whom thou ^e choosest,
and causest to approach unto thee, that he may ^c Ps. 51. 2.
dwell in thy courts : & 79. 9.
^f we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy ^{Isai. 6. 7.}
house, ^{Heb. 9. 14.}
even of thy holy temple. ^{1 John 1. 7, 9.}
^d Ps. 33. 12.
& 84. 4.
^e Ps. 4. 3.
^f Ps. 36. 8.
- 5 ¶ By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou
answer us,
O God of our salvation ;
who art the confidence of ^g all the ends of the ^g Ps. 22. 27.

2. "Unto Thee." Lit. "even up to Thee," as far as Thee.

"All flesh." God hears the prayers of all ; therefore all of every class and nation (Joel ii. 28.) press to Him.

3. "Iniquities." Lit. as in margin, "words or matters of iniquities," as in Ps. xxxv. 20 ; cv. 27 ; cxlv. 5 ; i. e. all the particulars of his sins, the long catalogue of them.

"Prevail." Have been too powerful for me, an intolerable burden.

The second clause of this verse is different from what we should have expected. The usual parallelism would suggest "as for our transgressions, they weigh us to the ground," or something similar : instead of which the Psalmist proclaims God's forgiveness ; "Thou, yea Thou, "and none other, coverest them ;" Thou, Who alone canst, but of Whom it might least be expected ; the pardon is as complete as it is free and gracious.

The Psalmist could not come into God's Presence without remembering his sins ; but he was assured of their pardon ; therefore he could endure that Presence, and rejoice in his lot as chosen and brought near to abide in God's courts.

4. "We shall be satisfied." Rather, "so would we be satisfied ;" O let us be satisfied. Conscious of God's free grace in drawing him to Himself, the Psalmist would fain enjoy in full draughts the blessings of His house ; for, as has been truly said, there is no better way of thanking God for past grace than by hungering and thirsting after a further supply.

5. The Psalmist now turns to thank God, first, for His mercy to Israel among the nations of the earth, and then for the gracious rain which He has sent on the land and the abundant harvest.

"Wilt Thou answer." Rather, "dost Thou answer." The Psalmist looks back on past wonders wrought for His people in answer to their prayers, as well as looks forward with hope to like displays of power in the future. Now and at all times God answers them with deeds of might (see Deut. x. 21 ; xi. 2, 3. 2 Sam. vii. 23. Ps. xlv. 4 ; lxvi. 3, 5 ; cvi. 22 ; cxlv. 6.).

earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea :

6 which by his strength setteth fast the mountains ;

^h Ps. 93. 1.

^h being girded with power :

ⁱ Ps. 83. 9.
& 107. 29.
Matt. 8. 26.

7 ⁱ which stilleth the noise of the seas,
the noise of their waves, ^k and the tumult of the people.

^k Ps. 76. 10.
Is. 17. 12, 13.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens :

thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening ² to rejoice.

² Or, to sing.

¹ Deut. 11. 12.

³ Or, after thou hadst made it to desire rain.

^m Ps. 68. 9, 10.

& 104. 13.
Jer. 5. 24.

ⁿ Ps. 46. 4.

9 ¶ Thou ¹ visitest the earth, and ³ ^m waterest it :
thou greatly enrichest it

ⁿ with the river of God, which is full of water :

thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

“Of them that are afar off upon the sea.” Lit. “of the sea of the “distant ones,” that is, of all in distant islands of the sea. God’s righteous judgments on the oppressor make Him the hope of the oppressed everywhere. As it is He, and He alone, Who keeps the giant mountains in their places, and stills the raging waters, being girded, as a mighty warrior, with sovereign power, so He restrains the wild tumult of the nations : the tokens of His power are felt far and wide ; and men tremble and rejoice before Him.

8. “Tokens.” Signs and evidences of His power, special interpositions of His providence.

“The outgoings of the morning and evening.” That is, the regions where the morning breaks and the evening sets. East and west rejoice, because God upholds them and gives them peace. The whole world is a hymn of praise to God.

9—13. The Psalmist concludes with a burst of thankful acknowledgment of God’s mercy in the rich harvest ; in vv. 9, 10, he looks back on the gracious rain poured out upon the land at the fitting hour ; in vv. 11—13 he exults in the sight of the abundance which the seasonable rain had brought.

9. “Thou visitest.” Rather, “Thou hast visited.” God’s merciful dealings with men in providence and in grace are continually called His visits. He Himself in a manner comes to them in the outward or inward blessing which He vouchsafes (see Jer. xxvii. 22 ; xxix. 10 ; xxxii. 5. St. Luke xix. 44.).

“With the river of God.” In the Prayer Book, which follows the Greek, this is the beginning of a fresh clause ; “The river of God is full “of water ;” God’s stores of blessing are inexhaustible, with a special reference to that “atmospheric reservoir, from which the fertilizing “moisture descends to the earth.”

“Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it.” The same word is repeated in the Heb. : “Thou preparest corn for man ;

PSALMS, LXVI.

- 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly :
² thou settlest the furrows thereof : ² Or, *thou causest rain to descend into the furrows thereof.*
³ thou makest it soft with showers : thou blessest the springing thereof. ³ Heb. *thou dissolvest it.*
- 11 Thou crownest ⁴ the year with thy goodness ;
 and thy paths drop fatness. ⁴ Heb. *the year of thy goodness.*
- 12 They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness :
 and the little hills ⁵ rejoice on every side. ⁵ Heb. *are girded with joy.*
- 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks ;
^o the valleys also are covered over with corn ;
 they shout for joy, they also sing. ^o Isai. 55. 12.

PSALM LXVI.

1 David exhorteth to praise God, 5 to observe his great works, 8 to bless him for his gracious benefits, 12 He voweth for himself religious service to God, 16 He declareth God's special goodness to himself.

To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.

1 ^a **M**AKE a joyful noise unto God, ² all ye ^a Ps. 100. 1.
 lands : ² Heb. *all the earth.*

“for thus (i. e. by sending the rain) Thou preparest it, the earth :” He prepares the land, and so prepares the produce.

10. “**Ridges . . . furrows.**” It would be better to transpose these two words. The mercy of God prepares the earth by copiously watering the furrows, and by pressing down and softening the ridges, which the ploughshare has raised.

11. Lit. “Thou hast crowned the year of Thy goodness.” The year in which God’s goodness had been signally displayed was now crowned with the blessing of harvest.

“**Thy paths.**” Lit. “chariot-tracks :” wherever Thou goest, abundance follows in Thy train.

12. The word “**upon**” is not in the Heb. The meaning is that even the pastures of the wilderness, the uncultivated waste, drop with abundance ; the verdure with which the hills are covered is a festive garment.

13. “**Flocks.**” The article is added in the Heb., as if to “convey the idea that flocks are the fit decoration of pastures.”

“The pastures have put on their pride,

“The white flocks grazing far and wide ;

“The vales are wrapt in golden grain,

“They shout for joy, they sing anain” (*Keble*).

The Psalm is especially a thanksgiving for an abundant harvest. The devout worshipper goes up to God’s house to pour out his thanksgivings ; but he does not at once open his mouth in praise. In the house of God his first impulse is silent reverence ; the sense of sin oppresses him ; but then comes the comforting thought that that sin is pardoned, and he clings more earnestly to Him Who permits him to approach. He rejoices in His presence, and in all the tokens of His power and goodness. Words come freely ; and he pours out his heart in thankful praise for all God’s mercies, and especially for those which at that time were filling every mind.

PSALMS, LXVI.

2 sing forth the honour of his name:—make his praise glorious.

^b Ps. 65. 5.

3 Say unto God, How ^bterrible art thou in thy works!

^c Ps. 18. 44.

^c Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies ²³submit themselves unto thee.

² Or, *yield feigned obedience,*

Ps. 18. 44.
& 81. 15.

4 ^d All the earth shall worship thee, and ^eshall sing unto thee;

³ Heb. *lie.*

they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

^d Ps. 22. 27.

& 67. 3.
& 117. 1.

5 ¶ ^f Come and see the works of God:

^e Ps. 96. 1, 2.

he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

^f Ps. 46. 8.

PSALM LXVI.

Song of thanksgiving for some national deliverance.

This Psalm is connected with the preceding in bearing the double designation "Psalm" and "Song," as do also the two following Psalms. It is not attributed to David, and is supposed to have been written after the overthrow of the Assyrians or after the return from Babylon.

It is plainly intended for public worship, celebrating, as it does, a great national deliverance, for which the Psalmist calls on all nations to raise a joyful song. This summons (vv. 1—4.) is grounded, first, on God's mighty acts in behalf of His people in the past (vv. 5—7.), and then, on His more recent deliverances (vv. 8—12.). The Psalmist then goes on to declare his personal sense of God's goodness to him in hearing his prayer. Not satisfied with making large offerings in token of his gratitude (vv. 13—15.), his full heart must needs publish everywhere the praises of Him Who has not cast out his prayer, nor turned away His mercy from him (vv. 16—20.).

2. "Make His praise glorious." Lit. "ascribe glory as His praise."

"In praising Him, recognize His *glory*. To dwell on His kindness to us personally is good and right, yet it is not the highest style of praise. That requires us to set His holy and glorious Being before us in all its "grandeur and elevation." Comp. "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory."

3. The song put into the mouth of the nations is essentially the same as that of the heavenly harpers (Rev. xv. 3, 4.).

"Submit themselves." Lit. "lie unto Thee," i. e. yield feigned submission, cringe before Thee, be obliged to pay court to Thee, even against their will.

"Thy foes before Thee lowly creep

"By Thy strong power controll'd" (*Keble*).

The Prayer Book has "were found liars unto Thee;" as in Deut. xxxiii. 29.

4. The devout Israelite looked forward to the time when the whole world would bow down, willingly or unwillingly, before Jehovah.

5. "The works of God." That is, the wonders which He has just wrought. He Who led His people safely through the Red Sea and through Jordan has again wrought mightily in their behalf.

PSALMS, LXVI.

- 6 ^g He turned the sea into dry *land* : f Ex. 14. 21.
^h they went through the flood on foot : h Josh. 3. 14,
there did we rejoice in him. 16.
- 7 He ruleth by his power for ever ;—ⁱ his eyes ⁱ Ps. 11. 4.
behold the nations :
let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.
- 8 ¶ O bless our God, ye people,
and make the voice of his praise to be heard :
- 9 which ² holdeth our soul in life, 2 Heb.
and ^k suffereth not our feet to be moved. putteth.
k Ps. 121. 3.
- 10 For ¹ thou, O God, hast proved us : 1 Ps. 17. 3.
^m thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Isai. 48. 10.
- 11 ⁿ Thou broughtest us into the net ; m Zech. 13. 9.
thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.
n Lam. 1. 13.
- 12 ^o Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ; o Isai. 51. 23.

6. "There did we rejoice in Him." Rather, "there would we rejoice in Him," or, "there let us rejoice in Him." "There," where those great deliverances were wrought, taking our stand upon the very spot, we would fain raise our hymn of praise.

7. God's power is ever the same ; nothing escapes His watchful Eye ; it is vain for those who resist His will to think that they can do it with impunity.

8—12. The Psalmist repeats his call to the nations to bless God, with more special reference to the recent peril and deliverance.

9. "Holdeth." Margin, "putteth," sets our soul in the realm of life, when it had been in great peril of death.

"Suffereth not our feet to be moved." Hath not given our feet to tottering, hath not suffered us to stumble and fall (Ps. cxxi. 3. 1 Sam. ii. 9.).

10—12. It was no ordinary suffering through which God had preserved His people, as the Psalmist sets forth under various figures. They had been cast as it were into a smelting furnace ; they had been entangled in a net ; they had been like beasts of burden, crushed beneath the yoke ; they had been laid prostrate for their enemies to trample on ; they had been well-nigh burnt up and drowned.

10. "Tried us." This first figure gives the key to the rest. God's purpose was to purify them by sufferings (see Ps. xii. 6. Isa. xlvi. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Mal. iii. 3.).

11. "The net." The word so rendered means a net in Ezek. xii. 13 ; but elsewhere it is a "fortress," "a stronghold" (1 Sam. xxii. 4 ; xxiv. 23. Ps. xviii. 2, "my fortress") : possibly therefore the reference here may be to a place of confinement.

"Affliction." Properly, the pressure of a heavy burden.

12. "Over our heads." Comp. Isa. li. 23 : "They that afflict thee have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over ; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, as the street for them that went over." But as the meaning of the preposition is "upon" rather than "over," the figure may be that of a frail, wretched man (as is implied in the word

PSALMS, LXVI.

- P we went through fire and through water :
 2 Heb. *moist.* but thou broughtest us out into a ² wealthy
place.
- q Ps. 100. 4. 13 ¶ ¹ I will go into thy house with burnt offerings :
 & 116. 14, ² I will pay thee my vows,
 17, 18, 19. which my lips have ³ uttered,
 r Eccles. 5. 4. 14 and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in
 3 Heb. *opened.* trouble.
- 15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of
⁴ fatlings,
 4 Heb. *marrow.* with the incense of rams ;
 I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.
- s Ps. 34. 11. 16 ¶ ^s Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God,
 and I will declare what he hath done for my
 soul.
- t Job 27. 9. 17 I cried unto him with my mouth,
 Prov. 15. 20. and he was extolled with my tongue.
 & 28. 9. 18 ^t If I regard iniquity in my heart,
 Isa. 1. 15. the Lord will not hear *me* :
 John 9. 31.
 Jam. 4. 3.

here used for "men") riding upon them and treating them imperiously. The more miserable the master, the more oppressed is the servant.

"Fire and water." See Isa. xliii. 2, where fire and water represent a succession of opposite but extreme perils.

"Into a wealthy place." Into rich abundance, into a condition of signal prosperity.

13. Here the Psalmist begins to speak in his own name ; but it is still as a member of the community, for national rather than personal mercies, that he gives thanks, as the magnificence of the sacrifices seems to intimate. Not only will he punctually pay the vows which he made in the time of his peril, but he will moreover bring the best and costliest offerings in his power.

15. "Incense." That is, the steam and smoke of the sacrifices.

16. "For my soul." It is God's graciousness in hearing his prayers that the Psalmist desires to make known. The public benefit has become a personal favour.

17. "He was extolled with my tongue." Lit. "praise was under my tongue," in readiness for immediate use (Ps. x. 7. Job xx. 12.). He not only prayed for help, but he was so confident of being heard, that words of praise were almost mingled with his prayer (Acts xvi. 25.).

18. "If I regard." That is, "if I aim at or design ;" as in Gen. xx. 10 : "What sawest thou," what hadst thou in view, "that thou hast done this thing ?" The truth which the Psalmist here asserts, that we must in our hearts turn away from all sin, if we would pray to God acceptably, is taught us repeatedly in Holy Scripture (see Job xxvii. 8, 9. Isa. i. 15 ; lix. 2, 3. Prov. xxviii. 9. Ezek. xiv. 1—5. St. John ix. 31. 1 St. John iii. 21.).

PSALMS, LXVII.

- 19 *but* verily God ^u hath heard *me*; ^u Ps. 116. 1, 2.
 he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
 20 Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my
 prayer,
 nor his mercy from me.

PSALM LXVII.

1 *A prayer for the enlargement of God's kingdom, 3 to the joy of the people, 6 and the increase of God's blessings.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.

^a Num. 6. 25.
 Ps. 4. 6.

1 **G**OD be merciful unto us, and bless us;
and ^a cause his face to shine ² upon us; & 31. 16. &
 80. 3, 7, 19.
 & 119. 135.
 Selah. ² Heb.
 with us.

2 That ^b thy way may be known upon earth,
^c thy saving health among all nations. ^b Acts 18. 25.
^c Luke 2. 30.
 31. Tit. 2. 11.

20. "Prayer and mercy stand to each other in the relation of call and "echo." The gift of prayer is in itself a pledge of a favourable answer. If we are still permitted to pray, it is a token that God's mercy has not yet been turned away from us.

This Psalm is suitable for any time of great deliverance, as in the Prayer Book it is appointed as a thanksgiving after a storm in the Form of Prayer to be used at Sea. But in a Christian's mouth, it is especially a joyous burst of thanksgiving for the blessings of redemption, and an urgent cry to all the world to take notice of, and rejoice in, that redemption.

PSALM LXVII.

Harvest thanksgiving song.

In Psalm lxxv. the Psalmist contemplated the corn still standing in its abundance; here the harvest has been gathered in, in fulfilment of the promise (Lev. xxvi. 4.), the exact words of which occur in ver. 6.

From the earthly harvest the Psalmist's thoughts pass to the spiritual, and he prays, not without a joyful anticipation that his prayer will be answered, that He Who had made the earth fruitful will shed His blessing on its inhabitants, and make them His people.

The structure of the Psalm is remarkable. The fourth verse, consisting of three lines in the Hebrew, divides the Psalm into two parts, each of three two-line verses; the second part beginning in ver. 5 exactly as the first closed in ver. 3.

1. There is a manifest reference here to the High-priest's blessing, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" (Num. vi. 24, 25.). The Psalmist invokes this blessing upon Israel, not however for themselves alone, but in order that from and through them God's gracious purpose of salvation might be made known to all the world. Hence the Divine Name "The Lord" (Jehovah), which tells of His covenant relation to Israel, is exchanged for that of "God" (Elohim), which expresses His relation to the world at large.

2. "Thy way." Thy mode of dealing with Thy people, Thy purpose. "Thy saving health." Rather, "Thy salvation."

PSALMS, LXVII.

- ^d Ps. 66. 4. 3 ^d Let the people praise thee, O God ;
let all the people praise thee.
- ^e Ps. 96. 10,
13. & 98. 9.
² Heb. *lead*. 4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy :
for ^e thou shalt judge the people righteously,
and ² govern the nations upon earth. *Selah*.
- 5 Let the people praise thee, O God ;
let all the people praise thee.
- ^f Lev. 26. 4.
Ps. 85. 12.
Ezek. 34. 27. 6 ^f *Then* shall the earth yield her increase ;
and God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.
- 7 God shall bless us ;
and ^g all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
- ^g Ps. 22. 27.

PSALM LXVIII.

1 *A prayer at the removing of the ark.* 4 *An exhortation to praise God for his mercies,* 7 *for his care of the church,* 19 *for his great works.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David.

3, 4. Here the Psalmist half prays for, half anticipates, the time when from all the people of the earth shall rise a chorus of praise to the One true God. He sees the whole world living under, and rejoicing in, His mild and righteous sway, guided and governed by Him as their Shepherd.

“Govern.” Lit. as in margin, “lead,” implying gracious guidance (Ps. xxiii. 3 ; xxxi. 3.).

6. “Then.” Not in the Hebrew, and the verb is in the past tense ; “the land hath given her increase.” This clause is the key to the occasion and purpose of the Psalm. The corn and fruits which have just been gathered are to the Psalmist a pledge and earnest of the higher spiritual blessings of which all the inhabitants of the world should be partakers.

“Shall bless us.” Rather, “May He bless us,” as in vv. 1, 7.

7. The great prayer of the Psalm is that God would so bless His Church, as that the heathen beholding it may be drawn to Him. The more brightly the light of God’s countenance shines on Churches or individuals, the more will men be led to glorify Him (Ps. cxviii. 3. St. Matt. v. 16. Acts ix. 31. Eph. iii. 1—11.). Let the Church increase in holiness and love, and its missionary work will prosper.

This Psalm is appointed to be said or sung as an alternative Canticle in the Evening Service immediately after the Second Lesson, as if to remind us, whenever we hear or read the good tidings of the Gospel, as set forth in that Lesson, that if faithful Jews could thus earnestly long for the time when the other nations should participate in the knowledge of God, how much more should our hearts burn within us to impart to all mankind the fuller light and more wonderful revelation which have been vouchsafed to us, so that the whole earth may join in one hymn of praise to the God of its salvation.

PSALM LXVIII.

A song of triumph in celebration of God’s taking possession of His sanctuary on Mount Zion.

There is great difference of opinion with regard to the occasion of this Psalm. Some, rejecting the title, refer it to the time of Jehoshaphat and

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- 1 **L**ET ^a God arise, let his enemies be scattered : ^a Num. 10. 35.
 let them also that hate him flee ² before him. ^b Isai. 33. 3.
- 2 ^b As smoke is driven away, so drive *them* away : ² Heb. from
^c as wax melteth before the fire, *his face.*
 so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. ^b Isai. 9. 18.
^c Ps. 97. 5. ^c Hos. 13. 3.
- 3 But ^d let the righteous be glad ; let them rejoice ^d Ps. 32. 11.
 before God : & 58. 10.
 & 64. 10.
- yea, let them ³ exceedingly rejoice. ³ Heb.
*rejoice with
 gladness.*
- 4 ¶ ^e Sing unto God, sing praises to his name : ^e Ps. 66. 4.

Jehoram, and their victory over Moab and Edom (2 Kings iii.) ; others, to the reign of Hezekiah and the overthrow of the Assyrians ; others, to the return from the Babylonish captivity. But there are strong reasons against a late date ; and on the whole no occasion seems so suitable to the language of the Psalm as the removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to the new Tabernacle prepared for it on Mount Zion.

Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, Who led them forth wondrously out of Egypt, revealing Himself in terror on Mount Sinai and in mercy in abundant blessings in the wilderness, having planted His people in Canaan, has chosen Zion for His abode, and gone up to dwell there, bringing with Him salvation to Israel and destruction to her foes. This is the burden of the earlier part of the Psalm ; then, at ver. 24, the Psalmist turns to the scene before him, the actual procession by which with songs of triumph the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, is being solemnly brought to the Tabernacle, and he prays that distant nations may come and pay their homage to Jehovah there. The close of the Psalm anticipates the fulfilment of this prayer, and calls on all the people of the world to join in praising Him, Who, though He is King of heaven, has His earthly throne on Zion. As sung by the Church on Whit-Sunday, we may understand the Psalm as setting forth the triumphs of the Messiah and His presence with His Church in her passage through the world, until she reach her eternal home.

1. "Let God arise." At each forward movement of the Ark in the wilderness Moses said solemnly, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies "be scattered ; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee" (Num. x. 35.). What so natural as that now, when the Ark was to be once again and finally removed, David should remind himself and others of the old watchword ? Now, as of old, the Ark was the special token of God's presence with Israel, and a pledge of the overthrow of her enemies, and as such the Psalmist exults in it.

"Scattered." As when the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire (Exod. xiv. 24.).

2. Smoke passes utterly away and leaves no trace (see Ps. xxxvii. 20. Hos. xiii. 3.). Wax melts and ceases to be. Both figures set forth man's utter nothingness before God.

3. "Before God," i.e. before the Face of God. The same word is used in vv. 1, 2. The Face of God, which scatters His enemies, is the joy of the righteous.

4. After the key-note has been struck by the watchword of the Ark's progress, God is represented as commencing His march, and the people are called on to praise Him and prepare His way.

PSALMS, LXVIII.

f Deut. 33. 26.
ver. 33.
g Ex. 6. 3.
h Ps. 10. 14,
18. & 146. 9.

f extol him that rideth upon the heavens
g by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.
5 h A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the
widows,
is God in his holy habitation.

i 1 Sam. 2. 5.
Ps. 113. 9.
2 Heb. *in*
a house.
k Ps. 107. 10,
14. & 146. 7.
Acts 12. 6, & c.

6 i God setteth the solitary ² in families :
k he bringeth out those which are bound with
chains :
but ^l the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

l Ps. 107. 34,
40.
m Ex. 13. 21.
Judg. 4. 14.
Hab. 3. 13.

7 ¶ O God, ^m when thou wentest forth before thy
people,
when thou didst march through the wilderness ;
Selah :

“Extol Him that rideth upon the heavens.” Rather, “cast up a way for Him that rideth over the deserts,” as Eastern princes send pioneers before them to raise a suitable pathway for their progress (Isa. xl. 3 ; lvii. 14 ; lxii. 10.).

“Cast up His way, prepare it well,
“Who rides in might o’er waste and fell ;
“In JAH, His name unchangeable,
“Exult before the Lord” (*Kelle*).

“By His name JAH.” Rather, “JAH is His name.” He is the One eternal, self-existing Being, Who has revealed Himself by the name JEHOVAH (Exod. vi. 3.).

5, 6. The character of this great God is now unfolded. Enthroned in the highest heaven, He is profoundly conversant with all the concerns of men ; the orphan and the widow, the lonely and the captive, find in Him their true Friend. Special provision was made in the law for the orphan and widow (Exod. xxii. 22. Deut. x. 17, 18.). There may be a more particular reference to the Israelites in the land of bondage ; they were in the condition of the widow and orphan, and God succoured them ; they were solitary, without a home, and God gave them one ; they were captive, and He released them, and brought them into prosperity.

6. “In a dry land.” That is, in the sun-scorched desert. The Psalmist may have had in his mind the rebellious people who perished in the wilderness (Heb. iii. 17.).

In its wider application the passage sets forth the tender condescension of Him Who will not leave His children comfortless (lit. “orphans,” St. John xiv. 18.), but watches over and defends them, gathering them into the home of His Church, and bringing them at last into the land of promise ; but those who rebel against His fatherly rule will not reach that better land.

7—10. The Psalmist goes on to speak of God’s dealings with His people in the wilderness. The description is taken, with some variations, from the song of Deborah (Judg. v. 4, 5.). See also Deut. xxxiii. 2. Hab. iii. 3.

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- 8 ⁿ the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at ⁿ the presence of God :
even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. ⁿ Ex. 19. 16, 18.
Judg. 5. 4.
Isai. 64. 1, 3.
- 9 ^o Thou, O God, didst ² send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst ³ confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. ^o Deut. 11. 11, 12.
Ezek. 34. 26.
² Heb. *shake out.*
³ Heb. *confirm it.*
- 10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein :
^p thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor. ^p Deut. 26. 5,
9. Ps. 74. 19.
- 11 ¶ The Lord gave the word :
 great *was* the ⁴ company of those that published ⁴ *it*. ⁴ Heb. *army.*

8. "The earth shook." See Exod. xix. 18.

"The heavens dropped." That is, the black thunder-cloud which rested on Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16.) poured forth a flood of rain.

"Even Sinai itself." Lit. "that Sinai," "Sinai yonder."

"Yon Sinai towering lone and high

"Bow'd down at sight of Israel's God" (*Keble*).

9. The Prayer Book Version, "Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain "upon Thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was weary," gives more accurately the meaning of the Hebrew.

"A plentiful rain." A shower-like abundance of good gifts; in allusion to the manna, food, water from the rock, which are said to have been "rained" upon His people (Ps. lxxviii. 24, 27.).

10. "Thy congregation hath dwelt therein." One explanation is, "Thy flock, Thy people, dwell therein," that is, in the wilderness; in consequence of the miraculous supply of food and water they were enabled to remain there forty years. Others render it, "Thy creatures" (e. g. the quails) settled therein," i. e. in Thine inheritance, among Thy people: God provided for them abundantly. Or the word translated "congregation" may be rendered "host" or "troop" (as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 13.), which has been understood of the Angels.

"Thine everlasting host was there,

"And safe within thé guarded round

"Thy people dwelt; celestial fare

"For Thy forlorn, Thy goodness found" (*Keble*).

11. The Psalmist turns to the victories by which the possession of Canaan was gained.

"The word." Plainly some important word, whether of command or promise (Hab. iii. 9.). The Almighty speaks and victory follows at once; as all creation obeyed His creative word, "Let it be."

"Great was the company of those that published it." Lit. "the women who proclaim the tidings—a great host." The allusion is to the custom of women coming out to celebrate with music the conqueror's return. The overthrow of Pharaoh, of Jabin, of Goliath, was celebrated by singing women (see Exod. xv. 20. Judg. v. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. Comp. 2 Sam. i. 20.).

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- ^q Num. 31. 8, 9, 54. 12 ^a Kings of armies ² did flee apace :
 Josh. 10. 16. and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.
 & 12. 8.
- ² Heb. *did flee, did flee.* 13 ^r Though ye have lien among the pots,
^r Ps. 81. 6. ^s yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered
 with silver,
^s Ps. 105. 37. and her feathers with yellow gold.
- ^t Num. 21. 3. 14 ^t When the Almighty scattered kings ³ in it,
 Josh. 10. 10. it was *white* as snow in Salmon.
 & 12. 1, &c.
³ Or, *for her, she was.*

12. It has been suggested that in this and the two following verses we have a fragment of one of those ancient songs of the women.

“Kings of armies.” Or, “hosts,” as if to contrast them with the Lord of hosts, before Whom they are powerless. The rout of the kings of Canaan is specially in the Psalmist’s mind (Josh. x., xi. Judg. v. 19; vii. 24, 25.); but there may be a reference to the victories of Moses over the Midianites (see marg. reff.) and Ammonites.

“Where are the kings of mighty hosts?”

“Fled far away, fled far and wide.

“Their triumph and their trophied boasts

“The damsels in their bowers divide” (*Keble*).

Comp. Judg. v. 30.

13. “Though ye have lien,” &c. According to one explanation of this difficult passage, it describes the condition of the people resting in peace and prosperity after war; everything will be bright and glorious: “when ye (the men of Israel) lie down among the sheepfolds (that is, rest quietly in the soft pastures), then are the wings of the “dove covered with silver, and her feathers with glittering gold.” Israel was God’s turtle-dove (Ps. lxxiv. 19.), and her “new circumstances “of ease and comfort are likened to the various hues of a dove disporting itself in the sun.”

“If calm ye rest, the troughs (or pens) between,

“The folds beside:—a Dove behold,

“His plumes inlaid with silver sheen,

“His pinions of the pale pure gold” (*Keble*).

According to another explanation, it is a taunt addressed to some who had shrunk from the fight, in imitation of Deborah’s reproach to the Reubenites (Judg. v. 16.): “will ye lie down among the sheepfolds, “as the wings of a dove that is covered with silver, and her feathers “with yellow gold?” will ye leave the Lord’s battle to be fought by others, and wrap yourselves in comfort and splendour?

14. “In it.” That is, in the land, as in Isa. viii. 21; lxxv. 9. Or it may be rendered, “by it;” that is, using the host of Israel as His instrument.

“It was white as snow in Salmon.” Lit. “Thou makest it “snow,” or, “it snows.” Some think the meaning is, “When God willeth “to destroy kings in order to preserve His inheritance, He sendeth “hailstones and snow from heaven,” as in the battle of Beth-horon (Josh. x. 11.). Others again understand the snow as an image of the bright gleam of heaven falling on the darkened land; the condition of Israel after the discomfiture of its foes was “like a black forest of “pine-trees suddenly silvered over with a white mantle of snow”

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- 15 ¶ The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan ;
 an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan. u Ps. 114. 4, 6.
x Deut. 12. 5,
11.
1 Kin. 9. 3.
Ps. 87. 1, 2.
& 132. 13, 14.
y Deut. 33. 2.
2 Kin. 6. 16,
17.
Dan. 7. 10.
Heb. 12. 22.
Rev. 9. 16.
- 16 ^u Why leap ye, ye high hills ?
^x *This is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in ;
 yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever. z Acts 1. 9.
Eph. 4. 8.
a Judg. 5. 12.
- 17 ^y The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,
^z *even* thousands of angels :
 the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the ² Or,
 holy *place*. even *many*
thousands.
- 18 ^z Thou hast ascended on high, ^a thou hast led
 captivity captive :

(Wordsworth). Or the meaning may simply be, that the enemies of God melt away like the snow on Salmon, a low hill where snow is unusual, and where it would probably disappear immediately.

“Salmon” is the name of a hill near Shechem, so called, it is said, from its black, shady woods.

15—18. From the conquests achieved for His chosen in Canaan the Psalmist passes on to God’s choice of Zion as His dwelling-place, and His triumphal entry therein.

“The hill of God,” &c. Rather, “A mountain of God is the “mountain of Bashan ; a mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan.” The mountain range of Bashan, with its huge basaltic columns, giving an impression of great antiquity and durability, is represented as looking on lowly Zion with jealousy. “Bashan” is an emblem of the world and its power, standing gloomily aloof from the people of God.

16. “Why leap ye ?” Rather, “why do ye look askance ?” that is, with jealousy. God has not only chosen Zion as His dwelling-place, but He will dwell there for ever. However powerful and majestic the world may be, God will maintain the honour of His Church.

17. The God of Israel is here described as entering Zion with His Angel-hosts. The literal translation is, “The chariots of God are “myriads twice-told, thousands of repetition,” that is, thousands and again thousands, incalculable thousands (see Dan. vii. 10.). The Lord is among them, in the midst of them ; they are round about Him.

“As in Sinai.” The words “as in” are not in the Hebrew. The passage should be rendered either, “Sinai is in the sanctuary,” that is, the glory of Sinai is, as it were, transferred to Zion ; or, “it is Sinai “in holiness,” that is, the presence of God in Zion is as real and majestic as the spectacle presented at the giving of the law on Sinai.

“Silent waits

“All Sinai in the holy place” (Keble).

18. The primary reference may be to the capture of the stronghold of Zion, here spoken of as the act of God Himself (2 Sam. v. 6—10.) ; but more probably to the ascent of the Ark thither (2 Sam. vi. 12—19.). God and His heavenly train are represented as moving in triumph to Zion, and leading His enemies as captives.

“On high.” This may mean heaven, as in Ps. vii. 7 ; xviii. 16 ; xvii. 5 ; xciii. 4 ; but the same word is applied to Zion (Jer. xxxi. 12. Ezek. xvii. 23 ; xx. 40.).

PSALMS, LXVIII.

^b Acts 2. 4, 33.
² Heb.
in the man.
^c 1 Tim. 1. 13.
^d Ps. 78. 60.

^b thou hast received gifts ² for men ;
 yea, *for* ^c the rebellious also, ^d that the LORD
 God might dwell *among them*.

19 ¶ Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with*
benefits,
even the God of our salvation. Selah.

^e Deut. 32. 33.
 Prov. 4. 23.
 Rev. 1. 18.
 & 20. 1.

20 *He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation ;
 and ^e unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from
 death.

“Thou hast led captivity captive,” i. e. led captive the vanquished (Judg. v. 12.).

“Thou hast received gifts for men.” Rather, “among men” (Ps. lxxviii. 60.), or, “consisting of men” (Num. viii. 17 ; xviii. 15.).

“Yea, for the rebellious also.” Rather, “and even among the “rebellious ones,” or “of the rebellious,” who have become the vassals of the conqueror. Or the words may be joined with the following clause, “that even the rebellious may be for the Lord God to dwell “among.”

Here we reach the highest point of the Psalm. He Who has led His people through the wilderness and overthrown their enemies, sits enthroned in triumph on Zion. So Christ, having broken the power of death and spoiled principalities and powers (Col. ii. 15.), ascended into heaven, laden with choicest gifts, which He bestows on His people, even on those who were once rebellious. See Eph. iv. 8, where St. Paul refers to this passage, and interprets it in the light of Christ’s Ascension: instead of “Thou hast received gifts for men,” St. Paul has “gave gifts unto men.” Christ’s victory was not for Himself, but for men.

19. The Psalmist here interrupts the description of God’s triumphal march to Zion by a burst of praise to Him Who has wrought so signally for His people.

“Daily.” Some join this with the first clause as in the Prayer Book, “Praised be the Lord daily:” the rest of the verse may then be rendered, “if any lay a burden on us, our God is our salvation,” or “He beareth our burden for us, the God Who is our salvation.”

“Praise to the Lord from day to day.

“Who bears our burthen on the way” (*Keble*).

But it may very well be taken as in the Bible Version, “Blessed be the “Lord; day by day doth He bear our burden, the God Who is our “salvation.” The mighty Conqueror, even in His triumph, feels for the daily trials and sorrows of His people, and helps them to bear them. See St. Matt. viii. 17, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our “sicknesses” (Heb. ii. 18 ; iv. 15.).

“Selah.” “The same thought, which is emphasized by the music, “is repeated in the next verse with heightened expression.”

20. “The issues,” i. e. the means of escape. Even when destruction seems inevitable, the mercy and power of God can and do open a way of escape.

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- 21 But ^f God shall wound the head of his enemies, ^f Ps. 110. 6.
^e and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on ^{Hab.} 3. 13.
still in his trespasses. ^g Ps. 55. 23.
- 22 The Lord said, I will bring ^h again from ^h Num. 21. 33.
Bashan,
I will bring *my people* again ⁱ from the depths ⁱ Ex. 14. 22.
of the sea :
- 23 ^k that thy foot may be ² dipped in the blood of ^k Ps. 58. 10.
thine enemies, ² Or, red.
¹ and the tongue of thy dogs in the same. ¹ 1 Kin. 21. 19.
- 24 ¶ They have seen thy goings, O God ;
even the goings of my God, my King, in the
sanctuary.
- 25 ^m The singers went before, the players on ^m 1 Chr. 13. 8.
instruments *followed* after ; ^{& 15. 16.}
among *them were* the damsels playing with ^{Ps. 47. 5.}
timbrels.

21—23. As His tenderness and grace to His people, so is His vengeance to His enemies.

21. "But." Rather, "yea, surely."

"Hairy scalp." A head with a luxuriant growth of hair ; here a token of arrogance and pride.

22. The Psalmist refers to a Divine utterance in confirmation of what he had just said of God's deliverance of His people.

"My people." These words, it will be observed, are not in the Hebrew. If the English Version is correct in taking Israel as the object of the verb, the meaning is, that even if another giant king of Bashan, or another Pharaoh were to arise, God would rescue His people from them as He had done before. But it seems more probable that not God's people but their enemies are here intended ; be they on the heights of Bashan, or in the profoundest depth of the sea, they shall not escape (comp. Amos ix. 3.).

23. Lit. "that thou mightest strike" (or, according to a conjectural reading, suggested by Ps. lviii. 10 and supported by the Greek and Latin Versions, "bathe") "thy foot in blood, that the tongue of thy "dogs (may have) its portion from the enemy."

"The tongue of thy dogs." A reference to the troops of hungry dogs, which in Eastern cities prowl about the fields and streets, and feed on dead bodies (see 1 Kings xiv. 11 ; xvi. 4 ; xxi. 19, 23 ; xxii. 38. 2 Kings ix. 10, 36.).

24. The Psalmist goes back to the procession to the sanctuary. "They (i. e. men in general, all the world) have seen Thy goings," i. e. His entry into Zion. The solemn procession with the Ark is looked on as an advance of God Himself, the King Who rules in holiness.

"In the sanctuary." Perhaps this should be rendered "in holiness," as in Ps. lxxvii. 13. Exod. xv. 11.

25. "Among them," &c. Rather, "in the midst of damsels beating

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- ² Or, ye that are of the fountain of Israel.
- ²⁶ Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, ² from ⁿ the fountain of Israel.
- ²⁷ There is ^o little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah ³ and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.
- ²⁸ Thy God hath ^p commanded thy strength : strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.
- ²⁹ Because of thy temple at Jerusalem ^q shall kings bring presents unto thee.
- ² Or, with their company.
- ^p So Ps. 42. 8.
- ^q 1 Kin. 10. 10, 24, 25. 2 Chr. 32. 23. Ps. 72. 10. & 76. 11. Is. 60. 16, 17.

“the timbrels.” Singers lead the way; then come the minstrels playing on the harp, preceded and followed by maidens beating the timbrels.

“The singers lead the choral march,

“The minstrels close the train,

“The virgin timbrels all around

“Guide soft th’ harmonious strain” (*Keble*).

See Exod. xv. 1—20. The timbrel or tabret answers to the modern tambourine.

26. This may be either the very song of the women or the Psalmist’s call to them to sing.

“In the congregations.” That is, in full assemblies, in full choir.

“From the fountain of Israel.” Or, as in the margin, “Ye that are of the fountain of Israel.” From Israel, as from a fountain-head, the nation flowed (Isa. xlviii. 1.).

27. “Benjamin . . . Judah . . . Zebulun . . . Naphtali.” Benjamin and Judah represent the south; Zebulun and Naphtali the north. Zebulun and Naphtali are mentioned because they are specially praised in Deborah’s song (Judg. v. 18.).

“Little.” As the smallest tribe (1 Sam. ix. 21.).

“With their ruler.” Rather, as in the Prayer Book, simply “their ruler;” because from Benjamin came the first king.

“And their council.” There is no “and” in the Hebrew; “their company,” their mighty host; Judah being the most populous tribe.

28—35. The Psalmist looks beyond God’s mercies to Israel to the time when the Gentiles shall acknowledge Him: he first prays that the kingdom established on Mount Zion may be extended to all nations, and then he concludes with an earnest call to those nations to praise the God of Israel.

“Thy God hath commanded thy strength.” Addressed to Israel. God, Who has all power, has given to Israel power over the world. Knowing that He alone can keep them in the height to which they have been raised, the Psalmist prays that He would strengthen and confirm His work.

“Commanded.” Or, “ordained” (Ps. xlii. 8; xliv. 4. Lev. xxv. 21. Deut. xxviii. 8. Ps. cxxxiii. 3.).

Many of the older Versions change the reading, and translate, “O God, command Thy strength.”

29. “Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem,” i.e. more exactly,

PSALMS, LXVIII.

- 30 Rebuke ² the company of spearmen,
^r the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of
the people,
till every one ^s submit himself with pieces of
silver :
³ scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.
- 31 ^t Princes shall come out of Egypt ;
^u Ethiopia shall soon ^x stretch out her hands
unto God.
- 32 ¶ Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth ;
O sing praises unto the Lord ; Selah :
- 33 to him ^y that rideth upon the heavens of
heavens, *which were* of old ;
lo, ^z he doth ⁴ send out his voice, *and that* a
mighty voice.
- 34 ^a Ascribe ye strength unto God :
his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is*
in the ⁵ clouds.
- ² Or,
*the beasts of
the reeds,*
Jer. 51. 32, 33.
^r Ps. 22. 12.
^s 2 Sam. 8. 2, 6.
- ³ Or, *he
scattereth.*
^t Is. 19. 19, 21.
^u Ps. 72. 9.
Isai. 45. 14.
Zeph. 3. 10.
Acts 8. 27.
^x Ps. 41. 20.
- ^y Ps. 18. 10-
& 104. 3.
ver. 4.
^z Ps. 29. 3, &c.
⁴ Heb. give.
- ^a Ps. 29. 1.
- ⁵ Or,
heavens.

“on account of Thy temple which soars above Jerusalem.” Some translate “out of;” “beginning from Thy temple at Jerusalem shall “kings bring gifts to Thee” (comp. St. Luke xxiv. 47.). The Psalmist sees the nations bowing down before the God of Israel, and he prays that His dominion may spread.

30. “Rebuke,” i. e. “put down,” as in Ps. ix. 5; lxxx. 16. Zech. iii. 2.

“The company of spearmen.” Rather, as in margin, “the beasts of “the reeds,” meaning the crocodile or the hippopotamus (Job xl. 21.), as symbolising Egypt.

“The multitude of the bulls,” i. e. the kings and chiefs, while the calves are the people over whom they rule. May the proud powers of the world come bending before Thee, and offering their choicest treasures!

“With pieces of silver.” As tribute-money to the conqueror.

“Scatter.” Rather, “He has scattered.” There is a wide leap here from the language of prayer in the early part of the verse. The Psalmist sees his prayer fulfilled.

“’Tis done; behold them scatter’d wide
“The tribes that joy in war” (*Kēble*).

All resistance is quelled, and there is peace.

31. See Isa. xix. 19—21; xlv. 14.

32. The Psalmist does not stop with contemplating Egypt and Ethiopia, conspicuous as they were as examples; he sees all the kingdoms of the earth surrendering themselves to God, and he calls on them to praise Him.

33. “His voice,” i. e. His thunder. God’s voice is a voice of power, which thunders down all that opposes Him.

PSALMS, LXIX.

^b Ps. 45. 4.
& 65. 5.
& 66. 5.
& 76. 12.

35 O God, ^b *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places:
the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people.
Blessed *be* God.

PSALM LXIX.

¹ *David complaineth of his affliction. 13 He prayeth for deliverance. 22 He devoteth his enemies to destruction. 30 He praiseth God with thanksgiving.*

² Ps. 45, title.

To the chief Musician ² upon Shoshannim,
A Psalm of David.

^a ver. 2, 14, 15.
Jonah 2. 5.

1 **S**AVE me, O God;
for ^a the waters are come in unto *my* soul.

35. This may be taken as the answer of the kingdoms of the earth to the call made to them to praise God. Addressing Israel they say, "Terrible is God out of thy holy places." The power of Jehovah is regarded as issuing from the sanctuary. The plural is used to express the various parts of the building; as in Ps. lxxiii. 17; Jer. li. 51.

The first half of the Psalm closed with Jehovah's triumphant Ascension; the second closes with the results of His victory and triumph, which embrace the whole world. That which is the subject of the Apocalypse, the taking up of the kingdoms of the world into the kingdom of God, is the subject also of this Psalm. Its anticipations therefore have their complete fulfilment in the Holy Catholic Church; and on that account it is appointed as one of the Psalms for Whitsun-day, the birthday of the Church.

PSALM LXIX.

The prayer of a righteous sufferer, rising from complaint and imprecation to hope and joy.

The various points of similarity between this Psalm and Pss. xxii., xxxv., xl., and cix., seem to shew that they were all written by the same person. The inscriptions assign them to David; and this particular Psalm is expressly quoted by St. Paul (Rom. xi. 9.) as David's (comp. with ver. 32 Ps. xxii. 26; with vv. 22—25 Ps. xxxv. 4—6; with ver. 2 Ps. xl. 2; with ver. 4 Ps. xl. 12; with ver. 10 Ps. cix. 24, 25.). It is impossible however to determine at what particular period of David's life it was written, whether during his persecution by Saul, or Absalom's rebellion, or the rising under Adonijah; perhaps the latest date is the most likely. By many the Psalm is ascribed to Jeremiah; it is even thought that it is the prayer to which he alludes in Lam. iii. 55 (see Jer. xxxviii. 1—6.). Certainly there are many coincidences of expression between this Psalm and the writings of Jeremiah (comp. e.g. with ver. 2 Lam. iii. 54; with vv. 7, 9 Jer. xv. 15; with ver. 8 Jer. xi. 18—23; with ver. 12 Lam. iii. 14; with ver. 21 Lam. iii. 5, 15.).

The Psalm was written by one in great trouble, suffering undeserved persecution, who, though deeply conscious of sin, is satisfied that it is his faithfulness to God which has brought his sorrows upon him. After

PSALMS, LXIX.

- 2 ^b I sink in ² deep mire, where *there is* no ^b Ps. 40. 2.
 standing : ² Heb.
 I am come into ³ deep waters, where the floods ^{the mire of}
 overflow me. ^{depth.}
³ Heb. *depth*
^c I am weary of my crying : my throat is dried : ^c Ps. 6. 6.
^d mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. ^d Ps. 119. 82,
 123.
 4 They that ^e hate me without a cause are more ^e Isai. 33. 14.
 than the hairs of mine head : ^e Ps. 35. 19.
 they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies ^{John 15. 25.}
 wrongfully, are mighty :
 then I restored *that* which I took not away.

a pathetic description of his sufferings, and especially of the persecutions he had to undergo, he appeals earnestly to the Avenger of men not to abandon him to his fate, but to recompense to his enemies the evil which they had done to him ; and then, recalling once more his afflicted condition, he concludes with the expression of his firm belief that he should not only be delivered himself, but that all who were like him in affliction would have cause to rejoice with him, for that God would save Zion and build the cities of Judah.

There are no less than five distinct references to this Psalm in the New Testament ; (i.) Our Saviour says (St. John xv. 25.) that the hatred of His enemies was a fulfilment of ver. 4 ; (ii.) when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, His disciples were reminded of ver. 9 ; (iii.) St. Paul (Rom. xv. 3.) refers to another part of ver. 9 ; (iv.) St. Paul says (Rom. xi. 9, 10.) that the rejection of Israel was the fulfilment of vv. 22, 23 ; (v.) the imprecation in ver. 25 is said to have been fulfilled in Judas Iscariot (Acts i. 20.). Besides these express references, we are reminded in ver. 21 of the vinegar and gall given to Christ upon the Cross (St. Matt. xxvii. 34. St. John xix. 28, 29.).

1—4. Out of deep distress, the work of His enemies, the Psalmist cries for help. The waters are a figure of calamities which come in like a flood, and carry him away with them. It occurs frequently in David's Psalms : see, e. g. Ps. xviii. 4 ; xxxii. 6 ; xlii. 7.

"Unto my soul," i. e. so as to imperil his life (Jer. iv. 10. Jonah ii. 5.).

3. He continued crying until he was exhausted ; his throat was parched, and his eyes grew dim. But though his bodily senses failed, his faith continued bright and strong ; he still waited for his God.

4. There is a similar complaint of the multitude of his enemies in Ps. xxxviii. 19 ; and of the groundlessness of their hatred in Ps. xxxv. 19 ; cix. 3.

"Then I restored that which I took not away." Apparently a proverbial expression, meaning that he suffered for wrong which he had never done (see Jer. xv. 10. Ps. xxxv. 11.).

"Then I, to stay their proud rebuke,
 "Repay the spoil I never took" (Keble).

As Christ has applied part of this verse to Himself (St. John xv. 25.), we may perhaps hear His voice throughout the early part of the Psalm, crying out in anguish, praying for deliverance, but still reposing with

² Heb.
guiltiness.

- 5 ¶ O God, thou knowest my foolishness ;
and my ² sins are not hid from thee.
- 6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of
hosts, be ashamed for my sake :
let not those that seek thee be confounded for
my sake, O God of Israel.
- 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach ;
shame hath covered my face.
- 8 ^f I am become a stranger unto my brethren,
and an alien unto my mother's children.
- 9 ^g For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ;
^h and the reproaches of them that reproached
thee are fallen upon me.

^f Ps. 31. 11.
Isai. 53. 3.
John 1. 11.
& 7. 5.

^g Ps. 119. 139.
John 2. 17.

^h See Ps. 89.
50, 51.
Rom. 15. 3.

patient trust upon His God and Father (see St. John xii. 27. Heb. v. 7.). The mere human sufferer could not but remember his sins (ver. 5.), and see in his sufferings their punishment : such penitential confessions shew that the Psalm is the outpouring of the writer's inmost heart. From the nature of the case they could have no place on Christ's lips ; but that is no hindrance to our seeing in David, as a sufferer, though not as a sinner, a representative of the Great Sufferer.

5—12. Though his sufferings were undeserved at the hands of man, he acknowledges fully his sin against God ; only he prays that no discouragement might come to the godly through him, as would be the case if he were abandoned to destruction, because it was really on account of his zeal for God and for His house, that he encountered so much enmity.

5. There is the same transition from complaining of his sufferings to confession of sin in Ps. xl. 12.

6. Perhaps the thought is, that the faithful would be taunted with David's sin, and so brought to shame : David deprecates this, on the ground that, sinner as he was, it was for righteousness' sake that he suffered. Or he may mean, that inasmuch as his sin had been pardoned, and he was known as a true servant of God, those who trusted in God would be discouraged if he were left to perish.

7. See Ps. xliv. 13. Jer. xv. 15.

8. A like complaint of the estrangement of his kindred is made in Ps. xxxi. 11 ; xxxviii. 11 ; both David's Psalms. Compare what is said of Christ (St. John i. 11 ; vii. 5.).

9. This zeal for God's house was especially characteristic of David's later years, and we can well conceive that he was taunted for his devotion to religious exercises and his profuse preparations for the building of the Temple. The malice of those who were estranged from God was concentrated on him. In their truest sense the words belong to Christ : none was ever so filled with burning zeal for the honour of God and His worship (St. John ii. 17.) ; none ever so identified himself with God as to refuse all self-pleasing, and to be willing to allow the reproaches of the ungodly (Rom. xv. 3.).

“ I pine with zeal of Thine abode,

“ Scorned by the scorners of my God ” (*Keble*).

PSALMS, LXIX.

- 10 ⁱ When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with ⁱ Ps. 35. 13, fasting, ^{14.}
that was to my reproach.
- 11 I made sackcloth also my garment ;
^k and I became a proverb to them. ^k 1 Kin. 9. 7.
^{Jer. 24. 9.}
- 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me ;
and ¹ I was the song of the ² drunkards. ¹ Job 30. 9.
^{Ps. 35. 15, 16.}
² Heb. *drinkers of strong drink.*
- 13 ¶ But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee,
O LORD, ^m *in* an acceptable time : ^m Isai. 49. 8.
O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, ² Cor. 6. 2.
in the truth of thy salvation.
- 14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink :
ⁿ let me be delivered from them that hate me, ⁿ Ps. 144. 7.
and out of ^o the deep waters. ^o ver. 1, 2, 15.
- 15 Let not the waterflood overflow me,
neither let the deep swallow me up,
and let not the pit ^p shut her mouth upon me. ^p Num. 16. 33.
- 16 Hear me, O LORD ; ^q for thy lovingkindness *is* ^q Ps. 63. 3.
good :
^r turn unto me according to the multitude of thy ^r Ps. 25. 16.
tender mercies. ^{& 86. 16.}
- 17 And ^s hide not thy face from thy servant ;
for I am in trouble : ³ hear me speedily. ^s Ps. 27. 9.
^{& 102. 2.}
- 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, *and* redeem it :
deliver me because of mine enemies. ³ Heb. *make haste to hear me.*

10. The Psalmist did not shrink from publicly expressing his grief for the dishonour done to God and His house ; he wept and fasted and wore sackcloth ; but he met with nothing but ridicule and reviling from all classes, and in all companies, grave or gay.

12. "They that sit in the gate." The rulers and magistrates (Deut. xxv. 7. Job v. 4 ; xxix. 7. Lam. v. 14.).

"The song." Job xxx. 9. Lam. iii. 14.

13. So in Ps. cix. 4, he opposes his constancy in prayer to the reproaches of his enemies.

"In an acceptable time." David is confident that the present time, when he was suffering as a witness for God, was a time when God would be sure to hear him.

"In the truth of Thy salvation." So as to prove the truth of His promises of salvation.

14, 15. The same figures as in vv. 1, 2, only there David is describing his condition ; here he prays for deliverance, and cherishes the hope that his prayer will be granted.

18. "Because of mine enemies." That is, lest they exult over him (Ps. xiii. 4 ; xxvii. 11.).

PSALMS, LXIX.

- ^t Ps. 22. 6, 7. 19 Thou hast known ^t my reproach, and my shame,
^{Isai. 53. 3.} and my dishonour :
^{Heb. 12. 2.} mine adversaries *are* all before thee.
- 20 Reproach hath broken my heart ; and I am full
 of heaviness :
 and ^u I looked *for some* ² to take pity, but *there*
^v *was* none ;
² Heb. *to lament*
^{to lament} and for ^x comforters, but I found none.
- ³ Job 16. 2. 21 They gave me also gall for my meat ;
^y and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to
^z drink.
- ^z Rom. 11. 9, 10. 22 ¶ ^z Let their table become a snare before them :
 and *that which should have been* for their
 welfare, *let it become* a trap.

19—21. This mention of his enemies leads the Psalmist to lay aside all metaphors, and to speak plainly of their malice and cruelty ; God knew all the anguish and desolation which he suffered. His words look beyond himself, and find their true fulfilment in the sinless Sufferer, of Whom David was a type. It was *His* heart that was broken by reproach, *He* Who was full of heaviness, Who could find no sympathy, but only mockery, gall to eat, and vinegar to drink.

To give wormwood for food and water of gall for drink, is a metaphorical expression, occurring in Jeremiah (viii. 14 ; ix. 15 ; xxiii. 15. Lam. iii. 15, 19.), for inflicting pain and anguish.

21. "Vinegar." Acid to a proverb (Prov. x. 26 ; xxv. 20.). See also Deut. xxix. 18. Amos v. 7 ; vi. 12.

The words were fulfilled, both metaphorically and literally, when Christ was on the Cross (St. Matt. xxvii. 34. St. John xix. 29.).

22—28. There is no malice or selfish animosity in these imprecations. It is the dishonour to God and his own keen sense of the malignant cruelty of his enemies that fires the Psalmist, and urges him to call for speedy and complete retribution. As it was due to God's justice to inflict vengeance, so it was not only permissible for him, but his duty, to desire that vengeance (see 2 Chron. vi. 23.).

22, 23. These two verses are referred to by St. Paul, as proving that the bulk of the people of Israel would be hardened, and only a remnant chosen. The quotation is not taken exactly either from the Hebrew or the Greek Version, though agreeing more nearly with the latter. It is probably for the sake of the latter of the two verses, that the passage is quoted by St. Paul.

22. It was fitting that the form of the punishment should correspond with the sin. The Psalmist therefore prays that, as his enemies had given him gall and vinegar, so their table, spread for enjoyment, might minister to their ruin, and as with their eyes they had gloated over his sufferings, and with the strength of their loins had ill-treated him, so their eyes might be blinded and their strength destroyed.

"Before them," i. e. as it lies spread out before them ; in the very midst of their feasting.

"And that which should have been," &c. Rather, "and a trap to

PSALMS, LXIX.

- 23 ^a Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not ;
and make their loins continually to shake. ^a Isai. 6. 9, 10.
John 12. 39,
40.
Rom. 11. 10.
2 Cor. 3. 14.
- 24 ^b Pour out thine indignation upon them,
and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. ^b 1 Thes. 2. 16.
^c Matt. 23. 38.
Act's 1. 20.
- 25 ^c Let ² their habitation be desolate ;
and ³ let none dwell in their tents. ² Heb. *their
palace.*
- 26 For ^d they persecute ^e *him* whom thou hast
smitten ; ³ Heb. *let
there not be
a dweller.*
and they talk to the grief of ⁴ those whom thou
hast wounded. ^d See 2 Chr.
28. 9.
Zech. 1. 15.
^e Isai. 53. 4.
- 27 ^f Add ⁵ iniquity unto their iniquity :
^g and let them not come into thy righteousness. ⁴ Heb. *thy
wounded.*
^f Rom. 1. 28.
^g Isai. 26. 10. Rom. 9. 31.

⁵ Or, *punishment of iniquity.* ^g Isai. 26. 10. Rom. 9. 31.

“them in their security ;” i. e. when they were in peace and unsuspecting ; that when they were feasting themselves without fear, vengeance might overtake them at their board. The Greek Version has “for retributions.”

23. That is, May the understandings which conceived such wickedness as they have designed be darkened, and may their limbs be unable to execute it (see Isa. vi. 10. Nahum ii. 10.).

24. The Psalmist prays that God will openly display against the wicked the indignation with which He is moved (Ps. vii. 11, where the same word is used) every day, even to their complete destruction (see next verse).

25. The fall of the house and ruin of the homestead would be in the East the greatest possible calamity. It is possible that our Lord had this passage in mind when He said to the Jews, “Behold your house is left “unto you desolate” (St. Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.). We dare not indeed put the Psalmist’s words into the mouth of Him, Who, so far from calling down vengeance on His persecutors, prayed for them ; but as the Prince of righteous sufferers, He recognized the justice of the Divine retribution on the Jewish nation, as St. Peter did subsequently in the case of Judas (Acts i. 20.).

26. This is the special aggravation of the wickedness of these wicked men ; they persecute one who is already smitten of God. Instead of pitying him in his sufferings, they increase them to the utmost.

“They talk to the grief.” Rather, “tell of the grief.” There are a few, not many, who share the Psalmist’s persecution ; their sorrows also these wicked men delight to count over. Christ’s enemies rejoiced in His sufferings : they only persecuted Him the more, because it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.

27. “Add iniquity,” &c. This need not be understood to mean, that God should add to the iniquities which they had committed others of which they were as yet guiltless. The literal meaning of the word translated “add” is “give,” i. e. put, set ; and the clause may well be rendered, “O set the stamp of guilt upon their guilt,” may the crimes which have been so long unpunished be now visited as they deserve (see margin). The prayer of the next clause is to the same purport, that being what they are, they may not be accounted righteous. It would be

PSALMS, LXIX.

- ^h Ex. 32. 32. 28 Let them ^h be blotted out of the book of the
 Phil. 4. 3. living,
 Rev. 3. 5. and not be written with the righteous.
 & 13. 8.
- ⁱ Ezek. 13. 9. 29 ¶ But I *am* poor and sorrowful :
 Luke 10. 20. let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.
 Heb. 12. 23.
- ^k Ps. 28. 7. 30 ^k I will praise the name of God with a song,
 and will magnify him with thanksgiving.
- ^l Ps. 50. 13, 14, 23. 31 ^l *This* also shall please the LORD better than
 an ox
 or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
- ^m Ps. 34. 2. 32 ^m The ² humble shall see *this*, and be glad :
 2 Or, meek. and ⁿ your heart shall live that seek God.
- ⁿ Ps. 22. 26. 33 For the LORD heareth the poor,
 o Eph. 3. 1. and despiseth not ^o his prisoners.
- ^p Ps. 96. 11. & 148. 1. 34 ^p Let the heaven and earth praise him,
 Isai. 44. 23. and 49. 13. the seas, ^q and every thing that ³ moveth therein.
- ^q Isai. 55. 12. 3 Heb. *creepeth*.

injurious to religion and morality that their evil deeds should be passed over.

28. "The book of the living." That is, the register of God's covenant people (see Isa. iv. 3. Ezek. xiii. 9. Dan. xii. 1.). To be blotted out of the book of the living means therefore to forfeit the privileges of God's people, to be shut out of His favour; but only with reference to this present life. It is only in the New Testament that we meet with the book of life as a list of the names of the heirs of everlasting life (St. Luke x. 20. Phil. iv. 3. Rev. iii. 5.). The prayer of this verse is in effect, that the wicked may be cut off, and not dealt with as if they were righteous.

29—36. In contrast to his enemies, outwardly prosperous, but soon to be brought low, the Psalmist sets forth his own misery, soon however to pass away; and in joyful confidence he begins to tune his heart for praise.

29. "But I." The pronoun is emphatic; "as for me:" in marked contrast with those who deserved execration.

31. "That hath horns and hoofs." That is, more than three years old, and dividing the hoof, and therefore ceremonially clean (Lev. xi. 3.). The sacrifice of a grateful heart is more acceptable than the most perfect offering prescribed by the law.

32. The blessed effects of his deliverance will extend to others. The verse might be rendered, "The humble have seen it, and they shall rejoice; ye that seek the Lord, let your heart revive" (Ps. xxii. 26.).

34. The Psalmist calls on all created things to give praise to God, Who will preserve Zion and the cities of Judah, and grant them as a perpetual possession to His people. This desire for the security and well-being of his kingdom would suit very well with the later years of David's life (comp. Ps. li. 18.). If the Psalm is Jeremiah's, the closing verses would be an anticipation of the return from exile.

The writer of this Psalm, whether David or Jeremiah, was not only

PSALMS, LXX.

- 35 ^r For God will save Zion,
and will build the cities of Judah : r Ps. 51. 18.
Isai. 44. 26.
that they may dwell there, and have it in
possession.
- 36 ^s The seed also of his servants shall inherit it : s Ps. 102. 28.
and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

PSALM LXX.

David soliciteth God to the speedy destruction of the wicked, and preservation of the godly.

To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David,
² to bring to remembrance.

2 Ps. 38, title.

- 1 **M**AKE haste, ^a O God, to deliver me ;
make haste ³ to help me, O LORD. a Ps. 40. 13.
&c. & 71. 12.
- 2 ^b Let them be ashamed and confounded that 3 Heb.
to my help.
b Ps. 35. 4, 26.
& 71. 13.
seek after my soul :
let them be turned backward, and put to con-
fusion, that desire my hurt.
- 3 ^c Let them be turned back for a reward of their c Ps. 40. 15.
shame
that say, Aha, aha.

unjustly persecuted, but persecuted for righteousness' sake ; he was a martyr therefore in the true sense of the word, and, as such, eminently a type of Christ. But the Psalm is not merely typical ; Almighty God has so guided the mind of the writer, that his words are in many places a prophecy of the life and sufferings of Christ. If there are parts of the Psalm which are unsuitable to the Christian sufferer, it is because Christ Himself has taught us to look upon persecution in a different point of view from that in which the saints of old regarded it. Persecution, to the Christian, is not merely an infringement of God's justice, and rebellion against His authority, demanding therefore signal and speedy retribution. Rather it is a blessed means of union with Christ and a partaking of His sufferings ; as He Himself has said, " Blessed are they " which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ; for theirs is the kingdom " of heaven " (St. Matth. v. 10).

PSALM LXX.

A fragment of Ps. xl., being a reproduction with a few variations of vv. 13—17 of that Psalm. It was probably detached for liturgical purposes ; whether by David himself, or later, is uncertain. The name Elohim is in some places substituted for Jehovah.

" To bring to remembrance." See on Ps. xxxviii.

This Psalm, like the thirty-eighth, was appointed to be said as a prayer at the offering of the meat offering, which was specially presented " for a memorial."

The first verse, divided into Versicle and Response, " O God, make speed to save us ; " " O Lord, make haste to help us," is recited at the beginning of our Morning and Evening Service. Day by day we are thus reminded that we are in the midst of enemies, and we earnestly entreat God's speedy help.

PSALMS, LXXI.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad
in thee:
and let such as love thy salvation say con-
tinually,

let God be magnified.

^a Ps. 40. 17.
^e Ps. 141. 1.

5 ^d But I *am* poor and needy: ^e make haste unto
me, O God:
thou *art* my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, make no tarrying.

PSALM LXXI.

1 *David, in confidence of faith, and experience of God's favour, prayeth both for himself, and against the enemies of his soul. 14 He promiseth constancy. 17 He prayeth for perseverance. 19 He praiseth God, and promiseth to do it cheerfully.*

^a Ps. 25. 2, 3.
& 31. 1.

1 **I** ^a N^a thee, O LORD, do I put my trust:
let me never be put to confusion.

^b Ps. 31. 1.

2 ^b Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me
to escape:

^c Ps. 17. 6.

^c incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

^d Ps. 31. 2, 3.

² Heb. *Be
thou to me
for a rock of
habitation.*

3 ^d ² Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I
may continually resort:

PSALM LXXI.

Prayer of an aged servant of God for a continuance of the aid which has been vouchsafed to him through life.

There is no inscription in the Hebrew: in the Septuagint the title is "A Psalm of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first "led captive," implying that the Psalm, originally David's, was much used by the Rechabites and the captives in Babylon. If it is David's, it belongs to the close of his life—probably to the time of Adonijah's revolt. It is to a great extent an echo of former Psalms (xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xl.); David takes up his former words, and adapts them to his altered circumstances. It is possible that in its present state, it is by the hand of Jeremiah, being called David's by the Greek Version, because it is to so great an extent compiled of Psalms which are undoubtedly his.

It consists of two main divisions; in the first, vv. 1—13, the Psalmist is encouraged to pray for deliverance on the ground of God's past favours; in the second, vv. 14 to the end, he promises praise and thanksgiving on account of the triumph which he is confident will be given him in answer to his prayers.

This Psalm is appropriately inserted in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick, teaching, as it does, the sufferer, and especially the aged sufferer, how he may be patient in tribulation and joyful in hope, by remembering the grace which he has experienced in the past, and by looking forward to the life of praise which lies before him in the future.

1—3. Taken, with slight alterations, from Ps. xxxi. 1—3.

3. "**My strong habitation.**" Or, as in margin, "a rock of habitation," that is, a high rock which cannot be scaled, and therefore

PSALMS, LXXI.

- thou hast given ^e commandment to save me ; • Ps. 44. 4.
 for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.
- 4 ^f Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ^r wicked, Ps. 140. 1, 4.
 out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel
 man.
- 5 For thou *art* ^s my hope, O Lord God : § Jer. 17. 7,
17.
thou art my trust from my youth.
- 6 ^h By thee have I been holden up from the ⁿ womb : h Ps. 22. 9, 10.
Isai. 46. 3.
 thou art he that took me out of my mother's
 bowels :
 my praise *shall be* continually of thee.
- 7 ⁱ I am as a wonder unto many ;—but thou *art* ⁱ my strong refuge. i Isai. 8. 18.
Zech. 3. 8.
I Cor. 4. 9.
- 8 Let ^k my mouth be filled *with* thy praise k Ps. 35. 28.
and with thy honour all the day.
- 9 ^l Cast me not off in the time of old age ; l ver. 18.

affording a safe abode (Ps. xc. 1 ; xci. 9.). Deut. xxxiii. 27 : “The eternal God is thy refuge,” rather, “dwelling-place.”

“Whereunto I may continually resort.” This answers to “for an house of defence to save me” in Ps. xxxi. 2.

“My home to hide in day and night” (*Keble*).

“Thou hast given commandment,” i. e. unalterably ordained ; as in Ps. xlv. 4 ; lxxviii. 28 ; cxxxiii. 3.

5. “My hope.” See Jer. xvii. 13 ; 1. 7. 1 Tim. i. 1. Col. i. 27.

6. “Have I been holden up.” Rather, “on Thee have I been stayed, supported” (see Ps. xxii. 9, 10.).

“On Thee with all my weight I lie,

“Even from the birth” (*Keble*).

“Thou art He that took me.” “Separated me.” Comp. Gal. i. 15. Others render, “my benefactor,” “my protector,” “my reliance.”

7. “As a wonder.” According to the immediate context, it would seem that the Psalmist has in view the marvellous protection that had been vouchsafed to him, on account of which many looked on him with astonishment (Ps. xl. 3, 5.) ; in which case we should read “and” for “but” in the second clause. But it is possible, taking into account the stand-point of the whole Psalm, that it may be his remarkable sufferings which caused him to be regarded as a wonder—as one singularly honoured, and yet so strangely afflicted.

8. This verse might be rendered, “My mouth is,” or, “shall be,” “filled with Thy praise.” In any case it expresses the Psalmist's resolve to pour himself out continually in thankful acknowledgment for God's past mercy, while at the same time he prays that He Who had watched over him so long, would not forsake him now that old age was approaching.

9. “Cast me not off.” That is, from Thy Presence, which is

forsake me not when my strength faileth.

- 10 For mine enemies speak against me ;
and they that ²lay wait for my soul ^mtake
counsel together,
- ² Heb. *watch,*
or, *observe.*
^m 2 Sam. 17. 1.
Matt. 27. 1.
- 11 saying, God hath forsaken him :
persecute and take him ; for *there is* none to
deliver *him*.
- ⁿ Ps. 32. 11,
19. & 35. 22.
& 38. 21, 22.
- 12 ⁿ O God, be not far from me :
O my God, ^omake haste for my help.
- ^o Ps. 70. 1.
- 13 ^p Let them be confounded *and* consumed that
are adversaries to my soul ;
let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour
that seek my hurt.
- ^p ver. 24.
Ps. 35. 4, 26.
& 40. 14.
& 70. 2.
- 14 ¶ But I will hope continually,
and will yet praise thee more and more.
- ^q ver. 8, 24.
Ps. 35. 28.
- 15 ^q My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness
and thy salvation all the day ;
for ^r I know not the numbers *thereof*.
- ^r Ps. 40. 5. &
139. 17, 18.
- 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God :
I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even*
of thine only.
- 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth :
and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous
works.
- ^s ver. 9.
- 18 ^s Now also ³when I am old and greyheaded,
O God, forsake me not ;
- ³ Heb. *unto*
old age and
grey hairs.

expressed in Ps. li. 11. Jer. vii. 15. He prays thus, because he was even then threatened by powerful enemies, who taunted him with his misfortunes, as a proof that God had abandoned him. There is no difficulty in applying this to the later years of David's life, which were full of trouble.

12, 13. For similar phrases in other Psalms, see marg. *reff.*

14. "But I." The pronoun is emphatic ; "but as for me." Confident that his prayer will be heard, he will hope on, and will ever find fresh ground for praise and thanksgiving.

15. "The numbers thereof." The proofs of God's righteousness and salvation are beyond the power of calculation (Ps. xl. 5 ; cxxxix. 17.).

16. "I will go." Rather, "I will come (Ps. lxxvi. 13.) with the "mighty acts of the Lord God ;" that is, I will enter Thy sanctuary with the praise of Thy mighty deeds.

17. "Thou hast taught me." Chiefly by His dealings with him. The acts of God's providence had taught him what God was, and what He required.

"Hitherto have I declared." Rather, "till now do I keep declaring."

18. "When I am old." Rather, as in margin, "even to old age

PSALMS, LXXI.

until I have shewed ²thy strength unto *this* ²Heb.
generation, *thine arm.*

and thy power to every one *that* is to come.

19 ^tThy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, ^tPs. 57. 10.
who hast done great things :

^uO God, who *is* like unto thee!

20 ^x*Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore
troubles, ^xPs. 60. 3.

^yshalt quicken me again, ^yHos. 6. 1, 2.
and shalt bring me up again from the depths of
the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness,
and comfort me on every side.

22 I will also praise thee ^{3z}with the psaltery,
even thy truth, O my God :

unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou
^aHoly One of Israel. ³Heb.
with the instrument of psaltery.
^zPs. 92. 1, 2, 3. & 150. 3.
^{a2}2 Kin. 19. 22. Isai. 60. 9.

“and grey hairs.” He is already old, and drawing near to hoary old age (comp. Isa. xlvi. 4.).

“Thy strength.” Lit. “Thy arm” (Isa. lii. 10 ; liii. 1. Ezek. iv. 7.). Thy protecting, guiding, fostering care (see Ps. xxii. 31.).

“Unto this generation.” Lit. “a generation,” i. e. the next (see Ps. xxii. 30.).

19—24. Contemplating the deliverance which he prayed for as already wrought, and anticipating the thanksgivings which he had vowed, he breaks forth into a loud song of praise.

“Who is like unto Thee?” Exod. xv. 11. Ps. xxxv. 10 ; lxxxix. 8. Jer. x. 6.

20. “Me.” Rather, according to the Hebrew text, “us.” He passes from God’s dealings with himself individually to His power and faithfulness, as exhibited to the whole nation ; the one was intimately interwoven with the other.

“The depths of the earth,” i. e. from extreme peril, like “the gates of death” in Ps. ix. 13.

21. “My greatness,” i. e. the dignity of his office.

“Comfort me on every side.” Rather, “will turn again and comfort me.”

22. “I will also.” The pronoun is again emphatic. The Psalmist also, on his part, will be very grateful for the signal favour shewn to himself and his people ; with joyful music he will praise God’s truth and faithfulness.

“O Thou Holy One of Israel.” A title found only in Ps. lxxxviii. 41 ; lxxxix. 18 ; but of frequent occurrence in Isaiah.

God’s word is pledged to save all who trust in Him. His faithfulness to this word is at once our prevailing plea in the hour of trouble, and our one absorbing subject for thanksgiving in the hour of deliverance. They who begin by praying, “Deliver me in Thy righteousness.” will end by exclaiming, “My tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long.”

PSALMS, LXXII.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee ;

^b Ps. 103. 4. and ^b my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

^c ver. 8, 15. 24 ^c My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long :

^d ver. 13. for ^d they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

PSALM LXXII.

1 *David, praying for Solomon, sheweth the goodness and glory of his, in type, and in truth, of Christ's kingdom. 18 He blesseth God.*

² Or, of.

³ Ps. 127, title.

A Psalm ^{2 3} for Solomon.

1 **G**IVE the king thy judgments, O God,
and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

^a Isai. 11. 2, 3, 4. & 32. 1. 2 ^a He shall judge thy people with righteousness,
and thy poor with judgment.

PSALM LXXII.

Prayer—which is also a vision—for the prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of God's Anointed.

The second book of the Psalter ends with this Psalm. The words appended to it, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," have led, not unnaturally, to the opinion that it was written by David ; but they probably only mean, that at the time when this collection was formed no more Psalms of David were known.

The title, though rendered in the Authorised Version "A Psalm for Solomon," might be also rendered "of Solomon," the preposition being the same as that which is used in the inscriptions of Psalms assigned to David.

It has been supposed that Solomon composed the Psalm early in his reign, as a prayer for his people to use in his behalf in the Temple service (comp. Pss. xx. and xxi.). At whatever time it was written, it is evident that Solomon here regards himself as a type of the Messiah. The wide and beneficial dominion, the plenteousness and peace anticipated in this Psalm, were partially fulfilled in Solomon ; but in their fulness they are realized only in Him Who is the Prince of peace, the One Almighty Deliverer Who can save to the uttermost, and Whose empire extends through all time and space.

1. "Thy judgments." That is, the decisions which the king would be called on to give as judge of the people. Solomon prays that these may be such as God Himself would give and in accordance with the Divine righteousness. Compare his prayer in 1 Kings iii. 9, "Give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people."

"The king's son" is the same person as the king. Solomon could not but regard it as a special plea that he was David's son.

2. The futures here and in the following verses are by some taken as optatives: "let him judge Thy people," &c. Some of them are certainly optatives, and therefore it seems natural to take them all as such. The Greek Versions however render them as futures, down to

PSALMS, LXXII.

- 3 ^b The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
and the little hills, by righteousness. ^b Ps. 85, 10.
Isai. 32, 17.
& 52, 7.
- 4 ^c He shall judge the poor of the people,
he shall save the children of the needy,
and shall break in pieces the oppressor. ^c Isai. 11, 4.
- 5 They shall fear thee ^d as long as the sun
and moon endure, throughout all generations. ^d ver. 7, 17.
Ps. 89, 36, 37.
- 6 ^e He shall come down like rain upon the mown
grass : ^e 2 Sam. 23, 4.
Hos. 6, 3.
as showers *that* water the earth. ^f Isai. 2, 4.
Dan. 2, 41.
Luke 1, 33.
- 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish ;
^f and abundance of peace ² so long as the moon
endureth. ² Heb.
till there be
no moon.
^g See Exod.
23, 31.
1 Kin. 4, 21,
24, Ps. 2, 8,
& 80, 11.
& 89, 25.
Zech. 9, 10.
- 8 ^g He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,

ver. 17. Probably the meaning is, that if only God will grant the prayer of the first verse, all these blessed results will follow ; the language of blessing and that of prediction seem to blend.

3. "Bring." That is, "bring forth" (as fruit), Ezek. xvii. 8. The whole land will be tranquil and prosperous, the result of the reign of righteousness (comp. Isa. xxxii. 16, 17.).

"By (rather, "in") righteousness." The two clauses supplement each other : "mountains and hills shall yield peace to the people in "righteousness." Peace is to be the yield of the world, but in righteousness.

4. "Children of the needy." Those who are born to poverty ; just as the king's son is one who is born a king.

5. "Fear Thee." That is, God. The righteous rule of the king will result in the increase of the fear of God. But this verse may be addressed to the king ; his readiness to crush the oppressor will obtain for him the unchangeable reverence of his subjects.

6. A meadow newly-mown, exposed to the heat of the sun, would soon dry up, unless refreshed by the rain. Solomon's righteous rule would, like the rain, be a refreshment and blessing to his people. David had before compared the prosperity of the righteous ruler to the tender grass springing out of the earth under the influence of sunshine and rain (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.). There is another interpretation of the word translated "mown grass." It literally means "that which "is shorn," and is used for "fleece" in Judg. vi. 37. Hence the older Versions translate here, "into a fleece of wool," as in the Prayer Book ; and the earlier commentators commonly explain it of the silence and secrecy of Christ's first Advent. But the word is applied to a meadow in Amos vii. 1. The figure has reference to the beneficent effect of Christ's coming rather than to its secrecy.

7. The figure of the last verse is carried on : as fruitfulness follows on rain, so shall righteousness and peace flourish (sprout out and bud) under him, whose coming is like the rain. Righteousness and peace are the special characteristics of the reign of the Messiah (Ps. lxxxv. 10.).

8—11. The dominion shall be as extensive as it is beneficent and lasting.

For the extent of Solomon's dominion, as fulfilling the promise in

PSALMS, LXXII.

and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

^h Ps. 74. 14. 9 ^h They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him ;

ⁱ Isai. 49. 23. ⁱ and his enemies shall lick the dust.

^k 2 Chr. 9. 21. 10 ^k The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents :

^l Ps. 45. 12. & 68. 29. the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

^l Isai. 49. 7. & 60. 6, 9. 11 ^l Yea, all kings shall fall down before him : all nations shall serve him.

^m Job 23. 12. 12 For he ^m shall deliver the needy when he crieth ;

the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence :

ⁿ Ps. 116. 15. and ⁿ precious shall their blood be in his sight.

Exod. xxiii. 31, see 2 Chron. ix. 26. The "sea," that is, the western sea, and "the river," the Euphrates, were definite points ; but the mention of another (eastern) sea and the expression "ends of the earth," shew that the writer's eye was really fixed on a boundless empire (Ps. ii. 8.). The prediction of the Psalmist is repeated by Zechariah (ix. 10.).

9. "They that dwell in the wilderness." The wild sons of the desert. The word is used sometimes of beasts as well as men.

"Lick the dust." Prostrate themselves to the very earth (comp. marg. reff.).

10. "Tarshish and the isles," i.e. Tartessus in the south of Spain, known to Solomon by its commerce with the Phœnicians, and the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean.

"Sheba." The inhabitants of Southern Arabia, descendants of Sheba, the son of Joktan, of the family of Shem (Gen. x. 28.). See 1 Kings x. 1.

"Seba" (a son of Cush, Gen. x. 7.) was a nation of Africa, bordering on, or included in, Cush, i.e. Ethiopia (see 1 Kings iv. 21 ; x. 10, 25.).

11. Not certain nations only, however divergent in character or position, but the whole world, will submit to this universal sway.

12—15. It is not the greatness of his power, but the fame of his justice and clemency, that will raise him to the dominion of the world. Consideration for the poor and helpless is a special proof of the integrity of a ruler (Job xxix. 12.).

14. "Precious shall their blood be in his sight." 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. 2 Kings i. 13. The lives of the poor, which too many Oriental rulers count of little value, will be carefully cherished by him ; if their blood is spilt, he will make much account of it (Ps. ix. 12 ; cxvi. 15.). Solomon's rule doubtless in his early years was just and beneficent ; but it is Christ's condescending sympathy with the poor and suffering, and especially with His martyred servants, that the Psalmist's words chiefly regard.

PSALMS, LXXII.

- 15 And he shall live, and to him ² shall be given of ³ Heb. one
the gold of Sheba : *shall give.*
prayer also shall be made for him continually ;
and daily shall he be praised.
- 16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth
upon the top of the mountains ; o 1 Kin. 4. 20.
the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon : p Ps. 89. 36.
^o and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of 3 Heb.
the earth. *shall be.*
4 Heb. shall
- 17 ^p His name ³ shall endure for ever : *be as a son*
⁴ his name shall be continued as long as the sun : *to continue*
his father's
name for
ever.

15. There is great uncertainty as to the subjects of the several verbs in this verse. The literal rendering is, "And he shall live, and he shall give to him of the gold of Seba, and he shall pray for him continually; he shall bless him every day." If we take the poor and afflicted man as the subject, the meaning will be that his life is preserved, and in gratitude he offers costly gifts, prays for his benefactor's prosperity, and blesses him continually. The subject, however, may be the king: "he shall live and prosper, and pour his gifts upon the afflicted, and make intercession for him unceasingly, and bless him at all times." Or the second clause may be taken impersonally, as suggested in the margin; He shall live, and one shall give to him of Seba's gold, and he shall make intercession for him continually; all day long shall he bless him.

"He lives, and to him gifts they bring

"Of Sheba's gold; and he will pray

"For them unwearied: our high King

"His awful blessing will breathe out all day" (*Keble*).

This rendering has been thus paraphrased: "He shall live on for ever, in the power of an endless life (Heb. vii. 16.); and men whom He has redeemed shall give to Him gifts more costly than that gold of Sheba which was given to Solomon; and, as Solomon made intercession for the people (1 Kings viii. 28, 29, 54.) and blessed them (*ib.* 55.) at the dedication of the Temple, so shall He make intercession for His redeemed continually, and bless them by night and by day; seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25.). *Kay*.

16. "An handful of corn." Rather, "abundance." The idea of this verse is, first, that of corn growing on successive terraces even to the tops of the hills, and waving up and down in the wind like the trees of Lebanon; and, secondly, that of a rapid and joyful increase of population. The populousness of Israel in the time of Solomon is especially noted (1 Kings iv. 20.). But the chief reference is to the reign of the Messiah (see Isa. xxvii. 6; xlix. 20. Zech. ii. 4.).

17. "Be continued." Lit. "be propagated," or, according to the Hebrew text as it stands, "propagate itself," be ever putting forth new shoots; gaining, generation after generation, a fresh accession of offspring. The rendering of the margin is thus paraphrased by Bishop Patrick, "His memory and fame shall never die, but be propagated from father to son, so long as the sun shall shine."

PSALMS, LXXIII.

- ^q Gen. 12. 3. and ^a *men* shall be blessed in him :
 & 22. 18. ^r all nations shall call him blessed.
 Jer. 4. 2.
^r Luke 1. 4^s. 18 ^a Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,
^s 1 Chr. 29. 10. ^t who only doeth wondrous things.
 Ps. 41. 13. & 106. 48.
^t Ex. 15. 11. 19 And ^u blessed *be* his glorious name for ever :
 Ps. 77. 14. & 136. 4. ^x and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory ;
 & 136. 4. Amen, and Amen.
^u Neh. 9. 5.
^x Num. 14. 21. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are
 Zech. 14. 9. ended.

PSALM LXXIII.

- 1 *The prophet, prevailing in a temptation, 2 sheweth the occasion thereof, the prosperity of the wicked. 13 The wound given thereby, diffidence. 15 The victory over it, knowledge of God's purpose, in destroying of the wicked, and sustaining the righteous.*
² Or, *A Psalm for Asaph.*
³ Ps. 50, title. ² A Psalm of ³ Asaph.
⁴ Or, *Yet.*
⁵ Heb. *clean of heart.*
 1 ⁴ **T**RULY God is good to Israel,
even to such as are ⁵ of a clean heart.

“**Shall be blessed.**” Lit. “shall bless themselves,” i. e. shall be blessed, and shall know and rejoice in their blessedness (Jer. iv. 2. Isa. lxxv. 16.).

18, 19. The usual doxology at the end of the several books of the Psalms (see Pss. xli. ; lxxxix. ; cvi.).

“**Who only doeth wondrous things.**” See Ps. lxxxvi. 10 ; cxxxvi. 4. Job ix. 8.

19. “**His glorious Name.**” 1 Chron. xxix. 13. Neh. ix. 5.

“**Let the whole earth,**” &c. In accordance with the promise in Num. xiv. 21.

The vision of a perfect kingdom here portrayed was partially fulfilled in Solomon. His reign was distinguished for equity, peace and prosperity, and his sway extended over many nations. But its glory soon passed away. The picture which the Psalmist has drawn is realized only in the kingdom and Church of the Messiah. He is the true Prince of peace, Whose dominion shall extend from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, and under Whom righteousness and peace shall flourish for ever.

PSALM LXXIII.

The thought of God the stay of the soul amid the perplexities of His providential dealings.

The Third Book of the Psalter contains seventeen Psalms, from the seventy-third to the eighty-ninth inclusive ; of these, eleven are attributed to Asaph, four to the sons of Korah, one to Ethan, and one only to David. Asaph was one of the leaders of David's choir. As some of the Psalms assigned to him seem to belong to a later date, it is thought that the name was given also to his descendants. There is no reason however why this Psalm should not have been written by Asaph himself ; its title in the Syriac Version is, “On the death of “Absalom,” and certainly some of the thoughts expressed in it might very well have occupied the writer's mind during Absalom's triumph.

PSALMS, LXXIII.

- 2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone ;
 my steps had well nigh slipped.
- 3 ^a For I was envious at the foolish,
 when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For *there are* no bands in their death :
 but their strength *is* ² firm.

^a Job 21. 7.
 Ps. 37. 1.
 Jer. 12. 1.

² Heb. *fat*.

The seventy-third Psalm deals with the difficulty which embarrassed David himself in the thirty-seventh Psalm, namely, the prosperity of the ungodly. It does not however deal with it in the same way. David counsels patience ; he implies that the difficulty is only in appearance ; in a little while the righteousness of God will be vindicated by the overthrow of the wicked and the triumph of the righteous. Here the Psalmist rather takes refuge in the thought that however it may be with the wicked, even if their prosperity is not disturbed in this world, it must be well with the righteous, because God is their portion, guiding them with His counsel, and afterwards taking them to His glory.

In the first part of the Psalm (vv. 1—14.) the Psalmist unfolds the trouble, which had almost driven him to scepticism ; in the latter part (vv. 15—28.) he explains how he has been enabled to overcome the temptation, namely, by casting himself wholly on God, and realising more intensely than ever that in Him, and in union with Him, is man's true and only happiness.

1. This first verse gives the conclusion to which the Psalmist had been brought, after he had gone through the mental struggle which he afterwards describes.

“**Truly.**” The same word as in vv. 13, “verily,” 18, “surely” (see also Pss. xxxix., lxii.). It may be rendered, “Yea, verily, God is “good ;” only good, nothing but good. The Psalm opens abruptly, from which we learn that before he broke forth into this language, the Psalmist's mind had been agitated with many doubts and conflicting suggestions. God may seem to be angry, and may send affliction upon affliction upon His people, but He has always a loving mind towards them (Lam. iii. 25.).

“**God is good to Israel.**” His mercy is over all His works, but His special love is reserved for the true Israel. The latter clause limits the blessing to the pure in heart, the Israelite indeed ; for they are not all Israel who are of Israel (comp. Ps. xxiv. 4. St. Matt. v. 8.).

2. “**But as for me.**” Left to himself and his own speculations, he had begun to stagger in his faith ; his feet had well-nigh swerved from the right path ; he had all but fallen.

3. “**Envious.**” Looked with half-longing eyes ; as in Ps. xxxvii. 1. Prov. xxiii. 17 (see Job xxi. 7. Jer. xii. 1.).

“**The foolish.**” Whose pride and boastfulness are utterly absurd (Ps. v. 5 ; lxxv. 4.).

“**I saw.**”

“With evil eye my soul beheld

“The peace of impious men” (*Keble*).

4. “**No bands in their death.**” Two interpretations are suggested : either, “there are no bands, that is, no severe struggles, no pangs, in their death ;” their death is painless. In the Book of Job it is

b Job 21. 9.
 2 Heb. *in the trouble of other men.*
 3 Heb. *with.*
 c So Ps. 103. 18.
 d Job 15. 27. Ps. 17. 10. & 119. 70. Jer. 5. 28.
 4 Heb. *they pass the thoughts of the heart.*
 e Ps. 53. 1.
 f Hos. 7. 16.
 g 2 Pet. 2. 18. Jude 16.
 h Rev. 13. 6.

- 5 ^b They are not ² in trouble as *other* men ;
 neither are they plagued ³ like *other* men.
 6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a
 chain ;
 violence covereth them ^c as a garment.
 7 ^d Their eyes stand out with fatness :
⁴ they have more than heart could wish.
 8 ^e They are corrupt, and ^f speak wickedly *con-*
cerning oppression :
 they ^g speak loftily.
 9 They set their mouth ^h against the heavens,
 and their tongue walketh through the earth.

reckoned as one of the blessings of the ungodly that they seem to go down to the grave in a moment, in full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet (Job xxi. 13, 23.). Or, "there are no bands to their death;" nothing which connects them with death, no diseases or sufferings which bring death upon them. This is the meaning of the Prayer Book Version, "they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong."

5. "In trouble as other men." Better, "in the trouble of frail man," the word used for man meaning especially man in his weakness; they seem to have no share in the common infirmities and frailties of men. They are exempt also from the troubles which are the common lot of men.

"Plagued." As in Isa. liii. 4, "smitten," that is, by God.

6. They make a display of their pride, as they would of a chain: violence is as habitual to them as their raiment. The gold chain round the neck was a favourite ornament and a badge of honour (Prov. i. 9. Cant. iv. 9.).

7. "With fatness." Rather, "out of fat." The picture is that of a bloated countenance and projecting eyes (comp. Ps. xvii. 10. Job xv. 27.). Some, following the Greek Version, render "out of a fat heart their iniquity cometh forth."

"They have more than heart could wish." Rather, "the imaginations of their heart overflow;" their proud and idle fancies, the illusions of their self-confidence, burst forth in presumptuous words. Comp. Jer. v. 28, which should be rendered, "They are waxen fat, they shine; yea, they overflow in words of evil." This passage suggests that the verse of the Psalm might be rendered, "They overflow, swell over, in thoughts of the heart."

"In thoughts and visions of their heart

"They wander uncontroll'd" (*Keble*).

8. Lit. "they scoff; they speak oppression wickedly; from on high they speak." They do not disguise their scorn or their designs of oppression; they conceive themselves raised high above others, and dictate to them accordingly.

9. While the heaven above is not secure from their blasphemous speech, their calumnious tongues range freely and haughtily over the earth. Or the first clause may mean, "they set their mouth in heaven," they speak authoritatively, as if they were gods.

- 10 Therefore his people return hither :
ⁱ and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them. i Ps. 75. 8.
- 11 And they say, ^k How doth God know ?
 And is there knowledge in the most High ? k Job 22. 13.
 Ps. 10. 11.
 & 94. 7.
- 12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
 who ^l prosper in the world ; they increase *in* ^l riches. l ver. 3.
 m Job 21. 15.
 & 34. 9.
 & 35. 3.
 Mal. 3. 14.
- 13 ^m Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain,
 and ⁿ washed my hands in innocency. n Ps. 26. 6.
- 14 For all the day long have I been plagued,
 and ^o chastened every morning. o Heb. my
 chastise-
 ment was.

10. "Therefore," i.e. because the wicked are unchecked in their prosperity.

"His people." Instead of "their people," "their following," the persons of whom the Psalmist had been speaking being considered as a class.

"Return hither," i. e. after them, after the wicked, "they who are likeminded run after them." So the Prayer Book takes it: "Therefore fall the people unto them." But by "his people" may be meant God's people, who, tempted by the sight of prosperous wickedness, turn back from Him, and run after the world. So Mr. Keble,—

"For this, ev'n hearts He call'd His own,
 "Toward them wondering turn."

"And waters," &c. Lit. "and fulness of water is drained by them ;" they drink in the dangerous doctrines as eagerly as a thirsty traveller drinks water from a well (Job xv. 16.). Or the meaning may be, that they drink deep of the fountain of sinful pleasure.

11. "And they say." Here we have the speech of those who are tempted to follow the prosperous sinners ; they deny God's knowledge and overruling providence. If God cared for the things of men (they say), He would not suffer the success of the wicked (Job xxii. 12, 13.).

12. It is perhaps best and simplest to take this and the two following verses as the continuation of the speech of God's perplexed and deluded people. Behold (they say), as a manifest proof that God does not see or care, these are ungodly, and yet prosperous, they have increased in strength ; the ungodly become powerful and wealthy, but piety is joined to nothing but misfortune.

13. The speech of those who are tempted to fall away to the wicked is made more dramatic by being put into the mouth of one of them ; it was of no avail for him to strive after sanctity, seeing that each day as it dawned brought some fresh trouble upon him. There was nothing for him but to join the company of the wicked, on whose heads blessings were poured which were denied to the godly.

We may however understand this and the next verse as containing the thoughts of the Psalmist himself ; he too felt the force of the temptation which had pressed upon others hitherto faithful, and he was almost ready to say that all his watchfulness had been in vain. This is the view of the Greek Version, which introduces "And I said" at the beginning of this verse ; in which they are followed by the Prayer Book.

- 15 ¶ If I say, I will speak thus ;
 behold, I should offend *against* the generation
 of thy children.
- ^o Eccles. 8. 17. 16 ^o When I thought to know this,—² it *was* too
² Heb. *it was*
labour in
mine eyes.
^p Ps. 77. 13. 17 until ^p I went into the sanctuary of God ;
^q Ps. 37. 38. *then* understood I ^q their end.
^r Ps. 35. 6. 18 Surely ^r thou didst set them in slippery places :
 thou castedst them down into destruction.
- 19 How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a
 moment !
- ^s Job 20. 8. They are utterly consumed with terrors.
^t Ps. 90. 5.
^u Isai. 29. 7, 8. 20 ^s As a dream when *one* awaketh ;

15. This is the Psalmist's answer to those (including himself) whom the untroubled life of the wicked, as compared with the righteous, had tempted to unbelief.

"If I say, I will speak thus." Rather, "If I had said, Let me speak thus, lo, then I should have betrayed," &c. Had he openly adopted their reasoning and their language, he would have been faithless to the cause of God's people, and have yielded to the despair of unbelief.

16. Still, though to doubt God's providential care was treachery to His people, the problem itself of the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked was full of difficulty.

"When I thought to know this." Pondered over, with a view to solving it (see Eccles. viii. 17.).

"Too painful." Lit. "a labour," weary toil. Comp. Eccles. iv. 4, where the word occurs twice, and is rendered first "travail," and then "vanity." Thinking alone will give neither the right light nor true happiness. Both are found only in faith. The Psalmist at last struck upon the way of faith, and then he found light and peace.

17. "Until I went," &c. In his perplexity he sought the presence of God in His sanctuary, and there, "in the calmness of the sacred courts," his eyes were opened to the holy ways of God and to the sad end of the ungodly.

"Then understood I." Rather, "and (till) I considered their latter end;" that is, as appears from the following verses, their after history in this life. He seems to mean that when he contemplated their whole career, he perceived how frequently they were liable to great and sudden reverses; he felt that he was wrong therefore, as the next verse implies, in attributing to them uninterrupted good fortune.

18. "Surely." That is, after all, I was mistaken; I did not sufficiently consider the entire state of the case; the truth is, that God sets them in slippery places, only that they may be cast down: their very prosperity is the instrument of their punishment.

19. "Consumed with terrors." Rather, "in consequence of terrors," not mere alarms, but terrible occurrences.

20. As a dream is forgotten immediately on account of its nothingness, so God takes no account of the wicked; they are a mere shadow, utterly unsubstantial to Him (Job xx. 8, 9.).

PSALMS, LXXIII.

so, O Lord, ^t when thou awakest, thou shalt ^t Ps. 78. 65.
despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was ^u grieved,—and I was pricked ^u ver. 3.
in my reins.

22 ^x So foolish *was* I, and ² ignorant :
I was *as* a beast ³ before thee.

^x Ps. 92. 6.
Prov. 30. 2.

23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee :
thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

² Heb.
I knew not.
³ Heb.
with thee.

24 ^y Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
and afterward receive me *to* glory.

^y Ps. 32. 8.
Isai. 58. 8.

25 ^z Whom have I in heaven *but thee* ?

^z Phil. 3. 8.

“When thou awakest.” That is, when Thou arisest in judgment, after having looked on for a time with forbearance (Ps. xxxv. 23.). The Greek and some old Versions take the word to mean “in the city;” hence our Prayer Book Version, “so shalt Thou make their image to “vanish out of the city;” that is, openly, on the scene where their evil deeds were committed.

“Their image.” In spite of their apparent greatness they were mere phantoms, vain unsubstantial shadows.

21. “Thus.” Lit. “for.” The Psalmist gives the reason of his inward struggle; he would not have been so much perplexed had he not been wilfully perverse; his own moral condition had aggravated the intellectual difficulty.

“Was grieved.” Lit. “became sour,” embittered.

“Was pricked.” Pierced as with the fang of an adder.

22. “A beast.” Hebrew Behemoth, the emblem of colossal stupidity (see note on word, Job xl.).

23. “Nevertheless.” Notwithstanding his foolish and unbelieving thoughts, he was under God’s fatherly care; He had kept him from falling (ver. 2.), and would keep him: to Him therefore he committed himself without hesitation for time and for eternity. The Psalmist’s words, in themselves, only imply that sudden destruction will come on the evil in this life. If this does not happen in all cases, it is sufficiently frequent to shew that such visitations are plainly God’s judgments, the mark of His displeasure. The Psalmist does not touch the question of the future of the ungodly. It is enough to deter him from envying their prosperity that they pass away under God’s anger. If their condition in the other world is taken into account, the difficulty of which the Psalm speaks is, of course, more completely answered.

24. Though dwelling with God and upheld by Him, he had been insensible to His Presence. Now, however, faith has returned, and he commits himself confidently to the Divine guidance. He may not be able to see through the mystery of that guidance, but he is sure that it will bring him to the everlasting glory of God’s presence. The future may be dark; but it is lighted up to the Psalmist by the conviction that God is his God, and will not fail him.

“Receive me.” Or, as we should say, take me to Thyself (Ps. xlix. 15. Gen. v. 24.).

25. He who in love can call God his, possesses heaven upon earth; he who cannot do so, possesses, not heaven, but hell, even in the midst

PSALMS, LXXIII.

And *there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*

- ^a Ps. 84. 2. & 119. 81.
² Heb. *rock.*
^b Ps. 16. 5. & 119. 57.
^c Ps. 119. 155.
^d Ex. 34. 15. Num. 15. 39. James 4. 4.
^e Heb. 10. 22.
^f Ps. 107. 22. & 118. 17.
- 26 ^a My flesh and my heart faileth :
but God is the ² strength of my heart, and ^b my portion for ever.
- 27 For, lo, ^c they that are far from thee shall perish :
 thou hast destroyed all them that ^d go a whoring from thee.
- 28 But *it is good for me to ^e draw near to God : I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may ^f declare all thy works.*

PSALM LXXIV.

- ² Or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction.
- ¹ *The prophet complaineth of the desolation of the sanctuary. 10 He moveth God to help in consideration of his power, 18 of his reproachful enemies, of his children, and of his covenant.*
- ² Maschil of Asaph.

of heaven. Therefore the Psalmist says that even heaven itself, without God, would be a dreary waste ; with Him, i. e. possessing Him, there was nothing on earth to be desired. His only friend, his sole desire and love, was God (Ps. xvi. 2).

“Were I in heaven without my God,

“’Twould be no joy to me ;

“And while this earth is mine abode,

“I long for none but Thee” (*Watts*).

26. “My flesh and my heart.” The outward and inward man. The Psalmist supposes for a moment—what is impossible—that his inner man should perish, but he immediately recalls the word. His body would soon sink into the grave, and it might seem that his soul would depart with the body ; but it could not be ; the unchangeable God was his portion, and he could not therefore really perish.

28. But as for him, union with God was his one good ; and to be one with the Eternal God was a sure pledge of an endless life. “It is this “vision of an endless future—‘my portion for ever’—thus presented “to the eye of the Psalmist in his retreat within the sanctuary, that “completes the removal of his original difficulty with respect to the “ways of God.” Not only is the prosperity of the wicked utterly vain and short-lived, but the joy of the righteous, being fixed in God, is everlasting.

There is nothing like retirement from the world, and quiet meditation in the presence of God to teach us the vanity of all worldly things, and the greatness and reality of the things out of sight. When we are alone with God and feel His nearness, we perceive that He alone is good, absolutely good, and that if we will cling to Him and make Him our portion, He will give us all things necessary to carry us safely through the perils of life to His own blessed and peaceful Presence in heaven ; He will guide us with His counsel, and after that receive us to glory.

PSALM LXXIV.

Appeal in behalf of the desolate sanctuary.

There are three chief suggestions as to the date of this Psalm and the seventy-ninth, which so resembles it, as to be reasonably assigned to the

PSALMS, LXXIV.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 O GOD, why hast thou ^a cast us off for ever?
 <i>Why</i> doth thine anger ^b smoke against ^c the
 sheep of thy pasture?</p> <p>2 Remember thy congregation, ^d <i>which</i> thou hast
 purchased of old;
 the ^e rod of thine inheritance, <i>which</i> thou hast ²
 redeemed;</p> | <p>^a Ps. 44. 9, 23.
 & 60. 1, 10.
 & 77. 7.
 Jer. 31. 37.
 & 33. 24.</p> <p>^b Deut. 29. 20.</p> <p>^c Ps. 95. 7.
 & 100. 3.</p> <p>^d Ex. 15. 16.
 Deut. 9. 29.</p> <p>^e Or, <i>tribe</i>.
 ² Deut. 32. 9.
 Jer. 10. 16.</p> |
|---|--|

same writer and the same circumstances. The first refers them to the occupation of Jerusalem and the profanation of the Temple by Shishak, king of Egypt, in the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv. 25, 26. 2 Chron. xii. 2—9.); the second to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Chaldæans; the third to the cruelties and insolence of Antiochus Epiphanes in the time of the Maccabees.

With regard to the first suggestion, it is to be observed, that there is no reason to suppose that Shishak was guilty of any violence in the Temple; it would seem (see the account in Chron.) that he entered Jerusalem peaceably, and required the surrender of the public treasure; there is no evidence of any such destruction as is indicated by vv. 6, 7 of this Psalm.

The objection sometimes made to the second suggestion, that (ver. 9.) "there is no more any prophet," is inconsistent with the fact that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were both living, may be in some measure answered by a reference to Lam. ii. 9, where Jeremiah makes a somewhat similar complaint. The entire destruction of the Temple which these Psalms imply; the expressions "perpetual desolations" in lxxiv. 3, "the sighing of the prisoner" in lxxix. 11 (comp. cii. 20, undoubtedly a Psalm of the captivity); and the resemblance between lxxix. 6, 7 and Jer. x. 25, are in favour of fixing the date at the time of the Chaldæan invasion. At the same time many expressions in these Psalms accurately describe the condition of things during the time of the Maccabees. Prophecy had long been dumb (1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27; xiv. 41.); the sanctuary was profaned and heathen emblems filled the Temple (1 Macc. i. 21, 22; ii. 8—12; iii. 48—51.). Compare also 1 Macc. vii. 16, &c., with Ps. lxxix. 2, 3. The contents of the two Psalms seem to coincide with the prayer of Judas Maccabæus in 2 Macc. viii. 1—4. The language of ver. 9 seems to imply a recent cessation of prophecy, whereas the order of prophets had died out two centuries before the date of Antiochus Epiphanes. On the whole, perhaps, we may consider the second conjecture as to the occasion of the Psalm as the most probable. The name of Asaph does not help to fix the date, as it appears to have been added to Psalms of his descendants and successors, who bore the same name, and filled the same office of choir-master.

1. God seemed to have cast off His people in perpetuity; His anger knew no respite. And yet they were "the sheep of His pasture." This figure occurs several times in the Asaphic Psalms (lxxvii. 20; lxxviii. 52, 71; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1.), and also in Jeremiah (xxiii. 1.).

2. Special pleas for interposition. God had purchased (or rather "acquired," "gotten") the people for Himself by delivering them from Egypt (Exod. xv. 16.); He had redeemed (Exod. xv. 13.) them to be His special inheritance; He had made choice of Zion as His dwelling-place.

"The rod of His inheritance." Rather, "the tribe;" as also in

PSALMS, LXXIV.

this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations ;
*even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in
the sanctuary.*

^f Lam. 2. 7. 4 ^fThine enemies roar in the midst of thy con-
gregations ;

^g Dan. 6. 27. ^g they set up their ensigns for signs.

5 *A man* was famous according as he had lifted up
axes upon the thick trees.

^h 1 Kin. 6. 18,
29, 32, 35. 6 But now they break down ^hthe carved work
thereof

Jer. x. 16 ; li. 19. In Isa. lxiii. 17 we have the plural, "the tribes of
"Thine inheritance."

What a contrast between the present condition of the chosen people
and their election ! Had God been so gracious to them only to cast
them off ?

3. "Lift up Thy feet." The phrase implies haste ; "come speedily,"
"haste to the rescue."

"Perpetual desolations." Such utter ruins, that no hope of restora-
tion remained.

"All that the enemy hath done wickedly." That is, all the havoc
that he has made.

4. "Roar." Comp. Lam. ii. 7 : "They have made a noise in the
"house of the Lord." The tumultuous noise in the Temple is com-
pared to the roaring of a lion.

"Thy congregations." Rather, "Thy place of meeting," the spot
where God had promised to meet His people.

"Their ensigns for signs." The same word is repeated in the
Hebrew, "their own signs for signs ;" which may mean either their
military standards or their religious symbols, the emblems of their
idolatry. Comp. ver. 9 : "We see not our signs," the signs of our holy
worship, such as the carved figures of cherubim (1 Kings vi. 29.) ; the
enemy had destroyed these, and set up their own unholy symbols in their
stead. This will of course apply to the statue of Jupiter erected in the
Temple by Antiochus (1 Macc. i. 54—64.) ; but a similar profanation
may have been perpetrated by the Chaldæans.

5. The literal rendering is, "It was known (it made itself known, it
"seemed) as if one lifted up on high axes in a thicket of the wood ;"
or perhaps, "he (i. e. each one of the enemy) was known (or seen) as
"lifting up," &c. The terrible scene of devastation is vividly described ;
the enemy were seen hewing down the wood-work of the Temple as they
would the trees of the forest.

"Each warrior counts it fame to wield

"His lifted axe, as woodman skill'd

"To rend his way through forest deep" (*Keble*).

6. "But now." Rather, "and now ;" there is no contrast to the
preceding verse, but a continuation of the description ; the axes are not
only lifted up, but brought down with crushing force.

"Carved work." 1 Kings vi. 29.

PSALMS, LXXIV.

at once with axes and hammers.

- 7 ^{i 2} They have cast fire into thy sanctuary,
 they have defiled ^k *by casting down* the dwelling
 place of thy name to the ground. i 2 Kin. 25. 9.
² Heb. *They have sent thy sanctuary into the fire.*
- 8 ¹ They said in their hearts, Let us ³ destroy them
 together : k Ps. 89. 39.
 1 Ps. 83. 4.
³ Heb. *break.*
 they have burned up all the synagogues of God
 in the land.
- 9 We see not our signs :—^m *there is no more any* m 1 Sam. 3. 1.
 Amos 8. 11.
 prophet :
 neither *is there* among us any that knoweth how
 long.
- 10 ¶ O God, how long shall the adversary reproach ?
 Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?
- 11 ⁿ Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy ⁿ Lam. 2. 3.
 right hand ?
 Pluck *it* out of thy bosom.

7. See 2 Kings xxv. 9. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19. Comp. Isa. lxiv. 11 :
 "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is
 "burned up with fire."

"They have defiled." Lam. ii. 2.

8. "Synagogues of God." Meeting-places of God, as in ver. 4. Lam.
 ii. 6. There is no positive evidence of the existence of anything an-
 swering to the later synagogues before the captivity ; but if it was
 customary to meet on new moons and sabbaths (2 Kings iv. 23.), it
 is natural to suppose that there were buildings appropriated to such
 meetings : indeed, under any circumstances, there would seem to be
 no difficulty in supposing that there were places of assembly for religious
 purposes. It is possible however that the reference here is to such holy
 places as Gibeon, Gilgal, Ramah, Bethel, &c. The ancient Versions
 mostly translate the word "festivities ;" and as the original meaning of
 the word here rendered "burn" is to "swallow up," they understand
 the clause to mean, "they abolished the feasts in the land."

9. "We see not our signs." That is, as explained by ver. 4, the
 acknowledged symbols of God's worship. His ordinances had ceased,
 and there was no message from heaven to declare when the present state
 of things would cease : even at the end of seventy years Zechariah still
 used the expostulation, "How long?" (i. 12.).

10. "How long." The Psalmist takes up the word : "how long is
 "this apparently endless blasphemy of the enemy to last?" Identifying
 his cause with the cause of God, he calls upon God to vindicate His
 honour by delivering him (see Exod. xxxii. 12, 13. Num. xiv. 13—16.
 Deut. ix. 28.).

11. "Why withdrawest Thou." Lit. "Why makest Thou to
 "return," i. e. into Thy bosom? (Exod. iv. 7.)

"Pluck it out of Thy bosom." Lit. "out of Thy bosom, consume ;"
 i. e. drawing forth from Thy bosom the hand that lies inactive there,
 make an end of them, destroy them, by one blow (see Isa. li. 9, 10.).

PSALMS, LXXIV.

- Ps. 44. 4. 12 ¶ For ° God is my King of old,
 working salvation in the midst of the earth.
 P Ex. 14. 21. 13 P Thou didst ² divide the sea by thy strength :
 2 Heb. *break*. ^q thou brakest the heads of the ³ dragons in the
 q Is. 51. 9, 10. waters.
 Ezek. 29. 3.
 & 32. 2.
 3 Or, *whales*. 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in
 r Num. 14. 9. pieces,
 s Ps. 72. 9. and gavest him ^r to be meat ^a to the people
 t Ex. 17. 5, 6. inhabiting the wilderness.
 Num. 20. 11.
 Ps. 105. 41.
 Isai. 48. 21.
 u Josh. 3. 13, 15 ^t Thou didst cleave the fountain and the
 &c. flood :
 4 Heb. *rivers*
 of strength. ^u thou driedst up ⁴ mighty rivers.
 x Gen. 1. 14, 16 The day is thine, the night also is thine :
 &c. ^x thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
 y Acts 17. 26. ^z Thou hast ^y set all the borders of the earth :
 z Gen. 8. 22. ^z thou hast ⁵ made summer and winter.
 5 Heb.
 made them.

12. "For." Rather, "and yet," in spite of the present condition of things. Here the second part of the Psalm begins, and the Psalmist draws comfort from God's former interpositions in His people's behalf. Time was, when, as Israel's King, God unfolded the fulness of His salvation throughout the earth (Ps. xlv. 4. Exod. viii. 22.). He brought His people through the Red Sea ; He gave them water from the rock ; He dried up the waters of the Jordan.

13. "Dragons." Or sea-monsters, an emblem of Pharaoh and his hosts (comp. Ezek. xxix. 3 ; xxxii. 2.).

14. "Leviathan," i.e. the crocodile, the symbol of Egyptian power (Job xli. 1.).

"Meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness." The corpses of the Egyptians became the prey of the wild beasts which inhabit the desert. The wild beasts are called a "people," as the locusts a "nation" in Joel i. 6, and the ants and conies a "people" in Prov. xxx. 25, 26.

15. "Thou didst cleave," i.e. Thou didst cleave the rock, and streams poured forth (Exod. xvii. 6. Num. xx. 11. Ps. lxxviii. 15. Hab. iii. 9.).

"Thou driedst up." Josh. iii. 13.

"Mighty rivers." Lit. "perennial," "never-failing." So in Amos v. 24.

16. From God's special mercies to Israel, the Psalmist turns to His benefits to all the world. God is the Maker of all ; day and night, summer and winter, are His appointment : therefore He will be sure to be a Father to His own people.

"The light." Properly, "luminary" or light-bearer ; as in Gen. i. 14—16. Some think that the singular is used for the plural, and that all the heavenly bodies are meant, of which the sun is named as chief. Others take it as the moon.

17. "The borders of the earth." Not merely those which separate earth and sea (Jer. v. 22.), but all those natural boundaries which divide one nation from another (Deut. xxxii. 8. Acts xvii. 26.).

PSALMS, LXXIV.

- 18 ¶ ^a Remember this, *that* the enemy hath re-^a ver. 22.
 proached, O LORD, Rev. 16. 19.
 and *that* ^b the foolish people have blasphemed ^b Ps. 39. 8.
 thy name.
- 19 O deliver not the soul ^c of thy turtledove unto ^c Cant. 2. 14.
 the multitude of *the wicked* :
^d forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. d Ps. 68. 10.
- 20 ^e Have respect unto the covenant : e Gen. 17. 7. 8.
 for the dark places of the earth are full of the Lev. 26. 44,
 habitations of cruelty. 45.
Ps. 106. 45.
Jer. 33. 21.
- 21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed :
 let the poor and needy praise thy name.
- 22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause :
^f remember how the foolish man reproacheth ^f ver. 18.
 thee daily. Ps. 89. 51.

18. Having gathered comfort from the contemplation of God's mercy to Israel as their Redeemer, and to all mankind as their Creator, the Psalmist returns to prayer, with greater confidence and hopefulness.

"Remember this," namely, "that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord." See ver. 22.

"The foolish people," i. e. destitute of the knowledge of God, which alone can make a really wise and understanding people (Deut. xxxii. 21.).

19. "The multitude." The word so rendered is translated "congregation" in the next clause. Some take it, "Give not over to the herd (wild beasts) the soul of Thy turtle-dove; forget not for ever the herd of Thy poor ones." Others, taking the word translated "soul" in the sense of spirit, eagerness (comp. Ps. xvii. 9, "deadly enemies," lit. "enemies in soul," i. e. in fierce intent), render, "Give not Thy turtle-dove to the herd of eager desire, to that ravenous company; forget not the company of Thy afflicted ones for ever."

"O ne'er to ravening beak give o'er

"The soul of Thy soft turtle-dove;

"The life of Thy forlorn and poor,

"Let it Thy care for ever prove" (Keble).

20. "The covenant." God's promise is the plea and refuge of His people.

"The dark places of the earth." Lit. "darknesses." The word is elsewhere used of the grave or Hades (Ps. lxxxviii. 6. Lam. iii. 6.). Here, joined to "of the earth," it may mean lurking places, or those parts of the earth where darkness reigns, that is, heathen lands. Some explain it of the caves and dens where the persecuted hid themselves, and notice its special application to the Maccabean age, when the persecuted confessors hid themselves far away in the mountains (1 Macc. ii. 26, &c. 2 Macc. vi. 11.), but were tracked by the enemy and slain: at that time the hiding places of the land were the abodes of cruelty and violence.

21. "Return," i. e. from drawing near to Thee with their supplications; let them not be put to shame by suffering a repulse.

PSALMS, LXXV.

23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies :
the tumult of those that rise up against thee
²increaseth continually.

² Heb.
ascendeth,
Jonah 1. 2.

PSALM LXXV.

1 *The prophet praiseth God.* 2 *He promiseth to judge uprightly.* 4 *He rebuketh the proud by consideration of God's providence.* 9 *He praiseth God, and promiseth to execute justice.*

² Or, *Destroy*
not.

³ Ps. 57, title.

⁴ Or,
for Asaph.

To the chief Musician, ² ³ Al-taschith,
A Psalm or Song ⁴ of Asaph.

1 **U**NTO thee, O God, do we give thanks,
unto thee do we give thanks: for *that* thy
name is near
thy wondrous works declare.

23. "Increaseth." Rather, as in margin, "ascendeth." Their violence goeth up to heaven continually, crying for vengeance (comp. Isa. xxxvii. 29.).

"Their rebel pride

"Swells high and loud: 'tis mounting yet" (*Kelle*).

This Psalm is perhaps best understood as the lamentation of an exile in Babylon, recalling sadly the ruined city and temple. Israel is still God's flock, His congregation, His turtle-dove, the rod of His inheritance. Her cause is His cause; her enemies His enemies. Therefore the Psalmist entreats Him to stretch forth His hand, and stay the reproaches and blasphemy of her foes. There have been times in the past, and there may be such again, when the powers of the world have so far prevailed, as to destroy the material fabrics of the Church, and interrupt her solemn services; but they cannot annul God's promises or prevent the work of restoration when the time of trial is over. In the meanwhile the Church will comfort herself by the remembrance of God's covenant of grace, and by the thought of that love which has not only redeemed her with His precious blood, and dwells in her by His Spirit, but has given her in the constant succession of natural times and seasons the hope of a happy recovery from spiritual disasters. And as faith and hope revive, prayer will become more earnest and more confident, even though there may be no immediate token of the breaking of the cloud.

PSALM LXXV.

The judgment of God upon the arrogant.

We may understand this Psalm as written at the time of the insolent message of Sennacherib (see Isa. xxxvi.; xxxvii.). The Psalmist is confident that God is near and will punish his enemies. He hears God saying that, when the appointed time is come, He will give righteous judgment. It was in vain for the Assyrian to boast of his power or to exalt himself; for though no deliverance could come from earth, God could and would deliver, and would oblige the presumptuous ones to drink to the dregs the cup of His wrath. This was the special vision presented to the Psalmist—the self-confident enemies of God's people, the proud Assyrians, utterly destroyed: and he promises therefore perpetual thanksgiving.

1. The Psalmist has in view Isaiah's message (Isa. xxxvii.), and fore-

PSALMS, LXXV.

- 2 ² When I shall receive the congregation—I will ^{2 Or, When I shall take a set time.} judge uprightly.
- 3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved :
I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.
- 4 ¶ I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly :
and to the wicked, ^a Lift not up the horn : ^a Zech. i. 21.
- 5 lift not up your horn on high :—speak *not with*
a stiff neck.
- 6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east,

sees and welcomes God's judgments on his enemies. The latter part of the verse should perhaps be translated : "And verily Thy name is "near; men have told of Thy wonders." It is the nearness of God's name (Isa. xxx. 27.) that calls forth his thanksgiving.

2. "When I shall receive." God is here introduced as speaking : He proclaims that His judgment cometh in due time, unalterable as the everlasting hills, on which, as pillars, He has established the earth.

The literal rendering is, either, as in margin, "When I shall take "a set time," i. e. when the set time is come ; or, "For I will take "(seize) the set time." In either case the meaning is, that when the appointed time for judgment has arrived, God will seize it, and will interpose and judge according to the strict rule of right. The word translated "congregation" is the usual expression, in the language of prophecy, for the time appointed for judgment (Ps. cii. 13. Hab. ii. 3. Dan. viii. 19 ; xi. 27, 35.).

3. "Are dissolved." Melting away ; either with fear, as in Exod. xv. 15. Josh. ii. 9 : or through the prevailing confusion and injustice.

"I bear up the pillars of it." Rather, "I, even I, have established, "adjusted, fixed by weight and measure, its pillars; and they cannot "fail." The pillars of the earth are the great mountain ranges, on the roots of which the earth seems to rest (1 Sam. ii. 8.). Here the reference is to the moral foundations of the earth ; however great the confusion, order and justice shall in the end prevail.

4, 5. The Divine utterance is continued ; in view of His righteous rule and sure judgment, God warns His enemies of the folly of their self-confidence and pride. These verses may however be understood as spoken by the Psalmist on the ground of the Divine promise which has gone before.

4. "The fools ;" i. e. empty foolish boasters (Ps. v. 5 ; lxxiii. 3.).

"Lift not up the horn." The horn is used to express either honour (Ps. cxii. 9.), or strength (Deut. xxxiii. 17.). Hence to exalt the horn of any one is to bestow upon him honour and dignity (Ps. lxxxix. 17 ; cxxxii. 17. 1 Sam. ii. 10.) ; to break or cut off the horn is to humble or cast down (ver. 10. Lam. ii. 3.). Here to lift up the horn is to behave with insolence and presumption.

5. The Psalmist may very well be supposed to have the speech of Rabshakeh in his mind (Isa. xxxvii. 23.).

"Speak not with a stiff neck." Lit. "speak not arrogantly with "neck," i. e. with a raised proud neck.

6. "For." The Psalmist here takes up and appropriates the words of

PSALMS, LXXV.

² Heb. *desert*.

^b Ps. 50. 6.
& 58. 11.

^c 1 Sam. 2. 7.
Dan. 2. 21.

^d Job 21. 20.
Ps. 60. 3.
Jer. 25. 15.
Rev. 14. 10.
& 16. 19.

^e Prov. 23. 30.

^f Ps. 73. 10.

nor from the west, nor from the ² south.

7 But ^b God *is* the judge :

^c he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For ^d in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup,
and the wine is red ;

it is ^e full of mixture ; and he poureth out of the
same :

^f but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the
earth shall wring *them* out, *and* drink *them*.

9 But I will declare for ever ;

I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 ^g All the horns of the wicked also will I cut
off ;

but ^h the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

^g Ps. 101. 8.
Jer. 48. 25.

^h Ps. 89. 17.
& 148. 14.

God, wherein He declared His justice and rebuked the arrogance of His enemies ; exaltation comes not (he says) from any earthly quarter, but from God. He is the Judge, Who lifteth up and casteth down according to His own righteousness.

“Promotion.” “Lifting up.” The word occurs no less than five times in this Psalm. The north is not mentioned here, because the arrogant Assyrian himself, from whom deliverance was desired, came from the north.

7. “Setteth up.” Better, in order to shew that it is the same word throughout, “lifteth up.”

8. The very purpose of God’s judgment is to put down all wickedness. However men may exalt themselves and oppose Him, they are in His righteous hands, and He will make them drink to the dregs the cup of His just anger.

“The wine is red.” Rather, “the wine foams,” or, “it foams with “wine.” The figure of a cup, as shewing forth God’s anger, is of frequent occurrence in the prophets (see Ps. lx. 3. Isa. li. 17. Jer. xxv. 15 ; xlix. 12. Ezek. xxiii. 32—34. Hab. ii. 16.).

“Full of mixture.” That is, of spices, and therefore more intoxicating.

“Out of the same,” i. e. out of the cup.

“But.” Rather, “yea,” “surely.”

“Wring them out, and drink them.” The wicked will not be allowed to drink and then pause ; they must drain the cup to the dregs.

9, 10. The Psalm ends as it began, with ascription of praise to God for the coming deliverance. As for the Psalmist, he will be the perpetual herald of God’s mercy : he even claims to be the instrument in His hand for the overthrow of His enemies ; he himself will cut off “all the horns,” i. e. all the strength of the wicked : but the honour and power of the righteous shall be increased. It is possible however that in the last verse the Psalmist introduces a saying of God Himself, the emphasis being on the word “all ;” not the Assyrians only, but *all* the wicked, will be cut off.

We are told in the Book of Chronicles, that when Sennacherib came up against Jerusalem, and the valleys about the city were full of chariots,

PSALMS, LXXVI.

PSALM LXXVI.

1 *A declaration of God's majesty in the church.* 11 *An exhortation to serve him reverently.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm
or Song ² of Asaph.

- 1 **I**ⁿ ^a Judah is God known:—his name is great
in Israel. ² Or,
for Asaph.
^a Ps. 43. 1,
&c.
- 2 In Salem also is his tabernacle,—and his
dwelling place in Zion.
- 3 ^b There brake he the arrows of the bow, ^b Ps. 46. 9.
Ezek. 39. 9.

and the horsemen were set in array at the gate (Isa. xxii. 7.), Hezekiah gathered the people together and spake comfortably to them, saying, "Be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (2 Chron. xxxii. 6—8.). This Psalm is the expression of the strong confidence which Hezekiah inspired, and which pervaded the people. God is the supreme Judge of the world. Pride and arrogance are virtually a denial of His authority, and will surely end, whether in nations or individuals, in the shame and overthrow of the boaster. This is the leading thought of the Psalm, as it is also the subject of the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1—10.).

PSALM LXXVI.

Thanksgiving for the deliverance of Jerusalem.

This Psalm, like the preceding, has reference to the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. What the seventy-fifth Psalm confidently expects this Psalm celebrates as having taken place. The Greek Version has the inscription, "Respecting the Assyrian," i. e. Sennacherib.

The Psalm consists of four stanzas of three verses each.

"On Neginoth." See on Ps. iv. title.

1—3. In the first stanza the Psalmist lays special stress on the fact, that it was at Jerusalem, God's chosen dwelling-place, that the great discomfiture took place. God had made Himself known in Judah; His name was great in Israel. Israel may only be mentioned here as identical with, or as including, Judah; but it has been suggested that there is a tacit recognition of Hezekiah's endeavour to restore the unity of the kingdom by a common Passover celebration (2 Chron. xxx. 1.).

2. "Salem." The ancient name of Jerusalem (Gen. xiv. 18.). It is perhaps chosen here in allusion to the *peace* which the city would now enjoy.

"His tabernacle." This does not mean the Tabernacle properly so called. And if it is true that Salem, as distinguished from Zion, the Sanctuary, designated the secular part of the city, it would be better not to use the word "tabernacle." The verse has been rendered, "In Salem is His covert (Jer. xxv. 38.); and His lair in Zion" (Ps. civ. 22. Amos iii. 4.).

3. "There." Pointing as it were to Jerusalem.

"The arrows of the bow." Lit. "the lightnings of the bow." Comp. Zech. ix. 14, "His arrow shall go forth as the lightning."

the shield, and the sword, and the battle.
Selah.

- c Ezek. 38. 12,
13. & 39. 4. 4 ¶ Thou *art* more glorious *and* excellent ^c than
the mountains of prey.
- d Isai. 46. 12.
e Ps. 13. 3.
Jer. 51. 30. 5 ¶ The stouthearted are spoiled, ^e they have slept
their sleep:
and none of the men of might have found their
hands.
- f Ex. 15. 1. 21.
Ezek. 39. 20.
Nah. 2. 13.
Zech. 12. 4. 6 ^f At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead
sleep.
- g Nah. 1. 6. 7 ¶ Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared:
and ^g who may stand in thy sight when once thou
art angry?
- h Ezek. 38. 20. 8 ^h Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from
heaven;
ⁱ the earth feared, and was still,
- i 2 Chron. 20.
21. 30.
k Ps. 9. 7, 8,
9. & 72. 4. 9 when God ^k arose to judgment,
to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

“Battle.” All that appertains to war (Hos. ii. 18.). God has broken in pieces all the weapons of Assyria, and therewith Assyria itself (Isa. xxxvii. 33.).

4. The passage may be rendered, “Glorious art Thou, and majestic, “from the mountains of prey;” in which case the “mountains of prey” will be the mountains or strongholds of Jerusalem or of Palestine generally: the Lion of Judah is represented as leaping with a terrible bound from the mountains upon His enemies, and returning to His lair with his booty (Isa. xiv. 25.). Others have suggested, that the meaning may be, that the walls of the fastnesses gleamed with the invaders’ shields (see Cant. iv. 4. Ezek. xxvii. 11.). If the rendering of the English Version is retained, the “mountains of prey” will mean the strongholds of the enemy. The proud, despoiling powers of the world are symbolized by mountains full of ravenous beasts. Far aloft above these, towers the glory of God on Zion.

5. “They have slept their sleep.” The sleep of death; as in Nahum iii. 18. They slept, but never awaked (2 Kings xix. 35.).

The latter half of the verse means that the hands, so lately lifted up threateningly against Jerusalem, are now paralyzed and dead.

6. “The chariot and horse.” So the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh were drowned in the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 4, 19.). Comp. Isa. xliii. 17.

7. God’s power is irresistible; man can only be still and fear Him.

“Who may stand,” &c. The question anticipates the self-condemning answer, that man cannot of himself stand before God’s wrath.

8. There is a contrast between heaven and earth: from heaven God’s voice is heard; in a moment the din of earth is still.

PSALMS, LXXVI.

- 10 ¶¹ Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. ¹ See Exod. 9. 16. & 18. 11. Ps. 65. 7.
- 11 ^m Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: ^m Eccles. 5. 4. 5. 6.
ⁿ let all that be round about him bring presents ⁿ 2 Chron. 32. 22, 23.
² unto him that ought to be feared. Ps. 68. 23. & 89. 7.
- 12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: ² Heb. to fear.
^o he is terrible to the kings of the earth. ^o Ps. 68. 35.

PSALM LXXVII.

- ¹ The psalmist sheweth what fierce combat he had with diffidence. ¹⁰ The victory which he had by consideration of God's great and gracious works. ² Ps. 39, & 62, title.
- To the chief Musician, ² to Jeduthun, A Psalm ³ of Asaph. ³ Or, for Asaph.

10. God's power being irresistible and exercised always in behalf of the righteous, even the wrath and violence of those who oppose Him must redound to His glory by displaying His attributes and giving occasion to thanksgiving. The only result of Sennacherib's fury will be, that the power which overthrew him will be more widely confessed and praised.

“The remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.” If this rendering is correct, the meaning will be, that all further outbursts of man's anger God will repress. But the word translated “restrain” rather means to “gird,” and the clause should run “with the remainder of wrath shalt “Thou gird Thyself.” Thou shalt bind man's wrath, even to its last and uttermost efforts, upon Thee as a robe of triumph, clothe Thyself therewith to Thy own glory, or for the accomplishment of Thy purposes.

“Man's wrath must praise Thee, Lord; till Thou
 “Have girt the last wrath on Thee” (*Keble*).

11. What remains but that God's people should shew their gratitude for His interposition by careful payment of their vows, while those that are round about, the surrounding nations, should acknowledge His power, and bring presents in token of homage? (see 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.)

“Unto Him that ought to be feared.” Lit. “to the Fear,” “the “Terrible One” (Isa. viii. 13, “your fear”).

12. The Psalmist sums up in the last verse the teaching of the whole Psalm (as in lxxv. 10.). As the vine-dresser cuts off the wild shoots of the vine, so God will put down the arrogance of men, and make Himself feared throughout the earth (Isa. xviii. 5.). Or the reference may be to the cutting off the ripe clusters when the vintage is come (see Rev. xiv. 18—20.).

When God's judgments are in the world men must needs fear before Him.

“O what fear man's bosom rendeth,
 “When from heaven the Judge descendeth,
 “On Whose sentence all dependeth.”

But as in the midst of earthly judgments God remembers mercy, and saves the meek and afflicted who trust in Him, so the day of final doom will be to His people the day of complete redemption.

PSALMS, LXXVII.

- ^a Ps. 3. 4. 1 ^a **I** CRIED unto God with my voice,
even unto God with my voice; and he gave
ear unto me.
- ^b Ps. 50. 15. 2 ^b In the day of my trouble I ^c sought the Lord:
^c Is. 26. 9, 16. 2 my sore ran in the night, and ceased not:
² Heb, my soul refused to be comforted.
my hand.
- ^d Ps. 142. 3. 3 I remembered God, and was troubled:
& 143. 4. I complained, and ^d my spirit was overwhelmed.
Selah.
-

PSALM LXXVII.

Comfort in affliction from the recollection of former mercies.

The tenderness of feeling and agitation displayed in this Psalm shew that the writer is describing his personal feelings; but at the same time it is plain that it is no personal and private calamity that oppresses him, but some affliction shared in company with the whole people. It has been thought that it was despair at the length of the captivity which disturbed him, and which was dissipated by the thought that the God Who rescued His people from Egypt could also deliver them from Babylon. But the evident reference to the Psalm in Habakkuk iii. precludes so late a date as the captivity. We may well conceive however that at some previous time of national depression, which is not described so minutely as to be capable of being identified, the Psalmist consoles himself with the remembrance of God's mercies.

The Psalm has two parts; the first (vv. 1—9.), in which the Psalmist expresses his sorrow and despair; the second (vv. 10—20.), in which he describes how relief came from remembering the past. From the God Who is now hidden he turns with hope to the God Who was formerly manifest.

“**To Jeduthun.**” See on xxxix. title.

1. Lit. “My voice (is) unto God, and I would fain cry aloud; my voice (is) unto God, and may He hearken unto me,” or “Oh! hearken Thou unto me.” The constant change of tenses in the first six verses, marks the deep inward struggle through which the Psalmist was passing.

2. “**In the day of my trouble.**” The Psalmist takes up Jacob's words (Gen. xxxv. 3.), and, like Jacob, he prays through the night; but he is not comforted as Jacob was.

“**My sore.**” Rather, as in margin, “my hand.”

“**Ran.**” Rather, “has been stretched out,” and that without intermission (Lam. iii. 49.). All through the night his hands were outstretched toward heaven in earnest entreaty.

“**Refused to be comforted.**” As Jacob when robbed of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 35.); or as Rachel (Jer. xxxi. 15.). Thoughts of comfort rebounded from him and made no impression.

3. Lit. “I would remember God, and sigh; I would muse (commune with myself), and my spirit sinks.”

“My speech to Thee would rise

“And make deep moan; I fain would muse,

“My heart sinks down and dies” (*Keble*).

PSALMS, LXXVII.

- 4 ¶ Thou holdest mine eyes waking :
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5 ^e I have considered the days of old,—the years of ^e Deut. 32. 7.
ancient times. ^{Ps.} 143. 5.
^{Isai.} 51. 9.
- 6 I call to remembrance ^f my song in the night : ^f Ps. 42. 8.
^g I commune with mine own heart : ^g Ps. 4. 4.
and my spirit made diligent search.
- 7 ^h Will the Lord cast off for ever ? ^h Ps. 74. 1.
And will he ⁱ be favourable no more ? ⁱ Ps. 83. 1.
- 8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever ?
Doth ^k his promise fail ² for evermore ? ^k Rom. 9. 6.
² Heb.
- 9 Hath God ^l forgotten to be gracious ? ^l to genera-
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? ^{tion and}
Selah. ^{generation?}
^l Isai. 49. 15.
- 10 ¶ And I said, This ^m is my infirmity : ^m Ps. 31. 22.
but I will remember the years of the right hand
of the most High.

If he tried to remember God and to muse on His dealings, all was dark and unintelligible : no light broke through the mist.

4. "Thou holdest mine eyes waking." Lit. "Thou heldest the "watches of my eyes," my eyelids ; Thou didst not suffer me to close them ; I could not sleep. Neither would he sleep ; his thoughts go back (ver. 5.) to the days and years of old, so rich in proof of God's power and loving-kindness.

6. Lit. "I would remember my song in the night (Job xxxv. 10.) ; "I would commune with my heart, and so my spirit enquires." He remembers the happier past of his people and himself, when joyful thanksgivings impelled him to music and song ; his mind hovers to and fro between the present and the past, in great agitation, until his anxiety takes shape in the searching questions which follow in the next three verses.

"Deep thoughts my heart engage,
"And searchings high and low" (*Keble*).

9. "Shut up." Just as a man who will not give shuts his hand (Deut. xv. 7.).

10. "And I said." Rather, "then I said." The Psalmist here stops his complaint, and even rebukes himself for his despondency. It was only through the disease and weakness of his soul that he allowed himself to entertain such thoughts.

"The years." It will be observed that the words "But I will re-
"member" are not in the original ; they probably, however, correctly represent the meaning of the passage. The next verse seems to shew what the Psalmist meant by the exclamation, "The years of the right hand
"of the most High !" Others take it differently ; "this is my sorrow
"—my appointed trial and affliction—these are the years of the right
"hand of the most High." The affliction will have its time, and not
last for ever. Or again, the word rendered "years" may, with the Greek
p d

PSALMS, LXXVII.

- ⁿ Ps. 143. 5. 11 ⁿ I will remember the works of the LORD :
surely I will remember thy wonders of old.
- 12 I will meditate also of all thy work,—and talk
of thy doings.
- ^o Ps. 73. 17. 13 ^o Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary :
- ^p Ex. 15. 11. 14 ^p who *is* so great a God as *our* God ?
- 14 Thou *art* the God that doest wonders :
thou hast declared thy strength among the
people.
- ^q Ex. 6. 6.
Deut. 9. 29. 15 ^q Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
- ^r Ex. 14. 21.
Josh. 3. 15, 16.
Ps. 114. 3.
Hab. 3. 8, &c. 16 ¶ ^r The waters saw thee, O God,
the waters saw thee ; they were afraid :
the depths also were troubled.

and other Versions, be translated “the changing;” and then the meaning may be, “This is my sorrow, that the right hand of the most “High has changed.”

11. This remembering of the works of God differs from the remembering of which he had spoken before in ver. 5. There he contemplated from a distance the Divine benefits, and he found the contemplation of them inadequate to assuage or mitigate his grief. Here he takes hold of them, so to speak, as assured testimonies of God’s everlasting grace.

“Then said I, ’Tis my sickening heart ;
“But O ye years of God’s right hand,
“Not yet with thoughts of you I part :
“Far, far and wide, what Heaven hath plann’d
“I would rehearse ; in memory deep
“Thy wonders of old time I keep” (*Keble*).

13. “In the sanctuary.” Rather, “in holiness,” as in the Prayer Book, “Thy way O God, is holy.” See Exod. xv. 11 : “Who is like “unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods ? Who is like Thee, glorious “in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ?”

15. “Thou hast redeemed ;” the word specially used with reference to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage (see Exod. xv. 13.).

“The sons of Jacob and Joseph,” i. e. “the sons whom Jacob begat “and Joseph nourished” (*Targum*). Joseph was their second father, by preserving their lives from famine.

The “Selah” marks the transition to the detailed account of the great redemption.

16—20. A hymn celebrating the passage of the Red Sea : from which we learn that it was accompanied by storm and earthquake, which are not mentioned in Exodus.

“The waters saw Thee.” See Psalm cxiv. 3.

“Were afraid.” Lit. “were in pangs ;” i. e. birth pangs ; “for a “nation was born in the waters of the Red Sea.” Comp. Hab. iii. 10, where the same word is used of the mountains.

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- 17 ² The clouds poured out water :
the skies sent out a sound :
³ thine arrows also went abroad.
- 18 The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven :
^t the lightnings lightened the world :
^u the earth trembled and shook.
- 19 ^x Thy way *is* in the sea,—and thy path in the
great waters,
^y and thy footsteps are not known.
- 20 ^z Thou leddest thy people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

² Heb.
*The clouds
were poured
forth with
water.*

^s 2 Sam. 22. 15.
Hab. 3. 11.

^t Ps. 97. 4.

^u 2 Sam. 22. 8.

^x Hab. 3. 15.

^y Ex. 14. 28.

^z Ex. 13. 21.
& 14. 19.
Ps. 78. 52.
& 80. 1.
Is. 63. 11, 12.
Hos. 12. 13.

PSALM LXXVIII.

1 *An exhortation both to learn and to preach the law of God. 9 The story of God's wrath against the incredulous and disobedient. 67 The Israelites being rejected, God chose Judah, Zion, and David.*

²³ Maschil of Asaph.

1 ^a **G**IVE ear, O my people, to my law :
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

² Ps. 74, title.

³ Or, A Psalm for Asaph to give instruction.

^a Isai. 51. 4.

17. The arrows of God are the lightnings, darting hither and thither, in the service of Him Who sent them (Hab. iii. 9—15.).

18. “In the heaven.” Lit. “in the rolling;” either with reference to the roll of the thunder; “the sound of Thy thunder went rolling forth,” or the whirlwind accompanying the thunder-storm.

19. No trace of His route was left behind; the waters closed in upon the path by which He led His people.

20. Num. xxxiii. 1. “Moses and Aaron were but His instruments. He can raise up like means of blessing for His people now. With this thought the minstrel lets his harp drop, and reclines in fulness of faith “on God’s fatherly love.” His song of triumph for the past has become a prophecy for the future.

There are times when even the remembrance of God’s former gracious dealings does not soothe the broken and desponding heart; it does but aggravate its sorrow. When men dwell upon the past in order to contrast it with the present, their recollection of God’s wonders of old is only another form of brooding over present distress. But let them go forth out of themselves and their own circumstances, and think steadily of God and His doings; let them throw themselves into the history of the past, and remember that though God’s ways are inscrutable, He is Himself always unchangeable, “the same yesterday, to day and for ever,” and then that which in their despair they mourned over as wholly past will be seen in its true light, as the promise and pledge of further deliverance.

PSALM LXXVIII.

Israel’s past history a warning against unbelief.

A recapitulation of the history of Israel, from the Exodus to the reign of David. Special mention is made of the predominance of Ephraim during the early history of the nation; but now Judah had

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- ^b Ps. 49. 4. 2 ^b I will open my mouth in a parable :
^{Matth.} 13. 35. I will utter dark sayings of old :
- ^c Ps. 44. 1. 3 ^c which we have heard and known,
 and our fathers have told us.
- ^d Deut. 4. 9. 4 ^d We will not hide *them* from their children,
 & 6. 7. ^e shewing to the generation to come the praises of
^{Joi} 1. 3. the LORD,
^e Ex. 12. 26, 27. and his strength, and his wonderful works that
 & 13. 8, 14. he hath done.
^{Josh} 4. 6, 7.
- ^f Ps. 147. 13. 5 ¶ For ^f he established a testimony in Jacob,
 and appointed a law in Israel,
 which he commanded our fathers,
^g Deut. 4. 9. ^g that they should make them known to their
 & 6. 7. children :
 & 11. 19.
- ^h Ps. 102. 13. 6 ^h that the generation to come might know *them*,
 even the children *which* should be born ;
 who should arise and declare *them* to their
 children :

been chosen, and the Ark had been moved from Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, to Mount Zion. Perhaps the purpose of the Psalm was to warn Judah, lest she follow the example, and share the fate of Ephraim ; in which case we may reasonably ascribe the Psalm to the time of Solomon. If however the object was to rebuke Ephraim, rather than to warn Judah, it may very well have been written after the revolt of the Ten Tribes, as a kind of protest against it.

For the historical facts alluded to by the Psalmist, see marginal references throughout.

1. The Psalmist comes forward as an inspired teacher, and calls on the people to listen to his law, that is, his instruction, based on the Divine teaching. The opening of the Psalm is like that of Ps. xlix. The Psalmist is spoken of as a prophet in St. Matt. xiii. 35.

2. "In a parable." In a set discourse or poem, which has a moral meaning. Asaph does not mean that he will speak mere parables and dark sayings, but that he will so set forth the history of their fathers, as to point out the lessons to be drawn from it.

"Dark sayings." Enigmas, the hidden meaning of Israel's history ; why God dealt with them as He did, sometimes supporting, sometimes rejecting them. St. Matthew (xiii. 34.) quotes this passage as fulfilled in our Lord's method of teaching.

3. It is best to take this verse as the beginning of a new period : "What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children." See Job xv. 18. It was God's express command, that the wonders which He wrought for His people, and the law which He gave them, should be handed on from generation to generation (Exod. x. 2 ; xii. 26, 27 ; xiii. 8, 14. Deut. iv. 9 ; vi. 7, 20 ; xi. 19 ; Josh. iv. 22.). And the Psalmist means to say, that in the historical warning which he was addressing to the people in this Psalm he was fulfilling that command.

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- 7 that they might set their hope in God,
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments :
- 8 and ⁱ might not be as their fathers,
^k a stubborn and rebellious generation ;
a generation ²¹ that set not their heart aright,
and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.
- 9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, and ²
³ carrying bows,
turned back in the day of battle.
- 10 ^m They kept not the covenant of God,
and refused to walk in his law ;
- 11 and ⁿ forgat his works,
and his wonders that he had shewed them.
- 12 ¶ ^o Marvellous things did he in the sight of their ^o
fathers,

ⁱ 2 Kin. 17. 14.
Ezek. 20. 18.

^k Ex. 32. 9. &
33. 3. & 34. 9.
Deut. 9. 6.
13. & 31. 27.
Ps. 68. 6.

² Heb. that
prepared
not their
heart.

¹ ver. 37.
² Chr. 20. 33.

³ Heb. throw-
ing forth.

^m 2 Kin. 17.
15.

ⁿ Ps. 106. 13.

^o Ex. 7. & 8,
& 9. & 10,
& 11, & 12.

8. "A stubborn and rebellious generation." Here we have the special point of the Psalmist's warning, that the people might not be stubborn and rebellious like their fathers. See Deut. xxi. 18, 20, where the same words are used of the disobedient son, who was unmoved by his parents' exhortations and correction.

9. "The children of Ephraim." It would seem that ver. 67 is the key to the explanation of this passage. The Psalmist having in view, on the one hand, the destruction of Shiloh and the rejection of Ephraim, and on the other, the choice of Judah and Zion, fixes his thoughts from the first on the unfaithfulness of Ephraim. In vv. 9—11 he denounces their cowardice and disobedience, and that, in spite of all the wonders which God had wrought for their fathers in Egypt, and in the wilderness. Then in vv. 56, 57 he repeats his former charge against them, and declares the punishment which had followed. It appears from Josh. xvii. 14—16, that the children of Ephraim, even in early times, though proud and boastful, were slothful and perhaps cowardly, for they had failed to drive out the Canaanites from the inheritance assigned to them, and confessed that they were afraid to attempt to do so, on account of the formidable chariots which the Canaanites used in battle.

"Being armed, and carrying bows." Rather, "armed with bows, and shooting with bows." Though well able to defend themselves, they failed to do so. Or it may be, that the expression is to be understood figuratively, as in ver. 57, "they were turned aside like a deceitful bow," and that the explanation is given in the next verse. Some persons think that the reference is to the circumstances mentioned in 1 Chron. vii. 21, where some of the sons of Ephraim were killed in a plundering expedition to rob the cattle of the men of Gath. Another explanation is, that by "Ephraim" is meant the northern kingdom, and that the defeat of Israel by Abijah (2 Chron. xiii.) is here alluded to ; but it would certainly seem to be the earlier history of the nation which the Psalmist has in view.

12. The Psalmist only just makes mention here of God's wonders

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- ^p Gen. 32. 3.
Num. 13. 22.
ver. 43.
^{Is.} 19. 11, 13.
Ezek. 30. 14.
- 13 ^a He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through ;
and ^r he made the waters to stand as an heap.
- ^r Ex. 15. 8.
Ps. 33. 7.
- 14 ^s In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.
- ^s Ex. 13. 21.
& 14. 24.
Ps. 105. 39.
- 15 ^t He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.
- ^t Ex. 17. 6.
Num. 20. 11.
Ps. 105. 41.
ⁱ Cor. 10. 4.
- 16 He brought ^u streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.
- ^u Deut. 9. 21.
Ps. 105. 41.
- 17 ¶ And they sinned yet more against him by ^x provoking the most High in the wilderness.
- ^x Deut. 9. 22.
Ps. 95. 8.
- 18 And ^y they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.
- ^y Ex. 16. 2.
- ^z Num. 11. 4.
- 19 ^z Yea, they spake against God ; they said, can God ² furnish a table in the wilderness ?
- ² Heb. *order*.

in Egypt, passing on at once to the events in the wilderness. These he recounts in detail, together with Israel's rebellion, and returns at ver. 43 to the wonders in Egypt, on which he dwells at length. Then, touching lightly on the passage through the wilderness, he tells how, notwithstanding their disobedience, God brought His people into Canaan, and gave them victory over their enemies, until at last, of His free grace He raised up David to be their king, and planted His sanctuary on Mount Zion.

“**Zoan**” has been identified with Rameses, the city from which the Israelites started in their march out of Egypt.

13—16. Enumeration of the miracles in the wilderness.

15. “**He clave the rocks.**” As at Horeb (Exod. xvii. 6.) ; and probably at other times, as often as water was wanted.

“**And gave them drink as out of the great depths.**” Lit. “gave them as it were depths to drink in abundance ; out of the great sub-terranean reservoir.”

16. “**Out of the rock.**” Rather, “out of the cliff :” it is the same word as is used in Num. xx. 8, of the cliff at Meribah-Kadesh.

17—20. Israel's perverseness and unbelief.

17. “**And they sinned yet more.**” No mention has been made as yet of any transgression ; but the giving of water from the rock would at once be associated with their murmuring, so that there would be no need to specify it.

18. “**They tempted God.**” Put Him to the proof by making further demands (Exod. xvii. 3, 7. Isa. vii. 12.). The Psalmist condenses the account of the manifestations of discontent recorded before the giving of the quails and manna (Exod. xvi.) and the second giving of quails (Num. xi.).

“**For their lust.**” Out of mere lust (Num. xi. 4, 5.).

19. The words put into their mouths are a poetical representation of what was in their hearts. They made the very miracles already

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- 20 ^a Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters ^a Ex. 17. 6.
 gushed out, Num. 20. 11.
 and the streams overflowed ;
 can he give bread also ?
 can he provide flesh for his people ?
- 21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and ^b was wroth : ^b Num. 11. 1,
 so a fire was kindled against Jacob, 10.
 and anger also came up against Israel ;
- 22 because they ^c believed not in God, ^c Heb. 3. 18.
 and trusted not in his salvation : Jude 5.
- 23 though he had commanded the clouds from
 above,
^d and opened the doors of heaven, ^d Gen. 7. 11.
 Mal. 3. 10.
- 24 ^e and had rained down manna upon them to eat, ^e Ex. 16. 4, 14.
 and had given them of the corn of heaven. Ps. 105. 40.
 John 6. 31.
- 25 ² Man did eat angels' food :—he sent them meat ¹ Cor. 10. 3.
 to the full. ² Or, *Every one did eat the bread of the mighty,*
- 26 ^f He caused an east wind ³ to blow in the ^f Num. 11. 31.
 heaven : Ps. 103. 20.
 and by his power he brought in the south wind. ³ Heb. *to go.*
- 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,
 and ⁴ feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea : ⁴ Heb. *fowl of wing.*
- 28 and he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp,
 round about their habitations.
- 29 ⁵ So they did eat, and were well filled : ⁵ Num. 11. 20.
 for he gave them their own desire ;

wrought the starting-point of fresh doubt ; God might be able to supply their thirst, but He could not give them bread or flesh.

21—33. The punishment of their unbelief. God gave them the bread and flesh which they desired ; but the granting of their desire was the severest chastisement.

25. "Angels' food." Lit. as in margin, "bread of the mighty ones." The ancient Versions render it "bread of angels," as supplied by angels, or as coming from the dwelling-place of the angels (Wisd. xvi. 20.).

26. "East wind . . . south wind." This may be a poetical expression for the south-east wind, which, flowing from the Aelanitic gulf of the Red Sea, would bring the quails. Or if (as is supposed) the quails were on their spring journey of migration northwards, a south wind would bring them from southern Egypt up the gulf of Akabah, and then an east wind would take them to the Israelitish encampment. In Num. xi. 31 it is said that "a wind from the Lord brought quails "from the sea."

28. "Let it fall." Num. xi. 31.

29. "Their own desire." Their own lust. The very word points to Kibroth-hattaavah, "the graves of lust" (Num. xi. 34.).

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- 30 they were not estranged from their lust.
ⁿ Num. 11. 33. But ^h while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,
 31 the wrath of God came upon them,
 and slew the fattest of them,
 and ² smote down the ³ chosen *men* of Israel.
² II. b. made to bow.
³ Or, young men. 32 ¶ For all this ⁱ they sinned still,
 and ^k believed not for his wondrous works.
¹ Num. 14, & 16, & 17. 33 ¹ Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
 and their years in trouble.
¹ Num. 14. 29, 35, & 26. 64, 65. 34 ^m When he slew them, then they sought him :
 and they returned and enquired early after God.
ⁿ Deut. 32. 4, 15, 31. 35 And they remembered that ⁿ God *was* their rock,
 and the high God ^o their redeemer.
^o Ex. 15. 13. Deut. 7. 8. 36 Nevertheless they did ^p flatter him with their
 & Isai. 41. 14. & 44. 6. & 63. 9. mouth,
 and they lied unto him with their tongues.
^p Ezek. 33. 31. 37 For ^q their heart was not right with him,
 neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
^q ver. 8. 38 ^r But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their*
 iniquity, and destroyed *them* not :
^r Num. 14. 18, 20. yea, many a time ^s turned he his anger away,
^s Isai. 43. 9. ^t 1 Kin. 21. 23. and did not stir up all his wrath.
^t 1 Kin. 21. 23. 39 For ^u he remembered ^x that they *were but* flesh ;
^u Ps. 103. 14, 16. ^x Gen. 6. 3. John 3. 6.

30. The verse may be rendered, "They were not parted from their lust; their meat was yet in their mouths, when the wrath of God," &c. The Psalmist plainly had before him the very words of Num. xi. 33.

31. The strong and hale, the hope of the nation, and the young, fell a prey to the plague.

32. In spite of these visitations they went on sinning; words which have a special reference to their murmuring after the return of the spies.

33. "In vanity." Lit. "in a breath" (Ps. xxxix. 5, 6.): "he caused their days to fade away like a breath." The reference is to the sentence passed upon the sinful generation.

"In trouble." Rather, "in terror" (Lev. xxvi. 16). They lived in perpetual fear, under sentence of speedy death (Num. xiv. 28—34).

34—39. Their transient repentance and God's unwearied mercy.

34. As in the case of the fiery serpents (Num. xxi. 6, 7).

"Early." Rather, "earnestly," as in Ps. lxxiii. 1.

36. It is not meant that they were not sincere in their confessions and prayers, but they sought God from fear alone, not because their hearts were drawn to Him (see 1 Kings xxi. 27.).

38. "Forgave." Rather, "forgives." God's mercy is everlasting (Exod. xxxiv. 6.).

39. "Flesh." That is, morally as well as physically weak (Gen. vi. 3; viii. 21.).

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

ⁱ a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. ⁱ Job 7. 7. 16.
Jam. 4. 14.

- 40 ¶ How oft did they ² ^z provoke him in the wilderness,
and grieve him in the desert! ² Or, rebel against him.
z ver. 17.
Ps. 95. 9, 10,
Isai. 7. 13.
& 63. 10,
Eph. 4. 30.
Heb. 3. 16, 17.
- 41 Yea, ^a they turned back and tempted God,
and ^b limited the Holy One of Israel. a Num. 14. 22.
Deut. 6. 16.
- 42 They remembered not his hand,
nor the day when he delivered them ³ from the enemy. ³ Or, from affliction.
c ver. 12.
Ps. 105. 27,
&c.
- 43 How ^c he had ⁴ wrought his signs in Egypt,
and his wonders in the field of Zoan : ⁴ Heb. set.
d Ex. 7. 20.
Ps. 105. 29.
- 44 ^d and had turned their rivers into blood ;
and their floods, that they could not drink. e Ex. 8. 24.
Ps. 105. 31.
- 45 ^c He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which
devoured them ;
and ^f frogs which destroyed them. f Ex. 8. 6.
Ps. 105. 30.
- 46 ^g He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar,
and their labour unto the locust. g Ex. 10. 13,
15. Ps. 105.
34, 35.
- 47 ^h He ⁵ destroyed their vines with hail,
and their sycamore trees with ⁶ frost. h Ex. 9. 23, 25.
Ps. 105. 33.
⁵ Heb. killed.
⁶ Or, great hailstones.

“Wind.” Job vii. 9. Hos. vi. 4 ; xiii. 3.

40—55. Here the Psalmist resumes the sad tale of Israel’s forgetfulness, and rehearses at length the wonders which they should have remembered ; first, the terrible judgments on the Egyptians (vv. 44—51.), and then His special mercy to themselves in bringing them in safety to the land of promise (vv. 52—56.).

41. “Limited.” The word literally means “to set a mark upon ;” and the meaning here is supposed to be either (i.), they set marks, i. e. boundaries or limits, to the Divine power (comp. ver. 20.) ; or (ii.), they set a mark, branded, stigmatized, reproached God ; or (iii.), they marked, i. e. goaded, provoked, Him. This last is the rendering of the Prayer Book, following the Greek Version : “they moved,” i. e. exasperated Him.

43. See on ver. 12. In the enumeration of the plagues the order of the history is not followed, except as regards the first and the last, and several are omitted, viz. the lice, the murrain of cattle, the boils and blains on man and beast, and the darkness.

45. “Divers sorts of flies.” This is the translation of a single word in the original ; it should be rendered simply “flies.” The common flies of Egypt, even in the present day, are said to deserve well the epithet “devouring.”

46. “Caterpillar.” Probably the locust in its larva state (Joel i. 4.).

47. For the vines of Egypt compare Gen. xl. 9. Numb. xx. 5. The sycamore or fig-mulberry was of so great value that David appointed a special overseer for it in his kingdom, as for vines and olives (1 Chron. xxvii. 28.).

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- ¹ Ex. 9. 23, 24, 25. ² Ps. 105. 32. ² Heb. *He shut up.* ³ Or, *lightnings.* 48 ^{1 2} He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to ³ hot thunderbolts.
- ⁴ Heb. *He weighed a path.* 49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them.*
- ⁵ Or, *their beasts to the murrain,* Ex. 9. 3, 6. ⁶ Ex. 12. 29. ⁷ Ps. 105. 36. & 136. 10. 50 ⁴ He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave ⁵ their life over to the pestilence;
- ⁸ Ps. 106. 22. ⁹ Ps. 77. 20. 51 ^k and smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in ^l the tabernacles of Ham:
- ⁿ Ex. 14. 19, 20. 52 but ^m made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- ^o Ex. 14. 27, 28. & 15. 10. 53 And he ⁿ led them on safely, so that they feared not:
- ⁶ Heb. *covered.* ^p Ex. 15. 17. ^q Ps. 44. 3. 54 And he brought them to the border of his ^p sanctuary, *even to this mountain,* ^q *which* his right hand had purchased.

Frost is unknown in Egypt; it is better therefore to render, with the margin, "great hailstones," or "sleet." The word does not occur elsewhere.

48. Exod. ix. 23: "The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground."

49. Lit. "an embassy of angels of misfortune." Perhaps evil angels troubled the Egyptians during the darkness (Wisd. xvii. 3—5, 9, 10.); or there may be a special reference to "the destroyer" in Exod. xii. 23.

50. "Made a way." Lit. "levelled a way;" allowed it to go forth without let or hindrance.

"The pestilence." The same word is used for "the murrain" in Exod. ix. 3; hence the margin suggests that the clause should be rendered "gave their beasts to the murrain." But the Hebrew word simply means "destruction," and the context seems to shew that the reference is to the death of the firstborn.

51. "The chief of their strength." Lit. "beginning of strength," applied to the firstborn also in Gen. xlix. 3. Deut. xxi. 17.

"Ham." So in Ps. cv. 23, 27; cvi. 22. The Egyptian name of Egypt is *Kem*.

54. "The border of His sanctuary." Lit. "the border of His holiness," i. e. His holy border, or territory.

"This mountain" may mean Zion, the mountain which He had chosen (Ps. lxxviii. 16.); but more probably it is the whole of Canaan, with its mountains and hills; "this mountain land," as "the mountain of Thine inheritance" (Exod. xv. 17.). See Isa. xi. 9; lvii. 13.

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- 55 ^r He cast out the heathen also before them, r Ps. 44. 2.
 and ^s divided them an inheritance by line, s Josh. 13. 7.
& 19. 51.
Ps. 136. 21,
22.
 and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their
 tents.
- 56 ^t Yet they tempted and provoked the most high ^t God, Judg. 2. 11,
12.
 and kept not his testimonies :
- 57 but ^u turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like ^u their fathers : ver. 41.
Ezek. 20. 27,
28.
 they were turned aside ^x like a deceitful bow. x Hos. 7. 16.
- 58 ^y For they provoked him to anger with their ^y Deut. 32.
16, 21.
Judg. 2. 12,
20.
Ezek. 20. 28.
^z high places, z Dent. 12. 2, 4.
1 Kin. 11. 7.
& 12. 31.
 and moved him to jealousy with their graven
 images.
- 59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth,
 and greatly abhorred Israel :
- 60 ^a so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, a 1 Sam. 4. 11.
Jer. 7. 12, 14.
& 26. 6, 9.
 the tent *which* he placed among men ;
- 61 ^b and delivered his strength into captivity, b Judg. 18. 30.
 and his glory into the enemy's hand.
- 62 ^c He gave his people over also unto the sword ; c 1 Sam. 4. 10.
 and was wroth with his inheritance.
- 63 The fire consumed their young men ;

55. "Divided them." Lit. "made them (i. e. the heathen) fall as "a line of inheritance;" allotted their land to Israel as an inheritance (Josh. xxiii. 4.).

56—64. The Psalmist returns to that which is the main subject of the Psalm, the ingratitude of Israel; with special reference here to the time of the Judges (Judg. ii. 12, 13.).

56. "Tempted and provoked;" as before in the wilderness (vv. 17, 18, 41.).

57. "Like a deceitful bow." Which will not discharge its arrows in the right direction (comp. Hos. vii. 16.).

58. "Moved Him to jealousy." Deut. xxxii. 16, 21.

59. The same had been said of their fathers (ver. 21.).

60. "Forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh." After the capture of the Ark by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 11.), Shiloh fell into insignificance; the Ark was never taken back there, and the Tabernacle was treated by Samuel as an abandoned shrine, his sacrifices being performed elsewhere (see Jer. vii. 12.).

61. "His strength . . . His glory," i. e. the Ark, as the place where He manifested His glory and His power (Ps. cxxxii. 8; lxiii. 2. See also 1 Sam. iv. 21.).

62. In the battle with the Philistines, when the Ark was taken, 30,000 were slain (1 Sam. iv. 10.).

63. "The fire," i. e. of war; the sword (comp. Num. xxi. 28. Jer. xlvi. 45.).

PSALMS, LXXVIII.

- ^d Jer. 7. 34.
& 16. 9.
& 25. 10. and ^d their maidens were not ² given to marriage.
64 ^e Their priests fell by the sword ;
² Heb.
praised. and ^f their widows made no lamentation.
- ^e 1 Sam. 4. 11.
& 22. 18. 65 ¶ Then the Lord ^g awaked as one out of sleep,
^f Job 27. 15. and ^h like a mighty man that shouteth by reason
Ezek. 24. 23. of wine.
^g Ps. 44. 23.
^h Isai. 42. 13. 66 And ⁱ he smote his enemies in the hinder parts :
ⁱ 1 Sam. 5. 6,
12. & 6. 4. he put them to a perpetual reproach.
- 67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph,
and chose not the tribe of Ephraim :
68 but chose the tribe of Judah,
the mount Zion ^k which he loved.
- ^k Ps. 87. 2. 69 And he ^l built his sanctuary like high *palaces*,
^l 1 Kings 6. like the earth which he hath ³ established for
³ Heb.
founded. ever.
- ^m 1 Sam. 16. 70 ^m He chose David also his servant,
11. 12. and took him from the sheepfolds :
2 Sam. 7. 8. 71 ⁿ from following ⁿ the ewes great with young he
⁴ Heb.
From after. brought him
ⁿ Gen. 33. 13. ^o to feed Jacob his people,
Isai. 40. 11. and Israel his inheritance.
^o 2 Sam. 5. 2.
1 Chr. 11. 2.

“ Given to marriage.” Lit. as in margin, “ praised ” (sung of) in the marriage song.

64. “ Their priests ” (1 Sam. iv. 11, 17.). Women survived their husbands, but were unable, on account of the condition of the land, to shew them the last signs of honour (Job xxvii. 15.).

65. The Psalm here takes a fresh turn. Though justly angry with His people, God will not keep His anger for ever. He takes them to Himself again, but in such a way as to transfer the precedence of Ephraim to the tribe of Judah. He seemed to sleep when the enemies of Israel prevailed ; after a while He awoke and took vengeance on them (Ps. vii. 6 ; xxxv. 23 ; xlv. 23 ; lxxiii. 20.).

66. “ In the hinder parts.” Rather, “ backward ” in flight ; in allusion to the victories under Samuel, Saul, and David.

67. When the Ark was brought back from the land of the Philistines, it was not taken again to Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, but to Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12—18 ; vii. 27—29.).

69. “ Like high palaces.” Rather, “ like the heights,” i. e. of heaven. The Tabernacle was to be lasting as the heights of heaven, and firm as the earth, which He hath founded for ever. As the heavens and earth which now are will give way to a new heaven and a new earth, so God’s dwelling-place will be ever among men, though not under the conditions of His abode on Mount Zion (Rev. xxi. 2, 3.).

71. “ To feed.” He who had fed the flock of Jesse was chosen to feed the flock of God ; just as the fishermen of Galilee were chosen to be “ fishers of men ” (2 Sam. vii. 7, 8.).

How truly does the history of Israel as drawn in this Psalm represent

PSALMS, LXXIX.

72 So he fed them according to the ^p integrity of his ^p 1 Kin. 9. 4.
heart ;
and guided them by the skilfulness of his
hands.

PSALM LXXIX.

1 *The psalmist complaineth of the desolation of Jerusalem. 8 He prayeth
for deliverance, 13 and promiseth thankfulness.*

A Psalm ² of Asaph.

<p>1 O GOD, the heathen are come into ^a thine inheritance ; ^b thy holy temple have they defiled ; ^c they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.</p> <p>2 ^d The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.</p>	<p>² Or, <i>for Asaph.</i> ^a Ex. 15. 17. Ps. 74. 2.</p> <p>^b Ps. 74. 7.</p> <p>^c 2 Kin. 25. 9, 10. 2 Chr. 36. 13. Mic. 3. 12.</p> <p>^d Jer. 7. 33. & 16. 4. & 34. 20.</p>
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the history of mankind in general ; sin is followed by chastisement, and chastisement leads to repentance, but when the chastisement is withdrawn, God's mercy is forgotten. Nevertheless He is still forbearing and full of compassion, forgiving iniquity and remembering men's weakness. Side by side, however, with this lesson of God's forbearance, the Psalm no less plainly teaches us that His promises are not absolute and inalienable, but conditional on man's faithfulness and devotion.

PSALM LXXIX.

Appeal on behalf of the people outraged and reproached.

Like Ps. lxxiv., this Psalm laments the destruction of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple, and in very similar language (comp. ver. 5 with lxxiv. 1, 10 ; ver. 1 with lxxiv. 2, 7 ; ver. 12 with lxxiv. 10, 18, 22 ; ver. 13 with lxxiv. 1.). There are also points of connection between this Psalm and other parts of Scripture : ver. 4 is a reproduction of Ps. xlv. 13 ; vv. 6, 7 occur in Jer. x. 25 ; and ver. 3 is quoted as part of Scripture in 1 Macc. vii. 16. As was said above on Ps. lxxiv., it is perhaps on the whole most likely that both Psalms have reference to the Chaldean destruction of Jerusalem.

1—4. The Psalm opens with a plaintive account of the calamities which had befallen the nation ;—the Holy City occupied by heathen and laid in ruins ; the Temple desecrated ; the bodies of God's people lying unburied around Jerusalem ; His chosen people scorned and derided by their neighbours.

1. "Thine inheritance." Ps. lxxiv. 2. Lam. i. 10.

"Have they defiled." In Ps. lxxiv. 7 the idea of profanation is connected with the work of destruction ; and it may be so here.

"On heaps," i. e. of ruins. Thus the prophecy of Micah (iii. 12.) quoted by Jeremiah (xxvi. 18.) was fulfilled.

2. "The flesh of Thy saints," &c. This passage is quoted by the

PSALMS, LXXIX.

- o Ps. 141. 7.
Jer. 14. 16.
& 16. 4.
Rev. 11. 9.
f Ps. 44. 13.
& 80. 6.
- g Ps. 74. 1, 9,
10. & 85. 5.
& 89. 46.
- h Zeph. 1. 18.
& 3. 8.
- i Jer. 10. 25.
Rev. 16. 1.
- k Is. 45. 4, 5.
2 Thess. 1. 8.
- l Ps. 53. 4.
- m Isai. 64. 9.
- ² Or, *the iniquities of them that were before us.*
- n Deut. 28. 43.
Ps. 142. 6.
- 3 Their blood have they shed like water
round about Jerusalem; ^e and *there was* none to
bury *them*.
- 4 ^f We are become a reproach to our neighbours,
a scorn and derision to them that are round
about us.
- 5 ¶ ^g How long, LORD? Wilt thou be angry for
ever?
Shall thy ^h jealousy burn like fire?
- 6 ⁱ Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have
^k not known thee,
and upon the kingdoms that have ^l not called
upon thy name.
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,
and laid waste his dwelling place.
- 8 ^m O remember not against us ² former iniquities:
let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:
for we are ⁿ brought very low.

writer of the Book of Maccabees as an old prophecy fulfilled in his time (1 Macc. vii. 17.). The circumstances mentioned would be likely to happen during any foreign invasion (Deut. xxviii. 26.).

“None to bury them.” A special aggravation of their trouble (see marginal references).

4. See Ps. xliv. 14. For the mockery and malicious joy of the neighbouring peoples at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans, see Ezek. xxv. 8—14. Lam. iv. 21, 22. Jer. xlix. 7—22. Obad. 1—16. Zech. i. 15. Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

5—7. Under the continued pressure of the trouble, the Psalmist appeals to God’s compassion, and begs Him to turn His wrath upon the heathen who were estranged from Him, and whom He was employing as the instrument of His chastisement against His own people, who (as is implied) *had* known Him and called upon His name. Comp. Isa. lxiii. 19: “We are Thine; Thou never barest rule over them; they “were not called by Thy name.”

The first note of interrogation in ver. 5 should be removed (Ps. xiii. 2.).

“Like fire.” Ps. lxxviii. 21. Deut. xxxii. 22.

6. The same words occur Jer. x. 25. It is difficult to say whether the Psalmist borrowed from the Prophet, or the Prophet from the Psalmist. Perhaps the former suggestion is the more likely. The whole tone of the Psalm is like Jeremiah’s.

8. “Former iniquities.” Rather, as in margin, “the iniquities of “them that were before us.” The Psalmist acknowledges that the calamities which Israel was suffering were the consequence of their sin—both their own sin (as is evident from the prayer for pardon in ver. 9.) and the sin of their forefathers.

“Prevent.” Lit. “come to meet us” (Ps. lix. 10.).

PSALMS, LXXIX.

- 9 ¶ ° Help us, O God of our salvation, for the ° Chr. 14. 11.
glory of thy name :
and deliver us, and purge away our sins, p for p Jer. 14. 7, 21.
thy name's sake.
- 10 ° Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is ° Ps. 42. 10.
their God? & 115. 2.
- Let him be known among the heathen in our
sight
by the ° revenging of the blood of thy servants ° Heb.
which is shed. vengeance.
- 11 Let ° the sighing of the prisoner come before ° Ps. 102. 20.
thee ;
- according to the greatness of ° thy power ° Heb.
° pre- ° Heb.
serve thou those that are appointed to die ; reserve the
children of
death.
- 12 and render unto our neighbours ° sevenfold into ° Gen. 4. 15.
their bosom Isai. 65. 6, 7.
Jer. 32. 18.
Luke 6. 38.
- ° their reproach, wherewith they have reproached
thee, O Lord. ° Ps. 74. 18, 22.

9. "For the glory of Thy name." God's own honour demanded that the heathen, whom He employed in punishing His people, should not always prevail: He Who had proclaimed His name as "the Lord, "the Lord God, merciful and gracious" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) would not fail to forgive His people's sins.

10. "Where is their God?" Joel ii. 17. Comp. also Exod. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 13—17. Deut. ix. 28.

"Let him be known," &c. Rather, as in Prayer Book, "let the avenging of the blood of Thy servants which is shed be made known among the heathen in our sight" (see Deut. xxxii. 43.). The Psalmist prays that God's people may see with their own eyes God's righteous judgment on their enemies.

11. See Ps. cii. 20; which is undoubtedly a Psalm of the time of the captivity.

"Those that are appointed to die." Lit. "sons of death," those who are doomed to die, whom death already claims as her own.

12. "Our neighbours." See ver. 4.

"Sevenfold," i. e. fully; seven being the number of a completed process (see Gen. iv. 15, 24.).

"Into their bosom." As the receptacle of whatever is given (see Isa. lxxv. 7. Jer. xxxii. 18. St. Luke vi. 38.).

"Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached Thee, O Lord." It is clear from this passage as well as from the whole Psalm, that it was the dishonour done to God, and not any feeling of personal anger, that inspired the Psalmist's prayer for vengeance. It was because God's temple was profaned, His city destroyed, His people dishonoured, His Name reproached, that the Psalmist calls for the Divine interference. He acknowledges fully that the nation was suffering for their own and their fathers' sins, but he only on that account prays more earnestly for pardon and relief. His prayer is grounded on various pleas; partly

PSALMS, LXXX.

- ^u Ps. 74. 1. & 95. 7. & 100. 3.
^s Isai. 43. 21.
^z Heb. *to generation and generation.*
- 13 So ^u we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever:
^x we will shew forth thy praise ² to all generations.

PSALM LXXX.

- ² Ps. 45, & 69, title.
³ Or, *for Asaph.*
^a Ps. 77. 20.
^b Ex. 25. 20, 22.
¹ Sam. 4. 4.
² Sam. 6. 2.
^c Ps. 99. 1.
^c Deut. 33. 2.
^d Ps. 50. 2. & 94. 1.
^d Num. 2. 18,—23.
^a Heb. *come for salvation to us.*
- 1 *The psalmist in his prayer complaineth of the miseries of the church. 8 God's former favours are turned into judgments. 14 He prayeth for deliverance.*

To the chief Musician ² upon Shoshannim-Eduth,
 A Psalm ³ of Asaph.

- 1 **G**IVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
 thou that ledest Joseph ^a like a flock;
^b thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims,
^c shine forth.
- 2 ^d Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh
 stir up thy strength,—and ⁴ come *and* save us.

because of the extremity to which they were reduced; partly, because of the glory of God's Name, Who is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, "and abundant in goodness and truth;" and partly, because the injuries and insults offered to His people were in truth a reproach to Him. Christians in their troubles may fittingly urge the same pleas, and urge them with the confident belief that God will at length avenge His own elect (St. Luke xviii. 7, 8). The time will come when they, the sheep of His pasture, shall give Him thanks, and shew forth His praise from generation to generation.

PSALM LXXX.

Prayer for restoration.

The special mention of "Joseph" in ver. 1, and of "Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh" in ver. 2, and the silence concerning Judah, have led to the inference that the affliction which the Psalmist laments was the affliction of the Northern kingdom alone; and hence the Psalm has been supposed to be a prayer for the Ten Tribes, that God would restore them and shew forth His ancient mercies to Israel. Others again think that Joseph is merely a national title, and that the key to the association of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh is to be found in the circumstance that these three tribes were joined in one group in the camp in the wilderness (see on ver. 2).

"Upon Shoshannim-Eduth." See Pss. xlv; lx. titles.

1. "O Shepherd of Israel." This title seems to have special reference to Jacob's blessing of Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 15): "the God which fed me" (rather, "the God Who was my shepherd"), xlix. 24.

"That dwellest between the cherubims." Rather, "which sittest upon the cherubim," as upon a throne; as in xcix. 1. 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 Kings xix. 15. Isa. xxxvii. 16. Comp. also Ps. xviii. 10.

"Shine forth." Manifest Thyself in Thy brightness and glory; as in another Asaphic Psalm (l. 2).

2. "Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh." The sons and brother

- 3 ^e Turn us again, O God,
^f and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- 4 ¶ O LORD God of hosts,
 how long ² wilt thou be angry against the prayer
 of thy people?
- 5 ^g Thou feedest them with the bread of tears;
 and givest them tears to drink in great measure.
- 6 ^h Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours:
 and our enemies laugh among themselves.
- 7 ⁱ Turn us again, O God of hosts,
 and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- 8 ¶ Thou hast brought ^k a vine out of Egypt:

^e ver. 7, 19.
 Lam. 5. 21.
^f Num. 6. 25.
 Ps. 4. 6.
 & 67. 1.

² Heb. *wilt thou smoke*,
 Ps. 74. 1.

^g Ps. 42. 3.
 & 102. 9.
 Isai. 30. 20.

^h Ps. 44. 13.
 & 79. 4.

ⁱ ver. 3, 19.

^k Isai. 5. 1, 7.
 Jer. 2. 21.
 Ezek. 15. 6.
 & 17. 6.
 & 19. 10.

of Joseph were encamped together to the west of the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Num. ii. 17—24.), and had the Ark immediately in front of them in marching (Num. x. 22—24.). As the Holy of Holies was at the western end of the Tabernacle, it would be immediately “before,” that is, in front of these three tribes. With this ancient arrangement before his eye Asaph prays that He Whose seat was upon the cherubim would shine forth, and deliver not only the tribes specially mentioned, but the whole nation.

3. The refrain of the Psalm, repeated (vv. 7, 19.), perhaps sung by the whole congregation. It seems to be a prayer for return from captivity; but it may mean deliverance from any calamity. As the Psalm advances, the Psalmist calls upon God with increased urgency; first, he addresses him as “God;” then (ver. 7.), “O God of hosts;” and at length (ver. 19.), “O Lord God of hosts.”

4. “Wilt Thou be angry?” Lit. “Hast Thou smoked?” The past tense implies that the wrath has continued for some time; how long is it to last? “Until when wilt Thou have been angry?” The usual expression is, that God’s anger smokes (lxxiv. 1.); here it is said of God Himself, in contrast, as it would seem, with the shining of His countenance in ver. 3.

“Against,” i. e. in spite of, notwithstanding (Ps. lxxviii. 32.). God hides Himself as it were in the smoke of wrath, and the prayer cannot reach Him.

5. “Bread of tears.” Comp. marg. reff.

“In great measure.” The word only occurs again in Isa. xl. 12. It means literally “a third part;” that is, a vessel of a particular size, like our “quart.” Though their tears fall only drop by drop, they fill the cup.

6. “A strife.” That is, they vie with each other who will hate and hurt us most.

“Our neighbours.” Comp. Ps. lxxix. 4, 12.

8. “Thou hast brought.” There is in the word the notion of rooting up and removing (Job xix. 10.). As men transplant vines, in order to improve them, so Israel, who had become great in Egypt, was trans-

PSALMS, LXXX.

- ¹ Ps. 44. 2.
& 78. 55. ¹ thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
- ^m Ex. 23. 28,
Josh. 24. 12. 9 Thou ^m preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.
- ² Heb.
the cedars
of God. 10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* ² the goodly cedars.
- ⁿ Ps. 72. 8. 11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches ⁿ unto the river.
- ^o Ps. 89. 40, 41,
Isai. 5. 5,
Nah. 2. 2. 12 Why hast thou *then* ^o broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
- 13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
- 14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts :
^p look down from heaven, and behold,—and visit this vine ;
- ^q Isai. 43. 5. 15 and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong ^q for thyself.

planted to Canaan. Comp. Gen. xlix. 22, where Joseph is compared to "a fruitful bough." The comparison of the vine is of frequent occurrence (see marg. ref.).

"Thou hast cast out," &c. Ps. xlv. 2. Exod. xv. 17.

9. "Thou preparedst room." Didst clear the ground, so that it should have free space and possibility of expansion.

10. "The boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars." Or, "the goodly cedars (were covered) by its boughs." Some think that the northern and southern boundaries of the promised land are described in this verse, viz. the hill country in the south and Lebanon in the north, as the eastern and western boundaries, the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, are indicated in the next (Ps. lxxii. 8. Deut. xi. 24. 1 Kings iv. 24.).

12. Why is there so great a contrast between the past and the present? The answer is given (Isa. v. 4.); the favoured vine had only brought forth wild grapes.

13. "The boar out of the wood." It is not necessary to suppose that some particular enemy is intended; indeed the parallel clause "the wild beast of the field" is against such a supposition. Comp. Jer. iv. 7; v. 6.

15. "The vineyard." Rather, "stock:" so the Jewish authorities understand the word; but many take it as a verb; "establish" or "protect" what Thou hast planted.

"The branch." Lit. "the son" (Gen. xlix. 22, "a fruitful bough"; lit. "the son of a fruitful tree.").

PSALMS, LXXXI.

- 16 *It is burned with fire, it is cut down :*
^r they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. ^r Ps. 39. 11.
& 76. 7.
- 17 ^s Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right
 hand,
 upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong
 for thyself.
- 18 So will not we go back from thee :
 quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
- 19 ^t Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, ^t ver. 3, 7.
 cause thy face to shine ; and we shall be saved.

PSALM LXXXI.

¹ *An exhortation to a solemn praising of God. 4 God challengeth that duty by reason of his benefits. 8 God, exhorting to obedience, complaineth of their disobedience, which proveth their own hurt.*

To the chief Musician ² upon Gittith, *A Psalm* ³ of Asaph. ² Ps. 8, title.

1 **S**ING aloud unto God our strength : ³ Or,
for Asaph.
 make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

16. "It is cut down." See Isa. xxxiii. 12, where the word is used of thorns cut down and left to dry for fuel.

17. "The man of Thy right hand," i. e. the people of Israel, hitherto spoken of as a vine. The Psalmist prays that God would protect those whom He had been wont to protect ; or perhaps, those whom His right hand had planted (ver. 15.), or whom He had placed at His right hand. Israel is called also "the son of man," to denote his feeble and dependent condition in himself.

18. "Quicken." "Revive," restore us to a new life (see Ps. lxxi. 20 ; lxxxv. 6. Hos. vi. 2.).

In times of persecution, or of spiritual decay, this Psalm may well be offered for the Church. God's former mercies are a powerful plea for restoration. Or we may apply it to ourselves individually : we are trees of the Lord's planting, whom He has taken out of the waste and set in His own garden. If through our own fault we have become dead and worthless, what more appropriate prayer can we offer than that God would bring us back to Him, cause His Face to shine on us, and save us !

PSALM LXXXI.

Summons to the Paschal feast.

This Psalm contains, first, a call to the feast, and then a declaration of the reason of the feast, followed by an earnest remonstrance, in the words of Almighty God Himself, against the past ingratitude of His people, and a promise of untold mercies, if they would now turn and obey.

1. The call in this verse is to the whole congregation. The word translated "make a joyful noise," though used sometimes of the clanging of trumpets, does not necessarily mean more than to shout aloud, as in Ezra iii. 11. The next verse is addressed to the Levites, the appointed singers and musicians in Divine service (2 Chron. v. 12.) ;

PSALMS, LXXXI.

- 2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

^a Lev. 23. 24.
Num. 10. 10.

- 4 For ^a this was a statute for Israel,
and a law of the God of Jacob.

- 5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony,
when he went out ² through the land of Egypt :
^b where I heard a language that I understood
not.

² Or,
against.
^b Ps. 114. 1.

and the third verse to the priests, to whom the blowing of trumpets especially belonged (Num. x. 8. Josh. vi. 4.). The festival is to be hailed by the people with shouts of joy, by the Levites with music, and by the priests with the blowing of cornets.

3. "In the time appointed." Rather, "at the full moon:" so that the meaning of the whole verse is, "blow the trumpet at the new moon, "at the full moon, on the day of our feast."

"Sound your trumpet-welcome clear

"To the moon's returning ray,

"When her orb is full and near;

"Sound, in our high solemn day" (*Keble*).

It is disputed whether the Feast of Tabernacles or the Passover is intended; if the former, there would be a special fitness in the call to blow the trumpet at the new moon, because the new moon, or first day of the month Tisri, in which the Feast of Tabernacles occurred, was especially the Feast of Trumpets. It has been objected indeed, that if the Feast of Tabernacles, from the 15th to the 22nd of Tisri, was meant, the Psalmist would seem to ignore the great fast of the year, the Day of Atonement, or the 10th of Tisri. But he does not say that the blowing of trumpets was to be kept up during the whole interval, from the 1st to the 15th; only that the rejoicing at the new moon was to be renewed at the full. On the other hand, the deliverance spoken of in the Psalm points plainly to the Feast of the Passover, on the 15th of Nisan, the first month of the ecclesiastical, as Tisri was of the civil, year; and though the 1st of Tisri was the *Feast of Trumpets*, a special blowing of trumpets was enjoined on every new moon (Num. x. 10.). The Psalm is therefore, most probably, an invitation to keep the Passover; the beginning of the month is to be saluted with shouts of joy and music, which are to break out afresh when the feast itself comes on.

4. "For." This is the reason why the feast should be observed with such joy; it was a duly appointed statute and ordinance of God for Israel, a testimony or memorial-witness of His love and power.

5. "Joseph." Put for the whole people; as would be natural during the sojourn in Egypt.

"When He went out through the land of Egypt." That is, went forth over the land to judge it (Exod. xi. 4; xii. 12.), as Joseph had gone forth over it to save it (Gen. xli. 45.). This passage is strongly in favour of the Passover being the feast referred to.

"Where I heard a language that I understood not." Some suppose that the Psalmist here identifies himself with Israel dwelling

PSALMS, LXXXI.

- 6 ° I removed his shoulder from the burden : c Isai. 9. 4.
& 10. 27.
his hands ² were delivered from ^d the pots. 2 Heb. *passed away.*
- 7 ° Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ; d Ex. 1. 14.
^f I answered thee in the secret place of thunder : e Ex. 2. 23.
& 14. 10.
I ^g proved thee at the waters of ³ Meribah. Ps. 50. 15.
Selah. f Ex. 19. 19.
g Ex. 17. 6. 7.
Num. 20. 13.
- 8 ¶ ^h Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee ; 3 Or, *Strife.*
h Ps. 50. 7.
- O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me ;
- 9 ⁱ there shall no ^k strange god be in thee ; i Ex. 20. 3, 5.
k Deut. 32. 12.
neither shalt thou worship any strange god. Isai. 43. 12.

in Egypt, among a people who spake a strange language (comp. Ps. cxiv. 1. Deut. xxviii. 49. Isa. xxxiii. 19.). But more probably it is the voice of God to which the Psalmist refers: speaking in the person of Israel he says, "the language of One I knew not, I heard;" that is, the revelation of Himself as Jehovah, which hitherto was hidden from them. Or the Psalmist may be speaking in his own person; as an introduction to the words of God which follow in the rest of the Psalm, he says abruptly that he hears the language of One unknown,—meaning that he feels himself under the influence of inspiration, and then he proceeds to give the Divine utterance. One further suggestion has been made, viz. that it is God Himself Who speaks. Passing over the land of Egypt in judgment He said, "The saying 'I know not, I hear;'" "I hear men saying 'I know not;'" with reference to Pharaoh's contemptuous words, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" "I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2.).

6, 7. God Himself declares the object of the feast, viz. to keep in remembrance His goodness in delivering His people from the house of bondage.

"Burden." The same word used in Exodus (i. 11—14; v. 4; vi. 6.).

"Pots." Rather, "the basket," used for carrying the clay to the brick-yard; but the word means also a pot (Job xli. 31.).

7. "In the secret place of thunder." That is, in the pillar of cloud, from which the Lord looked out and troubled the host of the Egyptians (Exod. xiv. 19, 24.); or the reference may be to the revelation of Himself on Mount Sinai.

"I proved thee." This was the purpose of all the trials of the wilderness (Exod. xv. 25; xvi. 4. Deut. viii. 2, 16.).

"Selah." The music rises, and after a long pause Almighty God reminds His people of the language He held with them in the wilderness, where He proved them.

8. Comp. Ps. l. 7, also a Psalm of Asaph.

"If thou," i. e. "Oh, that thou wouldst hearken unto Me!" The next verse contains the words to be attended to, as in Ps. xcvi. 7.

9. The key-note of the revelation of the law from Mount Sinai is here struck; the fundamental command which opens the Decalogue demanded fidelity to Jehovah, and forbade idol-worship as the sin of sins.

PSALMS, LXXXI.

- ¹ Ex. 20. 2. 10 ¹ I *am* the LORD thy God,
^m Ps. 37. 3, 4. which brought thee out of the land of Egypt:
 John 15. 7. ^m open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
 Eph. 3. 20.
ⁿ Ex. 32. 1.
 Deut. 32. 15, 18.
 11 ¶ But my people would not hearken to my
 voice;
 and Israel would ⁿ none of me.
^o Acts 7. 42. & 14. 16.
 Rom. 1. 24, 26.
² Or, *to the hardness of their hearts, or, imaginations.*
 12 ^o So I gave them up ² unto their own hearts' lust:
 and they walked in their own counsels.
^p Deut. 5. 29. & 10. 12, 13. & 32. 29.
 Isai. 48. 18.
 13 ^p Oh that my people had hearkened unto me,
 and Israel had walked in my ways!
^q Ps. 18. 45. Rom. 1. 30.
 14 I should soon have subdued their enemies,
 and turned my hand against their adversaries.
³ Or, *yielded feigned obedience,*
 15 ^q The haters of the LORD should have ³ ⁴ submitted themselves unto him:
 but their time should have endured for ever.
⁴ Heb. *lied.*
^r Deut. 32. 13, 14.
 Ps. 147. 14.
 16 He should ^r have fed them also ⁵ with the finest of the wheat:
 and with honey ^s out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.
⁵ Heb. *with the fat of wheat.*
^s Job 29. 6.

10. "Open thy mouth." This was all He required of them, a wide-opened mouth, an eager hungering after His bounty (see marg. reff.).

11. The special reproach lies in the circumstance, that they were God's own people who rejected Him. "My people" and "Israel" answer to each other in the complaint, as in ver. 13 and Isa. i. 3. Their disobedience frustrated God's gracious purpose.

12. "Unto their own hearts' lust." Rather, "to the stubbornness, wilfulness of their hearts" (Deut. xxix. 19. Jer. iii. 17.). This is the greatest and most fearful of all punishments, to be left to themselves.

"Counsels." Micah vi. 16.

13. The voice of God again calls to them; it is not yet too late. "If My people would hearken unto Me, and Israel would walk in My ways, quickly would I bow down their enemies." Though the unfaithfulness of the former generation still continues, there is yet time for repentance, and therefore the merciful One turns to the men of that present time and invites them to trust in Him and obey Him. Comp. Deut. xxxii., of which these verses are a kind of epitome.

15. "Submitted themselves." See Ps. xviii. 44.

"To Him," i. e. to the Lord; that so "their time," the time of Israel, should be for ever.

16. Rather, "Surely I fed him (i. e. Israel of old) with the fat of wheat; and with honey out of the rock would I satisfy thee (the present Israel)." The change of person is frequent in Hebrew poetry (Isa. xxxviii. 12. Ps. xli. 3.). The imagery is taken from Deut. xxxii. 12, 13. The stream of blessing sung of by Moses was unexhausted; it was ready to follow them through the rest of their history.

The Jewish feasts were specially instituted by God to be memorials of

PSALMS, LXXXII.

PSALM LXXXII.

1 *The psalmist; having exhorted the judges, 5 and reproved their negligence, 8 prayeth God to judge.*

A Psalm ² of Asaph.

- 1 **G**OD ^a standeth in the congregation of the mighty;
 he judgeth among ^b the gods.
- 2 How long will ye judge unjustly,
 and ^c accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

² Or,
 for Asaph.
^a 2 Chr. 19. 6.
 Eccles. 5. 8.

^b Ex. 21. 6.
 & 22. 28.

^c Deut. 1. 17.
 2 Chr. 19. 7.
 Prov. 18. 5.

His love and power; and so long as the people were permitted to keep them, they were pledges of His continued favour, ever-recurring proofs that, notwithstanding their ingratitude and perverseness, God was willing to pour down upon them the treasures of His bounty. So Christian festivals are not only commemorations of past mercies; they are seasons of special grace, when the windows of heaven are opened. Almighty God from time to time renews by them His gracious offers, promising that if men will listen to Him, and walk in His ways, He will do for them exceeding abundantly, above all that they can ask or think; if they will open their mouth, He will fill it.

PSALM LXXXII.

Denunciation of unjust judges.

A stern rebuke of the injustice and corruption of the magistrates. Such rebukes are so frequent in the prophets (see 2 Chron. xix. 5—7. Jer. xxi. 12. Ezek. xlv. 8, 9. Amos v. 12, 15. Micah vii. 3. Zech. vii. 9, 10.), that the particular period to which this Psalm refers cannot be determined; but Isaiah's complaint of the perversion of justice (Isa. iii. 13—15.) is so similar to Asaph's, that it is not unreasonable to suppose that they both refer to the same time, viz. about the reign of Uzziah.

The Psalm represents Almighty God as taking His stand in the midst of the judges, reproving them for their iniquity, reminding them of their duty and responsibility, and warning them that the majesty of their office would not save them from destruction if they abused it; it closes with an earnest appeal to God Himself to arise and execute an office which His representatives had so terribly misused.

1. "In the congregation of the mighty." Rather, "in the congregation of God;" that is, in the midst of Israel, which is expressly called "the congregation of the Lord" (Num. xxvii. 17; xxxi. 16. Josh. xxii. 16.). God takes His stand in the midst of His people, and especially He is present in the courts of judicature among the rulers and judges of His people. He takes account of, and judges them: "a Judge of gods is He."

"Among the gods," i.e. among the judges, as in Excd. xxi. 6; xxii. 8. Others explain "the gods" as the Angels, and understand the verse as representing Almighty God in the midst of His heavenly court looking down upon earthly judges.

2. This and the following verses, to the end of ver. 7, are either the address of Almighty God Himself to the unrighteous judges, or are spoken by the Psalmist in His name.

"Accept the persons." Have regard to the outward circumstances

PSALMS, LXXXII.

- ² Heb. *Judge.*
^d Jer. 22. 3.
- ^e Job 29. 12.
 Prov. 24. 11.
- ^f Mic. 3. 1.
- ^g Ps. 11. 3.
 & 75. 3.
- ³ Heb. *moved.*
^h Ex. 22. 9, 23.
 ver. 1.
 John 10. 34.
- ⁱ Job 21. 32.
 Ps. 49. 12.
 Ezek. 31. 14.
- ^k Mic. 7. 2, 7.
- ¹ Ps. 2. 8.
 Rev. 11. 15.
- 3 ² Defend the poor and fatherless :
^d do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 ^e Deliver the poor and needy :
 rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They ^f know not, neither will they under-
 stand ;
 they walk on in darkness :
^g all the foundations of the earth are ³ out of
 course.
- 6 ^h I have said, Ye *are* gods ;
 and all of you *are* children of the most High.
- 7 But ⁱ ye shall die like men,
 and fall like one of the princes.
- 8 ¶ ^k Arise, O God, judge the earth :
¹ for thou shalt inherit all nations.

PSALM LXXXIII.

1 *A complaint to God of the enemies' conspiracies.* 9 *A prayer against them that oppress the church.*

² Or,
 for Asaph.

A Song or Psalm ² of Asaph.

and position of the offender (Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17 ; xvi. 19. Prov. xviii. 5 ; xxiv. 23 ; xxviii. 21. See 2 Chron. xix. 7.).

3. "Defend." Lit. as in margin, "judge:" let the poor and needy have the benefit of the administration of justice.

5. If these verses are the words of God, we may understand Him as pausing for a moment, and then sorrowfully declaring that all remonstrance was vain ; their blindness and ignorance were beyond cure.

"They walk on." Rather, "to and fro." They subvert the fundamental principles of justice, and in consequence the whole fabric of society totters (Ps. xi. 3 ; lxxv. 3.).

6. "I have said." There is special emphasis on the pronoun : "I Myself have called you gods, and sons of the Most High:" it is I Who have raised you to your god-like dignity ; remember therefore that there is a Most High to Whom you are responsible ; if you act not according to His will your dignity will not protect you ; you will die like men (lit. like Adam), and fall like any one of the princes who in the course of history have been cast down by the judgment of God.

8. Justice being so perverted in the land, the Psalmist calls on God Himself to sit in judgment.

In St. John x. 34—36, Christ refers to this Psalm in answer to the charge of blasphemy which the Jews brought against Him, because He called Himself the Son of God. If they, to whom God's word had come, and who were endued with special powers from Him, were called gods, much more might He Whom God "had sanctified and sent into "the world," Who had been with the Father before He appeared on earth, and Whose life and works bore witness to His Divine mission, take to Himself the title of Son of God.

PSALMS, LXXXIII.

- 1 **K**EEP ^a not thou silence, O God : ^a Ps. 28. 1.
& 35. 22.
& 109. 1.
 hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
- 2 For, lo, ^b thine enemies make a tumult : ^b Ps. 2. 1.
Acts 4. 25.
 and they that ^c hate thee have lifted up the ^c Ps. 81. 15.
 head.

PSALM LXXXIII.

Cry to God against a confederacy of hostile nations.

A powerful confederation of surrounding nations—Moab, Ammon, and Edom, with certain Arabian tribes—coming up from the south, is assisted in its attempt to exterminate the chosen people by Philistines and Tyrians from the west, and Assyrians from the east. There is no record in history of precisely such a combination. Some refer it to the efforts made by Sanballat and others (“Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites”) to hinder the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Neh. iv. 7.); but it is not likely that the great body of these nations is intended, for they were all at that time subject to Persia, and could not make war independently; the combination was rather of individuals belonging to these peoples, as Geshem the Arabian and Tobiah the Ammonite. Others again refer it to the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. v.); but the attack of the nations round about at that time, though simultaneous, was not the result of an alliance, and the mention of Assyria, which had ceased to exist as an empire long before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, seems to preclude the possibility of so late a date. Amalek also had been destroyed by the Simeonites in the time of Hezekiah, and had no existence after the captivity (1 Chron. iv. 39—43.).

It is more probable that the Psalm was occasioned by the confederacy of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites against Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 1, 10.). This is not certain however, for there is no mention in Chronicles either of Assyria or of the western nations of Philistia and Tyre. But the Psalm may have been written on the first news of the confederacy, when those nations were reported to have a share in it; whereas the account in the Book of Chronicles, written later, makes mention only of those who actually took part in the expedition against Jerusalem, and on whom the destruction fell. It appears too from the Psalm itself that “the children of Lot” and their immediate neighbours were the leaders of the expedition, and the other, more distant, nations were only their allies. If, moreover, the tribute from the Philistines and Arabians mentioned in 2 Chron. xvii. 11, was brought, as has been suggested (comp. 2 Chron. xvii. 10 with xx. 29.), after the defeat of the Moabites and Ammonites, their share in this confederacy will help to explain why tribute was required from them.

The answer to Jehoshaphat’s prayer was brought by Jahaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, who may well have been the writer of this Psalm.

1. The danger is great and imminent: let not God be still; let Him not look on silent and unconcerned.

2. “**Make a tumult.**” Like the roaring of the sea (Isa. xvii. 12. Ps. xlv. 3.).

“**Lifted up the head.**” Have ventured to assume an attitude of defiance (Judg. viii. 28.).

PSALMS, LXXXIII.

^d Ps. 27. 5.
& 31. 20.
^e See Esther
3. 6, 9,
Jer. 11. 19,
& 31. 36.

² Heb. *heart*.

^f See 2 Chron.
20. 1, 10, 11.

³ Heb. *they
have been
an arm to
the children
of Lot*.

^f Num. 31. 7.
Judg. 7. 22.

- 3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people,
and consulted ^d against thy hidden ones.
- 4 They have said, Come, and ^e let us cut them off
from *being* a nation ;
that the name of Israel may be no more in
remembrance.
- 5 For they have consulted together with one
² consent :
they are confederate against thee :
- 6 ^f the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites ;
of Moab, and the Hagarenes ;
- 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ;
the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre ;
- 8 Assur also is joined with them :
³ they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.
- 9 ¶ Do unto them as *unto* the ^g Midianites ;

3. "Thy hidden ones," i. e. hidden under the shadow of Thy wings, taken under God's special protection (Ps. xxvii. 5 ; xxxi. 20.).

4. Nothing but entire extirpation will satisfy the enemies of Israel. A nation which separated itself from the rest of the world, and so condemned it, was to them a perpetual offence (comp. 2 Chron. xx. 11, 12.).

5. "Against Thee." There is a special emphasis on these words: the confederacy was really against God.

6. "The tabernacles." Or rather, "the tents," of Edom; to mark the nomad character of the people. The confederates are said in the Book of Chronicles to come "from beyond the sea (i. e. the Dead Sea) "from Edom" (for that is the true reading of the passage, instead of Aram, i. e. Syria). The Ishmaelites stretched across the Arabian desert to the Persian Gulf (Gen. xxv. 18.).

"The Hagarenes" or Hagarites are mentioned in 1 Chron. v. 10, 18—20, as living to the east of Gilead.

7. "Gebal." There is a town of this name near the sea coast at the foot of Mount Lebanon (Ezek. xxvii. 9.); but the mountainous district to the south of the Dead Sea, still called Djebel, is probably intended.

The Philistines and Phœnicians appear also in Amos i. 6, 9, as making common cause with Edom against Israel.

8. "Assur also." This is the first indication of any westward movement of the Assyrians. It would seem from the manner in which they are mentioned, that they did not take a prominent part in the expedition, but only sent a small contingent.

"They have holpen." Lit. as in margin, "they have been an arm "to" the children of Lot, the Moabites and Ammonites, the originators of the enterprise.

The "Selah" marks the change from a recital of the dangers to prayer for deliverance.

9. The Midianitish invasion also was of several confederate nomad tribes (see Judg. vi. 3, 33.); and Gideon's victory was among the most glorious in the recollection of the Israelites (Isa. ix. 4 ; x. 26.).

PSALMS, LXXXIII.

as to ^hSisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of ^hJudg. 4. 15,
Kison : 24. & 5. 21.

- 10 *which* perished at En-dor :
ⁱthey became as dung for the earth. i 2 Kin. 9. 37.
Zeph. 1. 17.
- 11 Make their nobles like ^kOreb, and like Zeeb : k Judg. 7. 25.
yea, all their princes as ^lZebah, and as Zal-^lJudg. 8. 12,
munna : 21.
- 12 who said, Let us take to ourselves
the houses of God in possession.
- 13 ^mO my God, make them like a wheel ; m Isai. 17. 13,
14.
ⁿas the stubble before the wind. n Ps. 35. 5.
- 14 As the fire burneth a wood,
and as the flame ^osetteth the mountains on ^oDeut. 32. 22.
fire ;
- 15 so persecute them ^pwith thy tempest, p Job 9. 17.
and make them afraid with thy storm.

“At the brook of Kison.” According to Judg. v. 21, the Kishon swept away the corpses of the shattered Canaanitish army.

10. “Endor” (now *Endúr*, to the north of Little Hermon) is about four miles south of Mount Tabor, and therefore near to Taanach and Megiddo, the scene of the battle (Judg. v. 19. Josh. xvii. 11.).

11. “Oreb and Zeeb,” the generals of Midian, were slain by the men of Ephraim, who rose at Gideon’s entreaty, and intercepted the flying Midianites at the fords of the Jordan. The place where they fell was celebrated many hundred years afterwards as “the rock Oreb” and “the wine-press of Zeeb” (Judg. vii. 24, 25. Isa. x. 26.).

“Zebah and Zalmunna” were kings of Midian, slain by Gideon’s own hand (Judg. viii. 5—21.).

12. The boastful cry of the Midianites when they poured themselves over the land.

“Now take we and divide,
“God’s portion, field and fold” (*Keble*).

“The houses.” Rather, “dwelling-places.”

13. The Psalmist seems to be recalling the discomfiture of the Midianites, and praying that it may be repeated.

“Like a wheel.” In Isa. xvii. 13 the word is translated “like a rolling thing,” where the margin has “thistle-down.”

“My God, as rolling thistle-down,

“As chaff before the wind,

“So make them” (*Keble*).

It means something which does not so much fly as roll before the wind. Hence it has been suggested that the branches of the wild artichoke are meant, which break off in globes when dry and roll before the wind by thousands. Others render it, “as whirling dust.”

“Stubble,” i. e. the straw from the threshing-floor (Job xiii. 25.).

14. Another figure, representing destruction as well as discomfiture. As the wind scatters, so the fire consumes, burning up the forest and clearing off the brushwood on the mountain’s side (Isa. x. 16—19.).

PSALMS, LXXXIV.

- ^q Ps. 35. 4, 26. 16 ^a Fill their faces with shame ;
 that they may seek thy name, O LORD.
 17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ;
 yea, let them be put to shame, and perish :
^r Ps. 53. 13. 18 ^r that *men* may know that thou, whose ^s name
^s Ex. 6. 3. alone is JEHOVAH,
^t Ps. 92. 8. art ^t the most high over all the earth.

PSALM LXXXIV.

1 *The prophet, longing for the communion of the sanctuary, 4 sheweth how blessed they are that dwell therein. 8 He prayeth to be restored unto it.*

² Ps. 8, title. To the chief Musician ² upon Gittith,
³ Or, of. A Psalm ³ for the sons of Korah.

^a Ps. 27. 4. 1 **H**OW ^a amiable *are* thy tabernacles,
 O LORD of hosts!

16. The end for which the Psalmist desires that God's judgments may fall on His enemies is, that they may seek His Name and acknowledge Him to be the Lord.

17, 18. The prayer of ver. 16 is expanded: "Let them be put to shame and confounded evermore; let them be abashed and undone; and then they shall know that Thou, i. e. Thy Name, alone art Jehovah, the only self-existent One, the Most High over all the earth."

If ever an army went forth to battle with religious faith and enthusiasm, it was the army which Jehoshaphat led from Jerusalem against the confederates, to whom the Psalm refers. They were preceded by choristers from the Temple, who chanted the song, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever." They were encouraged by the words of the Levite Jahaziel, who declared that they had but to stand still, and see the salvation of God, and by the king himself, exhorting them to believe in the Lord their God and to believe His prophets. The Psalm represents both their danger and their confidence. The Psalmist not only prays for the discomfiture of the invading armies, but he confidently expects it. He desires moreover that their enemies may not only be destroyed, but that they may seek the Lord (ver. 16.). In like manner from time to time the hosts of the world are banded together against the Church. But, however apparently irresistible, they are really powerless against the might of faith and prayer. The Psalm teaches us what sort of prayers Christians should offer at such times; they should not pray only for the overthrow of their enemies, but for their conversion. If they desire, as they may, their defeat and humiliation, it should be in order that they may be brought to love and fear the Christian's God.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Longing for the house of God.

The strong resemblance which this Psalm bears to Ps. xlii., also a Psalm of the sons of Korah, makes it probable that it was written by the same person. There is the same expression of love for the services of God's house, and of pain at being debarred from them; only here the Psalmist seems to speak of his absence as past; he has been

PSALMS, LXXXIV.

- 2 ^b My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD : ^b Ps. 42. 1, 2.
& 63. 1.
& 73. 26.
& 119. 20.
my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.
- 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house,
and the swallow a nest for herself, where she
may lay her young,
even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King,
and my God.
- 4 ^c Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house : ^c Ps. 65. 4.
they will be still praising thee. Selah.

restored to the blessings for which he had longed, and he rejoices accordingly. This Psalm is his thanksgiving; it sets forth the joy he felt in finding himself once more in God's presence. Like Ps. xlii., it may well belong to the time of Absalom's rebellion, being written either by David himself, as some think, or by some faithful Levite, who accompanied him, after the return to Jerusalem. Others refer it to the time of Hezekiah, when the presence of Sennacherib's army hindered the writer from going up, as usual, to the services of the Temple. Others connect it with the preceding Psalm, and take it to be the thanksgiving of some Korahite, when he returned to Jerusalem, after the destruction of the confederate host (2 Chron. xx. 28.).

1. "How amiable." That is, how loved and how lovely!

"Thy tabernacles." Rather, "Thy dwelling-places," the plural being used poetically for the singular as in Ps. xliii. 3. "Courts" in ver. 2 does not necessarily prove that the Temple was already built; it occurs in one of David's Psalms (lxv. 4.). Though the Tabernacle had only one court, "the arrangement of David's tent-temple is unknown to us, and may well be assumed to have been more gorgeous and more spacious than the old Tabernacle which remained at Gibeon."

2. "Soul . . . heart . . . flesh," i. e. the whole man in his self-conscious will, his feelings and affections, and his animal powers. There is a change of tenses in this verse: in the first clause the verbs are in the past tense; in the second the verb is present or future. The time of banishment is over now; in the presence of the living God the Psalmist shouts for joy.

"Longeth." Lit. "grew pale" with longing, pined away: it is used of Jacob longing sore for his father's house (Gen. xxxi. 30.).

"Fainteth." Lit. "was consumed," failed, languished (Job xix. 27. 2 Sam. xiii. 39.).

"The living God." This title occurs nowhere else in the Psalter except in Ps. xlii. 2.

3. "The sparrow." It is said that to this day sparrows are to be seen in numbers on Mount Olivet, and about the sacred enclosure of the Mosque of Omar. But the Psalmist may only mean that, as restless birds at length find their nests and rear their young, so he has now reached his true resting-place, even the altar of his God.

4. The Psalmist seems to be describing his own present blessedness, as one who is by office an inmate of God's house, and whose one employment is to praise Him.

"Still." That is, "always," continually. Or the word may be ren-

PSALMS, LXXXIV.

² Or, of mulberry trees make him a well, &c.

^d 2 Sam. 5. 22, 23.

³ Heb. covereth.

⁴ Or, from company to company.

^e Prov. 4. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

5 ¶ Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee ; in whose heart are the ways of them.

6 Who passing through the valley ^{2d} of Baca make it a well ;

the rain also ³ filleth the pools.

7 They go ^{4e} from strength to strength,

dered "yet," in spite of all hindrances. The music is appropriately prolonged, anticipating the praise.

5. The Psalmist turns to remember the past. Not only are they blessed whose home is in the sanctuary, and who spend their days in perpetual praise, but they also who, though at a distance and in adversity, look to God alone for strength and help. Such are ever longing for Zion and musing with delight on the journey thither ; and when they are permitted to enter upon it, be the way ever so gloomy and tedious, they find comfort and refreshment, until at length, with strength continually renewed, instead of exhausted, they reach the desired goal. The Psalmist is relating his own happy experience. Or he may be speaking, as some think, more generally, of the pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem for the festivals.

"In whose heart are the ways of them." Lit. "highways are in their heart ;" that is, the highways to the house of God are the object of their delight. The Psalmist and those likeminded with him cherish with joy the thought of the journey to Zion.

6. "The valley of Baca." This is interpreted by all the ancient Versions as the valley of weeping ; and the meaning is supposed to be, that the cheering prospect of reaching God's house converts that which in itself is a vale of tears and wretchedness into a fountain of joy. But the word here used is not, strictly speaking, the same as that which is translated "weeping." It does not occur elsewhere in the singular, but the plural is found in 2 Sam. v. 24, and 1 Chron. xiv. 14, where it means a kind of tree, whether the mulberry or the balsam. Hence "the valley of Baca" has been thought to be a particular valley on the way to Jerusalem, where that tree happened to abound, mulberry valley, as it might be called. This valley, however dry and sterile of itself, such as the Baca tree delights in, becomes to the joyful traveller a place of springs. That which is elsewhere ascribed to the power of God, Who causes the parched ground to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water (Isa. xxxv. 7 ; xli. 18.) is here the result of the faith and love of the pilgrims themselves. But their joy and refreshment are not due solely to their own high thoughts : God also Himself specially visits them, and sends down from heaven the rain of His grace.

"The rain also filleth the pools." Rather, "the early rain clothes it with blessings." A gentle rain, like that which refreshes the sown fields in the autumn, descends from above, and enwraps the valley through which they are passing in a shower of blessing.

"Who as they pass the vale of pain,

"Make it a gushing rill ;

"Yea, blessings with th' autumnal rain

"Come mantling, soft and still" (*Keble*).

7. "From strength," &c. ; i.e. as in marg., Their company increases,

PSALMS, LXXXIV.

- every one of them* in Zion ^f appeareth before God. ^f Deut. 16. 16.
Zech. 14. 16.
- 8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer :
give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
- 9 ¶ Behold, ^g O God our shield,
and look upon the face of thine anointed. ^g Gen. 15. 1.
ver. 11.
- 10 For a day in thy courts *is* better than a
thousand.
- ² I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of ² Heb.
my God, *I would*
than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. *choose rather*
to sit at the
threshold.
- 11 For the LORD God *is* ^h a sun and ⁱ shield :
the LORD will give grace and glory :
^k no good *thing* will he withhold from them that
walk uprightly. ^h Isai. 60. 19.
ⁱ Gen. 15. 1.
ver. 9.
^k Ps. 115. 9,
10, 11.
& 119. 114.
Prov. 2. 7.
- 12 O LORD of hosts,—¹ blessed *is* the man that ^k Ps. 34. 9, 10.
trusteth in thee. ¹ Ps. 2. 12.

as they approach the end of their journey, until the whole band at length stand before God in Zion. Then, having reached the goal, they pour out their hearts in the prayer which follows in the next verse.

9. After a pause, indicated by "Selah," the Psalmist returns to himself; in God's house, to which he has been restored, he acknowledges God as his shield and protection, and entreats Him to look upon and bless the king, now once more set upon his throne. This prayer for God's anointed might of course be uttered by David himself (comp. Ps. xx. 6; lxi. 6.); but it is not less appropriate in the mouth of a faithful friend and companion.

10. "Better than a thousand," i.e. better than a thousand spent elsewhere. "A doorkeeper." Marg. "sit at the threshold," as a servant of the lowest rank, but still ministering in the temple. The Korahites were keepers of the gates of the Lord's house (1 Chron. ix. 19; xxvi. 12—19.).

11. "A sun and shield;" a sun to enlighten, warm, and fructify; a shield to protect from evil.

12. Again the Psalmist dwells, as in ver. 5, on the blessedness of the man who looks to God alone for happiness and protection. "This Psalm "is one of those which shew us how God's elect were conducted by the "old covenant to a deep, inward life of communion with God. Few "Psalms have found so many echoes in the best Christian hymns."

God's earthly house is a type of the heavenly, and in the pilgrim's longing for and journeying towards the former, we see an image of the heavenly aspirations which rejoice the heart of the believer in his passage through the world. He need not faint or languish by the way, for God's Presence is a fountain of life everywhere beside him. And as he advances nearer to his home, his spiritual strength increases, and his faith and hope gradually brighten, until they are lost in sight. In the blessed vision of God every desire of the soul will be fulfilled; no night will dim its brightness, nor end overtake it. Even the lowest place in heaven infinitely surpasses any station, however exalted, in this transitory and evil world.

PSALMS, LXXXV.

PSALM LXXXV.

1 *The psalmist, out of the experience of former mercies, prayeth for the continuance thereof. 8 He promiseth to wait thereon, out of confidence of God's goodness.*

² Ps. 42, title.

³ Or, of.

⁴ Or, well pleased,
Ps. 77. 7.

^a Ezra 1. 11.
& 2. 1.

Ps. 14. 7.
Jer. 30. 18.
& 31. 23.
Ezek. 39. 25.
Joel 3. 1.

^b Ps. 32. 1.

⁵ Or, thou
hast turned
thine anger
from wax-
ing hot,
Deut. 13. 17.

^c Ps. 80. 7.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm ^{2 3} for the sons of Korah.

1 **L**ORD, thou hast been ⁴ favourable unto thy land :

thou hast ^a brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 ^b Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people,
thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath :

⁵ thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of
thine anger.

4 ¶ ^c Turn us, O God of our salvation,
and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

PSALM LXXXV.

Prayer for revival after restoration.

After thankfully acknowledging God's mercy in delivering His people and forgiving their sin, the Psalmist, almost abruptly, deprecates the continuance of that anger, which he had just before spoken of as withdrawn. The condition of the nation is one of great affliction ; though restored to favour, they are still suffering the consequences of their sin. The Psalmist prays earnestly for mercy, and looks forward with confidence to the fulfilment of his prayer, and to the perfect reign of righteousness and peace in the end. The combination of thankful remembrance of past mercies with a strong sense of present distress seems to point to the period immediately after the return from captivity, when the people were represented to Nehemiah as in great affliction and reproach (Neh. i. 3.).

1—3. Heavily as God's hand was still lying upon them, and urgently as he cries out for its removal, the Psalmist does not in his present distress forget to acknowledge God's past mercies. With a grateful heart he dwells on the abundance of God's gracious favour ; not only has He brought His people back from exile, but that restoration is a proof that He has forgiven all their sin, and laid aside His wrath.

2. The direction for the music to strike up at the end of this verse draws attention to the exceeding graciousness of God's forgiving love ; answering in a manner to "Blessed" in Ps. xxxii. 1.

4—7. In spite of all God's love and favour, though He had forgiven them, and was pacified towards them, yet the consequences of His wrath remained, as in the case of David ; therefore from thanksgiving the Psalmist has recourse to prayer, that the God of their salvation would turn back to them, and raise them from their low condition, quickening them by His grace, and saving them according to His loving-kindness. It is especially for revival and joy that the Psalmist prays. Though restored to their own land, God had not yet so manifested Himself to them as to enable them to rejoice in Him.

- 5 ^d Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? ^d Ps. 74. 1.
& 79. 5.
& 80. 4.
 Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
- 6 Wilt thou not ^e revive us again: ^e Hab. 3. 2.
 that thy people may rejoice in thee?
- 7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD,
 and grant us thy salvation.
- 8 ^f I will hear what God the LORD will speak: ^f Hab. 2. 1.
 for ^g he will speak peace unto his people, and to ^g his saints: ^g Zech. 9. 10.
 but let them not ^h turn again to folly. ^h 2 Pet. 2. 20,
21.
- 9 ¶ Surely ⁱ his salvation is nigh them that fear ⁱ him; Isai. 46. 13.
^k that glory may dwell in our land. ^k Zech. 2. 5.
John 1. 14.
- 10 Mercy and truth are met together;
^l righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*. ^l Ps. 72. 3.
Isai. 32. 17.
Luke 2. 14.
- 11 ^m Truth shall spring out of the earth;
 and righteousness shall look down from heaven. ^m Isai. 45. 8.

7. "Shew us Thy mercy," &c. In our mouths these familiar words may well be taken as an earnest entreaty for the manifestation of Christ to our souls, as St. Augustine paraphrases them, "Give us Thy Christ; let us know Thy Christ; let us behold Thy Christ, not as the Jews beheld Him and crucified Him, but as the angels behold Him, and rejoice."

8. Having poured out his prayer, he waits attentively for the answer. Surely, he says, God will speak peace to his people. Only, if they hope for deliverance, they must be careful not to return to that foolish presumption which was the cause of their trouble.

9—13. This is the substance of the message which he hears. If His people will fear Him, the Lord will assuredly visit them with His salvation; nay, He Himself in His glory will dwell among them; His mercy and faithfulness will combine to bless them; righteousness and peace, inseparably joined together, will wait upon Him; faithfulness too (in man) will spring out of the earth, and righteousness will be poured out, as His gift, from heaven. Every good thing, temporal and spiritual, shall flow from His presence; righteousness especially shall be the characteristic of His reign: it shall precede and follow Him; preceding Him as a radiance issuing from His face, following Him to point out His footsteps as the way His people should walk in (see Isa. xxxii. 16; xlv. 8, &c.).

9. "Glory," i.e. the special Presence of God. Though the Shechinah, or cloud of God's Presence, the distinguishing glory of the first Temple, was absent from the second, yet was it declared that the latter glory of God's House should be greater than the former (Hag. ii. 9).—a promise which was fulfilled when He Who was the brightness of His Father's glory tabernacled in human flesh, and visited His earthly Temple.

PSALMS, LXXXVI.

- ⁿ Ps. 84. 11. 12 ⁿ Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good* ;
^{Jam.} 1. 17. and ^o our land shall yield her increase.
^o Ps. 67. 6. 13 ^p Righteousness shall go before him ;
^p Ps. 89. 14. and shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

PSALM LXXXVI.

¹ David strengtheneth his prayer by the conscience of his religion, ⁵ by the goodness and power of God. ¹¹ He desireth the continuance of former grace. ¹⁴ Complaining of the proud, he craveth some token of God's goodness.

² Or, *A Prayer, being a Psalm of David.*

² A Prayer of David.

1 **B**OW down thine ear, O LORD, hear me :
 for I *am* poor and needy.

12. Observe the same union of temporal and spiritual blessings in Hos. ii. 18—23. See Lev. xxvi. 3, 4. Zech. viii. 12.

13. "Shall set us in the way of His steps." Lit. "maketh His "footsteps for a way," in which to follow Him.

The glorious picture of peace and prosperity, which the Psalmist here draws, as the result of God's restored presence to His people, is a foreshadowing of the reign of the Messiah. The kingdom which Christ came into the world to establish is emphatically a kingdom of mercy and righteousness, truth and peace. As these attributes met together in Him, so should they be the characteristics of His members; their rule of life should be, to shew mercy, speak truth, do righteousness and follow peace. As one of the Proper Psalms for Christmas Day, the Psalm may be understood as a prayer that He Who by His incarnation graciously visited and redeemed His people, would manifest Himself more and more to them, and cause the blessed vision of righteousness and peace, which the Prophets foretold, to be more completely realized, first, in His Church on earth, and then, in its full loveliness, in the new heavens and new earth, which shall be revealed hereafter.

PSALM LXXXVI.

A humble but confident supplication in time of persecution.

The only Psalm in the Third Book which is ascribed to David. It is so full of expressions which are to be found in other Psalms of David, that some persons think that it is called his merely on that account. But it is far from being a mere cento of passages taken from other Psalms; it has an original character of its own; only the similarity of style indicates identity of authorship.

It is an earnest prayer to God for help, based partly on the suppliant's necessity, and partly on God's goodness and power. The Psalmist promises to walk in God's ways, and to trust Him in danger. If the Psalm is David's, as may reasonably be believed, it would suit very well with the time either of his persecution by Saul, or of Absalom's rebellion.

1—5. The Psalmist urges one plea after another why his prayer should be heard; his sufferings (ver. 1.); his trust (ver. 2.); his constant supplication (vv. 3, 4.); God's mercy (ver. 5.).

"Bow down," &c. The prayer is like that of lv. 1, 2; while the ground on which it is based is, word for word, the same as in Ps. xl. 17.

PSALMS, LXXXVI.

- 2 Preserve my soul ; for I *am* ² holy :
 O thou my God, save thy servant ^a that trusteth
 in thee. ² Or, *one*
whom thou
favourest.
^a Isai. 26. 3.
- 3 ^b Be merciful unto me, O Lord :
 for I cry unto thee ³ daily. ^b Ps. 56. 1.
 & 57. 1.
- 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant :
^c for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. ³ Or,
all the day.
- 5 ^d For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to
 forgive ;
 and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call
 upon thee. ^c Ps. 25. 1.
 & 143. 8.
^d ver. 15.
 Ps. 130. 7.
 & 145. 9.
 Joel 2. 13.
- 6 ¶ Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer ;
 and attend to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 ^e In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee : ^e Ps. 50. 15.
 for thou wilt answer me.
- 8 ^f Among the gods *there is* none like unto thee,
 O Lord ;
^g neither *are there any works* like unto thy
 works. ^f Ex. 15. 11.
 Ps. 89. 6.
^g Deut. 3. 24.
^h Ps. 22. 31.
 & 102. 18.
 Isai. 43. 7.
 Rev. 15. 4.
- 9 ^h All nations whom thou hast made
 shall come and worship before thee, O Lord ;
 and shall glorify thy name. ⁱ Ex. 15. 11.
 Ps. 72. 18.
 & 77. 14.
- 10 For thou *art* great, and ⁱ doest wondrous things :
^k thou *art* God alone. ^k Deut. 6. 4.
 & 32. 39.
 Isai. 37. 16.
 & 44. 6.
 Mark 12. 29.
 1 Cor. 8. 4.
 Eph. 4. 6.
- 11 ¶ ^l Teach me thy way, O LORD ; I will walk in
 thy truth :
 unite my heart to fear thy name. ^l Ps. 25. 4.
 & 27. 11.
 & 119. 33.
 & 143. 8.

2. His prayer is for preservation ; his first plea was his necessity ; the next his love and trust in God (comp. Ps. xxv. 20.).

“Holy.” Rather, “godly,” “pious,” one whom the sense of God’s love constrains to devote himself to Him. Some however take it as in the margin, “one whom Thou favourest,” one who has been brought into covenant relation with God. Comp. the use of the word “saint” in the New Testament.

3. “Be merciful.” Ps. lvii. 1. Consult the marg. reff. throughout.

6—10. The Psalmist renews his supplication, confident that He Who rules over the nations will hear him. In this stanza also almost every verse is an echo of former passages in the Psalms or the Law.

9. God’s greatness is further shewn in His drawing all nations unto Him,—a plain recognition of the conversion of the heathen. They have their being from God, and though they have forgotten it for a time, the day will come when they will recognize it (Ps. xxiii. 31. Rev. xv. 4.).

11—13. The Psalmist will ever walk in God’s way, and he prays Him to guide him.

“Unite my heart,” i. e. make it one and entire, concentrate all its

PSALMS, LXXXVI.

- 12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart:
and I will glorify thy name for evermore.
- 13 For great *is* thy mercy toward me:
and thou hast ^mdelivered my soul from the lowest ²hell.
- ^m Ps. 56. 13. & 116. 8.
² Or, *grave*.
- ⁿ Ps. 54. 3. 14 ¶ O God, ⁿthe proud are risen against me,
and the assemblies of ³violent *men* have sought after my soul;
and have not set thee before them.
- ³ Heb. *terrible*.
- ^o Ex. 34. 6. Num. 14. 18. Neh. 9. 17. ver. 5. Ps. 103. 8. & 111. 4. & 130. 4, 7. & 145. 8. Joel 2. 13. 15 ° But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion,
and gracious,
longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
- 16 O ^pturn unto me, and have mercy upon me;
give thy strength unto thy servant,
and save ^qthe son of thine handmaid.
- ^p Ps. 25. 16. & 69. 16.
^q Ps. 116. 16. 17 Shew me a token for good;
that they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed:
because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

PSALM LXXXVII.

- 1 *The nature and glory of the church. 4 The increase, honour, and comfort of the members thereof.*
- ² Or, *of*. A Psalm or Song ²for the sons of Korah.

powers upon Thee alone. Comp. Jer. xxxii. 39: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me for ever."

13. "Lowest hell." The depths of Hades (Deut. xxxii. 22.).

The deliverance is so confidently expected, that he speaks of it as past.

14—17. The nature of the peril which threatened him is now declared, and the supplications of the beginning of the Psalm are renewed.

15. He supports his prayer by God's own testimony to Himself (Exod. xxxiv. 6.).

"Full of compassion, and gracious." Very compassionate, very gracious. Both words are intensive.

17. "A token for good." Some special dispensation which shall mark God's kindly mind towards him.

The earnest way in which the Psalmist returns (vv. 5, 15.), to the thought of God's mercy as his chief ground of hope in his distress makes this Psalm very precious to all who are in any kind of sorrow. But it is instructive to observe, that before David makes special mention of his particular trouble, he prays that he himself may be kept perfect with God (ver. 11.). If only his wayward heart can be fixed on God, he is sure that God will hear his prayer, and give him cause to thank Him continually.

PSALMS, LXXXVII.

- 1 **H**IS foundation is ^a in the holy mountains. ^a Ps. 48. 1.
 2 ^b The LORD loveth the gates of Zion ^b Ps. 78. 67,
68.
 more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
 3 ^c Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of ^c God. Selah. ^c See Isai. 60.
 4 ¶ I will make mention of ^d Rahab and Babylon ^d Ps. 89. 10.
Isai. 51. 9.
 to them that know me :

PSALM LXXXVII.

Zion the birthplace of the nations.

In the preceding Psalm (ver. 9.) the Psalmist had declared that all nations whom God had made should come and worship before Him. Here the fulfilment of the prophecy is proclaimed; the various powers of the world are represented as joining the congregation of the Lord. The gates of Zion are thrown open, and all the people of the earth press into it. The vision before the Psalmist's eye is like that of Isaiah, who beheld the mountain of the Lord's house exalted above the hills, and all nations flowing into it (Isa. ii. 2—4.). See also Isa. xix. 18—25; xlv. 5.

The Psalm is generally assigned to the time of Hezekiah, and connected with the presents from various nations sent to Jerusalem after the destruction of the Assyrians; on which occasion it is said that Hezekiah was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth (2 Chron. xxxii. 23.).

1. "His foundation." *His*, i. e. God's: "it is His foundation," the city which He has founded. This first verse states somewhat abruptly the subject of the Psalm, viz. the glory of Zion, which God has founded upon the mountains. Surrounded on three sides by deep valleys, Jerusalem was emphatically built upon the mountains. The Church is continually represented as a city that is set on an hill (see Isa. xxv. 6, 7. Micah iv. 1, 2. Ezek. xvii. 22, 23.). Some connect the first verse with the second, thus, "His foundation upon the holy mountains the Lord doth love, even," &c.

The praise of Zion is a favourite topic in the Psalms of the sons of Korah (see especially Ps. xlviii.).

2. The distinguishing glory of Zion was that God loved her, having rejected Bethel and Shiloh, in order that He might dwell there (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 67, 68.).

"The gates of Zion" are put for the whole compass of the city, not without reference to the fulness of the Gentiles entering through them (see Isa. lx. 11.).

3. "Are spoken of thee." In the prophets, and especially Isaiah (ii.; xi. 10.); but perhaps there is a reference to the Divine declaration which follows immediately.

4—6. The words of God Himself, proclaiming that Zion should be the birth-place of the nations. These verses are preceded and followed by "Selah," and so are separated off from the rest of the Psalm.

4. "Make mention." Loud and honourable mention (Ps. xlv. 17. Jer. iv. 16.).

"To." Rather, "as belonging to," "among" (comp. Isa. iv. 3.).

PSALMS, LXXXVII.

behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia ;
this *man* was born there.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man
was born in her :

and the highest himself shall establish her.

• Ps. 22. 30.
† Ezek. 13. 9.

6 ° The LORD shall count, when he ^fwriteth up
the people,

that this man was born there. Selah.

•7 As well the singers as the players on instru-
ments *shall be there* :

all my springs *are* in thee.

The meaning is, "I will name Rahab and Babylon among them that
"know Me," i. e. among My worshippers.

"**Rahab.**" That is, Egypt (Ps. lxxxix. 10. Isa. li. 9.). The two
great powers of the world, Egypt and Babylon, will one day bow
themselves down to the God of Israel. See Isa. xix. 24, 25: "In that
"day Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria," &c. After
the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the power of Assyria began to
wane, and Babylon took its place as the chief enemy of Israel. This
will account for the substitution of Babylon for Assyria in this Psalm.

"**This man.**" Rather, "this one," i. e. this nation, each of these
hostile nations. Almighty God points His finger, as it were, to Philis-
tia, Tyre, and Ethiopia, and declares that each and all of them should
be converted to Him; they will esteem it their highest privilege to be
enrolled in the register of the chosen people, and reckoned as born in
Zion.

5. "**Of Zion.**" Or, "to Zion." As the several nations are brought
into the number of God's children, those children, i. e. the Church, be-
come a vast multitude, to whom or of whom it is said that this man and
that man, one after another, are born in her. The prophet Isaiah speaks
much in the same way of Zion as the mother of the nations (Isa. liv.
1—3; lx. 4, 5; xlv. 5.).

6. This will be the result of the successive incorporations into the
Church, that when the Lord makes a census of the nations, passes them
in review one by one, He will say of each of them, This one was born
there. The most glorious thing that can be said of the several nations
is, that they have become members by adoption of the city of God. Zion
shall become the metropolis of the world.

On the custom of keeping rolls of citizens, see Ezek. xiii. 9. Isa. iv.
3. Ezra ii. 59. Neh. vii. 5.

7. This verse seems to express the joy of the converted nations.
When the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then shall one and all,
singing as well as dancing, say, All my fountains, that is, all my
sources of life and joy, are in thee, O city of God.

"Swell the song, the dance controlling,
"All my fresh springs are in thee," (*Keble*).

Others render, "Both they that sing, and they that dance, all my
"fountains of delight, are in thee," meaning that every source of plea-
sure, music, singing, &c., was to be found in Zion. Others again take

PSALMS, LXXXVIII.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A prayer containing a grievous complaint.

A Song or Psalm ² for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, ³ Maschil of ⁴ Heman the Ezrahite.

1 **O** LORD ^a God of my salvation,
I have ^b cried day *and* night before thee :

² Or, of.

³ Or.

A Psalm of Heman the Ezrahite, giving instruction.

⁴ 1 Kin. 4. 31.

1 Chr. 2. 6.

^a Ps. 27. 9.

& 51. 14.

^b Luke 18. 7.

this verse as a continuation of the utterance of Almighty God. It is a picture of the future glory of Zion, when the singers and dancers of the world shall no longer prostitute their talents to the services of profane worship, but raise their united voice to Jehovah in His Temple; "Singers also and dancers, yea, all My fresh springs, the sources of all "My joy, shall be in thee."

"Players on instruments;" or "dancers." Glorious things were said of the earthly Jerusalem. She was beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth; the glory of God's Presence dwelt within her. But the lofty promises and prophecies respecting Zion belong in truth to the Christian Church, Jerusalem which is above. To be incorporated into her by a new and heavenly birth, to be enrolled among her citizens, is the highest possible honour and joy.

"Lord! our portion in Thy city,

"Keep Thou by strong grace entire . . .

"Solid joys and lasting treasure

"None but Zion's children know" (*Newton*).

PSALM LXXXVIII.

Lamentation of one in deep affliction.

The tone of unrelieved anguish which runs through this Psalm distinguishes it from the rest of the Psalter; it is one continued complaint. But it is complaint *to* God, not of God. The writer pours out his sorrows into the ear of the God of his salvation. He cannot understand God's dealings with him; they are very dark and distressing; but he still looks to Him for relief. The distress is so acute and overwhelming, that it seems natural to ascribe it to some personal affliction. Hence some persons have assigned the Psalm to Hezekiah in his sickness, or to Uzziah when suffering from leprosy, or to Jeremiah in the dungeon, or to the writer of the book of Job; indeed, with regard to this last suggestion, if the book of Job belongs, as many think, to the age of Solomon, the similarity between the language of that book and this Psalm makes it quite conceivable that they were both written by the same person. It is possible, however, that some national calamity is here deplored; and under that supposition, the Psalm has been referred by some to the disruption of the kingdom and the subsequent disasters in the reign of Rehoboam, or to the early years of the captivity. At either of these periods, the faithful Israelite, bewildered and depressed, might think and speak of himself as shut out from the light of God's Presence, and so cast down into the region of death.

The inscription seems to assign this Psalm to two different authors, to the sons of Korah, and to Heman the Ezrahite. There are two Hemans mentioned in Scripture, one, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah

PSALMS, LXXXVIII.

- 2 let my prayer come before thee :
 incline thine ear unto my cry ;
 3 for my soul is full of troubles :
 and my life ^c draweth nigh unto the grave.
^c Ps. 107. 18. 4 ^d I am counted with them that go down into the pit :
^d Ps. 28. 1. ^e I am as a man *that hath* no strength :
^e Ps. 31. 12. 5 free among the dead,—like the slain that lie in
 the grave,

(1 Chron. ii. 6.), and the other, a Levite of the family of Korah, grandson of the prophet Samuel, one of David's three chief singers,—Asaph and Ethan or Jeduthun being his associates (1 Chron. vi. 31—38 ; xv. 16—22.). If “Heman the Ezrahite” can be identified with the latter of these, the inscription presents no difficulty : but the title “Ezrahite” is supposed to mean “of the family of Ezrah or Zerah,” which would connect him with the former Heman, of the tribe of Judah. In that case, we must understand the first part of the inscription, “A song or psalm for the sons of Korah,” not as denoting authorship, but merely as assigning the Psalm to the sons of Korah, to be set to music by them. But the question is a difficult one, and does not admit of any very satisfactory explanation. Ethan, to whom the next Psalm is ascribed, is also called “the Ezrahite ;” and the name of Ethan is associated with each of the Hemans mentioned above ; there was an Ethan a chorus-leader in David's time, and there was another Ethan one of the sons of Zerah. Heman and Ethan the Ezrahite are mentioned together also in 1 Kings iv. 31 as celebrated for wisdom in the reign of Solomon. They are probably the authors respectively of Pss. lxxxviii. and lxxxix. ; but whether they are to be identified with the Heman and Ethan who belonged to David's Levitical choir or to the Heman and Ethan of the tribe of Judah, seems uncertain. If they lived in the time of Solomon, they may very well have written these Psalms in the reign of his son Rehoboam.

“Upon Mahalath Leannoth.” On “Mahalath,” see Ps. liii. “Leannoth” means either to sing, or to humble, afflict. The latter is probably its meaning here ; in which case the title may be supposed to have reference to the character of the Psalm, “as a solemn exercise of “lamentation.” It is more deeply melancholy than any other in the Psalter.

1. By addressing God in the outset as the God of his salvation, the Psalmist gives a key-note of trust to the whole Psalm. His remedy for trouble is prayer, not mere complaint.

“I have cried day and night.” Lit. “day have I cried ; by night “before Thee ;” his cry is unceasing (comp. Ps. xxii. 2.). The broken language shews the intensity of his trouble.

2. It is no wonder that he cries so piteously, for his soul is thoroughly satiated with trouble ; he is brought to the very edge of the grave ; he is but a shadow of a man, in fact like one already dead.

4. “No strength.” No vital vigour ; he is a mere shadow.

5. “Free among the dead.” This may mean either “released,” i. e. from the bond of life, with its cares and duties (see Job' iii. 19.), or “separated,” turned adrift, homeless. Another rendering of the word is “my couch” (Job xvii. 13.) ; “my couch or place is among the dead.”

PSALMS, LXXXVIII.

whom thou rememberest no more :

and they are ^f cut off ² from thy hand.

^f Isai. 53. 8.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,—in dark-²ness, in the deeps. ^{Or, by thy hand.}

7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,

and ^g thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. ^g Ps. 42. 7.
Selah.

8 ^h Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far ^h from me ; ^{Job 19. 13, 19.}

thou hast made me an abomination unto them :

^h Ps. 31. 11. & 142. 4.

ⁱ *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

ⁱ Lam. 3. 7.

9 ^k Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction :

^k Ps. 38. 10.

LORD, ^l I have called daily upon thee,

^l Ps. 86. 3.

^m I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

^m Job 11. 13.

ⁿ Ps. 143. 6.

ⁿ Ps. 6. 5.

& 20. 9.

& 115. 17.

& 118. 17.

Isai. 38. 18.

10 ¶ ⁿ Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ?

“Whom Thou rememberest no more.” The dead are spoken of as practically forgotten by God, removed from His guiding and helping hand. Before Christ came, no clear light shone upon the condition of the departed; even to the faithful Israelite it was a place of darkness. Whatever he might hope for in the remote future, the immediate prospect was gloomy in the extreme; he saw before him nothing but hopeless inactivity (Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9. Isa. xxxviii. 18. Job xiv. 12. Eccles. ix. 10.).

6. The Psalmist heaps together words to express the gloom and dreariness of the intermediate state; it is a pit, the abode of darkness, an abyss. Each of the expressions in this verse is applied elsewhere to Hades (see Ps. lxxiii. 9; lxxxvi. 13. Ezek. xxvi. 20. Ps. cxliii. 3. Lam. iii. 6. Job x. 21, 22. Ps. lxix. 15.).

7. “Thou hast afflicted,” &c. More lit. “Thou hast pressed down “all Thy waves” (upon me). So the Greek translation.

“Thou whelm’st me in the drear abyss,

“Below all depths I lie.

“From gloom to gloom I sink forlorn,

“From deep to lower deep,

“And heavy on me leans Thy wrath,

“And all Thy billows sweep;

“They bear me down” (Keble).

8. Earthly friends also have deserted him (see marg. reff.); he is like one unclean, shut out from intercourse with others. The state of isolation here described is exactly that of the leper, and hence some have supposed that the writer of the Psalm was suffering from leprosy.

9. “Mourneth.” Rather, “hath wasted away;” his sight has become dim through excessive weeping; nevertheless he calls all day long on the Lord, and stretches forth his hand to Him.

10—12. These verses are sometimes taken as the very words of the earnest, importunate entreaty mentioned in the preceding verse. Two things he desires; that he may be the object of God’s wonder-working mercy, and that he may be able to praise Him for it. It is not God’s

PSALMS, LXXXVIII.

Shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah.

11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?

or thy faithfulness in destruction?

^o Job 10. 21. Ps. 143. 3. 12 ^o Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?

^p Ps. 31. 12. ver. 5. Eccles. 8. 10. & 9. 5. ^p and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD;

^q Ps. 5. 3. & 119. 147. and ^q in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

^r Ps. 43. 2. 14 LORD, ^r why castest thou off my soul?

^s Job 13. 24. Ps. 13. 1. Why ^s hidest thou thy face from me?

15 I *am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up:

^t Job 6. 4. while ^t I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

way to change the condition of the departed; and therefore the Psalmist begs Him to shew forth His goodness and faithfulness to him at once, before it is too late. Comp. Job xiv. 14: "If a man die, shall he live 'again?' which does not deny the possibility of a Resurrection, but expresses a deep feeling of its hopelessness.

"The dead." Lit. "the released ones," i. e. the shades of the lower world. The word is elsewhere used of the race of giants; but here and in Job xxvi. 5. Isa. xiv. 9; xxvi. 14 ("deceased"), of the spirits of the departed.

"Arise," i. e. rise up. There is no reference to the future Resurrection.

"Shall mighty ones from earth's dark womb
"Stand up, and shew Thy praise?" (*Keble*).

11. Observe the various expressions used for the other world, "the grave," "destruction," "the dark," "the land of forgetfulness."

"Destruction." The place of destruction. The Hebrew word is "Abaddon" (see Rev. ix. 11.).

13. "I." There is a strong emphasis on the pronoun; "but as for 'me:'" though he was on the brink of the grave, he still hoped, and still prayed. He contrasts himself with the departed, who were separated from all manifestation of God's love; he was still in life, and therefore he would not despair, but strain every nerve to struggle on in prayer, until he should reach that love.

"Prevent," i. e. "anticipate." God's mercy was sure to come; but by faith and prayer he would anticipate it.

15. "Ready to die from my youth up." The Psalmist complains that his condition, in which he is more like one dead than alive, has lasted from his youth. This may refer to a constitutional tendency to the disease from which he was suffering, in which case it would not apply to Job or Hezekiah. Or he may be speaking of some mental trouble which had weighed upon him all his life. Or it might be said of Israel, who from the earliest times had seemed continually on the point of destruction.

"While I suffer," &c. Rather, "I have borne Thy terrors: I must 'needs be exhausted.'"

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me;—thy terrors
have cut me off.

17 They came round about me ² daily like water ;
they ^u compassed me about together.

18 ^x Lover and friend hast thou put far from me,
and mine acquaintance into darkness.

² Or, *all the day.*

^u Ps. 22. 16.

^x Job 19. 13.
Ps. 31. 11.
& 38. 11.

PSALM LXXXIX.

1 *The psalmist praiseth God for his covenant, 5 for his wonderful power, 15 for the care of his church, 19 for his favour to the kingdom of David. 38 Then complaining of contrary events, 46 he expostulateth, prayeth, and blesseth God.*

² Or, A Psalm for Ethan the Ezrahite, to give instruction.

² Maschil of ³ Ethan the Ezrahite.

1 ^a I WILL sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever :

³ 1 Kin. 4. 31.

1 Chr. 2. 6.

^a Ps. 101. 1.

16. "Thy fierce wrath." Lit. "Thy hot wraths:" the image is that of an overflowing stream of fire.

17. The burnings have become floods: the wrath of God may be compared to every destroying and overthrowing element. The billows were ready to overwhelm him, and no helping hand was stretched out for his succour.

18. "Mine acquaintance into darkness." Rather, "my intimates are darkness;" wherever he looked there was only darkness; the only companion he had to look to was the darkness of the grave (comp. Job xvii. 14.).

"Where are the hearts I us'd to own?"

"Tis dark on every side" (*Keble*).

"With this complaint the harp falls from the poet's hands. He is silent, and waits on God, that He may solve this riddle of affliction. . . He is more faithful than men. No soul that in the midst of wrath lays hold upon His love, whether with a firm or a trembling hand, is suffered to be lost."

By appointing this saddest of all the Psalms for Good Friday, the Church suggests its application to Christ in His Passion. The gloomy view which the Psalm takes of the condition of the departed, as separated from God, forgetting Him and forgotten in turn, belongs of course to the writer himself; but in his life-long, overwhelming trouble, in the desertion of earthly friends, in his apparent abandonment by God, as well as in the steadfastness of his trust and the earnestness of his continued supplication, we may see in the Psalmist a type of Him, Whose life of suffering culminated in the anguish of the Garden and the Cross: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" "My God, my God; why hast Thou forsaken me?" (St. Matt. xxvi. 38; xxvii. 46.)

PSALM LXXXIX.

**Prayer for the fulfilment of the promises to David,
which seem to have failed.**

After rehearsing at length, and with apparent hopefulness, the promises made to David, the Psalmist expostulates earnestly, almost

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

² Heb.
to genera-
tion and
generation:
So ver. 4.
Ps. 119. 90.

b Ps. 119. 89.

c 1 Kin. 8. 16.

Isai. 42. 1.

d 2 Sam. 7.

11, &c.

1 Chron. 17.

10, &c. See

Jer. 30. 9.

Ezek. 34. 23.

Hos. 3. 5.

e ver. 23, 36. f See ver. 1. Luke 1. 32, 33.

with my mouth will I make known thy faithful-
ness ² to all generations.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever :
^b thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the
very heavens.

3 ^c I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have ^d sworn unto David my servant,

4 ^e thy seed will I establish for ever,
and build up thy throne ^f to all generations. Selah.

reproachfully, with Almighty God on account of the disasters which He had allowed His chosen to suffer, and prays for a renewal of the mercies which He had sworn unto David in His truth. The present condition of the king and his kingdom was a melancholy contrast to the high expectations which God's promises had aroused.

The Psalm is referred, with great probability, to the early part of the reign of Rehoboam. The revolt of the Ten Tribes and the subjugation of Judah by Shishak king of Egypt might well fill the hearts of the faithful with dismay, and bring to mind the promises which now seemed to have failed so signally.

Others however refer it to the time of the young Jehoiachin, when the utter ruin of the house of David appeared inevitable.

On the inscription, see Ps. lxxxviii.

1. Who would have supposed, from the tone of triumphant hopefulness which breathes through the first part of this Psalm, the circumstances of depression and almost despair under which it was written? From the misery of the time, when the house of David and the nation's hopes were overthrown, the Psalmist takes refuge in the promises of God. However dark the cloud which hung over him and his people, he will celebrate without ceasing God's mercy and faithfulness. This is in fact the key-note of the Psalm (see vv. 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 33, 49.).

"The mercies of the Lord," i. e. especially His mercies to the house of David; "the sure mercies," the faithful loving-kindnesses, "of David" (Isa. lv. 3.).

"Faithfulness," i. e. firm adherence to His covenant.

2. "For I have said." He said in his heart, he was inwardly convinced, that God's mercy and faithfulness are unchangeable: on this conviction he founds his resolution (in ver. 1.) to praise them continually. God's mercy not only rests on a sure foundation, but is ever rising higher and higher; His faithfulness, like the unchangeable heavens, is undisturbed by the perpetual ebb and flow of earthly things.

3, 4. Here follow the direct words of God, containing the promises alluded to in ver. 2 (see 2 Sam. vii. 8—16.).

4. Observe the parallelism between this verse and ver. 2. God having sworn that He would "establish" David's seed, and "build up" His throne for ever, the Psalmist transfers these expressions to God's mercy and faithfulness themselves; they will be maintained by the maintenance of David's throne.

"Selah." The music is prolonged and becomes *forte*, as an act of praise after the rehearsal of God's promise.

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- 5: ¶ And ^s the heavens shall praise thy wonders, s Ps. 19. 1. & 97. 6. Rev. 7. 10, 11, 12. h ver. 7.
 O LORD :
 thy faithfulness also : in the congregation ^h of ^h the saints.
- 6 For ⁱ who in the heaven can be compared unto i Ps. 40. 5. & 71. 19. & 86. 8. & 113. 5.
 the LORD ?
 Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD ?
- 7 ^k God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of ^k the saints, Ps. 76. 7, 11.
 and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.
- 8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD ^l like unto thee ? l Ex. 15. 11. 1 Sam. 2. 2. Ps. 35. 10. & 71. 19.
 or to thy faithfulness round about thee ?
- 9 ^m Thou rulest the raging of the sea : m Ps. 65. 7. & 93. 3, 4. & 107. 29.
 when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

5. "And." Perhaps the connection is with the jubilant Selah, which has gone before ; after the joyous burst of music, the Psalmist goes on to praise God in words. But it seems more simple to join this verse with ver. 2, taking vv. 3, 4 as parenthetical. In the following verses, to ver. 18, the Psalmist extols the majesty of God, especially of His power and faithfulness, because the value of the promise is measured by the character of the promiser. The God of the promise is He Who is praised by the heavens and by the holy ones above.

"Thy wonders." Rather, "Thy wonder," Thy wondrousness, Thy supernatural working, Thy mysterious Being.

"Of the saints." The holy ones ; i. e. the Angels, as in Job v. 1 ; xv. 15. Deut. xxxiii. 2.

"For this, O Lord, the heavens resound

"Thy wonders ever nigh,

"Thy truth amid the chosen round

"Of holy ones on high" (*Keble*).

6. "The sons of the mighty." See Ps. xxix. 1.

7. The reference is to the Angels in both clauses : in the great council of the Angels the Lord is terrible ; He towers above all that are round about Him in awful majesty (comp. 1 Kings xxii. 19.).

8. "O Lord God of hosts." With special reference to the Angels in the preceding verses.

"Or to Thy faithfulness." Rather, "And Thy faithfulness encircles "Thee." He is not only great, but faithful. His greatness strikes with terror, but "the faithfulness which encompasses Him softens the overpowering brilliancy of His glory, and awakens trust and confidence."

9. The Psalmist dwells, first, on God's power (vv. 9—13.), then, on His faithfulness (ver. 14.).

"The raging of the sea." With special reference, we may suppose, to the storm which occurred at the passage of the Red Sea (Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18.).

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- ⁿ Ex. 14. 26, 27, 28.
Ps. 87. 4.
Isai. 30. 7.
& 51. 9.
² Or, *Egypt*.
- 10 ⁿ Thou hast broken ² Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain ;
thou hast scattered thine enemies ³ with thy strong arm.
- ³ Heb. *with the arm of thy strength*.
- 11 ^o The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine :
as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.
- ^o Gen. 1. 1.
1 Chr. 29. 11.
Ps. 24. 1, 2.
& 50. 12.
- 12 ^p The north and the south thou hast created them :
- ^p Job 26. 7.
- ^q Josh. 19. 22.
- ^r Josh. 12. 1.
- 13 Thou hast ⁴ a mighty arm :
strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand.
- ⁴ Heb. *an arm with might*.
- 14 ^s Justice and judgment *are* the ⁵ habitation of thy throne :
- ^s Ps. 97. 2.
- ⁵ Or, *establishment*.
- ^t Ps. 85. 13.
- ^u Num. 10. 10.
& 23. 21.
Ps. 98. 6.
- 15 Blessed *is* the people that know the ^u joyful sound :
they shall walk, O LORD, in the ^x light of thy countenance.
- ^x Ps. 4. 6.
& 44. 3.
- 16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day :
and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

10. From the raging of the natural sea the poet passes to the uprising of men ; in the doings of God at the Red Sea both seas, so to call them, were miraculously subdued.

“Rahab,” i. e. Egypt ; as in Ps. lxxxvii. 4. The power of Egypt was crushed at the Red Sea, so that the proud kingdom was like one fatally smitten.

11. The Psalmist continues to dwell on the greatness of God’s power. He is the Creator and absolute owner of heaven and earth ; the world in its entire compass, as represented by the north and south, and in its most striking features, as represented by Tabor and Hermon, proclaims that it is His, and exists for His glory alone.

13. “A mighty arm.” Lit. as in margin, “an arm with might,” that is, clothed with might, revealing itself in acts of Almighty strength.

14. Having first praised His power and majesty (see on ver. 9.), he now passes to His faithfulness.

“The habitation.” Rather, “the basis” or “foundation” (Ps. xcvii. 2.).

“Shall go before Thy face.” Make haste to stand before Thee. Not only is His throne based on righteousness, but mercy and truth are His glad attendants, ready at all times to do His will.

15—18. God being so great in Himself and so loving and faithful toward Israel, blessed are they who belong to Him.

15. “The joyful sound,” i. e. the sound of the trumpets at the festivals (Lev. xxiii. 24. Num. x. 10 ; xxxi. 6.).

“O blessed are the tribes that know

“The joyful sound, the trump of God” (*Keble*).

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- 17 For thou *art* the glory of their strength :
^y and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. J ver. 24.
Ps. 75. 10.
& 92. 10.
& 132. 17.
- 18 For ² the LORD *is* our defence ;
 and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king. 2 Or. our
shield is of
the LORD,
and our
king is of
the Holy One
of Israel,
Ps. 47. 9.
- 19 ¶ Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one,
 and saidst,
 I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty ;
 I have exalted *one* ^z chosen out of the people. z ver. 3.
1 Kin. 11. 34.
- 20 ^a I have found David my servant ;
 with my holy oil have I anointed him : a 1 Sam. 16.
1, 12.
- 21 ^b with whom my hand shall be established :
 mine arm also shall strengthen him. b Ps. 80. 17.
- 22 ^c The enemy shall not exact upon him ;
 nor the son of wickedness afflict him. c 2 Sam. 7. 13.
- 23 ^d And I will beat down his foes before his face,
 and plague them that hate him. d 2 Sam. 7. 9.
- 24 But ^e my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be*
 with him : e Ps. 61. 7.
- and ^f in my name shall his horn be exalted. f ver. 17.
- 25 ^g I will set his hand also in the sea,
 and his right hand in the rivers. g Ps. 72. 8.
& 80. 11.

17. "Our horn shall be exalted." See on Ps. lxxv. 4.

18. "For the Lord is our defence." Rather, "To the Lord (be-
 longeth) our shield; and to the Holy One of Israel our king." Our
 shield and our king are the same person (comp. Ps. xlvii. 9. Hos. iv. 18.).
 Israel's king belongs to Jehovah; His faithfulness is pledged to protect
 him; and therefore it is impossible that any earthly power should pre-
 vail against him. This mention of the king leads the Psalmist to unfold
 in the succeeding verses the promise to David and his house.

19. "Then." Distinctly marking the time when the promise was made.
 "Thy holy one," i. e. Nathan, to whom God's message to David was
 communicated in a vision (2 Sam. vii. 4, 17. 1 Chron. xvii. 3, 15.).
 Here follows the substance of the Divine oracle.

"Help." Especially assistance in war. Mighty as David was, the
 Lord furnished him with aid.

"One chosen." So in ver. 3; but the word might be rendered,
 "a youth," "stripling;" while David was yet a youth he was raised
 up to be ruler of God's people (2 Sam. vii. 8. Ps. lxxviii. 71.).

22. "Exact." Act as a creditor towards him, treat him with violence.
 See Ps. lv. 16, where the word is rendered "seize."

"Nor the son of wickedness afflict him." In 2 Sam. vii. 10 this
 promise is addressed to the people at large.

This promise was fulfilled in the marvellous protection afforded to
 David in the various perils of his life (see 2 Sam. xxii. 1.).

23. The *past* deliverances are described in similar terms in 2 Sam.
 vii. 9.

25. "Rivers." The promise to Abraham (Gen. xv. 18.) was, that

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- ^h 2 Sam. 7. 14. 26 He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* ^h my father,
¹ Chr. 22. 10. my God, and ⁱ the rock of my salvation.
^l 2 Sam. 22. 47.
^k Ps. 2. 7. 27 Also I will make him ^k my firstborn,
¹ Col. 1. 13, 18. ¹ higher than the kings of the earth.
¹ Num. 24. 7.
^m Isai. 55. 3. 28 ^m My mercy will I keep for him for evermore,
ⁿ ver. 34. and ⁿ my covenant shall stand fast with him.
^o ver. 4, 36. 29 ^o His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever,
^p and his throne ^q as the days of heaven.
^p ver. 4. 30 ^r If his children ^s forsake my law,—and walk not
¹ Isai. 9. 7. in my judgments;
¹ Jer. 33. 17. 31 if they ² break my statutes,—and keep not my
^q Deut. 11. 21. commandments;
^r 2 Sam. 7. 14. 32 then ^t will I visit their transgression with the rod,
^s Ps. 119. 53. and their iniquity with stripes.
¹ Jer. 9. 13. 33 ^u Nevertheless my lovingkindness ³ will I not
² Heb. utterly take from him,
profane my 34 then ^t will I visit their transgression with the rod,
statutes. and their iniquity with stripes.
^t 2 Sam. 7. 14. 35 ^u Nevertheless my lovingkindness ³ will I not
¹ Kin. 11. 31. utterly take from him,
^u 2 Sam. 7. 13. nor suffer my faithfulness ⁴ to fail.
³ Heb. 36 My covenant will I not break,
I will not nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
make void
from him.
⁴ Heb. *to lie.*

his seed should possess from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates,—a promise renewed to Israel (Deut. xi. 24. Josh. i. 4. Comp. Ps. lxxx. 11. 2 Chron. ix. 26.). The use of the plural in this verse seems to imply unlimited dominion.

26, 27. What is here applied to David is in 2 Sam. vii. 14 spoken of his seed, that is, Solomon; as in 1 Chron. xxviii. 6; xxii. 10.

26. See Heb. i. 5, where the words are cited as fulfilled in Christ.

27. What God had before (Exod. iv. 22.) said of the whole people, "Israel is My son, My first-born," He here says of the king and representative of the people. The latest born of the sons of Jesse is made the first-born, and therefore the most favoured of the sons of the Most High. The name belongs pre-eminently to Christ (Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 6. Rev. i. 5.).

"Higher than." Rather, "most high above," or "in respect to." As Israel was to be supreme (lit. "most high") among the nations of the earth (Deut. xxviii. 1.), so Israel's king was to be supreme above all earthly kings. The promise to David was to stand for ever; David therefore is eternal in his seed (see vv. 33—37. 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16. Deut. xi. 21. St. Luke i. 32, 33.).

30—37. These verses are a paraphrase of 2 Sam. vii. 14—16. The faithlessness of David's family shall not hinder God's faithfulness to His covenant. He may chastise them indeed, but it will be as a Father (Prov. iii. 12; xxiii. 13, 14.).

31. "If they break." Rather, as in margin, "profane." The same word is used in ver. 34, "My covenant will I not break" (profane): the two verses answer to one another.

32. "With the rod." In 2 Sam. vii. 14, "with the rod of men," such chastisement as men inflict upon their children, to correct, not to destroy, them.

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- 35 Once have I sworn ^x by my holiness
² that I will not lie unto David. x Amos 4. 2.
2 Heb.
if I lie.
- 36 ^y His seed shall endure for ever,
 and his throne ^z as the sun before me. y 2 Sam. 7. 16.
Luke 1. 33.
John 12, 34.
ver. 4, 23.
- 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon,
 and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah. z Ps. 72. 5, 17.
Jer. 33. 20.
- 38 ¶ But thou hast ^a cast off and ^b abhorred,
 thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. a 1 Chr. 23. 9.
Ps. 44. 9.
& 60. 1, 10.
- 39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy ^b servant :
^c thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to b Deut. 32. 19.
Ps. 78. 59.
 the ground. c Ps. 74. 7.
Lam. 5. 16.
- 40 ^d Thou hast broken down all his hedges ;
 thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. d Ps. 80. 12.
- 41 All that pass by the way spoil him :

35. "Once." Either, "once for all," or "one thing," i.e. the perpetuity of David's throne. The words of the angel to the Virgin Mary point out to us the true fulfilment of the Divine promise ; "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (St. Luke i. 32, 33.).

37. This verse may be taken as in the Authorised Version, in which case the parallelism seems to require that we should understand the moon as the "witness in heaven." Or we may follow the Greek Version, and render the second clause, "and the Witness in heaven is faithful," or, "there is a faithful Witness in heaven," that is, God Himself. Comp. Job xvi. 19, "Behold My witness is in heaven." Or, as suggested by the Targum, this and the preceding verse may be rendered, "His seed shall be for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me ; as the moon (which) is established for ever, and (is) a faithful witness in the sky" (comp. Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.). Some make "the faithful witness" to be the rainbow (comp. Gen. ix. 9.).

38. Having dwelt at length on the beginnings of the house of David, which were so rich in promise, the Psalmist turns to contrast them with the sorrowful present. And at no time in the sacred history could the apparent failure of the promise have been more impressive than in the disastrous downfall of Rehoboam, after the splendid commencement of Solomon.

"But Thou." The pronoun is emphatic : "Thou, Who art ever faithful and true, Thou, Who hast made such great promises to the house of David, hast now, in spite of those promises, rejected Thine anointed, and been angry with him : how long is this anger to last ?"

40. "His hedges." That is, the boundary fences of his land (Ps. lxxx. 12.).

"His strongholds." Shishak "took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah" (2 Chron. xii. 4.).

41. "All that pass by the way," i.e. the hordes of the people passing by.

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

^e Ps. 44. 13.
& 79. 4.

he is ^e a reproach to his neighbours.
42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries ;

thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.

² Heb.
brightness.
^f ver. 39.

44 Thou hast made his ² glory to cease, and ^f cast his throne down to the ground.

45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened : thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

^g Ps. 79. 5.

46 ¶ ^g How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?

^h Ps. 78. 63.

^h Shall thy wrath burn like fire?

ⁱ Job 7. 7.
& 10. 9.
& 14. 1.
Ps. 39. 5.
& 119. 84.

47 ⁱ Remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

^k Ps. 49. 9.

48 ^k What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not ^l see death?

^l Heb. 11. 5.

Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.

ing through the land ; which accords very well with the untold multitudes which followed Shishak (2 Chron. xii. 3.).

43. "Turned the edge of his sword," i. e. caused the blade of his sword to be turned back by the enemy, so that he has been unable to stand his ground.

45. "The days of his youth hast Thou shortened." He does not mean by this that God had cut short his life, but that He had caused him to become old before his time. Rehoboam was only forty-six years old when, the larger part of his kingdom having been wrested from him, Egypt threatened to deprive him of what remained. Instead of his kingly robe, shame completely covered him.

46. From expostulation the Psalmist turns to prayer, which shews that the expostulation itself is not the language of distrust, but rather of prayer in another form.

The six verses of deprecation which follow are divided by Selah into two equal parts ; in the first, the Psalmist pleads the shortness of human life ; in the second, the former mercies to David.

47. The Psalmist desires that he himself may see the change in God's dealings with His people for which he prays. He knows not how soon his end may come ; he cannot look forward to a prolonged life ; therefore he prays that he may, while he lives, see the fulfilment of God's promise and the restoration of His favour to the seed of David. The verse may be rendered, "Remember what a mere fleeting life I have ; for what a mere nothing hast Thou created all the sons of men."

48. The meaning seems to be, that not the Psalmist alone can have no hope of seeing the change which he desires, unless it come speedily, but that there is no one whose expectation in the matter can be surer than his. All are frail and short-lived ; wherefore unless God speedily

PSALMS, LXXXIX.

- 49 Lord, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses,
which thou ^mswarest unto David ⁿin thy truth? ^m2 Sam. 7. 15.
Isai. 55. 3.
- 50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; ⁿPs. 54. 5.
^o*how* I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of all* ^oPs. 69. 9, 19.
the mighty people;
- 51 ^pwherewith thine enemies have reproached, ^pPs. 74. 22.
LORD;
wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of
thine anointed.
- 52 ^qBlessed *be* the LORD for evermore. ^qPs. 41. 13.
Amen, and Amen.

PSALM XC.

- 1 *Moses, setting forth God's providence, 3 complaineth of human fragility, 7 divine chastisements, 10 and brevity of life. 12 He prayeth for the knowledge and sensible experience of God's good providence.* ² Or, *A Prayer, being a Psalm of Moses.*
- ² A Prayer ³ of Moses the man of God. ³ Deut. 33. 1.

interfere, they will all pass away without beholding the desired deliverance.

49—51. These verses sum up the whole Psalm. The Psalmist beseeches God to vindicate His faithfulness by removing the reproach with which David's successor and his people were overwhelmed.

49. "Thy former lovingkindnesses." The proofs of favour in the reigns of David and Solomon.

50. "How I do bear," &c. This may be explained as in the Authorised Version by supplying "the reproach of" from the former clause; or we may render, "I bear in my bosom the whole of many peoples," with reference to the many foreign intruders (Egyptians and their allies) who overran the land of Israel. The Psalmist speaks as a member of the nation, identifying himself with the king, whose dishonour lay as a load upon his heart.

51. Lit. "who have reproached—as being Thine enemies, O Lord—"who have reproached the footsteps of Thine anointed;" they follow him everywhere, wheresoever he may go.

52. This doxology marks the close of the Third Book of the Psalter (comp. Pss. xli., lxxii.). It is not so inconsistent, as it might at first sight seem, with the tenour of the Psalm. He who begins with singing of the faithfulness and mercy of God may well conclude, even in the midst of his sorrow and disappointment, with words of praise (Job i. 21; xiii. 15.).

The deep tone of sadness which pervades the latter part of the Psalm seems to make it unsuitable for a Christmas Day Psalm; but while the first part plainly leads our thoughts to the kingdom of Christ, of which David's kingdom was a type, the second part may be taken as a warning to us, that as David's children after the flesh forfeited by their unfaithfulness their share in God's promises, and yet those promises did not miss their fulfilment, so our individual share in the Christian covenant depends upon our walking steadfastly in the ways of God. He is ever loving and faithful, and His promises to His Church cannot fail. But if we fall short of our part, they will be fulfilled in others, not in us.

PSALMS, XC.

^a Deut. 33. 27.
Ezek. 11. 16.
² Heb.
*in genera-
tion and
generation.*
^b Prov. 8. 25,
26.

- 1 **L**ORD, ^a thou hast been our dwelling place—
² in all generations.
 2 ^b Before the mountains were brought forth,
 or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the
 world,
 even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.
 3 Thou turnest man to destruction ;
 and sayest, ^c Return, ye children of men.

^c Gen. 3. 19.
Eccles. 12. 7.

PSALM XC.

The eternal God the refuge of mortal man.

The Fourth Book of the Psalter opens with the oldest of the Psalms, entitled "A prayer of Moses the man of God," and the title is generally accepted.

The sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness had been prolonged to forty years, in order that the whole generation which had come out of Egypt might die; towards the end of that time, therefore, the aged men of the congregation would be continually dropping off at seventy or eighty years of age. Amid this daily spectacle of mortality, the consequence of God's anger against man's sin, Moses looks up to the eternal God as the only refuge of His people, and prays Him to have compassion on them and give them joy for the years wherein they had suffered adversity, and crown their labours with His blessing.

The Psalm is described as "a prayer," which shews that "the kernel of the Psalm is the second part," and that the meditation on the transitoriness of human life, with which the Psalm opens (vv. 1—12.), is the basis on which the concluding prayer (vv. 13—17.) rests.

Moses is called "the man of God" (Deut. xxxiii. 1. Josh. xiv. 6. Ezra iii. 2.).

1. "Our dwelling-place." From the days of Abraham the chosen people had had no settled home, but God had proved Himself their dwelling-place; He was always ready to take up to Himself and protect those who trusted in Him. See Deut. xxxiii. 27, "The eternal God is thy refuge," rather, "thy dwelling-place" (Ps. xci. 9.).

2. "Thou hadst formed." More literally, "Thou hadst given birth to" (Job xxxviii. 8, 28.).

The Psalmist dwells on the greatness of Him Who is the home of His people. Not only before the creation of the mountains, the emblems of eternity (Deut. xxxiii. 15. Gen. xlix. 26. Prov. viii. 25.), but from an everlasting past to an everlasting future, He is the mighty God.

3. "To destruction." Lit. "to crumbling," i.e. to dust, with reference to Gen. iii. 19. The meaning is, "Thou turnest man to dust, and sayest, Return to dust, ye children of men" (Eccles. xii. 7.). Some, however, take the second clause to mean that as one generation dies off, God calls another into being; He bids them return continually; they die away, but do not die out. Comp. Eccles. i. 4, "One generation passeth away, and another cometh."

With the eternity of God, which fitted Him to be the dwelling-place of His people, the Psalmist contrasts the frailty of man; and by this contrast he tacitly expresses his belief in another life beyond the present, when man will find the refuge which he needs.

PSALMS, XC.

- 4 ^d For a thousand years in thy sight
are but as yesterday ² when it is past,
 and *as* a watch in the night. d 2 Pet. 3. 8.
2 Or, *when he hath passed them.*
- 5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood ; ^e they ^o they ^o Ps. 73. 20.
 are *as* a sleep :
 in the morning ^f *they are* like grass which ^f Ps. 103. 15.
³ groweth up. Isai. 40. 6.
3 Or, *is changed.*
e Job 14. 2.
Ps. 92. 7.
- 6 ^e In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up ;
 in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
- 7 For we are consumed by thine anger,

4. "When it is past." Rather, "when," or "as it is passing." A thousand years are to God just as yesterday is to us, when we stand on the border of the new day and look back on that which is closing. But some understand the passage, "A thousand years, when they are 'past, are in Thine eyes but as yesterday."

"A watch in the night." Which is spent in sleep, and therefore leaves no trace. A thousand years are to God not merely as a single day, but as a mere fragment of the night, of the passing away of which we are unconscious. St. Peter says further that "one day" is with the Lord as a thousand years," as well as "a thousand years" as one day" (2 St. Pet. iii. 8.). The Jews divided the night into three watches,—the first, from sunset to 10 p.m., was called "the beginning of the watches" (Lam. ii. 19.); the second, from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., was "the middle watch" (Judges vii. 19.); and the third, from 2 a.m. to sunrise, "the morning watch" (Exod. xiv. 24. 1 Sam. xi. 11.). In later times there were four watches (St. Mark xiii. 35.).

5. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood." This is expressed by one word in the Hebrew. God sweeps them away, and they become a sleep, that is, they die. On this figure it has been remarked, "When thou seest a torrent sweep by, say, There is my life flowing away; the water which has gone never returns."

"In the morning they are like grass which groweth up." If this rendering is correct, the meaning is, that while one generation is swept away as by a flood, another springs up, soon to share the same fate. But the word translated "groweth up" means also "to change," as in margin, or "to pass away," and the clause may be rendered, "in the morning they pass away as the grass:" so the Prayer Book, following the Greek and Latin Versions, "fade away suddenly like the grass."

6. In whichever way we understand the last clause of ver. 5, this verse is an expansion of the metaphor. If we follow the Authorised Version the meaning is, that the grass, to which men are likened, blooms and springs up in the morning; in the evening it is cut down and withers away. There is the same alternation in the generations of men; they are ever springing up and dying away, like the grass. But if we adopt the other translation, "passeth away," as suggested above, then we must render, "in the morning it (or 'he,' i. e. man) flourisheth and (then) passes away; in the evening it (or 'he') is cut down (lit. "one cuts him down") and withers away."

7—12. This shortness of human life is the consequence of God's displeasure against sin. Moses has in view the case of the Israelites, who

^h Ps. 50. 21.

Jer. 16. 17.

ⁱ Ps. 19. 12.

² Heb. *turned away.*

³ Or, *as a meditation.*

⁴ Heb. *As for the days of our years, in them are seventy years.*

- and by thy wrath are we troubled.
- 8 ^h Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our ⁱ secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.
- 9 For all our days are ² passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years ³ as a tale *that is told*.
- 10 ⁴ The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten;
and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years,
yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow;
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
- 11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger?
Even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.

were wasting away before his eyes under God's anger. The whole generation which had come forth from Egypt were being cut off before their time (Num. xiv. 26, &c. Deut. i. 34—39.). But the passage may be applied to men generally; sin is the cause of man's mortality.

7. "Troubled." "Confounded," "terrified" (comp. Lev. xxvi. 16. Ps. xlvi. 5; lxxviii. 33, where the same word is used).

8. God's wrath was the consequence of their sin; it was so heinous that God was constrained to punish. The full brightness of His countenance was fixed upon them, and revealed the recesses of the heart.

"Our secret sins." Lit. "our secret;" i.e. our most secret matter, our whole inner being. The Hebrew word is singular, and seems to mean the inward character as distinct from open transgression. Seen in the light of God's perfect purity, men are not only guilty of overt acts of sin, but their whole heart and character are corrupt. There is much in themselves which they do not see, except in the searching radiance of God's presence.

9. "Are passed away." "Have vanished," "waned away."

"As a tale." Rather, "like a sound," (as in Job xxxvii. 2.), or "a groan" (Ezek. ii. 10, "mourning"), which has scarcely gone forth before it has passed away; or it may mean "as a thought."

10. "And if by reason," &c. Rather, "Or, if they (the years) be "in full strength (full measure), eighty years." Seventy or eighty years were the average limit of the age of the generation which perished in the wilderness.

"Their strength." Lit. "their pride," i.e. the pride of the years, that of which man's life is proud, be it outward appearance, or luxury, or honour, or whatsoever.

"It is soon cut off." Rather, "It has passed swiftly away; and we "too have fled away;" we have been borne on the wings of the past. From the end of life the Psalmist glances back on its course: it is but an empty burden; it has passed swiftly away, and we have been borne away with it.

11. The frailty of men ought to teach them wisdom; but how few are there who practically consider God's anger, who bethink them that the shortness of man's life is the consequence of sin!

"Even according," &c. The meaning rather is, "Who (rightly

PSALMS, XC.

- 12 ^k So teach *us* to number our days,
that we may ² apply *our* hearts unto wisdom. ^k Ps. 39. 4.
² Heb. *cause to come.*
- 13 ¶ Return, O LORD, how long?
And let it ¹ repent thee concerning thy servants. ¹ Deut. 32. 36.
Ps. 135. 14.
- 14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
^m that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. ^m Ps. 85. 6.
& 149. 2.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein*
thou hast afflicted us,
and the years *wherein* we have seen evil.
- 16 Let ⁿ thy work appear unto thy servants,
and thy glory unto their children. ⁿ Hab. 3. 2.
- 17 ° And let the beauty of the LORD our God be ° upon us :
and ^p establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; ^p Isai. 26. 12.
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

“regards) Thy wrath, according to Thy fear?” i. e. according to the fear that is due to Thee, so as to fear Thee proportionately (Exod. xx. 20.).

12. “So teach us,” &c. The order of the words in the Hebrew suggests that the meaning is rightly given in the Authorised Version. But some connect the verse with the preceding; “so,” i. e. in accordance with a just fear of Thee.

“That we may apply.” Rather, “obtain,” bring home. The figure is taken from the ingathering of the harvest (2 Sam. ix. 10. Hag. i. 6.). A wise heart is the fruit which we gather from constantly reminding ourselves of our end (Deut. xxxii. 29.).

13. After the sad lament over the people perishing in their sin, Moses prays that God would turn from His anger, and once more bless and prosper His chosen.

“Return . . . repent Thee.” Comp. Exod. xxxii. 12, where the same words are used, “Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this “evil against Thy people.”

“How long?” How long will it be before Thou turnest? (Deut. xxxii. 36.)

14. “Satisfy us.” As if Israel in their distress had been longing for a return of God’s mercy.

“Early.” Lit. “in the morning.” Hitherto it has been night; let the day break, that Thy people may rejoice.

15. May the time of joy bear some proportion to the forty dreary years of sorrow.

“Afflicted us.” The same word is used in Deut. viii. 2, where Moses says that the long wandering was designed to humble (afflict) and prove Israel.

16. “Thy work,” i. e. God’s purpose of planting His people in Canaan, which is called in the next verse “the work of our hands,” because wrought by human means.

17. “The beauty.” That is, all that is engaging and gracious in God’s revelation of Himself (Ps. xxvii. 4.).

“Establish Thou the work of our hands.” What we in our feeble-

PSALMS, XCI.

PSALM XCI.

1 *The state of the godly.* 3 *Their safety.* 9 *Their habitation.* 11 *Their servants.* 14 *Their friend; with the effects of them all.*

^a Ps. 27. 5.
& 31. 20.
& 32. 7.

² Heb. *lodge.*

^b Ps. 17. 8.

1 **H**E ^a that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall ² abide ^b under the shadow of the Almighty.

ness have attempted, do Thou bless and perfect. The expression "work of our hands" is of frequent occurrence in Deuteronomy; so that the Deuteronomic impression of the Psalm accompanies us all through.

After the lapse of more than 3000 years, this funeral Psalm, as it may be called, over the dying Israelites in the wilderness, is felt to suggest thoughts so true and comforting, that nothing can be found more suitable to be used at the burial of the Christian dead. What is more consoling at such a time, than to be reminded of the eternity and unchangeableness of the merciful God, in contrast with the weakness and frailty of man? What is more profitable, than to be taught that each spectacle of mortality is a witness to man's sinfulness, and a warning to us to be wise in time and to remember our latter end? What more hopeful and encouraging than the prayer, that God would accomplish His good purpose towards us by bringing us to the inheritance which He has promised, and in the meanwhile would so bless and prosper us in our appointed work on earth, that we may be fellow-workers with Him in our salvation?

PSALM XCI.

The security of the believer.

The ancient Rabbins ascribed this Psalm to Moses; perhaps because, as it has no separate title, they considered that the title of Ps. xc. belonged to this Psalm also; perhaps because of a certain resemblance which may be traced between this Psalm and the book of Deuteronomy. Comp. ver. 4 with Deut. xxxii. 11, and ver. 9 with Deut. xxxiii. 27 (the word translated "habitation" in the Psalm is the same as that translated "refuge" in Deut., and "dwelling-place" in Ps. xc. 1.). Perhaps no great stress should be laid on these coincidences. A closer resemblance has been noticed between this Psalm and the words in which Eliphaz the Temanite (Job v. 17—23.) describes the good man's life. In the Greek Version it is assigned to David.

The subject of the Psalm is the special providence which watches over those who trust in God. In the Talmud it is called, together with Ps. iii., "a song of occurrences;" i. e. a protective or talismanic song, in time of danger.

The changes of person which occur frequently in the Psalm have been explained by supposing that it was composed for two sets of singers, who answer each other, and that the voice of God is heard at the end; but we may very well understand the Psalm as expressing the writer's own feelings, only at one time he speaks in his own person and professes his reliance in God's protection, at another he addresses himself in faith in the language of encouragement and promise.

1. The apparent tautology of this verse is in accordance with the parallelism of Hebrew poetry. The first clause expresses conscious and persevering trust in God, and the second the reward of such trust:

PSALMS, XCI.

- 2 ° I will say of the LORD, *He is my refuge* and ° Ps. 142. 5.
 my fortress :
 my God ; in him will I trust.
- 3 ¶ Surely ^d he shall deliver thee from the snare ^d Ps. 124. 7.
 of the fowler,
and from the noisome pestilence.
- 4 ° He shall cover thee with his feathers,
 and under his wings shalt thou trust : ° Ps. 17. 8.
 his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. & 57. 1.
 & 61. 4.
- 5 † Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by † Job 5. 19, &c.
 night ; Ps. 112. 7.
 nor for the arrow *that* flieth by day ; & 121. 6.
 Pro. 3. 23, 24.
 Isai. 43. 2.
- 6 *nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness ;
nor for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.

“he who takes his seat, i.e. deliberately places himself and reposes “calmly, in the secret place of the Most High, shall lodge under the “shadow of the Almighty.” Loving faith on man’s part will be met by faithful love on God’s part. According to this explanation the Psalm begins with a general statement of the safety of the man who makes God his refuge, and then there follows in the second verse the outburst of faith, in which the writer claims for himself the character he has just described. But some understand the first verse as describing in both clauses the same person, “he that sitteth in the secret place of the Most High, “that lodgeth under the shadow of the Almighty,” and they suppose that the Psalmist, instead of going on with the third person, applies to himself the description just given, and speaks in his own person, “I say of the Lord, He is my refuge.” According to this view, the Psalmist himself is the subject of both verses ; in the first he *looks at* himself, in the second he *speaks of* himself. The Greek, followed by the Syriac and Latin Versions, has the third person in the second verse ; “saith of Jehovah, He is my refuge.”

“**Shall abide.**” Lit. “shall lodge,” pass the night. God will befriend and shelter him in the night of trouble.

3. Here and in the following verses (to ver. 8.) the Psalmist turns and addresses himself (comp. Ps. cxxi. 2, 3.).

“**The snare of the fowler,**” i. e. the various evils which come upon men unawares, especially death (see Eccles. ix. 12.). It is a promise of safety to the believer against the plots of Satan his chief enemy (2 Tim. ii. 26.).

“**The noisome pestilence.**” Rather, “the pestilence of malignity,” i. e. the destroying, devouring pestilence ; or, taken spiritually, it may mean the pestilential ruin which sin brings.

4. Comp. Deut. xxxii. 11.

“**Shalt thou trust.**” Lit. “shalt thou find refuge.” Ps. lvii. 1.

“**His truth,**” i. e. “His faithfulness to His promise.” This is the believer’s defence, in time of war (ver. 5.), whether from surprise by night (Song of Solomon iii. 8.), or attack by day, and in time of pestilence (ver. 6.), fatal alike by night and day.

PSALMS, XCI.

- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
and ten thousand at thy right hand ;
but it shall not come nigh thee.
- ^g Ps. 37. 34.
Mal. 1. 5. 8 Only ^g with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see
the reward of the wicked.
- ^h ver. 2. 9 ¶ Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is*
^h my refuge,
even the most High, ⁱ thy habitation ;
- ⁱ Ps. 71. 3.
& 90. 1.
^k Prov. 12. 21. 10 ^k there shall no evil befall thee,
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
- ⁱ Ps. 34. 7.
& 71. 3.
Matt. 4. 6.
Luke 4. 10, 11.
Heb. 1. 14. 11 ⁱ For he shall give his angels charge over thee,
to keep thee in all thy ways.
- ^m Job 5. 23.
Ps. 37. 24. 12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands,
^m lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- ² Or, *asp.* 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and ² adder :

7. "It shall not come nigh thee." Be the danger what it may, no real harm can befall the man who trusts in God. Whether God protect him from bodily danger, as He protected the Israelites in Egypt, Aaron in the wilderness, when he stood between the dead and the living, the stripling David in his encounter with Goliath, and the three children in the furnace ; or whether, as sometimes, He suffer the righteous to fall, —in either case the believer is safe—so safe from all spiritual evil, that temporal harm can only bring a higher blessing.

8. "Only." Thou shalt be only a spectator of evil, as it falls justly on the wicked, as were the Israelites on the night of the Passover, or on the shore of the Red Sea.

9—13. The Psalmist's confidence rises higher and higher ; at all times and not only on special occasions, shall Angel guards protect him.

9. The change of persons is perplexing. The verse should be rendered, "For Thou, Lord, art my refuge ; thou hast made the Most High "thy habitation." In the first clause the Psalmist interrupts for a moment, as in ver. 2, his address to himself, and turning to God, exclaims, "Thou, O Lord, art my refuge ;" then, in the next clause he resumes the language of confiding trust, with which he had been encouraging himself. A similar abrupt transition occurs in Ps. lxxxi. 16.

11. This passage does not necessarily imply the appointment of special guardian Angels, but it is quite consistent with it ; and the belief in them prevailed not only among the early Christians, but also among the heathen.

"In all thy ways," i. e. in all ways in which thy faith prompts thee to walk,—not in the path of presumption and self-seeking. When Satan employed this verse in his attack on Christ in the wilderness (see marg. ref.), he omitted the words "in all thy ways," perceiving that they were inapplicable to the course to which he was endeavouring to persuade our Lord.

12. "In their hands." Lit. "on their hands." Comp. Exod. xix. 4, "how I bare you on eagles' wings."

13. See St. Luke x. 19, "Behold, I give you power to tread on

PSALMS, XCII.

the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample
under feet.

14 ¶ Because he hath set his love upon me, there-
fore will I deliver him :

I will set him on high, because he hath ⁿ known ⁿ Ps. 9. 10.
my name.

15 ° He shall call upon me, and I will answer him : ° Ps. 50. 15.

^p I will be with him in trouble ; P Isai. 43. 2.

I will deliver him, and ^q honour him. q 1 Sam. 2. 30.

16 With ² long life will I satisfy him,
and shew him my salvation. ² Heb. length
of days,
Prov. 3. 2.

PSALM XCII.

1 *The prophet exhorteth to praise God, 4 for his great works, 6 for his
judgments on the wicked, 10 and for his goodness to the godly.*

A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.

1 *IT* is a ^a good thing to give thanks unto the ^a Ps. 147. 1.
LORD,

“serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.” By means of His holy angels, God will enable those who trust in Him to overcome the evil spirits, which by reason of their fierceness are likened to lions (1 St. Peter v. 8.), and by reason of their malice to serpents. For the literal fulfilment of the promise, comp. Judges xiv. 6. 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35. Dan. vi. 23. Acts xxviii. 3, 5.

14—16. Here God Himself begins to speak, reckoning up the blessings He has in store for him that loves Him, for love is the foundation of trust ; He will deliver him from all evil, bodily and spiritual ; nay more, He will set him up on high, lifting him out of the reach of trouble, for even if the trouble continue outwardly, He will be with him in the midst of it (Isa. lxiii. 9.), hearing his prayer (Ps. l. 15, 23.) and shewing him honour ; and the deliverance and honour shewn to him on earth will be a foretaste of that complete salvation with which he shall be satisfied hereafter.

16. See Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. Ps. xxi. 4.

In early times this Psalm was appointed for daily use every evening, as a commendatory hymn, wherewith to lull ourselves to sleep ; we nestle, as it were, under the shelter of the Almighty wings, before we encounter the special dangers and temptations of the night. It is quite as suitable for the morning, suggesting to us that so long as we are in the path of duty, we are safe in God's hands : if He be for us—and He will be for us, if we walk with Him—no evil, visible or invisible, can really hurt us.

PSALM XCII.

Thanksgiving for God's righteous dealing in the degradation of the wicked, and the prosperity of the godly.

The title of this Psalm, “A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day,” would lead us to suppose that it was designed for use in public worship ; and we know that in the Temple service, after the captivity, it was the

PSALMS, XCII.

- and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High :
- 1 ^b Ps. 83. 1. 2 to ^b shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,
and thy faithfulness ² every night,
^c 1 Chr. 23. 5. 3 ^c upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon
Ps. 33. 2. the psaltery ;
³ upon the harp with ⁴ a solemn sound.
- ³ Or, upon the solemn sound with the harp. 4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work :
⁴ Heb. Higgaton, Ps. 9. 16. I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
- ^d Ps. 40. 5. & 133. 17. 5 ¶ ^d O LORD, how great are thy works !
^e Isai. 28. 29. Rom. 11. 33, 34. and ^e thy thoughts are very deep.
- ^f Ps. 73. 22. & 94. 8. 6 ^f A brutish man knoweth not ;
neither doth a fool understand this.

special Psalm appointed for the Sabbath, the ninety-third being the Psalm for the sixth day, and the ninety-fourth for the fourth.

The subject of the Psalm, viz. the righteousness of God in the government of the world, does not seem especially appropriate for the Sabbath. All that can be said is, that on the Sabbath men ought to rest from their own works to contemplate God's works (vv. 4, 5.), and that the dealings of His providence are as fitly called His works as creation itself. The Psalmist exults in God as the Ruler of the world, and joyfully anticipates the time when everything which seems to militate against His mercy and justice will be removed, and the righteous shall flourish like palms and cedars in the courts of the Lord.

1. "It is a good thing." Not only right, good in the sight of God, but good for man, a joy and delight (Ps. cxlvii. 1.).

2. "Every night." Lit. as in margin, "in the nights." The morning of the day and the night-time are often mentioned in the Psalms as fit times for meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving (Ps. v. 3 ; xlii. 8 ; lv. 17 ; lix. 16 ; lxiii. 6 ; lxxxviii. 13 ; cxix. 55.). It has been suggested that there is a special appropriateness in connecting God's mercy with the morning and His faithfulness with the night: in the day of our prosperity we rejoice in His loving-kindness; in the night of our sorrow we stay ourselves upon His truth.

4. The special reason why the Psalmist so delights in praising God is his joy in God's wonderful works.

4. "Through Thy work." Rather, "Thy doing," i. e. God's providential dealings as ruler of the world (Ps. xlv. 1 ; lxiv. 9 ; xc. 16.).

"The works of Thy hands." This *may* mean God's works in creation, as in Ps. viii. 6 ; but the reference here is rather to God's moral government.

5. "Thy thoughts," i. e. Thy designs, purposes (Ps. xxxiii. 11 ; xl. 5 ; cxxxix. 17. Comp. Isa. lv. 9. Rom. xi. 33.).

6. Man in his mere animal condition (Ps. lxxiii. 22.), or one who is so senseless as to allow his carnal nature to prevail over the spiritual, cannot measure the greatness of God's works, or fathom the depth of His thoughts.

PSALMS, XCII.

- 7 When ^s the wicked spring as the grass,
and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
it is that they shall be destroyed for ever :
- 8 ^h but thou, LORD, *art most* high for evermore.
- 9 ¶ For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD,
for, lo, thine enemies shall perish ;
all the workers of iniquity shall ⁱ be scattered.
- 10 But ^k my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of* ^k
an unicorn :
I shall be ^l anointed with fresh oil.
- 11 ^m Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine ^m
enemies,
and mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the
wicked that rise up against me.
- 12 ¶ ⁿ The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: ⁿ

^e Job 12. 6.
& 21. 7.
Ps. 37. 1, 2,
35, 38.
Jer. 12. 1, 2.
Mal. 3. 15.
^h Ps. 56. 2.
& 83. 18.

^l Ps. 68. 1.
& 89. 10.
^k Ps. 89. 17, 24.

^l Ps. 23. 5.

^m Ps. 54. 7.
& 59. 10.
& 112. 8.

ⁿ Ps. 52. 8.
Isai. 65. 22.
Hos. 14. 5, 6.

7. The apparent prosperity of the wicked is one of those difficulties which mere worldly-minded men cannot understand, but which those who are taught of God perceive to be only for a time. They spring up rapidly and flourish like the grass, but it is only to fade away as rapidly like the same grass under the fierce heat of the sun (see Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36.).

8. In contrast to the short-lived wicked, the Psalmist looks up to God, ever enthroned on high, unchangeable in nature and in might. Special prominence is given to this verse, both by its shortness and by its position, exactly in the middle of the Psalm.

9. "For." God being the everlasting King, the overthrow of His enemies necessarily follows.

"Lo." The Psalmist sees the workers of iniquity melting away, and points to them as it were with the finger of scorn.

10. As the wicked perish, the righteous, with whom the Psalmist identifies himself, are exalted.

"But my horn," &c. Rather, "And so Thou liftest up, as a wild ox, "my horn;" in allusion, it is said, to the way in which these animals use their horns, lowering the head and then tossing it up.

"I shall be anointed with fresh oil." Both this and the previous figure are intended to express the glad joy with which the Psalmist anticipates his triumph over his foes.

11. "Shall see . . . shall hear." Rather, "hath looked on . . . hath heard," i. e. with disdain (Ps. liv. 7.). The eye which was wont to look timidly on the persecutors, and the ear which shrank with terror from their name, now behold and hear of them, not only calmly but with triumph.

12. "Flourish." It is the same word as that rendered "spring up" in ver. 7. The wicked are like the grass, which soon withers; the righteous like the long-lived, ever-green palm. "The palm grows "slowly, but steadily, from century to century, uninfluenced by those "alternations of the seasons which affect other trees. It does not rejoice "overmuch in winter's copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought

PSALMS, XCIII.

he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

- 13 Those that be planted in the house of the
LORD
 shall flourish ^o in the courts of our God.
- ^o Ps. 100. 4.
 & 135. 2.
- 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ;
 they shall be fat and ² flourishing ;
- ² Heb. *green*.
- 15 to shew that the LORD *is* upright :
^p *he is my rock*, and ^q *there is no unrighteousness*
 in him.
- ^p Deut. 32. 4.
^q Rom. 9. 14.

PSALM XCIII.

The majesty, power, and holiness of Christ's kingdom.

- ^a Ps. 96. 10.
 & 97. 1.
 & 99. 1.
 Isai. 52. 7.
 Rev. 19. 6.
^b Ps. 104. 1.
- 1 **T**HE ^a LORD reigneth, ^b he is clothed with
 majesty ;

“and the burning sun of summer. There it stands, calmly looking down
 “on the world below, and patiently yielding its large clusters of golden
 “fruit from generation to generation” (*Thomson's Land and Book*,
 p. 49.).

“**Grow like a cedar.**” It is the strong and stately growth of the
 cedar which is especially pointed at by the comparison.

13, 14. The figure is still carried on. Like palm-trees growing
 within the precincts of the Temple (Ps. lii. 8.) and bearing fruit in old
 age, so the righteous, planted in God's Church, answer to the sacred soil,
 put forth ever fresh powers of life, and bear more abundant fruit in
 good works even to the end.

15. “**To shew,**” i. e. to shew forth, declare, make known, as in
 ver. 2. As the righteous look back on God's dealings with them, they
 proclaim His faithfulness and truth. “He is the Rock ; His work is
 “perfect ; for all His ways are judgment ; a God of truth and without
 “iniquity : just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4.).

However dark and mysterious God's government of the world may be,
 however utterly beyond the understanding of men of carnal and earthly
 mind, the Psalmist recognizes and rejoices in its wisdom and majesty.
 He sees the Lord enthroned on high, shrivelling up the wicked and
 exalting the righteous. He exults especially in the spectacle of the
 righteous, holding communion with God both in His outward temple
 and in the spiritual temple of His Church, abounding more and more in
 fruits of holiness, until they are transplanted to His heavenly courts.

PSALM XCIII.

The throne of God exalted far above the tumults of earth.

This is the first of a series of Psalms which celebrate the coming of
 Jehovah. It is an expansion of the eighth verse of the preceding Psalm,
 “Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.” The Psalmist anticipates
 the time when the great God, Who has for a time veiled His power, will
 come forth in all His majesty, and manifest Himself as King of the
 world, and the nations will be subdued unto Him. There are two
 series of prophecies, it has been remarked, in the Old Testament ; the
 one speaks of the Anointed of Jehovah ruling out of Zion, the other

PSALMS, XCIII.

the LORD is clothed with strength, ^c *wherewith* ^c Ps. 65. 6.
he hath girded himself:

^d the world also is stablished, that it cannot be ^d Ps. 96. 10.
moved.

2 ^e Thy throne *is* established ² of old :
thou *art* from everlasting.

^e Ps. 45. 6.
Prov. 8. 22,
&c.

3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
the floods have lifted up their voice ;
the floods lift up their waves.

² Heb.
from then.

4 ^f The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of ^f Ps. 65. 7.
many waters,
yea, than the mighty waves of the sea. ^{& 89. 9.}

of Jehovah Himself shewing Himself in His true greatness. The two series converge in the Old Testament, but do not meet ; it is the New Testament which makes it clear that the coming of the Anointed One and the coming of Jehovah are one and the same. The Greek Version ascribes the Psalm to David ; but the common opinion is, that it belongs either to the time of Hezekiah, or to the period immediately following the return from captivity. According to the Talmud, this is the Friday Psalm, because on the sixth day God finished His work and began to rule over His creatures.

1. "The Lord reigneth." More strictly, "hath become king," has entered upon the kingship and now reigns. He has indeed been King all along (ver. 2.), but His power is now acknowledged. The manifestation of His dominion is spoken of, as if it were His first accession to the throne. He has become King, and shews Himself to the world in His royal robes.

"The world also is stablished." Rather, "yea (or therefore) the world is established." Hitherto God's authority has been disturbed and disputed ; now a new era has begun ; the world, which is the seat of Jehovah's kingdom, stands firm against all hostile powers ; peace and justice everywhere prevail (Isa. xi. Ps. xcvi. 10.).

2. "Of old." Lit. "from then," i. e. from the most distant past ; "from all time where thought can soar."

3. All the fury of the world is powerless against the kingdom of God.

"The floods." The word commonly signifies "streams," "rivers ;" and it has been suggested that there may be a reference to the three great rivers of ancient times, as representing the several powers which oppressed Israel,—the Nile being the emblem of Egypt (Jer. xlvi. 7.), the Tigris of Assyria (Isa. viii. 7.), and the Euphrates of Babylon (Isa. xxvii. 1 ; where Assyria is symbolized by its swift straight river, the Tigris, Babylon by its singularly curved and winding river, the Euphrates). One after another they raged against Jehovah, but in vain.

"Their waves." Lit. "their dashing noise," their roaring, their din. The change to the present tense, in the last clause, would seem to imply that the danger was not wholly past.

4. Rather, "more than the voices of many waters—glorious waters, "breakers of the sea—is the Lord glorious in the height."

PSALMS, XCIV.

5 Thy testimonies are very sure:—holiness becometh thine house,

O LORD, ² for ever.

² Heb. to length of days.

PSALM XCIV.

1 *The prophet, calling for justice, complaineth of tyranny and impiety.*
8 *He teacheth God's providence.* 12 *He sheweth the blessedness of affliction.* 16 *God is the defender of the afflicted.*

² Heb. God of revenges.

² Deut. 32. 35. Nah. 1. 2.

³ Heb. shine forth, Ps. 80. 1.

1 O LORD ² God, ^a to whom vengeance belongeth;
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, ³ shew thyself.

“ With all tones of waters blending

“ Glorious is the breaking deep;

“ Glorious, beauteous without ending,

“ God Who reigns on heaven's high steep ” (*Keble*).

The epithet “glorious” is applied to the waters also in Exod. xv. 10, “They sank as lead in the mighty (glorious) waters.”

5. This verse would seem to be the reflection of the Psalmist, contemplating the glorious and universal kingdom which God would one day take to Himself. In view of that kingdom he exclaims that His testimonies, i. e. His revelation of Himself, embracing especially His promises, are altogether true and faithful. The future manifestation of His power is but the fulfilment of His promises. At the same time the seat of His dominion must be especially, and for ever, sacred and holy; therefore all who would dwell with Him must be holy in thought and deed.

As the preceding Psalm proclaims God's sovereignty in spite of the seeming triumph of the ungodly, so here the Psalmist declares that God is the true king of the world, in spite of the confusion and anarchy which seem to prevail, and He will one day manifest the fulness of His might. The powers of the world may rebel against Him, and persecute His people, but they cannot really resist His will. There will come a time, when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. xi. 15, 17; xix. 6.).

PSALM XCIV.

Appeal to God against injustice and oppression.

An earnest cry to God for judgment upon tyrannical rulers or unjust judges. Compare the character given of the judges in the early chapters of Isaiah (i. 23; iii. 14, 15; v. 7, 23; x. 2.). The Greek Version ascribes the Psalm to David, and assigns it to the fourth day of the week, which agrees with the Talmudic tradition, that the Psalm was the Wednesday song in the Temple services.

1—3. The introduction, in which the Psalmist appeals to God to arise as judge of the earth, and stay the oppression of the wicked.

1. The literal rendering is, “O God of vengeance, Jehovah, O God of ‘vengeances, shine forth.’” Compare “the Lord God of recompences” (Jer. li. 56.), the plural in each case signifying complete vengeance or recompence. The repetition of the title of God is characteristic of this and the preceding Psalm (vv. 3, 23; xciii. 1, 3.).

“Shew Thyself.” Rather, “shine forth,” as in Ps. lxxx. 1. The word

PSALMS, XCIV.

- 2 ^b Lift up thyself, thou ^c judge of the earth :
render a reward to the proud. ^b Ps. 7. 6. ..
^c Gen. 18. 25.
- 3 ¶ LORD, ^d how long shall the wicked,
how long shall the wicked triumph ? ^d Job 20. 5.
- 4 How long shall they ^e utter and speak hard ^e things ?
things ? ^e Ps. 31. 18.
^f Jude 15.
- And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves ?
- 5 They break in pieces thy people,
O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.
- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
and murder the fatherless.
- 7 ^f Yet they say, The LORD shall not see,
neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. ^f Ps. 10. 11, 13.
& 59. 7.
- 8 ¶ ^g Understand, ye brutish among the people :
and ye fools, when will ye be wise ? ^g Ps. 73. 22.
& 92. 6.
- 9 ^h He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see ? ^h Ex. 4. 11.
Prov. 20. 12.
- 10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he
correct ?
- He that ⁱ teacheth man knowledge, shall not he ⁱ know ? ⁱ Job 35. 11.
Isai. 28. 26.

may be taken as a past tense, "He hath shone forth," as in Deut. xxxiii. 2. Ps. 1. 2 : but the next verse makes it probable that it is a prayer.

4—7. A description of the character and conduct of those on whom vengeance is sought (comp. Ps. lxxxii. 2—5.).

4. The words "how long" are not in the Hebrew. The exact rendering is, "they pour forth, they utter arrogance, they carry themselves proudly, all the workers of iniquity."

6. Being themselves Israelites, they ought to have remembered the God of Jacob's special care for the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger (Exod. xxii. 21, 22. Deut. x. 18.).

8—11. It was utter folly to suppose that they could escape punishment.

8. "Ye brutish among the people," i.e. Israel. This was the especial aggravation of their sin and folly, that being God's own people, they should disregard the providence of the God of Israel.

"Brutish . . . fools." Ps. xcii. 6.

9. The planter of the ear and the framer of the eye must needs hear and see (Exod. iv. 11.). It is not said that God has ears and eyes, but that the powers which He bestows on His creatures He must needs possess in perfection.

10. Rather, "He that chasteneth (i.e. trains and instructs) the nations, shall not He reprove,—even He that teacheth man knowledge?" There is no need to supply, "Shall not He know?" as in the A. V.; the verse is one question and means, "He Who by His providential dealings is ever educating and teaching the nations of the

PSALMS, XCIV.

- * 1 Cor. 3. 20. 11 ^k The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man,
that they *are* vanity.
- ¹ Job 5. 17.
^{Prov.} 3. 11.
¹ Cor. 11. 32.
^{Heb.} 12. 5,
&c. 12 ¶ ¹ Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest,
O LORD,
and teachest him out of thy law ;
13 that thou mayest give him rest from the days of
adversity,
until the pit be digged for the wicked.
- ^m 1 Sam. 12.
22.
Rom. 11. 1, 2. 14 ^m For the LORD will not cast off his people,
neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness :
and all the upright in heart ² shall follow it.
- ² Heb. shall
be *after it*. 16 ¶ Who will rise up for me against the evildoers ?
Or who will stand up for me against the workers
of iniquity ?
- ⁿ Ps. 124. 1, 2. 17 ⁿ Unless the LORD *had been* my help,
my soul had ³ almost dwelt in silence.
- ³ Or, *quickly*.
^o Ps. 38. 16. 18 When I said, ° My foot slippeth ;
thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

“ world, even those to whom He has vouchsafed no direct revelation—
“ will He not detect and punish the tyrants and oppressors among His
“ own people ? ”

11. So far from not regarding their conduct, He knows all their thoughts and speculations ; He sees them in their utter vanity. This verse is quoted by St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 20.).

12—15. From the oppressor the Psalmist turns to the oppressed ; however much their affliction may come by the hand of man, it is God's work ; and there is a blessing in it (see marg. ref.). God will help the pious sufferer to obtain his right.

13. This is the object of God's teaching men by chastisement, namely, that they may have calm, inward rest in days of adversity, that they may not be disturbed by them, until the time come when the ungodly shall be destroyed. That time will come ; while it is delayed, God teaches men patience and resignation by chastisement.

14. The doom of the wicked is certain ; for God cannot desert His people.

15. Judgment, which seemed to have been for some time separated from righteousness, will return to it again ; and all the honest-hearted will support it, and share its triumph.

16—19. The Psalmist confirms his assertion of God's righteousness by his own experience ; he was without human succour, but the Lord was his help.

17. If God had not helped him, his soul would soon have taken up its abode in silence, like to the silence of the grave.

18. When he seemed to himself already as one that had fallen, God's mercy held him up ; and when sad and anxious thoughts multiplied

PSALMS, XCV.

- 19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.
- 20 ¶ Shall ^p the throne of iniquity have fellowship ^p Amos 6. 3. with thee,
which ^q frameth mischief by a law? ^q Ps. 58. 2.
^r Isai. 10. 1.
- 21 ^r They gather themselves together against the ^r Matt. 27. 1. soul of the righteous,
and ^s condemn the innocent blood. ^s Ex. 23. 7.
^t Prov. 17. 15.
- 22 But the LORD is ^t my defence;
and my God is the rock of my refuge. ^t Ps. 59. 9.
& 62. 2, 6.
- 23 And ^u he shall bring upon them their own ^u Ps. 7. 16.
iniquity, ^u Prov. 2. 22.
& 5. 22.
and shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

1 An exhortation to praise God, 3 for his greatness, 6 and for his goodness, 8 and not to tempt him.

- 1 O COME, let us sing unto the LORD:
^a let us make a joyful noise to ^b the rock of ^a Ps. 100. 1.
our salvation. ^b Deut. 32. 15.
^c 2 Sam. 22. 47.

within him, the encouragement of God's word and the inward utterances of His Spirit were his comfort.

20—23. In this last stanza the Psalmist looks forward with confidence to the Divine vengeance on the evil-doers, for which he had prayed in the beginning of the Psalm.

20. "The throne," i. e. the judgment-seat. Shall they who prostitute the tribunal of justice for the furtherance of their own malignant purposes, have any fellowship with Thee? Shall they claim thy sanction and authority?

"Which frameth mischief by a law." Which, i. e. the throne of iniquity, forges and fabricates iniquity under the plea and with the method of law.

21. We are reminded of the gathering of the chief priests against Christ (St. John xi. 47—53.). Every innocent sufferer is a type of Him, and may look to Him for support; God will not only frustrate the designs of his enemies, but will cause them to recoil on their own heads.

This Psalm, like so many others, brings before us the great conflict, which is ever going on in the world, between good and evil. Now, as of old, wicked men are proud and headstrong; they trample on the helpless and innocent; they go on their own way, forgetting or despising God. But He sees and hears all; He reads their inner thoughts, and knows how vain they are; nay, He leaves them not without witness of Himself even in their own wicked hearts. He may indeed suffer them to prosper for a while, and to oppress His servants; but it is because such chastisement is for His afflicted ones only a blessing in disguise. He will uphold and comfort them in their trouble; and in the end their arrogant and godless persecutors will be brought to ruin.

PSALMS, XCV.

- ² Heb. *prevent his face.* 2 Let us ² come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
- ^c Ps. 96. 4. & 97. 9. & 135. 5. 3 For ^c the LORD *is* a great God,—and a great King above all gods.
- ³ Heb. *In whose.* 4 ³ In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth :
⁴ Or, *the heights of the hills are his.* ⁴ the strength of the hills *is* his also.

PSALM XCV.

An invitation to worship God, and a call to hear His voice.

The Psalm contains two parts,—first, an invitation to the worship of God, and then a warning against unbelief and disobedience, implying that if men would join acceptably in the praises of God, they must come not only with humility and thankfulness, but with hearts ready to listen to, and obey, His voice.

The Greek and other ancient Versions assign the Psalm to David, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews quoting it, says: "He (the "Holy Ghost) limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day" (Heb. iv. 7.), but probably he only means by David "the book of Psalms," most of which was written by David. The common opinion is that it belongs to the time of the return from captivity. The deliverance from Babylon would naturally recall the history of the Israelites in the wilderness. God was giving them rest again, but they must beware of forfeiting it by an evil heart of unbelief, through which their forefathers had been shut out of the rest of Canaan.

From the earliest times this Psalm has been used as an introduction to public worship; and hence it comes in well in our Prayer Book at the head of what may be called the second part of the Morning Service, which consists of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as embodied in the Psalms and Canticles.

1. "Let us sing." The word means "sing with joy," "exult." As St. Augustine says, "The Psalm invites to a great banquet of rejoicing, "not in the world, but in the Lord."

2. "Come before His presence." Lit. as in margin, "prevent His "face," be beforehand in presenting ourselves before Him; not waiting to be summoned, but visiting His house with alacrity (Ps. lvii. 8; xvii. 13; lxxxix. 14. Micah vi. 6.).

"Him early seek with thankful lays" (*Keble*).

3. Three special reasons are given why we should make haste to approach God with joy and thanksgiving; first, because He is a great King above all gods; secondly, because He is Creator of the world; and thirdly, because He is the Shepherd and Guide of His people.

"Above all gods." That is, above all who are called gods and worshipped (Exod. xviii. 11.).

4. "The deep places." See Job xxxviii. 16: "Hast thou walked in "the search (i. e. in the recess) of the depth?"

"The strength." Rather, as in margin, "the heights." The nethermost recesses of the earth, as well as the inaccessible summits of the mountains are in God's hand.

PSALMS, XCV.

- 5 ^{2d} The sea *is* his, and he made it :
and his hands formed the dry *land*. 2 Heb. *Whose the sea is.*
d Gen. 1. 9, 10.
- 6 O come, let us worship and bow down :
let ^e us kneel before the LORD our maker. e 1 Cor. 6. 20.
- 7 For he *is* our God ;—and ^f we *are* the people of ^f
his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand. f Ps. 79. 13.
& 80. 1.
& 100. 3.
- ¶ ^g To day if ye will hear his voice,
8 harden not your heart, ^h as in the ³ provoca- g Heb. 3. 7, 15.
& 4. 7.
h Ex. 17. 2, 7.
Num. 14. 22,
& c. & 20. 13.
Deut. 6. 16.
3 Heb.
contention.
tion,
and as in the day of temptation in the wilder-
ness :

5. "Formed." That is, gave shape and beauty to that which before was "without form and void."

6. The invitation is repeated and becomes more urgent ; the worship is not only to be joyful, but very reverent, because God is not only the Creator of the world, but especially the God of Israel. The nearer God draws us to Himself, the more careful should we be to acknowledge our unworthiness, and the greatness of His condescension.

"Let us worship." Lit. "let us prostrate ourselves ;" "bow down," i. e. bend the knee ; "kneel," i. e. fall upon our knees.

"Our Maker," i. e. Who made them His people (Deut. xxxii. 6, 15.).

7. "The sheep of His hand ;" whom He guides and protects with His hand. Compare our Saviour's words : "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (St. John x. 28.).

The second part of the Psalm begins with the last clause of this verse. The connection seems to be : "To-day all this will be realized ; the Lord will be your God and Shepherd, if ye will hear His Voice."

"Even now 'tis so ;—this day, this hour ;
"If ye will hear His word of power" (*Keble*).

Or we may understand the clause as the expression of a wish, "To-day, would that ye would obey His voice !" In the following verses (vv. 8—11.) the voice which they are to obey is heard speaking. Or it may be, that the clause is to be connected with the next verse, "To-day, if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts ;" and so it seems to be taken in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. iii. 7, 8.).

"To-day." The position of the word at the beginning of the sentence draws special attention to the present as the critical time : "while it is called to-day," while there is yet time, while the words of the Psalm are yet on your lips, and you are permitted to sing them in God's house.

8. "As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation." It is generally thought best to take the two leading words as proper names, and to translate, "as at Meribah, and as in the day of Massah." The reference seems to be to the murmuring of the Israelites at Rephidim on account of the failure of water—the place being on that account called by the double name of "Massah and Meribah" (Exod. xvii. 1—7.), to be distinguished from Meribah in Kadesh (Num. xx.).

- ^lPs. 78. 18, 40, 56. 9 when ⁱyour fathers tempted me, ¹Cor. 10. 9. proved me, and ^ksaw my work.
^kNum. 14. 22. 10 ^lForty years long was I grieved with *this* generation,
^lHeb. 3. 10, 17. and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart,
^mNum. 14. 23, 28, 30. and they have not known my ways :
^lHeb. 3. 11, 18. & 4. 3, 5. 11 unto whom ^mI swear in my wrath
²Heb. *if they enter into my rest.* ²that they should not enter into my rest.

9. "Tempted." In reference to Massah, "temptation," in ver. 8. The same word is used in Exod. xvii. 7.

"Proved Me," i. e. put My power and goodness to the proof, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

"And saw My work." Lit. "also they saw My work;" which may mean, either, "My working," what I wrought in their behalf, how I dealt with them (Ps. xcii. 4.); or My judgments, chastisements (Ps. lxiv. 7—9. Hab. i. 5.).

10. "Forty years." In the Epistle to the Hebrews (iii. 9.) these words are joined to the previous verse; but it is evident from ver. 17 that the writer was aware that in the Hebrew the forty years are spoken of as the space during which God was grieved.

"Was I grieved." This scarcely expresses the meaning of the Hebrew, and would be better rendered "loathed." The Greek word used in Hebrews might be translated "offended:" in Lev. xxvi. 15, 30 the same word is rendered "abhor."

"With this generation." So according to the best reading of Heb. iii. 10; but "this" is not in the Hebrew. Lit. "with a generation," i. e. with a whole generation.

"It is a people that do err in their heart." Lit. "a nation of wanderers in heart are they."

"And they have not known My ways." There is an emphasis on "they:" even they, after all that they have seen, have not known My ways, that is, the ways in which I would have them walk (Exod. xviii. 20.).

11. "Unto whom." Rather, "so that," "wherefore," as in Gen. xiii. 16. 2 Kings ix. 37.

"That they should," &c. Lit. "if they shall enter into My rest;" the common form of an oath, as in Num. xiv. 23.

"Rest." Deut. xii. 9. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews argues that, because the warning contained in this Psalm was addressed to men already in possession of Canaan, therefore the rest here spoken of, and which they were in danger of losing, was something higher and more glorious.

The warning in the latter part of the Psalm seems to be connected with the invitation in the earlier part somewhat in this way:—Ye who enter into the courts of God's house, in order to rejoice and sing praise to Him, if ye will hear His voice, which is now and at all times sounding in your ears, take care that ye harden not your hearts. Day by day ye hear His voice, in His holy Word, in the teaching of His ministers, in the dealings of His providence and the motions of His grace; but it is

PSALMS, XCVI.

PSALM XCVI.

1 *An exhortation to praise God, 4 for his greatness, 8 for his kingdom, 11 for his general judgment.*

1 **O** ^a SING unto the LORD a new song :
sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

^a 1 Chron.
16. 23.—33.
Ps. 33. 3.

not certain that ye will listen to it. It is a voice for hearts to hear. And the rule for listening to it is to keep your hearts tender. Harden them not therefore by sin or selfishness, lest ye lose the power of hearing ; and if you do thus err in your hearts and refuse to listen to God's voice, He will swear in His wrath that ye shall not enter into the rest which yet remaineth for the people of God.

PSALM XCVI.

The Lord is King : let the people worship.

In the account given in 1 Chron. xvi. of the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem, a song of thanksgiving, made up of portions of Psalms cv., xcvi., cvi., is introduced, which at first sight appears to have been used on the occasion. In that case Psalm xcvi. must be at least as old as the time of David. But the passage in Chronicles does not expressly say that the Psalm there given was sung at the bringing up of the Ark ; for the verse, " On that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord " into the hand of Asaph and his brethren," might perhaps be more faithfully rendered, " On that day David first gave into the hand of " Asaph and his brethren to praise the Lord," which may mean simply that David on that day first appointed Asaph and his brethren to the office of singing God's praise in public worship. But, seeing that this statement is followed immediately by a thanksgiving Psalm, or parts of Psalms, it is more natural to suppose that the Psalm or Psalms are there introduced, because they are the very words which Asaph and his choir sang, than because these portions of later Psalms seemed to the writer of the Book of Chronicles to be appropriate to the occasion.

With regard to the objection urged against the Davidic origin of the Psalm, that its peculiar style, especially the repetition of the same words or phrases, and its confident anticipations of the coming of Jehovah, as the King of the whole world, point to a later period, it may be said, that the repetition spoken of is quite as marked in Ps. xxix., which is undoubtedly one of David's Psalms, and that a belief in the universality of the kingdom of Jehovah is as strongly expressed in Ps. xxii. 27, 28 and in other Psalms, as it is here.

The inscription of the Greek Version is " When the house was built after " the captivity, a song of David ; " which may refer to the tabernacle raised on Mount Zion for the reception of the Ark, after its captivity in the land of the Philistines and elsewhere ; or it may mean, that while the Psalm was originally David's, it was adopted with slight alterations by the exiles after their return.

The subject of this Psalm, as of Ps. xciii. and of the three Psalms which follow (xcvii.—xcix.), is the coming of the kingdom of Jehovah, though the aspect under which it is viewed is slightly different in each case. Here the Divine sovereignty is dwelt on chiefly as a reason why all the nations of the world should praise and worship Him.

PSALMS, XCVI.

- 2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name ;
shew forth his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the heathen,
his wonders among all people.
- ^b Ps. 145. 3. ^c Ps. 18. 3. 4 For ^b the LORD is great, and ^c greatly to be
praised :
- ^d Ps. 95. 3. ^d he is to be feared above all gods.
- ^e See Jer. 10. 11, 12. 5 For ^e all the gods of the nations are idols :
^f Ps. 115. 15. ^f but the LORD made the heavens.
- ^g Ps. 29. 2. 6 Honour and majesty are before him :
strength and ^g beauty are in his sanctuary.
- ^h Ps. 29. 1, 2. 7 ¶ ^h Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the
people,
give unto the LORD glory and strength.
- ² Heb. of his name. 8 Give unto the LORD the glory ² due unto his
name :

1—3. A call on God's people to praise Him, and make Him known to the heathen.

1. "O sing unto the Lord a new song." This clause is not in Chronicles, which is perhaps rather in favour of the Psalm being an adaptation of David's original hymn to the circumstances of the time. Israel had entered on a new stage of the history of its redemption, the pledge and prelude of a still more glorious state of things, when the Lord should appear in person : therefore He should be celebrated with a new song, i. e. with renewed and increased fervour (see Ps. xxxiii. 3 ; xl. 3. Isa. xlii. 10.).

2. "Shew forth." Rather, "proclaim good tidings," as in Isa. xl. 9 ; lii. 7 ; lx. 6.

3. If Israelites desired that all the world should know and rejoice in the wonders which God had wrought for them, how much more should we Christians delight to publish among the heathen the good tidings of a salvation in which they themselves have a share.

4—6. It is fit that the heathen should praise God, for He alone is worthy.

5. "Idols." Lit. "things of nought," "nothings," "vanities ;" as St. Paul says "an idol is nothing." In the Heb. word "Eleeim," there would seem to be a play on the similarity of sound to "Elohim," "gods" (Lev. xxvi. 1.). The word is of frequent occurrence in Isaiah (ii. 8, 18, 20 ; x. 10 ; xix. 3.).

6. "In His sanctuary." In 1 Chron. it is "in his place," which is more suited to the original circumstances, when the Temple was not yet built. The prophets represent the glory of God going forth from His holy place in Zion to enlighten the world.

7—9. God being thus great and glorious, the Psalmist calls on all the families of the earth to praise Him. The whole stanza is an echo of Ps. xxxix. 1—3.

8. In Isaiah lx. the prophet sees the heathen actually bringing the offerings, which they are here charged to bring.

PSALMS, XCVI.

bring an offering, and come into his courts.

- 9 O worship the LORD ^{1 2} in the beauty of holiness : i Ps. 29. 2. & 110. 3.
 fear before him, all the earth.
- 10 Say among the heathen *that* ^k the LORD reigneth : 2 Or, in the glorious sanctuary. k Ps. 93. 1. & 97. 1. Rev. 11. 15. & 19. 6.
 the world also shall be established that it shall
 not be moved :
- ^l he shall judge the people righteously.
- 11 ^m Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be
 glad ; l ver. 13. Ps. 67. 4. & 98. 9. m Ps. 69. 34. n Ps. 93. 7, &c.
- ⁿ let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
- 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein :
- 13 then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before
 the LORD : for he cometh,
 for he cometh to judge the earth :
^o he shall judge the world with righteousness, o Ps. 67. 4. Rev. 19. 11.
 and the people with his truth.

“Into His courts.” In 1 Chron. it is simply “before Him.” The expression “courts” would be more suitable to the Temple than to the Tabernacle.

9. “In the beauty of holiness,” i. e. in holy attire (Ps. xxix. 2). God’s true worshippers, in the sanctuary of His Church, must be clothed with holiness, answering to the holy garments of those who ministered in the Temple of old (comp. St. Matt. xxii. 11. Rev. xix. 8.). See also the rendering in the margin.

10—13. The glad tidings to be proclaimed to the world, and in which even nature shall rejoice, is the coming of God’s kingdom in righteousness.

10. “The Lord reigneth.” Rather, as in Ps. xciii. 1, “The Lord hath become King,” and, in consequence, the world, hitherto disturbed, rests on a foundation which cannot be shaken. Justin Martyr declares that the first line of this verse originally was, “Say among the heathen that “the Lord reigneth from the wood” (i. e. from the cross), and he charges the Jews with having erased the latter words. Great stress is laid on the addition by St. Augustine and others ; but it does not appear in any Hebrew manuscript.

11, 12. Even the inanimate creation will rejoice in the coming era, when the kingdom of Jehovah shall be established in righteousness over all the earth. This joy of all creatures in the coming of Jehovah is frequently mentioned in Isaiah (xxxv. 1 ; xlii. 10 ; xlv. 23 ; lv. 12.). When He has judged the earth and executed judgment, He will reign in the righteousness of mercy, and in faithfulness to His promises (see Isa. xi. 1—9.).

The Psalmist sets forth in glowing words the coming of Jehovah, and the setting up of His kingdom upon earth. He calls first on His own people and then on the heathen to bow down before Him, and give Him the honour which is His due. It is especially the spectacle of heathen nations joining with reverence and devotion in the public worship of the one true God, which the Psalmist has before his eyes, a spectacle of intense and thrilling joy ; which is even now being partially fulfilled, when heathen nations are beginning to answer to the call to “sing unto

PSALMS, XCVII.

PSALM XCVII.

1 *The majesty of God's kingdom.* 7 *The church rejoiceth at God's judgments upon idolaters.* 10 *An exhortation to godliness and gladness.*

^a Ps. 96. 10.

² Heb. *many, or, great isles.*

^b Isai. 60. 9.

^c 1 Kin. 8. 12.

Ps. 18. 11.

^d Ps. 89. 14.

³ Or, *establishment.*

^e Ps. 18. 8. & 50. 3.

Dan. 7. 10. Hab. 3. 5.

^f Ex. 19. 18. Ps. 77. 18. & 104. 32.

^g Judg. 5. 5.

Mic. 1. 4.

Nah. 1. 5.

- 1 **T**HE ^aLORD reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ;
 let the ²multitude of ^bisles be glad *thereof*.
 2 ^cClouds and darkness *are* round about him :
^drighteousness and judgment *are* the ³habitation
 of his throne.
 3 ^eA fire goeth before him,
 and burneth up his enemies round about.
 4 ^fHis lightnings enlightened the world :
 the earth saw, and trembled.
 5 ^gThe hills melted like wax at the presence of
 the LORD,
 at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

“the Lord a new song,” but will be fully realized hereafter, when the powers of evil shall be overthrown before Christ’s kingdom of righteousness and peace, and all nations of the earth shall come and worship before Him (Rev. xv. 4).

PSALM XCVII.

The Lord is King ; all nature trembles.

Here again the subject of the Psalm is the coming of Jehovah ; but it is set forth especially in its aspect of awe. All nature is convulsed, as when God appeared on Sinai. The imagery and the language bear a strong resemblance to parts of the Pentateuch, to Psalms xviii. and l., and to the later chapters of Isaiah.

The Greek Version ascribes it to David, “when his land was settled.”

1. The Psalmist sees the kingdom of Jehovah already come. Not the narrow territory of Canaan only, but the whole earth, embracing all the islands of the Gentiles, rejoices in His sway and in the overthrow of His enemies.

“The isles.” This expression denotes those countries to which the inhabitants of Palestine had access only by sea ; it is of frequent occurrence in the later chapters of Isaiah (xli. 1, 5 ; xlii. 4, 10 ; xlix. 1. See also Ps. lxxii. 10. Jer. xxv. 22 ; xxxi. 10.).

2. God enshrouds Himself in darkness, as on Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16. Deut. iv. 11 ; v. 22. Comp. also Ps. xviii. 11, 12.). The darkness represents the terribleness of His wrath, and the certainty of vengeance.

“The habitation.” More strictly, “the basis” (Ps. lxxxix. 14.).

3. See Ps. 1. 3. His harbinger is fire, which consumes His enemies on every side.

4. Comp. Ps. lxxvii. 18, where the same expression is used in connection with the passage of the Red Sea.

5. “Melted like wax,” i. e. altogether vanished into nothingness ; as wax, when melted, ceases to be (Micah i. 4.).

“The Lord of the whole earth.” Josh. iii. 11, 13. Micah iv. 13. Zech. iv. 14 ; vi. 5.

PSALMS, XCVII.

- 6 ^h The heavens declare his righteousness,
and all the people see his glory. h Ps. 19. 1.
& 50. 6.
- 7 ¶ ⁱ Confounded be all they that serve graven
images, that boast themselves of idols :
^k worship him, all *ye* gods. i Ex. 20. 4.
Lev. 26. 1.
Deut. 5. 8.
& 27. 15.
k Heb. 1. 6.
l Ps. 83. 18.
- 8 Zion heard, and was glad ;
and the daughters of Judah rejoiced
because of thy judgments, O LORD. m Ex. 18. 11.
Ps. 95. 3.
& 96. 4.
- 9 For thou, LORD, art ^l high above all the earth :
^m thou art exalted far above all gods. n Ps. 34. 14.
& 37. 27.
& 101. 3.
Amos 5. 15.
Rom. 12. 9.
o Ps. 31. 23.
& 37. 28.
& 145. 20.
Prov. 2. 8.
- 10 ¶ Ye that love the LORD, ⁿ hate evil :
^o he preserveth the souls of his saints ;
^p he delivereth them out of the hand of the
wicked. p Ps. 37. 39. 40.
Dan. 3. 28.
& 6. 22, 27.
q Job 22. 28.
Ps. 112. 4.
Prov. 4. 18.
- 11 ^q Light is sown for the righteous,

6. "The heavens declare His righteousness." All creation has its part in the mighty scene : not only the earth trembles and the mountains melt at the presence of Jehovah, but the heavens, where He reveals Himself, proclaim with joy, by His very presence there, the fulfilment of His righteous purposes, and all the people of the world behold his glorious appearance (Ps. 1. 6.).

"See His glory." Isa. xl. 5 ; lxvi. 18.

7, 8. When the glory of Jehovah is made manifest, everything that is opposed to it will be destroyed, while His own people will rejoice.

7. "Confounded be all they." Rather, "ashamed are all they ;" they become conscious of their delusion with shame and terror (Isa. xlii. 17. Jer. x. 14. See also Isa. ii. 18—21.).

"Worship Him, all ye gods." Rather, "all the gods have bowed down before Him," as Dagon before the Ark (1 Sam. v. 3. Isa. xix. 1 ; xlv. 1.). It is thought by some that this passage is referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 6.), for the Greek rendering here is, "Let all His Angels worship Him ;" but as the precise words of the writer of the Epistle occur in the Greek Version of Deut. xxxiii. 43 (though not in the Heb.), it is most likely that the quotation comes from there ; indeed it is almost proved by the word "and" with which the quotation is introduced.

8. When Zion hears that Jehovah has appeared, and that all the powers of the earth are bowing down to Him, she rejoices, and the daughter-cities of Judah rejoice with her (Ps. xlviii. 11.).

10. The Psalm might very well have closed with the preceding verse ; but the Psalmist adds an exhortation to God's people not to forfeit their share in His kingdom by any kind of sin.

11. "Light is sown." Which may mean simply "diffused," "scattered," strewn along the life's way of the righteous man ; or it may be taken strictly, "being sown now like seed, it will one day spring up." Whatever may be the afflictions of the righteous, they are but the seed of future happiness (Ps. cxxvi. 6.).

PSALMS, XCVIII.

- 2 ^d The LORD hath made known his salvation : d Isai. 52. 10.
Luke 2. 30,
31.
^e his righteousness hath he ² openly shewed in
the sight of the heathen. e Isai. 62. 2.
Rom. 3. 25,
26.
- 3 He hath ^f remembered his mercy and his truth
toward the house of Israel : f Luke 1. 54,
55, 72.
^g all the ends of the earth have seen the sal-
vation of our God. g Isai. 49. 6.
& 52. 10.
Luke 2. 30,
31. & 3. 6.
Acts 13. 47.
& 28. 28.
- 4 ¶ ^h Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the
earth : h Ps. 95. 1.
& 100. 1.
make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
- 5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp ;
with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
- 6 ⁱ With trumpets and sound of cornet i Num. 10. 10.
1 Chr. 15. 28.
2 Chr. 29. 27.
make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.
- 7 ¶ ^k Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof ; k Ps. 96. 11,
&c.
the world, and they that dwell therein.
- 8 Let the floods ^l clap *their* hands : l Isai. 55. 12.
- 9 let the hills be joyful together before the LORD ;
^m for he cometh to judge the earth : m Ps. 96. 10,
13.
with righteousness shall he judge the world,
and the people with equity.

2. "In the sight of the heathen." Comp. Isa. lii. 10 : "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

"Righteousness." Parallel with "salvation," as in Isaiah frequently (see Ps. lxxi. 15.). God's righteousness is the cause of His salvation. His word is pledged not only to accept the righteous, but to save all who repent and trust in Him.

3. "Toward," i. e. "on behalf of." Ps. cvi. 45 : "He remembered for them His covenant" (St. Luke i. 54.). The Psalmist rejoices in the thought that God's loving-kindness and truth to His own people are seen, and acknowledged, and gloried in by the whole world.

4—6. Signal mercies call for special acknowledgment. Our joy in what God has wrought for us must not be locked up in the silent heart ; our rejoicings must be heard aloud. Verse 4 calls for some joyful manifestation with the mouth ; verse 5 suggests the union of song with the music of stringed instruments, and verse 6 with the sound of wind instruments.

7—9. The Psalmist calls on the natural world, sea, and rivers and hills to share in the joy of His redeemed.

7. "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof." Ps. xcvi. 11.

"The world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. xxiv. 1.

8. "Clap their hands." 2 Kings xi. 12. Ps. xlvii. 1. Isa. lv. 12. Hab. iii. 10.

9. Ps. xcvi. 13. The reason is here given why the world should rejoice ; viz. because God has come to judge the world, and to bring

PSALMS, XCIX.

PSALM XCIX.

1 *The prophet, setting forth the kingdom of God in Zion, exhorteth all, by the example of forefathers, to worship God at his holy hill.*

a Ps. 93. 1.

b Ex. 25. 22.
Ps. 18. 10.
& 80. 1.

2 Heb.
stagger.

c Ps. 97. 9.

d Deut. 23. 53.
Rev. 15. 4.

1 **THE** ^a LORD reigneth ; let the people tremble :
^b He sitteth *between* the cherubims ; let the
earth ² be moved.

2 The LORD *is* great in Zion ;
and he *is* ^c high above all the people.

3 Let them praise ^d thy great and terrible name ;—
for it is holy.

it by His righteous sway from a condition of sorrow into a condition of peace and joy.

In the second revision of our Prayer Book (1552.) this Psalm was appointed for use as an alternative for the *Magnificat*, after the First Lesson at Evening Prayer. How suitable it is to carry our thoughts from God's wonders of old to the redemption wrought for us in Christ may be seen from its resemblance to the Song of the Virgin. Comp. "He that is mighty hath magnified me" (lit. "hath done to me great things") with "He hath done marvellous things ;" "He hath shewed strength with His arm," with "with His own right hand and with His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory ;" and "He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel," with "He hath remembered His mercy and truth toward the house of Israel."

PSALM XCIX.

The Lord is King: holy is He.

The Psalm is divided into two parts by the refrain in ver. 5 ; in the first (vv. 1—4.) the Psalmist anticipates the kingdom of Jehovah, to Whom all nations bow down, while He rules in righteousness ; in the second (vv. 6—8.), he looks back on God's past dealings, how He revealed Himself in mercy and in judgment. Both the anticipation and the retrospect urge him to call on men to exalt Him highly (vv. 5, 9.), and to bow down before His footstool.

There is also a threefold division, marked by the repetition of "Holy is He," or "Holy is the Lord our God" (vv. 3, 5, 9.) ; "an earthly echo, as it has been called, of the Trisagion (or Holy, Holy, Holy) of the Seraphim" (Isa. vi. 3.).

1. "Let the people tremble . . . let the earth be moved." The verbs denote facts of the time to come, the consequence of Jehovah having established Himself as King of the world, and should therefore be rendered, "The people tremble . . . the earth quakes."

"He sitteth between the cherubims." Rather, "seated before the cherubim" (He reigns). The reference is to the Presence of God in the Holy of Holies (1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 Kings xix. 15.). Jehovah's kingdom is continually represented as going forth from Jerusalem (comp. Isa. xxiv. 23.).

2. "The Lord is great in Zion." Comp. Rev. xi. 15—19 ; xiv. 1.

3. "Them," i. e. the people mentioned in ver. 2.

"For it is holy." Rather, "Holy is He," as also in ver. 5. The word "for" is not in the Heb.

PSALMS, XCIX.

- 4 ^e The king's strength also loveth judgment ; ^e Job 36. 5,
6, 7.
 thou dost establish equity,
 thou executest judgment and righteousness in
 Jacob.
- 5 ^f Exalt ye the LORD our God, ^f ver. 9.
 and worship at ^g his footstool ; ^g 1 Chr. 28. 2.
Ps. 132. 7.
for ^{2 h} he is holy. ² Or,
it is holy.
^h Lev. 19. 2.
ⁱ Jer. 15. 1.
- 6 ¶ ⁱ Moses and Aaron among his priests,
 and Samuel among them that call upon his
 name ;
 they ^k called upon the LORD, and he answered ^k Ex. 14. 15.
& 15. 25.
^l Sam. 7. 9.
& 12. 18.
^l Ex. 33. 9.
 them.
- 7 ^l He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar :
 they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance *that*
 he gave them.

4. The A. V. follows the Greek Version ; the meaning seems to be, that the King Who reigns on high is of infinite power, but His power is always exercised according to justice. Comp. Isa. lxi. 8 : " I the Lord "love judgment." But perhaps the verse should be translated, " And "the might of the king (such might as becomes the king), who loveth "judgment, hast Thou established in uprightness ; justice and right- "eousness hast Thou executed in Jacob." In either case the sense is much the same ; God's power is exercised in no arbitrary way, but always in accordance with righteousness and right.

5. " At His footstool." In Lam. ii. 1 God's footstool seems to be the holy city ; in Ps. cxxxii. 7, His sanctuary or Tabernacle ; in Isaiah lxvi. it is used for the earth ; in 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, it stands parallel with " the Ark of the covenant of the Lord," which seems to be its meaning here. The Ark is spoken of as God's footstool, because He was enthroned visibly above it in the Shekinah, or luminous cloud, which was present between the cherubim.

6. In proof that Jehovah's kingly rule was in accordance with right and justice, the Psalmist appeals to His dealings with His chief servants of old. Highly favoured as they were, they might not transgress with impunity.

Before the consecration of Aaron, " Moses " exercised the priestly office ; he sprinkled the blood of the covenant on Mount Sinai (Exod. xxiv. 8.) ; he performed the service in the sanctuary, setting the shew-bread in order and burning incense on the golden altar (Exod. xl. 22—27.) ; he consecrated Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii.).

" Samuel," on the other hand, comes forward prominently as a man of prayer (1 Sam. vii. 8—10 ; xii. 18.). See Jer. xv. 1, where Moses and Samuel are specially mentioned as having power with God.

7. See Exod. xxxiii. 9. Num. xi. 25 ; xii. 5 ; xvi. 19, 42 (where " the "glory of the Lord " = the cloud). The reference to Samuel seems to be dropped here ; but perhaps the Psalmist may be understood as passing, in this and the next verse, from the leaders to the people under them.

PSALMS, C.

- 8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God :
^m thou wast a God that forgavest them,
 though ⁿ thou tookest vengeance of their in-
 ventions.
- 9 ° Exalt the LORD our God,
 and worship at his holy hill ;
 for the LORD our God is holy.

^m Num. 14. 20.
 Jer. 46. 28.
 Zeph. 3. 7.
ⁿ See Exod.
 32. 2, &c.
 Num. 20. 12,
 21.
 Deut. 9. 20.
^o ver. 5.
 Ex. 15. 2.
 Ps. 34. 3.
 & 118. 28.

PSALM C.

1 *An exhortation to praise God cheerfully,* 3 *for his greatness,* 4 *and for his power.*

² Ps. 145, title.

³ Or, *thanks-giving.*

^a Ps. 95. 1.
 & 98. 4.

⁴ Heb. *all the earth.*

² A Psalm of ³ praise.

- 1 **M**AKE ^a a joyful noise unto the LORD, ⁴ all ye
 lands.
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness :

8. "Thou tookest vengeance." Moses and Aaron were punished by exclusion from the Holy Land, a proof of the justice of God's rule; but the reference probably is to God's dealings with the people generally.

Of this group of Psalms which celebrate the coming of Jehovah, the 96th especially proclaims His majesty, the 97th His terribleness, the 98th His saving power, the 99th His holiness. God's dealings with His people of old, even of those who were acceptable to Him, and whose sins were forgiven, shew the strict justice of His rule. He is emphatically a holy God, "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, but Who will by "no means clear the guilty." Therefore men must needs bow down before Him in humility and awe, as Moses did (Exod. xxxiv. 8.), and as the saints hereafter will do, when they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb, and say, "Great and marvellous "are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, "Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify "Thy Name? for Thou only art holy" (Rev. xv. 3, 4).

PSALM C.

A call to all the world to worship God.

This is a fitting close—a kind of doxology—to the series of Psalms which celebrate the sovereignty of Jehovah. All nations are invited to enter the courts of His house, and join in a chorus of thanksgiving.

The title, "A Psalm of praise," or rather, "for thanksgiving," seems to shew that it was intended to be sung during the offering of thank-offerings. It has long been used both by Jews and Christians in public worship.

1. The single-lined verse at the beginning has been compared to the signal-blast of a trumpet; it summons all mankind to rejoice before the Lord with heart and voice.

"Make a joyful noise." As in Ps. xcviii. 4; lxxvi. 1. Shout aloud to the Lord, salute Him joyfully as your King.

"All ye lands." Rather, "all the earth." The verb is plural; "earth" is singular; it means "all the inhabitants of the earth."

2. "Serve." Not merely "worship," but "serve," "be His ser-

PSALMS, C.

- come before his presence with singing.
- 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God :
^b *it is he that* hath made us, ² and not we
 ourselves ;
^c *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pas-
 ture.
4. ^d Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* ^d
 into his courts with praise :
 be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.
- 5 For the LORD is good ; ^e his mercy is ever-
 lasting ;
 and his truth *endureth* ³ to all generations.

^b Ps. 119. 73.
 & 139. 13,
 &c. & 143. 2.
 Eph. 2. 10.

² Or, *and*
his we are.
^c Ps. 95. 7.
 Ezek. 34. 30,
 31.

^d Ps. 66. 13.
 & 116. 17,
 18, 19.

^e Ps. 136. 1,
 &c.

³ Heb.
*to genera-
 tion and
 generation,*
 Ps. 89. 1.

“vants.” In Ps. ii. 11 the invitation was “serve the Lord with fear ;” here “with gladness.” Fear and joy do not exclude one another. The holiness of God demands our reverence ; His mercy our thankful joy. Earthly service is bitter ; but God’s service is perfect freedom, “because not necessity, but love, serves therein” (*St. Aug.*). If we would serve God in His sanctuary with gladness, we must be dutiful and obedient servants at other times.

3. “Know ye.” That is, as in the Prayer Book, “be ye sure,” “see how the facts bear witness,” “recognize” (Ps. iv. 3 ; xli. 10. Num. xxxii. 23.).

“He hath made us,” i. e. not merely created us, but made us what we are, chosen us to be His people (Ps. xcv. 6.).

“And not we ourselves.” So the written Heb. text, supported by the Greek, Latin, and Syriac Versions ; the meaning is, God has chosen us, and not we Him ; we may be sure therefore that He will continue to love those whom He has of His own free-will made His own. The marginal reading in the Heb., as in our English Bibles, gives “and His we are,” i. e. we belong to Him Who chose us for Himself ; we are His,—“His people, and the sheep of His pasture.” Perhaps it may be said that the second reading makes the transition easier to the next clause. See Isa. xliii. 1 : “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art Mine.”

4. “Enter into His gates.” This is addressed, not merely to God’s own people, but to all the nations of the earth. His mercy to His own is a reason why all should draw near to His courts. The pilgrimage of all the people of the world to Mount Zion is the Old Testament figure for their conversion to the true God. His temple is open to them all. They may enter ; and when they enter, they may look for great things. For Jehovah is good, and His loving-kindness and faithfulness endure for ever.

What fulness of meaning and truth is there in this Psalm, when adopted by a Christian congregation ! Well may they call upon themselves, and on all the world, to rejoice in, and give thanks to, Him Who has not only made them, but taken them into His own family, and has shewn forth towards them so abundantly the riches of His mercy and truth.

PSALMS, CI.

PSALM CI.

David maketh a vow and profession of godliness.

A Psalm of David.

- ^a Ps. 89. 1. 1 **I** WILL sing of mercy and judgment :
unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.
- ^b 1 Sam. 18. 14. 2 I will ^b behave myself wisely in a perfect way.
O when wilt thou come unto me ?
- ^c 1 Kin. 9. 4.
& 11. 4. I will ^c walk within my house with a perfect
heart.
- ² Heb. *thing of Belial.* 3 I will set no ² wicked thing before mine eyes :

PSALM CI.

The thoughts and resolutions of a king.

This Psalm has been called "David's mirror of a monarch," setting forth, as it does, the holy purposes with which he began his reign. Not only will he labour to keep his own heart and life pure, but he will be careful to purify his court and household : nothing base or unholy shall be tolerated in his kingdom. The exclamation in ver. 2, "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" has been explained as referring to David's desire for the bringing up of the Ark to Jerusalem, and the Psalm has accordingly been assigned to that occasion ; but the expression "the city "of the Lord" in ver. 8 seems to make it more probable that David's tabernacle on Mount Zion had already been consecrated by the visible token of God's Presence, and that he himself had received the glorious message of mingled "mercy and judgment" conveyed to him by Nathan (2 Sam. vii.). What sort of persons ought he and his household to be to whom God had come so near, and before whom so wonderful a destiny was opening !

1. "Of mercy and judgment." That is, of these attributes as exhibited in God's dealings with himself. A new light had been thrown on God's purposes for David and his house ; David therefore desired to praise Him. But at the same time the responsibility of being the object of such exceeding loving-kindness and perfect justice weighed upon him, and he earnestly resolved so to order himself and his kingdom as not to be wholly unworthy of God's designs respecting him. This resolution, to which he gives expression in this Psalm, is his answer to the "mercy and judgment" of which he would fain sing.

2. "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way." Or, "I will give heed to ;" that is, I will carefully endeavour to walk in the way of the perfect.

"O when wilt Thou come unto me?" The words are really a prayer, and, coming in parenthetically, they express the strong yearning of David's heart, that God would come to him, and dwell with him. Before the Ark had been brought to Jerusalem, David had said, "How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?" (2 Sam. vi. 9.) Now, it is no outward symbol, but God's inward, spiritual Presence that he longs for ; "Oh that Thou wouldst come and dwell with me, and strengthen me for my work and duty!" (Exod. xx. 24.)

3. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." I will never set

PSALMS, CI.

- ^d I hate the work of them ^e that turn aside ;
^{it} shall not cleave to me. ^d Ps. 97. 10.
- 4 A froward heart shall depart from me :
 I will not ^f know a wicked *person*. ^e Josh. 23. 6.
 1 Sam. 12.
 20, 21.
 Ps. 40. 4.
 & 125. 5.
- 5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him ^g will I cut off :
^h him that hath an high look and a proud heart ⁱ will not I suffer. ^f Matt. 7. 23.
 2 Tim. 2. 19.
^g Ps. 18. 27.
 Prov. 6. 17.
- 6 Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land,
 that they may dwell with me :
 he that walketh ² in a perfect way, he shall ² serve me. ² Or, *perfect
 in the way,*
 Ps. 119. 1.
- 7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within
 my house :
 he that telleth lies ³ shall not tarry in my sight. ³ Heb.
*shall not be
 established.*
- 8 I will ^h early destroy all the wicked of the land ;
 that I may cut off all wicked doers ⁱ from the
 city of the LORD. ^h Ps. 75. 10.
 Jer. 21. 12.
ⁱ Ps. 48. 2, 8.

before me as my aim or purpose any wicked thing (lit. thing of Belial, i. e. morally vile or worthless ; Ps. xli. 8. Deut. xv. 9.).

“The work of them that turn aside.” Or, it may be, as in the Prayer Book, “unfaithfulness,” evasions, deviations from truth and integrity. Everything of that kind he will shake off as an accursed thing (Deut. xiii. 17.).

4. “Froward.” That is, false, unfaithful.

“A wicked person.” Rather, “wickedness,” as in Ps. xxxiv. 14. Hitherto David has declared his determination to be pure and true himself ; in the rest of the Psalm he proclaims the rules by which he will govern others.

5. Neither the perfidious tale-bearer, nor the over-bearing courtier, could have any favour from him. “He had experienced the effects of “slander in the massacre of the priests on the false charge of Doeg ; he “had known, in the court of Achish, what it was to be scorned by “haughty princes” (*Littledale*).

6. At the same time his eyes will be upon those who are faithful and upright ; he will attach them to himself, and make them his servants. And he will not only clear his house of all deceitful persons, but he will do his utmost to cleanse the city of all evil-doers. It is “the “city of the Lord,” and therefore all wickedness shall be driven out.

8. “Early.” Lit. “in the morning,” morning by morning. The morning was the time for administering justice in the East. See Jer. xxi. 12, “Execute judgment in the morning” (2 Sam. xv. 2.).

Such were the resolutions which David formed for the government of himself, his household and his kingdom. On the one hand he did not require of others what he did not endeavour to practise himself ; on the other, he was not satisfied with ruling his own conduct aright, while he connived at wickedness in those around him. Well would it be, if every one placed in a position of authority, whether as a ruler or a

PSALM CII.

¹ *The prophet in his prayer maketh a grievous complaint. 12 He taketh comfort in the eternity and mercy of God. 18 The mercies of God are to be recorded. 23 He sustaineth his weakness by the unchangeableness of God.*

² Or, for.

³ Ps. 61. 2.
& 142. 2, 3.

^a Ex. 2. 23.
1 Sam. 9. 16.
Ps. 18. 6.

^b Ps. 27. 9.
& 69. 17.

^c Ps. 71. 2.
& 88. 2.

^d Ps. 119. 83.
Jam. 4. 14.

⁴ Or, (as
some read)
into smoke.

^e Job 30. 30.
Ps. 31. 10.
Lam. 1. 13.

A Prayer ² of the afflicted, ³ when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

1. **H**EAR my prayer, O LORD,
and let my cry ^a come unto thee.
2. ^b Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I
am in trouble ;
^c incline thine ear unto me :
in the day *when* I call answer me speedily.
3. ¶ ^d For my days are consumed ⁴ like smoke,
and ^e my bones are burned as an hearth.

master, were to take David as his model, and beginning with cleansing his own heart, were to be thoroughly strict and conscientious in putting down every form of evil in those dependent on him.

PSALM CII.

Complaints and hopes of a faithful Israelite during the Captivity.

The inscription is peculiar, because it describes the character of the Psalm, whereas the inscriptions generally relate either to the history of the writer, or to the musical accompaniments. Perhaps, like Hab. iii. 1, it was written by the Psalmist himself.

The condition of Jerusalem, as here described, ruined and desolate, and of the people, worn out by captivity and sorrow, naturally suggests that the Psalm was written during the exile. The writer not only shares the afflictions of his nation, but those afflictions enter into his very soul, and cause him intense personal distress. Nevertheless he is confident that God will remember Zion ; the appointed time of deliverance is at hand, and Jerusalem will not only be rebuilt, but be the mother of the nations. In spite of this confidence, however, the fear comes over him, that he shall not live to see the good time. But it matters not. Amid all earthly changes, God changes not, and His chosen ones shall partake of His eternity. Some attribute the Psalm to Jeremiah, to whose writings it has many points of resemblance ; others to Daniel ; and some to Nehemiah.

1, 2. Short petitions taken from other Psalms, with which the Psalmist was probably so familiar, that he was not conscious that they were borrowed (Ps. xxvii. 9 ; xxxi. 2 ; xxxix. 12 ; lxix. 17 ; lxxxviii. 2.).

3—11. The description of his misery and sorrow.

3. "Like smoke." Lit. as in margin, "into smoke ;" they vanish into smoke and disappear with it (Ps. xxxvii. 20.). His life was passing utterly away, and no relief came.

"As an hearth ;" where the fire is smouldering. Or "as a firebrand" (Prayer Book Version). "Even as a brand upon the hearth" (*Keble*). The Psalmist compares his mental anguish to fire consuming his body. ,

PSALMS, CII.

- 4 My heart is smitten, and ^f withered like grass ;
 so that I forget to eat my bread. f Ps. 37. 2.
ver. 11.
- 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning
^g my bones cleave to my ^h skin. g Job 19. 20.
Lam. 4. 8.
- 6 ⁱ I am like ^j a pelican of the wilderness :
 I am like an owl of the desert. h Or, *flesh*.
h Job 30. 29.
- 7 I ^k watch, and am as a sparrow
^l alone upon the house top. i Isai. 34. 11.
Zeph. 2. 14.
k Ps. 77. 4.
l Ps. 38. 11.
- 8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day ;
 and they that are ^m mad against me are ⁿ sworn ^m Acts 26. 11.
 against me. n Acts 23. 12.
- 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
 and ^o mingled my drink with weeping, o Ps. 42. 3.
- 10 because of thine indignation and thy wrath : & 80. 5.

4. "So that I forget." Rather, "For I have forgotten;" his sorrow is so great, that he cannot eat (1 Sam. i. 7. 2 Sam. xii. 17, 21. Job xxxiii. 20.). His heart is smitten (Ps. cxxi. 6.), like grass withered by the sun; want of food makes his blood fail (1 Sam. xxviii. 20.); his vital power is exhausted.

5. The constant strain of the mind and voice causes the flesh to waste away (see marg. reff.).

6. "Like a pelican." In allusion, probably, to the melancholy aspect of the pelican, as it sits alone, with its bill resting on its breast. In Zeph. ii. 14 and Isa. xxxiv. 11, the same Hebrew word is translated "cormorant."

"An owl of the desert." Rather, "of ruined places," among ruins.

"As owl that o'er some ruin'd heap
 "Sits cowering all the day" (*Keble*).

One of the Arabic names for the owl is "mother of ruins." The bird is mentioned here, no doubt, in order to convey the idea of loneliness and desolation.

7. "I watch," i. e. pass the night without sleep, like the lonely bird on the roof, while the household are asleep. Dr. Thomson (*Land and Book*, p. 43.) says of the sparrow, "When one of them has lost its mate, he will sit on the house-top alone, and lament by the hour his sad bereavement."

8. One chief cause of his grief is, that his enemies reproach him as forsaken of God.

"Are sworn against me." Rather, "swear by me," use my name as a proverb in their oaths; say, when they want to curse, "God do unto thee, as unto this man!" (Isa. lxxv. 15. Jer. xxix. 22.)

9. He fasted in sackcloth and ashes, and so ashes were to him instead of food; they were his daily portion. To eat ashes is a stronger expression of grief than to sit in ashes (Isa. xlv. 20. Lam. iii. 16.).

"Mingled my drink with weeping," instead of spices (Ps. xlii. 3. lxxx. 5.).

10. "Because of Thine indignation." It is this that makes his affliction so bitter; it is the outcoming of God's displeasure.

PSALMS, CII.

- ^p Ps. 30. 7. for ^p thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
^q Job 14. 2. 11 ^a My days *are* like a shadow that declineth ;
^r Ps. 103. 23. and ^r I am withered like grass.
^s & 144. 4.
^t Eccles. 6. 12.
^r ver. 4. 12 ¶ But ^a thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever ;
^{Is.} 40. 6, 7, 8. and ^t thy remembrance unto all generations.
^{Jam.} 1. 10.
^s ver. 26. 13 Thou shalt arise, and ^u have mercy upon Zion :
^{Ps.} 9. 7. for the time to favour her, yea, the ^x set time, is
^{Lam.} 5. 19. for the time to favour her, yea, the ^x set time, is
^t Ps. 135. 13. come.
^u Isai. 60. 10. 14 For thy servants take pleasure in ^y her stones,
^{Zech.} 1. 12. and favour the dust thereof.
^x Isai. 40. 2. 15 So the heathen shall ^z fear the name of the
^y Ps. 79. 1. LORD,
^z 1 Kin. 8. 43. and all the kings of the earth thy glory.
^{Ps.} 138. 4.
^{Isai.} 60. 3.

"Cast me down." The figure is the same as in Isa. xxii. 17, 18. The Psalmist was lifted up on high, and then tossed away like a ball. Or the metaphor may be from the wind (Job xxvii. 21 ; xxx. 22.). The chosen people were removed from their own land and scattered in exile.

11. "A shadow that declineth." A lengthening shadow, which grows longer and longer, until it is lost in darkness (Ps. cix. 23.). He is like an uprooted plant, which dries up at once.

12. Though broken down with sorrow, the Psalmist comforts himself with the thought that Jehovah, the covenant God of himself and his people, is unchangeable and everlasting.

"Shalt endure." Rather, "dost endure ;" lit. "sittest enthroned" (Ps. ix. 7 ; xxix. 10. Lam. v. 19.). Individuals and generations may pass away, but God still sits on His throne and His promises abide with Him.

"Thy remembrance." Lit. "Thy memorial," i. e. Thy name ; as in Exod. iii. 15. His name is the ever-living memorial of His covenant.

13. Jehovah is always the same ; He can never disown His manifested character : therefore He will have compassion upon Zion.

"The set time." This *may* refer to the seventy years spoken of by Jeremiah (xxv. 11, 12 ; xxix. 10. See also Dan. ix. 2.) ; but it is perhaps more likely that the reason why the Psalmist says that the time is come is given in the next verse, viz. because the captive people have begun to mourn over the ruins of Jerusalem, and to turn to God in repentance.

14. "Take pleasure." Yearn over, cling to with delight. The exiles yearn over the ruins of Jerusalem ; how much more must those ruins be precious in the eyes of God ! "Knowing that the very site of "the Temple was consecrated to God, and that the sacred edifice was to "be rebuilt on the same spot, they did not cease to regard it with reverence, "although its stones lay in disorder, mutilated and broken. The sadder "the desolation to which the Church has been brought, the less ought our "affections to be alienated from her" (*Calvin*).

15. The restoration of Jerusalem will be the means of the conversion of the world. As this was not the effect of the rebuilding of the city

PSALMS, CII.

- 16 When the LORD shall build up Zion,
^a he shall appear in his glory. ^a Is. 60. 1, 2.
- 17 ^b He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
 and not despise their prayer. ^b Neh. 1. 6,
 11. & 2. 8.
- 18 This shall be ^c written for the generation to
 come : ^c Rom. 15. 4.
 1 Cor. 10. 11.
 and ^d the people which shall be created shall ^d Ps. 22. 31.
 Isai. 43. 21.
 praise the LORD.
- 19 ¶ For he hath ^e looked down from the height of ^e Deut. 26. 15.
 Ps. 14. 2.
 & 33. 13, 14.
 his sanctuary ;
 from heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;
- 20 ^f to hear the groaning of the prisoner ; ^f Ps. 79. 11.
 to loose ² those that are appointed to death ; ² Heb. *the*
children of
death.
- 21 to ^g declare the name of the LORD in Zion,
 and his praise in Jerusalem ; ^g Ps. 22. 22.
- 22 when the people are gathered together,
 and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

after the captivity, we are led to look for a spiritual fulfilment of the promise (comp. Zech. xiv. 9, 16.).

16, 17. These verses give the reason of the fear of the heathen, and the extension of God's kingdom ; they are closely connected with the preceding, and should be rendered, "Because the Lord hath built Zion, hath appeared in His glory, (because) He hath turned Himself to the prayer of the destitute, and not despised their prayer."

17. "The prayer of the destitute," i. e. of the poor, homeless exiles. The building up of Zion is an answer to their prayer ; as the Incarnation was the fulfilment of the prayers of the faithful (St. Luke i. 13.), and Christ's second Advent will be His response to the cry of the martyrs (Rev. vi. 10.).

18. The Psalmist advances a further plea for the restoration of God's people, viz. that it shall be committed to writing, for the edification of generations to come.

"This ;" viz. what follows in vv. 19, 20, how God looked down from heaven, and heard the prayers of the captives.

"Which shall be created." The return from captivity will be, as it were, a second birth. In like manner the Church, from time to time may seem to be dead ; but God can re-create it, and every such re-creation is a special call for praise and thanksgiving.

19, 20. As of old He looked down on His people in bondage in Egypt (Exod. iii. 7.), so now He has listened to the exiles in Babylon, and fulfilled their prayer (Ps. lxxix. 11.).

20. "To loose, &c.;" i. e. "to set at liberty" (Prayer Book Version, "deliver") those who were advancing towards destruction, and would perish, if He did not interpose.

21. "To declare," i. e. as in Prayer Book Version, "that they may declare." Two effects will follow the restoration ; God's praises will be sung in Zion, and heathen nations shall be gathered into it (Ps. xxii. 27 ; lxxviii. 32. Isa. xlv. 14 ; lx. 4.).

PSALMS, CII.

- ² Heb. *afflicted.* 23 ¶ He ² weakened my strength in the way ;
^h Job 21. 21. he ^h shortened my days.
- ⁱ Isai. 38. 10. 24 ⁱ I said, O my God, take me not away in the
 midst of my days :
^k Ps. 90. 2. ^k thy years *are* throughout all generations.
^l Hab. 1. 12. 25 ^l Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the
^m Gen. 1. 1. earth :
ⁿ & 2. 1. and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.
^o Heb. 1. 10. 26 ^m They shall perish, but ⁿ thou shalt ³ endure :
^p Isai. 34. 4. & 51. 6. & 65. 17. & 66. 22. yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;
^q Rom. 8. 20. as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they
^r 2 Pet. 3. 7, shall be changed :
^s 10, 11, 12. 27 but ^o thou *art* the same,
^t ver. 12. and thy years shall have no end.
^u Heb. *stand.* 28 ^p The children of thy servants shall continue,
^v Mal. 3. 6. and their seed shall be established before thee.
^w Heb. 13. 8. ^x Jam. 1. 17. ^y Ps. 69. 36.

23. Having dwelt with delight on the glory of the time of redemption, the Psalmist returns to himself, and prays in his own behalf.

“In the way.” That is, in the journey of life : it is a toilsome, troublous path by which he has been led, and only a short distance remains (comp. Gen. xlvii. 9.).

24. “I said.” Rather, “I say ;” the remainder of the Psalm is his prayer. He prays that he may not be cut off before his time ; and that, apparently, not merely for the sake of life itself, but that he may see the glory of God manifested in the restoration of His people. Then, having given utterance to this prayer, he turns at once to the contrast between his own brief life and the eternity of God ; he grounds his prayer for the lengthening of life on that eternity ; he dwells on the thought of it, and from it, as above in ver. 12, he draws the joyful assurance, that His promises to His people will stand, and that they will abide with Him for ever.

25. The Psalmist looks backward ; the heavens and the earth, dating from so great antiquity, are God’s work ; therefore He was before them. In the next verse he looks forward ; these primeval heavens and earth, as they had a beginning so will they have an end ; their present condition will give place to another ; they will be changed : there will be a new heavens and a new earth ; but in the midst of this change God abides for ever (Isa. li. 6 ; lxy. 17 ; lxvi. 22.).

27. “Thou art the same.” Lit. “Thou art He,” the One Who is ever like Himself, but incomparable with all others (Isa. xli. 4 ; xlvi. 4 ; xliii. 10.).

28. “Shall continue.” Lit. “shall dwell,” i. e. in the land, as in a home (Ps. lxix. 35.).

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 10—12.), following doubtless Jewish tradition, refers to vv. 25—27 of this Psalm as addressed to Christ ; and he does so, evidently, because he is assured that the coming of Jehovah, to which the Psalmist is looking forward, is fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

This is the fifth of the Penitential Psalms ; it befits especially one

PSALMS, CIII.

PSALM CIII.

1 *An exhortation to bless God for his mercy, 15 and for the constancy thereof.*

A Psalm of David.

- 1 **B**LESS ^a the LORD, O my soul :
and all that is within me, *bless* his holy
name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,—and forget not all
his benefits :
- 3 ^b who forgiveth all thine iniquities ;

^a ver. 22.
Ps. 104. 1.
& 146. 1.

^b Ps. 130. 8.
Isai. 33. 24.
Matt. 9. 2, 6.
Mark 2. 5,
10, 11.
Luke 7. 47.

who, like Daniel (ch. ix.), sets himself to confess his own sins and the sins of the Church, and presents his supplication before the Lord his God for the holy mountain of his God. Such an one, while humbling himself under God's hand, may yet encourage himself with God's promises to the Church, and may anticipate the time when Christ shall come in the fulness of His power and draw all men unto Him.

PSALM CIII.

Hymn in honour of God's mercy and compassion.

The inscription, which assigns the Psalm to David, is supported by the Syriac, which describes it as written by David in his old age. As there is nothing in the Psalm itself to connect it specially with David, it is evident that the title rests not on conjecture, but on tradition ; it is possible therefore that it is correct, although the style and character of the Psalm are somewhat different from the generality of David's Psalms.

The Psalm is an outburst of thankful joy, first, for God's mercy to the writer individually, then for His gracious dealings with His people generally. It dwells especially on God's tenderness and compassion, both towards human sin and human weakness. The passage quoted in ver. 8 from Exod. xxxiv. 6 is, as it were, the text of the whole Psalm. Like many a noble river, it gushes out joyously at the beginning, from the fountain of a full heart, and then proceeding more calmly, but still brightly and cheerily for a time, gathers itself at last in all its strength to lose itself in the bliss of unceasing praise.

1—5. In this first part of the Psalm David calls on himself to praise God for his mercies to himself personally. He tells over those mercies in detail, in order the more effectually to move his gratitude.

1. "All that is within me." All his powers of heart and mind.

2. "Forget not." We are reminded here how prone men are to forget to render thanks when they are due, and especially to render thanks to God. Moses continually besought the Israelites to remember God's mercy (Deut. vi. 12 ; viii. 11, 14.). See Ps. lxxvii. 11 ; lxxviii. 11 ; cv. 5 ; cvi. 13, 21.

3. In his enumeration of God's various benefits David begins with His pardoning mercy. Without a sense of sin and hope of pardon, there can be no real gratitude for temporal blessings. "God's benefits 'will not be before our eyes, unless our sins also be before our eyes'" (St. Augustine).

PSALMS, CIII.

- c Ex. 15. 26.
 Ps. 147. 3.
 Jer. 17. 14.
- d Ps. 34. 22.
 & 56. 13.
- e Ps. 5. 12.
- f Isai. 40. 31.
- g Ps. 146. 7.
- h Ps. 147. 19.
- who ^c healeth all thy diseases ;
 4 who ^d redeemeth thy life from destruction ;
 ^e who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and
 tender mercies ;
 5 who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things* ;
 so that ^f thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- 6 ¶ ^g The LORD executeth righteousness
 and judgment for all that are oppressed.
- 7 ^h He made known his ways unto Moses,
 his acts unto the children of Israel.

"Diseases." Deut. xxix. 22. 2 Chron. xxi. 19. All kinds of inward and outward sufferings are included; and no doubt the word may be applied to spiritual maladies also. God heals our souls as well as our bodies (Hos. vii. 1; xi. 3; xiv. 4.).

4. "Redeemeth thy life from destruction." With reference to spiritual as well as bodily death.

"Crowneth." It is not enough to deliver His children from sin, disease and death; God sets a crown upon their heads—woven as it were out of His loving-kindness and compassion.

"First frees thy life from danger and from bane,

"Then crowns thee with benignant, tenderest love" (*Keble*).

5. Here again both bodily and spiritual blessings may be understood. God feeds both soul and body with necessary food, with fulness of all good, i. e. so far as the soul is concerned, with Himself: He is the Bread of Life.

"Thy mouth." Probably the right translation; but some take it to mean "ornament," as in Jer. ii. 32. Ezek. xxiii. 40, and understand by the ornament of the soul, the spirit or the heart. Others render "thy time," "thy duration," "the day of thy old age."

"Like the eagle's." All feathered creatures gain fresh strength after moulting; the eagle is specially mentioned, as the grandest and strongest of birds (Isa. xl. 31.). Or the meaning may be simply, "thy youth is renewed, so that in point of strength thou art like an eagle, and able to mount heavenward." So the Prayer Book Version, "making thee young and lusty as an eagle."

"Till in fresh youth thou dare the deep above,

"Rise eagle-like, and feel thee all renewed" (*Keble*).

6—18. From God's benefits to himself David passes to celebrate His gracious and fatherly dealings with His people at large.

6. "Righteousness and judgment." These words are plural in the Hebrew (Ps. xi. 7; cxlvii. 20. Micah vi. 5.), denoting the several acts by which He shews forth His righteousness and justice.

"For all that are oppressed." Not for himself only, but for all His suffering people.

7. "He made known His ways unto Moses," i. e. when, in answer to Moses' prayer (Exod. xxxiii. 13.), "Shew me now Thy way," He made Himself known to him as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and "gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

PSALMS, CIII.

- 8 ⁱ The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, and ² plenteous in mercy.
- 9 ^k He will not always chide:
neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.
- 10 ^l He hath not dealt with us after our sins;
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
- 11 ^m For ³ as the heaven is high above the earth,
so great is his mercy toward them that fear
him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,
so far hath he ⁿ removed our transgressions from
us.
- 13 ^o Like as a father pitieth *his* children,
so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
- 14 For he knoweth our frame;
^p he remembereth that we *are* ^q dust.
- 15 *As for* man, ^r his days *are* as grass:
^s as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

ⁱ Ex. 34. 6, 7.
Num. 14. 18.
Deut. 5. 10.
Neh. 9. 17.
Ps. 86. 15.
Jer. 32. 18.
² Heb. *great of mercy.*
^k Ps. 30. 5.
Isai. 57. 16.
Jer. 3. 5.
Mic. 7. 18.
^l Ezra 9. 13.
^m Ps. 57. 10.
Eph. 3. 18.
³ Heb. *according to the height of the heaven.*
ⁿ Isai. 43. 25.
Mic. 7. 18.
^o Mal. 3. 17.
^p Ps. 78. 39.
^q Gen. 3. 19.
Eccles. 12. 7.
^r Ps. 90. 5, 6.
1 Pet. 1. 24.
^s Job 14. 1, 2.
Jam. 1. 10, 11.

8. The very words of Exod. xxxiv. 6, quoted above. See Ps. lxxxvi. 15; cxlv. 8. Joel ii. 13. Neh. ix. 17.

9. "Chide." Rather, "contend," interpose judicially (Isa. lvii. 16.).

10. His dealings are regulated, not according to our sins, but according to His purpose of mercy (Ezra ix. 13.).

"God hath not judg'd as we have wildly done,
"Nor measur'd out His anger by our sins" (*Keble*).

11. The inconceivable vastness of the heavens is the recognized image of the mercy of God (Ps. lvii. 10; xxxvi. 5.).

12. Our sins are the great hindrance to our appreciation of the love of God; therefore the first action of that love is to take our sins away, to remove them to the greatest conceivable distance, as far as sun-rising is from sunset (see marg. reff.).

13. Even though forgiven and reconciled, men are weak and frail; but God has pity on them: He has a Father's heart towards them, knowing that they are but dust (Ps. lxxviii. 39.).

14. "Frame." Lit. "formation," as in Gen. ii. 7, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." "God deals tenderly with us as with brittle earthenware vessels" (*Kay*). Isa. xxix. 16; xlv. 9, 11. In other places God's compassion for man is based on the weakness of his moral nature (Gen. viii. 21. Deut. xxxi. 21.), and it is not perhaps to be wholly excluded here.

15. The figures of this verse are of frequent occurrence. Mortal man is likened to a blade of grass, which is green and fresh for a time, but is speedily dried up by the sun, or to a flower of the field, whose fullest bloom is but the beginning of its fading. In a moment the breath of God passes over him; he bows his head and passes away; his friends and companions look for him in the accustomed spot, but the earth has opened her mouth to receive him, and his place knows him no more. See Ps. xxxvii. 2, 10, 36; xc. 5, 6. Isa. xl. 6—8; li. 12. Job xiv. 2.

PSALMS, CIII.

- ² Heb. *it is not.* 16 For the wind passeth over it, and ² it is gone ;
and ¹ the place thereof shall know it no more.
- ^t Job 7. 10. & 20. 9. 17. But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting
to everlasting upon them that fear him,
and his righteousness ^u unto children's children ;
- ^u Ex. 20. 6. 18 ^x to such as keep his covenant,
and to those that remember his commandments
to do them.
- ^x Deut 7. 9. 19 ¶ The LORD hath prepared his ^y throne in the
heavens ;
and ^z his kingdom ruleth over all.
- ^z Ps. 47. 2. Dan. 4. 25, 34, 35. 20 ^a Bless the LORD, ye his angels,
³ that excel in strength, that ^b do his command-
ments,
hearkening unto the voice of his word.
- ^a Ps. 148. 2. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* ^c his hosts ;
^d *ye* ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- ³ Heb. *mighty in strength :* See Ps. 78. 25. 22 ^e Bless the LORD, all his works—in all places of
his dominion :
^f bless the LORD, O my soul.
- ^b Matt. 6. 10. Heb. 1. 14. ^c Gen. 32. 2. Josh. 5. 14. Ps. 68. 17. ^d Dan. 7. 9, 10. Heb. 1. 14. ^e Ps. 145. 10. ^f ver. 1.

13. "The wind." The hot wind of the desert. When referred to man, it is an emblem of every form of peril which threatens life: very often it is a mere breath of wind which snaps a man's life.

17. In the midst of all this feebleness and frailty, there is one strong ground of consolation, namely, that the mercy and faithfulness of God are everlasting, and that all who fear and obey Him, being partakers of that mercy and faithfulness, are partakers also of His eternity.

19. This merciful and gracious God is also the great and glorious King of the world; both for His goodness and His glory He is worthy to be praised—not by men only, but by the whole creation. Therefore the Psalmist concludes with calling first on the Angels, then on God's lower works, and then on himself, to join in a hymn of praise.

20. "That excel in strength." Mighty in strength. See Joel iii. 11, where "the mighty ones" mean the Angels.

"Hearkening," i. e. not only mightily executing God's word, when heard, but intently listening, ready to catch the intimation of His will.

21. "All ye His hosts." The Angels in the preceding verse probably mean the higher orders of Angels; here David calls on the lower ranks, the ministering spirits, to unite with those who are nearer to His throne.

22. "All his works." Even God's inanimate creatures may praise Him silently, by fulfilling the end of their creation, and revealing to men His goodness and power (comp. Ps. cxlviii.).

The Psalmist ends as he began, by stirring up his own soul to praise God.

It is instructive to observe how repeatedly the Psalmist declares that

PSALMS, CIV.

PSALM CIV.

¹ *A meditation upon the mighty power, 7 and wonderful providence of God. 31 God's glory is eternal. 33 The prophet voweth perpetually to praise God.*

1 BLESS ^a the LORD, O my soul.

^a Ps. 103. 1.
ver. 35.

O LORD my God, thou art very great ;

^b thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

^b Ps. 93. 1.

2 ^c Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* ^{a c} garment :

^{a c} Dan. 7. 9.

the mercy and compassion of God, which he celebrates so joyously, are exhibited especially towards those that fear Him and keep His commandments. Three times in the course of a few verses (vv. 11, 13, 17.), he repeats the words "them that fear Him." It is not however, apparently, as a warning against presumption that he insists on this condition, but rather as an encouragement to the humble and reverent. God's fatherly compassion is shewn especially towards those whose mind towards Him is that of dutiful and loving children.

PSALM CIV.

Hymn in honour of God's goodness as shewn in the works of creation.

There is an evident connection between Pss. ciii. and civ., the beginning and ending being the same. They may very well have come from the same writer ; if that writer was David, we may compare Ps. ciii. with Ps. xxiii., and Ps. civ. with Ps. viii. Ps. ciii. is a hymn of praise for God's mercies in the kingdom of grace ; Ps. civ. for His guiding and sustaining power in the world of nature. The Psalmist looks round upon the works of creation, and seeing in them the Presence and continual operation of his own covenant-God, he breaks forth into joyous but reverential rapture in the contemplation of His greatness. In his survey of God's works he follows, in outline, the order of creation as given in Genesis, beginning with the breaking forth of light and the building up of the heavens (vv. 2—4.) ; then comes the formation of the earth and its equipment as the habitation of man and beast (vv. 5—18.) ; then the ordering of the heavenly bodies (vv. 19—23.) ; then follows a thankful recognition of God's watchful care over His living creatures, fish and fowl, man and beast (vv. 24—30.) ; and the Psalm closes with a prayer that the glory of God, which is reflected in His creatures, may continue for ever, and that He Who rejoiced in His work, when it first came forth from His hand, as very good, may remove everything that shall interfere with such joy.

This Psalm is appointed by the Church for Whitsun-day, doubtless because it sets forth the glory of God the Holy Ghost as "the Lord and "Giver of life," by Whom God inspires and holds together and preserves all things, and leads them to perfection.

1—4. Praise to God for the work of the first and second days.

1. "Thou art clothed." The works of God are, as it were, the clothing of Him Who is Himself invisible. Before the work of creation He was, so to speak, unclothed ; now He has put on His apparel, and His splendour and majesty are revealed.

2. "With light." The first and chiefest of God's garments is light.

PSALMS, CIV.

- d Isai. 40. 22.
& 43. 12.
e Amos 9. 6.
- f Isai. 19. 1.
g Ps. 18. 10.
h Heb. 1. 7.
i 2 Kin. 2. 11.
& 6. 17.
2 Heb. *He hath founded the earth upon her bases.*
k Job 26. 7.
& 38. 4, 6.
Ps. 24. 2.
& 136. 6.
Eccles. 1. 4.
l Gen. 7. 19.
m Gen. 8. 1.
- d who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :
3 e who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters :
f who maketh the clouds his chariot :
g who walketh upon the wings of the wind :
4 h who maketh his angels spirits ;—ⁱ his ministers a flaming fire.
5 ¶ ^{2k} *Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.
6 ^l Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment :
the waters stood above the mountains.
7 ^m At Thy rebuke they fled ;

Dwelling Himself in unapproachable light (1 Tim. vi. 16.), He created the material light in order that by it men might catch some glimpse of His glory, as manifested in His works.

“The heavens,” i. e. the firmament, lit. “the expanse” (Gen. i. 8.). This wide expanse God has spread over us as a tent.

3. “In the waters,” i. e. the waters above the firmament. See Gen. i. 7, where the firmament is said to divide the waters of the ocean from the upper reservoirs of the clouds. On these reservoirs God lays the foundations of His heavenly dwelling-place (Ps. cxlviii. 4. Amos ix 6.).

“For chamber-beams sure, dark waters He binds” (*Keble*).

“Who maketh the clouds His chariot.” When He comes forth in thunder and lightning and storm to make His power felt upon earth, whether in destruction or deliverance.

“The wings of the wind.” Even the wind does not really blow “where it listeth,” but where He pleases; He holds the reins and guides its course.

4. “Spirits.” Rather, “winds.” The literal rendering of this passage is, “Who maketh His messengers out of winds, His ministers out of “flaming fire,” which may mean either that the winds and the lightning are His servants, or that He endows His messengers, His Angels, with the swiftness of the wind and the power of fire. It is in the latter sense that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 7.) takes the verse, when adducing it to prove the inferiority of the Angels to Christ: God clothes His Angels with the outward properties of wind and fire in order to effect His purposes in the world.

5—9. The separation of the land and water, part of the work of the third day.

5. “Who laid the foundations,” &c. More lit., as in margin. Though the earth seems to hang upon nothing, God has established her in her place, and keeps her there.

6. This verse describes the original condition of the earth while it lay in embryo beneath the waters (Gen. i. 9.); the tops of the mountains were covered. It came into being out of water and by means of water (2 St. Pet. iii. 5.).

7. “At Thy rebuke.” At the command of God, which was like

PSALMS, CIV.

- at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
- 8 ² ⁿ They go up by the mountains ;
they go down by the valleys unto ^o the place
which thou hast founded for them.
- 9 ^p Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass
over ;
^q that they turn not again to cover the earth.
- 10 ³ He sendeth the springs into the valleys,
which ⁴ run among the hills.
- 11 They give drink to every beast of the field :
the wild asses ⁵ quench their thirst.
- 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their
habitation,
which ⁶ sing among the branches.
- 13 ^r He watereth the hills from his chambers :
^s the earth is satisfied with ^t the fruit of thy
works.
- 14 ^u He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,

² Or, *The mountains ascend, the valleys descend.*

ⁿ Gen. 8. 5.
^o Job 38. 10, 11.

^p Job 26. 10.
^q Ps. 33. 7.
^r Jer. 5. 22.

^s Gen. 9. 11, 15.

^t Heb. *Who sendeth.*

^u Heb. *walk.*

^v Heb. *break.*
^w Heb. *give a voice.*

^x Ps. 147. 8.

^y Ps. 65. 9, 10.

^z Jer. 10. 13. & 14. 22.

^{aa} Gen. 1. 29, 30. & 3. 18. & 9. 3.

^{ab} Ps. 147. 8.

a voice of thunder, the waters fled hither and thither, and the dry land emerged (Ps. xviii. 15 ; lxxvi. 6. Isa. 1. 2.).

8. "They," i. e. the waters ; they go up to the mountains, they sink down into the valleys, as in Ps. cvii. 26, until they settle in the place appointed for them. If the rendering of the margin is adopted, the words, "The mountains ascend, the valleys descend," must be taken as a parenthesis, and the connection between the two verses is as follows : "At Thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away (the mountains rose, the valleys sank) to the place which Thou hast founded for them."

9. "A bound." Which shall protect the earth from the water (see Prov. viii. 29. Job xxxviii. 8—11.).

10—18. The further work of the third day ; the clothing of the earth with grass, herbs, and trees.

10. The good providence of God not only restrains the waters from covering the earth, but causes fountains to gush out of the mountains and to run down through the valleys.

11. The wild asses are specially mentioned as roaming far from men, or because they have a remarkable power of tracking out water in the desert (Job xxxix. 5—8.). Uninhabited regions are not removed from God's care (Job xxxviii. 26.).

12. "By them." That is, beside or above them, the springs ; where trees would flourish.

13. The mountains are beyond the reach of the springs ; God waters them by His rain.

"From His chambers," i. e. the clouds ; the same word as in ver. 3.

"The fruit of Thy works" may mean the rain, which is the result of His operations ; or the fruits of the vegetable creation, with which the dwellers on the earth are satisfied.

PSALMS, CIV.

- and herb for the service of man :
- ^x Job 28. 5. that he may bring forth ^x food out of the
 Ps. 136. 25. earth ;
 & 147. 9.
- ^y Judg. 9. 13. 15 and ^y wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man,
 Ps. 23. 5. and ² oil to make *his* face to shine,
 Prov. 31. 6, 7. and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.
- ² Heb. *to*
make his
face shine
with oil, or,
more than
oil. 16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap* ;
 the cedars of Lebanon, ² which he hath planted ;
- ^z Num. 24. 6. 17 where the birds make their nests :
as for the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.
- 18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats ;
 and the rocks for ^a the conies.
- ^a Prov. 30. 26.
- ^b Gen. 1. 14. 19 ¶ ^b He appointed the moon for seasons :
^c Job 38. 12. the sun ^c knoweth his going down.

14. "Herb." Cultivated plants, especially wheat.

"For the service," i. e. for the use, of man ; as in 1 Chron. xxvi. 30.

15. "Wine." Eccles. x. 19. Corn, wine, and oil are mentioned as the three chief products of the vegetable kingdom, and are included under the name "food" in ver. 14. The countenance is made bright with oil, not by means of anointing, for it was the head not the face that was anointed, but from its increasing the nutritious quality of the food.

"Strengthen." Judg. xix. 5. Gen. xviii. 5.

16. "The trees of the Lord," i. e. trees which grow without man's help ; the great trees of the forest which need no culture.

"Full of sap." The words "of sap" are not in the Hebrew. The meaning is, "they also are satiated" with rain, carrying on the connection with ver. 14. They "have their fill" (*Keble*).

17. The Hebrew name for "stork," called by the Greeks "most pious of winged creatures," denotes its tenderness and kindness to its young ; it is introduced here as one of the largest of nest-building birds.

18. The mention of God's care for the lodging of His creatures leads the Psalmist from the trees to the heights of the mountains, where the wild animals find shelter.

"The conies." The animal intended is said to be the Syrian hyrax, or rock-badger, which is like an Alpine marmot. See Prov. xxx. 26, "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks."

19—23. The Psalmist passes to the work of the fourth day. The moon is first mentioned, because in the Hebrew reckoning the night came before the day.

19. "Seasons." With special reference to the religious festivals, which depended on the cycles of the moon. See Lev. xxiii. 2, 4, 37, 44, where the word translated "feasts" is the same that is here used, and signifies literally "appointed times." See also Eccles. xliii. 6. The division of day and night depends on the sun, which, in obedience to God's command, always sets at the right time and place.

PSALMS, CIV.

- 20 ^d Thou makest darkness, and it is night :
 wherein ² all the beasts of the forest do creep
forth. ^d I ai. 45. 7.
² Heb. *all the beasts thereof do trample on the forest.*
^e Job 38. 37.
 Joel 1. 20.
- 21 ^e The young lions roar after their prey,
 and seek their meat from God.
- 22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,
 and lay them down in their dens.
- 23 Man goeth forth unto ^f his work and to his ^f labour until the evening. ^f Gen. 3. 19.
- 24 ¶ ^g O LORD, how manifold are thy works!
 In wisdom hast thou made them all :
 the earth is full of thy riches. ^g Prov. 3. 19.
- 25 *So is* this great and wide sea,
 wherein *are* things creeping innumerable,
 both small and great beasts.
- 26 There go the ships :
there is that ^h leviathan, whom thou hast ³ made
 to play therein. ^h Job 41. 1.
³ Heb. *formed.*

20. The night comes because God wills, and the wakeful life of the wild beasts begins to be astir.

“Creep forth.” Rather, “move about;” “prowl abroad” (*Keble*).

21. God makes the lion roar and range about for food; by following its nature, it does in truth seek its meat from God.

22, 23. When the day dawns the picture changes. Instead of the half-timid, half-savage prowling beasts, we have men labouring calmly and hopefully in the light of the sun. Wicked men, who choose darkness in order to cover their deeds of shame, and hate the light, are like the wild beasts (Job xxiv. 5, 13—17.).

24. At the mention of man the Psalmist pauses for a moment in his survey of God’s works, and as if unable to contain himself, breaks forth into admiration.

“Thy riches.” The riches of Thy creation. According to the common reading the word is plural, and may be rendered “creatures;” the singular, which is found in many MSS., means “possession,” “property,” as in Ps. cv. 21.

“The boundless earth by Thee is stor’d,

“Her household and her stock is Thine” (*Keble*).

25—30. Though he had anticipated by touching on the work of the sixth day, the Psalmist remembers that the sea and its inhabitants had not been mentioned, and therefore he returns to them.

25. “So is.” These words are not in the Hebrew, which should be rendered, “Yonder sea, great and wide-stretching;” it is a world of moving (not “creeping”) creatures innumerable.

“Wide.” Lit. “wide of two hands,” on both sides.

“Yon ocean vast and spreading wide

“His giant arms on either hand” (*Keble*).

26. “Leviathan.” Though elsewhere the name given to the croco-

PSALMS, CIV.

- ⁱ Ps. 136. 25.
& 145. 15.
& 147. 9. 27 ⁱ These wait all upon thee ;
that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due
season.
- 28 *That* thou givest them they gather :
thou openest thine hand, they are filled with
good.
- ^k Job 24. 14,
15.
Ps. 146. 4.
Eccles. 12. 7.
^l Isai. 32. 15.
Ezek. 37. 9. 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled :
^k thou takest away their breath, they die,
and return to their dust.
- 30 ^l Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created :
and thou renewest the face of the earth.
- ² Heb.
shall be. 31 ¶ The glory of the LORD ² shall endure for ever :
the LORD ^m shall rejoice in his works.
- ^m Gen. 1. 31. 32 He looketh on the earth, and it ⁿ trembleth :
ⁿ Hab. 3. 10. ^o he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.
^o Ps. 144. 5.

dile (Job xli. 1. Ps. lxxiv. 14.), it seems to stand here for any sea-monster ; probably of the whale kind.

“**Therein,**” i.e. in the sea. Some however render “with him,” referring to Job xli. 5.

“To make with him dread pastime there” (*Keble*).

The meaning in that case would be, that these monsters are like toys in the hand of God.

27. “**These all.**” Rather, “all of them,” the Psalmist’s view being no longer confined to the creatures of the sea ; he takes in all living things : depending entirely on God’s care, their being, their sustenance, their end are in His hand alone.

29. God being the fountain of life to His creatures, if He withdraw His protecting hand, in other words, if He gather in their breath, they die ; but (ver. 30.), when one set of creatures dies away, He gives forth again the breath of life, and a fresh generation is introduced, and the face of the earth is renewed.

30. “**Thy Spirit.**” In the Prayer Book Version it is “Thy breath.” The Hebrew word may be rendered either “breath” or “spirit.” The first reference is to Gen. i. 2, where the Spirit of God is set forth as the great vivifying principle, hovering over the waters, and breathing forth light and life. But the Holy Spirit is the giver of spiritual as well as natural life ; and therefore the passage may be understood spiritually. If God withdraws His Spirit from the soul of man, it becomes dead to Him ; if He take possession of it again, it revives, there is a movement among the dead bones, and the whole face of the spiritual world is changed.

31. It would be better to understand this verse, with the Greek Version, as a prayer : “may the glory of Jehovah be for ever !” The Psalmist closes his review of the wonders of creation with a prayer that the glory of God, which He has put upon His creatures, may abide, and that He Who at the completion of His work pronounced it very good, may still rejoice in it. For if His works cease to give Him pleasure, He can blot them out in a moment ; a mere look may cause the earth to tremble, a mere touch may set the mountains on fire.

PSALMS, CV.

- 33 ^p I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live : p Ps. 63. 4.
& 146. 2.
 I will sing praise to my God while I have my
 being.
- 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet :
 I will be glad in the LORD.
- 35 Let ^a the sinners be consumed out of the earth, q Ps. 37. 38.
Prov. 2. 22.
 and let the wicked be no more.
^r Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye ^r ver. 1.
 the LORD.

PSALM CV.

1 An exhortation to praise God, and to seek out his works. 7 The story of God's providence over Abraham, 16 over Joseph, 23 over Jacob in Egypt, 26 over Moses delivering the Israelites, 37 over the Israelites brought out of Egypt, fed in the wilderness, and planted in Canaan.

- 1 **O** ^a GIVE thanks unto the LORD ; call upon ^a 1 Chron. 16.
8.—22.
Isai. 12. 4.
 his name :

33. And as the Psalmist prays that God's glory may abound, so he declares that for his part it shall be the work of his life to glorify Him; his only anxiety is, that his quiet and audible meditation, his words and thoughts, may be acceptable to Him. May God rejoice in him, as he rejoices in God!

35. It is but natural that he who desires that God may rejoice in His works, and who himself delights in God, should pray that they who, instead of giving joy to God, excite His wrath, should be removed. It is sin that "mars the sweet accord" of God's creation, "overpowering" "with harsh din the music of His works and words." Therefore he prays that sin may be destroyed.

"Praise ye the Lord;" Hallelujah. This is the first place where Hallelujah occurs in the Psalter. The Hallelujah Psalms (strictly so called, because they begin with Hallelujah) are cvi., cxi.—cxiii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.—cl.

PSALM CV.

Song of thanksgiving for God's merciful dealings with His people.

The first part of this Psalm, to the end of the fifteenth verse, is found with a few variations in 1 Chron. xvi., as (apparently) part of the Psalm of thanksgiving sung on the occasion of the bringing up of the Ark to Jerusalem (see on Ps. xvi.). There is plainly a connection, by way of contrast, between this and the following Psalm. The subject of both is the early history of Israel; only in this Psalm that history is referred to as setting forth God's mercy, in the next as illustrating the people's continued disobedience.

1—6. Introduction; in which the Psalmist invites God's chosen to praise Him for the wonders He has wrought for them, such praise and thanksgiving to be made to resound among all nations.

1. "O give thanks." The first of the four Psalms which begin with these words, the others being cvi., cxviii., cxxxvi. This first verse occurs also, word for word, in Isa. xii. 4.

PSALMS, CV.

- ^b Ps. 145. 4,
5, 11. ^b make known his deeds among the people.
- 2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him :
^c Ps. 77. 12.
& 119. 27. ^c talk ye of all his wondrous works.
- 3 Glory ye in his holy name :
let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
- ^d Ps. 27. 8. 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength :
^d seek his face evermore.
- ^e Ps. 77. 11. 5 ^e Remember his marvellous works that he hath
done ;
his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth ;
- 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant,
ye children of Jacob his chosen.
- 7 ¶ He *is* the LORD our God :
^f Isai. 26. 9. ^f his judgments *are* in all the earth.
- ^g Luke 1. 72.
^h Gen. 17. 2.
& 22. 16, &c.
& 26. 3.
& 28. 13.
& 35. 11.
Luke 1. 73.
Heb. 6. 17. 8 He hath ^g remembered his covenant for ever,
the word *which* he commanded to a thousand
generations.
- 9 ^h Which *covenant* he made with Abraham,
and his oath unto Isaac ;

“Call upon His name,” i.e. proclaim it in solemn worship; call upon Him with prayer and praise; Gen. iv. 26.

4. “His strength . . . His face.” According to the Jewish interpreters, there is a special reference to the Ark (comp. “Ark of His strength,” Ps. cxxxii. 8. 2 Chron. vi. 41.), and to the Temple where He shews Himself; but the words have a wider application; they are a call to seek God’s help and favour in all ways and at all times. It is His strength that delivers from all dangers, and His face that lightens up all darkness.

5. “The judgments of His mouth.” His judicial sentences, with special reference to His utterances in Egypt.

6. “His chosen.” The word is plural, and belongs therefore not to Jacob, but to the people.

7. The Psalmist now begins to do what he had exhorted the people to do, namely, praise God. Jehovah is the God of Israel; while His sway extends over the whole world, His special covenant, to which He is ever faithful, is with them.

8. “He hath remembered . . . for ever.” Though He may seem to forget, He never does; His promise is ever present to Him. In 1 Chron. xvi. 15 the word is in the imperative, “Be ye mindful.”

“Commanded.” Rather, “established,” “ordained” (Ps. cxi. 9. Exod. xviii. 23.).

“To a thousand generations.” God’s promise is, to shew mercy unto them that love Him to the thousandth generation. Deut. vii. 9. Exod. xx. 6.

9. “Which covenant He made.” The word “covenant” is not in the Heb., and the relative refers to “word” in the preceding verse. The passage might be rendered as in Hag. ii. 5, “(the word) which He covenanted with Abraham” (see Gen. xxii. 16; xxvi. 3.).

10. and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,
and to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant :
- 11 saying, ¹Unto thee will I give the land of ¹ Gen. 13. 15.
 Canaan, & 15. 18.
- ² the lot of your inheritance :
- 12 ^k when they were *but* a few men in number ; ² Heb.
 yea, very few, ¹ and strangers in it. *the cord.*
- 13 When they went from one nation to another,
 from *one* kingdom to another people ; ^k Gen. 34. 50.
 Deut. 7. 7.
 & 26. 5.
- 14 ^m he suffered no man to do them wrong : ¹ Heb. 11. 9.
- yea, ⁿ he reprov'd kings for their sakes ; ^m Gen. 35. 5.
- 15 *saying*, Touch not mine anointed,
 and do my prophets no harm. ⁿ Gen. 12. 17.
 & 20. 3, 7.
- 16 Moreover ^o he called for a famine upon the land : ^o Gen. 41. 54.
- he brake the whole ^p staff of bread. ^p Lev. 26. 26.
 Isai. 3. 1.
 Ezek. 4. 16.
- 17 ^q He sent a man before them,
even Joseph, *who* ^r was sold for a servant : ^q Gen. 45. 5.
 & 50. 20.
- 18 ^s whose feet they hurt with fetters : ^r Gen. 37. 23,
 36.
- ³ he was laid in iron : ^s Gen. 39. 20.
 & 40. 15.
- ³ Heb. *his soul came into iron.*

12. This verse should be joined rather with what follows ; in vv. 12—15 the Psalmist celebrates God's protecting care over the people in their first small beginnings.

"A few men in number." Lit. "men of number," so few that they could be easily numbered ; as in Gen. xxxiv. 30. Deut. iv. 27. Jer. xlv. 28.

13. Spoken with reference to the wanderings of the patriarchs. Abraham and Isaac went to Egypt and Gerar, and Jacob to Padanaram, Edom, and Egypt also.

14. The Psalmist has in mind the preservation of Sarah in Egypt (Gen. xii.), and of Sarah and Rebekah in Philistia (Gen. xx. ; xxvi.).

15. "Mine anointed," i. e. His specially chosen ones ; Abraham being set apart (though not by actual anointing, a later custom) to be the father of peoples, and Sarai to be a princess.

"My prophets." Those with whom He held special intercourse, and who were commissioned to reveal His will to others. God Himself calls Abraham a prophet (Gen. xx. 7.).

16. The latter part of the Psalm, which narrates the history of Israel in Egypt and the wilderness, is not recited in Chronicles.

"He called for." Famine is God's servant, ready to answer His call (2 Kings viii. 1. Hag. i. 11.).

"Staff of bread." See marg. reff.

17. So Joseph himself says (Gen. xlv. 5 ; 1. 20.).

18. "With fetters." This circumstance is not mentioned in Genesis, but, considering the charge laid against him, it may well be supposed that at first Joseph was treated with great severity, and the supposition is confirmed by the Egyptian monuments.

"He was laid in iron." Lit. as in margin, "his soul came into iron ;" which may mean that he ("his soul" being a periphrasis for

PSALMS, CV.

- 19 until the time that his word came :
 † Gen. 41. 25. † the word of the LORD tried him.
- ‡ Gen. 41. 14. 20 † The king sent and loosed him ;
 even the ruler of the people, and let him go
 free.
- × Gen. 41. 40. 21 × He made him lord of his house,
 and ruler of all his ² substance :
- ‡ Heb. possession. 22 to bind his princes at his pleasure ;
 and teach his senators wisdom.
- ‡ Gen. 46. 6. 23 † Israel also came into Egypt ;
 † Ps. 78. 51. & 106. 22. and Jacob sojourned ² in the land of Ham.
- † Ex. 1. 7. 24 And ^a he increased his people greatly ;
 † Ex. 1. 8, &c. and made them stronger than their enemies.
- † Ex. 3. 10. & 4. 12, 14. 25 ^b He turned their heart to hate his people,
 † Num. 16. 5. & 17. 5. to deal subtilly with his servants.
- † Ex. 7, & 8, & 9, & 10, & 11, & 12. 26 ^c He sent Moses his servant ;
 † Ps. 78. 43, &c. and Aaron ^d whom he had chosen.
- ‡ Heb. words of his signs. 27 ^e They shewed ³ his signs among them,
 † Ps. 106. 22. ^f and wonders in the land of Ham.

himself) was bound with chains ; or "iron" may be used metaphorically for affliction, as in Ps. cvii. 10. The striking, though probably incorrect, rendering of the Prayer Book Version, "the iron entered into "his soul," comes from the Targum, which is followed by the Vulgate.

19. "His word." That is, God's word, His promise to exalt him over his brethren ; "until the time came for the Lord's word to take effect, the promise contained in that word tried him." Or it may mean Joseph's word, his word respecting his dreams ; "until that word "came to pass, God's promise proved and purified him." The time of waiting was a time of trial and purification.

22. "To bind." That is, "to control" (Gen. xli. 44.).

"At his pleasure." Lit. "according to his soul," i. e. his will.

"Teach his senators wisdom." Gen. xli. 38, 39.

23. "Land of Ham." So called because Mizraim was the son of Ham (Gen. x. 6. See Ps. lxxviii. 51.).

24. Compare what follows with the history as given in the book of Exodus, and with the somewhat different account of the same occurrence in Ps. lxxviii.

25. "He turned their heart." God's goodness to Israel stirred up the jealousy and hatred of the Egyptians ; God was not the cause of their hatred ; He only gave occasion for that which was already in their hearts to shew itself. The Targum renders, "their heart turned," as in Ps. lxxviii. 9 ; so Prayer Book, "their heart turned so."

"To deal subtilly." To kill their male children, and wear them out by hard labour (Exod. i. 10.).

27. "His signs." Lit. as in margin, "words of His signs," i. e. signs which spoke aloud for God. In Exod. iv. 8, God speaks of the "voices" of the miracles which Moses should work. Or it may mean simply, "the catalogue, the long list of His signs" (Ps. lxxv. 3, marg.).

PSALMS, CV.

- 28 ^g He sent darkness, and made it dark ;
and ^h they rebelled not against his word. g Ex. 10. 22.
h Ps. 99. 7.
- 29 ⁱ He turned their waters into blood,
and slew their fish. i Ex. 7. 20.
Ps. 78. 44.
- 30 ^k Their land brought forth frogs in abundance,
in the chambers of their kings. k Ex. 8. 6.
Ps. 78. 45.
- 31 ^l He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies,
and lice in all their coasts. l Ex. 8. 17, 24.
Ps. 78. 45.
- 32 ^m ² He gave them hail for rain,
and flaming fire in their land. m Ex. 9. 23,
25.
Ps. 78. 48.
- 33 ⁿ He smote their vines also and their fig trees ;
and brake the trees of their coasts. n Ps. 78. 47.
o Ex. 10. 4,
13, 14.
Ps. 78. 46.
- 34 ^o He spake, and the locusts came,
and caterpillers, and that without number,
35 and did eat up all the herbs in their land,
and devoured the fruit of their ground.
- 36 ^p He smote also all the firstborn in their land,
^q the chief of all their strength. p Ex. 12. 29.
Ps. 78. 51.
q Gen. 49. 3.
- 37 ^r He brought them forth also with silver and gold : ^r *Ex. 12. 35.*
and *there was not one feeble person among their tribes.*
- 38 ^s Egypt was glad when they departed :
for the fear of them fell upon them. s Ex. 12. 33.
- 39 ^t He spread a cloud for a covering ; t Ex. 13. 21.
Neh. 9. 12.

28. "They rebelled not," i. e. the Egyptians, who after the plague of darkness yielded to God's commands (Exod. x. 24.).

"One hour they fear Him, and obey" (*Keble*).

Some persons however make Moses and Aaron the subject; they executed their commission faithfully, not fearing the wrath of the king. Or the reference may be to the plagues, which came obediently at God's command. The Prayer Book Version, "They were not obedient unto His word," is derived from the Greek, which omits the negative of the Hebrew, translating "rebelled against."

The Psalmist begins with the ninth plague, that of darkness; he inverts the order of the third and fourth, the lice (possibly gnats or mosquitoes) and the flies; he omits the fifth and sixth, those of murrain and boils; in other respects he follows the history.

37. "Not one feeble person." Lit. "not one who stumbled" (Isa. v. 27.). The command was that not a hoof should be left behind, and it was fulfilled to the letter.

"Among their tribes." Lit. "his tribes," i. e. God's tribes (Ps. cxxii. 4.).

38. The Egyptians were glad to get rid of a people whose stay threatened them with total destruction (Exod. xii. 33.).

39. No reference is made to the passage of the Red Sea, but three of the chief miracles of the wilderness are specified.

PSALMS, CV.

- and fire to give light in the night.
- ^u Ex. 16. 12, &c. Ps. 78. 18, 27. 40 ^u *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and ^x satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
- ^x Ps. 78. 24, 25. 41 ^y He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out;
- ^y Ex. 17. 6. Num. 20. 11. Ps. 78. 15, 16. 1 Cor. 10. 4. 42 For he remembered ^z his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.
- 43 And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with ² gladness:
- ² Heb. singing. 44 ^a and gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;
- ^a Deut. 6. 10, 11. Josh. 13. 7, &c. Ps. 78. 55. 45 ^b that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.
- ^b Deut. 4. 1, 40. & 6. 21,—25.
- ³ Heb. Hallelujah. 46 ³ Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CVI.

1 *The psalmist exhorteth to praise God.* 4 *He prayeth for pardon of sin, as God did with the fathers.* 7 *The story of the people's rebellion, and God's mercy.* 47 *He concludeth with prayer and praise.*

“For a covering,” i.e. as a protection against the sun, a kind of canopy or awning. In Exod. xiii. 21, the cloud is spoken of as their guide, and in Exod. xiv. 19, 20, as a protection against their enemies.

40. The greedy, distrustful character of their petition is passed over, and the emphasis laid on the goodness which granted their request.

“Bread of heaven.” Ps. lxxviii. 24.

41. With special reference to the miracle at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 6.).

42. No allusion is made in this Psalm to Israel's rebellion or ingratitude; the Psalmist dwells only on God's faithfulness to His promise. His mercy did not forsake them until He brought them safely to Canaan.

43. “With joy.” In allusion perhaps to the triumphal song on the shore of the Red Sea.

44. “The labour of the people,” i.e. the product of their labours, buildings, vineyards, cultivated lands (Deut. vi. 10, 11. Josh. xxiv. 13. Neh. ix. 25.).

45. “That.” “To the end that.” This was the purpose or final cause of God's placing Israel in Canaan, that they might exhibit to the world the pattern of a holy nation, fulfilling His laws.

The whole Psalm is a thanksgiving for God's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham. The various mercies to Israel here detailed are so many proofs of the love and favour which God bore to their great forefather. But as they had been blessed for Abraham's sake, so must they be obedient after Abraham's example. In like manner Christians should never forget that obedience is the tribute which God demands in return for all His goodness. Christ gave Himself for us, that He might “redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, “zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 14.).

PSALMS, CVI.

- 1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.
^a O ^b give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is*
 good:
 for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 ^c Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?
Who can shew forth all his praise?
- 3 Blessed *are* they that keep judgment,
and he that ^d doeth righteousness at ^e all times.
- 4 ^f Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that*
thou bearest unto thy people:
 O visit me with thy salvation;

² Heb. Hallelujah.
^a 1 Chron. 16. 34.
^b Ps. 107. 1. & 118. 1. & 136. 1.
^c Ps. 40. 5.

^d Ps. 15. 2.
^e Acts 24. 16. Gal. 6. 9.
^f Ps. 119. 132.

PSALM CVI.

Praise of God's mercy to Israel, in spite of their repeated disobedience.

This Psalm, like Pss. lxxviii. and cv., recapitulates the history of Israel, but the purpose is different in each case. In Ps. lxxviii. the purpose is instruction; in cv. it is the setting forth of God's goodness; here it is the confession of man's ingratitude. It has been suggested that Psalms cv., cvi. have their counterpart in the Psalm of the Levites at Jerusalem after their return from captivity. Nehem. ix. 5—15 runs parallel with Ps. cv.; Nehem. ix. 16 begins at the same point as ver. 6 of Ps. cvi. The first and two last verses of the Psalm are found in 1 Chron. xvi.

1—5. Introductory. The Psalmist prefaces his confession with a recognition of God's goodness. God is unceasingly good, and surpassingly great: blessed are they that walk in His ways. Israel, indeed, has unhappily departed from them; but the Psalmist is confident that God has still a gracious mind towards them, and he prays that he himself may have a share in the salvation which is in store for them.

1. "Praise ye the Lord." The first of the eleven Hallelujah Psalms (cvi., cxl.—cxliii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.—cl.).

"For He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever." A liturgical formula of frequent occurrence. It appears first at the bringing up of the Ark (1 Chron. xvi. 34.); then at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3, 6.); then in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 21.); it was revived at the foundation of the second Temple (Ezra iii. 11.). See also Ps. cxviii. 1; cxxxvi. 1. Jer. xxxiii. 11. 1 Macc. iv. 24.

2. Man can never proclaim God's acts of love and power, so as either to exhaust them, or to praise them adequately. See Ecclus. xliii. 30, 31.

3. The mention in the last verse of the mighty acts of the Lord leads the Psalmist's thoughts to the persons to whom they will be manifested. He describes them as those who keep judgment and do righteousness, with a sad though silent reflection on the contrast presented by many of his countrymen.

4, 5. The prayer of these verses arises naturally from the preceding verse, where he proclaims the happiness of those who serve God, and whom He regards with favour.

4. "With the favour," &c. Lit. "in the favour of Thy people;"

PSALMS, CVI.

5 that I may see the good of thy chosen,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
that I may glory with thine inheritance.

g Lev. 26. 40.
1 Kin. 8. 47.
Dan. 9. 5.

6 ¶ ^g We have sinned with our fathers,
we have committed iniquity, we have done
wickedly.

7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in
Egypt;
they remembered not the multitude of thy
mercies;

h Ex. 14. 11,
12.

^h but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red
sea.

i Ezek. 20. 14.

8 Nevertheless he saved them ⁱ for his name's
sake,

k Ex. 9. 16.

^k that he might make his mighty power to be
known.

l Ex. 14. 21.
P. 18. 15.
Nah. 1. 4.

9 ^l He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried
up:

m Isai. 63. 11,
12, 13, 14.

so ^m he led them through the depths, as through
the wilderness.

at the time when Thou wilt again shew Thyself gracious unto Thy
people.

5. The intensity of the Psalmist's confidence in God's purposes of
good towards His people is shewn by the way in which he dwells on their
being His "chosen," His "nation," His "inheritance," and by the
vividness and increasing earnestness of his prayer that he may "see,"
"rejoice," and "glory in" their felicity.

6. "We have sinned." This is the key-note of the Psalm. The
writer takes up the words of Solomon (1 Kings viii. 47.). See also Jer.
iii. 25; xiv. 20. Lam. iii. 42. Dan. ix. 5.

"With our fathers." That is, as well as they. The recital of the
sins of the fathers, with which the Psalm is occupied, is but a confession
of their own sin; they and their fathers are linked together in trans-
gression.

7—12. The retrospect begins with the faithlessness of Israel in Egypt
and at the Red Sea. Even in Egypt they did not consider God's won-
derful acts and promises of deliverance; and the many signal mercies of
the deliverance itself were forgotten when they encountered fresh danger
at the Red Sea.

The reader should consult the marginal references for the details of
the history.

8. "Nevertheless." In spite of their unthankfulness, which might
have provoked God to leave their redemption unaccomplished, in His
unmerited mercy He saved them again, to make Himself an everlasting
Name, and to prove that He had power to complete the work which He
had begun.

9. "As through the wilderness." As safely as He afterwards

PSALMS, CVI.

- 10 And he ⁿ saved them from the hand of him that ⁿ Ex. 14. 30.
 hated *them*,
 and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. ^o Ex. 14. 27,
 28. & 1. 5.
- 11 ^o And the waters covered their enemies :
 there was not one of them left. ^p Ex. 14. 31.
 & 15. 1.
- 12 ^p Then believed they his words ;
 they sang his praise. ^q Ex. 15. 24.
 & 16. 2.
 & 17. 2.
 Ps. 78. 11.
- 13 ¶ ^q ² They soon forgot his works ;
 they waited not for his counsel :
 14 ^r but ³ lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
 and tempted God in the desert. ^r Num. 11.
 4, 33.
 Ps. 78. 18.
 1 Cor. 10. 6.
- 15 ^s And he gave them their request ;
 but ^t sent leanness into their soul. ^s Heb. *lusted*
a lust.
- 16 ^u They envied Moses also in the camp,
 and Aaron the saint of the LORD. ^t Isai. 10. 16.
^u Num. 16. 1,
 &c.

led them through the wilderness ; or, more simply, as across a level plain.

“The Red Sea dried away—He mark’d their path
 “Through coral-deeps, as o’er a sandy wild” (*Keble*).

Comp. Isa. lxiii. 13 : “That led them through the deep, as a horse in
 “the wilderness,” as the horse gallops over the plain.

12. The miracle at the Red Sea was not without effect ; we read
 (Exod. xiv. 31.) that the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord
 and His servant Moses ; and the song which they sang follows in the
 next chapter. But their faith and gratitude are mentioned, not for
 praise, but to censure them for being so short-lived. Six cases of
 rebellion are specified between the passage of the Red Sea and the entry
 into Canaan.

13. “They waited not for his counsel ;” i. e. for the development
 of His purposes, His time and manner of helping them. “The haste
 “of our desires is astonishing ; so much so, that we can scarcely allow
 “God one day. For unless He immediately answer our call, instantly
 “there arises impatience and at length despair” (*Calvin*).

14, 15. The first of their chief sins in the wilderness was their mur-
 muring for water (Exod. xv. 22—24 ; xvii. 2.), and for flesh (Exod.
 xvi. 3. Num. xi. 4.).

“Lusted exceedingly.” Lit. as in marg., “lusted a lust ;” the very
 expression used in Num. xi. 4. The rebellion at Kibroth-hattaavah
 was chiefly in the Psalmist’s mind.

15. “Leanness,” i. e. a wasting sickness, brought on by their excess
 in eating (Isa. x. 16. See Num. xi. 33, 34.).

16—18. The second sin mentioned is their rebellion against their
 leaders (see Num. xvi.).

16. “The saint of the Lord.” His holy one specially consecrated to
 His service, and proved to be so by the judgment which fell on those who
 rebelled against his authority. Korah is not mentioned among those who
 were swallowed up, for it is on the whole most likely that he was among
 the censer-bearers who were consumed by fire (see note on Numb. xvi. 30.).

PSALMS, CVI.

- ^x Num. 16. 17 ^xThe earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,
31, 32. and covered the company of Abiram.
Deut. 11. 6.
- ^y Num. 16. 18 ^y And a fire was kindled in their company ;
35, 46. the flame burned up the wicked. ...
- ^z Ex. 32. 4. 19 ^z They made a calf in Horeb,
and worshipped the molten image.
- ^a Jer. 2. 11. 20 Thus ^a they changed their glory
Rom. 1. 23. into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.
- ^b Ps. 78. 11, 12. 21 They ^b forgot God their saviour,
which had done great things in Egypt ;
- ^c Ps. 78. 51. & 105. 23, 27. 22 wondrous works in ^c the land of Ham,
and terrible things by the Red sea.
- ^d Ex. 32. 10, 11, 32. 23 ^d Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Deut. 9. 19, 25, & 10. 10. had not Moses his chosen ^e stood before him in
Ezek. 20. 13. the breach,
^e Ezek. 13. 5. & 22. 30. to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy
^f Deut. 8. 7. Jer. 3. 19. Ezek. 20. 6. *them.*
- ² Heb. *a land of desire.* 24 Yea, they despised ^f ² the pleasant land,
^g Heb. 3. 18. they ^g believed not his word :
- ^h Num. 14. 2, 27. 25 ^h but murmured in their tents,
ⁱ Num. 14. 28, &c. Ps. 95. 11. and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.
- ^j Ezek. 20. 15. Heb. 3. 11, 18. 26 ⁱ Therefore he ^k lifted up his hand against
^k Ex. 6. 8. Deut. 32. 40. them,
^l Heb. 3. 11. to overthrow them in the wilderness :
- ^m Lev. 26. 33. Ps. 44. 11. Ezek. 20. 23. 27 ³¹ to overthrow their seed also among the
nations,
and to scatter them in the lands.

19—23. The third great sin was the worship of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii.). There is a special stress on "Horeb," the Mount of God, where God had manifested His glory.

20. "Their glory," i. e. their glorious God (Jer. ii. 11. Rom. i. 23.); or it may mean, the object of their glory and praise (Deut. x. 21.); or, Who had made them glorious (Deut. iv. 6—8.).

23. "Therefore He said." Lit. "and He said" (uttered His word, resolved) to destroy them. Comp. 2 Sam. xxi. 16, where the word rendered "thought" is literally "said." Moses placed himself in the breach, and exposed his own life; he withstood, as it were, the advancing wrath of God by his prayer (Exod. xxxii. 11. Deut. ix. 18, 25.). For the figure here used, see Ezek. xiii. 5; xxii. 30. Jer. xviii. 20.

24—27. The fourth principal sin,—the rebellion consequent on the report of the spies (Num. xiii., xiv.). The expressions in these verses are taken from the Pentateuch; see marg. reff.

27. The threatenings of this verse are not found in Numbers but in Leviticus (xxvi. 33, 38.), repeated in Deut. xxviii. 64.

28—31. The fifth sin mentioned is the taking part in the Moabitish worship of Baal.

PSALMS, CVI.

- 28 ^m They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. ^m Num. 25. 2, 3. & 31. 16. Deut. 4. 3. & 32. 17. Hos. 9. 10. Rev. 2. 14.
- 29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions :
and the plague brake in upon them.
- 30 ⁿ Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment :
and *so* the plague was stayed. ⁿ Num. 25. 7, 8.
- 31 And that was counted unto him ^o for righteousness unto all generations for evermore. ^o Num. 25. 11, 12, 13.
- 32 ^p They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, ^q so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes :
^r because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. ^p Num. 20. 3, 13. Ps. 81. 7. ^q Num. 20. 12. Deut. 1. 37. & 3. 26. ^r Num. 20. 10.

28. "They joined themselves." They took part in the sacrificial meals connected with the worship of Baal-peor.

"The dead." That is, the dumb, dead idols, in opposition to the living God.

29. "The plague." This may mean the slaughter wrought upon the offenders by God's command (Num. xxv. 5. Comp. 1 Sam. iv. 17, where the same word is rendered "slaughter," and 2 Sam. xvii. 9.); but it is possible also that there was a divinely-sent pestilence (Num. xxv. 8, 9.).

30. "Executed judgment." The Prayer Book has "prayed," a meaning which belongs to another conjugation of the Hebrew verb, not to that here used. Phinehas' summary act was probably not an act of authority, but prompted by a spontaneous burst of indignation at the enormous wickedness of the offenders. As an act of burning zeal for God, it was accepted as an atonement for the people (Num. xxv. 13.). The sense is rightly given by the Greek and Latin Versions, "appeased."

31. In Gen. xv. 6 Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness; in the case of Phinehas, it was his zeal for God, which sprang from faith. God's promise to Phinehas was, "Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Num. xxv. 12, 13.). The office of High-priest, with a short interruption from the time of Eli to that of David, when for some unknown reason it was filled by the descendants of Ithamar, was perpetuated in the line of Phinehas.

32, 33. The sixth sin was the rebellion against Moses and Aaron at Meribah.

32. "It went ill with Moses." Some take it, "it grieved Moses," as in Neh. ii. 10; xiii. 8.

"For their sakes." Because their perversity was the occasion of Moses' sin; as the next verse explains.

33. "They provoked His spirit." Rather, "they rebelled against His Spirit," i. e. God's Spirit. Comp. Isa. lxiii. 10: "They rebelled, and vexed His holy Spirit." The obstinacy of the people against God so moved Moses, that for the moment he forgot that he was acting in God's Name and by His power.

PSALMS, CVI.

- s Judg. 1. 21, 27, 23, 29, &c. 34 ¶ ^s They did not destroy the nations,
t Deut. 7. 2. 16. ^t concerning whom the LORD commanded them :
u Judg. 2. 2. 35 ^u but were mingled among the heathen,
v & 3. 5, 6. and learned their works.
w Isai. 2. 6. 36 And ^x they served their idols :—^y which were a
x Judg. 2. 12, 13, 17, 19. snare unto them.
y Ex. 23. 33. 37 Yea, ^z they sacrificed their sons
z Deut. 7. 16. and their daughters unto ^a devils,
1 Judg. 2. 3, 14, 15. 38 and shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their
2 2 Kin. 16. 3. sons and of their daughters,
3 Isai. 57. 5. whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan :
4 Ezek. 16. 20. & 20. 26. and ^b the land was polluted with blood.
a Lev. 17. 7. 39 Thus were they ^c defiled with their own works,
b Deut. 32. 17. and ^d went a whoring with their own inventions.
c 2 Chr. 11. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 20.
d Num. 35. 33. 40 ¶ Therefore ^e was the wrath of the LORD kindled
e Ezek. 20. 18, 30, 31. against his people,
f Lev. 17. 7. Num. 15. 39. Ezek. 20. 30. insomuch that he abhorred ^f his own inheritance.
g Judges 2. 14, &c. 41 And ^g he gave them into the hand of the
h Ps. 78. 59, 62. heathen ;
i Deut. 9. 29. and they that hated them ruled over them.
g Judg. 2. 14. Neh. 9. 27, &c. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
h Judg. 2. 16. 43 ^h Many times did he deliver them ;
h Neh. 9. 27, &c. but they provoked *him* with their counsel,

34—42. The sins in Canaan, and the judgments which followed. They failed to exterminate the idolaters, and they shared in their idolatry.

34. "They did not destroy." Not from pity, but from sloth and indifference. The command to exterminate the Canaanites was plain (Exod. xxiii. 32, 33 ; xxxiv. 11—15. Deut. vii. 1—4.). As they did not fulfil the command, that which it was intended to prevent came to pass,—the heathen became a snare to them ; they intermarried with them, and served their idols.

37. There is no mention in the Pentateuch of their being guilty of human sacrifices ; but together with other heathenish customs they seem to have adopted this, though specially warned against it (Deut. xii. 31. Lev. xx. 2—5.).

39. "Their own works ;" i. e. their own idolatrous rites.

"Went a whoring." Almighty God represented His relation to the chosen people as that of a husband to a wife ; idolatry therefore was unfaithfulness to that relation. Comp. Judges ii. 17 ; viii. 33.

40—43. An epitome of the history of the Israelites, especially under the judges : apostasy, captivity, redemption, and relapse alternated with each other.

43. "They provoked Him with their counsel." Rather, as in ver.

- and were ² brought low for their iniquity.
- 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,
when ¹ he heard their cry :
- 45 ^k and he remembered for them his covenant,
and ¹ repented ^m according to the multitude of
his mercies.
- 46 ⁿ He made them also to be pitied
of all those that carried them captives.
- 47 ¶ ^o Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us
from among the heathen,
to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to
triumph in thy praise.
- 48 ^p Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from ever- ^p P Ps. 41. 13.
lasting to everlasting :
and let all the people say, Amen.—³ Praise ye ¹ Heb.
the LORD. *Hallelujah.*

² Or, *impoverished, or, weakened.*

¹ Judg. 3. 9. & 4. 3. & 6. 7. & 10. 10.

Neh. 9. 27, &c. ^k Lev. 26. 41, 42.

¹ Judg. 2. 18.

^m Ps. 51. 1. & 69. 16.

Isai. 63. 7. Lam. 3. 32.

ⁿ Ezra 9. 9. Jer. 42. 12.

^o 1 Chron. 16. 35, 36.

33, "they rebelled against Him in their counsel," in opposition to God's counsel; they followed their own purposes instead of His.

"Were brought low." Lit. "sunk down," "fell away;" pined away through their sins. Lev. xxvi. 39.

44—46. Israel's unthankfulness did not annul God's mercy and truth.

44. "He regarded." Lit. "saw in their trouble," saw when they were in trouble, looked compassionately upon them (Gen. xxix. 32. 1 Sam. i. 11.).

"Cry." Usually a cry of joy; but here, and in 1 Kings viii. 28, of lamentation (Ps. xvii. 1; lxxxviii. 2.).

45. "He remembered." Lev. xxvi. 41, 42.

46. "Repented." Relented, was moved with compassion (Deut. xxxii. 36. Ps. xc. 13.).

46. "He made them also to be pitied," &c. What Solomon prayed for the people (1 Kings viii. 50.), when delivered into the hands of the enemy, was fulfilled in their later history. Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, had compassion on their captives (see 2 Kings xxv. 27—30. 2 Chron. xxx. 9. Jer. xlii. 12. Dan. i. 9. Neh. i. 11.).

47. The whole Psalm has led the way to this prayer. The Psalmist, having spoken of God's compassion for His people in their captivity, prays that God would complete His work and gather them from among the heathen. The prayer rests upon the promise in Deut. xxx. 3, a passage to which Isaiah refers (xi. 12.) and Micah (ii. 12.).

48. The closing doxology of the Fourth Book.

As God's faithfulness was the burden of the preceding Psalm, so Israel's faithlessness is the burden of this. The wonders wrought before their eyes in Egypt, and the mighty deliverance which saved them from bondage, failed to teach them to trust in God; their life in the wilderness was a series of rebellions against Him; and even when brought into the land of Canaan, the same evil spirit of disobedience clung to them, and they gave themselves up to the abominations of idol-worship, until,

PSALMS, CVII.

PSALM CVII.

^a Ps. 106. 1.
& 118. 1.
& 136. 1.
^b Ps. 119. 68.
Matt. 19. 17.

¹ *The psalmist exhorteth the redeemed, in praising God, to observe his manifold providence, 4 over travellers, 10 over captives, 17 over sick men, 23 over seamen, 33 and in divers varieties of life.*

¹ **O** ^a GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for ^b he is good :

having filled up the cup of their iniquity, they were carried into captivity. Nevertheless, the Psalmist is confident that a time of restoration and prosperity will dawn upon the people; and he prays earnestly that it may come, and that he may have a share in it. While we confess that the Church at large and we individually have done amiss and dealt wickedly, and that whatever chastisements God may send are but the just reward of our faithlessness, yet may we comfort ourselves with the assurance, that as the Church is God's chosen heritage, He will one day visit her with His complete salvation. And we can have no more appropriate prayer for ourselves, than that we may rejoice in the gladness of His people, and may glory with His inheritance (v. 5).

PSALM CVII.

Call to those who have experienced God's deliverances to give thanks.

Though a new Book of the Psalter begins with this Psalm, there is without doubt a close connection with Psalm cvi. Both Psalms begin with the same words; and whereas Ps. cvi. ended (ver. 47.) with a prayer for deliverance from captivity, in this Psalm thanks are given (ver. 3.) for the restoration. It is the opinion of some persons, that the pictures drawn in the Psalm of various forms of trouble represent the different perils to which the scattered exiles had been subjected. Some had been delivered from lonely wanderings and famine, some from prison, some from sickness, some from dangers by sea. Or these pictures may be understood as portraying the sufferings of the exiles figuratively. They are likened to travellers who have lost their way in the desert and whom God has brought home: or they are like prisoners, whose chains have been broken; or they are like men afflicted with dangerous sickness, whom God has restored; or they are like storm-tossed mariners, brought safe into port at last. But this application of the whole Psalm to the circumstances of the captivity, whether literally or in figure, is full of difficulty. It seems far more natural to suppose that while the Psalmist begins with calling on the exiles to give thanks for the answer vouchsafed to their prayers, he goes on to describe other forms of suffering, in order to set forth, by several examples, God's readiness to hear the prayer of all who call upon Him, be their trouble what it may.

The first part of the Psalm (vv. 1—32.) is divided into four stanzas, closely resembling each other. First comes a description of some trouble; then a prayer for deliverance; then the deliverance; and lastly, an exhortation to give thanks. This arrangement is dropped in the latter part, and the Psalm changes into a more general hymn of praise of God's over-ruling Providence.

The Psalm was probably written after the decree of Cyrus had been promulgated, but before the departure from Babylon, while the exiles were gathering together from the various quarters of the empire.

1. The prophet Jeremiah had foretold that the time would come, when

PSALMS, CVII.

- for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,
^c whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the ^c Ps. 103. 10.
 enemy ;
- 3 and ^d gathered them out of the lands, ^d Ps. 106. 47.
 from the east, and from the west, from the north, ^{Isai. 43. 5, 6.}
 and ² from the south. ^{Jer. 23. 14.}
^{& 31. 8, 10.}
^{Ezek. 39. 27,}
^{28.}
- 4 ¶ They ^e wandered in ^f the wilderness in a soli- ² Heb. *from*
 tary way ; ^{the sea.}
 they found no city to dwell in. ^e ver. 40.
^f Deut. 32. 10.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty,—their soul fainted in them.
- 6 ⁵ Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, ⁵ ver. 13, 19, 28.
 and he delivered them out of their distresses. ^{Ps. 50. 15.}
^{Hos. 5. 15.}
- 7 And he led them forth by the ^h right way, ^h Ezra 8. 21.
 that they might go to a city of habitation.
- 8 ⁱ Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his ⁱ ver. 15, 21, 31.
 goodness,
 and *for* his wonderful works to the children of
 men !

in the streets of Jerusalem and in the Temple would be heard the voice of them that say "Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good; for "His mercy endureth for ever" (Jer. xxxiii. 11.). Here the Psalmist bids the freed exiles raise the same joyful strain before they leave Babylon, as in the preceding Psalm it is put into the mouth of those who were as yet only praying for and expecting deliverance.

2. "The redeemed of the Lord." One of the expressions which connect this Psalm with the later chapters of Isaiah (xxxv. 9; lxii. 12; lxiii. 4.).

3. "From the south." Lit. "from the sea." This expression proves that the writer of the Psalm was still in Babylon, though no longer a captive. In Palestine "the sea" always means the Mediterranean, i. e. the west. A writer in Babylon might express the south by the sea, meaning the Persian Gulf.

4. It is not clear what wanderings are meant; but this verse cannot but refer to the redeemed of the Lord in captivity. They were like wanderers in the desert, weary and destitute; and God gave them a home.

"In a solitary way." Lit. "in a waste of a way," a desert way; as in Acts viii. 26.

6. This is the great lesson of the Psalm, namely, that God hears at once the cry of the distressed (see vv. 13, 19, 28.). "Troubles are the "spurs to make men run to God;" and having recourse to Him they are relieved.

7. "By the right way." Lit. "by a right or straight way" (see Ezra viii. 21.).

8. Or, "let them acknowledge to the Lord His loving-kindness, and "to the children of men His wonders." The praises of God should be proclaimed not only before Himself, but before men.

PSALMS, CVII.

- ^k Ps. 34. 10. 9 For ^k he satisfieth the longing soul,
 Luke 1. 53. and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.
- ^l Luke 1. 79. 10 ¶ Such as ^l sit in darkness and in the shadow of
 death,
^m Job 36. 8. *being* ^m bound in affliction and iron ;
- ⁿ Lam. 3. 42. 11 because they ⁿ rebelled against the words of
 God,
^o Ps. 73. 24. and contemned ^o the counsel of the most High :
 & 119. 21. 12 therefore he brought down their heart with
 Luke 7. 30. labour ;
 Acts 20. 27. they fell down, and *there was* ^p none to help.
- ^p Ps. 22. 11. 13 ^q Then they cried unto the LORD in their
^q ver. 6, 19, 23. trouble,
 and he saved them out of their distresses.
- ^r Ps. 68. 6. 14 ^r He brought them out of darkness and the
 & 146. 7. shadow of death,
 Acts 12. 7, &c. and brake their bands in sunder.
- ^s ver. 8, 21, 31. 15 ^s Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his
 goodness,
 and *for* his wonderful works to the children of
 men!
- ^t Isai. 45. 2. 16 For he hath ^t broken the gates of brass,
 and cut the bars of iron in sunder.
- ^u Lam. 3. 39. 17 ¶ Fools ^u because of their transgression,

9. "The longing," i.e. "thirsting," soul, as in ver. 5 (Isa. xxix. 8).
 10—16. The case of prisoners. Their imprisonment was the consequence of their sin; they had not only resisted, but derided and blasphemed God's purpose of mercy towards them; therefore the chastisement had overtaken them, and He had humbled their rebellious pride by affliction and labour. But when they prayed to Him, He delivered them and brake their bonds. It is obvious to apply this to the hard bondage of sin, in which men are bound, as St. Augustine says, not with external iron, but by their own iron will, and to the deliverance to be sought and obtained from Him Who has come to bring out the prisoners from their prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house (Isa. xlii. 7.).

10. "Darkness and the shadow of death." "Darkness" is here an emblem of the dungeon; and "the shadow of death" represents imprisonment in its severest form (see ver. 14.). Even when this affliction falls on men for their disobedience, it is remitted on their supplication.

"Affliction and iron." The second term particularizes the nature of the first; iron fetters kept them in grievous bondage.

16. Comp. Isa. xlv. 2, where it is said of Cyrus, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

17—22. The case of the sick. Here again the suffering is represented

PSALMS, CVII.

- and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
- 18 ^x Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat ; x Job 33. 20.
 and they ^y draw near unto the gates of death. y Job 33. 22.
Ps. 9. 13.
& 88. 3.
- 19 ^z Then they cry unto the LORD in their
 trouble, z ver. 6, 13, 28.
 and he saveth them out of their distresses.
- 20 ^a He sent his word, and ^b healed them, a 2 Kin. 20. 4. 5.
Ps. 147. 15. 18.
 and ^c delivered *them* from their destructions. Matt. 8. 8.
- 21 ^d Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his b Ps. 30. 2.
& 103. 3.
 goodness, c Job 33. 28.
31. Ps 30. 3.
& 49. 15.
& 56. 13.
& 103. 4.
 and *for* his wonderful works to the children of
 men!
- 22 And ^e let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanks- d ver. 8, 15, 31.
 giving, e Lev. 7. 12.
Ps. 50. 14.
& 116. 17.
Heb. 13. 15.
 and ^f declare his works with ² rejoicing.
- 23 ¶ They that go down to the sea in ships, f Ps. 9. 11.
& 73. 28.
& 118. 17.
 that do business in great waters ; g Heb.
singing.
- 24 these see the works of the LORD,
 and his wonders in the deep.
- 25 For he commandeth, and ³ g raiseth the stormy h Heb. maketh
to stand.
 wind, g Jonah. 1. 4.

as the consequence of sin. Madly bent on living only for the present and on ruining themselves, their folly has brought affliction on them ; enfeebled by disease and want of food, they are brought to death's door ; but even they, though suffering the due reward of their deeds, have only to cry to the Lord and He will heal them.

17. "Are afflicted." Lit. "brought affliction on themselves," "brought themselves low." In 1 Kings ii. 26 the word is used of suffering willingly.

18. Comp. Job xxxiii. 20 : "So that his life abhorreth bread, and his "soul dainty meat."

20. "He sent His word." Special attention has been drawn to this and similar passages, as leading on to the New Testament doctrine of the Personal Word. Both in the natural world and in history the Word of God is not merely the expression of His will, but His messenger, and does His work (see Ps. xxxiii. 6 ; cv. 19 ; cxlvii. 18. Isa. lv. 11.).

"Their destructions." More lit. "their grave pits," in which they had been lying ; or it may mean, "the deep afflictions in which they "were plunged."

23—32. The case of sailors in a storm.

23. "Go down." Isa. xlii. 10. Jon. i. 3.

24. The description of the storm seems to shew that the Psalmist writes from personal experience.

25. "For he commandeth." Lit. "and He said," as in Ps. cv. 31,

34. It is the same word so often used in Gen. i.

PSALMS, CVII.

which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths :

ⁿ Ps. 22. 14.
& 119. 28.
Nah. 2. 10.

ⁿ their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,

^z Heb.
all their
wisdom is
swallowed
up.

and ^z are at their wit's end.

28 ⁱ Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

ⁱ ver. 6, 13, 19.
^k Ps. 89. 9.
Matt. 8. 26.

29 ^k He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet ; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

ⁱ ver. 8, 15, 21.

31 ^l Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men !

^m Ps. 22. 22,
25. & 111. 1.

32 Let them exalt him also ^m in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

ⁿ 1 Kin. 17.
1, 7.

33 ¶ He ⁿ turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground ;

“**Thereof.**” That is, of the sea ; though some render “**His,**” i. e. God’s, as in Ps. xlii. 7. Comp. “**His wind**” (Ps. cxlvii. 18.).

26. Ps. civ. 8.

27. “**Are at their wit’s end.**” Lit. “all their wisdom swallows ‘itself up’” (see marg.); that is, comes of itself to nought. Isa. xix. 3, “I will destroy (lit. swallow up) the counsel thereof;” I will bring it to nought.

28. A Basque proverb, quoted by Dr. Kay, says, “Let him who knows not how to pray, go to sea.”

29. Rather, “He stayed the storm into a gentle breeze.” The word rendered “**calm**” is found also Job iv. 16 (marg.), and 1 Kings xix. 12, “a still small voice,” lit. “a sound of soft stillness,” “a voice of a ‘gentle breeze.’”

“**Thereof.**” Lit. “their waves,” the waves which threatened to engulf them. These, to their joy, become calm (Jon. i. 11.).

32. “**Congregation of the people.**” The place where the Church assembles for worship.

“**Assembly of the elders.**” Where the chiefs of the nation meet in counsel (Ps. i. 1.).

33. There is a change here in the character of the Psalm ; there are no more pictures of individual suffering, with the double refrain. The Psalmist dwells on God’s providential dealings with nations, and sets forth the contrast which those dealings present. The wickedness of a people brings His curse upon them ; whilst on others He pours His blessing ; He may chastise them indeed for a time, but He remembers

PSALMS, CVII.

- 34 a ° fruitful land into ² barrenness,
for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. ° Gen. 13. 10.
& 14. 3.
& 19. 25.
- 35 ^p He turneth the wilderness into a standing ² water,
and dry ground into watersprings. ² Heb. *saltness*.
^p Ps. 114. 8.
Isai. 41. 18.
- 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
that they may prepare a city for habitation ;
- 37 and sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
which may yield fruits of increase.
- 38 ^a He blesseth them also, so that they ^r are multiplied greatly ;
and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. ^q Gen. 12. 2.
& 17. 16, 20.
^r Exod. 1. 7.
- 39 Again, they are ^s minished and brought low
through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. ^s 2 Kin. 10. 32.
- 40 ^t He poureth contempt upon princes,
and causeth them to wander in the ³ wilderness,
where there is no way. ^t Job 12. 21,
24.
³ Or, *void place*.
^u 1 Sam. 2. 8.
Ps. 113. 7, 8.
- 41 ^u Yet setteth he the poor on high ⁴ from affliction,
and ^x maketh *him* families like a flock. ⁴ Or, *after*.
^x Ps. 78. 52.
- 42 ^y The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice :
and all ^z iniquity shall stop her mouth. ^y Job 22. 19.
Ps. 52. 6.
& 58. 10.
^z Job 5. 16,
Ps. 63. 11.
Prov. 10. 11.
Rom. 3. 19.
- 43 ¶ ^a Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*,
even they shall understand the lovingkindness of
the LORD. ^a Ps. 64. 9.
Jer. 9. 12.
Hos. 14. 9.

His mercy, and rescues them from trouble. The physical condition of a land is changed according to the character of its inhabitants. The well-watered fruitful land becomes barren (vv. 33, 34.), and the waste unprofitable land puts forth an unexpected fertility (vv. 35—38.).

34. "Barrenness." Lit. "saltness," like the land around Sodom and Gomorrah (comp. Deut. xxix. 23.).

37. The exiles in Babylon, to whom the command was given (Jer. xxix. 5.), "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them," may have experienced the truth of this.

39—41. Sometimes their prosperity will draw down on them the jealousy of their powerful neighbours; in which case God will overthrow the tyrants, and restore the afflicted.

40. "He poureth contempt upon princes." Taken directly from Job xii. 21, as the next clause is from Job xii. 24.

41. "And maketh him families like a flock" of sheep. Causeth them so to increase, that they seem like a numerous and sportive flock (comp. Job xxi. 11.).

42. God's cognizance of the oppressed gives joy to the upright, and the boastful insolence of the wicked is put to silence. The first part of the verse comes from Job xxii. 19, and the latter from Job v. 16.

43. "Whoso is wise," let him observe these things, and let him "consider the loving-kindnesses of the Lord." The Psalm dies away

PSALMS, CVIII.

PSALM CVIII.

1 *David encourageth himself to praise God. 5 He prayeth for God's assistance according to his promise. 11 His confidence in God's help.*

A Song or Psalm of David.

- ^a Ps. 57. 7. 1 **O** ^a GOD, my heart is fixed ;
I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.
- ^b Ps. 57. 8,—
11. 2 ^b Awake, psaltery and harp :
I *myself* will awake early.
- 3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people :
and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.
- 4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens :
and thy truth *reacheth* unto the ² clouds.
- ^c Ps. 57. 5, 11. 5 ^c Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens :
and thy glory above all the earth ;
- ^d Ps. 60. 5, &c. 6 ^d that thy beloved may be delivered :
save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.

after the example of Hosea xiv. 9. Having related God's varied judgments and mercies, he declares that whoso is wise will consider and understand them ; he will see God's guiding hand alike in the events of his own life and in the destinies of nations.

There are few whose personal experience cannot supply instances of similar danger to those described in this Psalm, and of similar deliverances. While fear was strong, our prayers, it may be, were urgent : have we been careful, when the deliverance came, to thank the Lord for His goodness ? That is the special inquiry, which this Psalm suggests.

PSALM CVIII.

Thanksgiving for past deliverances, and confident hope of help in the future.

From the position of this Psalm in the Psalter it would seem to have been put together in its present form after the captivity, as a Psalm of thanksgiving for the restoration. It is nevertheless called "**A Psalm of David,**" because it is composed of two portions of David's Psalms, the first five verses being taken from Ps. lviii., and the remainder from the latter portion of Ps. lx, where see notes.

Both Psalms were originally composed under circumstances of great depression, the fifty-seventh when David was in the cave of Adullam, the sixtieth after great reverses in the war with the Syrians and Ammonites : but they both close with words of trust and confidence. The compiler of Psalm cviii. takes the joyful parts of the two former Psalms, and puts them together, almost as they originally stood.

1. "**With my glory.**" Rather, "yea, even my glory ;" i. e. "I will sing and give praise, even my glory shall do it," meaning his soul with its godlike powers. In Ps. lvii. 8, it is "awake up, my glory."

PSALMS, CIX.

- 7 ¶ God hath spoken in his holiness ;
I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem,
and mete out the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead *is* mine ; Manasseh *is* mine ;
Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head ;
- 9 ° Judah *is* my lawgiver ; Moab *is* my washpot ; ° Gen. 49. 10.
over Edom will I cast out my shoe ;
over Philistia will I triumph.
- 10 † Who will bring me into the strong city ? † Ps. 60. 9.
Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 11 *Wilt* not thou, O God, *who* hast cast us off ?
And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our
hosts ?
- 12 Give us help from trouble :
for vain *is* the help of man.
- 13 ‡ Through God we shall do valiantly : ‡ Ps. 60. 12.
for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM CIX.

1 *David, complaining of his slanderous enemies, under the person of Judas depreceth them. 16 He sheweth their sin. 21 Complaining of his own misery, he prayeth for help. 29 He promiseth thankfulness.*

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 **H**OLD ^a not thy peace, O God of my praise ; ^a Ps. 83. 1.
2 for the mouth of the wicked and the ² Heb. *mouth of deceit.*
² mouth of the deceitful ³ are opened against ³ Heb. *have opened themselves.*
me :

7. God's promise to David is here taken up and exulted in by the Psalmist after the exile.

10. The help given by the Edomites to Nebuchadnezzar when he besieged Jerusalem would make it natural for the returned exiles to adopt David's cry against Edom. See also Ps. cxxxvii, where Edom's cruelty at that time is specially referred to (Obad. 12.).

PSALM CIX.

Denunciation of a slanderous and cruel adversary.

It is impossible to fix a certain date to this Psalm, or to determine who the enemy is against whom its imprecations are directed. Doeg, Cush (Ps. vii. Inscr.), Abitophel, Shimei, have all been named.

There are three marked divisions ; in the first (vv. 1—5.), David complains of the malice, both in word and deed, of his enemies ; in the second (vv. 6—19.), he fastens on one of those enemies, and calls down terrible vengeance on him ; in the third (vv. 20—31.), he prays to God to protect him, and expresses his confidence that his prayer will be heard. The contrast between the middle division and the two others is so great, that it is difficult to conceive that they proceeded from the same lips. Hence it has been suggested, that the second section

PSALMS, CIX.

they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred ;

and fought against me ^b without a cause.

^b Ps. 35. 7.

& 69. 4.

John 15. 25.

4 For my love they are my adversaries :

but I *give myself unto prayer.*

does not contain David's imprecation against his enemy, but his enemy's imprecation against him, and should therefore be introduced by the word "saying," being in truth a long quotation. But, tempting as this suggestion is, and not improbable in itself, as well as supported by considerable authority, it cannot be reconciled with St. Peter's reference to one of these imprecations in Acts i. The natural, if not the necessary, conclusion from St. Peter's words is, that it is David who is speaking, and that he is speaking concerning Judas, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are led therefore to conceive of David as carried beyond himself and his own circumstances, and contemplating the enemies of One greater than himself. Consciously or unconsciously, David speaks of the cruelty and ingratitude of Christ's great enemy ; and so keen is his sense of the heinousness of his wickedness, that he heaps together words of bitter malediction. In other Psalms his sense of justice draws from him general denunciations of judgment upon his enemies ; here his passion is more intensely kindled by his exalted conception of the unapproachable goodness and innocence of Him Whom he dimly foresaw.

It is not necessary that we should justify, from a Christian point of view, the imprecations to which David here gives utterance. But so far as they proceeded from a burning indignation against sin, and from zeal for the honour of God, they would be acceptable to Him, and might well be overruled to be, as St. Chrysostom says, "a prediction in the form of "a curse," just as Sarah's angry words, being confirmed by God Himself (Gen. xxi. 12.), are spoken of as "scripture" (Gal. iv. 30.).

1—5. The Psalmist, unjustly and ungratefully slandered and persecuted, cries to God for help.

1. "Hold not Thy peace." Be not silent, as in Ps. xxviii. 1 ; xxxv. 22 ; do not refuse to interfere in my behalf.

"O God of my praise." "Thou Whom I have so often had occasion "to praise," espouse my cause, that I may praise Thee more (ver. 30.). See Jer. xvii. 14. Deut. x. 21.

2. More lit. "A wicked man's mouth and a mouth of deceit have they "opened against me : " it is a "wicked" mouth, because their object is to destroy ; it is a "deceitful" mouth, because they employ falsehood for the attainment of their purpose.

3. "They compassed me," &c. Comp. Hos. xi. 12. Whenever they approached him, it was with spiteful accusations.

4. "For my love ; " i.e. in return for my love, the love which I have shewn to them.

"I give myself unto prayer." Lit. "I am prayer," nothing but prayer. His one employment and refuge, without thought of revenge, is prayer. Comp. Ps. cxx. 7 (Heb.), "I am peace ; " cx. 3, "Thy people "shall be willing ; " lit. "willingness."

PSALMS, CIX.

- 5 And ^c they have rewarded me evil for good,
and hatred for my love. c Ps. 35. 7, 12.
& 38. 20.
- 6 ¶ Set thou a wicked man over him :
and let ^d Satan stand at his right hand. d Zech. 3. 1.
- 7 When he shall be judged, let him ^e be con-
demned : e Or, an
adversary.
and ^f let his prayer become sin. f Heb. go
out guilty,
or, wicked.
- 8 Let his days be few ;
and ^g let another take his ^h office. g Prov. 23. 9.
- 9 ⁱ Let his children be fatherless,
and his wife a widow. i Acts 1. 20.
- 10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and
beg : j Or, charge.
let them seek *their bread* also out of their
desolate places. k Ex. 22. 24.
- 11 ^l Let the extortioner catch all that he hath ;
and let the strangers spoil his labour. l Job 5. 5.
& 18. 9.

6—20. The Psalmist now calls down God's judgments on his persecutors. He either singles out one man in particular for special denunciation, or he treats the whole company of his enemies as if they were one man.

6. "Set thou a wicked man over him." Appoint a wicked, unprincipled man in office over him, that he may suffer what he has himself inflicted; make him the victim of unjust oppression, as I have been.

"Satan." Rather, "an adversary;" as in 1 Sam. xxix. 4. 2 Sam. xix. 22. 1 Kings xi. 14, 23, 25. In Job (i. 6—8; ii. 1, 2.) and Zechariah (iii. 1.) the article is prefixed. The adversary is to stand at the right hand, as the most suitable place for one who is determined to hinder or to assist another. In ver. 31 God's readiness to help the poor is expressed by His standing at his right hand.

7. Lit. "let him go forth condemned," that is, with the sentence of "guilty" pronounced upon him (see marg.).

"His prayer." His cry for the mitigation of the sentence; let this be regarded as an aggravation of his guilt. Or it may be his prayer to God; in which case the meaning is, "let his prayer, which begins in "sin, end therein" (Prov. xxviii. 9; xv. 8; Isa. i. 15.). Some render "let his prayer be a failure;" let it be ineffectual.

8. "Let his days be few." Ps. lv. 23.

"His office." This implies that the Psalmist's enemy was one who held a high position. Deprived of this by an untimely death, he would leave his family in great distress.

10. "Vagabonds." Like Cain (Gen. iv. 12.): let them wander up and down from their ruined homes, begging their bread.

11—15. From his family the Psalmist turns to his property and reputation.

11. "Catch." Lit. "lay snares for, entrap." The reference is to the efforts of the usurer to entangle the debtor with bonds and obligations.

PSALMS, CIX.

- 12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him ;
neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.
- ⁱ Job 13. 19.
^{Ps.} 37. 23.
^k Prov. 10. 7. 13 ⁱ Let his posterity be cut off ;
and in the generation following let their ^k name be blotted out.
- ^l Ex. 20. 5. 14 ^l Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD ;
and let not the sin of his mother ^m be blotted out.
- ^m Neh. 4. 5.
Jer. 18. 23. 15 Let them be before the LORD continually,
that he may ⁿ cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- ⁿ Job 18. 17.
Ps. 34. 16. 16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,
but persecuted the poor and needy man,
that he might even slay the ^o broken in heart.
- ^o Ps. 34. 18. 17 ^p As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him :
as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
- ^p Prov. 14. 14.
Ezek. 35. 6. 18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment,
so let it ^q come ² into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.
- ^q Num. 5. 22.
² Heb. *within him.* 19 Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth him,
and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
- 20 *Let this be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD,

15. "Let them," i.e. the sins of his parents and ancestors ; let them be so present before God, that He may root out utterly the whole race.

16. This verse gives the reason why his memory was to be rooted out ; viz. because he remembered not to shew mercy even to one who was utterly bowed down and broken-hearted ; mercy had been shewn to him, but he did not take care to shew it himself ; nay, he even thirsted for the blood of the afflicted.

17, 18. The verbs here should not be rendered as prayers, but as describing facts : "yea, he loved cursing, so it came unto him ; and he had no delight in blessing, so it was far from him ; yea, he clothed himself with cursing as with a garment, so it came like water into his bowels, and like oil into his bones." The three figures are a kind of ascending scale ; he has clothed himself with cursing ; he has drunk it in like water ; it has penetrated even to the marrow of his bones, like the oil which is rubbed in and received into the system.

20. Rather, "this is the reward of my adversaries from the Lord."

PSALMS, CIX.

and of them that speak evil against my soul.

- 21 ¶ But do thou for me, O GOD the LORD, for thy name's sake :
because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.
- 22 For I *am* poor and needy,
and my heart is wounded within me.
- 23 I am gone ^r like the shadow when it declineth : r Ps. 102. 11
& 144. 4.
I am tossed up and down as the locust.
- 24 My ^s knees are weak through fasting ; s Heb. 12. 12.
and my flesh faileth of fatness.
- 25 I became also ^t a reproach unto them : t Ps. 22. 6, 7.
when they looked upon me ^u they shaked their ^v heads. v Matt. 27. 39.
- 26 ¶ Help me, O LORD my God :
O save me according to thy mercy :
- 27 ^x that they may know that this *is* thy hand ; x Job 37. 7.
that thou, LORD, hast done it.

The curse which falls on them is but the fruit of their own choice. What else can they expect who requite the kindness of the righteous with such malice? Those who understand the preceding imprecations (vv. 6—19.) as spoken by David's enemies, render this verse, "This is the reward which my adversaries would obtain for me from the Lord."

21—25. The tone of the Psalm changes, and the Psalmist turns from his enemies to God, and prays that He will have mercy on him in his oppression.

21. "Do Thou for me." Lit. "act with me;" shew Thyself on my side (Jer. xiv. 7. Ps. cxix. 124.).

23. See Ps. cii. 11. His life passes away, as a shadow which grows longer and longer until it wholly disappears.

"Tossed up and down." Lit. "shaken off," or "driven away," as locusts are swept away by the wind, or easily shaken off (Job xxxix. 20. Nahum iii. 17.).

24. "Fasting." Ps. xxxv. 13; lxix. 10; as an expression of penitence, and as accompanied by continual supplication.

"Faileth of fatness," i. e. has wasted away, so that there is no more fatness; though some render "has shrunk up from want of oil."

25. "I became also." "And I—I am become" a reproach, when I should rather be an object of sympathy (Ps. xxii. 6; xxxi. 11.).

"They shaked their heads." Looking on the sufferer as one who was being punished by God, and therefore beyond hope (Ps. xxii. 7.). The Psalmist is here a type of Christ (St. Matt. xxvii. 39.), as in the earlier part of the Psalm the language which he uses respecting his enemies is applicable to the enemies of Christ.

26. The Psalm closes with a renewed cry for help; and as in Pss. xxii. and lxix., the Psalmist looks forward to a joyful termination of his affliction.

27. He returns to the plural number in speaking of his enemies, see

PSALMS, CX.

- ^y 2 Sam. 16. 11, 12. 28 ^y Let them curse, but bless thou :
 when they arise, let them be ashamed ; but let
^z thy servant rejoice.
^a Ps. 35. 26. & 132. 18. 29 ^a Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,
 and let them cover themselves with their own
 confusion, as with a mantle.
^b Ps. 35. 18. & 111. 1. 30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth ;
 yea, ^b I will praise him among the multitude.
^c Ps. 16. 8. & 73. 23. & 110. 5. & 121. 5. 31 For ^c he shall stand at the right hand of the
 poor,
² Heb. *from the judges of his soul.* to save *him* ² from those that condemn his soul.

PSALM CX.

^a Matt. 22. 44. Mark 12. 36. Luke 20. 42. Acts 2. 34. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Heb 1. 13. 1 Pet. 3. 22. See Ps. 45. 6, 7. 1 *The kingdom,* 4 *the priesthood,* 5 *the conquest,* 7 *and the passion of Christ.*

A Psalm of David.

1 **T**HE ^a LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,

vv. 2—5. He prays that all men may perceive when God at length interposes for his help, that from first to last it is His work ; He had permitted men to persecute His servant, in order that He might thereby bring about His own purpose (Acts iv. 28.).

28, 29. "Let them curse." Rather, "Though they curse, yet Thou blessest ; they stood up and were ashamed ; but Thy servant rejoiceth ; mine adversaries clothe themselves with shame ; they cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle."

31. This verse gives the ground of his thanksgiving, viz. because the Lord stands at the right hand of the poor to defend him. The contrast between this verse and ver. 6 has been well pointed out : "The adversary stands at the right hand of the persecutor, accusing him ; at the right hand of the persecuted stands God, protecting him. He who delivered him to human judges is condemned ; he who was delivered up is ' taken from oppression and from judgment ' (Isa. liii. 8.) by the Judge of judges, in order that, as we hear in the second Psalm, "he may sit at the right hand of the heavenly King."

The history of the lives of God's servants is often a history of suffering, persecution, and sorrow. It may be their comfort however to remember that though their enemies oppress and revile them, God is secretly blessing them, and will one day make their sufferings issue in victory and joy. Their enemies will be overthrown,—not by a merely accidental change of fortune, but by God's deliberate purpose and work, for it is His will that His people should through much tribulation enter into His kingdom.

PSALM CX.

David's Lord at the right hand of God, King and Priest
for ever.

This Psalm is repeatedly quoted in the New Testament. Not only does our Lord Himself refer to the first verse as proving that He, the

PSALMS, CX.

until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion :

Christ, Who was born of David's family according to the flesh, was more than man, but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews argues from the same verse, that Christ, being associated with God in His dominion, must be greater than the Angels. St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (ii. 34, 35.) quotes it in proof of Christ's Ascension and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 25.) of His mediatorial kingdom lasting until all His enemies shall have been subdued. The Epistle to the Hebrews also grounds on the fourth verse the Priesthood of Christ as involving the abolition of the Levitical Priesthood (Heb. v. 6 ; vii. 17, 21.). Thus the New Testament assumes that David in this Psalm speaks not of himself, but of the coming Messiah ; and our Lord's reference to it in His discourse to the Pharisees (St. Matt. xxii. 43—45.), and the argument He founds on it, prove that this interpretation of the Psalm was currently received among the Jews in His time.

1. "The Lord said unto my Lord." The literal rendering is, "The word (or oracle) of Jehovah to my Lord." The word translated "said" occurs frequently in the phrase "Thus saith the Lord;" it is used of the utterance of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 3, 4, 15, 16.), of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.) ; and of Agar (Prov. xxx. 1.) : once only is it used of the voice of the wicked (Ps. xxxvi. 1.). David in spirit hears the Divine voice speaking to One Whom he acknowledges to be his Lord and sovereign, and he feels himself inspired to record what he hears, and to make it the subject of a Psalm.

"Sit Thou at My right hand." To sit on the right hand of an earthly monarch may mean simply to be treated with respect and honour (1 Kings ii. 19.) ; but to sit on the right hand of the great God Himself, and to sit there in order to rule, would seem to imply association with Him in His kingly power. The words were fulfilled when Christ sat down at the right hand of God, from thenceforth expecting until His enemies were made His footstool (Heb. x. 12, 13. See Dan. vii. 13, 14. St. Matt. xxvi. 64.).

"Until I make." Lit. "up to the time when I will make." The meaning which St. Paul puts on this expression (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.), namely, that Christ's mediatorial kingdom will cease when His enemies are subdued, does not seem to be necessarily contained in the words. The word "until" does not, for the most part, exclude the time that lies beyond (see Gen. xxviii. 15. Deut. vii. 24. Ps. cxii. 8.). What St. Paul says therefore is rather of the nature of an explanation than of an inference.

"Thy footstool." See 1 Kings v. 3. Josh. x. 24. The figure, which is that of a conqueror with his feet upon the necks of the vanquished, denotes complete subjection. The history of time ends, not with the annihilation of evil, but with its subjugation.

2. The Psalmist now turns to address the King Himself, Who sits beside Jehovah's throne, and declares how the victory over His enemies shall be achieved, viz. by the help of Jehovah. Jehovah Himself shall wield the rod of His dominion, and shall stretch it forth far and wide, beginning from Zion.

"The rod of Thy strength." "The staff or sceptre of Thy

b Judg. 5. 2.
 c Ps. 96. 9.
 2 Or, *more than the womb of the morning: thou shalt have, &c.*
 d Num. 23. 19.
 e Heb. 5. 6. & 6. 20. & 7. 17, 21. See Zech. 6. 13.

- rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 ^b Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, ^c in the beauties of holiness
² from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.
- 4 ¶ The LORD hath sworn, and ^d will not repent, ^e thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

“authority.” The symbol of Christ’s power is the Cross, “a rod of greater power,” says St. Chrysostom, “than that of Moses, for that divided rivers, this brake in pieces the ungodliness of the world.”

Christ’s kingdom and the preaching of the Gospel began from Jerusalem (Isa. ii. 3.); but no limit is assigned (Zech. ix. 10.).

“Rule Thou,” &c. These words are best understood as the words of Jehovah, addressed to the King; but it is possible that the Psalmist is still speaking. Though at all times surrounded by enemies, Christ’s kingdom holds its ground. “To the very end the Church will be militant” (*Kay*).

3. In the conflict with His enemies, the King’s own people take their part cheerfully.

“Shall be willing.” Lit. “are willingnesses,” free-will offerings, ready for any sacrifices, like those who willingly offered themselves in the war against Jabin (Judg. v. 2, 9.).

“In the day of Thy power.” Lit. “Thy battle-day.”

“In the beauties of holiness.” Probably, clad in holy vestments, as priests, and as becomes the service of One Who is both Priest and King. Comp. Rev. xix. 14, where it is said that the armies which were in heaven followed Him, Whose name is called the Word of God, upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Christ’s people are both priests and warriors. As on the one hand they can only maintain their warfare by priestly self-consecration, so as priests can they only preserve their purity by unintermitted conflict (*Kay*). See on xxix. 2.

There should be a stop after “holiness,” and no stop at “morning.” The literal rendering is, “From the womb of the morning (is) to Thee the dew of Thy youth.”

“Thy youth.” That is, “Thy young men.”

As the first clause represents the people offering themselves willingly in holy attire for the King’s service, so the second sets forth their number, like dew drops descending out of the womb of the morning. The host of young men is likened to the dew, both on account of its freshness and abundance, and on account of the gentle, marvellous manner of its appearance (see 2 Sam. xvii. 12. Micah v. 7.).

4. Here is another Divine word which the Psalmist has heard; He Who shares Jehovah’s throne is also a Priest, a Priest for ever, not according to the Levitical law, but after the order of Melchizedek, both King and Priest. The importance of this announcement is shewn by the solemnity with which it is made. It is confirmed by the oath of God. This is one of the particulars noticed by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews as distinguishing Christ’s priesthood from that of Aaron (Heb. vii. 21.).

“After the order of Melchizedek.” Under the Jewish dispensation

PSALMS, CX.

- 5 The Lord ^fat thy right hand
shall strike through kings ^gin the day of his
wrath. f Ps. 16. 8.
g Ps. 2. 5, 12.
Rom. 2. 5.
Rev. 11. 18.
- 6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill
the places with the dead bodies ; h Ps. 68. 21.
Hab. 3. 13.
- ^h he shall wound the heads over ²many countries. 2 Or, great.
- 7 ⁱ He shall drink of the brook in the way : i Judg. 7. 5, 6.
- ^k therefore shall he lift up the head. k Isai. 53. 12.

the offices of priest and king were distinct, but the great Messiah; of Whom David speaks, was to be both King and Priest, "a Priest upon his throne," as Zechariah (vi. 13.) says; and He was to be a Priest for ever (Heb. vii. 24, 28.), a Priest not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles.

5. "The Lord;" *Adonai*. It is difficult to determine whether this means Jehovah or King Messiah. If it is Jehovah, we must understand the verse as addressed to the Messiah, and declaring by a change of figure that Jehovah will come down to help Him in the conflict, standing at His right hand, and smiting down His enemies. In that case, in the next two verses, the Psalmist contemplates the scene, and describes Messiah's work. If, on the other hand, the Lord means the Messiah, Who in the first verse is spoken of as sitting at the right hand of Jehovah, there is no change of subject to the end of the Psalm; the last three verses are addressed by the Psalmist to Jehovah.

The reference would seem to be to the end of the mediatorial dispensation, the day of the Lord's wrath, though some of the Fathers apply it to the conflict of Christ's kingdom with the world.

The word rendered "The Lord," i. e. *Adonai*, is never used except as a Divine name. In St. John xii. 41, St. John explains the *Adonai* of Isa. vi. 1 to be Christ.

"Shall strike." The verb is in the past tense. Though the victory is yet future, the Psalmist sees it accomplished (see Ps. ii. 12. Rev. vi. 15; xix. 18.).

6. The triumphs of the Messiah are described under the figure of an earthly battle-field.

"He shall judge among the heathen." That is, He shall completely destroy them (1 Sam. ii. 10.), and the result is seen in the battle-field covered with the slain, and in the subjugation of the various leaders who opposed Him one after the other.

"He shall fill the places with the dead bodies." Rather, "it," i. e. the field of battle, or the land, "is full of corpses."

"The heads." Lit. "head," the chief power of the whole confederacy; spiritually, it may mean Satan, once the prince of this world.

7. In this verse the Psalmist sees the Conqueror in pursuit, pausing for a moment to refresh himself by the wayside mountain torrent, but not fainting, like Samson (Judges xv. 18.), nor giving himself time for repose, until he triumphs gloriously. "The brook" will mean the stream of heavenly grace, which sustained Christ in His earthly career, and which is the only support of His servants. "Whatever of truth and righteousness man has, is from that fountain, after which we in this desert ought to thirst, in order that, bedewed as it were with a few drops from it, we may not faint in the way."

This Psalm is fitly entitled in the Syriac Version "A prophecy of

PSALMS, CXI.

PSALM CXI.

1 *The psalmist by his example inciteth others to praise God for his glorious, 5 and gracious works. 10 The fear of God breedeth true wisdom.*

² Heb.
Hallelujah.
^a Ps. 35. 18.
& 89. 5.
& 107. 32.
& 109. 30.
& 143. 1.

1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.
^a I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

^b Job 38. & 33,
& 40. & 41.
Ps. 92. 5.
& 139. 14.
Rev. 15. 3.
^c Ps. 143. 5.

2 ^b The works of the LORD *are* great,
^c sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

“Christ’s victory over His enemies.” In the conflict in which He is engaged His people gladly go forth with Him, numerous as the drops of morning dew, and arrayed in holy garments, like priests, and as befits the followers of One Who is Priest as well as King. Far and wide He extends His conquests, until every foe is completely subdued. Happy they who willingly join themselves to Him in the day of battle; they shall not be forgotten, when the victory is achieved. It is fitting that when we give thanks for Christ’s nativity on Christmas Day we should be reminded by the appointed use of this Psalm of His subsequent exaltation and triumph; just as the Angel Gabriel, when announcing Christ’s birth to the Virgin Mary, passed over His earthly life and sufferings, and dwelt only upon His eternal Kingship (St. Luke i. 31—33.).

PSALM CXI.

Song in praise of God and His doings.

This and the following Psalm evidently form a pair; the one being a song in praise of God, the other of those who fear Him, the reflection of His greatness, mercy and righteousness being seen in His servants. Both Psalms are alphabetical, the several clauses beginning with the several letters of the alphabet in order. Each clause consists for the most part of three words in the original. The first eight verses of both Psalms consist of two clauses each, the two last of three clauses, making in all twenty-two clauses, the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

1. “Praise ye the Lord.” Hallelujah—a liturgical title, rather than an integral part of the Psalm.

“I will praise the Lord.” What the Psalmist here proposes to himself, he carries out in the rest of the Psalm.

“In the assembly of the upright.” The word translated “assembly” is used for “secret converse” in Ps. xxv. 14; so that the Prayer Book probably gives the true sense of the passage, when it renders “secretly among the faithful and in the congregation.”

“In secret with the faithful choir,

“And ’mid the assembly of the just” (*Kelle*).

2. “Sought out.” That is, “continually searched into by those who find pleasure in them,” the objects of their careful study. Or the clause may be rendered “searched into, for all their delights.”

3. Or, “full of grandeur and majesty is His working.”

PSALMS, CXI.

- 3 His work *is* ^d honourable and glorious :
and his righteousness endureth for ever. d Ps. 145. 4,
5, 10.
- 4 He hath made his wonderful works to be re-
membered :
^e the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion. e Ps. 86. 5.
& 103. 8.
- 5 He hath given ^f meat unto them that fear him :
he will ever be mindful of his covenant. f Heb. *prey*.
Matt. 6. 26,
33.
- 6 He hath shewed his people the power of his
works,
that he may give them the heritage of the
heathen. g Rev. 15. 3.
h Ps. 19. 7.
- 7 The works of his hands *are* ^g verity and judgment ;
^h all his commandments *are* sure. i Isai. 40. 8.
Matt. 5. 18.
- 8 ⁱ They ³ stand fast for ever and ever,
and are ^k done in truth and uprightness. j Heb. *are
established*.
k Ps. 19. 9.
Rev. 15. 3.
- 9 ^l He sent redemption unto his people :
he hath commanded his covenant for ever :
^m holy and reverend *is* his name. l Matt. 1. 21.
Luke 1. 68.
m Luke 1. 49.
- 10 ⁿ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of
wisdom : n Deut. 4. 6.
Job 28. 28.
Prov. 1. 7.
& 9. 10.
Eccles. 12. 13.

“His righteousness endureth for ever.” The same is said of the godly man in the next Psalm (vv. 3, 9).

4. Lit. “He hath appointed a memorial for His wonderful works :” with reference, apparently, to the Passover, which is especially said to be “for a memorial” (Exod. xii. 14 ; xiii. 9.).

5. “Meat.” In allusion, probably, to the manna provided for the people in the wilderness. The margin gives “prey ;” but the word is sometimes used simply for “food” (see Prov. xxxi. 15. Mal. iii. 10. Comp. also Prov. xxx. 8, where the verb is used for “feed”). The Fathers understood this verse of the Eucharist, which is the special “memorial” of God’s great work ; and hence this Psalm has been not uncommonly accounted a Eucharistical Psalm.

6. “That He may give.” Rather, “giving,” “by giving.” By settling His people in the possessions of the heathen inhabitants of Canaan, God made known to them the power of His works. The conquest of Canaan was a type and pledge of the acquisition of the heritage of the heathen by the Church (comp. Ps. ii. 8.).

7, 8. God’s truth and faithfulness in bringing His people into the land of promise were a shadow of His strict fulfilment of His purpose of mercy to His Church.

9. The deliverance from Egypt and the ratification of the covenant on Mount Sinai shadowed forth the greater redemption which He has wrought for His people in Christ, and the new covenant which He has made for them under the Gospel. His holiness and awfulness are a guarantee of the inviolability of His covenant.

10. God being thus great and holy and true, man’s only wisdom is to fear and reverence Him.

“The beginning of wisdom.” Rather, “the chief point in” (see

PSALMS, CXII.

² Or, *good success*, Prov. 3. 4.
³ Heb. *that do them*.

² a good understanding have all they ³ that do
his commandments :
 his praise endureth for ever.

PSALM CXII.

1 *Godliness hath the promises of this life, 4 and of the life to come.*
 10 *The prosperity of the godly shall be an eyesore to the wicked.*

² Heb. *Hallelujah.*
^a Ps. 128. 1.
^b Ps. 119. 16, 35, 47, 70, 143.
^c Ps. 25. 13. & 37. 26. & 102. 28.

1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.
^a Blessed is the man *that* feareth the LORD,
that ^b delighteth greatly in his commandments.
 2 ^c His seed shall be mighty upon earth :
 the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Prov. i. 7, marg.). In Prov. iv. 7, the word is rendered "the principal thing."

"The fear of God is wisdom's crown" (*Keble*).

"A good understanding," i. e. "understanding of, insight into, what is good;" sound discretion, discernment (Prov. xiii. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 22.).

"That do His commandments." Lit. "that do them," which must mean the commandments in ver. 7.

"His praise endureth for ever." This may mean, the praise of the Lord; the whole Psalm being an exhortation to His praise; but it may also mean the praise of the man who fears and obeys God; in which case this Psalm will end where the next begins.

The primary purpose of the Psalm is to praise God for His wonder-working power in delivering His people from the bondage of Egypt, feeding them with food convenient for them in the wilderness, and at length planting them firmly in the heritage of the heathen. But we may well apply the words, as befits the Easter use of them, to the greater deliverance wrought for us by Christ, to the spiritual food which He gives for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls in their pilgrimage through the world, and to the glorious inheritance prepared for us in heaven. He Who was so faithful to His covenant with His ancient people will never forget His promises to His Church. What have we to do then, but to reverence Him for His holiness and power, and to praise Him for His mercy and grace?

PSALM CXII.

Song in praise of the righteous man and his works.

This Psalm, which in its formal arrangement corresponds exactly with the preceding, is a kind of comment on its last verse. Having declared that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the Psalmist sets forth the blessedness of the man that fears God.

1. As in Ps. cxi., the first words give the key-note to the whole Psalm, the subject of which is the excellence of godliness and its reward.

"That delighteth greatly in His commandments." A further description of the godly man; he not only fears to disobey God, but he loves to obey; he not only ceases to do evil, but learns to do well.

2. This was abundantly fulfilled in Abraham, whose seed prospered mightily for his sake. At all times a special blessing rests on the children of the righteous.

PSALMS, CXII.

- 3 ^d Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house : ^d Matt. 6. 33.
 and his righteousness endureth for ever.
- 4 ^e Unto the upright there ariseth light in the ^e Job 11. 17.
Ps. 97. 11.
 darkness :
he is gracious, and full of compassion, and
 righteous.
- 5 ^f A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth : ^f Ps. 37. 26.
Luke 6. 35.
 he will guide his affairs ^g with ² discretion. ^g Eph. 5. 15.
Col. 4. 5.
- 6 Surely ^h he shall not be moved for ever : ² Heb.
judgment.
ⁱ the righteous shall be in everlasting remem- ^h Ps. 15. 5.
ⁱ Prov. 10. 7.
 brance.

3. "Wealth," &c. So wisdom brings with her riches and honour (Prov. iii. 16; viii. 18. See 1 Kings iii. 11—13.).

"His righteousness endureth for ever." Whatever righteousness a man has is not only a copy of the Divine, but it is God's gift (Ps. xxiv. 5.); and He will not withhold that gift from those who look to Him for it. The righteousness of the godly man therefore is steadfast and imperishable, like God's (Ps. cxi. 3.). But it has been suggested that "righteousness" may mean here and in Ps. cxi. 3, as in later Heb., "beneficence." See Dan. iv. 27, where the Greek Version has "alms-giving;" and comp. St. Paul's reference to ver. 9 in 2 Cor. ix. 9.

4. The godly are not exempt from trouble, but in their darkest hours light will arise, as when the glad tidings of the Resurrection broke in upon the sad and despairing hearts of the Apostles (comp. Isa. lviii. 10. Ps. xcvii. 11.).

"Gracious, and full of compassion." These words are elsewhere always applied to God (Ps. cxi. 4. Exod. xxxiv. 6. Ps. cxlv. 8; cxvi. 5.). And inasmuch as they are in the singular number, while "the upright" in the preceding clause is plural, it has been thought that they do not here apply to the upright man, but to God. It is He Who, being gracious and full of compassion and righteous, arises as a light to the upright; He is the Sun of righteousness, dispensing grace and tender mercies from His wings (Mal. iv. 2. See Isa. lx. 1, 2.). But, considering the relation of this Psalm to the preceding, and the way in which the attributes of God are transferred to His servants, it is not unlikely that the words belong to him who is the subject of the Psalm, namely, the man that feareth the Lord; and the meaning is, that he is "gracious, and full of compassion and righteous," just as, and because, God Himself is so (St. Matt. v. 45, 48. St. Luke vi. 36.).

5. This verse should be rendered, "Happy the man (or, Well is it with the man), that," &c. (Isa. iii. 10. Jer. xlv. 17.). The word translated "sheweth favour" is of the same root as "full of compassion" in ver. 4. The Psalmist takes up the character described in the preceding verse, and declares it blessed (Prov. xiv. 21.).

"He will guide." This is one particular of his blessedness, which is enlarged on in the following verses; he will conduct and carry through successfully his affairs in the judgment; i. e. when brought into judgment.

6. "Surely." Rather, "for." He stands fast and unshaken during life; and after death his name is held in perpetual honour.

PSALMS, CXIII.

- ^k Prov. 1. 33. 7 ^k He shall not be afraid of evil tidings :
^l Ps. 57. 7. his ^l heart is fixed, ^m trusting in the LORD.
^m Ps. 64. 10. 8 His heart *is* established, ⁿ he shall not be afraid,
ⁿ Prov. 1. 33. until he ^o see *his desire* upon his enemies.
^o Ps. 59. 10. 9 ^p He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ;
 & 118. 7. ^q his righteousness endureth for ever ;
^p 2 Cor. 9. 9. ^r his horn shall be exalted with honour.
^q Deut. 24. 13. 10 ^s The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved ;
 ver. 3. ^t he shall gnash with his teeth, and ^u melt away :
^r Ps. 75. 10. ^x the desire of the wicked shall perish.

PSALM CXIII.

1 *An exhortation to praise God for his excellency, 6 for his mercy.*

- ² Heb. 1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.
Hallelujah. ^a Praise, O ye servants of the LORD,
^a Ps. 135. 1.

7. His conscience being at rest he is not disconcerted by any evil tidings ; casting all his care upon the Lord, he has no fear (Isa. xxvi. 3.).

8. "Until he see his desire upon his enemies." Lit. "until he look upon his enemies," i. e. in security and in triumph (see Ps. xci. 8 ; xcii. 11 ; liv. 7.).

9. "Dispersed." We see from Prov. xi. 24, where the same word occurs, that plentiful giving is meant. St. Paul quotes this verse as an encouragement to Christian beneficence, as shewing that God both can and will supply to the bountiful the means of performing acts of kindness ; their righteousness and its fruits shall abound (2 Cor. ix. 9.).

10. The honour which is shed over the righteous fills the wicked with envy and impotent rage (comp. Mic. vii. 10.).

The fear of God consists not merely in shrinking from displeasing Him, but in earnest desire to fulfil His perfect will. Where this fear holds sway, there God's richest blessing rests, both on the man himself and his family ; "they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (Isa. lxxv. 23.). If worldly prosperity be withheld, still the righteousness which God has implanted in him will flourish, and bear fruit for ever,—in good works here, in the reward of those works hereafter. He will have his times of darkness ; but light will be sure to break in upon him ; for the fear of the Lord, like the wisdom, of which it is the chief part, is gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits. Well is it with such a man ! while on the one hand he maintains his ground against his enemies and is free from fear, his heart being stayed upon God, on the other he is compassionate and bountiful towards his fellows ; and in consequence he will find himself in the end acknowledged and honoured by God. The career of the ungodly on the contrary is full of vexation and disappointment at the time, and will assuredly end in ruin.

PSALM CXIII.

God's greatness and condescension.

The six Psalms (cxiii.—cxviii.) were called by the Jews the "Hallel," and were sung at the three great feasts, at the Feast of Dedication,

PSALMS, CXIII.

- praise the name of the LORD.
- 2 ^b Blessed be the name of the LORD b Dan. 2. 20.
from this time forth and for evermore.
- 3 ^c From the rising of the sun unto the going down c Isai. 59. 19.
Mal. 1. 11.
of the same
the LORD'S name *is* to be praised.
- 4 The LORD *is* ^d high above all nations,
and ^e his glory above the heavens. d Ps. 97. 9.
& 99. 2.
e Ps. 8. 1.
- 5 ^f Who *is* like unto the LORD our God,
who ² dwelleth on high, f Ps. 89. 6.
- 6 ^g who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that*
are in heaven, and in the earth! 2 Heb.
exalteleth
himself to
dwell.
g Ps. 11. 4.
& 138. 6.
Isai. 57. 15.
- 7 ^h He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill ; h 1 Sam. 2. 8.
Ps. 107. 41.

and at the new moons. At the Passover the two first Psalms (cxiii. and cxiv.) were sung in the early part of the meal, the remainder (cxv.—cxviii.) after the filling of the fourth cup of wine. These last are supposed to have been the hymn sung by Christ and His Apostles after the last supper, before they went out to Gethsemane (St. Matt. xxvi. 30. St. Mark xiv. 26.). It is doubtless on account of the use of this and the following Psalm at the Passover, that they are appointed in our Prayer Book for Easter Day.

1. The first three verses are a call to the true Israel to praise God at all times and in all places.

“O ye servants of the Lord.” Not the Levites only, but all His faithful people (Ps. lxi. 36 ; xxxiv. 22 ; cxxxv. 1. Neh. i. 10.).

“The name of the Lord.” As the manifestation of His true nature. We may notice the threefold call to praise God's Name (comp. Ps. cxvi. 4, 13, 17 ; cxviii. 10—12. Mal. i. 11.).

3. The praise of God's Name shall finally fill all time and all space (see marg. reff.).

4—6. God is worthy to be praised, for His greatness and His condescension.

4. “Above all nations.” The nations of the earth are many, but the Lord is above them all ; the heavens are glorious, but the Lord's glory is exalted above them.

5. “Who dwelleth on high.” Lit. “Who maketh high to sit ;” that is, sits enthroned on high ; answering to the next verse, “Who maketh low to see,” i. e. directs His gaze deep downwards to the heavens and earth ; even heaven is low down to Him (see marg. reff.). There is nothing in the whole realm of His creatures so low that He does not notice ; nay, it is the poor and lowly whom He expressly regards, as is set forth in the remaining verses.

7, 8. These verses are taken, almost word for word, from the song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 8.) ; they are recalled, though not quoted, by the Blessed Virgin (St. Luke i. 52.).

7. “The dust” is an emblem of low estate (1 Kings xvi. 2.) ; just as “the dunghill” is of deep distress (Lam. iv. 5.). The Greek Version makes Job to have sat on a dung-heap (Job ii. 8.).

PSALMS, CXIV.

- ⁱ Job 36. 7. 8 that he may ⁱ set *him* with princes,
^k 1 Sam. 2. 5. *even* with the princes of his people.
Ps. 68. 6.
Isai. 54. 1. 9 ^k He maketh the barren woman ² to keep house,
Gal. 4. 27. *and to be* a joyful mother of children.
² Heb. Praise ye the LORD.
to dwell in
an house.

PSALM CXIV.

An exhortation, by the example of the dumb creatures, to fear God in his church.

- ^a Ex. 13. 3. 1 **W**HEN ^a Israel went out of Egypt,
^b Ps. 81. 5. the house of Jacob ^b from a people of strange
language ;

8. "With princes." Not the princes of the world, but of God's own chosen people. The reference is, through David (Ps. lxxviii. 70—72.), to Him of Whose humiliation and exaltation St. Paul speaks (Phil. ii. 7—10.).

9. Lit. "Who maketh her who is barren of (in) the house to dwell," that is, to be settled. By giving her children He makes her thoroughly at home in the house. A wife without children would lose her position.

"A joyful mother of children." Lit. "of the children." The Psalmist brings the matter so vividly before him, that he points as it were with his finger to the children with which God blesses her. The allusion to Hannah is obvious (see 1 Sam. ii. 5.). For the prophetic meaning, see Isa. liv. 1. Gal. iv. 27.

If, as is probable, the occasion of this Psalm was the restoration from captivity, we may picture to ourselves the joy with which the redeemed of the Lord acknowledged His tender condescension in pitying them in their misery and raising them once more to their true dignity as His own chosen people, and giving them hopes of further increase. And their hopes were fulfilled, though in a way beyond their thoughts; the Church of Mount Zion became the Church of all the ends of the world; and she who was spiritually barren was the mother of a numerous progeny (Isa. liv. 1—6; xlix. 20, 21; lx. 4, 22.).

PSALM CXIV.

The convulsions of nature before Him Who delivered Israel out of Egypt.

This glowing picture of the deliverance from Egypt harmonizes well with the thoughts and feelings of the newly-restored captives from Babylon. He Who caused the Red Sea and the Jordan to open a pathway for His people, the granite cliffs of Sinai to be shaken to their base, and the bare rock to send forth copious streams, may well be trusted to work wonders for the same people in this second great deliverance. And we Christians may sing the Psalm, especially at Easter time, as setting forth in type and figure Christ's victory over sin and death, and the redemption which He has thereby achieved for us.

1. They went down to Egypt as the house of Jacob, members of a single family; they came forth as God's special people, consecrated to His service.

PSALMS, CXIV.

- 2 ^c Judah was his sanctuary,—*and* Israel his dominion. e Ex. 6. 7.
& 19. 6.
& 25. 8.
& 29. 45, 46.
Deut. 27. 9.
- 3 ^d The sea saw *it*, and fled :
^e Jordan was driven back. d Ex. 14. 21.
Ps. 77. 16.
- 4 ^f The mountains skipped like rams,
and the little hills like lambs. e Josh. 3. 13,
16.
f Ps. 29. 6.
& 68. 16.
Hab. 3. 6.
- 5 ^g What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?
Thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back? g Hab. 3. 8.
- 6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams ;
and ye little hills, like lambs ?
- 7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the
Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob ;

“A people of strange language.” That is, a people who did not speak the language of God’s chosen Israel. The Greek and Latin Versions render “barbarous,” “foreign” (Gen. xlii. 23. Ps. lxxxi. 5.).

2. “Was.” Rather, “became.”

“His.” The Name of God is not mentioned (comp. Ps. lxxxvii. 1.), either because this Psalm is meant to be taken in close connection with the preceding, where the Name of Jehovah is repeated several times with great emphasis; or rather, in order to heighten the effect of its introduction in ver. 7.

Judah became His sanctuary, because there was Jerusalem, the chosen site of the temple; but all the tribes were parts of His kingdom. Or, Judah and Israel may be put for the whole people. (Comp. Exod. xv. 17, where the term “sanctuary” is applied to Palestine; see also Ps. lxxviii. 54. Exod. xix. 6.)

3. Rather, “the sea saw and fled” (Ps. xcvii. 4.).

“Fled,” i. e. before the strong wind by which the waters were parted (Exod. xiv. 21.).

“Was driven back.” Rather, “turned backwards.” So it would appear to the Israelites. They did not see the waters of Jordan; to the north they were held back and accumulated far away by the city of Adam, while to the south they flowed on rapidly to the Dead Sea (Josh. iii. 16.).

The dividing the Red Sea was the beginning, as the dividing of the Jordan was the close of the journey through the wilderness to Canaan. Between these great wonders came the giving of the Law with its attendant miracles.

4. Exod. xix. 18, “The whole mountain quaked greatly.” Comp. also Hab. iii. 10, “The mountains saw Thee, and they trembled” (Ps. xxix. 6.).

7. The answer to the apostrophe in vv. 5, 6. It is the Lord, the Sovereign Ruler, the God of Jacob, Who alone can mightily stir the seas and the mountains. At His presence the earth has trembled; let it tremble still.

“Tremble,” i. e. as in birth-pangs (Ps. xxix. 9; lxxvii. 16. Mic. iv. 10.). “The convulsions of nature which accompanied the Exodus “were as the birth-throes of the Israelite people” (Kay).

PSALMS, CXV.

^h Ex. 17. 6.
Num. 20. 11.
Ps. 107. 35.

8 ^h which turned the rock *into* a standing water,
the flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM CXV.

1 *Because God is truly glorious, 4 and idols are vanity, 9 he exhorteth to confidence in God. 12 God is to be blessed for his blessings.*

^a See Is. 48. 11.
Ezek. 36. 32.

1 **N**OT ^a unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
but unto thy name give glory,
for thy merey, *and* for thy truth's sake.

^b Ps. 42. 3, 10.
& 79. 10.
Joel 2. 17.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say,
^b Where *is* now their God ?

8. "The rock." That is, the rock of Horeb (Exod. xvii. 6.).

"The flint," i. e. the flinty rocks of Kadesh (Deut. viii. 15. Num. xx. 11.). These two miracles of the giving of water are chosen as the most conspicuous "proofs of unlimited omnipotence and of the grace "which converts death into life."

The Psalm reminds us how Christians, redeemed by the death and Resurrection of Christ, are meant to be an holy nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. What is it but the power of Jesus risen that quickens men to a new life in the waters of Baptism, subdues and changes their stubborn hearts, and supplies them, even in the barren wilderness, with ever-present streams of grace ?

PSALM CXV.

The greatness of the true God, as contrasted with the impotence of idols, a reason why His people should trust in Him.

A liturgical Psalm, composed probably for the Temple-service after the return. The scorn with which idol-worship is treated seems to shew that it was written after the great lesson of the captivity had been learnt. It is a prayer to God to help His people, and vindicate His honour from the taunts of heathen adversaries. He is the One true and living God ; therefore His people should trust in Him, and He will bless them.

In the Greek, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic Versions, and in some Hebrew MSS., this Psalm is joined to the preceding ; and to make up the number, Ps. cxvi. is divided into two. But it is difficult to believe that Ps. cxiv. is not complete in itself.

1. This is not an ascription of praise, but a prayer ; it is as if he said, "Glorify, O Lord, not us, not us, but Thy Name, by our deliverance." "Not unto us" is repeated, in order to mark a deep sense of unworthiness. The Psalmist rests his plea, not on any worthiness in those for whom he prays, but solely on God's mercy and faithfulness. They have nothing to depend on except God's free and gracious purpose towards them, and the faithfulness with which He adheres to that purpose.

2. This is ever the reproach made against God's people, when He does not at once interpose in their behalf. Thus Moses pleaded (Exod. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 13, 14.) ; the Psalmist says that this reproach was

PSALMS, CXV.

- 3° *c* But our God *is* in the heavens :
 he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. *c* 1 Chr. 16. 26.
 Ps. 135. 6.
 Dan. 4. 35.
- 4 ¶ *d* Their idols *are* silver and gold,—the work
 of men's hands. *d* Deut. 4. 28.
 Ps. 135. 15,
 16, 17.
 Jer. 10. 3, &c.
- 5 They have mouths, but they speak not :
 eyes have they, but they see not :
- 6 they have ears, but they hear not :
 noses have they, but they smell not :
- 7 they have hands, but they handle not :
 feet have they, but they walk not :
 neither speak they through their throat.
- 8° They that make them are like unto them ;
so is every one that trusteth in them. *e* Ps. 135. 18.
 Is. 44. 9, 10, 11.
 Jonah 2. 8.
 Hab. 2. 18, 19.
- 9 ¶ *f* O Israel, trust thou in the LORD :
he is their help and their shield. *f* See Ps. 118.
 2, 3, 4.
 & 135. 19, 20.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD :
 he *is* their help and their shield.
- 11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD :
 he *is* their help and their shield. *g* Ps. 33. 20.
 Prov. 30. 5.

as a sword in his bones (Ps. xlii. 3, 10. See also Ps. lxxix. 10. Joel ii. 17. Micah vii. 10.).

3. "But our God." The Psalmist's triumphant answer to the scornful question of the heathen. However they may taunt, Israel's God is in heaven, raised far above the earth, and rules over all ; whatsoever He wills is done (Ps. cxxxv. 6.).

4. The carved gods of the heathen on the other hand are but dead images, devoid even of those senses the outward organs of which they display (see marg. reff.). The Psalmist probably knew from his own experience that the thoughts of the idol-worshippers rested with the idol itself,—that as a matter of fact they did not regard it as a symbol. Therefore, like the later prophets generally, he scorned their worship as the extreme of folly and stupidity ; and he declares that they shall become as blind and deaf and dumb as the idols which they worship.

8. So Isa. xlv. 9, "They that make a graven image are all of them "vanity ;" that is, as utter emptiness as the image itself.

9. There is manifestly a change here in the musical and liturgical use of the Psalm. It is thought that while the first eight verses were rendered by the whole choir, the first clause of this and of the two following verses was sung as a solo by one of the Levites, and the second clause, "He is their help and their shield," chanted as a refrain by the chorus. The threefold division into "Israel," "the house of Aaron," and those "who fear the Lord," is the same as in Ps. cxviii. 2—4. In Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20, the house of Levi is added.

11. "Ye that fear the Lord" may mean the proselytes from the heathen, such as are mentioned in Ezra vi. 21, as those who had separated themselves unto the Israelites from the filthiness of the heathen of

PSALMS, CXV.

- 12 ¶ The LORD hath been mindful of us : he will
 bless us ;
 he will bless the house of Israel ;
 he will bless the house of Aaron.
- ^b Ps. 128. 1, 4. 13 ^h He will bless them that fear the LORD,
² Heb. *with*. both small ² and great.
- 14 The LORD shall increase you more and more,
 you and your children.
- ⁱ Gen. 14. 19. 15 Ye *are* ⁱ blessed of the LORD
^k Gen. 1. 1. ^k which made heaven and earth.
 Ps. 96. 5.
- 16 ¶ The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's :
 but the earth hath he given to the children of
 men.

the land (comp. Acts xiii. 16, 26.) ; or it may be taken more generally for all devout persons throughout the world (comp. Acts x. 34.).

12. The same voice which bade Israel trust in the Lord now proclaims, that as God had been mindful of them in time past, so will He be sure to bless them now. The blessing is repeated three times, corresponding to the threefold summons in vv. 9—11.

14. In spite of the oppression of the people, God will multiply them ; but perhaps the verse should be rendered as a prayer, "May the Lord "increase you!" (comp. Deut. i. 11. 1 Chron xxi. 3.)

15. "Ye are blessed." Rather, "Blessed be ye," according to the blessing of Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 19.). The title, "Maker of heaven "and earth," is given to the Lord with reference to the worthless idols mentioned above. It has been suggested (*Kay*) that it would be familiar to the people from the passage which Jeremiah inscribed upon his roll in Chaldec, lest any of the exiles should not be able to understand Hebrew: "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made "the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, "and from under these heavens" (Jer. x. 11. See Neh. ix. 6.).

16. Here the voice of the congregation comes in again. The priest or Levite had invoked on them the blessing of the Lord Who had made heaven and earth ; the congregation takes up his words. It is as if they said, Heaven and earth are the Lord's ; the heavens are His dwelling-place ; the earth He has assigned to the children of men, and it is assigned to them in order that they may praise Him thereon ; the dead cannot praise Him, but we, His earthly servants, both can and will.

If we Christians are not in danger of falling away into the worship of the false gods of the heathen, we still have need to remind ourselves that we may set up idols in our hearts, which are as displeasing to God, and as utterly worthless in themselves, as the graven images of the heathen. The Psalm calls us away from all such vanities to trust in the One true God, Whose free grace has chosen us to be His, and Who will ever be faithful to His choice. If we trust in Him He will bless us, and enable us to praise Him on earth ; and our earthly praises shall give place hereafter to an everlasting Hallelujah.

PSALMS, CXVI.

- 17 ¹The dead praise not the LORD,
neither any that go down into silence.
- 18 ^m But we will bless the LORD
from this time forth and for evermore.
Praise the LORD.

¹ Ps. 6. 5. &
88. 10, 11, 12.
Isai. 38. 18.

^m Ps. 113. 2.
Dan. 2. 20.

PSALM CXVI.

¹ *The psalmist professeth his love and duty to God for his deliverance.*
¹² *He studieth to be thankful.*

- 1 **I** ^a LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard
my voice *and* my supplications. ^a Ps. 18. 1.
- 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
therefore will I call upon *him* ² as long as I live. ² Heb. *in my days.*
- 3 ¶ ^b The sorrows of death compassed me,
and the pains of hell ³ gat hold upon me :
I found trouble and sorrow. ^b Ps. 18. 4,5,6.
³ Heb. *found me.*
- 4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD ;
O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

PSALM CXVI.

A thanksgiving on recovery from dangerous sickness.

A Jewish tradition ascribes this Psalm to Hezekiah, and the resemblance of its language to Isaiah's account of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery² is so marked, that it is very probable that the writer of the Psalm was familiar with the prophet's narrative. At the same time the peculiar grammatical forms which occur throughout the Psalm are supposed to require a later date; and it is therefore for the most part assigned to the time after the restoration.

It is the thanksgiving of one who has been raised up from dangerous sickness. He first recounts his deliverance, and then in the language of tender affection proclaims his gratitude, and binds himself to offer publicly the sacrifice of praise. Many expressions and phrases seem to be borrowed from earlier Psalms, shewing how familiar and precious those Psalms were to the hearts of the devout.

1. "I love the Lord, because He hath heard." Rather, "I love, or have loved (absolutely, without any expressed object; so 'I will' 'call' in ver. 2.); I am full of love, because the Lord hears my voice "and my supplications." There is no need for the Psalmist to name the object of his love. Compare the beginning of Ps. xviii., which has many points of resemblance with this Psalm: "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength."

2. "As long as I live." Heb., as in margin, "in my days" (comp. Isa. xxxix. 8.).

3. "The sorrows." Lit. "the cords" (Ps. xviii. 4.).

"The pains." The word only occurs in Ps. cxviii. 5. Lam. i. 3. In the latter passage it is translated "straits," which will suit all places. The Psalmist implies that the grave was so near him, that he was as one walking on a narrow path along the edge of a precipice.

PSALMS, CXVI.

- ^c Ps. 103. 8. 5 ^o Gracious *is* the LORD, and ^d righteous ;
^d Ezra 9. 15. yea, our God *is* merciful.
^e Neh. 9. 8. 6 ⁱ The LORD preserveth the simple :
^f Ps. 119. 137. & 145. 17. I was brought low, and he helped me.
^g Jer. 6. 16. 7 Return unto thy ^o rest, O my soul ;
^h Matt. 11. 29. for ^f the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
ⁱ Ps. 13. 6. 8 ^s For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
^j & 119. 17. mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.
^k Ps. 56. 13. 9 I will walk before the LORD—^h in the land of
the living.
^l 2 Cor. 4. 13. 10 ⁱ I believed, therefore have I spoken :
I was greatly afflicted :
^m Ps. 31. 22. 11 ^k I said in my haste,—^l All men *are* liars.
ⁿ Rom. 3. 4. 12 ¶ What shall I render unto the LORD
for all his benefits toward me ?
13 I will take the cup of salvation,

5. Instead of repeating that God had heard his prayer, he dwells with thankfulness on those attributes of God of which he had had special and comfortable experience (see Ps. ciii. 8 ; cxi. 4 ; cxii. 4. Exod. xxxiv. 6.).

6. "The simple." The word is often used of the foolish and inconsiderate ; here it means those who are free from guile and worldly wisdom, and unable to help themselves (Ps. xix. 7. St. Matt. xi. 25.). The Greek version has "babes." The Psalmist himself had experienced His aid at a time of great weakness.

7. "Thy rest." The word is plural, as signifying full, complete rest, such as is to be found only in God.

8, 9. An amplification of Ps. lvi. 13. Being delivered from death, he will walk forth freely and fearlessly in the land of the living, in close communion with God (Ps. xxvii. 13.).

10. "I believed, therefore have I spoken." The Authorised Version here follows the Greek, which is adopted by St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 13.). Perhaps the more accurate rendering of the Heb. would be, "I believed when (or in that) I thus spake," with reference to the trustful words of ver. 9, which were the result of sheer faith ; or with reference to the words which follow, "when I spoke (saying), I am "greatly afflicted ;" that is, his faith was strong when his affliction was most severe.

11. "I said in my haste." Ps. xxxi. 22. Disappointed of the succours which he looked for from man, he had learned from experience to trust in God.

12. Breaking away abruptly from the thought of his past sorrows and disappointment, he asks how he is to thank God adequately for all His bounty.

13. "I will take (lit. lift up) the cup of salvation." The primary reference is supposed to be to the cup of wine of the Passover (St. Matt. xxvi. 27.), which was raised aloft and drunk in thankful remembrance of the redemption out of Egypt. Hence to take the cup of salvation

PSALMS, CXVI.

- and call upon the name of the LORD.
- 14 ^m I will pay my vows unto the LORD now
in the presence of all his people. m ver. 18.
Ps. 22. 25.
Jonah 2. 9.
- 15 ⁿ Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints. n Ps. 72. 14.
- 16 O LORD, truly ^o I *am* thy servant ;
I *am* thy servant, and ^p the son of thine hand-
maid : o Ps. 119. 125.
& 143. 12.
p Ps. 86. 16.
- thou hast loosed my bonds.

would be a figurative expression for any act of thanksgiving. It is natural and right for us to apply the words to the "cup of blessing" in the Holy Communion, the highest act of praise and thanksgiving among Christians (comp. ver. 17.). The Prayer Book suggests this application, when it recommends that the woman who comes to give thanks after childbirth should, if possible, receive the Communion. Others explain the cup to mean, as frequently, the portion allotted to man; then to take the cup of salvation would mean to receive thankfully the abundant salvation which God has bestowed. "Our best thank-offering to God "is cheerfully to accept His blessings."

"Call upon the Name of the Lord." The usual expression for a solemn and public acknowledgment of God's goodness; it occurs three times in this Psalm (see vv. 4, 17.).

15. "Precious," &c. The meaning seems to be, that the Psalmist knows from his own experience that God so loves and cherishes His saints, that He does not lightly suffer them to be torn away by death. In Ps. lxxii. 14, the expression is, "precious shall their blood be in "His sight." To the Christian, who knows that death is gain to those who die in the Lord, this verse tells not only of the value which He sets on the lives of His servants, in saving them from death, but of the joy with which He welcomes their departure. It is said that Babylas, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 251.), died with these words on his lips.

16. "Truly." This word is translated "I beseech Thee" in ver. 4. It is a cry of supplication, when the prayer itself is unexpressed. It is as if he said, "Hear me; listen to me; be gracious to me." The Psalmist exults in the thought that He is God's servant. The title is of frequent occurrence in the later chapters of Isaiah; it is found several times in Ps. cxix., and it is used by Nehemiah (i. 11.). God had loosed the cords of death, by which he had been as it were tied to the altar, and had thereby bound him to Himself as His servant for ever.

The emphatic mention of the Temple and the congregation shews plainly that literal thankofferings are meant. Raised up from dangerous sickness, the Psalmist, like Hezekiah, looks forward with joy to his return to the sanctuary of God, and to the public acknowledgment of God's mercy which he purposes to offer (Isa. xxxviii. 19, 20.). And well is it, when those who having prayed earnestly for deliverance in times of pain or danger, are found, when their prayer is answered, in the house of God, thankfully acknowledging His goodness. This Psalm will supply them with suitable words of praise. We may however also understand the Psalm as the thanksgiving of the Jewish nation after captivity.

PSALMS, CXVII.

- ^q Lev. 7. 12. 17 I will offer to thee ^athe sacrifice of thanks-
Ps. 50. 14.
& 107. 22. giving,
 and will call upon the name of the LORD.
- ^r ver. 14. 18 ^rI will pay my vows unto the LORD now
 in the presence of all his people,
- ^s Ps. 96. 8. 19 in the ^scourts of the LORD's house,
& 100. 4.
& 135. 2. in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
 Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXVII.

An exhortation to praise God for his mercy and truth.

- ^a Rom. 15. 11. 1 **O** ^aPRAISE the LORD, all ye nations :
 praise him, all ye people.
- ^b Ps. 100. 5. 2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us :
 and ^bthe truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever.
 Praise ye the LORD.

They had been in great straits, fast bound in affliction and iron; they had had experience of God's righteousness in chastising them, of His mercy in answering their prayers; they had been restored once more to rest and freedom. What return could they offer to God except joyfully to pay their vows and sacrifice their thank-offerings in that holy house to which He had permitted them to return?

PSALM CXVII.

Call to all the nations of the world to praise the Lord.

As in Ps. c., the Psalmist summons all the people of the earth to praise the God of Israel, and that for the same reason, viz. on account of His abounding mercy and everlasting truth. This is the whole purport of the Psalm, shewing plainly that even under the Old Testament dispensation it was understood that it was God's purpose to bless all the nations of the world.

1. "All ye nations," i. e. all ye Gentiles. St. Paul quotes this verse as proving that God had fore-ordained that the Gentiles should be fellow-partakers with the Jews in His promised salvation (Rom. xv. 11.).

"All ye nations" are all nations without distinction; "all ye people" are all nations without exception (*Delitzsch*).

2. "Great." Lit. "has prevailed." It is the word used of the waters of the flood (Gen. vii. 18—20, 24. See also Ps. ciii. 11.). God's mercy, like a flood, is spread abundantly over the earth, prevailing over the sins of men (Rom. v. 20, 21.).

St. Paul seems to refer God's *mercy* to the Gentiles, and His *truth* to the Jews: "I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision on account of the truth of God (i. e. for the fulfilment of His "promise), to confirm the promises made to the fathers; and "that the Gentiles might glorify God on account of His mercy" (Rom. xv. 8.).

PSALMS, CXVIII.

PSALM CXVIII.

1 An exhortation to praise God for his mercy. 5 The psalmist by his experience sheweth how good it is to trust in God. 19 Under the type of the psalmist the coming of Christ in his kingdom is expressed.

1 **O** ^aGIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* ^a 1 Chron. 16, 8, 34.
Ps. 106. 1.
& 107. 1.
& 136. 1.
good:
because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

PSALM CXVIII.

Thanksgiving Psalm at the dedication of the second Temple.

This Psalm is very generally assigned to the period following the return from captivity; and there are several occasions connected with that period to which it might be referred. By some it is supposed to belong to the first Feast of Tabernacles after the return (Ezra iii. 1—4.); by others to the laying of the foundation of the second Temple (Ezra iii. 8—13.); by others to the dedication of the restored Temple (Ezra vi. 15—18.); and by others to the great celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the completion of the Temple (Neh. viii. 13—18.). The two first suggestions seem inconsistent with the mention of “the gate” or “gates” in vv. 19, 20, which implies that the building was completed. The use which, as we learn from Rabbinical writers, was made of this Psalm, especially of ver. 25, at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the ritual of the second Temple, may perhaps favour the view that it was originally composed for that festival; but we find that the observances of that feast were employed also at other times of rejoicing (see 1 Macc. xiii. 51. 2 Macc. x. 6, 7.); and especially, as we gather from St. Matt. xxi. 9, 15, the cry “Hosanna” (the original of the words “Save now, I beseech Thee” in ver. 25.) was commonly used by the Jews on festive occasions. It does not follow therefore from the subsequent connection of this Psalm with the Feast of Tabernacles that it was originally composed for that festival; while the whole character of the Psalm seems to suit the dedication of the building better than the celebration of a festival. Perhaps therefore it is best to regard it as a festival Psalm at the dedication of the new Temple.

1. This verse is found at the commencement of three other Psalms (cvi.; cvii.; cxxxvi.), and seems to have been a short liturgical formula in frequent use. It occurs in the hymn of thanksgiving said to have been used at the bringing up of the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. xvi. 34.); it was sung at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple (2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3.); and it was repeated at the laying of the foundation-stone of the second Temple (Ezra iii. 11.). What so natural as that it should be heard again, as in this Psalm, at the dedication of the Temple? Its use on that occasion would be the precise fulfilment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. xxxiii. 11.). The call to give thanks to the Lord is first addressed to all and every one; then there is a threefold division,—“Israel,” “the house of Aaron,” “they that fear the Lord,” as in Ps. cxv. 9—11. Comp. Ezra vi. 20, 21, where the same threefold division is found, in special connection with the Passover which followed the dedication of the Temple. The Psalm consists of two main divisions: the first

PSALMS, CXVIII.

^b See Ps. 115.
9, &c.

- 2 ^b Let Israel now say,
that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
3 Let the house of Aaron now say,
that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
4 Let them now that fear the LORD say,
that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

^c Ps. 120. 1.
² Heb. *out of distress.*
^d Ps. 18. 19.

- 5 ¶ ^c I called upon the LORD ² in distress :
the LORD answered me, and ^d set me in a large
place.

^e Ps. 27. 1.
& 56. 4, 11.
& 146. 5.
Isai. 51. 12.
Heb. 13. 6.

- 6 ^e The LORD *is* ³ on my side ; I will not fear :
what can man do unto me ?

³ Heb.
for me.

- 7 ^f The LORD taketh my part with them that help
me :
therefore shall ^g I see *my desire* upon them that
hate me.

^f Ps. 54. 4.
^g Ps. 59. 10.

^h Ps. 40. 4.
& 62. 8, 9.
Jer. 17. 5, 7.

- 8 ^h *It is* better to trust in the LORD
than to put confidence in man.

ⁱ Ps. 146. 3.

- 9 ⁱ *It is* better to trust in the LORD
than to put confidence in princes.

- 10 All nations compassed me about :

⁴ Heb. *cut them off.*

- but in the name of the LORD will I ⁴ destroy
them.

nineteen verses are sung by the people in a festive procession, led by priests and Levites, approaching the Holy place, the nineteenth verse, which should end with a full stop, being sung just as they enter the gates. The second part (vv. 20—27.) is sung by those who receive the procession ; verse 28 is the answer of those who have just reached the Temple ; while the whole body join in the concluding ascription.

5. The people here begin as one man to recount God's goodness. "In distress." Lit. "out of straitness," in allusion to the captivity of Babylon : "the Lord answered by bringing me into an open space" (Ps. xviii. 19 ; xxxi. 8.).

6. "The Lord is on my side." Lit. "The Lord is for me ;" the same words recur in the beginning of the next verse (see Ps. lvi. 4, 11.).

8, 9. The reference is to the opposition of the Samaritans to the building of the Temple, the intrigues of the Persian satraps, and the fickleness of the monarch. The work was stopped for a while under Artaxerxes (Pseudo-Smerdis) Ezra iv. 17—23 ; and even when on the death of Artaxerxes, Haggai and Zechariah roused the people to re-commence the building, the Persian nobles still tried to hinder it. "But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they (the Persian nobles) could not cause them to cease," until the matter was referred to Darius, and a favourable answer came back from him (Ezra v. 1—5.).

10. "All nations compassed me about." Ezra iv. 9, 10.

The fourfold repetition of the words "compassed me about" is intended to mark the pertinacious animosity of the Psalmist's enemies. It is

PSALMS, CXVIII.

- 11 They ^k compassed me about; yea, they com- ^k Ps. 88. 17.
 passed me about :
 but in the name of the LORD I will destroy
 them.
- 12 They compassed me about ^l like bees ; 1 Deut. 1. 44.
 they are quenched ^m as the fire of thorns : m Eccles. 7. 6
 for in the name of the LORD I will ² destroy ² Heb. Nah. 1. 10.
 them. cut down.
- 13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall :
 but the LORD helped me.
- 14 ⁿ The LORD *is* my strength and song, n Ex. 15. 2.
 and is become my salvation. Isai. 12. 2.
- 15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the
 tabernacles of the righteous :
 the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
- 16 ^o The right hand of the LORD is exalted : o Ex. 15. 6.
 the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
- 17 ^p I shall not die, but live,—and ^q declare the p Ps. 6. 5.
 works of the LORD. Hab. 1. 12.
q Ps. 73. 28.
- 18 The LORD hath ^r chastened me sore : r 2 Cor. 6. 9.
 but he hath not given me over unto death.
- 19 ¶ ^s Open to me the gates of righteousness : s Isai. 26. 2.

answered by the threefold recurrence of the second clause, “In the name of the Lord I will destroy them.”

12. “The fire of thorns.” Blazing up for a moment, and then dying away (Ps. lviii. 9.).

13. “Thou.” The whole body of enemies are addressed as one man.

14. Taken from Exod. xv. 2. The deliverance from Babylon would naturally recall that from Egypt.

15. “Rejoicing.” See Ezra vi. 16.

“Tabernacles.” Rather, “tents,” i. e. dwellings (Ps. lxxviii. 55 ; xci. 10 ; cxxxii. 3.). It is not the word used for the temporary tents in which the people lived during the feast of Tabernacles.

“The right hand of the Lord” is magnified also in Moses’ song (Exod. xv. 6, 12.).

17, 18. Israel had been sorely chastened and brought to the brink of destruction ; but God had not suffered them to fall a prey to death ; He had raised them up, in order that they might fulfil their high calling by proclaiming His mighty deeds to the world.

19. “Open to me.” The procession may be supposed at this point to have just reached the Temple gate, and to ask for admission ; as in Ps. xxiv. 7.

“The gates of righteousness,” i. e., as explained in the next verse, “into which the righteous only enter.” Comp. Pss. xv., xxiv., where in like manner holiness is set forth as the necessary condition of acceptable worship (see Isa. xxvi. 2.).

PSALMS, CXVIII.

- I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:
- ^t Ps. 24. 7. 20 ^t this gate of the LORD,
^u into which the righteous shall enter.
^u Isai. 35. 8.
 Rev. 21. 27.
 & 22. 14, 15.
- ^x Ps. 116. 1. 21 ¶ I will praise thee: for thou hast ^x heard me,
^y ver. 14. and ^y art become my salvation.
- ^z Matt. 21. 42. 22 ^z The stone *which* the builders refused
 Mark 12. 10. is become the head *stone* of the corner.
 Luke 20. 17.
- 23 ² This is the LORD's doing;
 Acts 4. 11. it *is* marvellous in our eyes.
 Eph. 2. 20.
- ² Heb. *This* 24 *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made;
 1 Pet. 2. 4, 7. we will rejoice and be glad in it.
 25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD:

20. A voice or voices from within the gate take up the word of the processional chant, and bid the righteous people enter.

"This gate," &c.; rather, "This gate belongs to the Lord."

22. "The stone," &c. It has been conjectured (*Plumptre, Biblical Studies*) that there is a reference here to a particular incident occurring at the building of the second Temple; a stone which had belonged to the old Temple, and which the workmen thought unsuitable for the place where it was being set, namely, at the corner of the building, was afterwards tried at the request of the priests, and found to be admirably adapted for the purpose. Others see in the rejection or despising of the stone a reference to the feeling of disappointment and despondency which came over many of the elders who were present at the laying of the foundation-stone of the second Temple. They could not endure the diminished proportions of the new building; they despised the day of small things. The work of re-building was surrounded with difficulty; it was actually interrupted for a time. But the mountain which had towered to the skies before Zerubbabel had become a plain. The Temple now stood completed before them, and Zechariah had brought forth the top or keystone amid the rejoicings of the people (*Zech. iv. 7—10.*). In either case the stone was a type of the people of Israel; they themselves had been in despair, and had forgotten, or disbelieved God's promise. But now He would vindicate His faithfulness, and they were raised to a place of honour and dignity among the nations. And then Israel itself was a type of Him Who, though rejected by His own people, was chosen of God and precious, the Corner-stone of the one great living Temple of the redeemed, whether Jews or Gentiles (*Acts iv. 11. St. Matt. xxi. 42. 1 St. Peter ii. 7. Eph. ii. 20.*).

24. This our festival day is a day which God Himself has made great; the restoration now completed is His wonderful work. So Easter Day is in the Christian Church pre-eminently the day which God has signalized by His greatest miracle; and every Sunday is the Lord's day (*Rev. i. 10.*), because it is the weekly commemoration of the first Easter Day.

25. "Save now." Or rather, "Save, I pray;" in the Heb. "Hoshiah-na" or "Hosanna." In the mouth of the multitude who welcomed

PSALMS, CXVIII.

O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 ^a Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the ^a Matt. 21. 9.
& 23. 39.
Mark 11. 9.
Luke 19. 38.
See Zech.
4. 7.

LORD :

we have blessed you out of the house of the

LORD.

27 God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us

^b light :

bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns
of the altar.

^b Esth. 8. 16.
1 Pet. 2. 9.

28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee :

^c *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.

^c Ex. 15. 2.
Isai. 25. 1.

29 ^d O give thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is*
good :

^d ver. 1.

for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

our Lord, it answers to our "God save the King!" (St. Matt. xxi. 9. St. John xii. 13.).

26. The priests and Levites welcome those who are entering the Temple.

"Who in Jehovah's Name draws near,

"Blessed is he ; we hold him dear :

"We bless you on your holy road ;

"We of the house and shrine of God" (*Keble*).

27. On the ground that God has shewn forth light for His people, having given them liberty and joy, the cry goes forth, "Bind the sacrifice," &c.

"Even unto." More lit. "even up to," as far as. The meaning has been supposed to be, that the number of victims for sacrifice was so great (according to Ezra vi. 17 as many as 712.), that the whole space of the court of the priests was full of them, and they reached as far as the horns of the altar. The call therefore is to bring the victims and prepare them for sacrifice. Others take the meaning to be, "Bind the victim with cords, till it is sacrificed, and its blood sprinkled upon the horns of the altar." There is no authority for supposing that the victims were fastened to the horns; the only use made of them seems to have been, that the priest took some of the blood of the victim with his finger and put it upon the horns of the altar (Lev. iv. 25, 30, 34.).

It is especially interesting to remember that this Psalm was sung by Christ and His Apostles on the very eve of His Passion. His enemies were compassing Him about; the Lord was chastening Him sore; the Stone was being rejected; the Sacrifice was about to be bound to the altar: but the Lord was on His side; He would not be given over unto death; the rejected Stone would soon become the Head of the Corner. On Easter Day we give thanks for the fulfilment of Christ's anticipations. If He rejoiced and gave thanks, while yet the night of humiliation, suffering and death lay between Him and the morning of victory, with what transport should we take up His words on the great Day of His resurrection, when all sorrow was over for ever, and there was nothing before Him but triumph and joy!

PSALMS, CXIX.

PSALM CXIX.

This psalm containeth sundry prayers, praises, and professions of obedience.

ALEPH.

² Or, *perfect*,
or, *sincere*.
^a Ps. 128. 1.

- 1 **BLESSED** are the ² undefiled in the way,
^a who walk in the law of the LORD.
2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,
and that seek him with the whole heart.

PSALM CXIX.

A hymn in praise of God's Law.

In the German Version of the Bible this Psalm is very appropriately inscribed, "The Christian's golden A, B, C, of the praise, love, power, and use of the word of God." The Psalm is, in fact, a meditation on God's word, which is referred to in every verse of the Psalm, except the 122nd and 132nd, under one or other of ten names, "law," "testimonies," "ways," "precepts," "statutes," "commandments," "judgments," "word," "saying," "faithfulness."

The Psalm is anonymous, and there are no sure indications in it as to the author. It has been variously ascribed to David, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezra, and to the times of the Maccabees. We gather from various expressions in the Psalm that the writer was suffering persecution, and that from persons in authority; his one stay and comfort in his trouble was God's word.

The Psalm is divided into twenty-two stanzas, according to the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the first word of the eight verses of each stanza beginning with the same Hebrew letter. There is a similar alphabetical arrangement in the third chapter of Lamentations, only there three consecutive verses begin with the same letter.

1—8. Among the many conflicting and futile schemes of happiness with which men busy themselves, they alone are truly happy who set themselves in God's way, and with a sincere and undivided heart seek to discover what He requires of them as the condition of His covenant, and so keep themselves from all sin. Such complete and careful obedience is God's plain command; and such is my desire, O Lord. Oh, that Thy grace would enable me never to swerve from this straight and narrow path! Could I ever keep steadfastly to it, my conscience would not accuse me, and I should have confidence towards Thee. What cause should I have also to rejoice and give thanks, when it had become habitual with me to know, and in all things to follow Thy righteous will! It is my earnest desire, O Lord, thus to keep close to Thee and to Thy laws; but I am weak and unstable; without Thy help I shall be sure to fall. Oh, go not far away! leave me not to myself! but be ever ready to uphold me with Thy right hand!

1. "Undefiled." Rather, "perfect," "upright;" whose ways are blameless.

2. "Testimonies," i. e. His commandments, based upon a solemn covenant (Ps. xix. 7; lxxviii. 5).

"Keep." The word implies diligent keeping. It is to search into, watch, carefully observe.

"With the whole heart." vv. 10, 34, 58, 69, 145. 2. Chron. xxx.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- 3 ^b They also do no iniquity :
they walk in his ways. b 1 John 3. 9.
& 5. 18.
- 4 Thou hast commanded *us*
to keep thy precepts diligently.
- 5 O that my ways were directed—to keep thy
statutes!
- 6 ^c Then shall I not be ashamed,
when I have respect unto all thy commandments. c Job 22. 26.
1 John 2. 28.
- 7 ^d I will praise thee with uprightness of heart,
when I shall have learned ² thy righteous judg-
ments. d ver. 171.
² Heb. *judg-
ments of thy
righteous-
ness.*
- 8 I will keep thy statutes :—O forsake me not
utterly.

BETH.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his
way?

18, 19, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart
"(lit. his whole heart) to seek God."

3. "They also do." Lit. "have done ;" but the Authorised Version
gives the right sense. Throughout the Psalm past tenses alternate with
presents, as denoting that which is habitual. The description of those
who are blessed is carried on in this verse ; their character is to walk in
God's ways, and, so far as they do so, they do not sin.

5. "Were directed." Were made straight (Prov. iv. 26.). The
Psalmist acknowledges his natural weakness and need of God's grace.

6. "Then," i. e. as explained in the second clause, "when I have
respect unto all Thy commandments."

"Ashamed," i. e. put to shame, being disappointed of his hope. Or
it may be ashamed in conscience, as in Rom. vi. 21, "what fruit had ye
"in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" When a man is careful
to keep all God's commandments, his conscience is at rest.

"Have respect unto." Look intently into, carefully examine in
order to keep (comp. St. James i. 25.).

7. "Have learned," i. e. have become acquainted with by practice.

"Thy righteous judgments." God's determinations respecting right
and wrong, which give expression to His righteousness. "When by
"long practice I shall have learned to know and follow in all things the
"rule of God's righteous will, then I will praise Him with a sincere and
"upright heart, a heart which looks to Him alone."

8. "Utterly." Or, "in any great degree ;" leave me not much to
myself, lest I be overcome.

9—16. The path of holiness, in which man's blessedness consists, is hard
to keep. Beset with temptations from without and from within, man is
prone to wander ; the young especially can with difficulty escape the
pollution that is in the world through lust. But they may keep them-
selves pure, if they are thoroughly minded to guide themselves according
to God's word. This is what is needed—a heart wholly turned to God.
My heart, O Lord, is true to Thee ; keep me from wandering. I have
treasured Thy words within my heart, that they may protect me from

PSALMS, CXIX.

- By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
- e 2 Chr. 15. 15. 10 With my whole heart have I ^e sought thee :
 f ver. 21, 118. O let me not ^f wander from thy commandments.
- g Ps. 37. 31. 11 ^g Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
 Luke 2. 19, 51. that I might not sin against thee.
- 12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD :
 h ver. 26, 33, ^h teach me thy statutes.
 64, 68, 103,
 124, 135.
 Ps. 25. 4. 13 With my lips have I ⁱ declared
 i Ps. 34. 11. all the judgments of thy mouth.
- 14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
 as *much as* in all riches.
- k Ps. 1. 2. 15 I will ^k meditate in thy precepts,
 ver. 23, 48, and have respect unto thy ways.
 78.
- l Ps. 1. 2. 16 I will ^l delight myself in thy statutes :
 ver. 35, 47, I will not forget thy word.
 70, 77.

GIMEL.

- m Ps. 116. 7. 17 ^m Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may
 live,

sin. They are ever on my lips, and in my thoughts; they are my joy and delight; I prize them above all wealth; to be occupied with them is supremest pleasure; I never forget them. May they be my guard and my guide!

9. The young man is especially mentioned, because of the temptations to which he is exposed.

“By taking heed thereto.” The second clause is the answer to the first; it may be understood either “by guarding it, i. e. his way, according to Thy word,” or “by guarding himself,” i. e. by self-watchfulness (see Josh. vi. 18.).

11. “Thy word.” Rather, “Thy saying”—a different word from that used in ver. 9, though the two are frequently interchanged.

“I have hid,” i. e. I have laid up deep. God’s word was laid up not only in his memory, but in his heart; he not only meditated upon it, and treasured it, but it was planted in his heart as a motive of action (Job xxiii. 12.).

13. As Moses taught the Israelites to teach God’s words to their children, and talk of them continually, so the Psalmist declares that what God had spoken with His mouth he would both treasure in his heart and recount with his lips (Deut. vi. 6, 7.).

14. “As much as in all riches.” Lit. “as over all wealth,” as much as if I gained possession of all wealth.

15. “I will meditate.” “I would fain meditate,” and by meditation keep more steadfastly before my eye the paths which Thou hast traced out for me in Thy word.

16. “I will delight myself.” “I will take my pleasure in,” I will please myself with thinking and speaking of. See Isa. xi. 8, “The sucking child shall play on (please itself with) the hole of the asp” (comp. Ps. i. 2.).

17—24. This stanza bears witness to a condition of danger, and perse-

PSALMS, CXIX.

- and keep thy word.
- 18 ² Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. 2 Heb. Reveal.
- 19 ⁿ I am a stranger in the earth : hide not thy commandments from me. n Gen. 47. 9. 1 Chr. 29. 15. Ps. 39. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 6. Heb. 11. 13.
- 20 ^o My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. o Ps. 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1. & 84. 2.
- 21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do ^p err from thy commandments. ver. 40, 131. p ver. 10, 110, 118.
- 22 ^q Remove from me reproach and contempt ; for I have kept thy testimonies. q Ps. 39. 8.
- 23 Princes also did sit and speak against me : but thy servant did ^r meditate in thy statutes. r ver. 15.

cution, and reproach. The Psalmist prays that of His mercy God will preserve him in the midst of peril, and reveal to him the secret wonders of His law. Lonely and despised, the object of reproach and of evil counsels, his heart yearned after God's law, and longed for a deeper insight into it. This is the burden of the prayer of this stanza, that God would reveal His law to him, so that that which was his chief delight might be also his support and stay.

17. "That I may live." It is for the gift of life that the Psalmist prays;—"Grant, O Lord, of Thy mercy that I may live; so shall I keep Thy word." He has no desire for life, except that he may obey God.

18. "Open," or "uncover;" take away the veil from my eyes (2 Cor. iii. 14—16.).

"Wondrous things." The mysterious truths which lie hid beneath the letter of God's word, and are incomprehensible to the ordinary understanding.

19. A special reason why God should unfold the true meaning and depth of the law: he is but a sojourner upon earth; he has no home nor inheritance here; he desires therefore to find his stay and comfort in the inner knowledge of God's commandments.

"Hide not." That is, reveal, unfold, make me to know in their fulness.

20. This knowledge was with him the object of intense desire; his soul was crushed, that is, overwhelmed and almost paralysed, by his longing after a more thorough knowledge of God's law.

21. This verse may be taken as in the Prayer Book Version, "Thou hast rebuked the proud; cursed are they which do err from Thy commandments." In contrast with his own love for God's law, he speaks of the wrath and curse which rest on the obstinate and disobedient.

22. "Remove." The same word as in ver. 18, "uncover," take away from me; reproach being regarded as a veil or covering. Others render it "roll away," and compare Josh. v. 9, where Joshua speaks of rolling away the reproach of Egypt.

23. While princes are sitting in council, and holding converse together against him, he is meditating on God's statutes.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- ^a ver. 77, 92. 24 ^a Thy testimonies also *are* my delight—and ² my counsellors.
- ² Heb. *men of my counsel.*
- ^t Ps. 44. 25. 25 ^t My soul cleaveth unto the dust :
^u quicken thou me according to thy word.
- ^u ver. 40. Ps. 143. 11. 26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me :
^x teach me thy statutes.
- ^x ver. 12. Ps. 25. 4. & 27. 11. & 86. 11. 27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts :
so ^y shall I talk of thy wondrous works.
- ^y Ps. 145. 5, 6. 28 ^z My soul ³ melteth for heaviness :
^z strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
- ^z Heb. *droppeth.* 29 Remove from me the way of lying :
and grant me thy law graciously.
- 30 I have chosen the way of truth :
thy judgments have I laid *before me.*
- 31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies :
O LORD, put me not to shame.
- 32 I will run the way of thy commandments,
when thou shalt ^a enlarge my heart.
- ^a 1 Kin. 4. 29. Isai. 60. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 11. HE.
- ^b ver. 12. 33 ^b Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes ;

25—32. The Psalmist is in great sorrow, and prays for consolation in a deeper knowledge of God's law, to which he is heartily devoted.

25. This does not seem to refer so much to danger of death, as to great depression of spirit. As mourners were used to sit in the dust, so the Psalmist's soul was bowed down with grief (Ps. xlv. 25.), and he prays God to revive him according to His promise.

26. "I have declared," i. e. made confession of them. As in Ps. xxxii. 5 David says, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," so here the Psalmist declares that he had rehearsed all the particulars of his life before God, and God had answered him; and then he goes on to pray that God would more and more reveal His will to him.

27. "Make me to understand." Lit. "make me to distinguish," give me a distinguishing mind.

28. "Melteth." Lit. "droppeth." It may mean either, that the soul is dissolved from trouble, or that it weeps itself away (Job xvi. 20.).

29. "The way of lying," i. e. the way which deviates from God's law and judgments, which are "the way of truth" (ver. 30.).

31. "I have stuck." Or, "cleaved," the same word as in ver. 25. While his spirit was oppressed and bowed down to the earth, his will kept firm hold of God's testimonies.

32. "Thou shalt enlarge." That is, according to some, "Thou shalt fill me with joy." In 1 Kings iv. 29 "largeness of heart" means greatness of understanding. Here it seems to mean increase of love, as opposed to a narrow selfishness. So St. Augustine, "My heart is narrow; do Thou enlarge it."

33—40. One thing the Psalmist longs for, viz. to know and keep the way

PSALMS, CXIX.

- and I shall keep it ^c unto the end.
- 34 ^d Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law ;
yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
- 35 Make me to go in the path of thy command-
ments ;
for therein do I ^e delight.
- 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
and not to ^f covetousness.
- 37 ^g Turn away mine eyes from ^h beholding vanity ;
and ⁱ quicken thou me in thy way.
- 38 ^k Stablish thy word unto thy servant,
who *is devoted* to thy fear.
- 39 Turn away my reproach which I fear :
for thy judgments *are* good.
- 40 Behold, I have ^l longed after thy precepts :
^m quicken me in thy righteousness.
- VAU.
- 41 ⁿ Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD,
even thy salvation, according to thy word.

c ver. 112.
Matt. 10. 22.
Rev. 2. 26.
d ver. 73.
Prov. 2. 6.
Jam. 1. 5.

e ver. 16.

f Ezek. 33. 31.
Mark 7. 21,
22.

g Luke 12. 15.
1 Tim. 6. 10.
Heb. 13. 5.

h Isai. 33. 15.
i Heb. *Make to pass.*

k 2 Sam. 7. 25.
l ver. 20.

m ver. 25, 37,
88, 107, 149,
156, 159.

n Ps. 106. 4.
ver. 77.

of God's commandments. But he is in danger of being led astray by his senses to objects of forbidden desire, or of utter worthlessness. Therefore he prays God to teach and strengthen him ; and he is confident that with His help he shall not swerve.

33. "Unto the end." Or, "to the uttermost," as in ver. 112.

35. Though it is a blessed thing when a man can say that he delights in God's law, yet he must not trust to that delight, as if it were sure to keep him in the right way.

36. The heart is deceitful, and inclined to selfishness ; therefore the Psalmist prays that God would influence and incline his heart.

37. And in order that his heart may be kept aright, he prays that his senses may be guarded from beholding and being attracted by anything which, being apart from God, is necessarily worthless. Comp. St. Matt. v. 29.

38. "Stablish Thy word," i. e. Thy promise. The Psalmist prays that God's promise of guidance may be confirmed and realized in him.

"Who is devoted to Thy fear." This clause may perhaps refer, not to the writer, but to God's promise ; "which is attached to Thy fear," or "which tendeth to Thy fear" (Ps. cxxx. 4.).

39. "My reproach." The reproach, not of confessing, but of denying God. God's judgments, that is, His revealed commands, are good and pleasant, and he longs after them ; but he is afraid of disobeying them ; therefore he prays God to preserve him.

41—48. This stanza is closely connected with the preceding. The fearless confession, for which the Psalmist prays, depends on the guidance and instruction which he had so earnestly besought before. If God will extend to him His promised mercy, especially if He will lead him and enable him to walk in the right way, he shall not be dumb before his persecutors, but able to answer them from his own experience ; the

PSALMS, CXIX.

- ² Or, *So shall I answer him that reproacheth me in a thing.* 42 ² So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me :
for I trust in thy word.
- 43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth ;
for I have hoped in thy judgments.
- 44 So shall I keep thy law continually
for ever and ever.
- ³ Heb. *at large.* 45 And I will walk ³ at liberty :
for I seek thy precepts.
- ^o Ps. 138. 1. ^o I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings,
^{Matt. 10. 18,} and will not be ashamed.
^{19,}
- ^{Acts 26. 1, 2.} 47 And I will ^p delight myself in thy command-
^{p ver. 16.} ments,
which I have loved.
- 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy command-
ments, which I have loved ;
^{q ver. 15.} and I will ^q meditate in thy statutes.
- ZAIN.
- 49 Remember the word unto thy servant,

consciousness of sin will not keep him silent, but he will bear witness for God and His truth. Keeping God's law continually, he will walk without restraint, freely and courageously; he will confess God even before kings; fear and shame will be alike unknown, because of his delight and inward longing after, or his persevering continuance in, the ways of God.

42. If God will extend to him the tokens of His loving-kindness, he will be able to answer from his own experience those who reproach him.

43. He prays for such experience of God's truth, as that he may be able to speak of it continually.

45. "At liberty." Lit. "in a wide place."

"So fearless may I walk at large" (*Keble*).

48. The expression "to lift up the hands" is used in the Bible to denote (i.) praying (Ps. xxviii. 2; cxli. 2. Lam. ii. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 8.); (ii.) blessing, either blessing others (Lev. ix. 22. St. Luke xxiv. 50.); or praising and blessing God (Ps. cxxxiv. 2.); (iii.) swearing (Gen. xiv. 22. Deut. xxxii. 40. Ps. cvi. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 7. Rev. x. 5.); but in this case the singular "hand" is always used; (iv.) setting about any action (Gen. xli. 44. Ps. x. 12. Heb. xii. 12.). Here it would seem to mean earnest, fervent longing, as in connection with prayer.

49—56. Though there was so much in his outward lot to distress him, scorned by the proud, vexed by the wickedness of the ungodly, with no abiding resting-place, God's promise was his support, and God's holy words his joy.

49. "Remember," i. e. fulfil. In like manner when God delays to fulfil His promise He is said to forget.

"The word." Probably some special promise of help.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- upon which thou hast caused me to ^r hope.
- 50 This *is* my ^s comfort in my affliction :
for thy word hath quickened me. ^r ver. 74, 81,
147.
^s Rom. 15. 4.
- 51 The proud have had me greatly ^t in derision :
yet have I not ^u declined from thy law. ^t Jer. 20. 7.
^u Job 23. 11.
Ps. 44. 18.
ver. 157.
- 52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD ;
and have comforted myself.
- 53 ^x Horror hath taken hold upon me because of ^x Ezra 9. 3.
the wicked
that forsake thy law.
- 54 Thy statutes have been my songs
in the house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 ^y I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the ^r Ps. 63. 6.
night,
and have kept thy law.
- 56 This I had,—because I kept thy precepts.
- CHETH.
- 57 ^z *Thou art* my portion, O LORD :
I have said that I would keep thy words. ^z Ps. 16. 5.
Jer. 10. 16.
Lam. 3. 24.

“Upon which.” Rather, “because,” “seeing that.” God had encouraged him by His promise ; he prays Him not to disappoint him.

50. “This,” i. e. Thy promise. Or, the meaning may be, This is my one comfort in my affliction, that Thy word of promise has revived me.

51. They derided him on account of his trust in God’s promise ;^r but no scorn, persecution, or danger will make him swerve from his obedience (vv. 61, 87, 109.).

52. “Thy judgments,” i. e. Thy righteous laws. Not only God’s special promise to himself, but the never-failing justice of His rule are to him a source of deepest comfort.

53. “Horror,” i. e. intense grief, burning indignation (vv. 136, 158.).

54. “In the house of my pilgrimage.” Lit. “in the house of my ‘sojournings,’” i. e. during his earthly life, because he was only a sojourner upon earth (see ver. 19. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Eccles. xii. 5.); his true home was elsewhere. In spite of dejection and loneliness, he was ever intent on God’s holy laws ; and the thought of them made sweet melody in his heart and on his lips.

56. “This I had, because I kept Thy precepts.” Rather, “This, ‘just this, has fallen to me, that I have kept Thy precepts.’” To others other blessings are allotted ; to him this chief blessing, that he had kept God’s law.

57—64. “The Lord is my portion” is the key-note to this stanza. The Psalmist had chosen God and God alone : therefore he declared emphatically that he would keep close to His words ; therefore he looked up to Him and earnestly entreated Him, according to His promise, to turn the light and favour of His countenance upon him ; therefore he carefully considered his ways, that he might direct his footsteps aright, and that without delay or weak parleying with flesh and blood. Sur-

PSALMS, CXIX.

- ² Heb. *face*, Job 11. 19.
a ver. 41. 58 I intreated thy ² favour with *my* whole heart :
be merciful unto me ^a according to thy word.
- ^b Luke 15. 17, 18. 59 I ^b thought on my ways,
and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
- 60 I made haste, and delayed not—to keep thy
commandments.
- ³ Or, *companies*. 61 The ³ bands of the wicked have robbed me :
but I have not forgotten thy law.
- ^c Acts 16. 25. 62 ^c At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee
because of thy righteous judgments.
- 63 I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee,
and of them that keep thy precepts.
- ^d Ps. 33. 5. 64 ^d The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy :
^e ver. 12, 26. ^e teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

- 65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O LORD, according unto thy word.
- 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge :

rounded as he was with the snares of wicked men, yet, having made God the one object of his choice, His righteous law was ever present with him. He breaks the rest and silence of the night by rising up to thank Him, while during the day he is careful to find his companions among those who, like himself, take God's law for their guide. The tokens of God's loving-kindness meet him at every turn ; the earth is full of it ; and he ever looks to it for that which is his most cherished desire, viz. a deeper and more inward knowledge of God's holy will.

57. "Thou art my portion, O Lord." Rather, "The Lord is my "portion," my inheritance: all that I care for upon earth (Ps. xvi. 5; lxxxiii. 26; cxlii. 5.).

58. "I intreated Thy favour." The literal meaning of the expression is "to stroke the face," to caress, soothe ; hence, to supplicate in order to appease (1 Sam. xiii. 12. Job xi. 19. Ps. xlv. 12. Prov. xix. 6.).

59. "I thought on." Not merely considered in a general way, but examined, reviewed thoroughly.

60. "I made haste." When he had considered his ways and found where he was, he made no delay in correcting what was amiss.

61. "The bands." Rather, "the snares," ver. 110.

65—72. The Psalmist dwells on the benefit of affliction as making him delight in God's law ; the word which proceeds out of His mouth is now more precious to him than the greatest earthly riches.

65. Reviewing his whole life, the Psalmist perceives and acknowledges that God has fulfilled His promise, and dealt kindly with him at all times.

66. As in ver. 64, out of his sense of God's general loving-kindness sprang the prayer "Teach me Thy statutes," so here the remembrance of God's merciful dealings with himself individually encourages him to give utterance to the one burning desire of his heart, viz. that God would help him more and more to know and understand His law.

"Judgment." Lit. "taste," the faculty of moral discernment (Phil. i. 9.).

PSALMS, CXIX.

- for I have believed thy commandments.
- 67 ^f Before I was afflicted I went astray :
but now have I kept thy word. f ver. 71.
Jer. 31. 18, 19.
Heb. 12. 11.
- 68 ^g Thou *art* ^g good, and doest good ;
^h teach me thy statutes. g Ps. 106. 1.
& 107. 1.
Matt. 19. 17.
h ver. 12, 26.
i Job 13. 4.
Ps. 103. 2.
- 69 The proud have ⁱ forged a lie against me :
but I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole
heart. k Ps. 17. 10.
Isai. 6. 10.
Acts 28. 27.
- 70 ^k Their heart is as fat as grease ;
but I ^l delight in thy law. l ver. 35.
- 71 ^m *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted ;
that I might learn thy statutes. m ver. 67.
Heb. 12. 10,
11.
- 72 ⁿ The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me
than thousands of gold and silver. n ver. 127.
Ps. 19. 10.
Prov. 8. 10,
11, 19.
- JOD.
- 73 ^o Thy hands have made me and fashioned me :
^p give me understanding, that I may learn thy
commandments. o Job 10. 8.
Ps. 100. 3.
& 138. 8.
& 139. 14.
p ver. 34, 144.
- 74 ^q They that fear thee will be glad when they
see me ;
because ^r I have hoped in thy word. q Ps. 34. 2.
r ver. 49, 147.

67. He explains how all God's dealings with him, even His chastisements, were good, because they brought him back from his wanderings.

"Thy word," i. e. Thy promise ; as in ver. 11.

68. Here again, as in vv. 64, 66, the goodness of God is the ground of his prayer for inward illumination : He implores the good and gracious God to be his Teacher.

69. "Have forged." Lit. "have sewed together," "patched up." Even the injurious calumnies of his enemies cannot shake his fidelity to God's word.

70. It is no wonder that they slander him, for God's word makes no impression on them ; their heart is covered as it were with thick fat, and has no spiritual perception (see marg. reff.) ; whereas his one delight is in God's law.

71. This appreciation of the law of God came to him in the school of affliction ; therefore he counted affliction as a signal blessing (ver. 67.).

73—80. The prayer of this stanza is for such deeper understanding of God's law as shall be a stay and comfort to him ; and that especially with the view of his example being an encouragement to those who fear God, and a confusion to His enemies.

73. The Psalmist grounds his prayer for spiritual enlightenment on God being his Creator, as before he grounded it on His tender mercy (ver. 68.).

"Have made me and fashioned me." Deut. xxxii. 6. Job xxxi. 15.

74. All good men will rejoice when they perceive how his patient trust in God's Word has been rewarded.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- ² Heb. *righteousness*. 75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* ² right, and ^s *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.
- ^s Heb. 12. 10. 76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be ³ for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.
- ^t ver. 41. 77 ^t Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live : for ^u thy law *is* my delight.
- ^u ver. 24, 47, 174. 78 Let the proud ^x be ashamed ; ^y for they dealt ^x Ps. 25. 3. ^y ver. 16. ^z ver. 23. 78 Let the proud ^x be ashamed ; ^y for they dealt ^z *perversely* with me without a cause : *but* I will ^z meditate in thy precepts.
- 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.
- 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes ;—that I be not ashamed.
- CAPH.
- ^a Ps. 73. 26. & 84. 2. 81 ^a My soul fainteth for thy salvation : ^b *but* ^b I hope in thy word.
- ^b ver. 74, 114. 82 ^c Mine eyes fail for thy word, ^c saying, When wilt thou comfort me ?
- ^c ver. 123. Ps. 69. 3. 83 For ^d I am become like a bottle in the smoke ;
- ^d Job 30. 30.

75. "Thy judgments," i. e. Thy judicial decrees, Thy decisions. The Psalmist is persuaded that God's judgments are pure righteousness, and that even in His chastisements He is faithful to His purpose of mercy to the sufferer. Every chastisement, however, though fraught with blessing, is grievous at the time, and therefore he prays that the consciousness of God's loving-kindness may be his consolation.

78, 79. He prays that his proud and calumnious enemies may be covered with shame, when they see the tokens of God's mercy towards him ; while those who fear God will learn from his experience the value of God's testimonies.

80. "Sound," i. e. perfect, undivided. Everything depends on this, viz. on his unwavering adherence to God's word ; without it, his delight and hope in that word and his meditation on it would only end in disappointment and confusion.

81—88. Though his enemies were very bitter, and had well-nigh succeeded in their cruel purposes—though the Divine vengeance was long delayed, and his soul and body were pining away in weary watching for the promised salvation, still he clung with earnest longing to God's word : nothing could drive it out of his mind.

81. "Fainteth." Pines away with eager longing. He was sure that God would fulfil His promise, and grant him help and consolation ; but meanwhile both soul and body languished in weary expectation (Ps. lxi. 3 ; lxxxiv. 2.).

83. "For." This might be rendered "although." Though worn out, like a shrivelled wine-skin in the smoke, he did not suffer anything to drive God's word out of his mind.

PSALMS, CXIX.

yet do I not forget thy statutes.

84 ^o How many *are* the days of thy servant? ^e Ps. 39. 4.
^f When wilt thou execute judgment on them ^f Rev. 6. 10.
 that persecute me?

85 ^g The proud have digged pits for me, ^g Ps. 35. 7.
 which *are* not after thy law. Prov. 16. 27.

86 All thy commandments *are* ² faithful: ² Heb. *faith-*
^h they persecute me ⁱ wrongfully; help thou *fulness.*
 me. ^h ver. 78.
ⁱ Ps. 35. 19.
& 38. 19.

87 They had almost consumed me upon earth;
 but I forsook not thy precepts.

88 ^k Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; ^k ver. 40.
 so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

LAMED.

89 ^l For ever, O LORD,—thy word is settled in 1 Ps. 89. 2.
 heaven. Matt. 24. 34,
35.
1 Pet. 1. 25.

90 Thy faithfulness *is* ³ unto all generations:
 thou hast established the earth, and it ⁴ abideth. ³ Heb.
to genera-
tion and
generation,
Ps. 89. 1.

91 They continue this day according to ^m thine ⁴ Heb.
 ordinances: *standeth.*
^m Jer. 33. 25.

84. "How many." Almost equivalent to "how few." His prayer for speedy judgment on his enemies is grounded on the shortness of his life and of the time within which the Divine justice can reveal itself (Ps. lxxxix. 47.). The case does not admit of delay.

85. "Pits." Such as were dug for wild beasts (Ps. lvii. 6. Jer. xviii. 20, 22.).

"Which." Rather, "who," with reference to the persons, not to their acts.

87. "Consumed." They had almost accomplished his ruin upon earth, but had not shaken the constancy of his faith. Nevertheless, conscious that he stands in continual need of supporting grace, he prays that God would revive him; so would he observe the testimonies of His mouth.

89—96. The word of God is eternal and all-penetrating. The whole world bears witness to His unchanging laws. God keeps His promise for ever, and the Psalmist knows by experience His truth and constancy. Had it been otherwise, he must have perished; he will never therefore forget His commandments, for by them He has given him life; God has taught him what he ought to do, and has opened out to him in obedience a prospect of unbounded happiness.

89. "Is settled in heaven." Has its fixed dwelling-place in heaven, and partakes therefore of the stability of heaven. Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 2, where God's faithfulness is said to be established in the heavens, beyond the reach of the changes and chances of earth.

91. "They" (i. e. the heavens and earth) "continue according to Thy ordinances." Lit. "stand for Thy judgments," ready to execute them. Or the subject may be taken from the following clause; all things are God's servants, and have therefore humbly to obey His judgments.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- for all *are* thy servants.
- ⁿ ver. 24. 92 Unless ⁿ thy law *had been* my delights,
I should then have perished in mine affliction.
- 93 I will never forget thy precepts :
for with them thou hast quickened me.
- 94 I *am* thine, save me ;
for I have sought thy precepts.
- 95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me :
but I will consider thy testimonies.
- ^o Matt. 5. 18. & 24. 35. 96 ^o I have seen an end of all perfection :
but thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.
- MEM.
- 97 O how love I thy law !
^p *it is* my meditation all the day.
- ^p Ps. 1. 2. 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made
me ^q wiser than mine enemies :
^q Deut. 4. 6, 8. for ² they *are* ever with me.
- ² Heb. *it is ever with me.* 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers :
^r 2 Tim. 3. 15. ^r for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.
- ^s Job 32. 7, 8, 9. 100 ^s I understand more than the ancients,
because I keep thy precepts.
- ^t Prov. 1. 15. 101 I have ^t refrained my feet from every evil way,

92. This word of God, on which all things depend, has alone upheld the Psalmist in his affliction.

93. He has felt its life-giving power ; therefore he can never forget it.

94. "Save me." This is the only prayer in this stanza ; the reason of it follows in the next verse.

96. All earthly perfection has its limit ; it cannot reach beyond a certain point ; but God's commandment stretches out in all directions, and is infinitely deep and high and broad (comp. Job xi. 7—9.).

97—104. "O how love I Thy law!" This is the key-note of the stanza. The Psalmist's love for God's law and unceasing occupation with it give him an insight into it ; and hence he is superior in wisdom to his enemies, to his teachers, to the aged. His wisdom is that practical wisdom, which consists in the fear of God and in avoiding evil.

98. "Thou through," &c. Rather, "Thy commandments make me "wiser than my enemies." The Heb. word for "make me wiser" is singular, the commandments being taken as a whole. Hence in the next clause the Heb. is "*it is ever with me.*" His enemies, with all their earthly wisdom, are not a match for his simplicity (comp. 1 Cor. i. 25—29.).

100. "The ancients ;" i. e. the aged. Taught by God's word, he surpassed in practical wisdom those who had once been his teachers, and those who by reason of age might well have taught him still (Job xxxii. 7.).

101. "I have refrained." It is not merely that he has not walked in the path of evil, but, his natural inclination being to walk therein, he has taken pains to avoid it.

PSALMS, CXIX.

that I might keep thy word.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments :
for thou hast taught me.

103 ^u How sweet are thy words unto my ² taste !
yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth !

^u Ps. 19. 10.
Prov. 8. 11.
² Heb. *palate*.

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding :
therefore ^x I hate every false way.

^x ver. 123.

NUN.

105 ^y Thy word *is* a ³ lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

^y Prov. 6. 23.
³ Or, *candle*.

106 ^z I have sworn, and I will perform *it*,
that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

^z Neh. 10. 23.

107 I am afflicted very much :

^a quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy ^u word. ^a ver. 88.

108 Accept, I beseech thee, ^b the freewill offerings ^b of my mouth, O LORD,
and ^c teach me thy judgments.

^b Hos. 14. 2.
Heb. 13. 15.

^c ver. 12, 26.

109 ^d My soul *is* continually in my hand :

^d Job 13. 14.

“That I might keep.” The order of these clauses corresponds with “cease to do evil; learn to do well.” Our first care must be to refrain from evil, and then we shall keep God’s word.

103. His delight in God’s word is the fruit of his being taught of God.

105—112. The way of holiness is dark, and beset with danger, but the Psalmist has sworn to walk in it. God’s word is his guide, to which he entrusts himself. Though bowed down by sorrow, and walking in constant peril, harassed by temptation, he has sworn to keep God’s commandments, and he will not swerve. May God only accept his vows, and revive him with His grace! God’s testimonies are his portion and his joy; his heart is fully bent to keep them to the end.

This stanza seems to suit especially the case of a young person, who, after having solemnly and cheerfully pledged himself to God’s service in Confirmation, is placed in circumstances of great temptation, but earnestly desires to be steadfast to his promise.

105. As a man walking in the dark is not satisfied with merely carrying a light in his hand, but turns it upon the path which he is treading, so God’s word should be brought to bear on every step we take (Prov. vi. 23.).

106. “I will perform.” Rather, “I have performed,” established my vow.

108. “Accept.” Be pleased graciously to accept (Ps. li. 18.). The free-will offerings of his mouth are the vows which he has made out of the fulness of his heart.

109. “In my hand.” The expression implies great danger; anything lying on the surface of the hand is very likely to drop off, and be lost. So Jephthah speaks of putting his life in his hand; i. e. willingly incurring great risk (Judges xii. 3. See 1 Sam. xix. 5; xxviii. 21. Job xiii. 14.).

PSALMS, CXIX.

- yet do I not forget thy law.
- ^e Ps. 140. 5. 110 ^o The wicked have laid a snare for me :
& 141. 9.
^f ver. 10, 21.
^g Deut. 33. 4. 111 ^g Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage
for ever :
for ^h they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
- ^h ver. 77, 92,
174.
² Heb. *to do*. 112 I have inclined mine heart ² to perform thy
statutes
always, ⁱ *even unto* the end.
- SAMECH.
- 113 I hate *vain* thoughts :—but thy law do I love.
- ^k Ps. 32. 7.
& 91. 1.
^l ver. 81. 114 ^k Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield :
^l I hope in thy word.
- ^m Ps. 6. 8.
& 139. 19.
Matt. 7. 23. 115 ^m Depart from me, ye evildoers :
for I will keep the commandments of my God.
- 116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I
may live :
and let me not ⁿ be ashamed of my hope.
- ⁿ Ps. 25. 2.
Rom. 5. 5.
& 9. 33.
& 10. 11. 117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe :
and I will have respect unto thy statutes
continually.
- ^o ver. 21. 118 Thou hast trodden down all them that ^o err
from thy statutes :

110. This verse seems to explain the dangers of which he had just spoken.

111. God's testimonies are his heritage, his possession ; as in ver. 98 he said, that they were ever with him ; he had taken possession of them for ever : for them he willingly gave up everything else.

113—120. This stanza also implies a situation of great trial and sifting. God's judgments are marking off the ungodly from the righteous, and shewing that they trusted in a lie. The Psalmist so fears God's sentence of condemnation, and at the same time so loves and trusts in God and His holy laws, that he does not hesitate as to his choice. He turns away from the wicked and the wavering ; he elings to God as his defence, and prays earnestly to Him to support him.

113. "Vain thoughts." Rather, "the double-minded," those who halt between two opinions (1 Kings xviii. 21. St. James i. 8.).

"Unstable hearts, of wavering choice" (*Keble*).

The Psalmist's love and trust and hope are devoted to God and to His law ; while those who waver in their allegiance and do wickedly he turns from with abhorrence.

"I hate" = "depart from me," in ver. 115 (Ps. vi. 8 ; cxxxix. 19, 22.).

116. At the same time he needs support and prays for it.

118. "Thou hast trodden down." Rather, "Thou hast despised, "rejected, made light of."

PSALMS, CXIX.

for their deceit *is* falsehood.

119 Thou ² puttest away all the wicked of the earth ² Heb. *caus-*
^p *like* dross : ^{est to cease.}
p Ezek. 22. 18.

therefore I love thy testimonies.

120 ^a My flesh trembleth for fear of thee ; ^q Hab. 3. 16.
 and I am afraid of thy judgments.

AIN.

121 I have done judgment and justice :
 leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be ^r surety for thy servant for good : ^r Heb. 7. 22.
 let not the proud oppress me.

123 ^s Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, ^s ver. 81, 82.
 and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy
 mercy,
 and ^t teach me thy statutes. ^t ver. 12.

125 ^u I *am* thy servant ; give me understanding, ^u Ps. 116. 16.
 that I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work :

“**Their deceit.**” Their deceitful artifices, on which they depend, deceive them ; their crooked policy is based on falsehood, and ends in disappointment.

119. As fire separates the pure ore from the dross, so God’s judgments mark off and put away the evil-doers (Ezek. xxii. 18—20.).

120. “**Trembleth ;**” “shuddereth.”

“Though o’er my flesh Thy terror creep” (*Keble*).

“**Thy judgments,**” i. e. Thy righteous laws, according to which God punishes. Strong fear is not incompatible with joyful love.

121—128. Conscious of his integrity, the Psalmist cannot believe that God will leave him in the hands of his persecutors. But this confidence does not raise him above the necessity of earnest prayer for the deliverance for which he longs. He is wholly God’s servant ; may God deal with him according to His loving-kindness ! especially—it is his one chief desire, to which he is ever returning—may He give him a deeper understanding of His law ! It is time that God should interfere in his behalf, for while the multitude break God’s law, he on that very account attaches himself more closely to it, and is as strict as he possibly can be in observing it.

121. “**Leave me not.**” Rather, “Thou wilt not surely leave me.”

122. “**Be surety.**” Lit. “guarantee Thy servant for good,” undertake my cause. Hezekiah uses the same word in the passage rendered, “O Lord, I am oppressed ; undertake for me” (Isa. xxxviii. 14. See Job xvii. 3.).

123. “**Mine eyes fail ;**” pine away, as in vv. 81, 82.

“**The word of Thy righteousness.**” The promise which proceeds from God’s righteousness, and which, on account of His righteousness, is sure to be fulfilled.

126. Rather, “it is time for Jehovah to act,” to interfere judicially ;

for they have made void thy law.

^x ver. 72.
Ps. 19. 10.
Prov. 8. 11.

127 ^x Therefore I love thy commandments
above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning*
all things to be right;
and I ^y hate every false way.

^y ver. 104.

PE.

129 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful:
therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light;
^z it giveth understanding unto the simple.

^z Ps. 19. 7.
Prov. 1. 4.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted:
for I ^a longed for thy commandments.

^a ver. 20.
^b Ps. 106. 4.
^{c2} Thes. 1. 6, 7.

132 ^b Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,
^{c2} as thou usest to do unto those that love thy
name.

² Heb.
according
to the cus-
tom towards
those, &c.

or, "it is time to work for Jehovah;" but the sense given in the A. V. may be illustrated by Jer. xviii. 23: "deal thus with them," lit. "do with them" (Ezek. xxxi. 11.).

127. "Therefore," i. e. either, because iniquity abounds, and calls down God's judgment (see ver. 119.); or because men are bent on breaking God's law; the more they disparage it, the greater its value in the Psalmist's eyes.

128. "All Thy precepts concerning all things." Lit. "all precepts of every kind" (Ezek. xliv. 30.). The Greek Version has "all Thy precepts," which gives the right meaning, though there is no "Thy" in the Hebrew.

129—136. The deeper the Psalmist's depression on account of those who despise God's word, the more does he yearn for its light and comfort. Those who love Him, God will be sure to accept and bless; on the strength of this plea, the Psalmist prays that God would bless him, and direct his steps in the right way, so that he may not be led away by the pressure of persecution, coming back to his one chief prayer, that God would enlighten and teach him.

129. "Wonderful." Strange, miraculous; "exalted above every-day life and the common understanding."

"Keep." Store up, and attentively contemplate.

"I study with unswerving eyes" (*Keble*).

130. "The entrance." Lit. "the opening," i. e. the disclosure, the revelation. When God reveals the mysteries of His word, the simple become wise (Ps. xix. 7.); the light of heaven streams in and illumines the dark soul.

131. "Panted," i. e. longed with strong desire, for that knowledge of His word, which God gives to those who seek it; he panted for it with open mouth, as a hungry man for food.

132. "As Thou usest to do it." Lit. "as is just," or, "as Thy rule is," towards those that love Thy Name. Love to God cannot be unresponded to (Heb. vi. 10.).

PSALMS, CXIX.

- 133 ^d Order my steps in thy word : d Ps. 17. 5.
 and ^e let not any iniquity have dominion over e Ps. 19. 13.
Rom. 6. 12.
 me.
- 134 ^f Deliver me from the oppression of man : f Luke 1. 74.
 so will I keep thy precepts.
- 135 ^g Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ; g Ps. 4. 6.
 and ^h teach me thy statutes. h ver. 12, 26.
- 136 ⁱ Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,
 because they keep not thy law. i Jer. 9. 1. &
14. 17. See
Ezek. 9. 4.
- TZADDI.
- 137 ^k Righteous *art* thou, O LORD,
 and upright *are* thy judgments. k Ezra 9. 15.
Neh. 9. 33.
Jer. 12. 1.
Dan. 9. 7.
- 138 ^l Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded
are ² righteous l Ps. 19. 7, 8, 9.
 and very ³ faithful. 2 Heb. *right-*
eousness.
3 Heb. *faith-*
fulness.
- 139 ^m My zeal hath ⁴ consumed me,
 because mine enemies have forgotten thy m Ps. 69. 9.
John 2. 17.
 words. 4 Heb.
cut me off.
- 140 ⁿ Thy word *is* very ⁵ pure :
 therefore thy servant loveth it. n Ps. 12. 6.
& 18. 30.
& 19. 8.
Prov. 30. 5.
- 141 I *am* small and despised :
yet do not I forget thy precepts. 5 Heb. *tried,*
or, refined.
- 142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteous-
 ness,
 and thy law *is* ^o the truth. o ver. 151.
Ps. 19. 9.
John 17. 17.
- 143 Trouble and anguish have ⁶ taken hold on me :
yet thy commandments *are* ^p my delights. 6 Heb.
found me.
- 144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* ever-
 lasting : p ver. 77.
^q give me understanding, and I shall live. q ver. 34, 73,
169.

136. Lam. iii. 48. Jer. ix. 18. Phil. iii. 18.

137—144. God's rule is perfectly righteous and faithful; and the Psalmist, though despised and persecuted, clings to it, and desires to understand it more thoroughly.

137. "Judgments," i. e. God's decisions in word and deed.

138. "Faithful," i. e. true to His purpose of seeking man's highest good.

139. "Hath consumed." Brought me to the brink of destruction by exposing me to persecution.

140. "Very pure." Like fire-proved, noblest metal.

145—152. Day and night, and with all earnestness the Psalmist prays that God would keep him faithful to His word, and deliver him from his enemies. He is confident that God is near, and therefore that he is safe; so excellent are God's words, that he is sure that they are eternal.

PSALMS, CXIX.

KOPH.

- 145 I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD :
I will keep thy statutes.
- 146 I cried unto thee ;
save me, ² and I shall keep thy testimonies.
- ² Or, *that I may keep.*
^r Ps. 5. 3.
& 88. 13.
& 130. 6.
^s ver. 74. 147 ^r I prevented the dawning of the morning, and
cried :
^s I hoped in thy word.
- ^t Ps. 63. 1, 6. 148 ^t Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches,
that I might meditate in thy word.
- 149 Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkind-
ness :
O LORD, ^u quicken me according to thy judg-
ment.
^u ver. 40, 154.
- 150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief :
they are far from thy law.
- ^x Ps. 145. 18. 151 Thou *art* ^x near, O LORD ;
^y ver. 142. ^y and all thy commandments *are* truth.
- 152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of
old
^z Luke 21. 33. that thou hast founded them ^z for ever.

RESH.

- ^a Lam. 5. 1. 153 ^a Consider mine affliction, and deliver me :
for I do not forget thy law.

145, 146. "I cried." Perhaps it is best to understand the latter part of each of these verses as containing the purport of the Psalmist's prayer.

147. "I prevented the dawning of the morning." Lit. "I was beforehand in the twilight;" even early before the morning dawn I cried. Early prayer implies earnest desire.

148. "My eyes have got before the night watches." The several watches of the night, as they come round, find him awake, and meditating on God's word.

149. "According to Thy judgment;" i. e. Thy righteous decree, the gracious rule which Thou hast laid down for Thyself.

150. "They draw nigh," i. e. they rush upon him with hostile purpose; but the nearer they approach, the further they are from God's law.

151. As his enemies draw nigh to persecute him, so God hastens to succour him.

152. "Concerning Thy testimonies." Rather, "from Thy testimonies." God's testimonies of themselves bear witness that they have no temporary purpose, but are perfect and eternal.

153—160. Though deeply afflicted, the Psalmist is still true to God's word; therefore he prays earnestly for help and revival. The petition "quicken me" is repeated three times in this stanza. The nearer the Psalm draws to its end, the more importunate does it become.

PSALMS, CXIX.

- 154 ^b Plead my cause, and deliver me :
^c quicken me according to thy word. b 1 Sam. 24. 15.
Ps. 35. 1.
Mic. 7. 9.
- 155 ^d Salvation *is* far from the wicked :
 for they seek not thy statutes. c ver. 40.
d Job 5. 4.
- 156 ² Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD :
^e quicken me according to thy judgments. 2 Or, *Many*.
e ver. 149.
- 157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies ;
yet do I not. ^f decline from thy testimonies. f Ps. 41. 18.
ver. 51.
- 158 I beheld the transgressors, and ^g was grieved ;
 because they kept not thy word. g ver. 136.
Ezek. 9. 4.
- 159 Consider how I love thy precepts :
^h quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-
 kindness. h ver. 88.
- 160 ³ Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning :
 and every one of thy righteous judgments
endureth for ever. 3 Heb. *The
beginning
of thy word
is true.*

SCHIN.

- 161 ⁱ Princes have persecuted me without a cause :
 but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. i 1 Sam. 24.
11, 14.
& 26. 18.
ver. 23.
- 162 I rejoice at thy word,—as one that findeth
 great spoil.
- 163 I hate and abhor lying :
but thy law do I love.
- 164 Seven times a day do I praise thee
 because of thy righteous judgments. k Prov. 3. 2.
Isai. 32. 17.
- 165 ^k Great peace have they which love thy law :
 and ⁴ nothing shall offend them. 4 Heb. *they
shall have
no stum-
blingblock.*

155. On the other hand, "the salvation of God is nigh them that fear
 "Him" (Ps. lxxxv. 9.).

158. The sight of the faithless filled him with disgust (Ps. cxxxix. 21.).
 "The recreants I survey,
 "And loathing, turn away" (*Keble*).

160. "From the beginning." Rather, "The sum of Thy word is
 "truth" (Ps. cxxxix. 17.). Taking the several parts of God's word and
 weighing them, the sum total of the whole is truth.

161—168. God's word is still, in spite of continued and unprovoked
 persecution, his fear, his joy, and his love, the object of his thanksgiving
 and the ground of his hope.

161. The fear of God is his protection from the fear of men.

162. His fear however is associated with joy, like the joy of a con-
 queror who has gained great spoil (Isa. ix. 3. Judges v. 30.).

164. Not only morning and evening, nor three times a day (Ps. lv.
 17.), but "seven times," i. e. again and again, continually; he is un-
 ceasingly giving thanks to God for His word.

165. See marg., "they shall have no stumbling-block;" i. e. no cause

PSALMS, CXIX.

- ¹ Gen. 49. 18. 166 ¹ LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation,
ver. 174. and done thy commandments.
- 167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies ;
and I love them exceedingly.
- ^m Prov. 5. 21. 168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies :
^m for all my ways *are* before thee.

TAU.

- ⁿ ver. 144. 169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD :
ⁿ give me understanding according to thy word.
- 170 Let my supplication come before thee :
deliver me according to thy word.
- ^o ver. 7. 171 ^o My lips shall utter praise,
when thou hast taught me thy statutes.
- 172 My tongue shall speak of thy word :
for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.
- 173 Let thine hand help me ;
for ^p I have chosen thy precepts.
- ^p Jo-h. 24. 22.
Prov. 1. 29.
Luke 10. 42. 174 ^q I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD ;
^q ver. 166. and ^r thy law *is* my delight.
- ^r ver. 16, 24,
47, 77, 111. 175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ;
and let thy judgments help me.
- ^s Isai. 53. 6.
Luke 15. 4,
&c.
1 Pet. 2. 25. 176 ^s I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; seek thy
servant ;
for I do not forget thy commandments.

of stumbling: no outward troubles shall cause them to fall (1 St. John ii. 10.).

169, 170. The twofold prayer, for the understanding of God's law and for deliverance, is repeated with special earnestness, as the Psalm draws to an end.

171, 172. The petitions of the two preceding verses are based upon the purpose of thankful praise of God and His word.

176. It seems strange that, after all his professions of obedience to God's word, the Psalmist should speak of himself as a wandering sheep. The explanation is perhaps to be found in ver. 67. There was a time when he wandered; but now he has turned to God, and has continued steadfast. Some render the passage, "If I have gone astray—seek Thou "like a lost sheep Thy servant;" and in that case the second clause would shew that his wandering was not apostasy; whenever he had been betrayed into by-ways, he still longed to hear the Shepherd's voice, and to return to the fold.

This Psalm reveals to us the depth of meaning which from the time of the captivity pious Jews were accustomed to see in the written law. It was not only the symbol of their distinct nationality, and the pledge of God's special favour to them, but it was the guide of their lives, and their comfort in affliction. They saw God Himself revealed in all His holiness, truth and love in the law, and their hearts were drawn out towards

PSALMS, CXX.

PSALM CXX.

1 *David prayeth against Doeg, 3 reproveth his tongue, 5 complaineth of his necessary conversation with the wicked.*

A Song of degrees.

1 **I**N ^a my distress I cried unto the LORD,—and ^a Ps. 118. 5.
he heard me. Jonah 2. 2.

it accordingly. If we desire that our hearts in like manner should burn within us in the study of God's word, we must approach it as coming to God Himself, to learn what God is, and to hear His voice. So, holding communion with God in His word, it will be to us our guide amid the temptations, and our solace amid the trials of life, the supply of all our needs, and the foretaste of that perfect vision of God which will be the joy of heaven.

PSALM CXX.

A cry of distress from among slanderous enemies.

“A song of degrees.” Lit. “a song of the goings up.” This title is given to fifteen Psalms, which, though of different dates, are placed together, and form a little Psalter by themselves. The most generally received opinion is, that they are thus put together, to serve as a collection of songs for the use of pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem for the yearly festivals. The word “going up” is the usual word for such journeys (Ps. cxxii. 4. Exod. xxxiv. 24. 1 Kings xii. 28. Isa. xxx. 29.); and the emphatic expression “*the* goings up” would seem to point to something especially solemn and distinctly prescribed, as was the case with those journeys. Others interpret the title of the return from captivity, and take these Psalms to be the songs of the pilgrim caravans on their homeward journey; and this explanation undoubtedly suits many of the Psalms. Others again explain it by the peculiarity of the poetical construction of some of the Psalms, in that the writer very frequently takes up a word or a thought of a former verse, repeating and intensifying it. This step-like movement of the thoughts is to be traced in some of the Psalms, especially in the 121st; but it seems fatal to its being considered an adequate explanation of the title, that there are several of the Psalms in which it is not observable at all. There is a Jewish tradition that these fifteen Psalms were sung on the fifteen steps which led from the court of the women in the Temple to the court of the men. This accords with the rendering of the Greek Version, “Song of the steps,” and with the spiritual interpretation which some writers have given to these Psalms, as songs of the steps which indicate the spirit of those who ascend from earthly things to God. In this view these fifteen Psalms have been termed “a spiritual stair or ladder, ‘steps ‘unto heaven,’ by which Israel mounted towards Him Who dwells in ‘heaven’” (*Kay*).

In this Psalm the writer is in great trouble, surrounded by spiteful enemies; but God has heard his cry in former distresses, and he trusts that He will deliver him now. It is uncertain whether the enemies are his own unfaithful countrymen or foreigners. By some the Psalm is referred to the time of the captivity, and to the heathen with whom the writer was in daily contact; others think it is the cry of a pilgrim passing through the desert from Babylon on his way to Palestine, and beset by

PSALMS, CXX.

² Or, *What shall the deceitful tongue give unto thee? or, What shall it profit thee?*

³ Heb. added.

⁴ Or, *It is as the sharp arrows of the mighty man, with coals of juniper.*

^b Gen. 10. 2. Ezek. 27. 13. ^c Gen. 25. 13. 1 Sam. 25. 1. Jer. 49. 23, 29.

- 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,
and from a deceitful tongue.
- 3 ² What shall be given unto thee?
Or what shall be ³ done unto thee, thou false
tongue?
- 4 ⁴ Sharp arrows of the mighty,—with coals of
juniper.
- 5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in ^b Mesech,
^c that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

savage and perfidious tribes; while others again think that the enemies spoken of are the Samaritans who tried to hinder the building of the Temple in the time of Ezra, or the Moabites and other neighbouring tribes by whom the Israelites were harassed in the days of Nehemiah.

1. "I cried." So Jonah (ii. 2.) drew hope for the future from the answer given to his former prayer.

2. "Lying lips." This is the special trouble from which the Psalmist prays for deliverance, viz. the calumny and slander of those around him. The heading of the Psalm in our English Bibles refers it to Doeg's spitefulness (1 Sam. xxij. 9. Comp. Ps. lii.); but the reference probably is to the character which the Samaritans gave of the Jews in their letter to Artaxerxes (Ezra iv. 11—16.), or to the treacherous conduct of Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. vi. 1—19.).

3. Lit. "What shall one give unto thee, and what shall one add (i. e. "further give) unto thee?" that is, "what punishment shall be bestowed, "yea, accumulated upon thee?" Or the passage may be rendered, "What "shall He (i. e. God) give unto thee?"

4. This verse answers the question of the preceding. The Psalmist is sure that his cry for help will be heard, and he tells the slanderer what he must expect.

"Of the mighty," i. e. of the Mighty One, of God (Isa. xlii. 13.), Who recompenses like with like. The false tongue, which is itself a sharp sword (Ps. lvii. 4.), a sharp arrow (Jer. ix. 8.), a fire kindled in hell (St. James iii. 6.), shall be punished by the arrows and fire of God (Ps. cxl. 10.).

"With coals of juniper." More properly, of broom. The root of the broom is said to be continually used for fires in the desert, and to retain its heat for a long time.

5. "Meshech" was a son of Japheth, and his race is frequently mentioned in Scripture in connection with Tubal, Magog, and other northern nations. They dwelt in the Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Caspian.

"Kedar," on the other hand, was one of the sons of Ishmael, whose descendants were settled in Arabia. It was impossible for any one to dwell with Meshech and among the tents of Kedar at the same time. They are introduced here therefore emblematically as two well-known barbarous tribes; much in the same way (it has been said) as we might speak of living among Turks and Hottentots. This verse would be suitable in the mouth of Nehemiah or Zerubbabel. They had hoped on returning to Jerusalem to be at peace; they found themselves in the midst of enemies.

PSALMS, CXXI.

6 My soul hath long dwelt—with him that ha'eth
peace.

7 I am ²for peace: but when I speak,—they are ²Or, a man
for war. of peace.

PSALM CXXI.

The great safety of the godly, who put their trust in God's protection.

A Song of degrees.

1 ²I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.

2 ^aMy help cometh from the LORD,
which made heaven and earth.

3 ^bHe will not suffer thy foot to be moved:

^che that keepeth thee will not slumber.

² Or, *Shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills? whence should my help come?*
See Jer. 3. 23.

^a Ps. 124. 8.

^b 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Prov. 3. 23, 26.

^c Ps. 127. 1.
Isai. 27. 3.

6, 7. The Psalm seems to close with complaint. Full long has the writer dwelt among bitter enemies, who would not have peace, but founded a quarrel on the most harmless word. But the prayer of faith with which the Psalmist begins must be understood as penetrating it to the end.

PSALM CXXI.

The Heavenly Keeper.

This Psalm is very commonly supposed to have been the evening song of the pilgrims to Jerusalem, either returning from exile or going up to the yearly feasts, when they halted for the last time, with the mountains of the city within sight. Another view is that the writer is still in banishment, looking out with longing eyes towards his native hills. All that can be said for certain is, that the Psalmist is in circumstances of danger, and encourages himself with the thought that there is One above, ever watchful, Who will be sure to keep him. The God of heaven is his keeper; he need not fear.

1. "The hills." That is, either, generally, the mountains of Israel (Ezek. vi. 3; xxxiv. 13; xxxvi. 4), or more particularly, the mountains on which the Temple was built (Ps. lxxxvii. 1; cxxxiii. 3).

"From whence." This clause is perhaps best taken interrogatively, "Whence cometh my help?" The Psalmist does not ask, as being in doubt, but in order to give occasion for the joyful answer of the next verse: it comes only from the Lord, Who sits enthroned behind, or upon, those mountains.

2. "My help cometh from." Lit. "from with," from Him with Whom is both the power and will to help, Jehovah the Creator of heaven and earth.

3. "He will not suffer," &c. Rather, "may He not suffer," &c.

"May He ne'er yield thy foot to slide,

"His watch unsleeping o'er thee keep!" (*Keble.*)

The Psalmist continues to address himself; "as thy help is wholly in the Lord, may He never suffer thy foot to stumble; may thy keeper never slumber!" And then, in the next verse, he almost recalls and

PSALMS, CXXI.

- 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The LORD is thy keeper :
the LORD is ^d thy shade ^e upon thy right hand.
- 6 ^f The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil :
he shall ^g preserve thy soul.
- 8 The LORD shall ^h preserve thy going out and thy
coming in
from this time forth, and even for evermore.

^d Isa. 25. 4.

^e Ps. 16. 8.
& 109. 31.

^f Ps. 91. 5.
Isa. 41. 10.
Rev. 7. 16.

^g Ps. 41. 2.
& 97. 10.
& 145. 20.

^h Deut. 28. 6.
Prov. 2. 8.
& 3. 6.

rebukes his prayer as unnecessary ; “ behold, the Keeper of Israel can-
“ not slumber.”

4. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers through weariness, nor is His life an alternate waking and sleeping. The eyes of His Providence are ever open over Israel. See God’s promise to Jacob, “ I am with “ thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest ” (Gen. xxviii. 15.).

5. “ The Lord is thy keeper.” This is the burden of the Psalm : be not afraid ; the Lord is Thy keeper ; He Who keeps the whole body will watch over and care for and keep thee !

“ Thy shade.” Thy shelter, as from the scorching sun (Ps. xci. 1. Isa. xxv. 4 ; xxx. 2, 3 ; xxxii. 2.). In some places the primary notion of shade is lost sight of, and the word is used simply for protection or defence (Num. xiv. 9.). And it may be so here ; the meaning may be, “ The Lord standing on thy right hand is thy defence,” as in the Prayer Book Version (comp. Ps. xvi. 8 ; cix. 31.). But the next verse, which, in accordance with the step-like character of the Psalm, rises out of this, seems to shew that the original figure is not lost sight of. The right hand, geographically, is the south, where the sun is most powerful (*Kay*).

6. The baneful influence of the Eastern sun at mid-day is frequently alluded to in Scripture (Isa. xlix. 10. Jonah iv. 8. 2 Kings iv. 19.). It is a common belief also, shared by Europeans as well as Arabs, that sleeping in the moonlight is prejudicial to the health, and particularly to the eyes. It seems more likely that the Psalmist alludes to this, than that he attributes the cold of the night to the moon (Gen. xxxi. 40. Jer. xxxvi. 30.).

7. From the hurtful influences of nature the Psalmist passes to evil of any kind and from whatever quarter : He will keep thy soul, thy very self, outwardly and inwardly, thy soul and body.

“ Preserve.” Better, “ keep :” it is the same word as in the preceding verses, the characteristic word of the Psalm.

8. “ Thy going out and thy coming in.” All the actions of thy life (Deut. xxviii. 6 ; xxxi. 2. 1 Sam. xxix. 6. 2 Sam. iii. 25. Isa. xxxvii. 28.) : everywhere and at all times, and that for ever.

How many hundreds have comforted themselves with this Psalm, in their own journeyings, or the journeyings of those belonging to them. The sweet and simple words have enabled them to soothe their fears in the assurance that they are in the hands of a Divine

PSALMS, CXXII.

PSALM CXXII.

1 *David professeth his joy for the church, 6 and prayeth for the peace thereof.*

A Song of degrees of David.

- 1 **I** WAS glad when they said unto me,
^a let us go into the house of the LORD. ^a Isai. 2. 3.
Ze.h. 8. 21.
- 2 Our feet shall stand—within thy gates, O
Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem is builded—as a city that is ^b compact ^b See 2 Sam.
5. 9.
together :
- 4 ^c whither the tribes go up, ^c Ex. 23. 17.
Deut. 16. 16.

and ever-watchful Keeper. But not for literal travellers only has the Psalm a lesson of comfort. We may apply it to all the troubles and dangers, from within and from without, which befall us in the journey of life. Our heavenly Guardian is ever at hand, and resting in Him we must be safe, whatever betide.

PSALM CXXII.

The pilgrim's wistful retrospect of his journey to Jerusalem.

The words "of David" are not found in the Greek, nor in some other ancient Versions; they are omitted also in some Hebrew MSS. Their authority therefore is very doubtful. If the Psalm is not David's, it may very fitly be attributed to the period after the restoration. We may suppose the writer to have gone up to Jerusalem for one of the great feasts, and on his return home to have given expression to the joy with which his visit had inspired him in this loving retrospect.

1. "I was glad." The Psalmist begins by recalling the time when friends or neighbours first came to him with the proposal that they should go up to Jerusalem; he remembers the thrill of joy with which he welcomed them.

2. "Our feet shall stand." Lit. "have become standing," have come to stand. The Psalmist here advances a step further; he recalls the moment when he found himself actually within the holy gates, enraptured with the scene around him.

3. The vocative is continued, "O Jerusalem, that art built up, as "a city which is compact together." If the Psalm was written after the captivity, the reference will be to the rebuilding of the city; the pilgrims rejoice to see the city raised up again from its ruin and desolation. If the Psalm is David's, he must be understood as exulting in his work of building Jerusalem, and making it so stately and magnificent. It is said that the idea of compactness especially impresses travellers in regard to Jerusalem. Standing on a rocky plateau, enclosed on three sides by deep valleys, the city is all gathered as it were into that space: it fills the space, but does not extend beyond it.

4. From the impression made by the outward appearance of Jerusalem the Psalmist passes to its greatness as the centre of religious and political life to the nation. Thither the tribes of Israel were wont, in obedience to God's command, to assemble for worship at the great

PSALMS, CXXIII.

- d Ex. 16. 24. the tribes of the LORD, unto ^d the testimony of
 Israel,
 to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
- e Deut. 17. 8. 5 ^e For there ² are set thrones of judgment,
 2 Chr. 19. 8. the thrones of the house of David.
- ² Heb. *do sit*. 6 ^f Pray for the peace of Jerusalem :
 f Ps. 51. 18. they shall prosper that love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy walls,
 and prosperity within thy palaces.
- 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes,
 I will now say, Peace *be* within thee.
- 9 Because of the house of the LORD our God
 g Ncb. 2. 10. I will ^g seek thy good.

PSALM CXXIII.

1 *The godly profess their confidence in God, 3 and pray to be delivered from contempt.*

- ^a Ps. 121. 1.
 & 141. 8.
^b Ps. 2. 4.
 & 11. 4.
 & 115. 3.

A Song of degrees.

1 **U**NTO thee ^a lift I up mine eyes,
 O thou ^b that dwellest in the heavens.

feasts (Exod. xxiii. 17 ; xxxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16.), and there also were the courts of justice, the thrones of the king and his assessors. The law particularly ordered that the seat of justice should be in the same place as the sanctuary (Deut. xvii. 8, 9).

“Unto the testimony of Israel.” Rather, “as a testimony, or law, for Israel.” The annual visits to Jerusalem were a witness to Israel’s privileges as God’s covenant people (comp. Ps. lxxxii. 4, 5).

5. “Thrones of judgment.” See 2 Sam. xv. 2, 3. 1 Kings iii. 16 ; vii. 7.

6. With the picture of Jerusalem, “the city of peace,” still fresh in his mind, the Psalmist at a distance spreads out his hands as it were over it, blessing it in the kindling of his love, and calling on all his countrymen round about and in all places to pray for its peace.

8. “For my brethren,” &c., i. e. for those of his countrymen whose home was in Jerusalem. Though his visit is over, and he is far from Jerusalem, he is still united in love to it, as the goal of his longing ; and for the sake of those who dwell there, and still more for the sake of Him Who has chosen it for His special abode, he will in all ways seek its good and pray for a blessing upon it.

Shall not we also rejoice when we are summoned to God’s house ? Though there is no longer one visible Temple, in which the faithful may meet for worship, our separate scattered churches recall the great spiritual Temple of the Holy Catholic Church, into which are gathered God’s servants of all ages and countries. With that goodly fellowship we associate ourselves, when we come and stand before God in His house. What can we do at such times, but pray for the peace and prosperity of the Church, and pledge ourselves in every possible way to seek to do her good ?

PSALMS, CXXIII.

- 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters,
and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;
so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God,
until that he have mercy upon us.
- 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us:
for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
- 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled
with the scorning of those that are at ease,
and with the contempt of the proud.
-

PSALM CXXIII.

Faith looking up to God in the midst of contempt and scorn.

A restored exile prays for help in behalf of his people exposed to contempt and persecution. Nehemiah says (ii. 19.) that their enemies laughed them to scorn and despised them, and he prayed, "Hear, "O our God, for we are despised," lit. "we are contempt" (the same word which is used twice in this Psalm, vv. 3, 4.). The peculiarity which marks others of the Psalms of degrees, by which a word used in one verse is taken up and dwelt on more emphatically in the next, is very conspicuous here. Ver. 2 intensifies and illustrates ver. 1; ver. 3 is the echo of the closing words of ver. 2; while ver. 4 repeats ver. 3.

1. "Lift I up." Lit. "have I lifted up;" but the past here includes the present. From the scorn and derision of earth, when undeserved, the Psalmist looks up to heaven in patient but trustful hope. "What shouldst thou do when the world despises and insults thee? Turn "thine eyes to heaven, and see that God, with His beloved angels "and His elect, looks down upon thee, rejoices in thee, and loves thee" (*Luther*).

2. The hand is the symbol of power: by the slave's eye being turned towards his master's hand is meant that he watches carefully for the least intimation of his will. Or the hand may be taken as the instrument of giving, and the reference may be to the slave's absolute dependence on his master. Or it may be the chastising hand that is meant; as the slave looks with entreaty to his master, deprecating punishment (Isa. ix. 13.), so the Psalmist's eyes are turned wistfully to God, until He have pity. The tone of the Psalm however indicates hopeful trust rather than humble submission. The future of His people is entirely in His hands; He will be sure some day to have mercy on His own.

4. "Those that are at ease." Especially those who abuse their ease and are wanton (see Isa. xxxii. 9, 11. Amos. vi. 1.).

The Psalm is a lesson of meekness. When we are, or fancy ourselves, scorned or forgotten, what have we to do but to look up to God and entreat His favour? It is pity for ourselves, and not vengeance on our foes, that we should seek. At the same time we must be ready to obey, like slaves waiting for some token of their master's will.

PSALMS, CXXIV.

PSALM CXXIV.

The church blesseth God for a miraculous deliverance.

A Song of degrees of David.

- 1 **I**F *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side,
a Ps. 123. 1. ^a now may Israel say ;
- 2 if *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us :
- b Ps. 56. 1, 2. & 57. 3. Prov. 1. 12. 3 then they had ^b swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us :
- 4 then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul :
- 5 then the proud waters—had gone over our soul.
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth.
- c Ps. 91. 3. Prov. 6. 5. 7 Our soul is escaped ^c as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers :
 the snare is broken, and we are escaped.
- d Ps. 121. 2. e Gen. 1. 1. Ps. 134. 3. 8 ^d Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,
^e who made heaven and earth.

PSALM CXXIV.

Hymn of thanksgiving to Him Who alone can help effectually.

As in Ps. cxxii., the words “of David” are of doubtful authority, not being found in the Greek and other ancient Versions. The imagery is like David’s ; for the figure of the overwhelming waters, see Ps. xviii. 4, 16 ; lxi. 2 ; and for the comparison of the soul to a bird, see Ps. xi. 1 ; lv. 6 ; lxxiv. 19 ; lxxxiv. 3 ; cii. 7. If it is his, it may belong to the time of the Edomite war ; but it would rather seem to refer to the time when Cyrus’ proclamation gave the captives the hope of returning to their own land. They were now set free from the net in which they had been long entangled.

1. Comp. Ps. cxxix. 1, 2.

2. “Men.” Lit. “man.” Comp. Ps. lvi. 11, where “man” is in like manner used for hostile men.

3. “They had swallowed us up quick ;” i. e. “alive ;” before life is extinct ; as in lv. 15. They would have made a complete and sudden end of us, as when the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and Abiram (Num. xvi. 30, 32, 33.).

4. The hostile power is likened to a swollen mountain stream, sweeping all before it ; as is the king of Assyria (Isa. viii. 7. See Ps. cxliv. 7.).

6. The enemies are here conceived of as beasts of prey, on account of their bloodthirstiness ; in the next verse as fowlers on account of their cunning.

8. “Who made heaven and earth.” The expression occurs fre-

PSALMS, CXXV.

PSALM CXXV.

1 *The safety of such as trust in God. 4 A prayer for the godly, and against the wicked.*

A Song of degrees.

1 **THEY** that trust in the LORD
shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

2 *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,*

quently in these Psalms, as bearing witness to the true God in the midst of idolatry (Ps. cxxi. 2; cxxxiv. 3.).

The power of Babylon was so strong that Israel's deliverance seemed beyond all expectation. If God had not interposed by bringing down the Persians upon them, Israel must have been like the prey of wild beasts, or as drowning men in a flood. In all our dangers likewise, bodily and spiritual, God is our only help. Again and again He makes us perceive that nothing but His free and unsought mercy has been our salvation; and who can tell in how many cases He has saved us without our knowledge! Especially He is our protection from our great spiritual enemy, in whom the fierceness of the wild beast, the suddenness of the flood, the craft of the fowler, all have their counterpart. Let us only in all dangers look to Him, and this Psalm may be hereafter the song of our own happy experience.

PSALM CXXV.

Jehovah the defence of the faithful.

On their return to Palestine, after a wearisome journey of four months, the exiles found their native land uncultivated and desolate, and Jerusalem in ruins. Even when the building of the temple had been begun they had much to endure, and the faith of some gave way. If they did not become actual idolaters, they neglected the worship of Jehovah. Thus there were two parties in the nation; some held fast by God, others leaned to heathen vices. The Psalmist encourages the faithful by assuring them that they would triumph in the end. As surely as the encompassing mountains guard Jerusalem, so will the Lord encompass and defend His people.

1. "Abideth." Standeth firm. Though the buildings of the city may be destroyed, the mountain itself remains; it stands unmoved like the solid earth (Ps. xciii. 1; civ. 5.).

2. Lit. "Jerusalem,—mountains are round about her; and the Lord is "round about His people." It is said that to a traveller approaching Jerusalem the towers stand against the sky, and seem to overtop the neighbouring hills; but any one in the city itself would perceive that the hills in every direction are higher. On the east the Mount of Olives is nearly two hundred feet above the city, while an outlying ridge bends round on the north. The ground rises gently on the west, and on the south there is the Hill of Evil Counsel. If the Holy City has its surrounding mountains, the nation has a far surer defence in the Lord; for "the mountains may depart and the hills be removed; "but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant "of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. liv. 10. Comp. Zech. ii. 4, 5.).

PSALMS, CXXVI.

so the LORD *is* round about his people
from henceforth even for ever.

^a Prov. 22. 8.
Isai. 14. 5.
² Heb.
wickedness.

3 For ^a the rod of ² the wicked shall not rest upon
the lot of the righteous ;
lest the righteous put forth their hands unto
iniquity.

4 Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be* good,
and to *them that are* upright in their hearts.

^b Prov. 2. 15.

5 As for such as turn aside unto their ^b crooked
ways,
the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers
of iniquity :

^c Ps. 128. 6.
Gal. 6. 16.

but ^c peace shall be upon Israel.

PSALM CXXVI.

² Heb.
*returned
the return-
ing of Zion,*
Ps. 53. 6.
& 85. 1.
Hos. 6. 11.
Joel 3. 1.

1 *The church, celebrating her incredible return out of captivity, 4 prayeth
for, and prophesieth the good success thereof.*

A Song of degrees.

1 **W**HEN the LORD ² turned again the captivity
of Zion,

3. The rod means the sceptre, or symbol of authority (Ps. ii. 9 ;
xlv. 6.).

The lot of the righteous is the Holy Land, the inheritance of God's
people. The Psalmist declares that the sceptre of heathen tyranny
shall not always rest on the land, shall not rest on it as its home. God
will not suffer the oppression of His people to last for ever, lest it should
lead to apostasy. This confidence in God's deliverance is adduced by
the Psalmist, not, as we might have expected, as the *consequence* of
God's watching round those who trust in Him, but rather as a *proof*
of it. The verse is introduced by "for," not by "therefore." The
Psalmist is so sure that God will not suffer the enemies of His people to
prevail, that he speaks of their discomfiture as already accomplished.

4, 5. The Psalm closes with a prayer that God will bless the faithful
but remove the cowardly, those who are afraid to confess Him, together
with the open transgressors, out of the way.

5. "But peace shall be upon Israel." This should rather be taken
as an ejaculatory prayer, "Peace upon Israel" (Ps. cxxviii. 6.). Comp.
Gal. vi. 16.

Trouble of every kind, and especially persecution, is the touchstone
of men's faith and sincerity ; by it the thoughts of many hearts are
revealed. If we would stand in the day of trial, we must learn the
lesson which this Psalm teaches, the lesson of simple trust in God ;
we must look up to Him as our only defence, towering high above us
indeed, yet bending graciously down to protect and embrace us ; and we
must pray, not only that God will do good to those who are good and
true of heart, but that He will make us good and true, and enable us so
to trust in Him at all times, as that we may have personal experience
of His peace.

PSALMS, CXXVI.

- ^a we were like them that dream. ^a Acts 12. 9.
- 2 Then ^b was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with singing :
then said they among the heathen,
the LORD ² hath done great things for them. ^b Job 8. 21.
- 3 The LORD hath done great things for us ;—
whereof we are glad. ² Heb. *hath magnified to do with them.*
- 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD,
as the streams in the south.

PSALM CXXVI.

A prayer for the completion of the restoration happily begun.

The Psalm supposes that the first company of exiles has returned to their homes, and the writer thanks God for the unexpected deliverance. It seemed like a dream, but it was not a dream; the Lord had wrought wonderfully for them, and they rejoiced. Nevertheless those who had returned were but a small proportion of the whole people, and they had many difficulties and discouragements to contend with. The Psalmist therefore prays that the work of restoration may be fully carried out, and that those still remaining in Babylon may be brought back in a mighty stream, to occupy and refresh the land. And he looks forward to the fulfilment of his prayer. In spite of present discouragements there would be a bright and prosperous future. Though tears might accompany the sowing, the harvest would be rich and plenteous.

1. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion." Or, "When the Lord brought back the returning ones of Zion;" i. e. when He put it into the heart of Cyrus to issue his proclamation sanctioning the return (Ezra i. 1).

"Like them that dream." They could not believe their senses; they thought they were dreaming: so St. Peter (Acts xii. 9).

2. "Laughter." Comp. Gen. xxi. 6. Job viii. 21.

"Singing." Rather, "a joyous shout."

"Hath done great things." Lit. as in margin, "hath magnified to do," i. e. hath displayed His transcendent goodness with, or in regard to, these men (Joel ii. 20.). Even the heathen confessed that it was the Lord's doing: and the captives themselves, now safe at home, take up the word and exult in it.

4. The work thus mightily begun was not complete. Those who had as yet returned were only a small vanguard compared with the whole nation.

"Turn again our captivity." Rather, "bring back our (remaining) captives."

"In the south," i. e. in the Negeb, the name given to the southern part of Judæa, stretching down to the edge of the desert. It is a dry and thirsty land, further removed from the fertilising influence of the sea-breezes than any other part of the Holy Land. But the winter rains fill the watercourses and bring verdure and fruitfulness. So the Psalmist prays that the Holy Land, which now yearns for her children as the parched desert thirsts for the winter torrents, may be refreshed

PSALMS, CXXVII.

^c See Jer. 31.
^d, &c.
² Or,
singing.
³ Or,
seed basket.

5 ^c They that sow in tears—shall reap in ² joy.
 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing
³ precious seed,
 shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
 bringing his sheaves *with him.*

PSALM CXXVII.

² Or, of
Solomon,
 Ps. 72, title.

¹ *The virtue of God's blessing.* ³ *Good children are his gift.*

A Song of degrees ² for Solomon.

³ Heb. that
 are *builders*
 of it in it.

¹ **E**XCEPT the LORD build the house,
 they labour in vain ³ that build it :

by a returning population, poured out like refreshing streams in all directions.

5. The Psalmist anticipates the fulfilment of his prayer. The returned exiles were like persons sowing in fear and misgiving, but God would be gracious to them, and the tearful sowing would be followed by an abundant harvest. The words were true in their literal meaning; for they were visited with continual drought and failures of crops (Hag. i. 10, 11; ii. 19.), and they might well be fearful as to the issue of their sowing. But doubtless the seed-time and harvest are emblematical, and the Psalmist's meaning is, that their present sorrow should be turned into joy. The foundations of the Temple were laid amidst weeping (Ezra iii. 12.), but its completion was an occasion of special joy (Ezra vi. 16, 22. Neh. xii. 43.).

6. This verse may be more exactly rendered, "Going he goes, and weeping, bearing a handful of seed; coming he comes, with a joyful shout, bearing his sheaves."

"Precious seed." In Amos ix. 13 the sower is described as he that draweth out and scattereth the seed; here the corresponding substantive means doubtless the seed which he draws out at a time, i. e. a handful or cast.

The figure of this verse is an amplification of that in ver. 5. Under God's providential care, the dry land is well watered, and the handful of seed sown in sorrow becomes sheaves joyfully carried from the harvest-field.

Whatever men really do for God, be it ever so sorrowfully and despondingly, will in the end prosper and bear fruit. 'In due season we shall reap, if we faint not' (Gal. vi. 9.). Our Lord has taught us to give a wide and general application to the words of the Psalm: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." This is true not only of sorrow for sin, but of all sorrow patiently endured; it is sure to bring comfort in the end.

PSALM CXXVII.

Everything depends on God's blessing.

The Hebrew title, which attributes this Psalm to Solomon, is wanting in the Greek Version. The Syriac, in addition to the title, "spoken by David with reference to Solomon," has the words, "spoken with reference to Haggai and Zechariah, who were urging men to build the Temple." In favour of Solomon's authorship is alleged the proverb-like

PSALMS, CXXVII.

except ^a the LORD keep the city,
the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

^a Ps. 121. 3,
4, 5.

2 *It is vain* for you to rise up early, to sit up
late,

to ^b eat the bread of sorrows :

^b Gen. 3. 17, 19.

for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

form of the Psalm, as well as certain particular coincidences of expression with the writings of Solomon (comp. ver. 2, "sorrows," toilsome efforts with Prov. v. 10, where the same word is rendered "labours;" ver. 4, "sons begotten in a man's youth" with "wife married in a man's youth," Prov. v. 18; ver. 5 "in the gate" with Prov. xxii. 22; xxiv. 7.). The whole Psalm too may be regarded as an unfolding of the proverb (Prov. x. 22.), "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth "no sorrow with it" (rather, "labour addeth nothing thereto"). Besides this, many persons see an allusion to Solomon's name (Jedidiah, "beloved of the Lord," 2 Sam. xii. 25.) in ver. 2, "so He giveth His "beloved sleep," or perhaps, as will be explained below, "in sleep." On the other hand, the general character of the Psalm is suitable to the times after the captivity, and it might very well have been written either by Zerubbabel or Nehemiah. In a sparse population, such as that of Palestine after the restoration, as in a newly colonised country now, the blessing of a large and strong family is specially recognised. The great topic of the Psalm, that everything depends upon the blessing of God, is specially illustrated in domestic life.

1. "**The house.**" Lit. "a house," which seems to shew that there is no special reference to the Temple. The Psalmist's words are general; the building of a house, the safety of a city, the obtaining of things necessary for life and comfort, the rearing of children, are blessings unattainable by human efforts, without God's help and grace. In like manner, in the spiritual building, however men may labour, they are only fellow-workers with God; the structure is really His (1 Cor. iii. 9.). As the individual house cannot be built without God's help, so neither can the collection of houses, which form the city, be preserved unless God guard it.

2. Lit. "making early to rise, making late to sit down," for food (1 Sam. xx. 24.) and rest. The picture is that of men relying entirely on themselves, and lengthening the day of labour to the utmost. But it is in vain; they do but eat the "bread of sorrows" (with reference doubtless to Gen. iii. 17.).

"**So He giveth His beloved sleep.**" The usual interpretation with modern expositors is, "Thus (in like manner—the same thing which "you procure by toilsome effort) He giveth to His beloved in, or by, "sleep," while they sleep. The restless, self-reliant man may toil early and late, but he toils in vain; while he who fears and trusts in God is blessed even when he sleeps. If the Authorised Version is followed, it must be explained somewhat in this way; in vain ye toil and moil, and curtail the time of rest; so, i. e. without such toiling and moiling, He gives to His beloved sleep; they are not restless and anxious, but lay them down in peace, and God gives them sleep.

"Still on the favoured of His eyes

"He bids sweet slumber freely wait" (*Keble*).

PSALMS, CXXVIII.

- ^c Gen. 33. 5. & 48. 4.
^d Josh. 24. 3, 4.
^d Deut. 28. 4.
- 3 Lo, ^c children *are* an heritage of the LORD :
and ^d the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.
- 4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man ;
 so *are* children of the youth.
- ^e Heb. *hath filled his quiver with them.*
^e See Job 5. 4. Prov. 27. 11.
 5 Happy *is* the man—that ² hath his quiver full
 of them :
^e they shall not be ashamed,
 but they ³ shall speak with the enemies in the
 gate.
- ³ Or, *shall subdue, as Ps. 18. 47. or, destroy.*

PSALM CXXVIII.

The sundry blessings which follow them that fear God.

A Song of degrees.

- ^a Ps. 112. 1. & 115. 13. & 119. 1.
- 1 **BLESSED** ^a *is* every one that feareth the
 LORD ;
 that walketh in his ways.

3. "Lo." He calls special attention to the gift of children, as an example of man's dependence in all things on God's blessing.

4. "Children of the youth," i. e. born in early married life, as opposed to "sons of old age" (Gen. xxxvii. 3; xlv. 20.). Comp. the expression "a wife of youth" (Prov. v. 18. Mal. ii. 14. Isa. liv. 6.).

It has been suggested that the comparison of a family of sturdy sons to arrows in the hand of a warrior would be especially appropriate to a time of constant danger, when the sword was carried side by side with the trowel (Neh. iv. 16—18.).

5. "Of them," i. e. of such arrows.

"They," i. e. the father and the sons together. If they have to defend themselves against enemies, they are not easily over-awed or disheartened. Unjust judges, malicious accusers, and false witnesses retire before a family so capable of defending itself.

"Shall speak." The margin suggests "shall subdue;" but the word is only twice used in that sense (Ps. xviii. 47; xlvii. 3.).

"In the gate." The gate was the place of concourse, and especially of the administration of justice (see Deut. xxi. 19; xxv. 7. Job v. 4. Prov. xxii. 22. Isa. xxix. 21. Amos v. 10, 12.).

PSALM CXXVIII.

God's blessing upon the righteous.

The subject of this Psalm is the domestic happiness of the man who fears God. Such a prosperous home-life as is here described would be to the Jew a sure token of God's favour. It has been suggested that this Psalm stands to the preceding in the same relation that Christ's Parable of the pearl of great price stands to that of the hid treasure. The 127th Psalm speaks of blessings which come to men unsought, as God's free gift, in contrast with the restless activity of men; this Psalm represents the sure blessedness of those who labour diligently in dependence on God's help.

1. The reality of a man's fear of God is proved by his walking in God's ways.

PSALMS, CXXVIII.

- 2 ^b For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands : ^b Isai. 3. 10.
 happy shalt thou be, and *it shall be* well with thee.
- 3 Thy wife shall be ^c as a fruitful vine by the ^c sides of thine house :
 thy children ^d like olive plants round about thy ^d table. ^d P. 52. 8. & 144. 12.
- 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed
 that feareth the LORD.
- 5 ^e The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion : ^e Ps. 134. 3.
 and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem
 all the days of thy life.
- 6 Yea, thou shalt ^f see thy children's children,
 and ^g peace upon Israel. ^f Gen. 50. 23, Job 42. 16. ^g Ps. 125. 5.

2. "The labour of thine hands." See Hag. i. 11; ii. 17. As formerly Moses threatened to the Israelites who should break God's covenant, that their enemies should eat up the fruit of their land (Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 33, 39, 40. Amos v. 11. Micah vi. 15.), so here it is promised as a special blessing to the God-fearing man that he should not be deprived of that for which he had honestly laboured.

3. From the blessing which attends him outside the house, the Psalmist turns to the happy state of things within. The wife is fitly represented by the vine, as delicate and needing support; it is the emblem also of fruitfulness and beauty.

"By the sides of thine house." These words refer probably to the wife, not to the vine; "in the innermost parts of thy house," as portraying the faithful wife, who is ever to be found at home, devoted to her husband and family.

"Like olive plants." Not "branches," as in Prayer Book Version. The olive is said to be usually surrounded by young and vigorous shoots. These shoots seem to protect and embrace the parent tree; such are young and affectionate children round the family table, full of strength and promise.

5. The Psalmist turns once more to address the godly man, whose blessedness he has been describing. The blessing of Jehovah, Whose abode is in Zion, shall rest upon him, and, for his sake, upon his country also. All his life, which shall be prolonged so as to see his children's children, he shall look on the prosperity of Jerusalem.

"Thou shalt see." Lit. "look thou;" so in next verse, "see thou." The God-fearing man is bidden to do that which according to the promise that has gone before it is certain he will do.

6. "And peace upon Israel." Rather, "Peace be upon Israel!" the ejaculatory intercession at the end of the Psalm; as in Ps. cxxv.

This Psalm is a thorough picture of the Jewish idea of happiness:—a God-fearing, industrious man, reaping the fruit of his industry, living peacefully and joyously in the bosom of his family, with God's blessing resting evidently upon him and making him a blessing to those around him. Though temporal prosperity is not the special sanction of the Christian covenant, as it was of the Jewish, a good man is still sure in some way to bring a blessing to his family, his country and the Church.

PSALMS, CXXIX.

PSALM CXXIX.

- 1 *An exhortation to praise God for saving Israel in their great afflictions.*
5 *The haters of the church are cursed.*

A Song of degrees.

² Or, *Much.*

^a See Ezek.

23. 3.

Hos. 2. 15.

& 11. 1.

^b Ps. 124. 1.

- 1 ² **M**^aANY a time have they afflicted me from
^b my youth,
2 many a time have they afflicted me from my
youth :
yet they have not prevailed against me.
3 The plowers plowed upon my back :
they made long their furrows.
4 The LORD *is* righteous :
he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
5 Let them all be confounded and turned back—
that hate Zion.

PSALM CXXIX.

The oppressors of Zion, repeatedly thwarted, shall in the end be completely destroyed.

The Psalmist looks back thankfully on the many and severe persecutions from which God had delivered His people ; and his remembrance of the past encourages him confidently to expect the entire discomfiture of the enemies of Zion in the future. There is no special reference to the restoration ; but such a retrospect and anticipation would be very natural at that time.

1. "From my youth." The sojourn in Egypt was the time of Israel's youth (see marg. ref.).

2. "Have not prevailed." Comp. 2 Cor. iv. 9. The Church has ever been burned with fire, but not consumed.

3. As elsewhere it is said that the enemies of Israel have driven over her (Ps. lxxvi. 12. Isa. li. 23.), so here the persecutions she has been subjected to are compared to the driving of a plough over her back. The words of the Psalm are often applied to the terrible scourging which Christ endured (St. Matt. xxvii. 26. St. John xix. 1. Isa. l. 6.).

4. "Righteous." God's righteousness is the ground of Israel's deliverance. If He was righteous in His judgments, as Israel herself confessed (Neh. ix. 33. Jer. xii. 1.), He was also righteous in succouring the penitent.

"The cords." More exactly, "the bands or traces." There seems to be a reference to the figure employed in ver. 3. When the cords which bind the oxen to the plough are cut, the ploughman's work is necessarily stopped (Job xxxix. 10.). Or the word may simply mean the bands of their captivity (Ps. ii. 3.).

5. The verbs in this and the following verse are all futures ; they express the language of confidence therefore rather than of prayer ; all that hate Zion will be forced to retreat ashamed and disappointed.

PSALMS, CXXX.

- 6 Let them be as ^c the grass *upon* the housetops, ^c Ps. 37. 2.
 which withereth afore it groweth up :
 7 wherewith the mower filleth not his hand ;
 nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.
 8 Neither do they which go by say,
^d the blessing of the LORD *be* upon you : ^d Ruth 2. 4.
 we bless you in the name of the LORD. Ps. 118. 26.

PSALM CXXX.

- 1 *The psalmist professeth his hope in prayer, 5 and his patience in hope.*
⁷ *He exhorteth Israel to hope in God.*

A Song of degrees.

- 1 **O**UT ^a of the depths have I cried unto thee, O ^a LORD. ^a Lam. 3. 55.
Jonah 2. 2.

6. The fate of the enemies of Jerusalem is compared to the tufts of grass, which are to be found on the flat roofs of eastern houses ; having no depth of soil, they soon wither away (comp. Isa. xxxvii. 27.).

“*Afore it groweth up,*” i. e., before it shoot forth and blossom ; or, as in the Prayer Book Version, “*afore it be plucked up ;*” lit. “before one plucks it up.”

7, 8. The image of the roof-grass is carried on, and brought vividly before the mind. The end of such grass is very different from that which befalls the grass or corn of the field ; no joyous harvest associations belong to it. Israel, on the contrary, is like a field which the Lord hath blessed, and which calls forth the congratulations of all who pass by.

8. This greeting to the reapers is taken from the life. “The Lord *be with you*” was Boaz’ salutation to his reapers ; and “The Lord *bless thee*” was their response (Ruth ii. 4.).

“*We bless you in the name of the Lord.*” This is to be understood as the counter-greeting of the harvesters.

God’s people at all times may comfort themselves with the belief in the final and complete victory of good over evil ; and the way in which the Psalmist continues to dwell on the contrast between the worthless roof-grass and the harvest seems especially to lead our thoughts on to the time when that victory shall be accomplished, and all the people of God shall be safely gathered in amid universal exclamations of joy.

PSALM CXXX.

**From the depth of self-condemnation to the assurance
of hope.**

The author and the date of this Psalm are alike unknown ; but it is commonly referred to the time of the captivity. The Psalmist, in deep affliction from the consciousness of sin, calls earnestly upon God. He cannot help himself ; his only hope is in the Divine compassion. For that compassion he has waited long and anxiously, waited with full trust that it would not fail him ; and it has not failed. Thus the Psalm rises from the depth of self-condemnation to the full assurance that with God there is the forgiveness and salvation which he needs.

1. “*Out of the depths,*” i. e. out of the deep waters of sorrow (Ps.

- ^b Ps. 113. 2.
Rom. 3. 23,
23, 24.
- ^c Ex. 34. 7.
- ^d 1 Km. 8. 40.
Ps. 2. 11,
Jer. 33. 8, 9.
- ^e Ps. 27. 14,
& 33. 20.
& 40. 1.
Isai. 8. 17.
& 23. 8.
& 30. 13.
- ^f Ps. 119. 81.
- 2 Lord, hear my voice:—let thine ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications.
- 3 ^b If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand ?
- 4 But *there is* ^c forgiveness with thee,
that ^d thou mayest be feared.
- 5 ^e I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,
and ^f in his word do I hope.

lxix. 2, 14. Isa. li. 10. Ezek. xxvii. 34.). The sinner looks around him, and sees nothing but his sins; he is overwhelmed by them; they compass him about and keep him down; he cannot extricate himself from their guilt and power: therefore, as his only hope, he cries to God, and entreats Him to listen to his cry.

2. "Attentive." The word is found only here and in 2 Chron. vi. 40; vii. 15: hence it has been supposed that in the addition made in the book of Chronicles (2 Chron. vi. 40—42.) to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, the chronicler is quoting from this Psalm in ver. 40, as from Ps. cxxxii. 8, 10, 16, in vv. 41, 42.

3. "Mark." Lit. "preserve," "keep." God preserves a man's sin, when He keeps it in remembrance and imputes it to him; when He records it in His book, and does not blot out the record (Ps. lvi. 8. Mal. iii. 16. Rev. xx. 12.); when, as it is expressed in the book of Job (xiv. 17.), He keeps it sewed up, as in a bag, ready for punishment. The inevitable consequence of such strict remembrance of sin must be man's destruction. Everything depends on God's having pity on him; he must sink in the depths of fear and anguish—he cannot stand—if God deal with his sins according to justice, and not according to His tender mercy.

4. "But." The Heb. word is "for." Verse 3 is virtually a prayer that God would not deal with him strictly, which prayer is grounded on the plea that His property is to forgive. Comp. the prayer of the Communion-Service, "Whose property is always to have mercy."

"Forgiveness." Lit. "the forgiveness;" as in ver. 7 "the mercy." By "the forgiveness" is probably meant the mercy which the suppliant needs. The word here used for forgiveness is only found in Dan. ix. 9. Neh. ix. 17. The corresponding verb occurs frequently in 2 Chron. vi. (see vv. 21, 25, 27, 30, 39.).

"That thou mayest be feared." This is the purpose of God in forgiving; viz. that we may fear and reverence and obey Him. The exceeding condescension and tenderness of the love of God makes the sinner—not shrink from Him,—not think lightly of his sin, but—bow down before Him with profoundest reverence. It was the depth of his awe and humility, not any desire to be separated from Christ, that made St. Peter cry out, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (St. Luke v. 8. See Jer. xxxiii. 9.).

5. "I wait." The tense is past; but the meaning probably is, "I have waited and do wait;" that is the attitude of his mind towards God. Confident in God's mercy, his soul hangs upon Him.

"In His word," i. e. in His promise.

PSALMS, CXXXI.

- 6 ^g My soul *waiteth* for the Lord
 more than they that watch for the morning :
² *I say, more than they that watch for the*
 morning. ^g Ps. 63. 6.
& 119. 147.
- 7 ^h Let Israel hope in the LORD :
 for ⁱ with the LORD *there is* mercy,
 and with him *is* plenteous redemption. ² Or, *which*
watch unto
the morning.
^h Ps. 131. 3.
ⁱ Ps. 86. 5, 15.
Isai. 55. 7.
- 8 And ^k he shall redeem Israel—from all his ^k
 iniquities. ^k Ps. 103. 3, 4.
Matt. 1. 21.

PSALM CXXXI.

1 *David, professing his humility.* 3 *exhorteth Israel to hope in God.*

A Song of degrees of David.

1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine
 eyes lofty :

6. “My soul waiteth for the Lord.” Lit. “is to the Lord,” like those who in the night time wait for the morning. The repetition of the words “they that watch for the morning,” gives the impression of protracted, painful watching. The wretched consciousness of sin, under which the Psalmist groans, is like the darkness of night, from which he hopes to escape into the sunny realm of love: and not he himself alone, but all Israel, for whom also the attitude of patient, believing waiting is the way of salvation.

7. “With the Lord there is mercy.” Lit. “the mercy.” With the Lord and Him alone, but with Him in all its fulness, is the mercy which man’s condition needs, the mercy which gives freedom, peace and joy.

“And with Him is plenteous redemption.” It is like the sea, which, however largely you may draw from it, is still inexhaustible. Of what nature that redemption is, is shewn in the next verse; “He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,” not merely from the consequences of sin, but from the sin itself. He will not only pardon, but cleanse the sinner.

This is the sixth of the penitential Psalms. The sinner, conscious of the degradation and guilt of sin, encourages himself with the thought that there is a greater deep, viz. the deep of God’s mercy, a deep which nothing can exhaust. It is a deep not of mercy only, but of plenteous and complete salvation; and whosoever believes and trusts in it can never be disappointed.

PSALM CXXXI.

The humility of perfect trust.

If this Psalm is rightly ascribed to David, we might almost take it as his secret answer to the reproach of his brother Eliab, “I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle” (1 Sam. xvii. 28.). David’s brethren knew as well as himself God’s design for him, and the jealousy which betrays itself in Eliab’s words probably found frequent utterance. We may well conceive David secretly solacing himself with the thought, that He Who knew

^a Rom. 12. 16.

² Heb. *walk*.

³ Heb.

wonderful,

Job 42. 3.

Ps. 133. 6.

⁴ Heb.

my soul.

^b Matt. 18. 3.

1 Cor. 14. 20.

^c Ps. 130. 7.

⁵ Heb.

from now.

- ^a neither do I ² exercise myself in great matters,
or in things too ³ high for me.
- 2 Surely I have behaved and quieted ⁴ myself,
^b as a child that is weaned of his mother :
my soul *is* even as a weaned child.
- 3 ^c Let Israel hope in the LORD—⁵from henceforth
and for ever.

his inward heart, knew how careful he was to repress all proud, ambitious thoughts, and to wait God's time for entering on the higher duties and responsibilities to which he knew himself to be called. Others see in the Psalm an echo of David's answer to the taunts of Michal, "And I will become of still less account than this, and I will be lowly in mine own eyes" (2 Sam. vi. 22.). The Psalm is indeed a faithful representation of David's whole life: the humility, resignation, patient waiting upon God, here portrayed, were never more perfectly realized than in him. If the Psalm was not written by David, it probably belongs to the time after the exile; the spirit of humble and patient waiting, to which it gives expression, would especially befit that day of small things.

1. Pride has its seat in the heart, is seen in the countenance, and expresses itself in outward actions; in every form and kind the Psalmist repudiates it.

It is said of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 16.) that his heart was "high." See Hab. ii. 4.

"Nor mine eyes lofty." The same expression occurs in a Davidic Psalm (xviii. 27.); comp. Prov. xxx. 13.

"Neither do I exercise myself." Lit. "I do not walk;" my course of life does not lie in them; I have nothing to do with them.

"Great matters." See Jer. xlv. 5.

"Too high." Lit. "too wonderful;" the same word is used (Gen. xviii. 14. Deut. xvii. 8; xxx. 11.).

2. "I have behaved." Lit. "I have levelled." The word is used of making the surface of a field level by ploughing (Isa. xxviii. 25.). The Psalmist means that he has made his soul smooth and even, so that humility is its natural condition.

"Quieted." Hushed and calmed it, so that it is silent, and lets God speak and work in it and for it (Ps. lxii. 1, 5.).

"As a child that is weaned of his mother." As a weaned child, not one that has just begun to be weaned, but an actually weaned child, lies upon its mother's breast without fretting, simply contented with the fact that it has its mother; so the Psalmist's soul, by nature restless, is still, not craving for earthly goods, but wholly satisfied with the presence and fellowship of God. It is a picture of perfect tranquillity, all natural longing being removed.

3. In no boastful spirit has the Psalmist spoken of his humility and resignation, but to urge others in like manner to wait on God in lowliness and patient trust.

Trust in God is the way to resignation; and resignation begets humility. Let a man once learn to rest calmly on the love and wisdom of God, and there will be no room in his heart for impatience or for pride. The will of God will cure all thought of self; he will not only not seek

PSALMS, CXXXII.

PSALM CXXXII.

¹ David in his prayer commendeth unto God the religious care he had for the ark. ⁸ His prayer at the removing of the ark, ¹¹ with a repetition of God's promises.

A Song of degrees.

1 **L**ORD, remember David,—and all his afflictions:

2 how he sware unto the LORD,

^a and vowed unto ^b the mighty God of Jacob; ^a Ps. 65. 1.

3 surely I will not come into the tabernacle of ^b Gen. 49. 24.

my house,

nor go up into my bed;

great things for himself, but when they come, he will accept them without self-complacency and in all humility, simply because they are the will of God (St. Luke i. 38.).

PSALM CXXXII.

Prayer for the recompence of David's piety in the perpetuity of his seed.

Part of this Psalm (vv. 8—10.) corresponds almost exactly with the words with which Solomon is said (2 Chron. vi. 41, 42.) to have concluded his dedication service. It is natural therefore to suppose, though the Psalm is not expressly ascribed to Solomon, that it was composed by him for the occasion of the removal of the Ark from the Tabernacle, in which it was placed by David, to the newly-built Temple (see 2 Chron. v. 2, &c.). The son pleads before God, first, his father's anxiety and zeal for God's worship, and, secondly, the promises made to his father and his seed; and he prays that God would make Zion His perpetual dwelling-place, and establish David's throne for ever. We can understand that the restored Israelites would take delight in adopting Solomon's words, and would encourage themselves with the thought of God's mercies pledged to David. This would account for the place of the Psalm among the songs of degrees; but inasmuch as they had no Ark to place in their Temple, nor any king to be designated God's anointed, it is difficult to suppose that it was originally composed for the dedication of the second Temple (Ezra vi. 16—22.). This, however, is the opinion of some expositors.

1. Rather, "Remember to David all his afflictions;" remember, so as to requite him and fulfil the promises made to him (Jer. ii. 2. Neh. v. 19.).

"All his afflictions." Lit. "his being afflicted," his harassing cares and painful efforts for God's honour (comp. 1 Chron. xxii. 14.). David's anxiety to prepare a sanctuary for the Lord began with his vow not to take any rest until he had placed the Ark in a suitable dwelling-place in Jerusalem, but it shewed itself also in his desire to erect a Temple to His honour, and, when that desire was forbidden, in his care to prepare the materials for the house to be built hereafter by his son.

3. The meaning seems to be, that David would not give himself up

PSALMS, CXXXII.

- ^c Prov. 6. 4. 4 I will ^e not give sleep to mine eyes,
or slumber to mine eyelids,
^d Acts 7. 46. 5 until I ^d find out a place for the LORD,
^e Heb. ha-
bitations. 2 an habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob.
- ^e 1 Sam. 17. 12. 6 ¶ Lo, we heard of it ^e at Ephratah :
^f 1 Sam. 7. 1. ^f we found it ^g in the fields of the wood.
^g 1 Chr. 13. 5. 7 We will go into his tabernacles :
^h Ps. 5. 7. & 93. 5. ^h we will worship at his footstool.

to the enjoyment of his home, or to rest, until he had found a fixed abode for the Ark; he dwelt in his house without dwelling in it, and lay down without entire repose (comp. 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.). The addition in the Prayer Book Version, "neither the temples of my head to take any rest," comes from the Greek Version.

6. This and the following verse are to be understood as spoken by the people: "we have found the Ark (they cried); let us go forth and worship."

"We heard of it at Ephratah." Some render, "We heard it" (i. e. the summons in ver. 7 to go unto His tabernacle); but this explanation does not suit the second clause, "We found it in the fields of the wood." The pronoun is generally understood of the Ark. By "the fields of the wood," lit. "the fields of Jaar," is no doubt meant Kirjath-jearim, "the city of woods," Jaar being the singular of Jearim; and the history tells us that it was to Kirjath-jearim, where the Ark had been for twenty years in the house of Abinadab, that David and his army went forth to fetch it. But it is difficult to explain the reference to Ephratah in the first clause. Ephratah is the ancient name of Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 16, 19; xlviii. 7.); but the Ark never was at Bethlehem. Hence some explain the passage, "We (i. e. David and his family) when we were in Bethlehem, used to hear of it," and they suppose that even in his youth David longed to be able to remove the Ark out of its obscurity. But the parallel clause, "We found it in the fields of the wood," seems to require that the first clause should be rendered, "We heard that it was at Ephratah." Others think that the reference is to Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim, where the Ark remained for several years. The word "Ephrathite" is used as commonly for "Ephraimite" as it is for "Bethlehemite" (see Judges xii. 5 (Heb.). 1 Sam. i. 1. 1 Kings xi. 26.); Ephratah therefore may not unreasonably be supposed to be another name for Ephraim. This appears the simplest explanation; but another suggestion is, that Ephratah is the name of the district in which Kirjath-jearim lay. Kirjath-jearim, it would seem, was peopled by the descendants of Shobal, the son of Hur, who peopled Bethlehem. The mother of Hur was Ephrath, or Ephratah, the wife of Caleb: her son was the father of Bethlehem, and her grandson the father of Kirjath-jearim (1 Chron. ii. 19, 50; iv. 4.). It is possible therefore that the district about Kirjath-jearim as well as Bethlehem was known by her name.

7. "Tabernacles," i. e. the tent erected on Mount Zion for the Ark.

"His footstool," i. e. the Ark (1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Ps. xcix. 5.).

PSALMS, CXXXII.

- 8 ⁱ Arise, O LORD, into thy rest ;
 thou, and ^k the ark of thy strength. i Num. 10. 35.
2 Chr. 6. 41,
42.
- 9 Let thy priests ^l be clothed with righteousness ;
 and let thy saints shout for joy. k Ps. 78. 61.
l Job 29. 14.
ver. 16.
Lai. 61. 10.
- 10 For thy servant David's sake
 turn not away the face of thine anointed.
- 11 ¶ ^m The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David ;
 he will not turn from it ;
ⁿ of the fruit of ² thy body will I set upon thy
 throne. m Ps. 89. 3,
4, 33, &c.
& 110. 4.
n 2 Sam. 7. 12.
1 Kin. 8. 25.
2 Chr. 6. 16.
Luke 1. 69.
Acts 2. 30.
- 12 If thy children will keep my covenant
 and my testimony that I shall teach them,
 their children shall also sit upon thy throne
 for evermore. 2 Heb.
thy belly.
- 13 ^o For the LORD hath chosen Zion ;
 he hath desired *it* for his habitation. o Ps. 48. 1, 2.
- 14 ^p This *is* my rest for ever :
 here will I dwell ; for I have desired it. p Ps. 68. 16.

8—10. See 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42.

8. It is doubtful whether these words are a continuation of the language of the people in David's time, or whether Solomon, or whoever is the author, speaks in his own name.

"Arise." Compare the cry which was raised every morning, when the Ark was moved in the wilderness (Num. x. 35, 36. See Ps. lxxviii. 1.).

9. "Let Thy priests," &c. So we pray daily, "Endue Thy ministers with righteousness, and make Thy chosen people joyful."

10. "Turn not away the face," i. e. do not reject his prayer; make him not to hide his face through shame at being rejected (see 1 Kings ii. 16 (marg.), 17, 20. 2 Kings xviii. 24.).

11. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16.

12. David's dynasty is especially connected with Zion; it was there that his seed should never cease to reign. The special promise to Zion is unfolded in God's own words in the rest of the Psalm.

14. The Ark had been for a short time at Bethel (Judg. xx. 26, 27, where for "the house of God" in ver. 26, we should read "Bethel"); then at Shiloh, which was rejected (Ps. lxxviii. 60.); then for twenty years at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 2.); and for three months in the house of Obed-edom. But Zion was the Lord's abiding dwelling-place, where His blessing should rest—on the poor, the priests, and on all the people. Observe how God's answer in the latter part of the Psalm takes up and concedes the blessings which had been asked. The prayer had been, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting place," and now comes the reply, "This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell." The Psalmist had prayed, "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness," and now God replies, "I will clothe her priests with salvation." The Psalmist had prayed, "Let Thy saints shout for joy;" and now God answers, "Her saints shall

PSALMS, CXXXIII.

- ^q Ps. 147. 14. 15 ^q I will ² abundantly bless her provision :
² Or, *surely*.
^r 2 Chr. 6. 41. I will satisfy her poor with bread.
 ver. 9. 16 ^r I will also clothe her priests with salvation :
 Ps. 149. 4. ^s and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
^s Hos. 11. 12. 17 ^t There will I make the horn of David to bud :
^t Ezek. 29. 21. ^u I have ordained a ³ lamp for mine anointed.
 Luke 1. 69. 18 His enemies will I ^x clothe with shame :
^u See 1 Kin. but upon himself shall his crown flourish.
 11. 36.
 & 15. 4.
 2 Chr. 21. 7.
³ Or, *candle*.
^x Ps. 35. 26.
 & 103. 23.

PSALM CXXXIII.

The benefit of the communion of saints.

A Song of degrees of David.

- ^a Gen. 13. 8.
 Heb. 13. 1.
² Heb. *even together*.

1 **B**EHOOLD, how good and how pleasant *it is* for ^a brethren to dwell ² together in unity!

“shout aloud for joy.” The Psalmist had prayed for himself, “For Thy servant David’s sake turn not away the face of Thine anointed;” and now God replies, “I will make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for Mine anointed.”

17. The “horn” is an emblem of dominion, and the “lamp” of prosperity and joy (see St. Luke i. 69. 1 Kings xi. 36. Ps. xviii. 28.).

“To bud;” to branch forth, to grow.

These promises to David have their fulfilment only in Christ (St. Luke i. 31, 32.). As we sing the Psalm we may think of Him and thank God for His promise of stability to His Church: it is in her that His gifts of abundance to the poor, salvation for His priests, joy for His saints, and shame for His enemies are fully realized. Hence the appropriateness of the Psalm for Christmas Day.

PSALM CXXXIII.

Song in praise of brotherly love.

The title “of David” is wanting in the Chaldee Version and in the Vatican MS. of the Greek. The Psalm cannot therefore be assigned to him with certainty, though there are occasions in his life to which it would seem eminently suitable; as, e.g. when after his disturbed reign of seven years in Hebron he became a king of an united people (2 Sam. v. 1—3. 1 Chron. xii. 38—40.); or, when he brought up the Ark to Jerusalem to be a centre of unity for the whole nation. But there are grammatical difficulties which militate against David’s authorship; it is possible therefore that it is only called his as breathing his spirit. If it belongs to the time of the return, we may take it as an appeal to the people to recognize the hill of Zion as the seat of their national worship, and to gather round it as one people (see Ezra iii. 1. Neh. viii. 1.). It would be very suitable also in the mouths of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem at any of the great feasts.

1. “To dwell together in unity.” Heb. “dwell also together.” The meaning is, that it is delightful when those who are united by blood also live together in love and harmony.

“Behold how precious and how dear

“When brethren dwell in love;

“Yea, dwell as one” (*Keble*).

PSALMS, CXXXIII.

- 2 *It is like* ^b the precious ointment upon the head, ^b Ex. 30. 25,
that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's ^{30.}
beard:
that went down to the skirts of his garments;
- 3 as the dew of ^c Hermon, *and as the dew that* ^c Deut. 4. 48.
descended upon the mountains of Zion:
for ^d there the LORD commanded the blessing,
even life for evermore. ^d Lev. 25. 21.
Deut. 28. 8.
Ps. 42. 8.

The blessings of unity are compared (i.) to the all-pervading fragrance of the holy oil; and (ii.) to the moisture from the summits of Hermon dropping in gentle showers on Mount Zion.

2. "The precious ointment." Lit. "the good oil," the holy consecrating oil, which was prepared in a certain way, and the use of which for purposes of common life was strictly forbidden (Exod. xxx. 22—33.).

"Upon the head." The sons of Aaron were only sprinkled with the oil (Lev. viii. 30.), Aaron alone was anointed with it (Lev. viii. 12; xxi. 10. Exod. xxix. 7.); it was poured upon his head, and thence ran freely but gently down to his beard and to his garments.

"Skirts." Lit. "mouth;" hence it is explained by some to mean "the opening of the robe at the neck" (Exod. xxviii. 32.). But some of the Versions translate the word "edge," and interpret it of the lower fringe of the robe. And this interpretation best suits the requirements of the passage. The point of the comparison is the power of brotherly love to unite together those who are locally most distant and most different in outward circumstances. It is like the fragrant oil diffusing itself over the whole of Aaron's person. Such love, as it embraces all the members of the body, so is it perceived everywhere by its delightful fragrance.

3. The words in italics should be left out. The meaning is not, that the dew falls alike on the two mountains, but that the moisture which gathers over Mount Hermon is caught up by the sun, and falls in refreshing showers on the distant mountains of Zion. When brethren bound together in love meet together, when brethren from the north unite with those of the south, as they do unite at Jerusalem, their common mother, at the great feasts, it is as when the dew of Hermon, which is covered with deep, almost eternal, snow, descends upon the bare and thirsty mountains around Jerusalem.

"There." This last clause shews that the figure of the dew, resting on Mount Zion was not meant only as a figure, but as suggesting that Zion was the centre, round which the brotherly concord which the Psalmist had been celebrating should gather.

In like manner, the loving thoughts and aspirations of the scattered members of the Christian Church, ascending to the great Father of all, descend in abundant blessing and renewed life on the spiritual Zion. The Church is the centre to which all their yearnings tend; and they long for the time when all separations shall cease, and they shall not only be inwardly united by the Spirit of love, but may dwell together in perfect fellowship.

PSALMS, CXXXIV.

PSALM CXXXIV.

An exhortation to bless God.

A Song of degrees.

- ^a Ps. 135. 1, 2. 1 **B**EHOLD, bless ye the LORD, ^a all ye servants of the LORD,
^b 1 Chr. 9. 33. ^b which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
^c 1 Tim. 2. 8. 2 ^c Lift up your hands ² in the sanctuary,—and
² Or, in holiness. bless the LORD.
^d Ps. 124. 8. 3 ¶ ^d The LORD that made heaven and earth—
^e Ps. 128. 5. & 135. 21. ^e bless thee out of Zion.

PSALM CXXXV.

1 *An exhortation to praise God for his mercy, 5 for his power, 8 for his judgments. 15 The vanity of idols. 19 An exhortation to bless God.*

- 1 **P**RAISE ye the LORD.
 Praise ye the name of the LORD ;

PSALM CXXXIV.

Nightly greeting and counter-greeting in the Temple.

The two first verses of this Psalm are addressed by the congregation to the priests and Levites, who had charge of the Temple during the night. Though appointed apparently for the purpose of guarding the Temple (1 Chron. ix. 27, 33.), it was natural that they should spend some portion of their time in prayer and praise ; and we may perhaps gather from the call here addressed to them that such was their custom. The last verse is the answer of the priests ; they dismiss the people with a blessing. It has been suggested, that this Psalm is purposely placed at the end of the songs of degrees, in order to take the place of a final blessing, such as occurs at the end of the several books of the Psalter.

1. "Stand." The word commonly used for the service of the priests and Levites (Deut. x. 8 ; xviii. 7. 1 Chron. xxiii. 30. 2 Chron. xxix. 11.). The addition in the Prayer Book Version, "even in the courts of the house of our God," comes from the Greek translation.

2. "Lift up your hands ;" in prayer.

"In the sanctuary." Rather, "towards the sanctuary," as in Ps. xxviii. 2 ; v. 7 ; cxxxviii. 2. Others take it "in holiness" (comp. 1 Tim. ii. 8.).

3. "The Lord bless thee." Lit. "shall bless thee"—the usual form of the priestly blessing, taken from Num. vi. 24 ; and on this account probably the singular is used, "thee" instead of "you."

"Out of Zion." As in Ps. cxxxviii. 5.

Here again we may give a spiritual meaning to Mount Zion. The voice of prayer and praise is ever going up from the Holy Church throughout the world ; and they who delight to take their part in the stream of ceaseless worship will assuredly find, that the blessing which goes forth from the God of heaven and earth upon the whole body of the Church will reach even to them.

PSALMS, CXXXV.

- ^a praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.
- 2 ^b Ye that stand in the house of the LORD,
in ^c the courts of the house of our God,
- 3 praise the LORD; for ^d the LORD *is* good:
sing praises unto his name; ^e for *it is* pleasant.
- 4 For ^f the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto him-
self,
and Israel for his peculiar treasure.
- 5 ¶ For I know that ^g the LORD *is* great,
and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
- 6 ^h Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he
in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all
deep places.
- 7 ⁱ He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends;
of the earth;
- ^a Ps. 113. 1.
& 134. 1.
^b Luke 2. 37.
^c Ps. 92. 13.
& 96. 8.
& 116. 19.
^d Ps. 119. 68.
^e Ps. 147. 1.
^f Ex. 19. 5.
Deut. 7. 6, 7.
& 10. 15.
^g Ps. 95. 3.
& 97. 9.
^h Ps. 115. 3.
ⁱ Jer. 10. 13.
& 51. 16.

PSALM CXXXV.

Hallelujah to the God of gods, Who is the God of
Israel.

Like the preceding, the Psalm begins with a loud call to praise the Lord, addressed however not to the priests and Levites, but to all the worshippers (see vv. 19, 20.). It has been called a mosaic, being made up almost entirely of passages from earlier writings (comp. ver. 1 with Ps. cxxxiv. 1; ver. 3 with Ps. cxlvii. 1; vv. 6, 15—20 with Ps. cxv.; ver. 7 with Jer. x. 13; vv. 8—12 with Ps. cxxxvi. 10—22; ver. 14 with Deut. xxxii. 36.).

1. "Praise ye the Lord." This Hallelujah at the commencement of the Psalm announces at once the subject of the whole.

"Ye servants of the Lord." Described more fully in the next verse; those who "stand in the house of the Lord" are His official servants, those who stand "in the courts of the house of our God" are the body of the worshippers.

3. "It is pleasant." Either the Name of the Lord, or the act of praising Him. It would seem from Ps. cxlvii. 1 that the latter is meant.

4. The reasons why the Lord is so worthy to be praised. He Who has chosen Israel is the God of gods, Who not only works wonderfully in the world of nature (vv. 6, 7.), but is the Redeemer of His people and the vanquisher of their enemies (vv. 8—12.).

"Chosen." See marg. reff.

5. "I." There is emphasis on the pronoun. The Psalmist identifies himself with the whole people. Israel has good reason to know the greatness of the Lord; "full well I know."

6. See Ps. cxv. 3. In Exod. xx. 4, 11, heaven, earth, and water are enumerated as the three kingdoms of created things.

"All deep places." All the inmost recesses of earth and sea and sky.

7. "The vapours." Lit. "things lifted up;" i. e. the clouds which are lifted up out of the sea (comp. 1 Kings xviii. 44.).

PSALMS, CXXXV.

- ^k Job 28. 25, 26.
& 38. 24, &c.
Zech. 10. 1.
^l Job 38. 22.
- ^m Ex. 12. 12, 23.
Ps. 78. 51.
& 136. 10.
- ⁿ Heb.
*from man
unto beast.*
- ^o Ex. 7, & 8,
& 9, & 10,
& 14.
- ^p Ps. 136. 15.
- ^q Num. 21. 24,
25, 26, 34, 35.
Ps. 136. 17,
&c.
- ^r Josh. 12. 7.
- ^s Ps. 78. 57,
& 136. 21, 22.
- ^t Ex. 3. 15.
Ps. 102. 12.
- ^u Heb.
*to genera-
tion and
generation.*
- ^v Deut. 32. 36.
- ^w Ps. 115. 4,
5, 6, 7, 8.
- ^k he maketh lightnings for the rain ;
he bringeth the wind out of his ^ltreasuries.
- 8 ¶ ^m Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,—² both
of man and beast.
- 9 ⁿ *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of
thee, O Egypt,
^o upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
- 10 ^p Who smote great nations,
and slew mighty kings ;
- 11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of
Bashan,
and ^q all the kingdoms of Canaan :
- 12 ^r and gave their land *for* an heritage,
an heritage unto Israel his people.
- 13 ¶ ^s Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever ;
and thy memorial, O LORD, ³ throughout all
generations.
- 14 ^t For the LORD will judge his people,
and he will repent himself concerning his ser-
vants.
- 15 ^u The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold,
the work of men's hands.

“He maketh lightnings for the rain.” So that rain is accompanied and announced by lightning. It is said that rain from a thunder-cloud is more fertilizing than other rain. The Greek rendering is, “He makes the lightnings into rain ;” changes that which is terrible into what is refreshing.

8—12. The Lord is worthy to be praised also, because He delivered His people from Egypt, and planted them in the land of Canaan.

8, 9. The destruction of the first-born was the immediate cause of Israel's deliverance. For the particulars see marg. ref.

10—12. Sihon and Og are alone mentioned of the vanquished kings, because they were the first, and because their overthrow made a deep impression on the Israelites at the time, and dwelt long in their memory.

13. This God Who works so mightily in nature and in defence of His people is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever (Exod. iii. 15.).

14. “Will judge,” i. e. will vindicate, see that they have right.

“Repent himself.” Relent towards, have compassion on (see Deut. xxxii. 36.).

15—18. The wonders which God has wrought for His people prove Him to be the living and true God ; all idols and idol worshippers are vain. Taken from Ps. cxv. 4—8. The Psalm closes, as it began, with a call to praise the Lord. The threefold call in Ps. cxv. 9—11 ; cxviii. 2—4 becomes fourfold here by the introduction of the house of Levi.

PSALMS, CXXXVI.

- 16 They have mouths, but they speak not ;
 eyes have they, but they see not ;
 17 they have ears, but they hear not ;
 neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.
 18 They that make them are like unto them :
so is every one that trusteth in them.
- 19 ¶ ^x Bless the LORD, O house of Israel : x Ps. 115. 9,
&c.
 bless the LORD, O house of Aaron :
 20 bless the LORD, O house of Levi :
 ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.
 21 Blessed be the LORD ^y out of Zion, which dwell- y Ps. 134. 3.
 leth at Jerusalem.
 Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXXXVI.

An exhortation to give thanks to God for particular mercies.

- 1 **O** ^a GIVE thanks unto the LORD ; for *he is* a Ps. 106. 1.
& 107. 1.
& 118. 1.
 good :

21. In Ps. cxxxiv. 3 the Lord had blessed out of Zion ; here on the other hand His people bless Him out of Zion. In Zion, i. e. in His Church, God's people dwell with Him ; there He blesses them, and there they bless Him : from thence His blessing and their praise go forth into the world.

The reasons on which the Psalmist grounds his summons to all God's servants to praise Him are as applicable to us as they were to the Israelites ; viz. God's goodness in Himself, the joyousness of the act of praise, His special favour in choosing us for His people, His wonderful dealings with us in providence and in grace. How can we ever cease to exult in Him Who thus multiplies the proofs of His goodness ! More especially, how can we venture to set up any idols in our hearts, when the Lord of all love and power offers Himself to be our God, and calls on us to take delight in Him !

PSALM CXXXVI.

Hymn of thanksgiving to the Lord, because His mercy endureth for ever.

The foregoing Psalm ended with an appeal to the priests and Levites to praise the Lord ; this Psalm may be taken as the answer to that appeal, the Levites singing the first part of each verse, and the people responding with the refrain. It will be observed that, as far as ver. 18, the verses of this Psalm fall into groups of three ; then follow two groups of four verses each. The Psalm follows very closely upon the lines of the preceding ; indeed vv. 17—22 are nearly identical with Ps. cxxxv. 10—12. The Psalm opens in the same way as Pss. cvi. and cxviii. ; but the refrain is here carried on throughout the whole. See 1 Chron. xvi. 41. 2 Chron. v. 13 ; vii. 3. Ezra iii. 10, 11.

1—3. A threefold thanksgiving to God, as “the Lord,” “the God of gods,” “the Lord of lords.”

PSALMS, CXXXVI.

- ^b 1 Chr. 16.
34, 41.
2 Chr. 20. 21.
^c Deut. 10. 17.
- ^b for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 2 O give thanks unto ^c the God of gods :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^d Ps. 72. 18.
- 4 ¶ To him ^d who alone doeth great wonders :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^e Gen. 1. 1.
Prov. 3. 19.
Jer. 51. 15.
- 5 ^e To him that by wisdom made the heavens :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^f Gen. 1. 9.
Ps. 24. 2.
Jer. 10. 12.
- 6 ^f To him that stretched out the earth above the
waters :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^g Gen. 1. 14.
- 7 ^g To him that made great lights :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- ^h Gen. 1. 16.
2 Heb. for
the rulings
by day.
- 8 ^h the sun ² to rule by day :—for his mercy
endureth for ever :
- 9 the moon and stars to rule by night :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ⁱ Ex. 12. 29.
Ps. 135. 8.
- 10 ¶ ⁱ To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- ^k Ex. 12. 51.
& 13. 3, 17.
- 11 ^k and brought out Israel from among them :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- ^l Ex. 6. 6.
- 12 ^l with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- ^m Ex. 14. 21, 22.
Ps. 78. 13.
- 13 ^m To him which divided the Red sea into parts :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- 14 and made Israel to pass through the midst of it :
for his mercy *endureth* for ever :
- ⁿ Ex. 14. 27.
Ps. 135. 9.
³ Heb.
shaked off.
- 15 ⁿ but ³ overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the
Red sea :

4—9. As in Ps. cxxxv. the Psalmist begins by extolling the God of nature.

6. "Stretched out." Spread out the earth like a great crust upon the waters (see Isa. xlii. 5; xliv. 24.).

10. Here the song of praise is addressed to the God of history, the God Who had wrought salvation for His people. The destruction of the first-born, the deliverance from Egypt, the miracles of the wilderness, the victories over mighty kings, especially over Sihon and Og, and the possession of the promised land, are recounted in rapid succession.

13. "Parts." Lit. "divisions," "sections;" from the same root as the preceding verb. The word is peculiar with this reference; it is used in Gen. xv. 17.

15. "Overthrew." As in Exod. xiv. 27, "shook off," "dashed down."

PSALMS, CXXXVII.

- for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 16 ¶ ° To him which led his people through the wilderness :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever. | ° Ex. 13. 18.
& 15. 22.
Deut. 8. 15. |
| 17 P To him which smote great kings :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | P Ps. 135. 10,
11. |
| 18 Q and slew famous kings :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | Q Deut. 29. 7. |
| 19 R Sihon king of the Amorites :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | R Num. 21. 21. |
| 20 S and Og the king of Bashan :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | S Num. 21. 33. |
| 21 T and gave their land for an heritage :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | T Josh. 12. 1,
&c.
Ps. 135. 12. |
| 22 <i>even</i> an heritage unto Israel his servant :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever. | |
| 23 ¶ Who U remembered us in our low estate :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever : | U Gen. 8. 1.
Deut. 32. 36.
Ps. 113. 7. |
| 24 and hath redeemed us from our enemies :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever. | |
| 25 X Who giveth food to all flesh :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever. | X Ps. 104. 27.
& 145. 15.
& 147. 9. |
| 26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven :
for his mercy <i>endureth</i> for ever. | |

PSALM CXXXVII.

1 *The constancy of the Jews in captivity.* 7 *The prophet curseth Edom and Babel.*

1 **B**Y the rivers of Babylon,
there we sat down, yea, we wept,

23, 24. From His wonders in former times, the Psalmist turns to the mention of more recent mercies, especially to the deliverance from captivity; and in ver. 25 he calls to mind God's goodness not only to the whole race of men, but to all created beings.

26. The additional verse in the Prayer Book is found only in the Latin Version.

The refrain of this Psalm was familiar in Jewish worship: again and again the Israelites were enjoined to thank God, because "His mercy" (loving-kindness, gracious goodness) *endureth for ever.* That mercy has a still deeper signification to us, and we should never be weary in celebrating it.

PSALM CXXXVII.

A reminiscence of the days of exile.

In ver. 23 of the last Psalm the writer had thanked God for remem-

PSALMS, CXXXVII.

when we remembered Zion.

- 2 We hanged our harps
upon the willows in the midst thereof.
- 3 For there they that carried us away captive
required of us ²a song ;
and they that ³a wasted us *required of us* mirth,
saying,
Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.

² Heb.
*the words
of a song.*

³ Heb. *laid
us on heaps.*

^a Ps. 79. 1.

bering His people in their low estate, that is, in their captivity in Babylon. The present Psalm enlarges on the sorrows of the captivity. The Psalmist, newly returned, recalls the feeling of desolation and despondency with which by the waters of Babylon they remembered their lost home and the shattered hopes of their country. They could but sit and weep ; they could not even find solace in their sacred songs, which had once been their joy and pride ; indeed, when some of their captors, whether in mockery or kindness, would persuade them to sing one of their native melodies, it seemed like an act of unfaithfulness to comply with the request. Sooner let hand and voice lose all power of music ; while Jerusalem lay in ruins, songs of joy were out of place. But love for Jerusalem not only drew forth tears for her sorrows ; it kindled a desire for vengeance on her enemies. And so the Psalm, which began in plaintive tones, ends with an outburst of imprecation.

1. "By the rivers of Babylon." These may mean either the streams within the city itself, which, covering as it did, according to Herodotus, a space of 200 square miles, contained probably many streams, or the streams of the Babylonian empire, viz. the Euphrates, Tigris, Chebar (Ezek. i. 3.), and Ulai (Dan. viii. 2.).

"There ;" emphatic. "There," in that strange land, in great Babylon, the scene of our captivity.

"We sat down." Sitting is the posture of mourning and humiliation (Ezra ix. 3, 4.). The bank of a river, like the sea-shore, is a natural resort for those who seek solitude in their grief.

"Yea, we wept." The form of expression implies that tears flowed at once. The solitude and the contrast of the scene around to that of their native land soon made them weep.

2. The harp among the Hebrews was especially the accompaniment of songs of joy and cheerfulness ; rarely, if ever, used in time of affliction (see Isa. xxiv. 8. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Job xxx. 31. Rev. xviii. 22. Gen. xxxi. 27. 1 Sam. x. 5. 2 Sam. vi. 5.).

"Upon the willows." It has been remarked that before the captivity the willow was always associated with feelings of joyful prosperity (Lev. xxiii. 40. Isa. xlv. 4.). Since the captivity the tree has become the emblem of sorrow.

"In the midst thereof." That is, in Babylon itself.

3. "Sing us," &c. Not said so much in scorn, as from a desire that the Israelites would reconcile themselves to the land of their captivity ; but they said, or thought with themselves, that songs of joy were impossible under their circumstances. Sacred songs of some sort doubtless the Israelites composed, and sang in their exile, but they were unaccompanied with joyful music (see Neh. ii. 2, 3.).

PSALMS, CXXXVII.

- 4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song—in a ²strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.
- 6 If I do not remember thee, let my ^btongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above ³my chief joy.
- 7 ¶ Remember, O LORD, ^cthe children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem;—who said, ⁴Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.
- 8 O daughter of Babylon, ^dwho art to be ⁵destroyed; happy shall he be, ^ethat rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
- 9 Happy shall he be, that taketh and ^fdasheth thy little ones against ⁷the stones.

² Heb. *land of a stranger* ?
^b Ezek. 3. 20.
³ Heb. *the head of my joy*.
^c Jer. 49. 7, &c. Lam. 4. 22. Ezek. 25. 12. Obad. 10, &c.
^d Heb. *Make bare*.
^e Isai. 13. 1, 6, &c. & 47. 1. Jer. 25. 12. & 50. 2.
^f Heb. *wasted*.
^g Heb. *that recompenseth unto thee thy deed which thou didst to us*.
^h Jer. 50. 15, 29. Rev. 18. 6.
ⁱ Isai. 13. 16.
^j Heb. *the rock*.

5. To join in such music in Babylon would be to forget Jerusalem.

"Let my right hand forget her cunning." The two last words are not in the Heb. The ellipse may be supplied, as in the A. V., "her skill," or, more generally, "her power of motion."

"Oblivion chill my hand" (*Keble*).

6. "Cleave to the roof of my mouth" (Job xxix. 10).

"Above my chief joy." Lit. "above the summit, or the sum, of my joy;" which may be explained either, "if I count not Jerusalem to be my highest joy," or, "if solicitude for Jerusalem does not make me forget all earthly joys."

7. From the thought of Israel's sorrows the Psalmist turns to those who had caused them, and calls down God's vengeance, first on the kindred race of Edom, who had malignantly helped the oppressor, and then on the oppressor himself. Lit. "remember to the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem," the day of its destruction, in which they rejoiced. Edom's malicious joy in the overthrow of Jerusalem is referred to in Obad. 1—16. Jer. xlix. 7—22. Lam. iv. 21, 22. Ezek. xxv. 8—14.

8. "Who art to be destroyed;" or, "Who art destroyed." The Psalmist contemplates what was decreed, as if it were already past (Isa. xiii. 19; xlvii. 11.). The prayer is, that Babylon might herself suffer what she had inflicted (Isa. xlvii. 6. Comp. Jer. li. 56. Hosea x. 14.).

9. It was the decree of heaven that the children of Babylon should be dashed in pieces before her eyes (Isa. xiii. 16.); the Psalmist recognizes the decree as just, and prays that it may be fulfilled. It is zeal for God, and not merely love for his country and indignation against her oppressors, that puts these harsh words into the mouth of the Psalmist: it is as if he said, "Let the enemies of God and of His people be swept away from the face of the earth!" (comp. Judges v. 31.).

Here, as elsewhere, we see traces of that law of retribution, which lies at the root of the imprecations of the Old Testament. Christ has virtually

PSALMS, CXXXVIII.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

1 *David praiseth God for the truth of his word. 4 He prophesieth that the kings of the earth shall praise God. 7 He professeth his confidence in God.*

A Psalm of David.

1 **I** WILL praise thee with my whole heart :
 ^a before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
2. ^b I will worship ^c toward thy holy temple,
 and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and
 for thy truth :

^a Ps. 119. 46.

^b Ps. 28. 2.

^c 1 Kin. 8. 29,
30. Ps. 5. 7.

repealed that law (St. Matt. v. 38, 39.), and has thereby taught us that prayers which were right and lawful on Jewish lips are unlawful for us. It was the characteristic feature of the old dispensation to visit sin with pain and death, and it was natural and right for those who lived under that dispensation to acquiesce in the rule of God's dealings. Now, however, that Christ has come, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," the one desire and prayer of the Christian is, that sin, and not the sinner, may be destroyed.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

Thanksgiving for God's great promises, and confidence in their fulfilment.

This and the seven following Psalms are ascribed to David. The Greek Version, though retaining the traditional title, has added the names of Haggai and Zechariah, as if it were unsatisfactory. If there is nothing which distinctly confirms the title, there is nothing to contravene it. It has been thought, not unreasonably, to be an outpouring of David's grateful heart after God had overthrown his enemies on every side, established him firmly on the throne, and promised that throne to his seed in perpetuity (2 Sam. vii.). When Nathan left David, after unfolding before him God's gracious purpose for him and for his family, David, it seems, went into the Tabernacle, in which the Ark rested, and made his humble acknowledgments for God's wonderful and condescending love. The words with which he communed with God were the simple outpouring of a full heart, which scarcely knew what to say, so overwhelmed was he with the sense of God's goodness (2 Sam. vii. 18—29.). Afterwards, when he returned to his palace, he may be supposed to have written this Psalm, which takes up, in more lofty strain, the note already struck in the Tabernacle. The mingled fervour, boldness and humility displayed in the Psalm are certainly characteristic of David.

1. "Unto Thee." David does not name Him Whom he praises: there could be but One Whom he could so address. His whole heart was full of Him.

"Before the gods." Some (e.g. the Greek Version) understand "the Angels;" others, "the false gods of the heathen," in scorn of whom David declares he will pour forth the praises of the true God; others, "the great men and nobles of the earth," as in Ps. lxxxii. 1 (comp. cxix. 46.); boldly will he bear before them his witness to the greatness and goodness of God.

2. "Toward Thy holy Temple." This might be said of the Tabernacle (Ps. v. 7).

PSALMS, CXXXVIII.

- for thou hast ^d magnified thy word above all thy ^d Isai. 42. 21.
name.
- 3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,
and strengthenedst me *with* strength in my
soul.
- 4 ^e All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O ^e Ps. 102. 15,
22.
LORD,
when they hear the words of thy mouth.
- 5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD:
for great *is* the glory of the LORD.
- 6 ^f Though the LORD *be* high, yet ^g hath he respect ^f Ps. 113. 5, 6.
Isai. 57. 15.
unto the lowly:
but the proud he knoweth afar off. g Prov. 3. 34.
James 4. 6.
1 Pet. 5. 5.
- 7 ^h Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou ^h Ps. 23. 3, 4.
wilt revive me:
thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the
wrath of mine enemies,
and thy right hand shall save me.
- 8 ⁱ The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth ⁱ Ps. 57. 2.
Phil. 1. 6.
me:

“Thy word,” i. e. God’s promise that his son should have an everlasting throne (2 Sam. vii. 21.).

“Above all Thy name,” i. e. as it would seem, “above all Thy previous manifestations of Thyself.” This promise to David and his seed was a new era, as it were, in the Divine revelations.

3. There are two things for which David gives thanks: in his many troubles God has heard his prayer, and, as a consequence of this, He has filled his soul with strength and courage.

4. David anticipates how all the kings of the earth will acknowledge the greatness of the Lord, when they have heard of His promise to him and seen its fulfilment.

6. The special point in God’s dealings that will make such an impression in the world, is that He has lifted up the lowly David and cast down his proud enemies.

“Hath respect unto.” Lit. “seeth,” “looks upon.”

“The lowly.” The same word which David uses of himself (2 Sam. vi. 22.), and there rendered “base.”

“He knoweth afar off,” i. e. He looks on them only from a distance; He does not make them the objects of His special regard.

7. From his experience of God’s past mercy, the Psalmist is confident for the future. Though his path may lead through the severest trouble, he is confident in God’s power to revive him; in the very darkness of death he sees the light of life (Ps. xxiii. 4.).

8. “Will perfect;” carry out the work which He has begun (see marg. reff.). The beginning was all that God had as yet done for David; the completion was in Christ. The pledge of this completion is God’s everlasting mercy, which will not rest, until the promise is fully accomplished.

PSALMS, CXXXIX.

thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever :
^k forsake not the works of thine own hands.

^l See Job
10. 3, 8.
& 14. 15.

PSALM CXXXIX.

¹ David praiseth God for his allseeing providence, 17 and for his infinite mercies. 19 He defiesth the wicked. 23 He prayeth for sincerity.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

^a Ps. 17. 3.
Jer. 12. 3.

1 O LORD, ^a thou hast searched me, and known
me.

“The works of Thine own hands,” i.e. all that He had already accomplished for David, from his deliverance out of the hand of Saul to the bestowal of the promise. He prays that God will not let any of His works remain unfinished, but bring them to a glorious consummation (comp. 2 Sam. vii. 25—29.).

David exults in the special mercy and faithfulness which God had shewn to him. Lowly as he was, according to the world's standard, God had regarded him, and had great purposes respecting him. He was confident that those purposes would be accomplished, and that all the realms of the earth would recognize and rejoice in the greatness of the Lord. So Christians may rejoice in God's promise of love and favour to His Church. Now, as well as of old, it is His will to exalt the humble and meek, to strengthen and protect all who trust in Him, and to carry on to the end the work which He has wrought in them. And the time will come, when even the distant heathen will give thanks for the accomplishment of His good purposes for the Church.

PSALM CXXXIX.

The omniscience and omnipresence of God.

The wonderful depth and poetic force of this Psalm undoubtedly seem to favour the inscription, which ascribes it to David. But the Chaldee words and phrases which occur in it have led many commentators to the opinion that it is of much later origin, and that it is only inscribed as David's because of its Davidic character. Others however affirm that these Aramaic forms are not really conclusive against an early date. So that it seems allowable (to say the least) to read the Psalm as David's, and to recognize in its almost overpowering realization of the Presence and goodness and holiness of God the utterance of his later years. His whole life was naked before God ; his one desire at its close was to lay himself bare in His presence, and to surrender every thought or deed that was contrary to His holiness.

The Psalm may be divided into four stanzas, consisting each of six verses. In the first (vv. 1—6.) the Psalmist celebrates God's omniscience ; in the second (vv. 7—12.) His omnipresence ; these wonderful attributes of God are then further illustrated (vv. 13—18.) by the thought that He is the Creator and Guardian of men ; and the Psalm closes (vv. 19—24.) with an outburst of deep vexation against the enemies of such a God, and an earnest prayer that the great Searcher of hearts would keep him pure and direct him to life eternal.

1. Lit. “Thou hast searched me, and Thou knowest ;” all is clear and open to Thy searching Eye. The thought of this Eye of God seeing him

PSALMS, CXXXIX.

- 2 ^b Thou knowest my downsit-^b and mine up-^b 2 Kin. 19. 27.
 rising,
 thou ^c understandest my thought afar off. c Matt. 9. 4.
 John 2. 24, 25.
- 3 ^d Thou ² compasses^t my path and my lying down,
 and art acquainted *with* all my ways. d Job 31. 4.
- 4 For *there is* not a word in my tongue,
but, lo, O LORD, ^e thou knowest it altogether. e Heb. 4. 13.
- 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before,
 and laid thine hand upon me.
- 6 ^f *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me ;
 it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it. f Job 42. 3.
 Ps. 40. 5.
 & 131. 1.
- 7 ¶ ^g Whither shall I go from thy spirit ?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? g Jer. 23. 24.
 Jonah 1. 3.
- 8 ^h If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there :
ⁱ if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. h Amos 9.
 2, 3, 4.
 i Job 26. 6.
 Prov. 15. 11.

through and through fills the Psalmist's imagination, and he continues to dwell upon it.

2. "Thou;" emphatic: "Thou and none beside Thee."

"My downsit-^b and mine up-^b . . my path and my lying down." Sitting down and rising up, walking and lying are the sum of human conditions; they represent the whole of a man's life and God knows them.

"Afar off." Lit. "from afar," from far above (Ps. xxxiii. 13—15; cxxxviii. 6.). Or it may mean that God discerns men's thoughts, before they are expressed, while they are yet only being conceived.

3. "Thou compasses^t." Heb. as in marg. "winnowest." As corn spread out and exposed without protection to the action of the wind, so everything with regard to us is open before God. There may also be the idea of sifting the good from the evil in our lives.

"Art acquainted." Lit. "art accustomed to;" see Num. xxii. 30: "Was I ever in the habit of doing so to thee?" Job xxii. 21: "Habituate thyself to Him, and be at peace." The word implies the close and thorough knowledge which comes from long intercourse.

4. Perhaps, "When there is not (yet) a word on my tongue, lo! O Lord, Thou knowest it all." Whether the word is spoken or repressed, God knows it.

5. Man is surrounded by God on all sides; His hand keeps him in, so that he can do nothing without God's knowledge and God's permission (Job iii. 23. Comp. Acts xvii. 28.).

6. Before he passes on from God's omniscience to dwell on His omnipresence, the Psalmist breaks out into admiration of His greatness.

"Such knowledge." A knowledge so all-penetrating as God's knowledge I cannot comprehend.

7. Man's first feeling, when he fully realizes the Presence of God, is that of awe; he shrinks from it, and would escape, if he could. The consciousness that he cannot escape brings him back to God (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.).

8. "If I make my bed in hell." Lit. "if I should make Hades my bed" (comp. Amos ix. 2—4. Prov. xv. 11. Job xxvi. 6—9.).

- 9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ;
- 10 even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ;
even the night shall be light about me.
- 12 Yea, ^k the darkness ² hideth not from thee ;
but the night shineth as the day :
³ the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.
- 13 ¶ For thou hast possessed my reins :
thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise thee ; for I am fearfully *and*
wonderfully made :

^k Job 26. 6.
& 34. 22.
Dan. 2. 22.
Heb. 4. 13.

² Heb. *dark-
eneth not*.

³ Heb. *as is
the dark-
ness, so is
the light*.

9. Lit. "If I should lift up wings (Ezek. x. 16.) of dawn," such wings as the dawn of morning has ; that is, could I fly with the swiftness with which the first rays of morning light shoot across the sky. Comp. "the wings of the sun" (Mal. iv. 2.) ; and "of the wind" (Ps. xviii. 10.).

"The uttermost parts of the sea," i. e. the Mediterranean, denoting the extreme west. This seems to suggest that the Psalm was written in Palestine.

10. Here the thought is rather of help and protection. The consciousness that God is everywhere, in breadth and depth and height, not only strikes him with awe, but brings with it a sense of rest and safety.

11. "If I say." Rather, "Should I say (or 'Then I said'), Let darkness enshroud me, and let the light around me be night." The close of the sentence is in the next verse.

"Shall cover." The only other places where the word occurs are Gen. iii. 15. Job ix. 17, where it means "to bruise," or "crush." Here some render it "enshroud;" others "overwhelm."

12. "Yea." It is the same word as in ver. 10 : in each case it is the answer to the preceding verse, "even the darkness darkens not from Thee," interposeth no darkness so as to hide from Thee, "and the night giveth full light as the day."

"Gloom is as light, and light as gloom" (*Keble*).

13—18. God must needs know man thoroughly, for he is the work of His hands.

"Thou hast possessed." The word has two meanings; (i.) "to create," "frame," as in Ps. civ. 24. Gen. xiv. 19 : "Possessor (rather Maker) of heaven and earth;" Deut. xxxii. 6 : "Is not He thy Father that bought (rather formed) thee?" and (ii.) "to acquire, possess" (Prov. viii. 22.).

"Thy work, Thy purchase" (*Keble*).

The "reins" are especially mentioned as the seat of the tenderest, most secret emotions.

"Covered." Lit. "interweaved," i. e. with bones and sinews. Comp. Job x. 11, where "hast fenced" should be rendered "hast woven."

14. This verse answers to ver. 6. The Psalmist bursts into admira-

PSALMS, CXXXIX.

- marvellous *are* thy works ;
 and *that* my soul knoweth ² right well.
- 15 ¹ My ³ substance was not hid from thee,
 when I was made in secret,
and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the
 earth.
- 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being
 imperfect ;
 and in thy book ⁴ all *my members* were written, ⁴ Heb. *all*
⁵ *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as* ⁵ Or, *what*
yet there was none of them. ⁵ *days they*
should be
- 17 ^m How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, ^m Ps. 40. 5.
 O God !
 how great is the sum of them !
- 18 *If* I should count them, they are more in number
 than the sand :

tion at the thought of the mysteriousness of his being. Lit. "I have
 "been made, or become, wonderful in a fearful manner;" I have come
 wonderfully into being, under circumstances which are full of astonish-
 ment.

15. "My substance." Lit. "my bone," my bodily frame.

"Curiously wrought." Lit. "was embroidered," or woven with
 threads of many colours.

"In the lowest parts of the earth," i. e. in a region of darkness and
 mystery, used here figuratively of the womb.

16. "My substance yet being imperfect." Expressed by one word
 in the original, which means an unshapen, undeveloped mass, generally
 understood of the embryo in the womb (comp. Job x. 5—11.).

"In Thy book all my members were written." "My members"
 is not in the Heb. The literal translation of this and the following
 clause is, "In Thy book were they, all of them, written, the days were
 "sketched out, and there was not one of them." "All of them" is
 generally referred to the days in the next clause, and the passage is
 explained to mean, "In the book of God's omniscience all the days of
 "a man's life are sketched out long before they become realities."
 There is however another reading of the last clause, substituting "for
 "it" instead of "not;" if this change is made, the passage will run, "days
 "were marked out, and for it, i. e. for my substance, one of them,
 "i. e. of the days, was fixed." Among the days foreseen and fore-ordained
 by God was one for the beginning of the Psalmist's life.

17, 18. Again, as in ver. 14, the Psalmist breaks off in thankful wonder
 at God's thoughts respecting him. They are very precious to him. The
 sum of each page in the book of God's foreknowledge is more than the
 sand with its innumerable grains. He falls asleep while reckoning them ;
 when he awakes, he still finds himself absorbed in the contemplation of
 them. Sleeping and dreaming and waking up, he is carried away by
 that endless, and yet endlessly attractive, pursuit (viz. meditation on
 God's love towards him), the most fitting occupation of one who is
 awake, and the sweetest of one who is asleep and dreaming.

when I awake, I am still with thee.

- ⁿ Isai. 11. 4. 19 ¶ Surely thou wilt ⁿ slay the wicked, O God :
^o Ps. 119. 115. ^o depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.
- ^P Jude 15. 20 For they ^P speak against thee wickedly,
and thine enemies take thy name in vain.
- ^q 2 Chr. 19. 2. 21 ^q Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee ?
^r Ps. 119. 158. And am not I grieved with those that rise up
 against thee ?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred :—I count them
 mine enemies.
- ^r Job 31. 6. 23 ^r Search me, O God, and know my heart :
^s Ps. 26. 2. try me, and know my thoughts :
- ^t Heb. *way of pain, or, grief.* 24 and see if *there be any* ² wicked way in me,
^u Ps. 5. 8. and ^s lead me in the way everlasting.
 & 143. 10.

19. The Psalmist passes abruptly from meditating on God's love and goodness to denounce the wicked (comp. Ps. civ. 35.). The connection seems to be, And yet this good and loving God is not loved, but slighted: O that thou wouldest slay the wicked !

20. Perhaps the last clause of ver. 19 should be taken parenthetically, and then this verse will join on with the first clause ; " Surely Thou " wilt slay the wicked, O God, who speak of Thee with wicked purpose, " and have lifted up unto vanity, i. e. have taken Thy Name in vain, " being Thy adversaries."

21. There can be no true love of God and of holiness without a burning indignation against sin ; but Christ has taught us to distinguish between the sinner and his sin, and, while we hate the sin, to yearn over and love the sinner, and seek his conversion.

22. They are not God's enemies, because they are his ; but they are his enemies, because they are God's.

23, 24. Afraid lest he should hate with an impure hatred, lest he should be jealous against the wicked, and yet not pure himself, the Psalmist prays that there may be no such inconsistency lurking in him. Deeply conscious, as he said in the beginning, that God searched him through and through, he does not wish it otherwise ; on the contrary he turns the thought into a prayer, and opening his heart to God, only desires to be taught his sin in order that he may guard against it.

" My thoughts." Lit. " branches," branchings of thought, anxious distracted thoughts : " my roving thought " (*Keble*).

24. " Wicked way." Lit. " way of sorrow," that is, that which is really sorrow, or which ends in sorrow. Some render it, " way of idols," according to the use of the word in Isa. xlviii. 5. But the antithesis is more pointed between the way which ends in sorrow and the way which ends in everlasting life.

" The way everlasting." The way of God, the way of the righteous, which stands for ever and shall never perish (Ps. i. 6.).

There is something so awful in the thought of God's All-seeing Eye, that it might almost seem presumptuous for any man to contemplate it without alarm. But, whether awful or not, we must contemplate it,

PSALMS, CXL.

PSALM CXL.

David prayeth to be delivered from Saul and Doeg. 8 He prayeth against them. 12 He comforteth himself by confidence in God.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

- 1 **D**ELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man :
^a preserve me from the ² violent man ; ^a ver. 4.
 2 which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart ; ² Heb. man of violences.
^b continually are they gathered together *for* war. ^b Ps. 56. 6.
 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ;
^c adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah. ^c Ps. 58. 4. Rom. 3. 13.
 4 ¶ ^d Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the ^d wicked ; ^d Ps. 71. 4.

because it is the truth. We cannot hide ourselves from God, however much we may desire to do so. And if only we will yield ourselves to Him to follow the good which He loves, and to hate what He hates, the thought of His heart-searching knowledge will be a comfort and strength to us, rather than a cause of fear. He knows and approves our sincere purpose, and He will help us to overcome the evil which we deplore. The hypocrite and the half-hearted must needs shrink from the thought of God; he who simply and honestly surrenders himself to God's will may open his heart to Him, and be at peace.

PSALM CXL.

Appeal against slanderous and malicious enemies.

There is a great similarity, both in character and expression, between this and the three following Psalms. They are all ascribed to David by the titles, the correctness of which is generally recognized. They are all prayers out of trouble, and prayers which bear witness to the patience of faith. In this Psalm the writer complains of crafty and malignant enemies, who are preparing war against him, and with whom he will have to contend in open fight. It may have been written therefore before the outbreak of Absalom's rebellion; or it may belong to the time of Saul's persecution, and have reference to Doeg or the Ziphites. It closely resembles other Psalms of David, especially Pss. lviii. and lxi. It consists of four stanzas, the close of the first three being marked by Selah.

1. "From the evil man." Not spoken exclusively of one man, as appears from the plural in the next verse (Ps. xviii. 48.).

2. It is doubtful whether the meaning is, "every day do they gather themselves to battles," or "do they collect, gather up, wars."

"War." The word is always used of wars or battles, properly so called.

3. "They sharpen their tongues," so that they may inflict a fatal wound, like the tongue of a serpent. Under their lips, shooting out from thence, is the poison of the adder. There is the idea of concealment in the expression "under the lips;" it not only lies there, ready for use, but it is hidden there.

4, 5. The course of this second stanza is parallel to the first; the

PSALMS, CXL.

e ver. 1.

° preserve me from the violent man ;
who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

f Ps. 35. 7.
& 57. 6.
& 119. 110.
& 141. 9.
Jer. 18. 22.

5 f The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords ;
they have spread a net by the wayside ;
they have set gins for me. Selah.

6 ¶ I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God :
hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked :
further not his wicked device ; ^{2g}lest they exalt
themselves. Selah.

2 Or, let
them not
be exalted.
g Deut. 32. 27.

9 ¶ *As for* the head of those that compass me
about,

h Ps. 7. 16.
& 94. 23.
Prov. 12. 13. & 18. 7.
i Ps. 11. 6.

^h let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

10 ⁱ Let burning coals fall upon them :—let them
be cast into the fire ;
into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

prayer for deliverance, which is almost identical in the two stanzas, is followed by the description of those from whom deliverance is sought.

5. The number of synonymous words brought together shews the manifoldness of the efforts to entrap him. The same metaphor from the life of the hunter is found in Ps. ix. 15 ; xxxi. 4 ; lxiv. 5 ; xli. 9 ; cxlii. 3.

“The proud.” This may refer to their inordinate ambition, or to their arrogant bearing towards God. Proud as they are towards God they are deceitful towards men.

“By the wayside.” Lit. “by the hand of the way,” i. e. close beside. If the Psalm belongs to the time of the persecution of Saul, this verse may be taken literally of the treacherous attempts of David’s enemies to take him ; if it belongs to a later period, it refers rather to their secret plottings against his sovereignty.

6—8. Instead of setting himself to guard against the artifices of his enemies, he simply has recourse to God. He is his protector.

7. “Thou hast covered,” as with a helmet. God will protect him from death ; He has protected him hitherto, and will continue to do so. (Comp. “helmet of salvation,” Isa. lix. 17. Eph. vi. 17.).

“My strong salvation ! o’er my brow
“In battle hour I feel Thee spread” (*Keble*).

9. The meaning seems to be, that he wishes that the trouble which the slanderous lips of his enemies occasion him may fall upon their own head (Ps. vii. 16.).

The verbs in this and the following verses are futures, and perhaps should be so rendered, and not as expressing a wish.

10. “Burning coals,” Ps. xviii. 12, 13.

“Into deep pits ;” floods of water. Fire and water represent

PSALMS, CXLI.

- 11 Let not ²³ an evil speaker be established in the ² earth: ² Heb. a man of tongue.
 evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow ³ him. ³ Or, an evil speaker, a wicked man of violence, be established in the earth: let him be hunted to his overthrow.
- 12 I know that the LORD will ^k maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.
- 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy ^k name: ^k 1 Kin. 8. 45. Ps. 9. 4.
 the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

PSALM CXLI.

1 David prayeth that his suit may be acceptable, 3 his conscience sincere, 7 and his life safe from snares.

A Psalm of David.

1 LORD, I cry unto thee: ^a make haste unto ^a me; ^a Ps. 70. 5.

dangers which cannot be escaped; they are therefore suitably placed together (Ps. lxvi. 12. Isa. xliii. 2.).

“That they rise not again.” Ps. xxxvi. 12. Isa. xxvi. 14.

11. “An evil speaker.” Lit. “A man of tongue,” a slanderer (comp. Ps. ci. 5.).

“To overthrow him.” The root of the word has the sense of “hastening;” it may therefore be rendered “in violent haste.”

“The violent—evil hunts him down

“With restless urging” (Keble).

12, 13. The reason of the confidence expressed in the preceding verses; viz. that the cause of the righteous is sure to triumph. God will assuredly befriend them, and the day will come, when they shall have cause to praise His Name and shall have their dwelling-place with Him.

“In Thy presence.” Lit. “before Thy face” (Ps. xvi. 11.).

Daily conflict, spiritual enemies on every side—that is the condition of God’s people. But in God is their refuge, if they will by faith have recourse to Him. He can and will help them from all the power of their foes, so that they shall be able to say with the Apostle, “We are troubled “on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; “persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.). Let them take all things as coming from God; and they will find that for all things they will have cause to give thanks, and they will thank Him for ever.

PSALM CXLI.

Prayer for preservation from the sins of wicked adversaries, as well as from their snares.

This Psalm, like the preceding, may be referred either to the time of David’s persecution by Saul, or, more probably, to the time of Absalom’s rebellion. It is possible from ver. 2 that David meant it to be sung at the time of the evening sacrifice, while he was at a distance

- give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.
- ^b Rev. 5. 8. & 8. 3, 4.
² Heb. directed.
^c Rev. 8. 3.
^d Ps. 134. 2.
^e 1 Tim. 2. 8.
^f Ex. 29. 39.
- 2 Let ^b my prayer be ² set forth before thee ^c as incense ;
 and ^d the lifting up of my hands as ^e the evening sacrifice.
- 3 ¶ Set a watch, O LORD; before my mouth ;
 keep the door of my lips.
- 4 Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity :
^f and let me not eat of their dainties.
- 5 ¶ ^g ³ Let the righteous smite me ; *it shall be a kindness :*
 and let him reprove me ; *it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head :*
 for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.
- ¹ Prov. 23. 6.
² Prov. 9. 8. & 19. 25. & 25. 12. Gal. 6. 1.
³ Or, Let the righteous smite me kindly, and reprove me ; let not their precious oil break my head, &c.

from the sanctuary. In danger of murmuring against God's providential dealings, he prays that God would guard his tongue and enable him to resist the allurements of the wicked around him. His one desire was to cling to God ; and to Him he looked for deliverance.

1. Comp. Ps. iv. 1 ; xxii. 19 ; xxxviii. 22 ; xl. 13 ; lxx. 5.

2. "Be set forth." The same word is used in 2 Chron. xxix. 35 ; xxxv. 10, 16.

"As incense." Lit. "incense:" for the omission of "as," see Ps. xi. ; Hos. xiv. 2 : "we will offer in return our lips (as) calves."

"The evening sacrifice." The word used for sacrifice is the meat-offering (Lev. ii. 1, see note), consisting of fine flour with oil and frankincense. This, like the incense, was added to the usual morning and evening burnt-offering. David seems to be thinking especially of the evening sacrifice, which he designated by its two accompaniments: he begs that his prayer may go up with acceptance before God, like the cloud of incense in the Tabernacle and the sweet savour of the sacrifice.

3. The consciousness of his sin made David very anxious not to speak either angry words against his enemies or murmuring words against God. God has set two natural barriers to restrain speech, the teeth and the lips ; but these are not enough, unless He also guard them.

4. From the prayer for the grace of silence, David passes to a prayer that he may have no fellowship with the wicked. The first prayer has reference to his words, the last to his actions ; but as the actions depend on the state of the heart, he prays also that his heart may not be inclined to wickedness.

"Eat of their dainties." Indulge in their sensual, luxurious life.

5. Conscious of his sins, David is ready to welcome the reproofs of his friends ; "let a righteous man smite me, it is loving-kindness ; let him rebuke me (not in word only, but by deed), it shall be as oil upon the head ; let not my head refuse it ;" or, "let a righteous man smite me in

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places,
they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

7 ¶ Our bones are scattered ^h at the grave's mouth, ^h 2 Cor. 1. 9.
as when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth. ^{12 Chr. 20. 12.}
^{Ps. 25. 15.}
^{& 123. 1, 2.}

8 But ⁱ mine eyes *are* unto thee, O God the Lord: ^{2 Heb. make not my soul bare.}
in thee is my trust; ² leave not my soul destitute.

"kindness and reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head." As in ver. 4 he prays that he may not join in the festivities or share the indulgences of the wicked, so here he prays that he may not refuse even the hard strokes of the righteous.

"For yet my prayer," &c. Lit. "For it is still so, that my prayer is against their wickedness." The connection is, Let me not refuse the reproofs of the righteous, for my constant prayer is not to partake of the evil deeds of the wicked.

"The just man's rod is very love,

"Oil to my head his wounds shall prove,

"My head that may not loathe them;—my true prayer

"E'en yet shall rise against the deeds they dare" (*Keble*).

6. The meaning is supposed to be, that the time will come when the rulers will receive signal punishment, and then the people who were misled by them will come to their right mind, and listen to the Psalmist's words as welcome.

"Their judges." That is, the leaders, rulers, princes of the wicked.

"Are overthrown in stony places." Lit. "have been hurled down into the hands, or by the sides, of the rock;" that is, have been dashed down on the rock, as the ten thousand Edomites in the valley of Salt (2 Chron. xxv. 12.).

"They," i. e. the people. If the Psalm belongs to the time of Absalom, David foresees the signal destruction which would befall the leaders of the insurrection, and the return of the mass of the people to their allegiance.

7. "Our bones," &c. Lit. "As when one furrows and cleaves the earth, (so) our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Hades." "The bones of God's servants were strewn as thickly over the ground, as stones over the newly-ploughed soil; so that the Holy Land looked as if it had become an ante-chamber of Hades" (*Kay*). See Jer. viii. 1, 2. Some however think that the point of the comparison consists in this, that as the design of ploughing the ground is, that it may yield its produce, so their bones are scattered in order that they may rise up anew, as the seed which sprouts up out of the newly-turned soil. They see here therefore the germ of a national resurrection; as in Isa. xxvi. 19. Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14. The consolatory character which this explanation gives to the verse accords best with what has gone before, and the rest of the Psalm follows naturally from it.

8. "But." Rather, "For," giving the ground of the confidence which the Psalmist has just expressed.

"Leave not my soul destitute." Rather, "pour not out my soul" (Isa. liii. 12.); give it not over to destruction.

PSALMS, CXLII.

- ^k Ps. 119, 110. & 140, 5. & 142, 3. 9 Keep me from ^k the snares *which* they have laid for me,
 and the gins of the workers of iniquity.
¹ Ps. 35, 8. 10 ¹ Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
 whilst that I withal ² escape.
² Heb. *pass over.*

PSALM CXLII.

David sheweth that in his trouble all his comfort was in prayer unto God.

- ² Ps. 57, title. ²³ Maschil of David; A Prayer ⁴ when he was in the cave.
³ Or, A Psalm of David, giving instruction.
⁴ 1 Sam. 22, 1. & 24, 3.
^a Ps. 102, title. Isai. 26, 16. 1 **I** CRIED unto the LORD with my voice;
 I with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.
 2 ^a I poured out my complaint before him;
 I shewed before him my trouble.

10. "Whilst that I withal escape." The pronoun is emphatic.

"Behold them laid, the godless crew,

"Low in the toils they darkly drew;

"The while, with gathering heart and watchful eye,

"I wait mine hour to pass victorious by" (*Keble*).

The Psalmist is in danger, both from the allurements and from the persecutions of cruel enemies; his one weapon of defence is prayer (Ps. cix. 4.)—prayer for grace not to be led away by their flattery to participate in, or to connive at, their wickedness, and prayer for protection from their snares. And he confidently believes that God will so frustrate their designs as that they will in the end perish by the very destruction which they had intended for him. Here are counsel and encouragement for any who, in order to escape persecution, are tempted to yield to the enticements of wicked men; let them in their trial have recourse to prayer; let them not only offer their daily supplications without fail (ver. 2.), but let their eyes be ever waiting upon the Lord (ver. 8.); and assuredly He will sustain them and keep them from falling.

PSALM CXLII.

Cry in loneliness to the One true Friend.

It is doubtful whether the cave mentioned in the inscription is the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii.), or the cave of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv.). The sense of loneliness here described would suit David's condition in the cave of Adullam, before his brethren came to him (comp. title of Ps. lvii.). David's trouble is present, not past; the A. V. gives a wrong impression by the use of the past tense throughout.

1. This verse should run: "with my voice to the Lord I cry; with "my voice to the Lord I make supplication." Deserted by earthly friends, he finds his refuge in God; he cries aloud to Him; he does not merely pray inwardly, but with his voice; for audible prayer reacts soothingly upon him who offers it.

2. "I poured out . . . I shewed." Rather, "I pour out . . . I make "known" (comp. the title of Ps. cii.).

PSALMS, CXLII.

- 3 ¶ ^b When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, ^b Ps. 143. 4.
 then thou knewest my path.
^c In the way wherein I walked have they privily ^c Ps. 140. 5.
 laid a snare for me. ^d Ps. 69. 20.
- 4 ^{a2} I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but ² Or,
^e *there was* no man that would know me: *Look on the*
 refuge ³ failed me; ⁴ no man cared for my soul. *right hand,*
and see.
^e Ps. 31. 11.
 & 88. 8, 18.
- 5 ¶ I cried unto thee, O LORD:
 I said, ^f *Thou art* my refuge *and* ^g my portion
^h in the land of the living. ⁴ Heb. *no*
man sought
after my
soul.
^f Ps. 46. 1.
 & 91. 2.
- 6 Attend unto my cry; for I am ⁱ brought very
 low:
 deliver me from my persecutors; for they are ^g Ps. 16. 5.
 stronger than I. & 73. 26.
 & 119. 57.
 Lam. 3. 24.
- 7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise ^h Ps. 27. 13.
 thy name: ⁱ Ps. 116. 6.

3. Though he makes known his complaint to God, it is not because God did not know his trouble already; on the contrary this very thing is his consolation, that God is intimately acquainted with all that concerns him.

“Was (rather, ‘is’) overwhelmed.” Lit. “darkness itself.”

“When heavy, like a veil of woe,

“My spirit on me lay,

“Thou, Thou, O Lord, didst read and know

“My life’s mysterious way” (Keble).

Instead of saying that he comforts himself with the fact that God knows all, he states the fact with which he comforts himself.

4. “I looked.” Rather, as in margin, “Look on the right hand, and “see.” Even God’s all-seeing Eye could not discover any trustworthy friend on earth.

“There was no man who would know me,” i. e. acknowledge, look kindly on me (Ruth ii. 10, 19.). Such a friend, if he had one, would be standing at his right hand; but if God looked there, he would find him unprotected (see Ps. xvi. 8; cix. 6, 31; cxxi. 5.).

“No man cared for my soul.” Lit. “makes inquiry about, looks “after” (Jer. xxx. 17.).

5. “I cried . . . I said.” Rather, “I have cried . . . I have said.” Shut out from all earthly friends he cried to God; to Him he fled; he desired nothing else but to be His; being His Who is the Living One, he must ever be in the land of the living. See Ps. xxvii. 13; lxxiii. 26 (where “for ever” = “in the land of the living”); Isa. xxxviii. 11.

6. His own feebleness (Ps. lxxix. 8.), the superiority of his enemies (Ps. xviii. 17.), and his desire for the glorifying of God’s Name, are the pleas on which he grounds his prayer.

7. “Prison.” There may possibly be an allusion to the cave in which David was hiding; or the word may be used figuratively for trouble (comp. Ps. cxliii. 11.).

PSALMS, CXLIII.

^k Ps. 34. 2.

^l Ps. 13. 6.
& 119. 17.

^k the righteous shall compass me about; ^l for
thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

PSALM CXLIII.

¹ David prayeth for favour in judgment. ³ He complaineth of his griefs.
⁵ He strengtheneth his faith by meditation and prayer. ⁷ He prayeth
for grace, ⁹ for deliverance, ¹⁰ for sanctification, ¹² for destruction
of his enemies.

A Psalm of David.

¹ **H**EAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my
supplications:

^a Ps. 31. 1.

^a in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy
righteousness.

“The righteous shall compass me about.” He is not so much alone as he feared; the righteous will gather round him, sympathizing with and congratulating him (1 Cor. xii. 26.). But the verb may be rendered “shall crown themselves on my account,” shall rejoice and triumph.

Beset with enemies, and misunderstood, or at least only partially understood, by his friends, David feels himself separated from all created beings. In his isolation he turns to God, to Him Who alone is constant and true, to Him Who alone knows all his needs, and can supply them. The thought of God sheds light and joy over his darkness, and he is confident that he will not only have cause to bless God himself, but that others will rejoice with him. Even in his lonely cave he hears the echo of the congratulations which will one day greet him. Can it be that we are allowed, with David, to make God our refuge and portion? With this let us be content. The world is ever changing; friends pass away or are unsympathizing; but Christ loves us with an unchanging love. “Thou art thy Saviour’s darling—seek no more.”

PSALM CXLIII.

**The contrite, but trustful, prayer of one sorely
persecuted.**

Some copies of the Greek Version add to the inscription, “When Absalom his son pursued him;” and the melancholy tone of the Psalm undoubtedly agrees with the suggestion, that it is the prayer of the dethroned, conscience-stricken monarch. The many expressions found in other Psalms do not prove that it is not David’s; there is nothing unnatural in the supposition that they had become familiar to him. It is numbered rightly among the Penitential Psalms; indeed it may be almost said to be the most penitential of them all. The division of the Psalm into two parts by the Selah is in itself a confirmation of the title.

¹, ². The Psalmist grounds his prayer on two pleas—on God’s faithfulness to His promises (such as those contained in 2 Sam. vii.), and on His righteousness, or justice, which always upholds the right, and restrains the oppressor. At the same time he is so conscious of his sin, that he feels that, however right his cause may be, compared with the violence and injustice of his enemies, he cannot personally take his

PSALMS, CXLIII.

- 2 And ^b enter not into judgment with thy servant : ^b Job 14. 3.
 for ^c in thy sight shall no man living be justified. ^c Ex. 34. 7.
 3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ; ^c Job 4. 17. &
 he hath smitten my life down to the ground ; 9. 2. & 15. 14.
 he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those & 25. 4.
 that have been long dead. Ps. 130. 3.
 Eccles. 7. 20.
 Rom. 3. 20.
 Gal. 2. 16.
- 4 ^d Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within ^d Ps. 77. 3.
 me ; & 142. 3.
 my heart within me is desolate.
- 5 ^e I remember the days of old ; ^e Ps. 77. 5,
 I meditate on all thy works ; 10, 11.
 I muse on the work of thy hands.
- 6 ^f I stretch forth my hands unto thee : ^f Ps. 88. 9.
^g My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. ^g Ps. 63. 1.
 Selah.

stand upon God's justice. If God were to deal with him as he deserves, neither he nor any one living could be counted righteous.

2. This is virtually a prayer for mercy ; and on this account it stands as one of the sentences at the beginning of our Morning and Evening Prayer. We do not come before God trusting in anything of our own, but simply in God's forgiving love. We need the mercy which justifies the penitent, because we cannot stand before the justice which condemns the ungodly. The Psalmist entreats God to hear his supplication, in spite of his unworthiness ; and then he goes on to set forth the greatness of his necessity. Though he is God's servant, and not only looks to Him and trusts in Him (vv. 6, 8, 9.), but desires to do His will (vv. 8, 10.), yet is he not thereby justified. Even the holiness of the good spirits does not coincide with the absolute holiness of God (Job xv. 15.) ; much less has any living man a righteousness which avails before Him (Job ix. 2 ; xv. 14.).

3. "For." Some connect this with ver. 2, as giving the reason why he deprecates God's dealing with him according to strict justice. He has been persecuted by deadly foes, and is nigh unto death, as the punishment of his sin ; therefore he prays that his sin may be forgiven and the chastisement withdrawn. But it seems rather to be the ground of the prayer of the first verse, ver. 2 being almost parenthetical, "hear me ; for my persecutors are mighty and cruel."

"As those that have been long dead." Rather, "as those that have been for ever dead," those "who lie in the long-continuing night of the grave, from which there is no return" (Lam. iii. 6. Ps. lxxxviii. 4—6.).

4. "Is desolate." Lit. "astonishes itself," amazed and confounded by the greatness of the trouble.

5, 6. The thought of God's past dealings with him and with His people makes his prayer for help more urgent (Ps. lxxvii. 4—7, 12.). As the parched land opens as it were its mouth and asks for the rain, so the very weariness and weakness of his soul calls for God's help (Ps. lxiii. 1.).

PSALMS, CXLIII.

- 7 ¶ Hear me speedily, O LORD : my spirit faileth :
hide not thy face from me,
^h ² lest I be like unto them that go down into the
pit.
- 8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness ⁱ in the
morning ;
for in thee do I trust :
^k cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ;
for ^l I lift up my soul unto thee.
- 9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies :
I ³ flee unto thee to hide me.
- 10 ^m Teach me to do thy will ;—for thou *art* my God :
ⁿ thy spirit *is* good ; lead me into ^o the land of
uprightness.
- 11 ^p Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake :
for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of
trouble.

7. The latter part of the Psalm, even more than the former, recalls thoughts and expressions of former Psalms.

The prayer in each member of this verse is grounded on this, that matters had now come to an extremity, which is always God's opportunity.

8. "In the morning." The prayer of this verse, that the night of sorrow and anxiety may end with the dawn, and that God would point out to him the way in which he should go, to escape the artifices of his enemies, would suit very well with the early days of David's flight from Absalom (Ps. xxv. 1, 2, 8.).

9. "I flee unto Thee to hide me." Lit. "unto Thee have I concealed." All his desires, confessions, hopes, all that he has been, or is, or wishes to be—all he has disclosed to God, and to Him alone. "I have hid all with Thee" (*Keble*). Comp. 1 St. Pet. ii. 23, where Christ is said to have entrusted (all) to His Father.

10. "Thy Spirit is good." Rather, "Let Thy good Spirit (Neh. ix. 20.) lead me in a level land;" where he would be safe from stumbling (Isa. lxiii. 13, 14.).

11, 12. "Quicken me," &c. The verbs here are futures, and should be so rendered, "Thou wilt quicken," &c. The Psalmist becomes confident that his prayers will be heard. The distinguishing mark of this Psalm is the Psalmist's trust in God's mercy: his one plea is, that he trusts entirely to God; it is impossible that God would suffer one who has hidden himself with Him to perish (vv. 6, 8, 9, 10, 12.).

The sinner, overwhelmed by the burden and power of sin, cries earnestly to God for deliverance. He throws himself on God's mercy; he cannot stand before His justice. Yet he prays with confidence. Though his enemies, the sins which oppress him, are very powerful, God's faithfulness and righteousness are pledged for his help. He has promised to hear the cry of the penitent, and He will not break His word. He is righteous and hates sin, and desires the recovery of the sinner. Therefore His very righteousness, as well as His mercy, are on the side of the penitent.

PSALMS, CXLIV.

- 12 And of thy mercy ^a cut off mine enemies,
and destroy all them that afflict my soul :
for ^r I *am* thy servant.
- q Ps. 54. 5.
r Ps. 116. 16.

PSALM CXLIV.

1 *David blesseth God for his mercy both to him and to man. 5 He prayeth that God would powerfully deliver him from his enemies. 9 He promiseth to praise God. 11 He prayeth for the happy state of the kingdom.*

A Psalm of David.

- 1 **B**LESSED be the LORD ² my strength,
^a which teacheth my hands ³ to war, *and* my
fingers to fight :
- 2 ^b ⁴ my goodness, and my fortress ; my high tower,
and my deliverer ;
my shield, and *he* in whom I trust ; who sub-
dueth my people under me.
- 3 ^c LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge
of him !
or the son of man, that thou makest account of him !
- 4 ^d Man is like to vanity :
^e his days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.
- ² Heb. *my rock,*
Ps. 18. 2, 31.
^a 2 Sam. 22. 35.
Ps. 18. 34.
³ Heb. *to the war, &c.*
^b 2 Sam. 22. 2, 3, 40, 48.
⁴ Or, *My mercy.*
^c Job 7. 17.
Ps. 8. 4.
Heb. 2. 6.
^d Job 4. 19.
& 14. 2.
Ps. 39. 5.
& 62. 9.
^e Ps. 102. 11.

PSALM CXLIV.

Anticipation of peace and prosperity as the result of earnestly-sought deliverance.

There is a striking difference between the first part of this Psalm (to ver. 11.) and the remainder. In the earlier portion, which is largely made up of passages from earlier Psalms, the writer, in circumstances of danger, prays that the Divine aid which he had experienced in times past may be vouchsafed to him again ; in the latter he describes with great beauty and originality the prosperous condition of the people on whom God's blessing rests. It is thought by some that the last four verses are a fragment of a former hymn ; by others, on the contrary, they are regarded as a very late addition. Amid these conflicting conjectures, it is perhaps best to abide by the title, and refer the Psalm to the time when David, having been acknowledged king over all Israel, prays for deliverance from the Philistines whose attack he is anticipating, and looks forward in the end to a peaceful and prosperous reign (2 Sam. v. 17.). This Psalm, of mingled prayer and praise, forms a transition from the two Prayer-Psalms, which precede it, to the Psalm of praise which follows.

1. The first two verses recall the words of David's great song of thanksgiving (Ps. xviii. 1, 2, 34, 47.).

2. "**My people.**" Some would read "the people." Comp. Ps. xviii. 43, "Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people;" in 2 Sam. xxii. 44 it is "my people." See also Ps. xviii. 47. 2 Sam. xxii. 48.

3. In Psalm viii. it is the thought of God's greatness that draws forth the expression of his own littleness ; here it is rather God's exceeding kindness and condescension (comp. Gen. xxxii. 10. 2 Sam. vii. 18—20.).

PSALMS, CXLIV.

- f Ps. 18. 9. 5 ¶^f Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down :
 Isai. C4. 1. g touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
 g Ps. 104. 32. 6 ^h Cast forth lightning, and scatter them :
 h Ps. 18. 13, shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.
 14. 7 ⁱ Send thine ² hand from above ;
 i Ps. 18. 16. ^k rid me, and deliver me out of great waters,
 2 Heb. *hands*. from the hand of ¹ strange children ;
 k ver. 11. 8 whose mouth ^m speaketh vanity,
 Ps. 69. 1, 2, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
 14. 9 ¶ I will ⁿ sing a new song unto thee, O God :
 1 Ps. 54. 3. upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings
 Mal. 2. 11. will I sing praises unto thee.
 m Ps. 12. 2. 10 ° *It is he* that giveth ³ salvation unto kings :
 n Ps. 33. 2, 3. who delivereth David his servant from the hurt-
 & 40. 3. ful sword.
 o Ps. 18. 50. 11 ¶ ^p Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of
 3 Or, *victory*. strange children,
 p ver. 7, 8. whose mouth speaketh vanity,
 and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood :
 q Ps. 128. 3. 12 that our sons *may be* ^q as plants grown up in
 their youth ;
 that our daughters *may be* as corner stones,
 4 Heb. *cut*. ⁴ polished *after* the similitude of a palace :

5. What is here a prayer is in Ps. xviii. 8, 9, 17 celebrated as accomplished. May we suppose this Psalm to have been written before, and Ps. xviii. after, the Philistine invasions recorded in 2 Sam. v. 17—25?

7. "Strange children." Lit. "sons of the stranger," of the alien; the Philistines (Ps. xviii. 44, 45.).

8. "Their right hand," &c., i. e. the right hand raised for false oaths. But the meaning may be, that as they blaspheme with their mouths, so in their actions they do injustice.

9. The prayer for deliverance is followed by a vow of thanksgiving.

10. David mentions himself by name also in Ps. xviii. 50.

11. Verses 7, 8 are here repeated as a refrain.

12. The connection of this part of the Psalm with the preceding is uncertain. Some take it in this way: "Deliver us from our enemies,—us whose sons are as plants, &c. Happy is the people that is in such a case!" Others, as in Authorised Version, "so that, in order that, our sons may grow up," &c.

"Grown up." Rather, "well grown, grown large."

"Corner-stones." Perhaps, "corner pillars, columns, or cornices." The idea is that the young men are like trees growing up strong and vigorous in the open air; the young women like delicately-carved pillars within the house.

"So may our sons as saplings grow

"In youth's gay hour of bloom ;

PSALMS, CXLV.

- 13 *that our garners may be full, affording* ²all manner of store : ² Heb. *from kind to kind.*
- that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets :*
- 14 *that our oxen may be* ³strong to labour ; ³ Heb. *able to bear burdens, or, laden with flesh.*
- that there be no breaking in, nor going out ;*
- that there be no complaining in our streets.*
- 15 ^rHappy is *that* people, that is in such a case : ^r Deut. 33. 29. Ps. 33. 12. & 65. 4. & 146. 5.
- yea, happy is that* people, whose God is the LORD.

PSALM CXLV.

1 *David praiseth God for his fame, 8 for his goodness, 11 for his kingdom, 14 for his providence, 17 for his saving mercy.*

David's ^aPsalm of praise.

^a Ps. 100, title.

1 **I** WILL extol thee, my God, O king ;
and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

"As pillar'd shafts our daughters show
"In modell'd arch or dome" (*Keble*).

13. "That our sheep may bring forth," &c. Rather, "our sheep bringing forth thousands, multiplied by myriads, in our pastures," which some prefer to "streets" in the Authorised Version.

14. Some render, "Our oxen laden with produce ; no breach, no going forth (no removal to a foreign land), no cry of sorrow in our open places." But as the word translated "oxen" usually means "princes," "leaders," others render, "Our princes firmly established, so that there be no breaking in (of foes), no going out (into captivity)."

15. David concludes his picture of national prosperity with the exclamation, that blessed are the people who are not only thus abundantly favoured, but who see in their abundance the tokens of Jehovah's love and favour.

The kingly might which David had attained was entirely God's gift ; He alone had led him on to victory. David accordingly exults in God's goodness to him, which was the more wonderful on account of his own insignificance. He is still however in need of God's protecting care, and he prays earnestly that it may be continued to him, and that he may see all his enemies subdued, and his people dwelling in peace and plenty. The picture which the Psalmist draws at the close of the Psalm of a nation on whom God's blessing rests may seem to us too exclusively one of worldly prosperity ; but if the nation, so blessed, gratefully acknowledges that its prosperity is God's gift, and is led by the sense of His fatherly goodness to look forward to, and rejoice in, the better inheritance which awaits God's children hereafter, then most truly may we say with the Psalmist, "Happy is the people that is in such a case ; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord."

PSALM CXLV.

Hymn of praise to the beneficent King of all creatures.

The inscription might be rendered more properly "praise-hymn of David." The word "praise-hymn" occurs only in this title, but it is the name given to the whole Psalter, which is the book of "praise-

PSALMS, CXLV.

- 2 Every day will I bless thee ;
and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 ^b Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised ;
² and ^c his greatness *is* unsearchable.
- 4 ^d One generation shall praise thy works to
another,
and shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy
majesty,
and of thy wondrous ³ works.
- 6 And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible
acts :
and I will ⁴ declare thy greatness.
- 7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy
great goodness,
and shall sing of thy righteousness.
- 8 ^e The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion ;

^b Ps. 96. 4.
& 147. 5.

² Heb. and
of his great-
ness there is
no search.

^c Job 5. 9.
& 9. 10.

Rom. 11. 33.

^d Isai. 38. 19.

³ Heb.
things, or,
words.

⁴ Heb.
declare it.

^e Ex. 34. 6, 7.
Num. 14. 18.
Ps. 86. 5, 15.
& 103. 8.

“hymns.” It is an alphabetical Psalm, with one letter wanting. Perhaps a verse has been lost, or perhaps it was omitted in order that there might be three stanzas of seven verses each. A verse representing it is found in the Greek, but not in the other Versions. The Psalm is remarkable for the way in which words are heaped together in order to give utterance to the fulness of the Psalmist’s heart, especially words expressive of the greatness of God. It is well fitted to be the introduction to the five Hallelujah Psalms with which the Psalter closes. By appointing this Psalm for Whitsun-day the Church would have us think especially of the great gift of the Holy Spirit when we sing of God’s wondrous works, His marvellous acts, His abundant kindness. That gift is the crown of all blessings on earth, and the pledge of glory in heaven. We may understand also by the kingdom of God, of which the Psalm speaks so much, the Holy Church, which had its birth on Whitsun-day.

1. “O King.” Lit. “the King,” which is very appropriate in the mouth of a king, acknowledging the Lord to be King of kings.

“For ever and ever.” Loving and clinging to the Eternal One, the Psalmist felt that he must be himself eternal. His one delight is in praising God ; and he will praise Him not only continually, but without intermission ; not only “for ever and ever,” but every day, be they days of sorrow or of prosperity, in that eternity (Ps. lxxviii. 19.).

3. Ps. xviii. 3 ; xlvi. 1. Though His greatness is so infinitely deep that no searching can fathom it, yet it is being continually revealed in mighty deeds ; and these deeds, the manifestations of that victorious power which prevails over everything, men will celebrate continually.

5. Lit. “On the splendour of the glory of Thy majesty, and the facts of Thy wondrous works would I muse.” The accumulation of words sets forth the incomparable greatness of God.

7 “Abundantly utter.” Lit. “pour forth,” as from a fountain which shall never fail (Ps. xix. 2 ; lix. 7.).

8. See marg. reff. These passages shew how deeply God’s revelation

PSALMS, CXLV.

- slow to anger, and ² of great mercy.
- 9 ^f The LORD *is* good to all :
and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.
- 10 ^g All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD ;
and thy saints shall bless thee.
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,
and talk of thy power ;
- 12 to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,
and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- 13 ^h Thy kingdom *is* ³ an everlasting kingdom,
and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all gene-
rations.
- 14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall,
and ⁱ raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.
- 15 ^k The eyes of all ⁴ wait upon thee ;
and ^l thou givest them their meat in due season.
- 16 Thou openest thine hand,
^m and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
- 17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways,
and ⁵ holy in all his works.

² Heb. *great in mercy.*
^f Ps. 100. 5.
Nah. 1. 7.

^g Ps. 19. 1.

^h Ps. 146. 10.
1 Tim. 1. 17.
³ Heb.
a kingdom of all ages.

ⁱ Ps. 146. 8.

^k Ps. 104. 27.
⁴ Or, *look unto thee.*

^l Ps. 136. 25.

^m Ps. 104. 21.
& 147. 9.

⁵ Or,
merciful, or, bountiful.

of Himself to Moses was impressed on the minds of men (Exod. xxxiv. 5—7.). The will of God ever tends towards favour and compassion; wrath is only the background of His nature, which He reluctantly and after long waiting lets loose against those who reject His mercy: it is His strange work (Isa. xxviii. 21.).

9. "To . . . over." God's mercy extends to all, hovering over and covering them.

10. All God's works, even though inanimate, shew forth His glory; their dumb voices are loud-speaking witnesses of His love. His saints who live in His love extol Him by words and acts; they are ever telling of the glory and greatness of His kingdom.

13. God's kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, both past and future; and His supreme authority is exhibited in every separate generation. The goal of all history is the gathering in of all things in heaven and earth into the all-embracing kingdom of God in Christ. Eph. i. 10. Comp. Dan. iv. 3, 34.

There is an evident break at the close of this verse; it is here that the missing verse would come in.

14. The Psalmist here describes the character of God's kingdom; the poor and afflicted are His special charge.

"All that fall." Lit. "the falling ones." He is the support of those who are falling, the lifter up of those who are bowed down (Ps. xxxvii. 24; cxlvi. 8.).

15. He is also the nourisher of all; all His creatures, rational and irrational, look to Him with confident hope. From His full hand He satisfies all their desire (Ps. civ. 27, 28.).

17. "Righteous." That is, He ever acts strictly according to His rule of mercy.

PSALMS, CXLVI.

- ⁿ Deut. 4. 7. 18 ⁿ The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
^o John 4. 24. to all that call upon him ^o in truth.
 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him :
 he also will hear their cry, and will save them.
^p Ps. 31. 23. & 97. 10. 20 ^p The LORD preserveth all them that love him :
 but all the wicked will he destroy.
 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD :
 and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever
 and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

1 The psalmist voweth perpetual praises to God. 3 He exhorteth not to trust in man. 5 God, for his power, justice, mercy, and kingdom, is only worthy to be trusted.

² Heb.
Hallelujah.
^a Ps. 103. 1.

1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.
^a Praise the LORD, O my soul.

“Holy.” Rather, as in margin, “merciful, gracious, loving.” In Jer. iii. 12 the same word is rendered “merciful.”

18. He Who is nigh to all men in His power and goodness is especially nigh in mercy to those who pray to Him.

19, 20. Those who are spoken of in the first of these two verses as those who fear God are spoken of in the next as those who love Him. Fear and love are inseparable; fear without love forgets the mercy of God, love without fear, if it were possible, would forget His majesty.

21. The Psalmist ends his hymn of praise by praying that he himself and all mankind may make the praise of God their everlasting employment.

No day should pass, be it ever so busy or ever so sorrowful, without its tribute of grateful praise. God is every day blessing us and doing us good; therefore we should praise Him every day. There is in truth no joy so intense as the joy of praising God. Any one who can sing this Psalm heartily and enter into its spirit will experience as lively a foretaste of the world to come as can be experienced in this present life; while on the other hand, as St. Augustine has said, he who careth not to sing praises in this transitory world, must be content to be silent hereafter.

PSALM CXLVI.

Praise the Lord, the One true Helper.

The Psalter closes with a loud burst of thanksgiving, in which for the time even prayer is silent. Each of the concluding five Psalms begins and ends with Hallelujah. They probably belong to the time of the restoration of Jerusalem and the consecration of its walls under Nehemiah (xii. 43.). The Greek Version ascribes this and the two following Psalms to Haggai and Zechariah.

1. “Praise the Lord, O my soul.” When calling on all the world to praise God, the Psalmist begins with himself and attunes his own heart to praise.

PSALMS, CXLVI.

- 2 ^b While I live will I praise the LORD : b Ps. 104. 23.
 I will sing praises unto my God while I have
 any being.
- 3 ^c Put not your trust in princes, c Ps. 118. 8, 9.
nor in the son of man, in whom *there is* no ² help. Isai. 2. 22.
- 4 ^d His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; d Ps. 104. 23.
 in that very day ^e his thoughts perish. Eccles. 12. 7.
- 5 ^f Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his e Isai. 2. 22.
 help, f Sec 1 Cor.
 whose hope *is* in the LORD his God : e 2. 6.
- 6 ^g which made heaven, and earth, f Ps. 144. 15.
 the sea, and all that therein *is* : Jer. 17. 7.
 which keepeth truth for ever : g Gen. 1. 1.
- 7 ^h which executeth judgment for the oppressed : Rev. 14. 7.
ⁱ which giveth food to the hungry. h Ps. 103. 6.
- ^k The LORD looseth the prisoners : i Ps. 107. 9.
- 8 ^l the LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind : k Ps. 68. 6.
^m the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down : l & 107. 10, 14.
m Matt. 9. 30.
John 9. 7,
—32.
n Ps. 145. 14.
& 147. 6.
Luke 13. 13.

2. This verse is the answer to his summons to himself: yes, he will praise the Lord, and that not only in the Psalm he is now commencing, but through his whole life.

3. The allusion may be to the Persian princes; Cyrus who had sanctioned the return died shortly after; a subsequent king revoked his edict; and though at this time the reigning prince was favourable to them, his life, if not his favour, was uncertain. In man is no salvation, either for himself or others; salvation only cometh from above (Ps. xxxiii. 16; lx. 11.).

4. "To his earth." His native earth (Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19.).

"His thoughts." His plans and purposes, be they good or bad, favourable or otherwise.

5. Man's help being of no avail, blessed is he whose confidence is placed only and entirely in the Lord.

6. Man, even though willing, is not at all times able to help; the Lord is the Almighty Creator of the universe. Man may change his mind, the Lord is ever faithful to His purpose.

7. The Psalmist goes on to declare what He Who is both able and willing actually does for His people. He obtains right for the oppressed; He provides their daily food for them that look to Him; He looseth the prisoners; he openeth the eyes of the blind; He lifteth up those who are bowed down; He loveth the righteous; He protecteth the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

"The Lord looseth the prisoners." Observe the five lines or clauses beginning with "The Lord" or Jehovah, and consisting each of three words in the original. It has been noticed that the acts of mercy here enumerated were fulfilled in the personal ministry of Christ. He released those who were bound (St. Luke viii. 29.); He opened the eyes of the blind (St. John ix. 1—8. St. Matt. ix. 27—31.); He raised those that were bowed down (St. Luke xiii. 11—16.).

PSALMS, CXLVII.

- the LORD loveth the righteous :
- ^a Deut. 10. 13. 9 ⁿ the LORD preserveth the strangers ;
 Ps. 68. 5. he relieveth the fatherless and widow :
- Ps. 147. 6. ° but the way of the wicked he turneth upside
 down.
- ^p Ex. 15. 18. 10 ^p The LORD shall reign for ever,
 Ps. 10. 16. *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
 & 145. 13. Praise ye the LORD.
 Rev. 11. 15.

PSALM CXLVII.

1 The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his care of the church, 4 his power, 6 and his mercy: 7 to praise him for his providence: 12 to praise him for his blessings upon the kingdom, 15 for his power over the meteors, 19 and for his ordinances in the church.

- 1 **P**RAISE ye the LORD :
 for ^a *it is good* to sing praises unto our God ;
^b *for it is pleasant* ; and ^c *praise is comely*.
- ^a Ps. 92. 1.
^b Ps. 135. 3.
^c Ps. 33. 1.

9. "He turneth upside down." Lit. "He turneth aside" out of its course, so that it ends in ruin (Ps. i. 6.). That which is the natural issue of wickedness is in truth the Lord's doing. But that He delighteth not in judgment is shewn even here, where (as has been well pointed out) while His acts of mercy are largely dwelt upon, His judicial punishment is dismissed in a single line.

God is the One Creator, Governor and King of the world ; therefore men must trust in Him and Him alone : all other helpers will, sooner or later, fail. The only question is, *May we trust in Him?* If we may, and if we will, then we cannot fail also to praise Him. All the tokens of His goodness which encourage us to trust are a call also to thankful praise.

PSALM CXLVII.

**Praise the Lord, the sovereign Ruler of all things,
 and the Restorer of Jerusalem.**

That was a glad and solemn day for Jerusalem, when, after many difficulties and discouragements, the walls of the city were once more rebuilt, and they were enabled to keep the feast of the dedication. The Levites were summoned to Jerusalem from their several cities, and a solemn perambulation of the wall was made by two bands of singers. Starting from the western wall one choir went to the right and made the circuit of the southern wall, the other to the left along the northern wall, until they met on the eastern wall, and drew up either in or by the Temple, when festive sacrifices were offered amid music and shouts of joy (Neh. xii. 27—43.).

It is generally believed that this Psalm has reference to this dedication. The restored people rejoice in their rebuilt city.

1. "Good . . . pleasant." Here, as in Ps. cxxxv. 3, the invitation to praise God is based not only on the obligation but the delight. To go forth out of ourselves, and lose ourselves in adoring praise is man's keenest joy on earth, as well as a preparation for the eternal Hallelujahs of heaven.

"Comely." Ps. xxxiii. 1. Praise is fitting, both because God is so good in Himself and so merciful to us.

PSALMS, CXLVII.

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|--|---|
| <p>2 ¶ The LORD doth ^d build up Jerusalem :
 ^e he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.</p> <p>3 ^f He healeth the broken in heart,
 and bindeth up their ² wounds.</p> <p>4 ^g He telleth the number of the stars ;
 he calleth them all by <i>their</i> names.</p> <p>5 ^h Great <i>is</i> our Lord, and of ⁱ great power :
 ³ ^k his understanding <i>is</i> infinite.</p> <p>6 ^l The LORD lifteth up the meek :
 he casteth the wicked down to the ground.</p> <p>7 ¶ Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving ;
 sing praise upon the harp unto our God :</p> <p>8 ^m who covereth the heaven with clouds,
 who prepareth rain for the earth,
 who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.</p> <p>9 ⁿ He giveth to the beast his food,
 <i>and</i> ^o to the young ravens which cry.</p> <p>10 ^p He delighteth not in the strength of the horse :
 he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.</p> | <p>d Ps. 102. 16.
 e Dent. 30. 3.
 f Ps. 51. 17.
 Isai. 57. 15.
 & 61. 1.
 Luko 4. 18.
 2 Heb. <i>griefs</i>.
 g See Gen.
 15. 5.
 Isai. 40. 26.
 h 1 Chr. 16. 25.
 Ps. 48. 1.
 & 96. 4.
 & 145. 3.
 i Nah. 1. 3.
 3 Heb. <i>of his understanding there is no number</i>.
 k Isai. 40. 28.
 l Ps. 146. 8, 9.
 m Job 38. 26,
 27.
 Ps. 104. 13,
 14.
 n Job 38. 41.
 Ps. 104. 27.
 28. & 136. 25.
 & 145. 15.
 o Job 38. 41.
 Matt. 6. 26.
 p Ps. 33. 16,
 17, 18.
 Hos. 1. 7.</p> |
|--|---|

2. Here the delightful work of praise begins; it is the Lord Who hath rebuilt Jerusalem, and gathered the scattered exiles.

“The outcasts.” Lit. “those who are thrust out, driven away” (see Deut. xxx. 1, 4. Neh. i. 9. Isa. xi. 12; lvi. 8.).

3. “Broken in heart . . . wounds.” With reference, in the first instance, to the affliction of the captivity.

4. He who gives a number and names to the stars, so that not one is overlooked by Him, may well be trusted to know and to relieve the troubles of men. See Isa. xl. 26, 27, which was plainly in the mind of the writer of this Psalm.

5. God’s perfect knowledge, as well as His Almighty power, is the stay of the Church. He knows all its varying fortunes and watches over her. And His dealings with her reflect that union of gracious love and righteous anger which is in Him: the patient sufferers He strengthens; haughty sinners He casts down.

7. The song of praise makes a fresh start, taking a wider range, celebrating God’s loving-kindness through the whole circle of His creatures.

8. “Upon the mountains.” That is, beyond the reach of human cultivation. The Greek Version adds to this verse a short clause, “and green herb for the service of men;” whence our Prayer Book Version.

9. “To the young ravens which cry.” It is said that the young ravens are early deserted by their mothers. Their cry is mentioned also Job xxxviii. 41; comp. St. Luke xii. 24. The word here used for *cry* expresses the harsh croak of the raven.

10, 11. As God provides for those who among the lower animals simply wait for and receive their food from Him, so among men His special favour is shewn to those who, discarding all self-reliance, trust only in Him.

PSALMS, CXLVII.

- 11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
in those that hope in his mercy.
- 12 ¶ Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem ;
praise thy God, O Zion.
- 13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates ;
he hath blessed thy children within thee.
- ² Heb. *Who maketh thy border peace.* 14 ² He maketh peace *in* thy borders,
and ^r filleth thee with the ³ finest of the wheat.
- ¹ Is. 60. 17, 18. 15 ^s He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth :
his word runneth very swiftly.
- ^r Ps. 132. 15. 16 ^t He giveth snow like wool :
he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.
- ³ Heb. *fat of wheat,* Deut. 32. 14. Ps. 81. 16. 17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels :
who can stand before his cold ?
- ^s Job 37. 12. Ps. 107. 20. ^t Job 37. 6. 18 ^u He sendeth out his word, and melteth them :
he causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.
- ^u ver. 15. See Job 37. 10.

12—20. This concluding stanza is a fresh Psalm in the Greek Version. The Psalmist calls on restored Jerusalem to praise God, Who has raised her from ruins and strengthened her with gates, Who has given her peace instead of conflict, plenty instead of desolation. From Him alone all earthly blessings come, the cold of winter and the genial breezes of spring ; and to Israel He has manifested Himself not only as the God of nature, but as the God of revelation ; to all the world He has imparted His outward gifts ; to Israel alone has He vouchsafed the knowledge of Himself.

13. See Neh. vii. 3, where special mention is made of the walls being closed and barred at night.

14. "The finest of the wheat." Lit. as in margin, "the fat of wheat;" the Psalmist here notes the fulfilment of the promise in Ps. lxxxii. 16.

15. "His commandment" and "His word" are represented as His servants, whom He sends to fulfil His will (Gen. i. 3. Ps. xxxiii. 9 ; cvii. 20.).

16. The snowflakes are like flocks of wool, and cover the earth with a white warm garment ; the trees and roofs are crusted over with the fine hoar frost, as if sprinkled with ashes.

17. "Like morsels." That is, in hailstones.

18. "Them." The snow, the hoar frost, and the ice. God sends a thawing wind and the waters flow again.

He who ruled the whole world by His word had specially revealed His will to Israel, and to Israel alone. His special care for them had been lately signally manifested again. The restoration from captivity was like the return of spring (Isa. lv. 10, 11.).

We may read this Psalm as a thanksgiving for the building up of the Church of Christ, into which He gathers together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad (St. John xi. 52.). He Who rules the stars in their courses, and feeds the birds of the air, and orders all the

PSALMS, CXLVIII.

- 19 ^x He sheweth ² his word unto Jacob,
^y his statutes and his judgments¹ unto Israel.
- 20 ^z He hath not dealt so with any nation :
 and *as for his* judgments, they have not known²
 them.
- Praise ye the LORD.

^x Deut. 33.
^{2, 3, 4.}
 Ps. 76. 1.
 & 78. 5.
 & 103. 7.
² Heb.
his words.
^y Mal. 4. 4.
^z See Deut.
 4. 32, 33, 34.
 Rom. 3. 1, 2.

PSALM CXLVIII.

1 *The psalmist exhorteth the celestial, 7 the terrestrial, 11 and the rational creatures to praise God.*

- 1** ² **PRAISE** ye the LORD.
 Praise ye the LORD from the heavens :
 praise him in the heights.
- 2** ^a Praise ye him, all his angels :
 praise ye him, all his hosts.

² Heb.
Hallelujah.

^a Ps. 103. 20,
 21.

operations of the natural world for the support and comfort of the race of men, has shewn His distinguishing favour to the members of His Church, in that He has vouchsafed to them the revelation of Himself, and entrusted them with His holy word (Rom. iii. 1, 2.). If the possession of that word by His ancient people was a sufficient reason for the Hallelujah with which this Psalm closes, the fact that He has granted that blessing to us in still greater clearness is surely a call to us to re-echo with joyful hearts the song of praise.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Praise the Lord, all His creatures in heaven and earth.

The Church appears in this Psalm as the leader of the choir of the universe. It calls on all creatures in heaven and earth, and especially on all men of all classes and ages, to join in concert in praising the Name of the Lord; and that especially because of His dealings with His chosen Israel. The conclusion of the Psalm shews what it was which fired the Psalmist's heart. God's signal mercy in raising His people from their depression and crowning them once more with honour and power is not merely a call to Israel to praise Him, but may fitly excite the joy of all beings in heaven and earth. The Psalm has two parts: first the heavens (vv. 1—6.), and then the earth (vv. (7—14.)), are invited to join the chorus of praise; and in each case a special reason for such praise is given: in the case of the heavenly bodies, because He made them what they are, and they must needs unceasingly fulfil His will (vv. 5, 6.); in the case of men on earth, because they can know and perceive His glory, and that glory is unapproachable (ver. 13.). The last verse strikes a deeper, tenderer note; the great God of heaven and earth is the Redeemer of His people.

1. "From the heavens." Answering to "from the earth" in ver. 7. Let His praise resound from heaven.

2. "All His hosts." In the earlier scriptures the word "host" is applied to the heavenly bodies (Gen. ii. 1. Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. See also 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3, 5. Jer. xix. 13.), but in later times it was used also of the Angels (1 Kings xxii. 19.). Here,

PSALMS, CXLVIII.

- 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon :
praise him, all ye stars of light.
- ^b 1 Kin. 8. 27.
² Cor. 12. 2.
^c Gen. 1. 7.
- 4 Praise him, ^b ye heavens of heavens,
and ^c ye waters that *be* above the heavens.
- ^d Gen. 1. 1,
6, 7.
Ps. 33. 6, 9.
- 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD :
for ^d he commanded, and they were created.
- ^e Ps. 89. 37.
& 119. 90, 91.
Jer. 31. 35,
36. & 33. 25.
- 6 ^e He hath also stablished them for ever and
ever :
he hath made a decree which shall not pass
- ^f Isai. 43. 20.
- 7 ¶ Praise the LORD from the earth,
^f ye dragons, and all deeps :
- ^g Ps. 147. 15,
—18.
- 8 fire, and hail ; snow, and vapours ;
stormy wind ^g fulfilling his word :
- ^h Isai. 44. 23.
& 49. 13.
& 55. 12.
- 9 ^h mountains, and all hills ;
fruitful trees, and all cedars :
- 10 beasts, and all cattle ;
creeping things, and ² flying fowl :
- 11 kings of the earth, and all people ;
princes, and all judges of the earth :
- 12 both young men, and maidens ;
old men, and children :
- ⁱ Ps. 8. 1.
Isai. 12. 4.
- 13 let them praise the name of the LORD :
for ⁱ his name alone is ³ excellent ;
- ² Heb. *birds of wing.*
- ³ Heb. *exalted.*
- ^k Ps. 113. 4.
- ^k his glory *is* above the earth and heaven.

as in Ps. ciii. 20, 21, the parallel clause seems to shew that Angels are meant. But Angels and stars are joined together in Job xxxviii. 7.

4. "Heavens of heavens," i. e. all which can be included under the name of heaven, the heavens in their highest and uttermost range (Deut. x. 14.).

5. "Let them praise the Name of the Lord: for." So again in ver. 13.

"He commanded." Ps. xxxiii. 6. He not only created them, but gave them a law ; set them each in their place from which they cannot depart, and appointed each their work which they cannot neglect.

6. "Which shall not pass," i. e. pass away (Esther i. 19, marg. ; ix. 27, marg.). It may be rendered, "not one transgresses it" (Job xiv. 5. Ps. civ. 9. Jer. v. 22.).

7. "From the earth." The summons to praise God now passes to the earth and all that is therein in the widest extent.

"Dragons." "Sea-monsters" (Gen. i. 21.).

8. "Fulfilling His word." Even the wild winds; which seem to know no law, obey His will (Ps. civ. 4 ; cviii. 25.).

11. In the first part of the Psalm, when the Psalmist calls on the heavens to praise the Lord, he begins with the Angels, and ends with the waters above the heavens ; in the second, on the contrary, he begins with the lowest, and ends with the highest upon earth.

PSALMS, CXLIX.

14 ¹ He also exalteth the horn of his people,
^m the praise of all his saints ;
even of the children of Israel, ⁿ a people near ⁿ Eph. 2. 17.
 unto him.
 Praise ye the LORD.

¹ Ps. 75. 10.

^m Ps. 143. 9.

PSALM CXLIX.

¹ *The prophet exhorteth to praise God for his love to the church, 5 and for that power which he hath given to the church.*

1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.

^a Sing unto the LORD a new song,

² Heb.

Hallelujah.

^a Ps. 33. 3

Isai. 42. 10.

14. "He also exalteth the horn of His people." More literally, "He hath raised up a horn for His people." Comp. St. Luke i. 69. During the captivity Israel had lost its horn, that is, its beauty and power; now God had given them one, had restored them to a place of dignity among the nations.

"The praise of all His saints," i. e. "which is an object of praise to all His saints." Comp. the expression "to the praise" in the New Testament (Eph. i. 6, 12, 14. Phil. i. 11. 1 St. Pet. i. 7.). Or it may mean that God is the object of praise to His saints.

"A people near unto Him." Lit. "the people of His nearness" (Deut. iv. 7.). It is on account of this nearness, and the signal favour implied in it, that the Psalmist strikes up his Hallelujah, and calls on heaven and earth to join with him.

This Psalm is not only an invitation to all created things to unite in offering their tribute of praise to their God and King, but it carries on our thoughts to the time when the summons will be obeyed, and the whole creation, which now groans together with us under the bondage of corruption, shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and shall wear without hindrance and without decay a dress of glory and joy in honour of the great Creator. But He Who is the Creator of the world is also the Redeemer of Israel; therefore the hymn of praise in which the whole universe shall join is in truth a hymn in honour of Him Who hath visited and redeemed His people, and raised up an horn of salvation for them in the house of His servant David (see Rev. v. 13.).

PSALM CXLIX.

Praise the Lord for His mercy to His people, and for the subjugation of the heathen.

This Psalm takes up the note struck at the close of the preceding. There the Psalmist said that God had raised up an horn for His people, an occasion of praise to all His saints; here he expressly calls on the saints (vv. 1, 5, 9.) to praise Him. The Psalm is the song of Israel rejoicing not merely in the return from captivity, but in the prospect of victory over the nations. In the Christian's mouth it is a thanksgiving for the triumph of the Church over all enemies, and the exaltation of the kingdom of Christ above all the kingdoms of the earth.

1. "A new song." Such as befits the revived condition of restored Israel (see Ps. xxxiii. 3; xl. 3; xcvi. 1; xcvi. 1. Isa. xlii. 10.). The

PSALMS, CXLIX.

- and his praise in the congregation of saints.*
- ^b See Job 35. 10.
^c Ps. 100. 3.
 Isai. 54. 5.
 Zech. 9. 9.
 Matt. 21. 5.
^d Ps. 81. 2.
 & 150. 4.
^e Or, *with the pipe.*
^f Ps. 35. 27.
 Ps. 132. 16.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in ^b him that made him :
 let the children of Zion be joyful in their ^c King.
- 3 ^d Let them praise his name ² in the dance :
 let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel
 and harp.
- 4 For ^e the LORD taketh pleasure in his people :
^f he will beautify the meek with salvation.
- 5 ¶ Let the saints be joyful in glory :
 let them ^g sing aloud upon their beds.
- 6 *Let* the high praises of God be ^h in their mouth,
 and ^h a twoedged sword in their hand ;

times when "old things have passed away, and all things have become "new" especially demand a new song. The praises of the Christian Church are "a new song" compared with the thanksgivings of the saints under the Old Testament; the song of the redeemed in heaven will be a new song in comparison with the praises which they sang on earth (Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3.).

"In the congregation of saints." That is, in the rebuilt temple, in the Christian Church (Ps. lxxxix. 5; cvii. 32.).

2. "In Him that made him," i. e. not merely by creating him, but by making him His people. The restoration from captivity was a kind of re-creation (Ps. xcv. 6; c. 3.). Comp. "we are His workmanship" (Eph. ii. 10.).

3. "Dance." Exod. xv. 20. Judg. xi. 34. Jer. xxxi. 4. Ps. xxx. 11.

4. "Taketh pleasure." His real delight is in His people; His anger is but for a swiftly-passing moment (Isa. liv. 7.).

"He will beautify." Isa. lv. 5; lx. 7, 9, 13; lxi. 3.

"The meek." Those who in their low estate meekly and patiently waited for God's salvation.

5. "In glory." In the condition of honour and glory in which He has placed them by crowning them with salvation. Comp. (by way of contrast) Neh. i. 3; ii. 17.

"Upon their beds." Where before they poured forth their complaints (Hos. vii. 14.). The bed is the place for soliloquy, and the tears shed there are now turned into songs of joy; God gives them songs in the night (Job xxxv. 10.).

6. The Psalmist looks forward to the future exaltation of Israel; he sees them going forth to victory with the praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand. Comp. 2 Macc. xv. 27, "So that "fighting with their hands and praying unto God with their hearts they "slew no less than thirty and five thousand men."

It is possible that the Jews after the captivity expected that they might once more be the instruments in God's hands for the destruction of His enemies; and many in Christian times, we know, taking such verses as these as their watchword, have armed themselves or others for the fight, and considered that they were doing battle for the Lord. "It was by means of this Psalm that Caspar Sciopius, in his 'Clarion "of the Sacred War,' a work written, it has been said, not with ink

PSALMS, CL.

7 to execute vengeance upon the heathen,

and punishments upon the people ;

8 to bind their kings with chains,
and their nobles with fetters of iron ;

9 ⁱ to execute upon them the judgment written :

ⁱ Deut. 7. 1, 2.

^k this honour have all his saints.

^k Ps. 148. 14.

Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CL.

¹ *An exhortation to praise God, 3 with all kind of instruments.*

1 ² PRAISE ye the LORD.

² Heb.
Hallelujah.

Praise God in his sanctuary :

“but with blood, roused and inflamed the Roman Catholic princes to “the Thirty Years’ War. It was by means of this Psalm that, in the “German Protestant community, Thomas Münzer fanned the flames of “the War of the Peasants.” But we are justified by such passages as Ps. cx. 5, 6. Isa. xlv. 14 ; xlix. 23 ; lix. 16—19, comp. with Rev. i. 16 ; ii. 12 ; xix. 15, in giving a spiritual application to this passage, and in understanding it with reference to the victory of the Messiah over the nations of the world ; while some willingly submit themselves others will be cut off before Him (comp. Rev. xiv. 20 ; xvii. 14).

9. “The judgment written,” i. e. prescribed and fixed unalterably (comp. Isa. lxxv. 6.) ; God’s judgment upon those who oppose Him.

“This honour have all His saints.” Lit. “an honour (it is) to “all His saints,” i. e. it is an honour to the saints, to subdue the heathen nations to God. The victories of Christ won over the heathen are the glory of His people.

Notwithstanding the thoughts of vengeance to which the Psalmist here gives expression, thoughts in which Christians cannot rightly participate, it is instructive to observe that they are confessedly “the meek” (ver. 4.), whom God delivers and exalts and leads forth to victory. Under the Gospel also the promise is that the meek shall inherit the earth ; only the conquest is achieved not by earthly might, but by patience and prayer ; the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

PSALM CL.

Hallelujah.

Nothing is known as to the author or date of this Psalm. It may have been composed by the latest collector of the Psalter in order to form a conclusion to the whole book ; or, having been written independently, it may have been placed in its present position, because of its fitness for the purpose. The tenfold exhortation “Praise ye,” preceded and followed by Hallelujah, perhaps favours the former suggestion, the number ten signifying completeness. But with whatever purpose originally composed, we can conceive no more fitting conclusion to the Book of Praises than this Psalm. It calls on all living creatures to praise God, in all places of His worship, for all His glory and greatness, with all the accompaniments of solemn pomp and joy.

1. “In His sanctuary,” i. e. in His earthly temple ; in contrast with

PSALMS, CL.

- praise him in the firmament of his power.
- ^a Ps. 145. 5, 6. 2 ^a Praise him for his mighty acts :
- ^b Deut. 3. 24. praise him according to his excellent ^b greatness.
- ² Or, *cornet*, 3 Praise him with the sound of the ² trumpet :
Ps. 98. 6. ^c praise him with the psaltery and harp.
- ^c Ps. 81. 2. 4 Praise him ^d with the timbrel and ³ dance :
& 149. 3. praise him with ^e stringed instruments and
^d Ex. 15. 20. organs.
- ³ Or, *pipe*, 5 Praise him upon the loud ^f cymbals :
Ps. 149. 3. praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
- ^e Ps. 33. 2. 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the
& 92. 3. LORD.
& 141. 9. Praise ye the LORD.
Isai. 38. 20.
- ^f 1 Chron. 15.
- 16, 19, 28.
& 16. 5.
& 25. 1, 6.

heaven, which is mentioned in the next clause. The earthly and heavenly dwelling-places are mentioned together repeatedly in 1 Kings viii.

“The firmament of His power.” That is, where His majesty and power are displayed (Ps. lxxviii. 34.).

2. As the whole universe is the scene of His praise, so His infinite greatness is the ground of it.

3—5. The means and instrument of His praise; viz. every kind of musical appliance, wind instruments and stringed instruments, tabrets, cymbals and dances.

“Trumpet.” Probably the curved ram’s horn, to be distinguished from the straight silver trumpet.

4. “Timbrel,” or tambourine, the chief instrumental accompaniment of the dance (Exod. xv. 20.).

“Stringed instruments.” Probably some specific musical instrument is meant, as two stringed instruments are mentioned in the preceding verse.

“Organs.” Rather, “pipe.”

5. Of the two kinds of cymbals here mentioned, the “loud cymbals,” or clear-sounding cymbals, consisted of four small plates of brass, or some other hard metal, two plates being attached to each hand of the performer, and smitten together to produce a loud noise; the “high sounding cymbals,” or clanging cymbals, consisted of two larger plates, one held in each hand, and struck together as an accompaniment to other instruments.

6. “Everything that hath breath.” Lit. “the whole of breath,” i.e. all living beings (Gen. ii. 7.). From the lifeless instruments the Psalmist passes to the voices of living creatures, and calls on everything that has a voice to praise God. God has given us breath in order that we may praise Him. Blessed are they who are so fulfilling His purpose here on earth, as that they may hope to find their happiness in the unceasing Hallelujahs of heaven (see Rev. xix. 1—6.).

THE PROVERBS.

INTRODUCTION.

1. NOTWITHSTANDING the doubts of some writers, the book of Proverbs has always been included in the list of Sacred Books, and reckoned to belong to that class of them which were called "Writings," that is, sacred writings, distinguished from the "Law" and the "Prophets" by being of a more general character. Let us inquire what is the true title of the book, and what it means.

2. The Hebrew word, which in our English Version is rendered "Proverbs," comes from a word which means, in the first place, to rule or have dominion. Hence the Proverbs have been supposed to mean, sayings which rule, that is, which are weighty and important. But the word also means to compare or liken, and also to be like, and hence the Proverbs came to mean comparisons or parables, rather than proverbs, in the sense in which we commonly understand that word. Yet the two things, parables and proverbs, though not always the same, are nearly related to each other; and in the sixteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel (St. John xvi. 25, 29.), the word "proverbs" is used to denote certain sayings of our Lord's which from their brevity might fairly be so called, and which, partly from the same cause, the disciples were at first unable to understand, but which would more properly be called similitudes. Somewhat in the same way also the Book of Proverbs, though it contains many sayings which rightly deserve that name, might as a whole perhaps more properly be called a book of instructive similitudes, expressed oftentimes in a proverbial form.

The Jewish title of the book (as shewn in i. 1.) is "Proverbs of Solomon, son of David," or, more shortly, "Proverbs." By many early Christian writers it was entitled "Wisdom," and also "Excellent Wisdom," and was often used as a book of instruction for young people. Jerome, the great commentator and translator of the Bible into Latin, who lived during part of the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ, in a letter to a Christian lady named Laeta, concerning the education of her little daughter Paula, a letter full of interesting matter throughout, recommends that, after learning the Psalms, she should be trained in the discipline of life by means of the Book of Proverbs.

But besides this general title of "Proverbs," the opening sentences of the book contain other expressions, viz. "words of the wise," and also "dark sayings," whose meaning the writer of the book exhorts the reader to examine. But it is not certain whether these "words" and "sayings" are intended to be the same in all respects as the "proverbs," or to form distinct branches of them.

3. The method of conveying instruction by means of proverbs, especially in the form of verse, is common among all nations, but particularly so among those of the East. We are told by missionaries in India, that at the present day the book which Hindoo parents are

INTRODUCTION.

most ready to purchase, and encourage their children to read, is the Book of Proverbs from the Christian Bible. As we have already seen, the parable and the proverb are closely connected, so that the proverb when expanded often becomes a parable, while the parable may often be summed up in a proverb. The book of Job contains many such sayings, and many also are found in other books. See Judg. ix. 7—15; xiv. 14. 1 Sam. x. 12; xxiv. 13. Ezek. xvi. 44; xviii. 2. But we may say without fear of contradiction, that the highest perfection of this mode of instruction has been reached in the parables and proverbial sayings of our Lord, the "one Shepherd," greater even than Solomon, whose wise words, like stings or "ox-goats," pierce into the thoughts and intents of our hearts, and remain fixed there like "tent-nails" fastened into the ground (see Eccles. xii. 11. Eph. vi. 17. and Heb. iv. 12.).

4. Some Jewish writers joined together the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, under the one title of "Books of Wisdom;" and a Jewish account, not unlikely in itself, but destitute of authority, said that the Song of Songs was the work of Solomon in his earlier life, the book of Proverbs the fruit of his mature age, and that of Ecclesiastes the work of his later days (see General Introduction and Introduction to Ecclesiastes).

The opening title of the book of Proverbs appears to regard Solomon as its sole author, who, as we learn from the book of Kings, wrote three thousand "proverbs," and one thousand and five "songs" or poems (1 Kings iv. 32.). But we must not imagine that the whole of this book proceeded from Solomon, still less that it did so in the order in which it now stands. Doubtless he left behind him a great number of compositions, from which learned men in later days made selections; and to these, later still, were attached sayings by other writers which were current among the Jews. Among the former of these two classes may be reckoned the "proverbs copied out" by "the men of Hezekiah" (Prov. xxv. 1.). One Jewish writer thought that the collection was made by Isaiah, but the general opinion appears to be that the book of Proverbs was put into its present shape by some person or persons unknown about 200 to 300 years after Solomon's death, that is about 800—700 B. C. (see on Eccles. xii. 11.).

5. The book may be divided into five portions.

- i. Chapters i—ix. an introductory discourse in praise of wisdom, addressed especially to young people.
- ii. Chapters x—xxii. 16, entitled "Proverbs of Solomon."
- iii. Chapters xxii. 17—xxiv. entitled "words of the wise."
- iv. Chapters xxv—xxix. The portion copied out by the "men of Hezekiah."
- v. Chapters xxx—xxxii, a sort of appendix, in three portions:—
 - (a) The "words of Agur" (chapter xxx.).
 - (b) The "words of Lemuel" (chapter xxxi. 1—9.).
 - (c) The description of the virtuous woman, a composition later in date than the rest (chapter xxxi. 10—31.).

6. The form of the book in the original is poetical throughout, a characteristic which our English translation in its usual form has not in any way made apparent, for the very sufficient reason that, at the time when this was made, the structure of Hebrew poetry was not so

INTRODUCTION.

well understood as is now the case. In Part I most of the stanzas, if we may so call them, consist of two portions or members, which answer to each other.

Thus :—(a) “My son, forget not my law :
“and my commandments let thine heart keep” (iii. 1.).

(b) “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart :
“and on thine own understanding lean not” (iii. 5.).

But sometimes three such portions are found—

(a) “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee ;
“bind them about thy neck :
“write them upon the table of thine heart” (iii. 3.).

(b) “He winketh with his eyes ;
“he speaketh with his feet ;
“he teacheth with his fingers” (vi. 13.).

These passages are given merely as specimens of the simpler forms of the poetry ; but in other parts, other and more complicated forms are used, which it is not necessary to describe here.

7. The book, as a whole, may be called the book of divine common-sense, that is, a book of instruction concerning behaviour in the common transactions of life, in which the thought of God and of His continual Presence holds the chief place. The writer makes it his business to shew that good conduct produces after all more of solid advantage even in this life to those who practise it than the opposite behaviour. The real guide of life is the fear of God ; and in this alone is there real health and satisfaction to the soul. The slothful, the intemperate, the licentious, though they enjoy themselves for the present, yet have their reward in that present enjoyment alone, for they are really laying up for themselves a store of future remorse and discontent which more than overbalances their previous enjoyment. Martin Luther recommended the man who aimed at piety to make the book of Proverbs his daily and nightly companion, and to compare his own daily life with its precepts. This was sound advice, but we must not forget, that which no doubt he also meant to convey, that in order to reap the full advantage from the study of this book, we must read it, like the rest of the Old Testament, by the light of the Gospel, which has brought life and immortality into a light clearer than was enjoyed even by Solomon. That light proceeds from the eternal purpose of God, revealed in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the example of His perfect life, made apparent in the Gospel history. In this way the book of Proverbs will help to make us wise unto salvation in the way which St. Paul has pointed out, namely, “through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. iii. 15.). In Jesus Christ we have the most eminent example of divine common-sense that the world has ever seen. In Him alone does the excellent wisdom dwell continually, which is the “mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, “and holy hope” (Eccclus. xxiv. 18.), and therefore it is only by means of intimate communion with Him that the full benefit can be reaped of the admirable counsels which are set forth in this book, whose sentiments, and in many cases whose language also, are adopted and confirmed by more than one writer of the New Testament. Let us, as Christians, pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our endeavour to discern and apply the divine sense of this wonderful book.

PROVERBS, I.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The use of the proverbs.* 7 *An exhortation to fear God, and believe his word.* 10 *To avoid the enticings of sinners.* 20 *Wisdom complaineth of her contempt.* 24 *She threateneth her contemners.*

^a 1 Kin. 4. 32.
ch. 10. 1.
& 25. 1.
Eccles. 12. 9.

1 **T**HE ^aproverbs of Solomon the son of David,
king of Israel;

2 to know wisdom and instruction;
to perceive the words of understanding;

^b ch. 2. 1, 9.

3 to ^breceive the instruction of wisdom,
justice, and judgment, and ²equity;

² Heb.
equities.
^c ch. 9. 4.

4 to give subtilty to the ^csimple,
to the young man knowledge and ³discretion.

³ Or, ad-
visement.

CHAPTER I.

Part I.

The first part contains chapters i. to ix. inclusive. From ver. 1 to ver. 6 inclusive, is a sort of preface to the whole work, setting forth the general use of proverbial instruction.

2. "Wisdom and instruction." By this is meant, not so much worldly wisdom, as the knowledge of God, and of His "manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10.), which sees deeper than mere worldly wisdom, as our Lord often shewed in His dealing with Scribes and Pharisees. It is this alone which makes men wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ. Solomon could teach this in part only, but Christians are enabled through the Holy Spirit to supply what was wanting in his teaching, and He will lead "into all truth" those who seek His help. Yet from the beginning, God has taught that it is only the godly who are truly "wise," while the ungodly, the obstinate, and the self-conceited, are truly "fools" in His sight. It is therefore in the sense of heavenly wisdom, that the word "wisdom" must generally be understood throughout this book.

3. "Wisdom." Not the same word as is thus rendered in ver. 2, but the clear sight which "by reason of use" discerns readily between good and evil (Heb. v. 14.).

"Justice." God's eternal law of right.

"Judgment." Man's law, founded upon the law of God.

"Equity." Plain, straightforward sincerity.

4. "Subtilty." Caution or prudence. The original word means "laying bare." It is therefore the clearness of sight which detects evil under the mask of good, such as that by which our Lord confuted the Tempter, and detected the hypocrisy of the men who sought to entrap Him. See as instances of this, St. Mark iii. 24, and St. Luke xx. 20—26. His conduct shews the perfection of clear judgment, or what we call "common sense," joined with simplicity. Politic, crafty men, often try to deceive by putting "bitter for sweet," and "light for darkness" (Isa. v. 20.), but this clear sight perceives the fraud, and suffers no harm thereby.

"The simple." The original word means "open." Those people are perhaps meant, who open their eyes and ears without discretion, to all that is to be seen and heard. See ver. 22, and chap. xiv. 15.

PROVERBS, I.

- 5 ^dA wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; ^d ch. 9. 9.
and a man of understanding shall attain unto
wise counsels :
- 6 to understand a proverb, and ²the interpretation; ² Or, *an eloquent speech.*
the words of the wise, and their ^edark sayings.
- 7 ¶ ^fThe fear of the LORD is ³the beginning of ^f knowledge; ^f Job 28. 28.
but fools despise wisdom and instruction. ^f Ps. 111. 10.
^f ch. 9. 10.
^f Eccles. 12. 13.
- 8 ^gMy son, hear the instruction of thy father,
and forsake not the law of thy mother; ^g Or, *the principal part.*
^g ch. 4. 1.
& 6. 20.
- 9 for ^hthey shall be ⁴an ornament of grace unto ^h thy head, ^h ch. 3. 22.
and chains about thy neck. ⁴ Heb. *an adding.*
ⁱ Gen. 39. 7,
&c.
ⁱ Ps. 1. 1.
ⁱ Eph. 5. 11.
- 10 ¶ My son, if sinners entice thee, ⁱconsent thou not.

5. "A wise man." He who possesses heavenly wisdom.

6. "Words of the wise." These words have been thought by some to be the title of a separate book, or a separate portion of this book. See Introduction, Sect. 5.

"Dark sayings." Such sayings as require explanation to discern their divine sense.

7. With this verse the proper subject of the book begins, and sets forth the true foundation of all knowledge, namely, the fear of the Lord Jehovah. That fear is not the fear of a slave for a cruel master, but the reverence of a dutiful child for his parent. In this world fear is very often in some degree mixed up even with this feeling, but hereafter there will be no fear, for the love of God in Christ will fill the whole soul of man. See 1 St. John iv. 16.

"Fools." A heathen poet has said that folly is the sister of wickedness. See ver. 2.

8. "My son," &c. Reverence for parents is the first step in the fear of God. We may say that to a young child this for a time makes up the whole of its duty. The parent stands to him, as it were, in the place of God until his understanding becomes capable of receiving the thought of Him. See Eph. vi. 1. How earnestly should parents pray for spiritual help to guide them in the great work of training their children!

"Thy mother." Not one who spoils her child, but one who, like Eunice, strives to train him in the fear and love of God. See 2 Tim. i. 5.

9. "Ornament of grace." Lit. a chain, or garland, which surrounds, and as it were, clothes the person.

"Chains about thy neck." See Gen. xli. 42. Dan. v. 16, and the apocryphal Book of Wisdom, chap. v. 16, where we read of a "beautiful crown" as the reward of the righteous, which reminds us of the crown of life of Rev. ii. 10.

10. The practical instruction now begins. The young man and young woman also are warned of the danger of bad company. We

PROVERBS, I.

- ^k Jer. 5. 26. 11 If they say, Come with us, let us ^k lay wait for blood,
let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause :
- 12 let us swallow them up alive as the grave ;
and whole, ^l as those that go down into the pit :
- ^l Ps. 28. 1. & 143. 7. 13 we shall find all precious substance,
we shall fill our houses with spoil :
- 14 cast in thy lot among us ;
let us all have one purse :
- ^m Ps. 1. 1. ch. 4. 14. ⁿ Ps. 119. 101. 15 my son, ^m walk not thou in the way with them ;
ⁿ refrain thy foot from their path :
- ^o Isai. 59. 7. Rom. 3. 15. 16 ^o for their feet run to evil,
and make haste to shed blood.
- ² Heb. *in the eyes of every thing that hath a wing.* 17 Surely in vain the net is spread ² in the sight of
any bird.
- 18 And they lay wait for their *own* blood ;
they lurk privily for their *own* lives.
- ^p ch. 15. 27. ¹ Tim. 6. 10. 19 ^p So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of
gain ;
which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.
- ³ Heb. *Wisdoms, that is, Excellent wisdom.* ^q ch. 8. 1, &c. & 9. 3. John 7. 37. 20 ¶ ³ ^q Wisdom crieth without ;
she uttereth her voice in the streets :

cannot afford to make compromises with sin, or to call it by wrong names. There is no way of dealing with direct temptation except by stout refusal.

“Consent not.” The force of the little word “No” is well shewn in the history of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 9.). Sinners often try to entrap the unwary by deceitful promises of profit or pleasure to be obtained. They magnify these, but suppress the guilt of the enterprises which they propose.

12. **“As the grave.”** As men sometimes die in the midst of health and prosperity.

14. **“Cast in thy lot,”** &c. By an affectation of openness and generosity, the tempter tries to entrap the unwary. “Let us all,” he says, “share alike as friends.”

17. **“Surely in vain,”** &c. When the danger is so plain as not to be mistaken, no one runs into the snare. An Italian proverb says, “an old “bird is not caught with a new net,” a saying which agrees with our own proverb about old birds and chaff. An Arabic proverb also says that while the fowler is setting his net the bird enjoys itself. But the words may mean that some are so foolish as to run headlong into danger.

18. **“They lay wait for their own blood.”** Their devices often recoil upon themselves, and in executing their plots against others, such men often bring about their own destruction. This was the case with Abimelech, Judges ix. 56. And if this be the case in this world, much more will it be so in the world to come.

20. **“Wisdom.”** That is, divine wisdom, the voice of God (see the margin). Bishop Butler explains it as the voice of natural religion, teaching us that what in fact we experience in the world concerning the

PROVERBS, I.

- 21 she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates :
in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,
- 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity ?
and the scorers delight in their scorning,
and fools hate knowledge ?
- 23 Turn you at my reproof :
behold, ^r I will pour out my spirit unto you,
I will make known my words unto you. r Joel 2. 28.
- 24 ^s Because I have called, and ye refused ;
I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ;
s Isai. 65. 12.
& 66. 4.
Jer. 7. 13.
Zech. 7. 11.
- 25 but ye ^t have set at nought all my counsel,
and would none of my reproof :
t Ps. 107. 11.
ver. 30.
Lukc 7. 30.
- 26 ^u I also will laugh at your calamity ;
I will mock when your fear cometh ;
u Ps. 2. 4.
- 27 when ^x your fear cometh as desolation,
and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ;
when distress and anguish cometh upon you.
x ch. 10. 24.
- 28 ^y Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ;
they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me :
y Job 27. 9.
& 35. 12.
Isai. 1. 15.
Jer. 11. 11.
& 14. 12.
Ezek. 8. 18.
Mic. 3. 4.
Zech. 7. 13.
Jam. 4. 3.

consequences of men's actions agrees with what religion teaches us is to be expected in the other. "These things," he says, "are not accidental, or to be met with only now and then ; but they are things of every day's experience : they proceed from general laws, very general ones, by which God governs the world, in the natural course of His Providence" (*Bishop Butler, Analogy*, Part I. ch. 2.). We cannot help noticing how often wisdom is spoken of as a person, and in conformity with poetical usage, the feminine gender is used in speaking of wisdom, but we can hardly help connecting the thought of her with that of the Son of God, in Whose person all wisdom dwells, both human and divine, for He is the Divine Word, from Whom the wisdom of Solomon himself proceeded. See Deut. xxxii. 1, and St. Matt. xii. 42.

21. "The gates." In Eastern cities the gateways were the principal places of concourse. See Deut. xxi. 19, 20. Ruth iv. 1. 1 Kings xxii. 10. 2 Kings vii. 1.

22. "Scorners." Fools who mock at sin. See chap. xiv. 9.

23. "Pour out my spirit," &c. I will tell you my mind freely, or, if you repent, I will give you my spirit, and make you to understand my advice.

26. "I will laugh at your calamity." When the day of retribution comes, men will be reminded of their former folly and obstinacy. See 1 Kings xxii. 25, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

28. "Shall they call," &c. A day will come when the door will be shut, and God will turn a deaf ear to their entreaties.

PROVERBS, II.

- ^z Job 21. 14. 29 for that they ^z hated knowledge,
 ver. 22. and did not ^a choose the fear of the LORD :
^a Ps. 119. 173.
^b ver. 25. 30 ^b they would none of my counsel :
 Ps. 81. 11. they despised all my reproof.
^c Job 4. 8. 31 Therefore ^c shall they eat of the fruit of their
 ch. 14. 14. own way,
 & 22. 8. and be filled with their own devices.
 Isai. 3. 11.
 Jer. 6. 19.
² Or, ease of 32 For the ² turning away of the simple shall slay
 the simple. them,
 and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.
^d Ps. 25. 12, 33 But ^d whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell
 13. safely,
^e Ps. 112. 7. and ^e shall be quiet from fear of evil.

CHAPTER II.

1 Wisdom promiseth godliness to her children, 10 and safety from evil company, 20 and direction in good ways.

- ^a ch. 4. 21. 1 **M**Y son, if thou wilt receive my words,
 & 7. 1. and ^a hide my commandments with thee ;
 2 so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,
 and apply thine heart to understanding ;
² Heb. givest 3 yea, if thou criest after knowledge,
 thy voice. and ² liftest up thy voice for understanding ;
^b ch. 3. 14. 4 ^b if thou seekest her as silver,
 Matt. 13. 44.

31. "Eat the fruit of their own way." Reap the fruit of their own misconduct. So Shakespeare:—

"To wilful men

"The injuries that they themselves procure

"Must be their schoolmasters" (*King Lear*, ii. 4.).

32. "Turning away," &c. The revolt of these misguided people will be in the end their own ruin. But some explain this to mean repentance, as if the repentance of such men as these were not real, but only such a change of conduct as makes them feel secure for the time, but will not after all preserve them from ruin.

CHAPTER II.

1. The author, after first pointing out the source of "wisdom," and its essential value, 1—9, then points out some of its results, as well as some of those which arise from opposite conduct, 10—22.

3. "If thou criest after knowledge." Although "wisdom," like "every good and perfect gift," proceeds entirely from the Almighty giver (ver. 6.), yet it is His will that man should work with Him in order to obtain it, for what he sows that he may also expect by God's blessing to reap. See 1 Cor. iii. 9. Gal. vi. 7. Col. ii. 3.

4. "If thou seekest her as silver." When people expect to find a "treasure hidden in a field," they spare no pains to discover it. If men were as much in earnest in seeking after heavenly wisdom as for gold and silver, they would not be disappointed in the search. See St. Matt. xiii. 44, 46.

PROVERBS, II.

- and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures ;
- 5 then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD,
and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 ^c For the LORD giveth wisdom : c 1 Kin. 3. 9,
12.
out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and under- Jam. 1. 5.
standing.
- 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous :
^d *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. d Ps. 84. 11.
ch. 30. 5.
- 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment,
and ^e preserveth the way of his saints. e 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Ps. 66. 9.
- 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and
judgment,
and equity ; *yea*, every good path.
- 10 ¶ When wisdom entereth into thine heart,
and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul ;
- 11 discretion shall preserve thee,
^f understanding shall keep thee : f ch. 6. 22.
- 12 to deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*,
from the man that speaketh froward things ;
- 13 who leave the paths of uprightness,
to ^g walk in the ways of darkness ; g John 3. 19,
20.
- 14 who ^h rejoice to do evil,
and ⁱ delight in the frowardness of the wicked ; h ch. 10. 23.
Jer. 11. 15.
- 15 ^k whose ways *are* crooked,
and *they* froward in their paths : i Rom. 1. 32.
k Ps. 125. 5.
- 16 to deliver thee from ^l the strange woman, l ch. 5. 20.

7. "A buckler." The reader will remember that the "shield of faith" forms a part of the "whole armour" of God as set forth by St. Paul. Eph. vi. 16.

8. "His saints." Those who worship God in spirit and in truth. See St. John iv. 23.

9. "Righteousness." The same word as is rendered "justice" in i. 3.

10. "When knowledge is pleasant." The process of acquiring knowledge of all kinds, but especially knowledge of heavenly things, is often not pleasant at first, because it is accompanied by self-denial and trouble. Knowledge must take possession of the soul before it becomes pleasant.

11. "Discretion." The careful thought which enables men to discern and decide rightly what they ought to do.

12. "Froward." The original word means to turn. It is used therefore to denote that turning aside from the straight path which leads people into sin.

16. "The strange woman." The word means one who departs. It may be intended therefore to point out (1) one who belongs to another nation, not an Israelite, and therefore excluded from marriage with one of God's people (Deut. vii. 3).. (2) One who departs from

PROVERBS, II.

- ^m ch. 5. 3. & 6. 24. & 7. 5. ^m *even* from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words ;
- ⁿ See Mal. 2. 14, 15. 17 ⁿ which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.
- ^o ch. 7. 27. 18 For ^o her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.
- 19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.
- 20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous.
- ^p Ps. 37. 29. 21 ^p For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.
- ^q Job 18. 17. Ps. 37. 28. & 104. 35. 22 ^q But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be ² rooted out of it.
- ² Or, *plucked up.*

CHAPTER III.

1 An exhortation to obedience, 5 to faith, 7 to mortification, 9 to devotion, 11 to patience. 13 The happy gain of wisdom. 19 The power, 21 and the benefits of wisdom. 27 An exhortation to charitableness, 30 peaceableness, 31 and contentedness. 33 The cursed state of the wicked.

the law of God, especially in respect of the marriage-tie, a departure to which the idolatry and apostasy of Israel are frequently compared by the Prophets. In either case departure from God's law is pointed out; and Christians may take notice that as marriage is under the Gospel an express likeness of Christ's union with His Church, so violation in any way of that holy bond is an invasion of the holiness which is the proper mark of Christians, the sin which beyond all others defiles the body, and corrupts the soul. Eph. v. 32. 1 Cor. vi. 18. Especially does the writer intend to warn young men of immorality and sensuality.

17. "Forsaketh the guide of her youth." The wife who forsakes her husband, or the daughter who allows herself to mix in company forbidden by her parents, her proper guides, is a dangerous companion to those of the other sex, for in so doing she breaks the law not of man only, but of God. As an instance of the unforeseen consequences of light conduct, see the sad story of Dinah, Jacob's daughter, Gen. xxxiv.

18. "The dead." Perhaps the word used here means spirits of the old rebellious people, the "giants" of the old days, who rebelled against God, and incurred His displeasure. The condition of those who give themselves up to sensual indulgence of this kind may well be described as "death." See Gen. vi. 4. 1 Tim. v. 6. 2 St. Pet. ii. 4.

19. "None that go," &c. So difficult is the work of repentance in this case, that it is described as impossible (see Heb. vi. 4.).

"Life." The original word is "lives," that is, life both of body and soul.

21, 22. "The upright shall dwell in the land," &c. To the Jew the sum of earthly blessings was gathered up into the one promise of possession of his own land. That land is the type to the Christian of that "land of pure delight," into which nothing sinful can enter, and from which "transgressors" who repent not will be for ever excluded (Rev. xxi. 17; xxii. 14, 15.).

PROVERBS, III.

- 1 **M**Y son, forget not my law ;
^a but let thine heart keep my command-
 ments :
- 2 for length of days, and ² long life,
 and ^b peace, shall they add to thee.
- 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee :
^c bind them about thy neck ;
^d write them upon the table of thine heart ;
- 4 ^e so shalt thou find favour and ³ good under-
 standing
 in the sight of God and man.
- 5 ¶ ^f Trust in the LORD with all thine heart ;
^g and lean not unto thine own understanding.
- 6 ^h In all thy ways acknowledge him,
 and he shall ⁱ direct thy paths.
- 7 ^k Be not wise in thine own eyes :
^l fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
- 8 It shall be ⁴ health to thy navel,
 and ^{5 m} marrow to thy bones.

^a Deut. 8. 1.
 & 30. 16, 20.
² Heb. *years of life.*
^b Ps. 119. 165.
^c Ex. 13. 9.
 Deut. 6. 8.
 ch. 6. 21.
 & 7. 3.
^d Jer. 17. 1.
 2 Cor. 3. 3.
^e Ps. 111. 10.
 See 1 Sam. 2. 26.
 Luke 2. 52.
 Acts 2. 47.
 Rom. 14. 18.
³ Or, *good success.*
^f Pa. 37. 3, 5.
^g Jer. 9. 23.
^h 1 Chr. 28. 9.
ⁱ Jer. 10. 23.
^k Rom. 12. 16.
^l Job 1. 1.
 ch. 16. 6.
⁴ Heb. *medicine.*
⁵ Heb. *watering, or, moistening.*
^m Job 21. 24.

CHAPTER III.

2. "Length of days," &c. As to the Jew, long life and peace in the land of promise were the greatest of blessings, so to the Christian, eternal life, of which the life in the promised land was the type, is the great reward held out to him, and peace must accompany it. But though he has not in this world any special land of promise, yet "godliness" carries with it a promise both in respect of the present life and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

3. "Bind them about thy neck." The Jews used to write sentences from the Law on parchment, and wear them on their persons, in order to remind themselves continually of the commandments of God (Deut. vi. 8.). This practice was both innocent in itself, and useful, but what the writer especially exhorts his readers to do is the last, namely to carry the "law" of wisdom as constantly and carefully in their hearts as if the words were bound round their necks.

4. "So shalt thou find favour," &c. As Jesus increased in stature, so He increased also in wisdom, and in favour both with God and man (St. Luke ii. 52.). See also 1 Sam. ii. 26.

5. "Lean not unto thine own understanding." That is, while you make proper use of your understanding, as being God's gift, do not depend entirely on it, but look to Him, and seek in prayer His guidance and counsel.

7. "Be not wise in thine own eyes." Self-conceit is the ruin of many people, for it leads them to forget God.

8. "Health to thy navel," &c. A strengthening medicine to the body, a healing lotion to the bones. That is, a source of strength to the soul and moral nature of man.

PROVERBS, III.

- ⁿ Ex. 22. 29. & 23. 19. & 34. 26.
Deut. 26. 2. &c.
Mal. 3. 10. &c.
Luke 14. 13.
- 9 ¶ⁿ Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase :
- 10 ° so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
- ^o Deut. 28. 8.
^p Job 5. 17.
Ps. 94. 12.
Heb. 12. 5, 6.
Rev. 3. 19.
- 11 ¶^p My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD ;
neither be weary of his correction :
- 12 for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth ;
^q even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.
- ^r ch. 8. 34, 35.
- 13 ¶^r Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and ² the man *that* getteth understanding.
- ² Heb. *the man that draweth out understanding.*
- 14 ^s For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver,
and the gain thereof than fine gold.
- ^s Job 28. 13, &c.
Ps. 19. 10. ch. 2. 4. & 8. 11, 19. & 16. 16.
- 15 She *is* more precious than rubies :
and ^t all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
- ^t Matt. 13. 44.
- ^u ch. 8. 18.
¹ Tim. 4. 8.
- 16 ^u Length of days *is* in her right hand ;
and in her left hand riches and honour.
- ^x Matt. 11. 29, 30.
- 17 ^x Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths *are* peace.

9. "Honour the Lord with thy substance." The Law laid special stress on acts of thanksgiving for God's gifts, and attached special blessings to them. Ex. xiii. 2. 2 Chron. xxxi. 10. These were under the Law of a temporal kind, but were intended to point to blessings in the life to come.

10. "So shall thy barns," &c. We may refer to such passages in the New Testament as St. Matt. vi. 20. St. Luke xii. 16, 21, 34.

11. "Despise not the chastening of the Lord." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, very probably St. Paul, reminds us as God's children of these words (Heb. xii. 5.). See also the service for the Visitation of the Sick in the Prayer Book. They tell us that trials come from God, or at least are permitted by Him, as well as favours, and are to be used as proceeding from Him, being likenesses of the sufferings of Christ. Col. i. 24.

13. "Getteth understanding." The margin says, "draweth out," that is, discovers by search. As all knowledge obtained by one's own labour is more valuable than what is borrowed from others, so the knowledge of God and of His Word gained by experience is most valuable.

16. "Length of days." The gift of eternal life.

"Riches and honour." The crown of reward promised to the righteous. Rev. ii. 10.

17. "Ways of pleasantness." That is, real comfort to the soul, inward peace even in the midst of outward trials, the peace which passes understanding. Phil. iv. 7.

PROVERBS, III.

- 18 She *is* ^y a tree of life to them that lay hold upon ^r her : Gen. 2. 9. & 3. 22.
 and happy *is every one* that retaineth her.
- 19 ^z The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth ; Ps. 104. 24. & 136. 5.
 by understanding hath he ² established the ch. 8. 27. Jer. 10. 12. & 51. 15.
 heavens.
- 20 ^a By his knowledge the depths are broken up, 2 Or, prepared.
 and ^b the clouds drop down the dew. a Gen. 1. 9.
- 21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes : b Deut. 33. 28. Job 36. 23.
 keep sound wisdom and discretion :
- 22 so shall they be life unto thy soul,
 and ^c grace to thy neck. c ch. 1. 9.
- 23 ^d Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely,
 and thy foot shall not stumble. d Ps. 37. 24. & 91. 11, 12. ch. 10. 9.
- 24 ^e When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid : e Lev. 26. 6. Ps. 3. 5. & 4. 8.
 yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be
 sweet.
- 25 ^f Be not afraid of sudden fear,
 neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it
 cometh. f Ps. 91. 5. & 112. 7.
- 26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence,
 and shall keep thy foot from being taken.
- 27 ¶ ^g Withhold not good from ³ them to whom it g Rom. 13. 7. Gal. 6. 10.
 is due, 3 Heb. the owners thereof.
 when it is in the power of thine hand to do *it*.

18. "A tree of life." That is, eternal life as well as life in this world. See above, ii. 19. It was this eternal life which the tree of life in Paradise was intended to foreshew (Gen. iii. 22.). This same tree of life is described at length in Rev. xxii. 2. But to obtain life, men must lay hold on wisdom, and not let her slip out of their hands.

19. "By wisdom," &c. There seems in this to be a reference to the Son of God, the eternal Word, by Whom the worlds were created (St. John i. 3. Heb. i. 2.).

21. "Them." That is, wisdom and understanding (see ver. 13.).

24. "Thy sleep shall be sweet." He who trusts entirely in God may sleep securely, undisturbed by thoughts of sin or of danger. So St. Peter slept in prison (Acts xii. 6. See also Ezek. xxxiv. 25.).

25. "The desolation of the wicked." Either the destructive attacks which wicked men make on those who try to live godly lives (St. John xv. 18—20. 2 Tim. iii. 12.), or more probably the destruction which overtakes the wicked ; while the storms which destroy them rage around, the godly man dwells securely, for he has nothing to fear. See i. 27.

27. "Withhold not good," &c. To "do justly" is the first duty of a man, and may be said to come even before that of loving "mercy." He who is kind on the one side, but unjust on the other, fulfils his duty very imperfectly. See Mic. vi. 8.

PROVERBS, III.

- ⁿ Lev. 19. 13. 28 ^h Say not unto thy neighbour,
Deut. 24. 15. Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give;
when thou hast it by thee.
- ² Or, *Practise no evil.* 29 ² Devise not evil against thy neighbour,
seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.
- ¹ Rom. 12. 18. 30 ¹ Strive not with a man without cause,
if he have done thee no harm.
- ^k Ps. 37. 1. & 73. 3. 31 ^k Envy thou not ³ the oppressor,
ch. 24. 1. and choose none of his ways.
- ³ Heb. *a man of violence.* 32 For the froward *is* abomination to the LORD:
¹ but his secret *is* with the righteous.
- ¹ Ps. 25. 14. ^m Lev. 26. 14, 33 ^m The curse of the LORD *is* in the house of the
&c. wicked:
Ps. 37. 22. but ⁿ he blesseth the habitation of the just.
Zech. 5. 4. ^o Surely he scorneth the scorners:
Mal. 2. 2. but he giveth grace unto the lowly.
- ⁿ Ps. 1. 3. 34 ^o Surely he scorneth the scorners:
^o Jam. 4. 6. but he giveth grace unto the lowly.
- ¹ Pet. 5. 5. 35 The wise shall inherit glory:
⁴ Heb. *exalteth the fools.* but shame ⁴ shall be the promotion of fools.

28. "Say not unto thy neighbour," &c. Many thoughtless people delay to pay their debts even when they are quite able to do so. Such conduct is dishonest, and unworthy of a Christian.

29. "Securely." Without fear of any attack. See Judges xviii. 27, 28.

30. "If he have done thee no harm." Make no unprovoked attack on any one. As Shakespeare says, "Beware of entrance to a quarrel" (*Hamlet*, i. 3.). But the Gospel lays down a higher rule still, namely, not to resist evil (St. Matt. v. 39.).

31. "The oppressor." The man who uses his office or his rank in life for tyrannical purposes; a very common fault, but especially in the East.

32. "His secret is with the righteous." He holds friendly intercourse with those who obey and love Him, but not with the ungodly and disobedient, nor with the hypocrites, who only try to seem righteous before men (see St. Matt. vi. 1—6.).

33. "The curse of the Lord," &c. A wicked man's success and wealth are not attended by any real and lasting blessing, even in this life.

34. "He scorneth the scorners." The insolence of proud and overbearing men, who despise Him, returns sooner or later on their own heads. See St. James iv. 6. 1 St. Pet. v. 5.

35. "The wise shall inherit glory." Perhaps even in this world, but certainly hereafter. See St. Luke xiv. 11.

"Shame shall be the promotion of fools." These words might be rendered either (1) "Fools lift up disgrace," that is, receive it as their reward at last, while wise men receive glory as their inheritance. Or, (2) as the margin says, "Disgrace lifts up fools," that is, it takes them away and destroys them; or, which is nearly the same thing, the success of bad men in the world lifts them up only to cast them down more disgracefully: their promotion ends in shame and disgrace. Those

PROVERBS, IV.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ Solomon, to persuade obedience, ³ sheweth what instruction he had of his parents, ⁵ to study wisdom, ¹⁴ and to shun the path of the wicked. ²⁰ He exhorteth to faith, ²³ and sanctification.

- 1 **H**EAR, ^a ye children, the instruction of a ^a Ps. 34. 11.
father, ch. 1. 8.
and attend to know understanding.
- 2 For I give you good doctrine,
forsake ye not my law.
- 3 For I was my father's son,
^btender and only *beloved* in the sight of my mother. ^b 1 Chr. 23. 1.
- 4 ^c He taught me also, and said unto me, ^c 1 Chr. 28. 9.
let thine heart retain my words : Eph. 6. 4.
- ^d keep my commandments, and live. ^d ch. 7. 2.
- 5 ^e Get wisdom, get understanding : ^e ch. 2. 2, 3.

who have read the history of the separated kingdoms of Israel and Judah, have seen instances of this remark in the short-lived reigns of such kings as Zimri, Pekahiah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiachin (see 1 Kings xvi. 2 Kings xv. ; xxiii. ; xxiv.).

In reading the foregoing chapters, but especially the last of them, the Christian will be able to see a meaning deeper than the words themselves at first sight convey. The "law" of which they speak is in its full sense the law of Christ; the rule of life which His perfect example, set forth to us in the Gospels, lays down. Not that any words can express fully the way in which that rule is to be applied. We must carry it about with us, "bind it about" our "neck," "write it "on the table of our heart," and draw forth from it laws and patterns of behaviour as we want them. Leaning upon this rule, we shall learn to avoid self-conceit, and to trust in the Lord at all times and on all occasions. If our worldly substance be increased, we shall endeavour to use it so as to lay up treasure in heaven, but even though we may not be favoured with worldly prosperity, we shall learn nevertheless that the privation of it proceeds from the hand of our heavenly Father Who corrects because He loves us. But we learn also clearly that truth which even Solomon could only foresee with less clearness, that the "length of days" which the possession of wisdom insures, is that eternal life which the Gospel has brought to light; the "riches and "honour" which flow from her gifts are to be found in the "crown of "life," which awaits those who through wisdom have overcome the world, and the "peace" which surrounds her paths, is everlasting peace, peace past understanding, of which true Christians enjoy a blessed and comfortable portion even in this life.

CHAPTER IV.

1. "Hear, ye children," &c. The writer seems to speak here from his own experience, shewing therefrom the happy results of the instruction which he had himself received, and how great had been the influence upon his own life of wisdom combined with parental love.

3. "Only beloved." The one most beloved. Jewish traditions refer this to the Messiah.

PROVERBS, IV.

forget *it* not ; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee :
^f love her, and she shall keep thee.

^f 2 Thess. 2.
 10.
^g Matt. 13.44.
 Luke 10. 42.

7 ^g Wisdom *is* the principal thing ; *therefore* get wisdom :

and with all thy getting get understanding.

^h 1 Sam. 2.30.

8 ^h Exalt her, and she shall promote thee :
 she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

ⁱ ch. 1. 9.
 & 3. 22.

9 She shall give to thine head ⁱ an ornament of grace :

² a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

² Or,
she shall compass thee with a crown of glory.
^k ch. 3. 2.

10 ¶ Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings ;
^k and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom ;
 I have led thee in right paths.

^l Ps. 18. 36.

12 When thou goest, ^l thy steps shall not be straitened ;

^m Ps. 91. 11,
 12.

^m and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction ; let *her* not go :
 keep her ; for she *is* thy life.

ⁿ Ps. 1. 1.
 ch. 1. 10, 15.

14 ⁿ Enter not into the path of the wicked,
 and go not in the way of evil *men*.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it,
 turn from it, and pass away.

^o Ps. 36. 4.
 Isai. 57. 20.

16 ^o For they sleep not, except they have done mischief ;

7. "With all thy getting," &c. The world says : get money at all events, in any manner. The divine law says : make heavenly wisdom the first object in life. If God gives you worldly prosperity, use it to His glory, but at any rate make Him the principal object of your pursuit (St. Matt. vi. 33.).

12. "Thy steps shall not be straitened." You will be able to walk freely in the narrow path of life. A man laden with unrepented sin, walks as it were with shackles on his legs, clogging his steps, and making him walk uneasily.

14. "Enter not into the path of the wicked." Do not trust yourself to meddle with sin in any form, nor flatter yourself that you can draw back at any time. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (St. James iv. 7. 1 St. Pet. v. 9.).

16. "They sleep not," &c. Evil takes such hold on some men that they prefer it to good. Like Milton's fallen angel, they say, "Evil, be thou my good" (*Par. Lost*, iv. 110.). And not only so, but they take pleasure in leading others astray (see Rom. i. 32.). The more need therefore for Christians to be watchful against their great adversary the devil.

PROVERBS, IV.

and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause
some to fall.

- 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
and drink the wine of violence.
- 18 ^p But the path of the just ^q is as the shining light, ^p Matt. 5. 14,
45.
^{Phil.} 2. 15.
that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. ^q 2 Sam. 23. 4.
- 19 ^r The way of the wicked is as darkness :
they know not at what they stumble. ^r 1 Sam. 2. 9.
Job 18. 5, 6.
Is. 59. 9, 10.
Jer. 23. 12.
John 12. 35.
- 20 ¶ My son, attend to my words ;
incline thine ear unto my sayings.
- 21 ^s Let them not depart from thine eyes ;
^t keep them in the midst of thine heart. ^s ch. 3. 3, 21.
^t ch. 2. 1.
- 22 For they *are* life unto those that find them,
and ^u health to all their flesh. ^u ch. 3. 8.
& 12. 18.
- 23 Keep thy heart ³ with all diligence ;
for out of it *are* the issues of life. ² Heb.
medicine.
- 24 Put away from thee ⁴ a froward mouth,
and perverse lips put far from thee. ³ Heb.
*above all
keeping.*
- 25 Let thine eyes look right on,
and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. ⁴ Heb. *fro-
wardness of
mouth, and
perverse-
ness of lips.*
- 26 Ponder the path of thy feet,
and ⁵ let all thy ways be established. ⁵ Or, *all thy
ways shall
be ordered
aright.*
- 27 ^x Turn not to the right hand nor to the left :
^y remove thy foot from evil. ^x Deut. 5. 32.
& 28. 14.
Josh. 1. 7.
^y Isai. 1. 16.
Rom. 12. 9.

18. "The path of the just is as the shining light." Perfection in human arts does not come all at once, nor is this the case, generally speaking, in religion. The good seed brings forth fruit "with patience" (St. Luke viii. 15.). We are exhorted to "grow in grace and in the "knowledge" of Christ, Who Himself increased in "wisdom" as He increased in bodily stature. The more a Christian knows of God, the more clearly does God's work show itself in him, just as the light of day gathers strength as it advances.

19. "The way of the wicked is as darkness." The habit of sin blinds men's eyes, so that they confound right and wrong (see Isa. v. 20. St. John xii. 35.).

23. "Keep thy heart," &c. The heart may be said to be the seat and fountain of life to the body, so that an injury to it is in every way to be avoided. So also in a figurative sense the heart or conscience is the source of human conduct, and ought therefore to be guarded with the utmost care (see St. Luke vi. 45.).

25. "Let thine eyes," &c. We all know the opinion which we form of those who "look straight" at us, and how we are apt to judge unfavourably of those who seem to avoid doing so. The straightforward man is one who, like Nathanael, is "without guile." He has no thoughts or wishes in reserve to interfere with his honest resolution. See St. John i. 47.

27. "Turn not to the right hand," &c. The way of life is narrow,

PROVERBS, V.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Solomon exhorteth to the study of wisdom.* 3 *He sheweth the mischief of whoredom and riot.* 15 *He exhorteth to contentedness, liberality, and chastity.* 22 *The wicked are overtaken with their own sins.*

- 1 **M**Y son, attend unto my wisdom,
and bow thine ear to my understanding :
2 that thou mayest regard discretion,
and *that* thy lips may ^a keep knowledge.
3 ^b For the lips of a strange woman drop as an
honeycomb,
and her ² mouth is ^c smoother than oil :
4 but her end is ^d bitter as wormwood,
^e sharp as a twoedged sword.
5 ^f Her feet go down to death ;
her steps take hold on hell.
6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life,
her ways are moveable, *that* thou canst not know
them.
7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children,
and depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her,
and come not nigh the door of her house :
9 lest thou give thine honour unto others,
and thy years unto the cruel :

^a Mal. 2. 7.

^b ch. 2. 16.
& 6. 24.

² Heb. *palate*.

^c Ps. 55. 21.

^d Eccles. 7. 26.

^e Heb. 4. 12.

^f ch. 7. 27.

and leaves no room for turning. In order to avoid evil we must go straight forward.

On the whole we are reminded of the great importance of self-watchfulness. By sobriety and vigilance we shall be better enabled to resist the temptations of Satan. Let us then watch over thought, word, and deed, that by God's grace we may put him to flight, not dallying with evil by the way-side, but marching onward as soldiers to the battle.

CHAPTER V.

The following chapter is especially addressed to young men and women, warning them against indulgence in youthful lusts (see 2 Cor. vi. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 22.). But it speaks also to all, for no time of life is exempt from temptation. We must pray for God's grace to keep us in temperance, soberness, and chastity.

6. "Her ways are moveable." She has various ways of attracting attention and seducing the heart from the right path. She is moreover fickle, inconstant, transferring her affections, or rather her capricious inclinations, from one object to another without difficulty or scruple.

9. "Thine honour." Thy good character. To part with a good name is a loss of the most serious kind.

"Thy years." The flower of life, which cannot be restored.

"The cruel." One who by and by will requite thy devotion with heartless, selfish indifference.

PROVERBS, V.

- 10 lest strangers be filled with ² thy wealth ; ² Heb. *thy strength.*
 and thy labours *be* in the house of a stranger ;
- 11 and thou mourn at the last,
 when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,
- 12 and say, How have I ⁸ hated instruction, ⁸ ch. 1. 29.
 and my heart ^h despised reproof ; ^h ch. 1. 25.
& 12. 1.
- 13 and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
 nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
- 14 I was almost in all evil
 in the midst of the congregation and assembly.
- 15 ¶ Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
 and running waters out of thine own well.
- 16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad,
and rivers of waters in the streets.
- 17 Let them be only thine own,
 and not strangers' with thee.
- 18 Let thy fountain be blessed : ¹ Mal. 2. 14.
 and rejoice with ¹ the wife of thy youth. ^k See Cant.
2. 9. & 4. 5.
& 7. 3.
- 19 ^k *Let her be as* the loving hind and pleasant roe ; ³ Heb.
water thee.
 let her breasts ³ satisfy thee at all times ;

11. "And thou mourn at the last," &c. When it is too late, regret for the past will come, and the unhappy victim of his own lusts will mourn in vain that he had in youth rejected the advice of parents or friends, and the warnings of the Word of God.

14. "I was almost in all evil," &c. Either, "I entered publicly into almost every kind of wickedness," or, "I just missed being put to open shame in the congregation" (see Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxi. 21.).

15. "Drink waters out of thine own cistern." To dwellers in the hot climates of the East, the possession of a well or a fountain is a matter of the highest importance, and one which makes the possessor more independent of other persons than almost anything else can do. So the child of God is exhorted to be content with the one source of comfort which is opened to him in holy marriage, the likeness, as St. Paul says, of the union between Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 32.).

16. "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad." The children which are the fruit of a marriage like this will strengthen the community by spreading a virtuous example among those among whom they live. Thus the "well" from which these "fountains" proceed is a source of blessing not only to those who live close to it, but to many others also who are perhaps unknown to them.

"Around each pure domestic shrine

"Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine,

"Our hearths are altars all."

Christian Year, First Sunday after Easter.

(See Zech. viii. 5, and Jer. ix. 21.)

19. "Roe." The antelope, or gazelle, often made a domestic favourite in the East.

PROVERBS, VI.

- ² Heb. *err thou always in her love.* 20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with ¹ a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?
- ¹ ch. 2. 16. & 7. 5.
- ^m 2 Chr. 16. 9. 21 ^m For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.
- Job 31. 4. & 34. 21. ch. 15. 3. Jer. 16. 17. & 32. 19. Hos. 7. 2. Heb. 4. 13. ⁿ Ps. 9. 15. ³ Heb. *sin.*
- 22 ⁿ His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his ³ sins.
- ^o Job 4. 21. & 36. 12. 23 ^o He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Against suretiship, 6 illness, 12 and mischievousness. 16 Seven things hateful to God. 20 The blessings of obedience. 25 The mischiefs of whoredom.

- ^a ch. 11. 15. & 17. 18. & 20. 16. & 22. 26. & 27. 13.
- 1 **M**Y son, ^a if thou be surety for thy friend, *if* thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,
- 2 thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.
- 3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, ² and make sure thy friend.
- ² Or, *so shalt thou prevail with thy friend.*

22. "His own iniquities," &c. As a beast or bird is taken in the hunter's or the fowler's net, so are men often ensnared and brought to destruction by means of their own sins, and thus the means which they have used to seduce others become a net, as it were, of destruction to themselves.

23. "Go astray." The word means also to totter or stumble. A man who is unsteady soon quits the right path.

CHAPTER VI.

1. "Surety . . . stricken thy hand." To make ourselves answerable in money matters on behalf either of a friend or a stranger is a dangerous thing, and therefore to be considered carefully beforehand, for in case of his failing to fulfil his engagement the surety becomes liable (see xxii. 26, 27.). By strangers are probably meant foreigners, with whom before Solomon's time there was very little commercial intercourse. This however was greatly extended by his large dealings with foreign countries (see 1 Kings x.).

3. "Humble thyself, and make sure thy friend." Lit. "let him tread upon thee," that is, be not ashamed of asking him for your money. The margin says, "so shalt thou prevail with thy friend." But the original may perhaps mean, "stamp with thy feet," that is, lose no time, press upon him urgently. The precept is plainly one of worldly prudence rather than of godly exhortation. Yet we may be reminded of the great Surety Who will never fail of His promise.

PROVERBS, VI.

- 4 ^b Give not sleep to thine eyes,
nor slumber to thine eyelids. ^b Ps. 132. 4.
- 5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand *of the hunter*,
and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.
- 6 ¶ ^c Go to the ant, thou sluggard ; ^c Job 12. 7.
consider her ways, and be wise :
- 7 which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,
8 provideth her meat in the summer,
and gathereth her food in the harvest.
- 9 ^d How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ? ^d ch. 24. 33,
34.
when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep ?
- 10 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to sleep :
- 11 ^e so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, ^e ch. 10. 4.
& 13. 4.
& 20. 4.
and thy want as an armed man.
- 12 ¶ A naughty person, a wicked man,

5. "A roe." See v. 19. The words "of the hunter" are not in the original, but may fairly be supplied.

6—8. "Go to the ant," &c. Ants, or at least some sorts of them, unlike bees, do not appear to be devoted to a single ruler. When they march, parties of them take their places by turns at the head of the column, and appear to act as spies for the rest. In Solomon's time, and until much later, the common opinion concerning ants in general was that they laid up stores in summer to support themselves during the winter. So far as we know now, this is not the case, unless the sort of ant which Solomon had in view has different habits from those which have hitherto been observed by others. Though ants are most industrious during summer, they lie dormant and require no food during winter. The words of the passage, however, though they seem to say that the ants lay up stores for the winter, do not expressly assert this; but we can see plainly, that the general meaning which Solomon intended to express is the common notion concerning the ant, with which every one was familiar, in order to give an example of industry and forethought.

9—11. There is nothing on which the Book of Proverbs lays more stress, than on the duty of diligence, and the evil of sloth. Does this disagree with our Lord's warnings against undue anxiety for the future? Certainly not: what He condemns is over anxiety, and want of trust in God (see St. Matt. vi. 20, 25. St. Luke xii. 33, and 1 Tim. v. 8.). God has given us faculties and abilities, to be used both for His glory and our own benefit, and of these He will require an account. But He reserves to Himself the final disposition of all our plans, so that after all we must rely on Him at last, doing our best, and trusting the result to Him.

11. "One that travelleth," &c. An invader, one who comes unexpectedly, and who will rob without scruple or distinction (see St. Luke xxi. 34, 35.).

12. "A naughty person." Lit. "a man of Belial;" one who is good for nothing. They who are set on mischief can make signs as easily to

PROVERBS, VI.

- walketh with a froward mouth.
- ^r Job 15. 12. 13 ^r He winketh with his eyes,
^{Ps.} 35. 19. he speaketh with his feet,
^{ch.} 10. 10. he teacheth with his fingers ;
- 14 frowardness *is* in his heart,
^g Mic. 2. 1. ^g he deviseth mischief continually ;
^h ver. 19. ^h he ²soweth discord.
- ² Heb. *casteth forth.* 15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly ;
ⁱ Jer. 19. 11. suddenly shall he ⁱ be broken ^k without remedy.
^k 2 Chr. 36. 16.
- 16 ¶ These six *things* doth the LORD hate :
³ Heb. *of his soul.* yea, seven *are* an abomination ³ unto him :
- ^l Ps. 18. 27. 17 ⁱ ⁴ a proud look, ^m a lying tongue,
[&] 101. 5. and ⁿ hands that shed innocent blood.
- ⁴ Heb. *Haughty eyes.* 18 ^o An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
^m Ps. 120. 2, 3. ^p feet that be swift in running to mischief,
- ⁿ Isai. 1. 15. 19 ^q a false witness *that* speaketh lies,
^o Gen. 6. 5. and he ^r that soweth discord among brethren.
- ^p Isai. 59. 7. 20 ¶ ^s My son, keep thy father's commandment,
^{Rom.} 3. 15. and forsake not the law of thy mother :
^q Ps. 27. 12. ^t bind them continually upon thine heart,
^{ch.} 19. 5, 9. and tie them about thy neck.
^r ver. 14.
- ^s ch. 1. 8. 21 ^u When thou goest, it shall lead thee ;
^{Eph.} 6. 1. when thou sleepest, ^x it shall keep thee ;
^t ch. 3. 3. and *when* thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.
[&] 7. 3. 22
^u ch. 3. 23, 24.
^x ch. 2. 11.

be understood as words. Shakespeare has given a picture of this in respect of one branch of usage (*Winter's Tale*, i. 2.); but the description of the text is not confined to the particular point which he has selected. Signs of intended mischief or of deceit may often be given with the eyes, the fingers, or the feet, so as to be as easily understood as words themselves. And we may perhaps be reminded of the kiss of Judas, the sign by which he pointed out our Lord to His enemies (St. Matt. xxvi. 48, 49 ; xxvii. 3, 5).

15. "His calamity shall come suddenly." His well-deserved punishment (see Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22, 25.).

16—19. "Six . . . seven." This is a common mode of stating a maximum number, in order to shew that all the seven things are displeasing to God (see xxx. 18, 21, 29. Eccles. xi. 2.). In naming them one by one, we may carry our minds back to the description given in verses 12—14. The pride, the deceit, the cruelty, the ill-will, the spirit of discord, the mischief noted there, are more fully pointed out in the present passage.

20—23. "Keep thy father's commandment," &c. Take notice of the striking way in which the advice of wise and religious parents is illustrated and enforced, especially in reference to the deadly sin pointed out in the passage following (vv. 24—29.). Their advice is represented as a bosom companion, a guide, a nightly protector, a lamp of light to point out the path of life. The sons and daughters who take it as their

PROVERBS, VI.

- 23 ^y For the commandment *is* a ² lamp; and the law *is* light; ^y Ps. 19. 8. & 119. 105.
² Or, *canille.*
and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life:
- 24 ^z to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery ³ of the tongue of a strange woman. ^z ch. 2. 16. & 5. 3. & 7. 5.
³ Or, *of the strange tongue.*
- 25 ^a Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. ^a Matt. 5. 28.
- 26 For ^b by means of a whorish woman *a man is* ^b brought to a piece of bread: ^b ch. 29. 3.
^c and ⁴ the adulteress will ^d hunt for the precious life. ^c Gen. 39. 14.
⁴ Heb. *the woman of a man, or, a man's wife.*
- 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? ^d Ezek. 13. 18.
- 28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?
- 29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.
- 30 *Men* do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
- 31 but *if* he be found, ^e he shall restore sevenfold; ^e Ex. 22. 1, 4.
he shall give all the substance of his house.
- 32 *But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman ^f lacketh ⁵ understanding: ^f ch. 7. 7.
⁵ Heb. *heart.*
he *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
- 33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

guide will be sure to find its value in their journey. But who is the real counsellor, the true friend and protector; who is it that supplies and keeps alight the lamp of guidance? No other, we may be sure, than the Son of God, Who is the true Light of the world, and Whose divine Word, set forth in His own human life, is the true lamp to guide our feet, the true light to direct our paths (see St. John i. 4, 9; iii. 19, 21; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 46. 1 St. John i. 7; ii. 8—11.).

23. "Reproofs of instruction," &c. We may bear in mind that a great part of the work of the Holy Comforter is to reprove (St. John xvi. 8.).

25. "Eyelids." Probably allusion is made to the custom among Eastern women of applying a black colour to the eyelids, both above and below the eyes, in order to set off the complexion, and to make the countenance more attractive (see 2 Kings ix. 30. Jer. iv. 30. Ezek. xxiii. 40.).

30, 31. "Despise a thief," &c. Probably the meaning is, men will not disregard the thief and let him escape punishment, even when he steals only to satisfy his hunger. If so, how much more deserving of punishment is the adulterer. Or, they do not think so ill of the man who steals from necessity as they do of the other (see Exod. xxii. 1. Deut. xxiii. 24, 25.).

PROVERBS, VII.

- 34 For jealousy *is* the rage of a man:
therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
- 35 ² He will not regard any ransom;
neither will he rest content, though thou givest
many gifts.

² Heb. *He will not accept the face of any ransom.*

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Solomon persuadeth to a sincere and kind familiarity with wisdom. 6 In an example of his own experience, he sheweth 10 the cunning of an whore, 22 and the desperate simplicity of a young wanton. 24 He dehorteth from such wickedness.*

- 1 **M**Y son, keep my words,
and ^a lay up my commandments with thee.
- 2 ^b Keep my commandments, and live;
^c and my law as the apple of thine eye.
- 3 ^d Bind them upon thy fingers,
write them upon the table of thine heart.
- 4 Say unto wisdom, Thou *art* my sister;
and call understanding *thy* kinswoman:
- 5 ^e that they may keep thee from the strange woman,
from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words.
- 6 ¶ For at the window of my house
I looked through my casement,
- 7 and beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among ² the youths, a young man
^f void of understanding,
- 8 passing through the street near her corner;
and he went the way to her house,

^a ch. 2. 1.

^b Lev. 18. 5.

ch. 4. 4.

Isai. 55. 3.

^c Deut. 32. 10.

^d Deut. 6. 8.

& 11. 18.

ch. 3. 3.

& 6. 21.

^e ch. 2. 16.

& 5. 3.

& 6. 24.

² Heb.

the sons.

^f ch. 6. 32.

& 9. 4, 16.

34, 35. "Rage . . ransom." Heat, burning indignation for dishonour inflicted by the offender, for which no recompense can make amends.

The exhortations to industry in the earlier part of this chapter remind us how constantly God calls us to make use of His gifts of all kinds, not only for our own profit, but for that of the community. Thus industry is a setting forth of His bounty towards us. In the latter part of it, the writer warns us of the danger of that sin which more almost than any other destroys the peace of families and corrupts the heart of the nation. He pursues it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter we have a picture of the sin mentioned in the chapter preceding, drawn in a manner which agrees with Eastern usages. We might give it a name, like that which our great satirical painter Hogarth gave to his own pictures on the like subject, "*The Rake's Progress*," or "*The Harlot's Progress*." It is a picture full of warning to all, but especially to the young of both sexes. Let none read it without a prayer to the Holy Spirit to preserve themselves and those whom they love, their sons and daughters, from the sins which it describes.

6. "Casement." Rather, "lattice." Windows in the East, in Solomon's time, had no glass.

PROVERBS, VII.

- 9 ^g in the twilight, ² in the evening,
in the black and dark night:
- 10 and, behold, there met him a woman
with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.
- 11 (^h She *is* loud and stubborn ;
ⁱ her feet abide not in her house :
- 12 now *is she* without, now in the streets,
and lieth in wait at every corner.)
- 13 So she caught him, and kissed him,
and ³ with an impudent face said unto him,
- 14 ⁴ *I have* peace offerings with me ;
this day have I payed my vows.
- 15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
- 16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,
with carved *works*, with ^k fine linen of Egypt.
- 17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
- 18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning:
let us solace ourselves with loves.
- 19 For the goodman *is* not at home,
he is gone a long journey :
- 20 he hath taken a bag of money ⁵ with him,
and will come home at ⁶ the day appointed.
- 21 With ¹ her much fair speech she caused him to yield,
^m with the flattering of her lips she forced him.
- 22 He goeth after her ⁷ straightway,
as an ox goeth to the slaughter,
or as a fool to the correction of the stocks ;

^g Job 24. 15.
² Heb. *in the evening of the day.*

^h ch. 9. 13.

ⁱ 1 Tim. 5. 13.
^{Tit.} 2. 5.

³ Heb. *she strengthened her face, and said.*

⁴ Heb. *Peace offerings are upon me.*

^k Isai. 19. 9.

⁵ Heb. *in his hand.*

⁶ Or, *the new moon.*

¹ ch. 5. 3.
^m Ps. 12. 2.

⁷ Heb. *suddenly.*

10. "The attire of a harlot" (see Gen. xxxviii. 14.).

11. "Loud." In reference to this unpleasant characteristic of the unchaste woman, we may call to mind Shakespeare's description of the gentle and good Cordelia,—

"Her voice was ever soft,

"Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman." (*King Lear*, v. 3.)

14. "Have I payed my vows." That is, I have plenty of meat from the animals which I have offered in sacrifice (see Lev. iii. i; vii. 15.).

16. "Tapestry." Rugs or coverlets. Eastern beds are usually only mattresses spread on the floor (see St. John v. 8, 10.).

"Carved works." Embroidery.

"Linen of Egypt." See xxxi. 13, 22. 1 Kings x. 28.

17. "Cinnamon." The Hebrew word is almost the same as the English. We are told that Phœnician traders brought this spice from the East, and that the Greeks learned and adopted its name from them. Perhaps the same was the case with the Hebrews (see 1 Kings x. 25.).

22. "A fool to the . . . stocks." Many explanations of this

PROVERBS, VIII.

- 23 till a dart strike through his liver ;
n Eccles. 9. 12. ⁿ as a bird hasteth to the snare,
 and knoweth not that it *is* for his life.
- 24 ¶ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children,
 and attend to the words of my mouth.
- 25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways,
 go not astray in her paths.
- 26 For she hath cast down many wounded :
o Neh. 13. 26. yea, ^o many strong *men* have been slain by her.
- p ch. 2. 18. & 5. 5. & 9. 18. 27 ^p Her house *is* the way to hell,
 going down to the chambers of death.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 The fame, 6 and evidency of wisdom. 10 The excellency, 12 the nature, 15 the power, 18 the riches, 22 and the eternity of wisdom, 32 Wisdom is to be desired for the blessedness it bringeth.

a ch. 1. 20. & 9. 3.

- 1 **D**OETH not ^a wisdom cry ?
 And understanding put forth her voice ?
- 2 She standeth in the top of high places,
 by the way in the places of the paths. ^b
- 3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city,
 at the coming in at the doors.
- 4 Unto you, O men, I call ;
 and my voice *is* to the sons of man.
- 5 O ye simple, understand wisdom :
 and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.
- b ch. 22. 20. 6 Hear ; for I will speak of ^b excellent things ;
 and the opening of my lips *shall be* right things.
- 2 Heb. the abomination of my lips. 7 For my mouth shall speak truth ;
 and wickedness *is* ² an abomination to my lips.

passage have been suggested, but as it stands, it may perhaps be read and explained thus. As the shackle or fetter "goes," that is, serves for the punishment of the fool and the transgressor, and is the fitting conclusion of his folly ; so the foolish infatuation of the man here described serves to lead him to his ruin. His punishment is sure to come at last, and thus the temptation which leads to it may be said to hold him fast as a man's feet are held fast in the stocks (see Acts xvi. 24.).

CHAPTER VIII.

In this and the following chapter we have a further description of Wisdom as a person, her origin, and as it were her family descent, and her dwelling-place. We cannot doubt that a great deal of what is here expressed in poetical language, applies to the Son of God, and can only be fully explained by reference to Him, the Word of God, the Son of the Father, in Whom all wisdom dwells (see 1 Cor. i. 24, 30. Col. ii. 3.).

1. "Wisdom." See i. 20. We may take notice of the variety of the places in which wisdom is to be found (see vv. 2, 3.). So the eyes of the Lord are in every place (ch. xv. 3.).

PROVERBS, VIII.

- 8 All the words of my mouth *are* in righteousness ;
there is nothing ² froward or perverse in them. ² Heb. *wreathed*.
- 9 They *are* all plain to him that understandeth,
 and right to them that find knowledge.
- 10 Receive my instruction, and not silver ;
 and knowledge rather than choice gold.
- 11 ^c For wisdom *is* better than rubies ;
 and all the things that may be desired are not
 to be compared to it. ^c Job 28. 15,
 &c.
^d Ps. 19. 10.
 & 119. 127.
 ch. 3. 14, 15.
 & 4. 5, 7.
 & 16. 16.
^e Or, *subtilty*.
- 12 ¶ I wisdom dwell with ³ prudence,
 and find out knowledge of witty inventions.
- 13 ^d The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil :
^e pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
 and ^f the froward mouth, do I hate. ^d ch. 16. 6.
^e ch. 6. 17.
^f ch. 4. 24.
- 14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom :
 I *am* understanding ; ^g I have strength. ^g Eccles. 7. 19.
- 15 ^h By me kings reign,
 and princes decree justice. ^h Dan. 2. 21.
 Rom. 13. 1.
- 16 By me princes rule,
 and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth.
- 17 ⁱ I love them that love me ;
 and ^k those that seek me early shall find me. ⁱ 1 Sam. 2. 30.
 Ps. 91. 14.
 John 14. 21.
^k Jam. 1. 5.

8. "Froward." The original word means "twisted," or, as the margin says, "wreathed," that is, entangled, tortuous, deceitful, as is often the case in worldly politics.

9. "Plain to him that understandeth." Plain to him who gives his heart to understand, and seeks to put into practice the precepts which he has heard (see St. John vii. 17.).

11. "All the things." That is, all earthly things.

12. "I wisdom." The writer seems now to take upon himself to speak as with the voice of God, and to describe the origin of wisdom as one who is himself thoroughly conversant with all that belongs to her.

"Dwell with prudence." Lit. "inhabit prudence," that is, am joined in the most intimate manner with prudence, or, as the margin says, "subtilty," that is, clearness of perception. So St. Paul says all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ (Col. ii. 3.), and elsewhere he speaks of God inhabiting the light which is unapproachable by man (1 Tim. vi. 16.).

"Witty inventions." Lit. "knowledge of counsels." The original words are nearly the same as those rendered "knowledge and discretion" in i. 4.

13. True wisdom will be sure to hate what is hateful in God's sight, that is sin (see St. John, viii. 29, 38.).

14. "Sound wisdom." Lit. "safety," or "stability" (see Rev. v. 12.).

16. "By me princes rule." As "the powers that be are ordained of God," so the true rule of good government is founded on the knowledge and fear of God (see Rom. xiii. 1.).

17. "Seek me early." The original word means "divide," or

PROVERBS, VIII.

- ¹ ch. 3. 16. 18 ¹ Riches and honour *are* with me ;
 Matt. 6. 33. *yea*, durable riches and righteousness.
- ^m ch. 3. 14. 19 ^m My fruit *is* better than gold, *yea*, than fine gold ;
 ver. 10. and my revenue than choice silver.
- ² Or, *walk*. 20 I ² lead in the way of righteousness,
 in the midst of the paths of judgment :
 21 that I may cause those that love me to inherit
 substance ;
 and I will fill their treasures.
- ⁿ ch. 3. 19. 22 ⁿ The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his
 John 1. 1. way,
 before his works of old.
- ^o Ps. 2. 6. 23 ^o I was set up from everlasting,
 from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth ;
 when *there were* no fountains abounding with
 water.
- ^p Job 15. 7, 8. 25 ^p Before the mountains were settled,
 before the hills was I brought forth :
 26 while as yet he had not made the earth, nor
 the ³ fields,
 nor ⁴ the highest part of the dust of the world.
- ³ Or, *open*
^{places}.
⁴ Or, *the*
^{chief part}. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there :
 when he set ⁵a compass upon the face of the depth :
- ⁵ Or, *a circle*. 28 when he established the clouds above :
 when he strengthened the fountains of the deep :
- ^q Gen. 1. 9, 10.
 Job 38. 10, 11.
 Ps. 33. 7. 29 ^q when he gave to the sea his decree,
 & 104. 9.
 Jer. 5. 22. that the waters should not pass his commandment :

“pierce,” as the light of the morning pierces the darkness of night. Hence it means to seek eagerly, and so also, early. The examples of Samuel, and of our Blessed Lord, remind us of the value of “seeking” God early, and of the blessing which attends those who do so (see 1 Sam. iii. 19. St. Luke ii. 52, and 2 Tim. iii. 15.).

18, 21. “Riches, substance, treasures.” The riches which wisdom has to give belong more to heaven than to earth (see St. Matt. vi. 19, 20.).

22—31. We have in this passage a description in highly poetical language of the work of creation, which, as St. John tells us, was accomplished by the “Word,” that is, the Son of God (St. John i. 1—3.).

23. “Set up.” Lit. “woven,” that is, set in compact order. But some think the word means “anointed.” If so, the reference to the anointed Son of God would be still more distinct.

26. “Highest part.” Lit. the “head,” that is the essential part, the atom round which the rest was gathered in the process of formation.

27. “Set a compass.” Lit. “in tracing a circle,” that is, when the Creator traced the curved line or horizon which the surface of the sea presents.

PROVERBS, VIII.

- when ^r he appointed the foundations of the ^r Job 38. 4.
 earth:
- 30 ^s then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with* ^s John 1. 1,
him:
 2, 18.
- ^t and I was daily *his* delight,
 rejoicing always before him; ^t Matt. 3. 17.
 Col. 1. 13.
- 31 rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth;
 and ^u my delights *were* with the sons of ^u Ps. 16. 3.
 men.
- 32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children:
 for ^x blessed *are they that* keep my ways. ^x Ps. 119. 1, 2.
 & 128. 1, 2.
 Luke 11. 28.
- 33 Hear instruction, and be wise,
 and refuse it not.
- 34 ^y Blessed *is* the man that heareth me,
 watching daily at my gates,
 waiting at the posts of my doors. ^y ch. 3. 13, 18.
- 35 For whoso findeth me findeth life,
 and shall ^z obtain favour of the LORD. ^z Heb.
bring forth.
^z ch. 12. 2.
^a ch. 20. 2.
- 36 But he that sinneth against me ^a wrongeth his
 own soul:
 all they that hate me love death.

29. "Foundations of the earth." That is the fundamental laws on which the universe is constructed, and by which it is governed (see Ps. civ. 31.).

30. "Rejoicing." As God rejoices in His works, so the Son always does what is pleasing to Him (St. John viii. 29.).

31. "The habitable part." More properly perhaps, the universal world, the earth in every part.

"My delights were with the sons of men." The chief work of God, the one in which He took most delight, was the creation of man.

34. "Posts of my doors." The Hebrews were desired to write the words of the Law on their door-posts, that is to keep them constantly in view (Deut. vi. 9.). Thus persons waiting by the doors would be in sight of some of the words of wisdom.

35. "Obtain." The margin has "bring forth." As if the possession of wisdom in any degree were a sure way to draw forth from God more of His gifts, more of His "fulness, and (more) grace for grace" (St. John i. 16.).

36. "They that hate me love death." See St. John v. 40. As the Holy Scriptures in general contain the word of God, and as in particular the New Testament contains the account of the words and deeds of the Son of God, so we may say that to study these Scriptures is the best way to make ourselves acquainted with the voice and will of God. His infinite wisdom is contained therein, and therefore to know the Scriptures is to know about Him; but we must endeavour not to know only, but to practise what they tell us, or else our knowledge will be of little advantage.

PROVERBS, IX.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *The discipline, 4 and doctrine of wisdom.* 13 *The custom, 16 and error of folly.*

^a Matt. 16. 18.
Eph. 2. 20,
21, 22.
1 Pet. 2. 5.
^b Matt. 22. 3,
&c.
² Heb.
her killing.
^c ver. 5.
ch. 23. 30.
^d Rom. 10. 15.
^e ch. 8. 1, 2.
^f ver. 14.
^g ver. 16.
ch. 6. 32.
Matt. 11. 25.

- 1 **WISDOM** hath ^a builded her house,
she hath hewn out her seven pillars :
2 ^b she hath killed ² her beasts ; ^c she hath mingled
her wine ;
she hath also furnished her table.
3 She hath ^d sent forth her maidens :
^e she crieth ^f upon the highest places of the city,
4 ^g whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither :
as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith
to him,
5 ^h Come, eat of my bread,
and drink of the wine *which* I have mingled.
6 Forsake the foolish, and live ;
and go in the way of understanding.
7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself
shame :

^h ver. 2.
Cant. 5. 1.
Isai. 55. 1.
John 6. 27.

CHAPTER IX.

1. "Seven pillars." In Eastern buildings pillars form a more important feature than they commonly do in ours. The recollection of the tent, supported by posts or pillars, which is the habitation of men living in the desert, and often moving from place to place, was preserved in the architecture of more solid buildings. The word "seven" here, and often elsewhere in Scripture, denotes a complete number. Hence, to hew out the seven pillars of a house would mean to construct it firmly according to established rules. The house built by Wisdom represents, no doubt, the Church of God, of which the Apostles were pillars, and Jesus Christ the corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Gal. ii. 9.).

2. "Killed her beasts." In reading this description of fat things prepared by divine Wisdom, we cannot help turning our thoughts to the marriage-feast prepared by the king in our Lord's parable, that feast of which the Passover, as leading the way to the sacrifice of the Cross, was a type, the Lord's Supper of the Christian Church the representation, and the marriage-supper of the Lamb the fulfilment (see Isa. xxv. 6 ; lv. 2. St. Matt. xxii. 4. Rev. xix. 9.).

"Mingled her wine." That is, probably, mingled with myrrh or spices to strengthen it (see Isa. v. 22.).

"Table." By this is denoted probably, in the first place, the table of the Passover, from which our thoughts may be naturally led on to the Lord's Table of the Christian Church (see 1 Cor. x. 21.).

3. "Maidens." In our Lord's parable the servants were sent forth to summon the guests (St. Matt. xxii. 3, 4.). An Eastern traveller of the eighteenth century tells us that at Alexandria he saw women going about inviting guests to a banquet (*Hasselquist, Travels*, p. 56.).

7. "He that reproveth a scorner," &c. There are some people so deeply sunk in sin that they are insensible to reproof. On such people

PROVERBS, IX.

and he that rebuketh a wicked *man* *getteth* himself a blot.

- 8 ⁱ Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee : ⁱ Matt. 7. 6.
^k rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. ^k Ps. 141. 5.
- 9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser :
 teach a just *man*, ¹ and he will increase in learning. ¹ Matt. 13. 12.
- 10 ^m The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom : ^m Job 28. 28.
Ps. 111. 10.
ch. 1. 7.
 and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.
- 11 ⁿ For by me thy days shall be multiplied, ⁿ ch. 3. 2, 16.
& 10. 27.
 and the years of thy life shall be increased.
- 12 ^o If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself : ^o Job 25. 6, 7.
ch. 16. 26.
 but *if* thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear *it*.
- 13 ^p A foolish woman *is* clamorous : ^p ch. 7. 11.
she is simple, and knoweth nothing.
- 14 For she sitteth at the door of her house,
 on a seat ^q in the high places of the city, ^q ver. 3.
- 15 to call passengers
 who go right on their ways :
- 16 ^r whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither : ^r ver. 4.
 and *as for* him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
- 17 ^s stolen waters are sweet, ^s ch. 20. 17.
 and bread ² eaten in secret is pleasant. ² Heb. of
secrecies.

reproof is wasted, and will only draw down ridicule and abuse (see St. Matt. vii. 6.); but a wise and good man will value judicious reproof.

10. "The holy." As in the original the word for "the Lord" is in the plural number, so the word for "holy" is also plural. From this circumstance some have supposed that the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity are indicated. This cannot be affirmed with certainty, but in any case the use of the plural number seems to point out the extent and variety of the power which the knowledge of God bestows. He who possesses it possesses a treasure of boundless extent, nor is there any limit to the manner in which it may be applied.

12. "Wise for thyself." All wisdom will benefit its possessor, but the "scorner" must lay the blame of his misconduct on his own shoulders only. See Gal. vi. 5.

13. "Foolish." Corrupt, depraved. "Simple." Rather, as the original suggests, she is folly itself; that is, the more depraved such people are, the more really foolish do they shew themselves to be.

16. "Simple," foolish; almost the same word as in verse 13.

17. "Stolen waters are sweet," &c. The fact that a thing is forbidden is enough with many persons to set their minds longing after it. So it was with our first parents. By and by the corrupted mind takes

PROVERBS, X.

- ^t ch. 2. 18. & 7. 27. 18 But he knoweth not that ^t the dead *are* there ;
and that her guests *are* in the depths of hell.

CHAPTER X.

From this chapter to the five and twentieth are sundry observations of moral virtues, and their contrary vices.

- ^a ch. 15. 20.
 & 17. 21, 25.
 & 19. 13.
 & 29. 3, 15.
^b Ps. 49. 6,
 &c.
 ch. 11. 4.
 Luke 12. 19,
 20.
^c Dan. 4. 27.
^d Ps. 10. 14.
 & 34. 9, 10.
 & 37. 25.
² Or,
*the wicked
 for their
 wickedness.*
^e ch. 12. 24.
 & 19. 15.
^f ch. 13. 4.
 & 21. 5.

- 1 **T**HE ^aproverbs of Solomon.
^a A wise son maketh a glad father :
 but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother.
- 2 ^b Treasures of wickedness profit nothing :
^c but righteousness delivereth from death.
- 3 ^d The **L**ORD will not suffer the soul of the right-
 eous to famish :
 but he casteth away ²the substance of the wicked.
- 4 ^e He becometh poor that dealeth *with* a slack hand :
 but ^f the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

pleasure in wickedness for its own sake. A heathen poet has remarked this disposition in lines which may be rendered thus:—

“Forbid a sick man baths, he longs to dip ;
 “Forbid men pleasures, and they long to sip.
 “We long to steal the closely-guarded treasure ;
 “Few care to taste the unforbidden pleasure.”

18. “He knoweth not,” &c. Like the guests at Belshazzar’s feast, they indulge their thirst for pleasure in the very presence of approaching ruin (see Dan. v. 1—4.).

CHAPTER X.

The second division of the book begins here, and extends to chapter xxii. 16. It is entitled the Proverbs of Solomon, and is thought by many to belong to him more entirely than the other parts. We shall notice in it less connection between the several precepts than has hitherto been the case. See Introduction, Sect. 5.

1. “A wise son.” In this we are reminded of “the Son Who never “did amiss,” and also of the mother to whom He was entrusted during His childhood and youth (see St. Luke ii. 51, 52.).

“A foolish son.” A heathen fable relates how a foolish mother was punished by her son on the scaffold, to which her unwise indulgence in his childhood had brought him (*Aesop, Fables*, 101.). There are many people in the world whose dispositions have been injured by over indulgence in childhood, and who could trace to this cause many of the disappointments and misfortunes which they have afterwards met with in their lives.

2. “Treasures of wickedness.” Even in this life ill-gotten gain seldom thrives at last. We are reminded by this verse of Ahab, of Gehazi, and of Judas.

“Righteousness.” Holiness of life in general, of which alms-giving forms an important part (see St. Matt. vi. 20. St. Luke xvi. 9. Acts ix. 36 ; x. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 19.).

3. “The Lord will not suffer,” &c. See Ps. xxxvii. 25.

4. “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.” Although God does not exhort men to seek riches, but the contrary, He has no promise of good for the idle and negligent. On the one hand He never encourages

PROVERBS, X.

- 5 He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son :
but he that sleepeth in harvest *is* ^g a son that
 causeth shame. g ch. 12. 4.
& 17. 2.
& 19. 26.
h ver. 11.
Esth. 7. 8.
- 6 Blessings *are* upon the head of the just :
but ^h violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. i Ps. 9. 5, 6.
& 112. 6.
Eccles. 8. 10.
- 7 ⁱ The memory of the just *is* blessed :
but the name of the wicked shall rot. k ver. 10.
2 Heb. a
fool of lips.
- 8 The wise in heart will receive commandments :
^k *but* ² a prating fool ³ shall fall. 3 Or, shall
be beaten.
l Ps. 23. 4.
ch. 28. 18.
Is. 33. 15, 16.
- 9 ^l He that walketh uprightly walketh surely :
but he that perverteth his ways shall be known. m ch. 6. 13.
n ver. 8.
- 10 ^m He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow :
ⁿ *but* a prating fool ⁴ shall fall. 4 Or, shall
be beaten.
o Ps. 37. 30.
ch. 13. 14.
& 18. 4.
- 11 ^o The mouth of a righteous *man* *is* a well of life :
but ^p violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. p Ps. 107. 42.
ver. 6.

idleness: the "slack hand" is almost sure to lead to poverty and loss, while industry and care are in direct agreement with all His precepts and principles of conduct. But while He forbids Christians to trust in riches, He bids them use them in such a manner as to help them in the way of eternal life (St. Mark x. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 17.). We must not forget however that, after all, it is the Gospel which has taught the true doctrine about riches more clearly than was known before.

6. "Blessings are upon the head of the just, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." We may understand this passage in two ways. (a) The blessing of God will fall upon those who are liberal; but the violence of wicked men will cover their face, that is, it will recoil upon them in the way of retribution, covering their countenances with confusion. To cover the face was a sign to a criminal or a prisoner of approaching condemnation (see Esther vii. 8.). It was also a sign of mourning (see Ezek. xxiv. 17.), or of separation from society (see Lev. xiii. 45.). In each case it was a bad sign. See ver. 11.

(b) "Violence covereth," &c. The words might be rendered thus. The mouth, or face, of the wicked will cover violence. That is, while good men freely praise the liberal, wicked men will close their mouth, but harbour evil thoughts towards them in their hearts (see Ps. xxviii. 3; lxii. 4, and below ver. 11.).

7. "Shall rot." Shall be remembered with disgust.

8. "Receive commandments," Listen to instruction, perhaps in silence, while a chatterer will waste his time in talk, and perhaps fall into disaster or punishment (margin). See 3 St. John 10.

9. "He that walketh uprightly," &c. The guileless man walks surely because his conscience is clear.

"He that perverteth his ways," &c. He who takes a crooked and dishonest course will at last be detected.

10. "He that winketh." He who uses signs as instruments of mischief (see vi. 12, 13.).

11. "A well of life." Lit. "a fountain of lives." The speech of good men is a source of good both for this world and the next (St. John iv. 14. Col. iv. 6. 1 St. Pet. iv. 11.).

PROVERBS, X.

- 12 Hatred stirreth up strifes :
 but ^q love covereth all sins.
- ^q ch. 17. 9.
¹ Cor. 13. 4.
¹ Pet. 4. 8.
- 13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found :
 but ^r a rod *is* for the back of him that is void of
² understanding.
- ^r ch. 26. 3.
² Heb. *heart*.
- 14 Wise *men* lay up knowledge :
 but ^s the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.
- ^s ch. 18. 7.
 & 21. 23.
- 15 ^t The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city :
 the destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.
- ^t Job 31. 24.
^{Ps.} 52. 7.
^{ch.} 18. 11.
- 16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life :
 the fruit of the wicked to sin.
- ¹ Tim. 6. 17.
- 17 He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction :
 but he that refuseth reproof ³ erreth.
- ³ Or. *causeth to err*.
- 18 He that hideth hatred *with* lying lips,
 and ^u he that uttereth a slander, *is* a fool.
- ^u Ps. 15. 3.
- 19 ^x In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin :
 but ^y he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.
- ^x Eccles. 5. 3.
^y Jam. 3. 2.
- 20 The tongue of the just *is as* choice silver :
 the heart of the wicked *is* little worth.
- 21 The lips of the righteous feed many :
 but fools die for want ⁴ of wisdom.
- ⁴ Heb. *of heart*.
- 22 ^z The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich,
 and he addeth no sorrow with it.
- ^z Gen. 24. 35.
 & 26. 12.
^{Ps.} 37. 22.

12. "Love covereth all sins." Seeks to forgive and extenuate them (see 1 Cor. xiii. 7. St. James iii. 18. 1 St. Pet. iv. 8.).

14. "Wise men lay up knowledge." They consider and weigh well what they have learned.

"The mouth of the foolish," &c. Men who are too fond of talking are apt to make great mistakes. Thus they are often on the brink of trouble.

15. "The rich man's wealth," &c. No doubt that in this world "money" is very often "a defence" (Eccles. vii. 12.). Poverty on the other hand, often hinders advancement in life. But beyond this life the case is different, for both riches and poverty cease to exist.

16. "The labour of the righteous," &c. Good men work in order to do good, but bad men work for mischievous and bad purposes.

18. "He that hideth hatred," &c. Men who seek to conceal their enmity by fair speeches, and those who speak slanderous untruths about others are sure in the end to be detected.

19. "In the multitude of words," &c. People who talk overmuch are very apt to be careless about what they say, and so fall into mistakes and even into sin (see St. James i. 20.).

21. "Feed many." Help them in the way of life by good advice enforced by their own good example.

"Die for want of wisdom." Lose eternal life by their folly.

22. "He addeth no sorrow with it." If men use God's gifts well,

PROVERBS, X.

- 23 ^a *It is as sport to a fool to do mischief :* ^a ch. 14. 9.
& 15. 21.
but a man of understanding hath wisdom.
- 24 ^b *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him :* ^b Job 15. 21.
but ^c *the desire of the righteous shall be granted.* ^c Ps. 145. 19.
Matt. 5. 6.
- 25 *As the whirlwind passeth,* ^d *so is the wicked no more :* ^d 1 John 5. 14,
15.
but ^e *the righteous is an everlasting foundation.* ^e Ps. 37. 9, 10,
15.
- 26 *As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,*
so is the sluggard to them that send him. ^f Ps. 15. 5.
ver. 30.
Matt. 7. 21,
25, & 16. 18.
- 27 ^f *The fear of the LORD* ² *prolongeth days :* ^f ch. 9. 11.
but ^g *the years of the wicked shall be shortened.* ^g 2 Heb.
addeth.
- 28 *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness :*
but the ^h *expectation of the wicked shall perish.* ^g Job 15. 32,
33, & 22. 16.
Ps. 55. 23.
Eccle. 7. 17.
- 29 *The way of the LORD is strength to the upright :* ^h Job 8. 13.
& 11. 20.
ⁱ *but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.* ^h Ps. 112. 10,
ch. 11. 7.
- 30 ^k *The righteous shall never be removed :* ⁱ Ps. 1. 6.
& 37. 20.
but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.
- 31 ^l *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom :* ^k Ps. 37. 22,
29.
& 125. 1.
ver. 25.
but the froward tongue shall be cut out.
- 32 *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable :* ^l Ps. 37. 30.

they will have no cause to regret having received them, for they have no sting of remorse for having gotten them by bad means.

23. "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief." Mischievous even in sport is foolish and wrong. What are called practical jokes are often only ill-natured trifling with the infirmities or the comfort of others (see xxvi. 19.).

24. "The fear of the wicked." That which wicked men fear will come unsought. Their prayer will not be heard because they ask amiss (St. James iv. 3.). On the other hand, the prayer of righteous men is acceptable to God.

26. "As vinegar to the teeth," &c. To send a sluggard on an errand is sure to bring disappointment and annoyance to the person who sends him.

27—30. The promises and warnings described in this passage are no doubt in their first meaning of a temporal kind; but, when explained in the light of the Gospel, they speak to the Christian of eternal reward and punishment.

29. "The way of the Lord," &c. The course of divine Providence confirms the faith of good men, because they are enabled by God's grace to see how "all things work together for good to those who love Him" (Rom. viii. 28.).

"But destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." We may omit the words "shall be," which are not in the original, and the passage will then be read thus: "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, but it is destruction to the workers of iniquity." Why? Because they misunderstand and abuse it.

31. "Cut out." Treated like a rotten branch, cast aside and treated with contempt (see St. John xv. 6.).

32. "Know what is acceptable." Are ready to conciliate, and disinclined to harshness or unkindness.

In this chapter the principal points which are enforced by the writer are :

PROVERBS, XI.

² Heb. *frowardnesses*.

but the mouth of the wicked *speaketh* ² frowardness.

CHAPTER XI.

- ^a Lev. 19. 35, 36.
Deut. 25. 13, —16.
ch. 16. 11.
& 20. 10, 23.
- ² Heb. *Balances of deceit.*
- ³ Heb. *a perfect stone.*
- ^b ch. 15. 33.
& 16. 18.
& 18. 12.
Dan. 4. 30, 31.
- ^c ch. 13. 6.
- ^d ch. 10. 2.
Ezek. 7. 19.
Zeph. 1. 18.
- ^e Gen. 7. 1.
- ^f Heb. *rectify.*
- ^f ch. 5. 22.
Eccles. 10. 8.
- ^g ch. 10. 23.
- 1 **A** ^{a 2} FALSE balance *is* abomination to the LORD :
but ³ a just weight *is* his delight.
- 2 ^b When pride cometh, then cometh shame :
but with the lowly *is* wisdom.
- 3 ^c The integrity of the upright shall guide them :
but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.
- 4 ^d Riches profit not in the day of wrath :
but ^e righteousness delivereth from death.
- 5 The righteousness of the perfect shall ⁴ direct his way :
but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.
- 6 Therighteousnessoftheuprightshalldeliverthem :
but ^f transgressors shall be taken in *their own* naughtiness.
- 7 ^g When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish :

1. Industry, together with the right use of God's gifts. 2. Care in speech, because haste in words often leads to mischief. 3. Kindness and forbearance, in the spirit of that charity which covers, that is, does not publish the faults of others. Hatred and ill-will are the special marks of an ungodly and unchristian temper. Christ came to declare the love of God for man (see Titus iii. 3, 4.).

CHAPTER XI.

1. "Just weight." Lit. as margin, a "perfect stone," that is, a stone used as a weight. See 2 Sam. xiv. 26, the "king's stone." Also Lev. xix. 35, 36. Deut. xxv. 13, 16, and below, chap. xvi. 11. Just as business cannot be carried on fairly without true and just weights and measures, so the use of such as are unfair is a mark of dishonesty and deceit, and as such is contrary to God's law.

2. "With the lowly is wisdom." The modest, humble man is more truly wise, even in a worldly sense, than the proud and self-conceited (see St. Luke xiv. 7—11.).

4. "The day of wrath." In the day of calamity, even in this world, riches are often of no avail; still less so in the great day of final judgment (see St. Luke xvi. 22, 23.).

"Righteousness." The word appears to be used both in its widest sense of goodness (see ver. 5 below), but especially in the narrower sense of liberality, alms-giving, which without doubt helps men towards heaven, though not of course for its own sake, nor apart from Christ.

7. "His expectation shall perish." A wicked man plans for this life only, and consequently he has nothing to hope for beyond the grave.

PROVERBS, XI.

- and the hope of unjust *men* perisheth.
- 8 ^b The righteous is delivered out of trouble, h ch. 21. 18.
and the wicked cometh in his stead.
- 9 An ⁱ hypocrite with *his* mouth destroyeth his neighbour : Job 8. 13.
but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.
- 10 ^k When it goeth well with the righteous, the city k Esth. 8. 15.
ch. 28. 12, 28.
rejoiceth :
and when the wicked perish, *there is* shouting.
- 11 ^l By the blessing of the upright the city is ex- l ch. 20. 8.
alted :
but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
- 12 He that is ² void of wisdom despiseth his neigh- 2 Heb.
destitute of
heart.
m Lev. 19. 16.
ch. 20. 19.
bour :
but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.
- 13 ^m ³ A talebearer revealeth secrets : 3 Heb. He
that walk-
eth, being a
talebearer.
n 1 Kin. 12. 1,
&c.
ch. 15. 22.
& 24. 6.
o ch. 6. 1.
but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the
matter. 4 Heb. shall
be sore
broken.
5 Heb. those
that strike
hands.
- 14 ⁿ Where no counsel *is*, the people fall :
but in the multitude of counsellors *there is* safety.
- 15 ^o He that is surety for a stranger ⁴ shall smart
for it :
and he that hateth ⁵ suretiship is sure.

8. "Cometh in his stead." While those who trust in God and obey Him are sure to receive from Him comfort and deliverance, either in this world or the next, the wicked man very often falls into mischief, even in this world (see Ps. vii. 15, 16. Dan. iii. 22 ; vi. 24.).

10. "The city rejoiceth." In the long run people learn to respect uprightness, as they fear and dislike tyranny and injustice.

11. "The blessing of the upright." The prayers of good men, as St. James says, avail much, and are more likely to draw down the blessing of heaven than the counsels of evil men, which in the end bring mischief (see St. James v. 16.).

12. "He that is void of wisdom," &c. The self-conceited despise others, and this is a sure mark of ignorance and folly, for there is scarcely any one from whom something may not be learned. The men who are most truly learned are usually the most humble, because they know how much there is to be learned beyond what they themselves know.

13. "A talebearer," &c. See x. 10.

"He that is of a faithful spirit," &c. He who loves truth, a trustworthy man, may be trusted to hold his tongue, and not reveal what ought to be kept secret. We may call to mind the behaviour of Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Matt. i. 19, 20.).

14. "The multitude of counsellors." We may, perhaps, supply the word "wise" or "faithful" before "counsellors," for otherwise a multitude of advisers may lead only to perplexity.

15. "He that is surety," &c. See above, vi. 1.

PROVERBS, XI.

- P ch. 31. 30. 16 ^p A gracious woman retaineth honour :
and strong *men* retain riches.
- ^q Matt. 5. 7.
& 25. 34, &c. 17 ^q The merciful man doeth good to his own soul :
but *he that is* cruel troubleth his own flesh.
- 18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work :
but ^r to him that soweth righteousness *shall be* a
sure reward.
- 19 As righteousness *tendeth* to life :
so he that pursueth evil *pursueth it* to his own
death.
- 20 They that are of a froward heart *are* abomina-
tion to the LORD :
but *such as are* upright in *their way are* his
delight.
- ^s ch. 16. 5. 21 ^s *Though* hand *join* in hand, the wicked shall not
be unpunished :
- ^t Ps. 112. 2. but ^t the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.
- 22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,
so *is* a fair woman which ² is without discretion.
- ² Heb.
departeth
from. 23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good :
but the expectation of the wicked ^u *is* wrath.
- ^u Rom. 2. 8, 9. ^x Ps. 112. 9. 24 There is that ^x scattereth, and yet increaseth ;
and *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet,
but *it tendeth* to poverty.

16. "A gracious woman." One who is gentle and considerate, a "lady" in the full sense of that word, wins and retains respect by her behaviour, in the same way as strong men win and retain riches (see St. Luke xi. 21.).

17. "Doeth good to his own soul." By shewing kindness to others a man does good to himself, for he puts himself in the way of receiving kindness from others. On the other hand a cruel man is not likely to receive kindness where he has shewn none, but the words may mean, a cruel man is unkind even to his own kindred, his children and relatives.

18. "A deceitful work." A work which being dishonest throughout will disappoint him in the end.

21. "Though hand join in hand." Wicked men may league together, but they will not at last escape unpunished (see Judges ix. 56, 57.).

22. "A jewel of gold," &c. A woman's beauty, if she departs from "discretion," and falls into sin, ceases to be an ornament to her. The writer had probably in his mind two thoughts; (1) the ring commonly put into a pig's snout, and (2) the gold ring used as a nose ornament by Eastern women (Gen. xxiv. 30. Isa. iii. 21.).

23. "The desire," &c. See x. 24. What wicked men desire is likely to draw down God's anger upon them.

24, 25. True liberality is never wasteful, and never loses in the end. Even in this life it receives a blessing, much more does it receive one hereafter; while the niggardly, and those who withhold what is

PROVERBS, XI.

- 25 ^y ² The liberal soul shall be made fat : ^y 2 Cor. 9. 6,
7, 8, 9, 10.
^z and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. ^z Heb.
- 26 ^a He that withholdeth corn, the people shall *The soul*
of blessing.
 curse him : ^z Matt. 5. 7.
 but ^b blessing *shall be* upon the head of him that ^a Amos 8. 5, 6.
^b Job 29. 13.
 selleth *it*.
- 27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour : ^c Esth. 7. 10.
^c but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto ^c Ps. 7. 15, 16.
& 9. 15, 16.
& 10. 2.
& 57. 6.
 him. ^d Job 31. 24.
Ps. 52. 7.
- 28 ^d He that trusteth in his riches shall fall : ^d Mark 10. 24.
 but ^e the righteous shall flourish as a branch. ^e Luke 12. 21.
- 29 He that troubleth his own house ^f shall inherit ^f 1 Tim. 6. 17.
 the wind : ^e Ps. 1. 3.
& 52. 8.
& 92. 12, &c.
 and the fool *shall be* servant to the wise of heart. ^g Jer. 17. 8.
- 30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life ; ^f Eccles. 5. 16.
 and ^g he that ³ winneth souls *is* wise. ^g Dan. 12. 3.
^h 1 Cor. 9. 19,
&c.
- 31 ^h Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in ^h Jam. 5. 20.
 the earth : ³ Heb. *taketh*.
 much more the wicked and the sinner. ^h Jer. 25. 29.
ⁱ 1 Pet. 4. 17,
18.

due to others at the time when they ought to pay it, they who "oppress the hireling in his wages," do not in the end enrich themselves (see Mal. iii. 5.).

26. "He that withholdeth corn," &c. Corn represents food in general. To store up for private profit what is needful for public benefit is odious, while they who, like Joseph, stored up provision which was sold in time of want, earn the thanks of the community (Gen. xli. 48—56.).

27. "Seeketh good," &c. He who devotes himself to the work of doing good to others will, sooner or later, obtain their good-will, but they who seek to do harm to others, are very likely to suffer harm themselves (see above xi. 8.).

29. "Troubleth his own house," &c. Brings trouble on his household by his own misconduct. Such a man mars the prosperity of his family, and shall "inherit the wind," that is, shall reap disappointment.

"The fool shall be servant," &c. Unwise, thoughtless people make themselves dependent on those who are more prudent.

30. "The fruit of the righteous," &c. A tree of life, that is, a solid and lasting reward, is the result of righteous conduct.

"He that winneth souls is wise." On the other hand a wise man brings others, in the end, to his side. So, we may add, a holy life is never thrown away, but it helps to win men to God's side.

31. "The righteous shall be recompensed," &c. Even in this life godliness does not lose its reward (see 1 Tim. iv. 8.), while wicked men, though they seem to flourish for a time, yet in the end generally meet with their recompense. But another explanation is, if the righteous suffer affliction in this life, as part of the chastisement of God's love, how much more shall the ungodly do so.

We may add that the Gospel makes it certain that, in the world

PROVERBS, XII.

CHAPTER XII.

- 1 **W**HOSO loveth instruction loveth knowledge :
but he that hateth reproof *is* brutish.
- ^a ch. 8. 35. 2 ^a A good *man* obtaineth favour of the LORD :
but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.
- ^b ch. 10. 25. 3 A man shall not be established by wickedness :
but the ^b root of the righteous shall not be moved.
- ^c ch. 31. 23.
¹ Cor. 11. 7.
^d ch. 14. 30. 4 ^c A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband :
but she that maketh ashamed *is* ^d as rottenness
in his bones.
- 5 The thoughts of the righteous *are* right :
but the counsels of the wicked *are* deceit.
- ^e ch. 1. 11, 18. 6 ^e The words of the wicked *are* to lie in wait for
blood :
^f but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.
- ^r ch. 14. 3. 7 ^g The wicked are overthrown, and *are* not :
but the house of the righteous shall stand.
- ^g Ps. 37. 36,
37.
ch. 11. 21.
Matt. 7. 24,
25, 26, 27. 8 A man shall be commended according to his
wisdom :
^h but he that is ² of a perverse heart shall be
despised.
- ^h 1 Sam. 25.
17.
² Heb.
*perverse
of heart.*

to come, there is a reward for the righteous, and a punishment for the ungodly.

In the foregoing chapter we have pictures in strong colours of 1. The public advantages arising from government carried on by wise and upright counsellors and able administrators. These are shewn in (a) justice in commercial regulations, exerting a wholesome influence on commercial dealings ; (b) prevention or defeat of combinations of bad men for evil purposes ; (c) a result of general contentment among the people. 2. The duties of individuals, and the blessings arising to them from (a) the true use of riches as contrasted with false reliance on them ; (b) general uprightness and honesty of conduct, or, as the Christian would add, holiness of life ; (c) the virtuous and discreet behaviour of women, and their influence on society, as contrasted with the evil arising from the opposite conduct.

CHAPTER XII.

3. "A man shall not be established by wickedness." Put this into modern language, and it will run thus:—cheating never prospers in the long run, though for a time it may seem to do so, but on the whole honesty is the best policy.

"The root of the righteous," &c. A good and upright man rests on a solid foundation, the Rock of Christ in Whom he has placed his faith (see Ps. cxii. 6, 7. 2 Tim. i. 12.).

4. "Rottenness." Her conduct, "like a worm i' th' bud," destroys her husband's happiness.

6. "The mouth of the upright." The speech of truthful, upright men often wins favour even from their enemies.

PROVERBS, XII.

- 9 ⁱ *He that is despised, and hath a servant,* ⁱ ch. 13. 7.
is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.
- 10 ^k *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast:* ^k Deut. 25. 4.
but the ² tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. ² Or, bowels.
- 11 ^l *He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread:* ^l Gen. 3. 19.
but he that followeth vain persons ^m is void of ^m understanding. ^m ch. 28. 19.
ch. 6. 32.
- 12 *The wicked desireth ³ the net of evil men:* ³ Or, the fortress.
but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.
- 13 ⁿ *The wicked is snared by the transgression of ⁿ his lips:* ⁿ Heb. The snare of the wicked is in the transgression of lips.
^o *but the just shall come out of trouble.* ^o ch. 18. 7.
^o 2 Pet. 2. 9.
- 14 ^p *A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth:* ^p ch. 13. 2.
& 18. 20.
^q *and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.* ^q Isai. 3. 10, 11.
- 15 ^r *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes:* ^r ch. 3. 7.
Luke 18. 11.
but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. ^s ch. 23. 11.
- 16 ^s *A fool's wrath is ^s presently known:* ^s Heb. in that day.

9. "He that is despised," &c. The words should probably be rendered thus; "He who is despised, and is a servant to himself." That is, a man who is not ashamed to wait on himself, even though he be despised by others on this account, is more to be respected than one who is too proud to do so.

10. "A righteous man," &c. To shew kindness to animals was a duty carefully taught by the Law of Moses (see Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. Deut. xiv. 21; xxii. 6.). There is no clearer proof of a bad heart than cruelty to them. Even the mercy of a bad man, or what he regards as mercy, is tainted with cruelty.

12. "Desireth the net of evil men," &c. The margin here suggests "fortress" instead of "net," for the two words have the same origin. Perhaps we may take advantage of the two meanings, and say that the words mean, bad men desire that which bad men regard as their stronghold, which at last may prove to them only a net of destruction (see 1 Sam. xxiii. 7.).

"Yieldeth fruit." The original word is "will give," and the word "fruit" is not in the original. Perhaps we may express the meaning thus; the root of righteous men, that is, what righteous men have planted, will give or yield the same.

13. "The wicked is snared," &c. Bad men get themselves into mischief by their talk, while good men often escape by their simple honesty.

14. "The fruit of his mouth." A man's words are the "fruit of his mouth," and according to these he will be regarded by men either with favour or dislike, and according to these also, in their due measure, will be judged by God hereafter. See St. Matt. x. 32; xii. 37.

16. "Presently." The original has "in the (same) day." They

- but a prudent *man* covereth shame.
- t ch. 14. 5. 17 ^t *He that* speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness :
but a false witness deceit.
- u Ps. 57. 4. & 59. 7. & 64. 3. 18 ^u There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword :
but the tongue of the wise *is* health.
- x Ps. 52. 5. ch. 19. 9. 19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever :
^x but a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.
- 20 Deceit *is* in the heart of them that imagine evil :
but to the counsellors of peace *is* joy.
- 21 There shall no evil happen to the just :
but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.
- y ch. 6. 17. & 11. 20. Rev. 22. 15. 22 ^y Lying lips *are* abomination to the LORD :
but they that deal truly *are* his delight.
- z ch. 13. 16. & 15. 2. 23 ^z A prudent man concealeth knowledge :
but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
- a ch. 10. 4. 24 ^a The hand of the diligent shall bear rule :
but the ² slothful shall be under tribute.
- ² Or, *deceitful.*
b ch. 15. 13. 25 ^b Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop :
but ^c a good word maketh it glad.
- c Isai. 50. 4. ³ Or, *abundant.* 26 The righteous *is* more ³ excellent than his neighbour :
but the way of the wicked seduceth them.
- 27 The slothful *man* roasteth not that which he took in hunting :

who take offence readily are foolish and wrong. Christians ought to be "slow to wrath" (St. James i. 19.). It is often wiser and better to "pocket an affront" than to be eager to resent one.

18. "There is that speaketh," &c. A sarcastic, "gibing" spirit, as Shakespeare calls it (*Love's Labour Lost*, v. 2.), is often very offensive, but the kind words of wise men are like a soothing medicine (see 2 Sam. xvi. 7. Ps. lv. 21 ; lvii. 4. St. James iii. 5, 10.).

20. "Deceit is in the heart," &c. They who meditate mischief are generally obliged to employ deceit.

"To the counsellors," &c. They who reconcile others who are at variance bring peace and joy with them, and the good-will of those whom they unite.

21. "No evil." No lasting evil.

24. "Under tribute." An indolent man has always to pay for his self-indulgence. He is dependent on others, and has a load as it were of debt upon him which he cannot shake off.

26. "More excellent than his neighbour." The man of principle stands on firmer ground than those who by self-indulgence have weakened their own power to resist temptation (see St. James i. 14, 15.).

27. "The slothful man," &c. In primitive society many men lived,

PROVERBS, XIII.

but the substance of a diligent man *is* precious.

- 28 In the way of righteousness *is* life ;
and *in* the pathway *thereof* *there is* no death.

CHAPTER XIII.

- 1 **A** WISE son *heareth* his father's instruction :
a but a scorner *heareth* not rebuke. a 1 Sam. 2. 25.
- 2 b A man shall eat good by the fruit of *his* mouth : b ch. 12. 14.
but the soul of the transgressors *shall eat*
violence.
- 3 c He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life : c Ps. 39. 1.
ch. 21. 23.
but he that openeth wide his lips shall have Jam. 3. 2.
destruction.
- 4 d The soul of the sluggard desireth, and *hath* d ch. 10. 4.
nothing :
but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.
- 5 A righteous *man* hateth lying :

as Esau did, by their spoil in hunting. The words may mean (1) a slothful hunter does not follow up his game, and so loses it ; or (2) he does not take the trouble to cook the food which he has gained by his hunting. On the other hand, an industrious man takes care that nothing shall be lost or wasted for want of care (see St. John vi. 12.).

28. "In the pathway thereof there is no death." As the words stand in our Version the meaning is plain enough, but the word "pathway" might be rendered "byway," and the word "no" in the original might be so written as to mean "to." In that case the words would stand thus, "the by-path," that is, the path which leads away from life, leads "to death."

If this be the true explanation of the passage, we are reminded that the way of righteousness, though narrow, is ever straightforward ; and that he who intends to follow it must not turn aside to the right or left. By-paths and by-roads never answer in the long run.

The following points in the foregoing chapter may be noticed with advantage. 1. The mention of the wholesome influence exerted by women. 2. The recommendation of kindness to animals. 3. The duty of truthfulness, and the hatefulness of falsehood and dishonesty in the sight of God. 4. The advantages of prudence in speech. 5. The benefits arising from industry and the evils of idleness.

CHAPTER XIII.

2. "A man shall eat good," &c. See above, ch. xii. 14.

"The soul of the transgressors," &c. Violent men will reap the fruit of their violence both here and hereafter.

3. "He that keepeth his mouth," &c. Carefulness in speech is a maxim both of worldly prudence and of Christian conduct (see St. James i. 26.).

4. "The soul of the sluggard." The slothful man is always wishing vainly for something to turn up to his advantage, and save him the trouble of labour, but the industrious man works and thrives.

- but a wicked *man* is loathsome, and cometh to shame.
- ^e ch. 11. 3, 5, 6. 6 ^e Righteousness keepeth *him that is* upright in the way :
² Heb. *sin*. but wickedness overthroweth ² the sinner.
- ^f ch. 12. 9. 7 ^f There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing :
there is that maketh himself poor, yet *hath* great riches.
- 8 The ransom of a man's life *are* his riches :
but the poor heareth not rebuke.
- 9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth :
^s but the ³ lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
- ^g Job 18. 5, 6. & 21. 17. ch. 24. 20. 10 Only by pride cometh contention :
³ Or, *canite*. but with the well advised *is* wisdom.
- ^h ch. 10. 2. & 20. 21. 11 ^h Wealth *gotten* by vanity shall be diminished :
⁴ Heb. *with the hand*. but he that gathereth ⁴ by labour shall increase.
- 12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick :
but ⁱ *when* the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life.
- ⁱ ver. 19. ^k 2 Chr. 36. 16. 13 Whoso ^k despiseth the word shall be destroyed :
⁵ Or, *shall be in peace*. but he that feareth the commandment ⁵ shall be rewarded.
- ^l ch. 10. 11. & 14. 27. & 16. 22. ^m 2 Sam. 22. 6. 14 ^l The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life,
to depart from ^m the snares of death.
- 15 Good understanding giveth favour :

5. "A wicked man is loathsome." The "corrupt communication" which proceeds from a bad man brings disgrace upon him (see St. Matt. xii. 35. St. Luke vi. 45. Eph. iv. 29. Col. iii. 8.).

7. "There is that maketh," &c. The same thought which was expressed in ch. xi. 24, 25 is expressed here also, but with greater force. The present passage also points more clearly to the future reward of those who, instead of laying up treasure here, seek to lay up treasure in heaven. We cannot help thinking also of Him "Who for our sakes "became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich" (see St. Matt. vi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. viii. 9.).

8. "The ransom of a man's life," &c. A rich man is sometimes able to save his life by giving money ; but on the other hand a poor man who has nothing to give is not visited with the reproaches that assail the rich.

9. "The light . . . the lamp," &c. This figure of speech reminds us of the Parable of the Ten Virgins (St. Matt. xxv. 1—13.).

13. "The word." The commandments of the Law.

14. "The law of the wise," &c. The wisdom of wise men, as it must have proceeded from God's gift, is precious in proportion as it sets forth His likeness. Much more that Law which comes directly from Him, and which is set forth in the pattern of His Son, must be helpful to us in the way of salvation.

15. "Good understanding," &c. Sound wisdom gets a man favour

PROVERBS, XIII.

- but the way of transgressors *is* hard.
- 16 ⁿ Every prudent *man* dealeth with knowledge : ⁿ ch. 12. 23. & 15. 2.
but a fool ² layeth open *his* folly. ² Heb. spreadeth.
- 17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief :
but ^o ³ a faithful ambassador *is* health. ^o ch. 25. 13.
- 18 Poverty and shame *shall be to him* that refuseth instruction : ³ Heb. an ambassador of faithfulness.
but ^p he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured. ^p ch. 15. 5, 31.
- 19 ^q The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul : ^q ver. 12.
but *it is* abomination to fools to depart from evil.
- 20 He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise :
but a companion of fools ⁴ shall be destroyed. ⁴ Heb. shall be broken.
- 21 ^r Evil pursueth sinners : ^r Ps. 32. 10.
but to the righteous good shall be repayed.
- 22 A good *man* leaveth an inheritance to his children's children :
and ^s the wealth of the sinner *is* laid up for ^s Job 27. 16, 17.
the just. ^s ch. 28. 8. Eccles. 2. 26.
- 23 ^t Much food *is in* the tillage of the poor : ^t ch. 12. 11.
but there *is that is* destroyed for want of judgment. ^u ch. 19. 18. & 22. 15. & 23. 13.
- 24 ^u He that spareth his rod hateth his son : ^u & 29. 15, 17.

from others, but "the way of transgressors," that is, of unrighteous, deceitful men, brings no comfort either to themselves or others.

17. "A wicked messenger." One who neglects or perverts his message will justly incur punishment for his fault, but "a faithful ambassador," that is one that delivers his message truly, even though it may not be agreeable, causes less disappointment than the other, while the bearer of tidings that are both true and good is doubly welcome (see 2 Sam. xviii. 27, and 2 Kings v. 21—27.).

19. "It is abomination," &c. Corrupted hearts cannot make up their minds to leave off their favourite sins; they shrink from making the attempt.

22. "The wealth of the sinner," &c. Riches ill-gotten sometimes pass into the hands of those who make better use of them (see Job xxvii. 16, 17.).

23. "Much food," &c. The industry of poor men gets them a livelihood from their "tillage," that is, ground newly broken up, but want of wisdom is apt to cause waste and loss.

24. "He that spareth the rod." Some parents give way to their children in order to save themselves the trouble of resistance or the pain of refusal. Such treatment is in truth only self-indulgence. Those who correct them, as is sometimes the case, only when their faults become troublesome to themselves, are in truth only giving way to revenge. The same principle is expressed by an Arabic proverb which says, "He first spoils the slave and then beats him." There are some faults and some dispositions in children which can only be dealt with

PROVERBS, XIV.

- 7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
when thou perceivest not *in him* the lips of
knowledge.
- 8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand
his way :
but the folly of fools *is* deceit.
- 9 ^g Fools make a mock at sin : g ch. 10. 23.
but among the righteous *there is* favour.
- 10 The heart knoweth ² his own bitterness ; 2 Heb. the
bitterness
of his soul.
and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his
joy.
- 11 ^h The house of the wicked shall be overthrown : h Job 8. 15.
but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.
- 12 ⁱ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, i ch. 16. 25.
but ^k the end thereof *are* the ways of death. k Rom. 6. 21.

than God. The Wisdom, however, which he "seeks" to display, turns out at last to be "nought." But those who apply themselves to the study of God's Word, and the practice of religion, find the study easier by practice. They "go from strength to strength" (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). This remark, however, may be applied to study of all kinds. To him who wishes to learn and understand, and who applies himself to study, knowledge soon becomes easy; but ignorant people try to cast contempt on study by saying, "what is the good of it?"

7. "Go from the presence," &c. After a time it is of no use to reason with foolish people, and better to give up the attempt. As St. Paul says, "If any man be ignorant," that is, he who chooses to be so, "let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. xiv. 38.).

8. "The folly of fools is deceit." Sinners, and those who are wilfully ignorant, only deceive themselves.

9. "Fools make a mock at sin." One of the devices of Satan is to induce people to laugh at sin, and say that there is no harm in it. But it is only fools who are deceived by this device, for, sooner or later, its true nature becomes manifest. But it is not certain that the words ought to be rendered thus. Another way of rendering them is as follows: "Sin," that is the sin-offering which was directed by the Law in the case of offences of a less serious kind (Lev. v.), "will mock "at fools;" that is, it is useless for sinners who have no wish to repent, to offer sin-offerings. Perhaps they bring offerings of an inferior kind, merely for form's sake (Mal. i. 13.). At any rate, their hearts are unchanged, and their offering is a mockery.

"Among the righteous there is favour." Between righteous men and God there is favour. Their offerings are acceptable to Him.

10. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness," &c. In the sorrow and the joy of every human being there are some points which no one but himself can understand. As the old saying is, no one knows where the shoe pinches but the man who wears it. Yet there is One Who knows all, and feels for all those whom He calls His brethren.

12. "There is a way," &c. Self-deceit is the first stage of sin. We first deceive ourselves, and then follow blindly the way of destruction.

PROVERBS, XIV.

- ¹ ch. 5. 4.
Eccles. 2. 2.
^m ch. 1. 31.
& 12. 14.
- 13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ;
and ¹ the end of that mirth *is* heaviness.
- 14 The backslider in heart shall be ^m filled with
his own ways :
and a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself.
- 15 The simple believeth every word :
but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going.
- ⁿ ch. 22. 3. 16 ⁿ A wise *man* feareth, and departeth from evil :
but the fool rageth, and is confident.
- 17 *He that is* soon angry dealeth foolishly :
and a man of wicked devices is hated.
- 18 The simple inherit folly :
but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- 19 The evil bow before the good ;
and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ^o ch. 19. 7. 20 ^o The poor is hated even of his own neighbour :
but ² the rich *hath* many friends.
- ² Heb. *many are the lovers of the rich.*
^p Ps. 41. 1.
& 112. 9. 21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth :
^p but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.
- 22 Do they not err that devise evil ?
But mercy and truth *shall be* to them that devise
good.
- 23 In all labour there is profit :
but the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury.

13. "Even in laughter," &c. Sometimes a laughing countenance covers a sad heart, which is all the sadder for its outward appearance. Or, by "laughter" may be meant excessive laughter, such as the forced mirth of the gambler, the drunkard, or the harlot, which betokens inward sadness (see Eccles. ii. 2 ; vii. 3.). An Arabic proverb expresses the same thought.

14. "The backslider in heart," &c. A corrupt man will sooner or later reap the fruit of his own corruption, and a good man will also receive in time his due reward.

15. "The simple." See above, i. 4, and below ver. 18.

19. "The evil bow before the good." We may refer as an instance of this to the history of Haman and Mordecai (Esther vi. 11.).

20. "The poor is hated," &c. Men in general dislike poverty so much, that even poor men sometimes dislike and shew unkindness to those who are poorer than themselves. Unless men's hearts are guided by the Holy Spirit, their troubles and difficulties only tend to sour their temper, and make them more selfish.

"The rich hath many friends." So long as his riches last, his friends remain with him.

23. "Labour . . . talk," &c. The old fable of the ant and the grasshopper reminds us of the great truth conveyed by this verse. Industry, however humble may be its line of work, will repay the labourer, but mere talk is unprofitable, worthless.

PROVERBS, XIV.

- 24 The crown of the wise *is* their riches :
but the foolishness of fools *is* folly.
- 25 ¹ A true witness delivereth souls : q ver. 5.
but a deceitful *witness* speaketh lies.
- 26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence :
 and his children shall have a place of refuge.
- 27 ^r The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,
 to depart from the snares of death. r ch. 13. 14.
- 28 In the multitude of people *is* the king's honour :
but in the want of people *is* the destruction of
 the prince.
- 29 ^s *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding* : s ch. 16. 32.
but he that is ² *hasty of spirit exalteth folly.* James 1. 19.
- 30 A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh :
but ^t *envy* ^u *the rottenness of the bones.* 2 Heb. *short of spirit.*
- 31 ^x *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth* ^y *his*
 Maker : t Ps. 112. 10.
but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor. u ch. 12. 4.
x ch. 17. 5.
y See Job 31.
15, 16.
ch. 22. 2.

24. "The crown of the wise," &c. To wise men, who know how to use them, riches are a crown and an ornament to their condition. But as to the folly of fools, what is it? No crown, but it ends where it began, in mere folly.

25. "A true witness," &c. He who speaks the truth helps to save men's lives both in this world and the next; but a false-hearted man will utter lies without scruple.

26, 27. "In the fear of the Lord," &c. In worldly troubles the fear of God is the only true source of confidence to the children of God. He is then their true refuge, and to Him they can flee without fear of being rejected. So also is He in times of spiritual temptation. They who truly fear and love Him will find in Him a fountain of strength which will enable them to escape "death," the death of the soul, to which sin ultimately leads those who give way to it.

28. "The multitude of people," &c. Good government tends to increase population and promote prosperity, whilst bad government tends to diminish both. The reader will find in Addison's *Spectator*, No. 512, a story which illustrates this point well, but it is too long to repeat here. Modern travellers in Persia confirm the truth of the rule which is expressed in that story and in the text; they describe to us a bad, corrupt government, and a dwindling population.

29. "Hasty of spirit." The margin says "short." A man who is "short" in his temper, who is easily provoked, and answers hastily, is likely to act foolishly and bring trouble on himself by impatience. See 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

30. "A sound heart," &c. There is an old saying, "a sound mind in a sound body." Bodily health is promoted by absence of anxiety, while an envious discontented spirit vexes the mind and injures the bodily health (see Esther v. 9.).

31. "He that oppresseth the poor," &c. God is the Maker both of poor and rich. Therefore to insult or oppress the poor is an insult

PROVERBS, XV.

- 32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness :
z Job 13. 15. but ^z the righteous hath hope in his death.
& 19. 26.
Ps. 23. 4. 33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath
& 37. 37. understanding :
2 Cor. I. 9. but ^a *that which is* in the midst of fools is made known.
& 5. 8.
2 Tim. 4. 18. 34 Righteousness exalteth a nation :
a ch. 12. 16. but sin *is* a reproach ² to any people.
& 29. 11.
2 Heb. 35 ^b The king's favour *is* toward a wise servant :
to nations. but his wrath is *against* him that causeth shame.
b Matt. 24.
45, 47.

CHAPTER XV.

- ^a 1 **A** ^a SOFT answer turneth away wrath :
a Judg. 8. 1, but ^b grievous words stir up anger.
2, 3.
ch. 25. 15. 2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright :
b 1 Sam. 25. ^c but the mouth of fools ² poureth out foolishness.
10, &c.
1 Kin. 12.
13, 14, 16.
c ver. 28. ch. 12. 23. & 13. 16. ² Heb. *belcheth, or, bubbleth.*

to Him. Woe therefore to them who despise the poor for their poverty (see Deut. xv. 11. St. James ii. 5.).

32. "The wicked is driven away," &c. In his calamity the wicked man is cast down, for he has no hope of the future to support him. Not so the righteous.

33. "Wisdom resteth," &c. Wise men keep their own counsel, while fools reveal what had better be kept secret, and so often turn wisdom into folly.

34. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." Nations, like the individuals of whom they consist, bear special characters in the world. To have a character for truth, justice, and the like, raises the reputation of the people in the world, while the contrary character lowers and degrades the people to whom it belongs.

35. "The king's favour," &c. Wise and discreet ministers are of the greatest value to those whom they serve, but unwise servants bring discredit on their employers, and displeasure from them on themselves.

In this chapter we are reminded (1) of the beginning of sin, namely, self-deceit. We begin by persuading ourselves that sin is not so sinful as it really is; (2) of the consequence of sin, namely, to corrupt and give a bad name both to the whole man, and to the community to which he belongs. (3) Of the true remedy against sin, namely, the fear of the Lord, which, like a fountain of fresh water, never fails to support and strengthen us against temptation, and so to preserve us from the snares which lead to destruction.

CHAPTER XV.

1. "A soft answer," &c. The following story is related by a Greek historian of Themistocles the famous Athenian. He had been giving advice on an occasion of the greatest importance to all Greece. One of the members of the council, who took a different view of the case from him, threatened in his passion to strike him. "Strike," said Themistocles, "but listen." The other gave way immediately, and Themistocles carried his point.

2. "Poureth out." Pours out, as the margin says, profusely and without judgment.

PROVERBS, XV.

- 3 ^d The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good. d Job 34. 21. ch. 5. 21. Jer. 16. 17. & 32. 19. Heb. 4. 13.
- 4 ² A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life : but perverseness therein *is* a breach in the spirit. ² Heb. *The healing of the tongue.*
- 5 ^o A fool despiseth his father's instruction : ^f but he that regardeth reproof is prudent. ^e ch. 10. 1. ^f ch. 13. 18. ver. 31, 32.
- 6 In the house of the righteous *is* much treasure : but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.
- 7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge : but the heart of the foolish *doeth* not so.
- 8 ^s The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD : but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight. ^g ch. 21. 27. & 28. 9. Is. 1. 11. & 61. 8. & 66. 3. Jer. 6. 20. & 7. 22. Amos 5. 22.
- 9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination unto the LORD : but he loveth him that ^h followeth after righteousness. ^h ch. 21. 21. 1 Tim. 6. 11.
- 10 ³ Correction *is* ⁱ grievous unto him that forsaketh the way : *and* ^k he that hateth reproof shall die. ³ Or, *Instruction.* ⁱ 1 Kin. 22. 8. ^k ch. 5. 12. & 10. 17. ^l Job 26. 6. Ps. 139. 8. ^m 2 Chr. 6. 30. Ps. 7. 9. & 44. 21. John 2. 24. 25. & 21. 17. Acts 1. 24. ⁿ Amos 5. 10. ^o 2 Tim. 4. 3. ^p ch. 17. 22. ^p ch. 12. 25.
- 11 ¹ Hell and destruction *are* before the LORD : how much more then ^m the hearts of the children of men ?
- 12 ⁿ A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him : neither will he go unto the wise.
- 13 ^o A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance : but ^p by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

3. "The eyes of the Lord," &c. See St. Matt. v. 45. Acts xiv. 17.

4. "A wholesome tongue," &c. The original has "the healing of the tongue." That is, perhaps, gentleness of speech, which soothes and encourages (Tit. ii. 8.).

"Perverseness." A quarrelsome disposition, which by its irritating talk breaks up and destroys happiness.

7. "The lips of the wise," &c. The conversation of a wise and good man can hardly help being beneficial to those who converse with him.

11. "Hell and destruction," &c. Both the present and the future are known to God. "Hell," the place of departed spirits, and "destruction," a word used also in the sense of a place of punishment. Both names are in general names of places, and not of states of mind ; but in the New Testament the word for "destruction," Abaddon, is used as the name of a person (Rev. ix. 11.), as seems to be the case also in Job xxviii. 22. He who knows them both knows also our minds and dispositions.

13. "A merry heart," &c. A cheerful disposition is a great gift of God, enabling men to look on the bright side of the events of life rather than the dark one. On the other hand a gloomy desponding spirit is a great affliction. Yet God can relieve it, and heal the broken-hearted (see below, vv. 15, 30.).

PROVERBS, XV.

- 14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge :
but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.
- 15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil :
^q but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.
- ^r Ps. 37. 16. ch. 16. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 6. 16 ^r Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.
- ^s ch. 17. 1. 17 ^s Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.
- ^t ch. 26. 21. & 29. 22. 18 ^t A wrathful man stirreth up strife :
but *he that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife.
- ^u ch. 22. 5. 19 ^u The way of the slothful *man is* as an hedge of thorns :
but the way of the righteous ² *is* made plain.
- ² Heb. *is raised up us a causey.* 20 ^x A wise son maketh a glad father :
but a foolish man despiseth his mother.
- ¹ ch. 10. 1. & 29. 3. 21 ^y Folly *is* joy to *him that is* ³ destitute of wisdom :
^z but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.
- ^y ch. 10. 23. ³ Heb. *void of heart.* 22 ^a Without counsel purposes are disappointed :
but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.
- ^z Eph. 5. 15. ^a ch. 11. 14. & 20. 18. 23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth :
and ^b a word *spoken* ⁴ in due season, how good *is it!*
- ^b ch. 25. 11. ⁴ Heb. *in his season.* 24 ^c The way of life *is* above to the wise,
that he may depart from hell beneath.
- ^c Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1, 2. ^d ch. 12. 7. & 14. 11. 25 ^d The LORD will destroy the house of the proud :
but ^e he will establish the border of the widow.
- ^e Ps. 68. 5, 6. & 146. 9. ^f ch. 6. 16, 18. 26 ^f The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD :
^g but *the words* of the pure *are* ⁵ pleasant words.
- ^g Ps. 37. 30. ⁵ Heb. *words of pleasantness.*

17. "Better is a dinner of herbs," &c. It is better to fare slenderly in peace and good-will, than splendidly in the midst of strife and quarrelling.

19. "The way of the slothful," &c. A lazy man is always finding difficulties, which are like "hedges of thorn" to him, and stop his progress. The "thorns" here mentioned are much stronger and sharper than ours.

"The way of the righteous," &c. The upright man goes straight forward with a clear conscience, and does not allow the difficulties to stop him.

23. "A man hath joy," &c. It is pleasant to a man to have been able to give good advice, when it is followed by those to whom it was given. We all know the value of words spoken at the right time and in the right manner.

24. "Above." Pointing towards heaven, and drawing him away from destruction.

25. "The border." The land-mark, and hence the property which it points out (see Deut. xxvii. 17, 19.).

PROVERBS, XVI.

- 27 ^h He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house ; ^h ch. 11. 10.
Isai. 5. 8.
Jer. 17. 11.
but he that hateth gifts shall live.
- 28 The heart of the righteous ⁱ studieth to answer : ⁱ 1 Pet. 3. 15.
but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.
- 29 ^k The LORD *is* far from the wicked : ^k Ps. 10. 1.
& 34. 16.
but ^l he heareth the prayer of the righteous. ^l Ps. 145. 18,
19.
- 30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart :
and a good report maketh the bones fat.
- 31 ^m The ear that heareth the reproof of life
abideth among the wise. ^m ver. 5.
- 32 He that refuseth ² instruction despiseth his own ² Or,
soul : *correction.*
but he that ³ heareth reproof ⁴ getteth under-
standing. ³ Or, *obeyeth.*
⁴ Heb.
possesseth
an heart.
- 33 ⁿ The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom ;
and ^o before honour *is* humility. ⁿ ch. 1. 7.
^o ch. 18. 12.

^a ver. 9.
ch. 19. 21.
& 20. 24.
Jer. 10. 23.
² Or,
disposings.
^b Matt. 10. 19,
20.

CHAPTER XVI.

- 1 **T**HE ^a ² preparations of the heart in man,
^b and the answer of the tongue, *is* from the
LORD.

27. "Gifts." Bribery. See Isa. i. 23.

28. "Studieth." Meditates before speaking. Bad men care not what proceeds from their mouths.

"Poureth out." See above, ver. 2, and St. Matt. xii. 35.

30. "The light of the eyes," &c. A cheerful look gives pleasure to others, and a good character by giving peace of mind helps to maintain bodily health.

32. "He that refuseth," &c. See above, ver. 12, and Amos v. 10.

33. "Before honour is humility." Humility comes first, and honour afterwards. They who humble themselves are often exalted even in this world, for the world dislikes conceit (see St. Matt. xxiii. 12. St. Luke xiv. 11.).

We can hardly help noticing in this chapter the repeated mention of the blessing of cheerfulness, and contentment. There can be no doubt that some dispositions are naturally more cheerful, while some are more sad than those of others. But the thought of God and of the Cross of Christ will do much to relieve and remove the depression of low spirits, and the melancholy of disposition which is natural to some people, and which tries them so severely.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. "The preparations of the heart," &c. This verse may be rendered thus: "To man (belong) preparations of heart, and from Jehovah (come) answers of (the) tongue." That is, man forms plans in his mind, but the words in which they are made known to the world come from God's gift.

In this chapter the points which seem to demand our attention most

PROVERBS, XVI.

- c ch. 21. 2. 2 ^c All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes ;
 d 1 Sam. 16. 7. but ^d the LORD weigheth the spirits.
- e Ps. 37. 5. 3 ^{e 2} Commit thy works unto the LORD,
 & 55. 22. and thy thoughts shall be established.
 Matt. 6. 25. 4 ^f The LORD hath made all *things* for himself :
 Luko 12. 22. ^g yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.
 Phil. 4. 6. 5 ^h Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomi-
 1 Pet. 5. 7. nation to the LORD :
 2 Heb. Roll. ⁱ *though* hand *join* in hand, he shall not be ³ un-
 f Isai. 43. 7. punished.
 Rom. 11. 36. 6 ^k By mercy and truth iniquity is purged :
 g Job 21. 30. and ^l by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.
 Rom. 9. 22. 7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
 h ch. 4. 17. he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.
 & S. 13. 8 ^m Better *is* a little with righteousness
 i ch. 11. 21. than great revenues without right.
 3 Heb. held 9 ⁿ A man's heart deviseth his way :
innocent. ^o but the LORD directeth his steps.
 k Dan. 4. 27. 10 ⁴ A divine sentence *is* in the lips of the king :
 Luke 11. 41.
 l ch. 14. 16.
 m Ps. 37. 16.
 ch. 15. 16.
 n ver. 1.
 ch. 19. 21.
 o Ps. 37. 23.
 Prov. 20. 24.
 Jer. 10. 23.
 p Heb.
Divination.

are—1. That God is the disposer of all human events; man may propose, but He disposes. 2. The duty of rulers, not kings only, but of all placed in authority over others. 3. The advantages of plain, straightforward conduct, and the mischief caused by slander, gossip, and envy. 4. The evils arising from pride and self-will, and the duty and advantage of government of the temper and of the passions in general, and of courteous behaviour towards all.

2. "All the ways," &c. Men easily find excuses for themselves, but God is the true judge of all our intentions (see Heb. iv. 12.).

3. "Commit thy works," &c. Entrust to God your plans, and He will direct them rightly (see ver. 9.).

4. "The Lord hath made," &c. God has made all men, even those who, by their misconduct, are working out ruin for themselves.

6. "By mercy and truth," &c. Under the old Covenant, the rule of life appeared to be "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly" with God (Micah vi. 8.), but under the Gospel Christians know that it is only the blood of Jesus Christ which takes away the guilt of sin: yet men must nevertheless endeavour to shew mercy and truth, that is, holiness of life, after the example of Christ, in their conduct, for this will help them in the way of salvation.

7. "When a man's ways," &c. Goodness and truth have power, under God's good providence, to win the favour even of enemies.

9. "A man's heart," &c. An excellent Christian writer has said, "Man proposes, but God disposes." We may refer also to 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

10. "A divine sentence," &c. A king's decision is like a declaration from God, for the powers that he are ordained by Him. See Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. 1 St. Pet. ii. 13, 14, 17. A good king therefore will use all his endeavours to decide righteously.

PROVERBS, XVI.

his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

- 11 ^pA just weight and balance *are* the LORD'S : ^p Lev. 19. 36.
²all the weights of the bag *are* his work. ^{ch.} 11. 1.
 12 *It is* an abomination to kings to commit wicked- ² Heb. *all*
 ness : ^{the stones.}
 for ^qthe throne is established by righteousness. ^q ch. 25. 5.
 13 ^rRighteous lips *are* the delight of kings ; [&] 29. 14.
 and they love him that speaketh right. ^r ch. 14. 35.
 14 ^sThe wrath of a king *is as* messengers of death : ^s ch. 19. 12.
 but a wise man will pacify it. [&] 20. 2.
 15 In the light of the king's countenance *is* life ;
 and ^this favour *is* ^uas a cloud of the latter rain. ^t ch. 19. 12.
 16 ^xHow much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold ! ^u Job 29. 23.
 and to get understanding rather to be chosen ^z ^xcb. 8. 11, 19.
 than silver !
 17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil :
 he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
 18 ^yPride *goeth* before destruction,
 and an haughty spirit before a fall. ^y ch. 11. 2.
 19 Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the [&] 17. 19.
 lowly, [&] 18. 12.
 than to divide the spoil with the proud.
 20 ³He that handleth a matter wisely shall find ³ Or, *He*
 good : ^{that under-}
 and whose ^ztrusteth in the LORD, happy *is* he. ^{standeth a}
 21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent : ^{matter.}
 and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning. ^z Ps. 2. 12.
 22 ^aUnderstanding *is* a wellspring of life unto him [&] 34. 8.
 that hath it : ^{Isai.} 30. 18.
 but the instruction of fools *is* folly. ^{Jer.} 17. 7.
 23 ^bThe heart of the wise ⁴teacheth his mouth, ^a ch. 13. 14.
 and addeth learning to his lips. [&] 14. 27.
^b Ps. 37. 30.
⁴ Heb. *maketh wise.*

15. "A cloud of the latter rain." A shower in spring when the corn is ripening in hot countries, refreshing it and hastening its growth.

16. "How much better," &c. See the beautiful description of wisdom in the book of Job (ch. xxviii. 12—28.).

18. "A haughty spirit," &c. We can hardly help thinking of the rise and fall of such men as Cardinal Wolsey and the Emperor Napoleon I. See ch. xv. 33.

21. "Sweetness of the lips," &c. Gentleness in the teacher greatly assists the learner.

22. "Understanding is a wellspring of life," &c. A truly wise man helps others on their way by his conversation and the good advice which he is able to give, but fools neither learn nor teach to any good purpose. See vv. 23, 24.

PROVERBS, XVI.

- 24 Pleasant words *are as* an honeycomb,
sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
- c ch. 14. 12. 25 ^c There is a way that seemeth right unto a man,
but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.
- ¹ See ch. 9. 12.
Eccles. 6. 7. 26 ^{d 2} He that laboureth laboureth for himself ;
for his mouth ³ craveth it of him.
- ² Heb.
The soul of
him that
laboureth. 27 ⁴ An ungodly man diggeth up evil :
and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire.
- ³ Heb. *boveth*
unto him. 28 ^e A froward man ⁵ soweth strife :
and ^f a whisperer separateth chief friends.
- ⁴ Heb. *A man*
of Belial. 29 A violent man ^g enticeth his neighbour,
and leadeth him into the way *that is* not good.
- ^e ch. 6. 14, 19.
& 15. 18.
& 26. 21.
& 29. 22. 30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things :
moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.
- ⁵ Heb. *send-*
eth forth. 31 ^h The hoary head *is* a crown of glory,
if it be found in the way of righteousness.
- ^f ch. 17. 9.
^g ch. 1. 10,
&c. 32 ⁱ *He that is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty ;
and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh
a city.
- ^h ch. 20. 20.
ⁱ ch. 19. 11.

26. "Laboureth for himself." His exertions are stimulated by the thought that his labour will turn to his own advantage.

"His mouth," &c. He knows that he must provide food for himself and his family. The writer is speaking of the labour of free men, not of slaves.

27. "Diggeth up evil." More properly, "diggeth evil." That is, makes pit-falls for others, into which he himself will probably fall hereafter (see Ps. cxix. 85. Jer. v. 26.).

30. "Shutteth his eyes," &c. Shuts his eyes while he is contriving mischief, as if he were innocent and indifferent to what is passing ; and mutters to himself while he is forming his plans (see St. Luke v. 21, 22.).

31. "The hoary head," &c. If we omit "if," which is not in the original, this verse would run thus—

"A crown of glory is a hoary head,

"in (the) way of righteousness it will be found."

This mode of expression is not uncommon in Hebrew, but the sense is clear, namely, that the old age of a good man adds a special dignity and grace to him, and commands the respect of others. But on the other hand, the unrepentant sinner gains no dignity and no respect by his old age. He is a melancholy spectacle of time wasted. See Isa. lxxv. 20.

32. "He that is slow to anger," &c. In ch. xiv. 29, and also in xv. 1, mention has already been made of the advantage of control over the temper. In the present passage we have a further and more forcible illustration of the same. Self-control is always better than mere power, for (a) it enables a man to exercise more influence over others ; (b) it prevents him, through the grace of God, from falling into the faults and calamities into which others are led by want of it.

PROVERBS, XVII.

33 The lot is cast into the lap ;
but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

CHAPTER XVII.

- 1 **B**BETTER *is* ^a a dry morsel, and quietness ^a ch. 15. 17.
therewith,
than an house full of ² sacrifices *with* strife. ² Or, *good cheer.*
- 2 A wise servant shall have rule over ^b a son that ^b ch. 10. 5.
causeth shame, & 19. 26.
and shall have part of the inheritance among the
brethren.
- 3 ^c The fining pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for ^c Ps. 26. 2.
gold : ch. 27. 21.
but the LORD trieth the hearts. Jer. 17. 10.
Mal. 3. 3.
- 4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips ;
and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.
- 5 ^d Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker : ^d ch. 14. 31.
and ^e he that is glad at calamities shall not be ^e Job 31. 29.
³ unpunished. Obad. 12.
³ Heb. *held innocent.*
- 6 ^f Children's children *are* the crown of old men ; ^f Ps. 127. 3.
& 128. 3.

33. "The lap." The fold of the shawl which forms the upper garment of Eastern people. We are not to suppose that the use of lots does away with the exercise of prudence and good reason ; but there are some questions which, after all consideration, appear to be so evenly balanced, as to require decision from without. In such cases the present passage and others in Holy Scripture appear to justify the use of lots (see Lev. xvi. 8, 10. Below, ch. xviii. 18. Acts i. 26.). But the same arguments which justify the use forbid also the abuse of them, reminding us that in all questions of conduct or action which admit of doubt, the decision comes, after all, from God, and is therefore to be sought with reverence.

To possess this belief firmly is a source of the greatest comfort to every devout Christian. Having taken all due pains for his own welfare both in spiritual and temporal matters, he commits the care both of his soul and his body to a wise and kind Father and Friend, of whom he is sure that He will provide for both, so as to make the course of events turn out not only to His own glory, but to the ultimate advantage, even though it may not be visible and immediate, of all those who love Him truly (see above, ch. iii. 5, 6. Ps. xxxvii. 5. Rom. viii. 28.).

CHAPTER XVII.

1. "Sacrifices." Lit. "meat" (of slain animals) "of strife," that is, perhaps, not such sacrifices as are spoken of above, ch. vii. 14, but, as the margin suggests, a plentiful entertainment, but quarrelling at the same time.
2. "A wise servant." See the case of Ziba (2 Sam. xvi. 1—4; xix. 29.).
4. "A wicked doer," &c. It is an old saying that a man is known by the company he keeps. Bad men therefore do not scruple to listen to falsehoods nor to converse familiarly with liars.

PROVERBS, XVII.

- and the glory of children *are* their fathers.
- 2 Heb. *A lip of excellency.* 7 ² Excellent speech becometh not a fool : much less do ³ lying lips a prince.
- 3 Heb. *a lip of lying.* 8 ⁵ A gift *is as* ⁴ a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it : whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.
- 4 Heb. *a stone of grace.* 9 ^h He that covereth a transgression ⁵ seeketh love ; but ⁱ he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.
- 5 Or, *procureth.* 10 ⁶ A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.
- 1 ch. 16. 28. 11 An evil *man* seeketh only rebellion : therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.
- 6 Or, *A reproof aveth more a wise man, than to strike a fool an hundred times.* 12 Let ^k a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.
- k Hos. 13. 8. 13 Whoso ^l rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.
- 1 Ps. 103. 4, 5. 14 The beginning of strife *is as* when one letteth out water : therefore ^m leave off contention, before it be meddled with.
- Jer. 18. 20. 1 ch. 20. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 9. 1 Thes. 4. 11.

6. "The glory of children are their fathers." To come of a "good family," one whose deeds have been good and worthy of remembrance, is a credit to those who are so descended. Their "fathers" are justly their "glory."

7. "Excellent speech," &c. It sounds inconsistent for a fool to utter wise speeches, and men are consequently not disposed to listen to them. On the other hand, it is unbecoming and unworthy of a prince to be guilty of untruth. The word of a king ought to be as sacred as truth itself.

8. "A gift is as a precious stone," &c. Everywhere, but more especially among Eastern nations, gifts are highly valued. Men follow those who have them to offer.

9. "He who covereth," &c. Although it is wrong to excuse sin by giving it a wrong name (see Isa. v. 20.), yet it is no part of our duty to publish the faults of others. To refrain from doing so is a part of Christian charity (see xi. 13 ; xvi. 28. 1 St. Pet. iv. 8.).

11. "A cruel messenger." One who is sent to punish his rebellion.

12. "Let a bear," &c. Even a wild beast in his fury is a less dangerous enemy than a "fool in his folly." The former can but wound or kill the body, the latter may serve to destroy the soul. See St. Luke xii. 4, 5.

13. "Whoso rewardeth," &c. As instances of this we may refer to David himself (see 2 Sam. xii. 10.), and to his sentence of retribution on Joab (1 Kings ii. 5, 6.).

14. "The beginning of strife," &c. It is easier to set water running than to stop it. So when strife has begun no one can tell when it will cease.

PROVERBS, XVII.

- 15 ⁿ He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just,
even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.
- 16 Wherefore *is there* a price in the hand of a fool
to get wisdom, ° seeing *he hath* no heart to it?
- 17 ^p A friend loveth at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity.
- 18 ^q A man void of ² understanding striketh hands,
and becometh surety in the presence of his
friend.
- 19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife:
and ^r he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.
- 20 ³ He that hath a froward heart findeth no good:
and he that hath ^a a perverse tongue falleth into
mischief.
- 21 ^t He that begetteth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow:
and the father of a fool hath no joy.
- 22 ^u A merry heart doeth good ⁴ *like* a medicine:
^x but a broken spirit drieth the bones.
- 23 A wicked *man* taketh a gift out of the bosom
^y to pervert the ways of judgment.

ⁿ Ex. 23. 7.
ch. 24. 24.
Isai. 5. 23.

° ch. 21. 25,
26.

^p Ruth 1. 16.
ch. 18. 24.

^q ch. 6. 1.
& 11. 15.
² Heb. *heart*.

^r ch. 16. 18.

³ Heb. *The
froward of
heart*.

^a Jam. 3. 8.

^t ch. 10. 1.
& 19. 13.
ver. 25.

^u ch. 12. 25.
& 15. 13, 15.

⁴ Or, *to a
medicine*.

^x Ps. 22. 15.

^y Ex. 23. 8.

16. "Wherefore is there a price," &c. Of what use is it for a fool to offer money to buy instruction, when he has no heart and no ability to learn. Fine fabrics cannot be made from coarse materials (see xi. 22.).

17. "A friend loveth at all times," &c. We learn who are our true friends by their behaviour in time of trial.

"A brother is born for adversity." Some would render these latter words "out of adversity," as if adversity were the source from which we learn who are our true friends and brothers. But as the value of a true friend becomes best known in adversity, so by his conduct at that time he shews how valuable his services are for helping us under the necessities to which it gives rise. We are reminded also of Him Who, beyond all others, is our true Friend and Brother, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

19. "Exalteth his gate." He who builds a palace in his pride is likely soon to be cast down. When Cardinal Wolsey built Hampton Court Palace, he was next to the king the greatest man in England, but within a few years he was obliged to surrender it to the king, and he himself was cast down from his high station.

21. "He that begetteth a fool." This remark, combined with that in ver. 25, reminds us of such sons as Rehoboam, son of Solomon; Manasseh, son of Hezekiah; and the sons of Josiah. In our own history we have a similar instance in King Edward II, son of Edward I.

22. "Like a medicine." If we adopt the rendering of the margin, the words will mean that cheerfulness of disposition assists the action of medicine, while gloominess of spirit retards it.

23. "The bosom." The fold of the upper garment, which serves as a

PROVERBS, XVIII.

- ^z ch. 14. 6. **24** ^z Wisdom *is* before him that hath understanding ;
Eccles. 2. 14. but the eyes of a fool *are* in the ends of the earth.
& 8. 1.
- ^a ch. 10. 1. **25** ^a A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,
& 15. 20. and bitterness to her that bare him.
& 19. 13.
ver. 21.
- ^b ver. 15. **26** Also ^b to punish the just *is* not good,
ch. 18. 5. nor to strike princes for equity.
- ^c Jam. 1. 19. **27** ^c He that hath knowledge spareth his words :
and a man of understanding is of ² an excellent
² Or, a cool spirit.
- ^d Job 13. 5. **28** ^d Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is
counted wise :
and he that shutteth his lips *is* esteemed a man
of understanding.

CHAPTER XVIII.

- ² Or, He that separateth himself seeketh according to his desire, and intermeddleth in every business : See Jude 19.
- 1** **T**HROUGH ² desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh *and* intermeddleth with all wisdom.

pocket to contain the purse (see xvi. 33.). The "gift" here spoken of is one used for a corrupt purpose, a bribe.

24. "Wisdom is before him," &c. A wise man fixes his attention on the object before him, but a fool's eyes wander and are inattentive.

26. "Princes." Noble-minded upright persons.

"For equity." The word "for" should probably be rendered "beyond" or "contrary to." To use violence towards such persons is contrary to what is right (see St. John xviii. 23.).

27. "Excellent." The margin here expresses the meaning of a different reading of the text. A man of a "cool," that is, a calm temper, possesses a great advantage, and shews his wisdom in dealing with others (see xvi. 32.).

28. "Even a fool," &c. So great are the dangers of the tongue, as St. James reminds us, that mere silence sometimes passes for wisdom. Thus a man of few words is often regarded as wise for this reason (see x. 19. St. James iii. 5—8.).

The blessing of "wise" and good children cannot be estimated too highly. We are reminded in the foregoing chapter, and also in other parts of the Book, of the great value of this gift, and of the misery caused to parents by their children's "folly" and misconduct. Against this calamity the rank in society held by parents affords no certain protection. It is only "wisdom" that can do this, and it sometimes happens, as history reminds us by many examples, that the "servant" who is "wise" is raised to occupy the place forfeited by an "unwise" son, whose folly brings shame on himself, sorrow to his parents, and trouble to his country.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. "Through desire," &c. The passage as given in the margin expresses the sense preferred by many Jewish commentators, but it ought perhaps to be expressed thus. "After (his own) desire does he

PROVERBS, XVIII.

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| <p>2 A fool hath no delight in understanding,
but that his heart may discover itself.</p> <p>3 When the wicked cometh, <i>then</i> cometh also contempt,
and with ignominy reproach.</p> <p>4 ^a The words of a man's mouth <i>are as</i> deep waters,
^b <i>and</i> the wellspring of wisdom <i>as</i> a flowing brook.</p> <p>5 ^c <i>It is</i> not good to accept the person of the wicked,
to overthrow the righteous in judgment.</p> <p>6 A fool's lips enter into contention,
and his mouth calleth for strokes.</p> <p>7 ^d A fool's mouth <i>is</i> his destruction,
and his lips <i>are</i> the snare of his soul.</p> <p>8 ^e The words of a ² talebearer <i>are</i> ³ as wounds,
and they go down into the ⁴ innermost parts of
the belly.</p> <p>9 He also that is slothful in his work
is ^f brother to him that is a great waster.</p> <p>10 ^g The name of the LORD <i>is</i> a strong tower :
the righteous runneth into it, and ⁵ is safe.</p> | <p>^a ch. 10. 11.
& 20. 5.</p> <p>^b Ps. 78. 2.</p> <p>^c Lev. 19. 15.
Deut. 1. 17.
& 16. 19.
ch. 24. 23.
& 28. 21.</p> <p>^d ch. 10. 14.
& 12. 13.
& 13. 3.
Eccles. 10.
12.</p> <p>^e ch. 12. 18.
& 26. 22.</p> <p>² Or,
<i>whisperer.</i></p> <p>³ Or, <i>like
as when
men are
wounded.</i></p> <p>⁴ Heb.
<i>chambers.</i></p> <p>^f ch. 28. 24.</p> <p>^g 2 Sam. 22.
3. 51.
Ps. 18. 2.
& 27. 1.
& 61. 3, 4.
& 91. 2.
& 144. 2.</p> <p>⁵ Heb. <i>is
set aloft.</i></p> |
|--|--|

“seek, who separates himself: in all wisdom he will be exasperated.” It probably means that a man who sets up his own fancy against the opinion of the world, and affects singularity, is often only seeking to gratify his own vanity, and so quarrels with those who differ from him, though they may be wiser than he is. It contains also a warning against those who in religious matters set up their own private opinions against the rule of the Church, and find fault with doctrines and practices which they do not understand.

2. “A fool hath no delight,” &c. He only talks for talking's sake, not because he understands or loves the subject. An Arabic proverb says, “a fool has his answer on the edge of his tongue.”

3. “Ignominy,” disgraceful conduct.

4. “The words of a man's mouth,” &c. The words of a wise man are like deep waters, not to be sounded all at once, nor understood without inquiry. But when they once flow forth, they are like an abounding and refreshing stream.

6. “His mouth calleth for strokes.” His words often deserve punishment.

8. “The words of a talebearer,” &c. The word rendered “wounds” should probably be rendered “dainties,” and the meaning of the passage will be, scandal is swallowed eagerly by some people, and to them it is like nourishing food, their dainty meat.

9. “He that is slothful,” &c. Idleness and extravagance often go together. The indolent man has not strength of mind either to resist the temptation to self-indulgence to take care of what he possesses or to exercise self-denial. But as in God's creation nothing is useless, so our Lord shewed by His own conduct that He was desirous that none of His gifts should be wasted. See St. John vi. 12.

PROVERBS, XVIII.

- ^h ch. 10. 15. 11 ^h The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city,
 and as an high wall in his own conceit.
- ^l ch. 11. 2.
 & 15. 33.
 & 16. 18. 12 ⁱ Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
 and before honour *is* humility.
- ² Heb.
returneth
a word. 13 He that ² answereth a matter ^k before he heareth *it*,
it is folly and shame unto him.
- ^k John 7. 51. 14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity ;
 but a wounded spirit who can bear ?
- 15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge ;
 and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
- ^l Gen. 32. 20.
¹ Sam. 25.
 27. 16 ^l A man's gift maketh room for him,
 and bringeth him before great men.
- ch. 17. 8.
 & 21. 14. 17 *He that is* first in his own cause *seemeth* just ;
 but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.
- 18 The lot causeth contentions to cease,
 and parteth between the mighty.
- 19 A brother offended *is harder to be won* than a
 strong city :
 and *their* contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.
- ^m ch. 12. 14.
 & 13. 2. 20 ^m A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit
 of his mouth ;
and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.
- ⁿ See Matt.
 12. 37. 21 ⁿ Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue :
 and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

11. "The rich man's wealth," &c. It is quite true that "money is a defence" (Eccles. vii. 12.), but men are too apt to think that it is all-powerful, and that rich men are able to do anything they please ; but see below, xix. 1.

14. "Who can bear ?" Without the grace of God, no one can bear distress and disappointment.

16. "A man's gift," &c. In the East to offer presents is an established mark of civility, and an introduction to the favour of those to whom they are offered, so that the scanty, and still more the absence of them, is regarded as an affront (see 1 Sam. x. 27.) ; while on the other hand, liberality in presents is a means of obtaining their good-will.

17. "He that is first in his own cause," &c. The man who states his own case first has an advantage, until the other side also is heard.

18. "The lot," &c. If the principle laid down above (ch. xvi. 23.) be true, there are many questions so evenly balanced that an appeal to this mode of decision would be wise and equitable.

19. "A brother offended," &c. When brothers fall out, they are often more bitter enemies than other people. To reconcile them is often more difficult than to gain entrance into a strong castle.

20. "A man's belly," &c. Men's words and ways of speaking help either to fill their bellies or to empty them, that is, to provide them with food or to injure their livelihood.

PROVERBS, XIX.

- 22 ° *Whoso* findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*,
and obtaineth favour of the LORD. ° ch. 19. 14.
& 31. 10.
- 23 The poor useth intreaties ;
but the rich answereth ^p roughly. P Jam. 2. 3.
- 24 A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly :
^q and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a ^q ch. 17. 17.
brother.

CHAPTER XIX.

- 1 **B**BETTER ^a is the poor that walketh in his in- ^a ch. 23. 6.
tegrity,
than *he that is* perverse in his lips, and is a fool.
- 2 Also, *that* the soul *be* without knowledge, *it is*
not good ;
and he that hasteth with *his* feet sinneth.
- 3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way :
^b and his heart fretteth against the LORD. b Ps. 37. 7.
c ch. 14. 20.
d ver. 9.
- 4 ° Wealth maketh many friends ;
but the poor is separated from his neighbour. Ex. 23. 1.
Deut. 19. 16,
19.
- 5 ^d A false witness shall not be ² unpunished,
and *he that* speaketh lies shall not escape. ch. 6. 19.
& 21. 28.
- 6 ° Many will intreat the favour of the prince : ² Heb. *held
innocent.*
° ch. 29. 26.

22. To have a wife is a good thing in itself, and therefore to have a good one helps the husband in all ways.

24. "A man that hath friends," &c. This verse may be thus rendered: "A man of (many) friends is one who perishes by friends, but "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (see ver. 19.). The meaning will be, To have too many friends is dangerous, but to have one good one is a priceless treasure. Shakespeare says—

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

"Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel" (*Hamlet*, i. 3.).

Among the subjects noticed in this chapter, the one of the tongue is perhaps the most important; and we may well remember our Lord's declaration as to the value of men's words as shewing their character (St. Matt. xii. 34, 37.). The man who watches carefully over himself will be no less careful about what he speaks than about what he does, for he knows that his words form a part of his character as much as his actions, and will be judged accordingly at last.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. "Better is the poor," &c. See above, xviii. 11.

2. "That the soul be without knowledge," &c. To be ignorant, especially of oneself, is an evil; and he who makes too much haste in a matter which he does not understand is likely to fall into error and disaster.

3. "His heart fretteth against the Lord." Men make mistakes by their own folly, and charge God with the blame.

6. "Many will intreat," &c. The habit of making presents, especially

PROVERBS, XIX.

- f ch. 17. 8.
& 18. 16.
& 21. 14.
- ² Heb. *a man of gifts.*
- g ch. 14. 20.
- h Ps. 38. 11.
- 3 Heb. *an heart.*
- i ch. 16. 20.
- k ver. 5.
- l ch. 30. 22.
Eccles. 10. 6. 7.
- m ch. 14. 23.
Jam. I. 19.
- 4 Or, *prudence.*
- n ch. 16. 32.
- o ch. 16. 14, 15.
& 20. 2.
& 28. 15.
- p Hos. 14. 5.
- q ch. 10. 1.
& 15. 20.
& 17. 21, 25.
- r ch. 21. 9, 19.
& 27. 15.
- s 2 Cor. 12. 14.
- t ch. 18. 22.
- u ch. 6. 9.
- x ch. 10. 4.
& 20. 13.
& 23. 21.
- y Luke 10. 28.
& 11. 28.
- z ch. 28. 27.
Eccles. 11. 1.
Matt. 10. 42.
& 25. 40.
2 Cor. 9. 6,
7, 8.
Heb. 6. 10.
- and ^fevery man *is* a friend to ²him that giveth gifts.
- 7 ^gAll the brethren of the poor do hate him :
how much more do his friends go ^hfar from him ?
he pursueth *them with* words, *yet they are want-*
ing to him.
- 8 He that getteth ³wisdom loveth his own soul :
he that keepeth understanding ⁱshall find good.
- 9 ^kA false witness shall not be unpunished,
and *he that* speaketh lies shall perish.
- 10 Delight is not seemly for a fool ;
much less ^lfor a servant to have rule over
princes.
- 11 ^mThe ⁴discretion of a man deferreth his anger ;
ⁿand *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression.
- 12 ^oThe king's wrath *is* as the roaring of a lion ;
but his favour *is* ^pas dew upon the grass.
- 13 ^qA foolish son *is* the calamity of his father :
^rand the contentions of a wife *are* a continual
dropping.
- 14 ^sHouse and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers :
and ^ta prudent wife *is* from the LORD.
- 15 ^uSlothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ;
and an idle soul shall ^xsuffer hunger.
- 16 ^yHe that keepeth the commandment keepeth his
own soul ;
but he that despiseth his ways shall die.
- 17 ^zHe that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto
the LORD ;

to persons in authority, is very likely to lead to favouritism and even to bribery. The state of things, in which favour and bribery are more valued than justice, may be seen described in Isa. i. 23. Mic. vii. 3.

7. "All the brethren of the poor," &c. See above, ch. xiv. 20. We may add that Shakespeare has noted what he calls the "disease of all—shunned poverty" (*Timon of Athens*, iv. 2.), and see St. James ii. 6.

10. "Delight," &c. An easy luxurious life does not sit well on a fool, and nothing is less tolerable than the tyranny of one who has been a slave.

13. "The contentions of a wife," &c. An ill-tempered partner causes perpetual annoyance, somewhat in the same way as the rain dropping through a leaky roof. See the next verse.

16. "He that despiseth his ways." He who is careless in his conduct.

17. "He that hath pity," &c. The words used in the offertory of our Communion Service, which correspond to these, follow an older translation of the Bible. They remind us (a) of the great duty of

PROVERBS, XIX.

- and ² that which he hath given will he pay him ² Or,
again. his deed.
- 18 ^a Chasten thy son while there is hope,
and let not thy soul spare ³ for his crying. a ch. 13. 24
& 23. 13.
& 24. 17.
- 19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment :
for if thou deliver *him*, yet thou must ⁴ do it again. 3 Or, to his
destruction :
or, to cause
him to die.
- 20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction,
that thou mayest be wise ^b in thy latter end. 4 Heb. add.
b Ps. 37. 37.
- 21 ^c *There are many devices in a man's heart ;*
nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall
stand. c Job 23. 13.
Ps. 33. 10, 11.
ch. 16. 1, 9.
Is. 14. 26, 27.
& 46. 10.
Acts 5. 29.
Heb. 6. 17.
- 22 The desire of a man *is* his kindness :
and a poor man *is* better than a liar.
- 23 ^d The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life :
and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied ;
he shall not be visited with evil. d 1 Tim. 4. 8.
- 24 ^e A slothful *man* hideth his hand in *his* bosom,
and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again. e ch. 15. 19.
& 26. 13, 15.
- 25 ^f Smite a scorner, and the simple ^{5g} will beware :
and ^h reprove one that hath understanding, *and*
he will understand knowledge. f ch. 21. 11.
5 Heb. will
be cunning.
g Deut. 13. 11.
h ch. 9. 8.

almsgiving, (b) of the blessing which God has promised to the right performance of that duty.

18. "Let not thy soul spare," &c. The rendering of the margin is perhaps to be preferred, and the sense will be, "do not set thy soul on his destruction;" that is, do not let any personal feeling interfere with correction of his fault, either in the way of severity or of leniency, so as to do him a lasting injury either in soul or body. Punishment is a serious matter, and ought to be gravely and calmly administered.

19. "A man of great wrath," &c. A man of a fiery temper frequently gets into trouble, and even when he has been released from punishment soon falls into it again.

22. "The desire of a man," &c. The value of a gift consists in the "desire," that is, the good-will of the giver; thus a man's kindness of heart is more valuable than his outward gift. A poor man who can only give little is better than a deceitful, insincere rich man.

23. "Visited with evil." The troubles of life will do him no lasting injury, because he has placed his faith in God.

24. "Hideth his hand in his bosom." The passage ought perhaps to run thus, "dippeth his hand in the dish," that is, in order to take food from it. He is so lazy that, after dipping his hand in the bowl or dish, he will not carry the food to his mouth (see xii. 27. St. Matt. xxvi. 23.).

25. "Smite a scorner," &c. The sight of punishment inflicted on offenders will make others more careful for themselves, in order to avoid the like visitation (see ver. 29.). Fear of punishment, the "terror of the Lord," deters from transgression many whom higher motives do not reach, but to persons of understanding reproof alone is sufficient.

PROVERBS, XX.

26 He that wasteth *his* father, *and* chaseth away *his* mother,

¹ ch. 17. 2. *is*^a a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from the words of knowledge.

² Heb. *A witness of Belial.* 28 ² An ungodly witness scorneth judgment : and ^k the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.

^k Job 15. 16. & 20. 12, 13. & 34. 7. 29 Judgments are prepared for scorers, ¹ and stripes for the back of fools. ¹ ch. 10. 13. & 26. 3.

CHAPTER XX.

^a Gen. 9. 21. ch. 23. 29, 30. ¹ Isai. 28. 7. Hos. 4. 11. 1 **W**INE ^a *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging : and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

^b ch. 16. 14. & 19. 12. ^c ch. 8. 36. 2 ^b The fear of a king *is* as the roaring of a lion : *whoso* provoketh him to anger ^c sinneth *against* his own soul.

^d ch. 17. 14. 3 ^d *It is* an honour for a man to cease from strife : but every fool will be meddling.

26. "Chaseth away his mother." Sets her warnings at defiance.

27. "Cease my son," &c. The words as they stand seem to exhort us not to listen to evil advice, but perhaps the verse means, "Better to give up learning, than to hear without obeying." It is thus an ironical reproof to careless hearers.

28. "The mouth of the wicked," &c. Bad men, as it were, swallow iniquity eagerly. They "work all uncleanness with greediness" (see Mic. vii. 3. Eph. iv. 19.).

29. See above, ver. 25.

Among points worthy of special notice in this chapter we may select the following ; (1) the influence gained in the world, often to an undue degree, by the possession of wealth, and the injury caused to the poor by its abuse ; (2) the mischief caused by indolence ; (3) the advantage of control over the temper ; (4) the duty of liberality, and its value in God's sight ; (5) the sorrow caused to parents by the misconduct of their children, and the duty of endeavouring to bring them up well and wisely.

CHAPTER XX.

1. "Strong drink." Spirit distilled from honey or dates.

"Raging," noisy. The Hebrews, like too many people of other nations, were given to drunkenness, a sin for which they were again and again reproved by the Prophets (see 1 Kings xvi. 9. Isa. v. 11, 22 ; xxviii. 3. Hab. ii. 15, 16.). No less does St. Paul reckon drunkenness as one of those sins which tend to deprive a Christian of his heavenly inheritance (1 Cor. vi. 10. Gal. v. 21.). May we not say that it is one of the crying sins of the British nation ? For striking descriptions of the effects of drunkenness the reader may refer both to ch. xxiii. 19—25, and to the Apocryphal book of Esdras (1 Esdr. iii. 17—24.).

2. "Sinneth against his own soul." Incurs risk to his own life.

PROVERBS, XX.

- 4 ^e The sluggard will not plow by reason of the ² cold ;
^f therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. ^e ch. 10. 4.
& 19. 24.
² Or, winter.
^f ch. 19. 15.
- 5 ^g Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water ;
^h but a man of understanding will draw it out. ^g ch. 18. 4.
^h ch. 25. 14.
Matt. 6. 2.
Luke 18. 11.
- 6 ⁱ Most men will proclaim every one his own
³ goodness :
 but ⁱ a faithful man who can find ? ³ Or, bounty.
ⁱ Ps. 12. 1.
Luke 18. 8.
k 2 Cor. 1. 12.
- 7 ^k The just *man* walketh in his integrity :
^l his children *are* blessed after him. ^l Ps. 37. 26.
& 112. 2.
m ver. 26,
n 1 Kin. 8. 46.
2 Chr. 6. 36.
Job 14. 4.
Ps. 51. 5.
Eccles. 7. 29.
- 8 ^m A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment
 scattereth away all evil with his eyes. 1 Cor. 4. 4.
1 John 1. 8.
- 9 ⁿ Who can say, I have made my heart clean,
 I am pure from my sin ? o Dent. 25.
13, &c.
ver. 23.
ch. 11. 1.
& 16. 11.
Mic. 6. 10, 11.
- 10 ^o ⁴ Divers weights, *and* ⁵ divers measures,
 both of them *are* alike abomination to the LORD. ⁴ Heb. A
stone and
a stone.
⁵ Heb. an
ephah and
an ephah.
- 11 Even a child is ^p known by his doings,
 whether his work *be* pure, and whether *it be* right. p Matt. 7. 16.
- 12 ^q The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,
 the LORD hath made even both of them. q Ex. 4. 11.
Ps. 94. 9.
- 13 ^r Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty ;
 open thine eyes, *and* thou shalt be satisfied with
 bread. r ch. 6. 9.
& 12. 11.
& 19. 15.
Rom. 12. 11.
- 14 *It is* naught, *it is* naught, saith the buyer :

5. "Draw it out." He will shew it forth himself at the proper time, or he will induce others who possess the gift to shew it.

6. "Most men," &c. Many men are willing enough to boast of their own good deeds, their kindness, their liberality, and the like (see margin), but "faithful" men on whose word we can always rely, are not so easily found.

8. "Scattereth . . . with his eyes." Endeavours to remove it wherever he sees it existing.

9. "Who can say," &c. We may take this verse in connection with ver. 6. It is the "faithful man" who is most sensible of his own imperfection, and how much he needs One to cleanse him from his sin (see Ps. xiv. 3.).

10. "Divers weights," &c. It is plain that unless the measures and standards of value be uniform, there must be room for fraud between buyers and sellers.

11. "Even a child," &c. The actions of children are, in their due proportion, as important in God's sight as those of grown people. The pattern of childhood is to be found in our Lord, of Whom Samuel was in this respect a likeness (1 Sam. ii. 26. St. Luke ii. 51, 52, and see above, ch. viii. 17.).

13. "Open thine eyes." Use proper diligence, the natural gifts with which God has endowed thee (see above, ver. 12.).

14. "It is naught . . . saith the buyer," &c. Before completing a bargain purchasers often try to depreciate the value of the thing offered for sale. But when the purchase is complete they boast of its cheapness (see Eccles. xxvii. 2.).

PROVERBS, XX.

- Job 23. 12.
 16, 17, 18, 19.
 ch. 3. 15.
 & 8. 11.
 ch. 22. 26,
 27.
 & 27. 13.
 u ch. 9. 17.
 H. b. *Bread*
of lying, or,
falsehood.
 ch. 15. 22,
 & 21. 6.
 Luke 14. 31.
 z ch. 11. 13.
 Rom. 16. 18.
 Or,
enticeth.
 Ex. 21. 17.
 Lev. 20. 9.
 Matt. 15. 4.
 Job 18. 5, 6.
 ch. 24. 20.
 Or, *candle.*
 ch. 28. 20.
 Hab. 2. 6.
 Deut. 32. 35.
 ch. 17. 13.
 & 24. 29.
 Rom. 12. 17,
 19.
 1 Thes. 5. 15.
 1 Pet. 3. 9.
 2 Sam. 16.
 12.
 ver. 10.
 Heb.
balances
of deceit.
 Ps. 37. 23.
 ch. 16. 9.
 Jer. 10. 23.
- but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.
 15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies :
 but ^s the lips of knowledge *are* a precious jewel.
 16 ^t Take his garment that is surety *for* a stranger :
 and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.
 17 ^u ² Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man ;
 but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.
 18 ^x *Every* purpose is established by counsel :
^y and with good advice make war.
 19 ^z He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth
 secrets :
 therefore meddle not with him ^a that ³ flattereth
 with his lips.
 20 ^b Whoso curseth his father or his mother,
^c his ⁴ lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.
 21 ^d An inheritance *may be* gotten hastily at the
 beginning ;
^e but the end thereof shall not be blessed.
 22 ^f Say not thou, I will recompense evil ;
 but ^g wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.
 23 ^h Divers weights *are* an abomination unto the LORD ;
 and ⁵ a false balance *is* not good.
 24 ⁱ Man's goings *are* of the LORD ;

16. "Take his garment," &c. The most important part of an Eastern dress is the large shawl or wrapper, the "cloak," which is the outer garment, and in which the wearer wraps himself at night. This would be the last thing therefore with which a needy man would part, and the Law, in its kindness, forbade creditors, if they took this from their debtors, to keep it later than the evening of the same day, because it was the night-dress (Exod. xxii. 26, 27. Deut. xxiv. 10, 13. St. Matt. v. 40.). The passage therefore appears to mean, if a man is so foolish, as to become a surety for a stranger, perhaps a foreigner, you may as well take his upper garment from him at once, for he is sure to be reduced at last to extreme necessity.

"Strange woman." The word should probably be rendered "strangers" or "foreigners."

17. "Bread of deceit." Dishonest gain, which will disappoint at last.

20. "His lamp shall be put out." To have a lamp or light in one's house is a proverbial expression for general welfare (see 2 Sam. xiv. 7. 1 Kin. xi. 36.). The words therefore mean, he shall meet with punishment here or hereafter.

22. "I will recompense," &c. To take into our own hands the duty of avenging our own wrongs, or such as we regard in that light, is presumptuous and dangerous. We can seldom trust ourselves to be judges in our own case. It is better to leave the matter in the hands of God, Who will rectify all inequalities at last.

24. "Man's goings," &c. Men propose, but God disposes. We cannot tell certainly how our plans will turn out.

PROVERBS, XXI.

how can a man then understand his own way?

25 *It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy,*

and ^k after vows to make enquiry.

^k Eccles. 5.
4, 5.

26 ¹ A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

¹ Ps. 101. 5, &c.
ver. 8.

27 ^m The spirit of man is the ² candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

^m 1 Cor. 2. 11.
² Or, lamp.

28 ⁿ Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

ⁿ Ps. 101. 1.
ch. 20. 14.

29 The glory of young men is their strength: and ^o the beauty of old men is the grey head.

^o ch. 16. 31.

30 The blueness of a wound ³ cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.

³ Heb. is a purging medicine against evil.

CHAPTER XXI.

1 **T**HE king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water:

25. "It is a snare to a man," &c. The word here rendered "devour" means also to "utter rashly." It is a mockery for a man to make a vow to God, and then to ask himself whether he ought to have made it (see Eccles. v. 4, 5.).

26. "The wheel." The threshing sledge, armed with teeth, spoken of here figuratively as an instrument of punishment (see 2 Sam. xii. 31. Isa. xxviii. 27, 28; xli. 15.).

27. "The spirit of a man," &c. A man's conscience is a light given him by God, enlightening him from within (St. John i. 9. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.). How great the blessing of a conscience tender and alive to perceive both good and evil; for if the light within us be darkness, great indeed is that darkness (St. Matt. vi. 23. and Phil. i. 9, 10. Heb. v. 14.).

28. "Mercy and truth," &c. Shakespeare says:—

"Earthly power doth then shew likest God's,

"When mercy seasons justice" (*Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1.).

"In the kingdom of the Son of God mercy and truth meet together" (see Ps. lxxxv. 10.).

30. "The blueness of a wound," &c. As a scar shews the healing of a wound, so punishment rightly received helps to cleanse men's hearts (see 2 Cor. vii. 10. Heb. xii. 11.).

In this chapter we may remark specially the warnings against the following sins: (1) drunkenness; (2) covetousness; (3) sloth; (4) dishonesty in various ways and degrees; (5) slander and gossip; (6) misbehaviour on the part of children towards parents.

And we are reminded of the value of (1) truth and honesty; (2) distrust of ourselves apart from God; (3) the importance of the behaviour of children in His sight to Whom all things are known.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. "Rivers of water." Channels for irrigation, which men turn as they please, watering the ground "with their foot" (Deut. xi. 10.). So God will direct the hearts of rulers, if they seek His guidance.

PROVERBS, XXI.

he turneth it whithersoever he will.

- ^a ch. 16. 2.
^b ch. 24. 12.
 Luke 16. 15.
^c 1 Sam. 15. 22.
 Ps. 50. 8.
 ch. 15. 8.
 Is. 1. 11, &c.
 Hos. 6. 6.
 Mic. 6. 7, 8.
^d ch. 6. 17.
² Heb.
*Haughtiness
 of eyes.*
³ Or, *the
 light of the
 wicked.*
^e ch. 10. 4.
 & 13. 4.
^f ch. 10. 2.
 & 13. 11.
 & 20. 21.
² Pct. 2. 3.
⁴ Heb.
*saw them,
 or, dwell
 with them.*
^g ver. 19.
 ch. 19. 13.
 & 25. 24.
 & 27. 15.
- 2 ^a Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes :
^b but the LORD pondereth the hearts.
 3 ^c To do justice and judgment
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
 4 ^d 2 An high look, and a proud heart,
and ³ the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.
 5 ^e The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plen-
 teousness ;
 but of every one *that is* hasty only to want.
 6 ^f The getting of treasures by a lying tongue
is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek
 death.
 7 The robbery of the wicked shall ⁴ destroy them ;
 because they refuse to do judgment.
 8 The way of man *is* froward and strange :
 but *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.
 9 ^g *It is* better to dwell in a corner of the housetop,

3. We have in this passage, as well as in the one quoted by our Lord from the Prophet Hosea, as well as in others from the Old Testament, a declaration of the great doctrine, that the inward state of the heart of man is far more important in God's sight, than the performance of any outward services, however good in themselves, and however punctually and dutifully performed. This was greatly perverted by the Jews in our Lord's day, and is liable to perversion at all times. May we Christians be preserved from this mistake (see St. Matt. ix. 13.).

4. "The plowing of the wicked." The way in which wicked men deal with others. But, as the margin shews, the Hebrew word may also mean "lamp," that is, the prosperity of these men in life. See above, xx. 20.

6. "The getting of treasures," &c. As the words stand in our Version, they probably mean, "riches gained by dishonesty soon fly away: they are like straws tossed by the wind, and they who seek them are really seeking their own destruction." Another reading of the Hebrew gives "nets of death," instead of "them that seek death." Thus ill-gotten riches are like a snare, entangling and destroying men (see St. Luke xxi. 34, 35. 1 Tim. vi. 9.).

7. "Destroy them." Probably, "shall carry them away." The marginal version is much less probable.

9. "Better to dwell," &c. The latter part of the verse "in a wide house," would run thus according to the original, as the margin suggests, "and a house (of) society," that is, one in which the husband and wife dwell together. In Eastern houses much use is made of the roof during the hot season, and sometimes booths are constructed as temporary dwelling-places. But these are of course exposed to all the changes of weather. Yet even solitude in a lodging such as this, says the writer, is better than the society of a quarrelsome partner in the house itself. The state of marriage, so vastly elevated and ennobled

PROVERBS, XXI.

- than with ² a brawling woman in ³ a wide house. ² Heb. a woman of contentions.
- 10 ^h The soul of the wicked desireth evil : his neighbour ⁴ findeth no favour in his eyes. ³ Heb. an house of society. ^h Jam. 4. 5.
- 11 ⁱ When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise : and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. ⁴ Heb. is not favoured. ⁱ ch. 19. 25.
- 12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked : but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.
- 13 ^k Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. ^k Matt. 7. 2. & 18. 30. &c. Jam. 2. 13.
- 14 ^l A gift in secret pacifieth anger : and a reward in the bosom strong wrath. ^l ch. 17. 8, 23. & 18. 16.
- 15 It is joy to the just to do judgment : ^m but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. ^m ch. 10. 29.
- 16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.
- 17 He that loveth ⁵ pleasure shall be a poor man : he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich. ⁵ Or, sport. ⁿ ch. 11. 8. Is. 43. 3, 4. ^o ver. 9.
- 18 ⁿ The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. ⁶ Heb. in the land of the desert.
- 19 ^o It is better to dwell ⁶ in the wilderness,

under the Gospel, offers, like every other state of life, its own trials. Of these, the one of temper is perhaps the most frequent, and is sometimes the most severe. Married people should earnestly seek God's grace to keep them from giving way to temptation in this respect. See ver. 19.

12. "The righteous man," &c. Probably, not the "righteous man," but the "righteous One," that is, God, Who beholds attentively the condition of the wicked, and overthrows them, sooner or later, "in their wickedness."

14. "The bosom." See xvii. 23. The writer by this expression draws attention to the secrecy of the action.

16. "Remain in the congregation of the dead." He is as good as dead. He wanders in darkness, and his only resting-place will be in death. We may refer to St. Matt. xii. 43. St. Luke xi. 24.

17. "He that loveth pleasure," &c. The word for "pleasure" means riotous enjoyment, "drunkenness, revellings, and such like." They who indulge in these things are in the way to the ruin of body, soul, and worldly estate (see ch. xxiii. 21, and Gal. v. 21, 24.).

18. "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous." Sometimes the calamities of the wicked are the means of delivering the righteous.

- than with a contentious and an angry woman.
- 20 ^p *There is* treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise ; but a foolish man spendeth it up.
- 21 ^q He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.
- 22 ^r A wise *man* scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.
- 23 ^s Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.
- 24 Proud *and* haughty scorner *is* his name, who dealeth ² in proud wrath.
- 25 ^t The desire of the slothful killeth him ; for his hands refuse to labour.
- 26 He coveteth greedily all the day long : but the ^u righteous giveth and spareth not.
- 27 ^x The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination : how much more, *when* he bringeth it ³ with a wicked mind ?
- 28 ^y ⁴ A false witness shall perish : but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.
- 29 A wicked man hardeneth his face : but *as for* the upright, he ⁵ directeth his way.
- 30 ^z *There is* no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.
- ^p Ps. 112. 3.
Matt. 25.
3, 4.
- ^q ch. 15. 9.
Matt. 5. 6.
- ^r Eccles. 9.
14, &c.
- ^s ch. 12. 13.
& 13. 3.
& 13. 21.
Jam. 3. 2.
- ² Heb. *in the wrath of pride.*
- ^t ch. 13. 4.
- ^u Ps. 37. 26.
& 112. 9.
- ^x Ps. 50. 9.
ch. 15. 8.
Isai. 66. 3.
Jer. 6. 20.
Amos 5. 22.
- ³ Heb. *in wickedness?*
- ^y ch. 19. 5, 9.
- ⁴ Heb. *A witness of lies.*
- ⁵ Or, *con-sidereth.*
- ^z Is. 8. 9, 10.
Jer. 9. 23.
Acts 5. 39.

24. "Proud wrath." Lit. "Ebullitions of insolence." A man who habitually allows his proud and overbearing temper to get the better of him is sure to get a bad name for his pains.

25. "Killeth him." That is, leads to his destruction. He desires, but has no energy to carry out his wishes, even though he starve for want of it.

26. "The righteous giveth," &c. The good man, on the contrary, is both industrious and charitable. He labours for himself, but finds something "to give to him that needeth." (Eph. iv. 28.).

27. "The sacrifice of the wicked," &c. How can an obstinate, impenitent sinner offer acceptable sacrifice? His very prayer must turn to sin.

28. "Heareth." That is, with attention.

"Constantly." That is, so that his words endure. They make a lasting impression. See St. Luke ii. 46, 47 ; xxi. 33.

29. "Directeth his way." He seeks counsel of God to direct his conduct, while the man who is hardened in sin is obstinate and refuses counsel.

PROVERBS, XXII.

31 ^a The horse *is* prepared against the day of battle : ^a Ps. 20. 7. & 33. 17. Isai. 31. 1.
but ^{b2} safety *is* of the LORD. ^b Ps. 3. 8.

CHAPTER XXII.

- 1 **A** ^a *GOOD* name *is* rather to be chosen than ^a Or, *favour is better than, &c.*
great riches, ^b ch. 23. 13. 1 Cor. 12. 21.
and ² loving favour rather than silver and gold. ^c Job 31. 15. ch. 14. 31.
- 2 ^b The rich and poor meet together : ^d ch. 14. 16. & 27. 12.
^c the LORD *is* the maker of them all. ^e Ps. 112. 3. Matt. 6. 33.
- 3 ^d A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself : ^f Or, *The reward of humility, &c.*
but the simple pass on, and are punished. ^f ch. 15. 19. ^g 1 John 5. 18.
- 4 ^{e3} By humility *and* the fear of the LORD ^h Eph. 6. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 15.
are riches, and honour, and life. ⁴ Or, *Catechise.*
- 5 ^f Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the froward : ⁵ Heb. *in his way.*
^g he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them. ¹ Jam. 2. 6.
- 6 ^{h4} Train up a child ⁵ in the way he should go : ⁶ Heb. *to the man that lendeth.*
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
- 7 ⁱ The rich ruleth over the poor,
and the borrower *is* servant ⁶ to the lender.

31. "The horse is prepared," &c. It was Solomon who introduced the use of horses into the Jewish army. See Deut. xvii. 16. 1 Kings iv. 26 ; x. 9. Eccles. ix. 11. Industry and preparation are indispensable, but, lest men should think too highly of themselves, they ought to remember that, after all, the final result must depend on God.

In the foregoing chapter we are reminded among other points, (1) of the mischief and discomfort caused by quarrelsome, ill-tempered women ; (2) of the danger of self-indulgence and excessive pursuit of pleasure ; (3) of the value of industry and the danger of indolence ; (4) of the danger of pride and an overbearing disposition ; (5) of the duty of trust in God.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. "Loving favour." Men's good opinion.
2. "The rich and poor meet together." Perhaps we may join this verse to the one preceding, and say, as regards good name, rich and poor stand on equal terms in God's sight.
3. "The simple pass on," &c. They who heed not warnings often fall into calamity and punishment.
4. "By humility," &c. The marginal reading is to be preferred, but the words seem to shew that in the writer's opinion, "humility" is almost the same thing as the "fear of the Lord." Its reward is to be found in "riches, honour, and life."
6. "Train up," &c. The original word means to make a person taste, to imbue. That is, accustom the child to the taste of what is right, and that taste will, under God's blessing, last through his lifetime. "In the way he should go." Lit. "Upon (the) mouth, that is, the beginning of his way."
7. "The borrower is servant to the lender." In the world to come,

PROVERBS, XXII.

- k Job 4. 8. 8 ^k He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity :
 Hos. 10. 13. 2 and the rod of his anger shall fail.
 2 Or, and
 with the rod
 of his anger
 he shall be
 consumed.
 1 2 Cor. 9. 6. 10 ^m Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out;
 3 Heb. Good
 of eye. yea, strife and reproach shall cease.
 m Gen. 21. 11 ⁿ He that loveth pureness of heart,
 9, 10. 4 for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.
 P's. 101. 5. 12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge,
 n P's. 101. 6. and he overthroweth ⁵ the words of the transgressor.
 ch. 16. 13. 13 ^o The slothful man saith, *There is a lion without,*
 4 Or, and I shall be slain in the streets.
 hath grace
 in his lips. 14 ^p The mouth of strange women is a deep pit :
 5 Or, the
 matters. 4 he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.
 o ch. 26. 13. 15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child ;
 P ch. 2. 16. but ^r the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.
 & 5. 3. 16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches,
 & 7. 5. and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come
 & 23. 27. to want.
 q Eccles. 7. 17 ¶ Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of
 26. the wise,

there will be no rich or poor, for all will be equal in God's sight. But in this world the man who has money, capital, is sure to stand higher, and to possess advantages over the man who is poorer, and is obliged to borrow money to make his way.

8. "The rod of his anger shall fail." The envy and ill-will which he is sure to feel towards those who are better off than himself, as well as his revenge towards those who have brought calamity upon him, will come to nothing.

9. "A bountiful eye." See xxiii. 6.

11. "He that loveth pureness of heart," &c. He whose heart is pure will speak purely and honestly, and earn the favour of those who are set over him.

13. "The slothful man," &c. Lazy men raise difficulties, and see dangers where there are none.

14. "A deep pit." A pit made to catch wild animals. He who has cast off God, and made Him his enemy, falls easily into temptation and destruction.

15. "Foolishness is bound," &c. Levity and inexperience belong naturally to children. It is the business of education to correct these defects.

16. "He that giveth to the rich," &c. He who makes presents to rich people in order to obtain their favour, will gain nothing in the end, and only impoverish himself.

Part III.

17. The THIRD PART begins here, and may be entitled *Words of*

PROVERBS, XXII.

- and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.
- 18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if thou keep them
² within thee ; ² Heb. in thy belly.
 they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.
- 19 That thy trust may be in the LORD,
 I have made known to thee this day³, even to thee. ³ Or, trust thou also.
- 20 Have not I written to thee ^a excellent things ^a ch. 8. 6.
 in counsels and knowledge,
- 21 ^t that I might make thee know the certainty of ^t Luke 1. 3, 4.
 the words of truth ;
^u that thou mightest answer the words of truth ^u 1 Pet. 3. 15.
⁴ to them that send unto thee ? ⁴ Or, to those that send thee ?
- 22 ^x Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor : ^x Ex. 23. 6. Joh 31. 16, 21.
^y neither oppress the afflicted in the gate : ^y Zech. 7. 10. Mal. 3. 5.
- 23 ^z for the LORD will plead their cause,
 and spoil the soul of those that spoil them. ^z 1 Sam. 24. 12. & 25. 33. Ps. 12. 5. & 35. 1, 10. & 68. 5. & 140. 12. ch. 23. 11. Jer. 51. 36.
- 24 Make no friendship with an angry man ;
 and with a furious man thou shalt not go : ^a ch. 6. 1. & 11. 15.
- 25 lest thou learn his ways,
 and get a snare to thy soul.
- 26 ^a Be not thou *one* of them that strike hands,
 or of them that are sureties for debts.
- 27 If thou hast nothing to pay,
 why should he ^b take away thy bed from under ^b ch. 20. 16.
 thee ?
- 28 ^c Remove not the ancient ⁵ landmark,
 which thy fathers have set. ^c Deut. 19. 14. & 27. 17. ch. 23. 10. ⁵ Or, bound.

the Wise. There is a difference in the style of the composition, which may be seen even in the English translation. Probably it was not composed by Solomon. See Introduction, Sect. 5.

18. "They shall be fitted in thy lips." Learned by heart, and used familiarly. See Deut. vi. 6, 7.

19. "That thy trust may be," &c. "The purpose of my instruction is to induce thee, yea thee, my reader, to put thy trust in the Lord." With this way of understanding the verse the margin does not disagree.

21. "Answer the words of truth," &c. Give faithful and true answers to those who consult thee. But perhaps the marginal version is more correct, "those that send thee;" that is, that thou mayest be able to answer the expectations of those who entrust thee with the message of truth.

22, 23. "In the gate." The gate (see above, i. 22.) was the most public place in the city, where the rulers sat in judgment (see 2 Sam. xv. 2.). On the retribution denounced on those who oppress the poor, we may refer to our Lord's parable of the Unjust Judge, St. Luke xviii. 1—8.

28. "Remove not the ancient landmark." In countries destitute of

PROVERBS, XXIII.

- 29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business ?
 he shall stand before kings ;
 he shall not stand before ² mean men.

² Heb. ob-
 scure men.

CHAPTER XXIII.

- 1 **W**HEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
 consider diligently what is before thee :
 2 and put a knife to thy throat,
 if thou be a man given to appetite.
 3 Be not desirous of his dainties :
 for they are deceitful meat.
 4 ^a Labour not to be rich :
^b cease from thine own wisdom.
 5 ² Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ?
 for riches certainly make themselves wings ;
 they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.
 6 ^c Eat thou not the bread of *him that hath* ^d an
 evil eye,

^a ch. 28. 20.

¹ Tim. 6. 9,
 10.

^b ch. 3. 5.
 Rom. 12. 16.

² Heb. *Wilt*
thou cause
thine eyes
to fly upon.

^c Ps. 141. 4.

^d Deut. 15. 9.

hedges, boundary-stones are of the utmost importance. To remove them was an offence against the law, and also a mark of covetousness and oppression.

29. "He shall stand before kings," &c. He shall rise in the world, and be employed by rulers, as Joseph was. Many, perhaps most, men who have risen in the world, have owed their rise to the diligent and punctual performance of their duties in inferior stations.

Several passages in this chapter relate to the duties of rich and poor towards each other. It is tolerably certain, (1) that the distinction between rich and poor is one which belongs only to this world, and is plainly marked as such, for death levels them both to an equality; (2) but that, so long as the world lasts, that distinction will be kept up. This is not only inevitable, but there is also this advantage in it, namely, that men are stimulated to industry and good conduct by the hope of advancement. It has been well said that if the rich were always humble, the poor always patient, and if both were always penitent, devout, amiable, and peaceable, both rich and poor would live together in comfort and mutual confidence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. "When thou sittest to eat, &c. This may be explained (1) as a general warning against greediness and intemperance to those who are invited by persons of larger means than themselves; (2) as a warning to those who are suddenly promoted (see xxii. 29.) not to presume on their elevation; (3) as a caution against being led astray by temptations coming from persons of higher rank than ourselves (see vv. 6, 7.).

2. "Put a knife to thy throat." Be moderate in eating, for fear of the consequences of excess.

3. "Deceitful meat." Unwholesome food, or perhaps such as is offered not in hospitality, but with a bad intention.

5. The word "riches" must be supplied from the sense of the foregoing verse.

6. "Him that hath an evil eye." A stingy, covetous man, as

PROVERBS, XXIII.

- neither desire thou his dainty meats :
 7 for as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he :
 eat and drink, ^e saith he to thee ;
 but his heart *is* not with thee. ^e Ps. 12. 2.
- 8 The morsel *which* thou hast eaten shalt thou
 vomit up,
 and lose thy sweet words.
- 9 ^f Speak not in the ears of a fool :
 for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. ^f ch. 9. 8.
Matt. 7. 6.
- 10 ^g Remove not the old ² landmark ;
 and enter not into the fields of the fatherless :
^g Deut. 19. 14.
& 27. 17.
ch. 22. 28.
- 11 ^h for their redeemer *is* mighty ;
 he shall plead their cause with thee. ² Or, *bound*.
^h Job 31. 21.
ch. 22. 23.
- 12 Apply thine heart unto instruction,
 and thine ears to the words of knowledge.
- 13 ⁱ Withhold not correction from the child :
 for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall
 not die. ⁱ ch. 13. 24.
& 19. 18.
& 24. 15.
& 29. 15, 17.
- 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod,
 and ^k shalt deliver his soul from hell. ^k 1 Cor. 5. 5.
- 15 ¶ My son, ¹ if thine heart be wise,
 my heart shall rejoice, ³ even mine. ¹ ver. 24, 25.
ch. 29. 3.
- 16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice,
 when thy lips speak right things. ³ Or, *even I*
will rejoice.
- 17 ^m Let not thine heart envy sinners :
 but ⁿ *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day
 long. ^m Ps. 37. 1.
& 73. 3.
ch. 3. 31.
& 24. 1.
ⁿ ch. 28. 14.
- 18 ^o For surely there is an ⁴ end ;
 and thine expectation shall not be cut off. ^o Ps. 37. 37.
ch. 24. 14.
Luke 16. 25.
⁴ Or, *reward*.

opposed to one who has a "bountiful eye" (ch. xxii. 9.). There is no real friendship or hospitality in the entertainment of such persons.

8. "Lose thy sweet words." Words of thanks, which, as an empty compliment thou wilt seek, if possible, to recall.

11. "Redeemer." Avenger, or requiter. Properly, the kinsman, to whom by law belonged the right of redemption of property sold (Lev. xxv. 23, 25. Ruth iii. 12 ; iv. 4.). To him also by ancient custom belonged the duty, much mitigated by the Law of Moses, but still existing in the East and elsewhere, and not long extinguished in parts of our own country, of avenging the blood of a slain kinsman (Num. xxxv. 19, 21. Deut. xix. 4—13.). But we are reminded of another, more powerful, Redeemer, even Jehovah, Who will, sooner or later, avenge the cause of the oppressed. See Job xix. 25.

16. "My reins," &c. I shall feel an inward joy when I hear thee speaking well and wisely (see Jer. xii. 2.).

17. "Envy sinners." Envy their prosperity.

PROVERBS, XXIII.

- p ch. 4. 23. 19 ¶ Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
 and ^p guide thine heart in the way.
- q Isai. 5. 22.
 Matt. 24. 49.
 Luke 21. 34.
 Rom. 13. 13.
 Eph. 5. 18. 20 ^q Be not among winebibbers ;
 among riotous eaters ² of flesh :
- 2 Heb. of
 their flesh.
 r ch. 19. 15. 21 for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to
 poverty :
 and ^r drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.
- s ch. 1. 8.
 & 30. 17.
 Eph. 6. 1, 2. 22 ^s Harken unto thy father that begat thee,
 and despise not thy mother when she is old.
- t ch. 4. 5, 7.
 Matt. 13. 44. 23 ^t Buy the truth, and sell *it* not ;
also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
- u ch. 10. 1.
 & 15. 20.
 ver. 15. 24 ^u The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice :
 and he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy
 of him.
- 25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad,
 and she that bare thee shall rejoice.
- 26 ¶ My son, give me thine heart,
 and let thine eyes observe my ways.
- x ch. 22. 14. 27 ^x For a whore *is* a deep ditch ;
 and a strange woman *is* a narrow pit.
- y ch. 7. 12.
 Eccles. 7. 26. 28 ^y She also lieth in wait ³ as *for* a prey,
 and increaseth the transgressors among men.
- 3 Or, as a
 robber.
 z Is. 5. 11, 22. 29 ¶ ^z Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ?
 who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ?
 who hath wounds without cause ?
 who ^a hath redness of eyes ?
- a Gen. 43. 12.
 b ch. 20. 1.
 Eph. 5. 18. 30 ^b They that tarry long at the wine ;
 they that go to seek ^c mixed wine.
- c Ps. 75. 8.
 ch. 9. 2. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
 when it giveth his colour in the cup,

20, 21. "Eaters of flesh." More properly, perhaps, those who consume flesh upon themselves, that is, who indulge their selfish appetites without stint. In these days of self-indulgence in all ways, but very remarkably in eating and drinking, the warning of this passage is particularly applicable. We may call to mind the course of the Prodigal in the Parable (St. Luke xv. 13, 14.) ; and some may have seen and remember the ghastly pictures by our great artist Hogarth called "Gin Lane," and by George Cruikshank on drunkenness in general.

26. "Thine heart." Thine earnest attention and loving allegiance.

27—35. In this passage the close connection is pointed out which there is between the various sins of the flesh, gluttony, intemperance, uncleanness, unchastity.

30. "Mixed wine." See ch. ix. 2.

31. "Colour." Literally, "Eye," that is, brightness.

PROVERBS, XXIV.

when it moveth itself aright.

- 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
and stingeth like ² an adder.
- 33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women,
and thine heart shall utter perverse things.
- 34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down ³ in the
midst of the sea,
or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
- 35 ^d They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I
was not sick ;
they have beaten me, and ^{4 e} I felt it not :
^f when shall I awake ? I will seek it yet again.

² Or, a
cockatrice.

³ Heb. in
the heart of
the sea.

^d ch. 27. 22.
Jer. 5. 3.

⁴ Heb. I
knew it not.

^e Eph. 4. 19.

^f See Deut.
23. 19.
Isai. 56. 12.

CHAPTER XXIV.

- 1 **B**E not thou ^a envious against evil men,
^b neither desire to be with them.
- 2 ^c For their heart studieth destruction,
and their lips talk of mischief.
- 3 Through wisdom is an house builded ;
and by understanding it is established :
- 4 and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.
- 5 ^d A wise man ² is strong ;
yea, a man of knowledge ³ increaseth strength.
- 6 ^e For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war :
and in multitude of counsellors *there is safety*.

^a Ps. 37. 1, &c.
& 73. 3.

ch. 3. 31.
& 23. 17.

ver. 19.

^b ch. 1. 15.

^c Ps. 10. 7.

^d ch. 21. 12.
Eccles. 9. 16.

² Heb. is in
strength.

³ Heb.
strengthen-
eth might.

^e ch. 11. 14.
& 15. 22.

& 20. 18.
Luke 14. 31.

“**Moveth itself aright.**” When it runs freely from the vessel, without clog or disturbance from thickness and dregs.

34, 35. The writer describes in these verses the staggering steps, the unsteady gait of the drunkard, like to those who are unaccustomed to the sea. Also his unconscious, wandering talk, and lastly his return to the same sottish enjoyment which has brought all these evils and inconveniences upon him.

In this chapter we have warnings against 1. covetousness, 2. gluttony, 3. drunkenness, 4. uncleanness ; together with the temporal remedies against them, especially the careful training of children, and the rich reward which follows care in this matter, both to parents and to the children themselves.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. “**Be not envious,**” &c. Avoid both extremes. Neither be jealous of the prosperity of the wicked, and so covet what belongs to them, nor seek to associate with them on terms of friendship.

3. “**Through wisdom,**” &c. See ch. ix. 1. It is by wisdom from above that men’s welfare, both here and hereafter, is best secured.

4. “**By knowledge,**” &c. The riches here mentioned are those which knowledge of God and of His works supplies.

PROVERBS, XXIV.

- ^f Ps. 10. 5.
 ch. 14. 6.
- ^g Rom. 1. 30.
- ² Heb.
narrow.
- ^h Ps. 82. 4.
 Isai. 58. 6, 7.
 1 Johu 3. 16.
- ⁱ ch. 21. 2.
- ^k Job 34. 11.
 Ps. 62. 12.
 Jer. 32. 19.
 Rom. 2. 6.
 Rev. 2. 23.
 & 22. 12.
- ^l Cant. 5. 1.
- ³ Heb. *upon
 thy palate.*
- ^m Ps. 19. 10.
 & 119. 103.
- ⁿ ch. 23. 18.
- 7 ^f Wisdom is too high for a fool :
 he openeth not his mouth in the gate.
- 8 He that ^g deviseth to do evil
 shall be called a mischievous person.
- 9 The thought of foolishness is sin :
 and the scorner is an abomination to men.
- 10 If thou faint in the day of adversity,
 thy strength is ² small.
- 11 ^h If thou forbear to deliver *them that are drawn*
 unto death,
 and *those that are ready to be slain* ;
- 12 if thou savest, Behold, we knew it not ;
 doth not ⁱ he that pondereth the heart consider it ?
 and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he
 know it ?
 and shall *not* he render to *every man* ^k according
 to his works ?
- 13 ¶ My son, ^l eat thou honey, because *it is good* ;
 and the honeycomb, *which is sweet* ³ to thy taste :
- 14 ^m so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy
 soul :
 when thou hast found it, ⁿ then there shall be a
 reward,
 and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

7. "He openeth not his mouth." He does not venture to speak among the elders and counsellors of the city.

"In the gate." In the place of public meeting.

9. "The thought of foolishness." The sinful thought which leads to sinful action (St. Matt. xii. 35.).

"The scorner." The carping, satirical person, whom every one dislikes.

10. "If thou faint," &c. It is in adversity that true courage and strength of principle, as well as true friendship, are shewn.

11. This passage, according to the original, may be thus arranged :—

"Deliver those (who are) being carried to death :

"and those (who are) tottering to slaughter.

"If thou forbear"

That is, forbear not to deliver them. Do not hang back in the time of trial (see Judges v. 23.).

12. "If thou sayest," &c. On no account employ in such cases the plea of ignorance : "I know nothing about it ; it is not my business." Such a plea is founded on mere selfishness or idleness (see Gen. iv. 9.). God, Who knows the hearts of all, will render to every man according to his deserts.

13, 14. "Eat thou honey," &c. True wisdom used worthily becomes sweet as honey, and will last beyond the grave.

PROVERBS, XXIV.

- 15 ¶ ° Lay not wait, O wicked *man*, against the ° dwelling of the righteous ;
 spoil not his resting place :
° Ps. 10. 9, 10.
 P Job 5. 19.
 Ps. 24. 19.
 & 37. 24.
 Mic. 7. 8.
- 16 P for a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth
 up again :
q Esth. 7. 10.
 Amos 5. 2.
 & 8. 14.
 Rev. 18. 21.
 q but the wicked shall fall into mischief.
- 17 r Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
 and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth :
r Job 31. 29.
 Ps. 35. 15, 19.
 ch. 17. 5.
 Obad. 12.
- 18 lest the LORD see *it*, and ² it displease him,
 and he turn away his wrath from him.
2 Heb. *it be evil in his eyes.*
- 19 s ³ Fret not thyself because of evil *men*,
 neither be thou envious at the wicked ;
s Ps. 37. 1.
 & 73. 3.
 ch. 23. 17.
 ver. 1.
- 20 for ^t there shall be no reward to the evil *man* ;
^u the ⁴ candle of the wicked shall be put out.
3 Or,
 Keep not company with the wicked.
 t Ps. 11. 6.
 u Job 18. 5, 6.
 & 21. 17.
 ch. 13. 9.
 & 20. 20.
- 21 ¶ My son, ^x fear thou the LORD and the king :
 and meddle not with ⁵ them that are given to
 change :
x Rom. 13. 7.
 1 Pet. 2. 17.
- 22 for their calamity shall rise suddenly ;
 and who knoweth the ruin of them both ?
5 Heb.
 changers.
- 23 ¶ These *things* also *belong* to the wise.
^v *It is* not good to have respect of persons in
 judgment.
v Lev. 19. 15.
 Deut. 1. 17.
 & 16. 19.
 ch. 18. 5.
 & 28. 21.
 John 7. 24.

15, 16. Do not think, O wicked man, that thy plots against the good will succeed at last. They may fall into temporal calamities "seven times," that is, again and again, but they will ultimately succeed. We may also remember the question of St. Peter founded upon Jewish habits of thought, St. Matt. xviii. 21, and our Lord's words, St. Luke xvii. 4. Both of these passages remind us that as no one is exempt from sin, so the opportunity of repentance is open to all who seek it heartily.

15. "Resting-place." The righteous man's quiet home.

17. "Rejoice not," &c. As it is a part of true "charity" not to rejoice in iniquity, so is it no part of a Christian's duty to exult over the calamities of wicked men. In so doing men seem to take credit to themselves for freedom from sin.

18. "He turn away his wrath from him." Perhaps we may add the words "to thee." God may send on thee the calamities which have befallen thine enemy.

20. "The candle of the wicked." See above, ch. xiii. 9. We are reminded of the lamps of the foolish virgins in our Lord's parable (St. Matt. xxv. 8.).

22. "Both." Those who fear not God, and those who disobey the king.

23. "These things also belong to the wise." Here begins a sort of appendix to the division entitled *Words of the Wise*, which began with chapter xxii. 17.

PROVERBS, XXIV.

- ¹ ch. 17. 15. 24 ² He that saith unto the wicked, Thou *art*
Isai. 5. 23. righteous ;
 him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor
 him :
- 25 but to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight,
 and ² a good blessing shall come upon them.
- ² Heb. a *...*
blessing of
good. 26 *Every man* shall kiss *his* lips
³ that giveth a right answer.
- ² Heb. *that*
answereth
right words. 27 ^a Prepare thy work without,
^a 1 Kin. 5. 17,
 18. and make it fit for thyself in the field ;
 Luke 14. 28. and afterwards build thine house.
- ^b Eph. 4. 25. 28 ^b Be not a witness against thy neighbour without
 cause ;
 and deceive *not* with thy lips.
- ^c ch. 20. 22. 29 ^c Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done
Matt. 5. 30,
44. to me :
Rom. 12. 17,
19. I will render to the man according to his work.
- 30 ¶ I went by the field of the slothful,
 and by the vineyard of the man void of under-
 standing ;
- ^d Gen. 3. 18. 31 and, lo, ^d it was all grown over with thorns,
 and nettles had covered the face thereof,
 and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

24. To say of sin that it is not sinful is one of the commonest devices of the Tempter (see Isa. v. 20.).

25. "To them that rebuke." It is part of the Holy Spirit's work to reprove (St. John xvi. 8.).

26. "Kiss his lips." Treat with favour. In former days among ourselves, and among Eastern people still, the kiss was a usual outward mark of favour and friendship (see 2 Sam. xx. 9. St. Matt. xxvi. 48, 49.).

27. "Prepare thy work," &c. Do not begin to build your house until it be clear that you can complete and maintain it (see St. Luke xiv. 28—30.).

29. "Say not," &c. Remember that vengeance belongs not to thee but to God (Rom. xii. 19.). Yet how often do men allow the spirit of revenge to overcome them, and say, "I will be even with him."

30. "The slothful." The man who is indolent at heart, "slothful in spirit," answers to this description in moral and spiritual things quite as much as the man who is so in temporal things. His "field" is neglected, his "vineyard" is overgrown with thorns, and the "wall" of self-restraint is broken down which he ought to have maintained. His soul is allowed to go to decay and ruin.

31. "Stone wall." Vineyards on hills are often built on terraces of earth supported by walls, and sometimes the vines are planted between walls at short distances (see Num. xxii. 24, 25. Isa. v. 2. St. Matt. xxi. 33.).

PROVERBS, XXV.

- 32 Then I saw, *and* ² considered *it* well : ² Heb. *set my heart.*
 I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction.
- 33 ^o Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to sleep : ^o ch. 6. 9, &c.
- 34 so shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth ;
 and thy want *as* ³ an armed man. ³ Heb. *a man of shield.*

CHAPTER XXV.

1 *Observations about kings, 8 and about avoiding causes of quarrels, and sundry causes thereof.*

- 1 ^a **T**HESSE are also proverbs of Solomon, which ^a I Kin. 4. 32.
 the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.
- 2 ^b *It is* the glory of God to conceal a thing : ^b Deut. 29. 29.
Rom. 11. 33.
 but the honour of kings *is* ^c to search out a matter. ^c Job 29. 16.
- 3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,
 and the heart of kings ² *is* unsearchable. ² Heb. there is no searching.
- 4 ^d Take away the dross from the silver,
 and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. ^d 2 Tim. 2. 21.
- 5 ^e Take away the wicked *from* before the king,
 and ^f his throne shall be established in right- ^e ch. 20. 8.
^f ch. 16. 12. & 29. 14.
 eousness.

34. "One that travelleth." An invader from without, a plunderer. One of the difficulties which occur to devout minds arises from the worldly prosperity of the wicked (see Job xxi. 7. Ps. lxxiii.). But it is one which the knowledge of the future life and of judgment to come alone can remove. In the world, our Lord says, His disciples must expect tribulation, but He encourages them by the knowledge that He has overcome the world, and that they therefore can do the same (St. John xvi. 33.). The reader will also do well to notice the clear and forcible description of the evils which slothful people bring on themselves by their negligence.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. Here begins the FOURTH PORTION of the work, including chapters xxv.—xxix. It contains sayings collected and published by the learned men of Hezekiah's time, among whom Isaiah may justly be thought to have held a place, though there is no proof that this was the case.

2. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." In the works and ways of God there are many things which cannot be understood fully in this life. In these we must submit our understandings to Him Who is above us.

"The honour of kings," &c. That is, earthly rulers ought to endeavour to discover the truth of the matters with which they have to deal.

3. "Unsearchable." Earthly rulers, if they are wise, must exercise caution in their speech, but like other men they must answer to God for their thoughts as well as their actions.

4, 5. "The dross," &c. Wicked men in a king's court are like the dross which is mixed with silver and gold in their native state. As this must be removed if the metal is to be pure, so bad and corrupt courtiers ought to be banished from the sovereign's presence.

PROVERBS, XXV.

- ² Heb. *Set not out thy glory.* 6 ² Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king,
and stand not in the place of great men :
- ⁵ Luke 14. 8, 9, 10. 7 ⁵ for better *it is* that it be said unto thee, Come up hither ;
than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince
whom thine eyes have seen.
- ^h ch. 17. 14. ^h Matt. 5. 25. 8 ^h Go not forth hastily to strive,
lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof,
when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.
- ⁱ Matt. 5. 25. & 18. 15. 9 ⁱ Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself* ;
and ³ discover not a secret to another :
- ³ Or, *discover not the secret of another.* 10 lest he that heareth *it* put thee to shame,
and thine infamy turn not away.
- ^k ch. 15. 23. ^k Isai. 50. 4. 11 ^k A word ⁴ fitly spoken
is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.
- ⁴ Heb. *spoken upon his wheels.* 12 *As* an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

6, 7. "Put not forth thyself," &c. Self-conceit seldom answers in the long run even in this world. Men in general, but especially those who are in authority, dislike and repress those who, as our Lord says "exalt themselves" unduly ; while those who are really deserving of promotion, but who are content to "abase themselves" for the time, are more likely in the end to receive their due reward, if not in this world, at any rate, hereafter in God's good time.

8. "Go not forth hastily to strive." Shakespeare says, "Beware of entrance to a quarrel" (*Hamlet*, i. 3.). The warning in the text has been proved only too true in more than one case both of national and private quarrels, begun hastily and ending in the defeat and loss of those who provoked them. We may refer for an apt saying on this point to 1 Kings xx. 11.

8—10. "Debate thy cause," &c. Go at once to the man of whom you think that you have reason to complain, and do not publish to other persons secrets committed to your keeping, for the discredit of having done so will surely return upon yourself.

11. "A word fitly spoken," &c. Lit. as the margin says, "on wheels ;" that is, spoken at the right time and place.

"Apples of gold," &c. The original word means a fruit with a pleasant smell. The apple is all but unknown in Palestine, and the fruit intended may be either the apricot, which is very common, or the quince. Of these, the former is the one which seems to answer best to the description of the text.

"Pictures of silver." Perhaps baskets of silver net-work. The whole presents a picture of refreshing fruit daintily served up.

12. "An earring of gold," &c. Reproof judiciously administered never offends people who are themselves wise and humble-minded, not self-conceited and obstinate.

PROVERBS, XXV.

- 13 ¹ As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
so is a faithful messenger to them that send him:
 for he refresheth the soul of his masters. 1 ch. 13. 17.
- 14 ^m Whoso boasteth himself ² of a false gift
is like ⁿ clouds and wind without rain. m ch. 20. 6.
 2 Heb.
*in a gift of
 falsehood.*
 n Jude 12.
- 15 ^o By long forbearing is a prince persuaded,
 and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. o Gen. 32. 4,
 &c.
- 16 ^p Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is
 sufficient for thee,
 lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. p 1 Sam. 25.
 24, &c.
 ch. 15. 1.
 & 16. 14.
 p ver. 27.
- 17 ³ Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house;
 lest he be ⁴ weary of thee, and *so* hate thee. 3 Or, *Let thy
 foot be sel-
 dom in thy
 neighbour's
 house.*
- 18 ^q A man that beareth false witness against his
 neighbour
 is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow. 4 Heb.
full of thee.
 q Ps. 57. 4.
 & 120. 3, 4.
 ch. 12. 18.
- 19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of
 trouble
is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.
- 20 *As* he that taketh away a garment in cold weather,
and as vinegar upon nitre,

13. "Cold of snow." An iced drink, cool and refreshing in hot weather. See below, ver. 25.

14. "Whoso boasteth himself," &c. He who promises but fulfils not, is like clouds and wind not followed by rain, at the time when this is much wanted.

15. "By long forbearing," &c. A magistrate who, like the unjust judge in the parable, is persuaded by importunity.

"Breaketh the bone." Overcomes difficulty.

16. "Hast thou found honey?" &c. Use God's gifts with moderation, lest by excess they turn to bitterness (see Ezek. iii. 3.).

17. "Withdraw thy foot," &c. Do not intrude unduly on thy neighbours, by multiplying over-much thy visits, lest they become distasteful to them.

18. "A man that beareth," &c. The various ways in which slander inflicts its injury are pointed out by the different words used; the "maul," a heavy weapon for striking; the "sword," for cutting and slashing; and the "arrow," which wounds from a distance, but perhaps deeply and mortally.

19. "Out of joint." Tottering, unsteady.

20. "Vinegar on nitre." Not nitre, which is nitrate of potash, but natron, carbonate of soda, which when touched with acid will effervesce. The writer intends to describe the meeting of two discordant elements. See Jer. ii. 22, which is the only other passage in which the word occurs which is rendered "nitre." Both the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes and also St. Paul remind us that there is a time for all things. Mirthful music is out of season and repulsive in a time of sorrow. See Eccles. iii. 4. Ps. cxxxvii. 3, 4. Rom. xii. 15.

- r Dan. 6. 18.
Rom. 12. 15.
s Ex. 23. 4, 5.
Matt. 5. 44.
Rom. 12. 20.
- t 2 Sam. 16.
12.
u Job 37. 22.
2 Or, *The north wind bringeth forth rain: so doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.*
x Ps. 101. 5.
y ch. 19. 13.
& 21. 9, 19.
- z ver. 16.
a ch. 27. 2.
b ch. 16. 32.
- 21 ^a If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat ;
 and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink :
 22 for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
^t and the LORD shall reward thee.
 23 ^{u 2} The north wind driveth away rain :
 so *doth* an angry countenance ^x a backbiting
 tongue.
 24 ^y *It is* better to dwell in the corner of the house-
 top,
 than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.
 25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
 so *is* good news from a far country. •
 26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked
is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.
 27 ^z *It is* not good to eat much honey :
 so *for men* ^a to search their own glory *is not*
 glory.
 28 ^b He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit

22. "Thou shalt heap coals," &c. Thy kindness will be like a fire on his head, a thing which he can never forget, nor without burning shame be able to return evil for thy good. Even if he do so, God will not forget thee.

23. "The north wind," &c. The margin reminds us, that the word rendered "driveth away" may also mean "bringeth forth." It means literally, "pierce," which may mean both to begin and also to end by cutting off. In Palestine a wind from N.W. would bring rain from the sea (see 1 Kings xviii. 44, 45.). Thus, as a N., or rather N.W. wind brings a cloudy sky, followed by rain, so a slanderous tongue brings angry looks.

25. See above, ver. 13.

26. "A righteous man," &c. A good man, giving way to temptation, and flattering the wicked, is like a wholesome spring of water polluted and spoiled.

27. "It is not good," &c. Honey is good, but unwholesome in excess.

"So for men to search," &c. The words "is not" are not in the original. The word rendered "glory" also means a weight or burden, and the words "their own glory" might be rendered "weighty matters," but even without this alteration the words may be understood thus:—As to eat honey in excess is not good, so for men to be always pondering weighty matters, whether such as belong strictly to themselves or not, too deeply, is a glory perhaps, but also a burden (see Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2; and Eccles. i. 18; xii. 12.).

It is one of the great trials of our faith to find in the course of God's Providence, or in the visible creation, things which we cannot under-

PROVERBS, XXVI.

is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 Observations about fools, 13 about sluggards, 17 and about contentious busybodies.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 AS snow in summer, ^a and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.</p> <p>2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying,
so ^b the curse causeless shall not come.</p> <p>3 ^c A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.</p> <p>4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.</p> <p>5 ^d Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in ² his own conceit.</p> <p>6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, <i>and</i> drinketh ³ damage.</p> <p>7 The legs of the lame ⁴ are not equal :
so <i>is</i> a parable in the mouth of fools.</p> <p>8 ⁵ As he that bindeth a stone in a sling,
so <i>is</i> he that giveth honour to a fool.</p> | <p>^a 1 Sam. 12. 17.</p> <p>^b Num. 23. 8. Deut. 28. 5.</p> <p>^c Ps. 32. 9. ch. 10. 13.</p> <p>^d Matt. 16. 1.—4. & 21. 24.—27.</p> <p>² Heb. <i>his own eyes.</i></p> <p>³ Or, <i>violence.</i></p> <p>⁴ Heb. <i>are lifted up.</i></p> <p>⁵ Or, <i>As he that putteth a precious stone in an heap of stones.</i></p> |
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stand. Some of these difficulties are gradually removed by more advanced knowledge, but some we must be content to leave for the present without understanding them, in confidence that hereafter we shall know even as also we are known.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. "Rain in harvest." In Palestine such an occurrence as this is extremely rare, see 1 Sam. xii. 17. Things out of season and out of place annoy us by their being unsuitable to the time or to the person.

2. "Come." The flight of birds, especially that of swallows, often seems to us vague and without purpose. So the curse pronounced wantonly and in mere passion shall not come to pass.

3. Perverse, sensual people make themselves like to animals, and must sometimes be treated accordingly.

4, 5. The same rule cannot invariably be followed in dealing with foolish people. Sometimes it is better to give no answer, lest you be thought to set a value on their arguments. But sometimes you must give such an answer as shall confute them.

6. "Cutteth off the feet." A man who sends a message by a foolish or deceitful messenger is like a lame man who cannot go on his own errand, and consequently suffers damage thereby (see 2 Sam. xvi. 1—6 ; xix. 24—30.). Sometimes, as the margin suggests, a message thus sent being misunderstood, or wrongly delivered, causes strife and violence.

7. "Not equal." Lit. "hang down," and are weak. So a wise saying in a fool's mouth loses its force.

8. "He that bindeth a stone," &c. The margin explains this of

PROVERBS, XXVI.

- 9 *As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.*
- ² Or, *A great man grieveth all, and he hireth the fool, he hireth also transgressors.*
- 10 ² The great *God* that formed all *things* both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.
- 11 ^o As a dog returneth to his vomit, ^f so a fool ³ returneth to his folly.
- ^e 2 Pet. 2. 22.
^f Ex. 8. 15.
- 12 ^s Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? *There is more hope of a fool than of him.*
- ³ Heb. iterateth his folly.
^g ch. 29. 20.
Luke 18. 11.
Rom. 12. 16.
Rev. 3. 17.
- 13 ^h The slothful *man* saith, *There is a lion in the way;* a lion *is* in the streets.
- ^h ch. 22. 13.
- 14 *As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.*
- ⁱ ch. 19. 24.
- 15 ⁱ The slothful hideth his hand in *his* bosom; ⁴ it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.
- ⁴ Or, *he is weary.*
- 16 The sluggard *is* wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

putting a (precious) stone in a heap of (common) stones. The original word means not only "put," but "bind," and the meaning would thus be, He who gives honour to a fool is like a man who puts a precious stone into a heap of common stones, in which it is sure to be lost or spoiled.

9. "As a thorn," &c. "It is no more fit for a fool to meddle with a wise speech, than for a drunken man to meddle with a thorn bush" (*Bishop Hall, Hard Texts*).

10. The word "God" is not in the original, and the margin seems to give a better sense to this verse than the text. The passage would thus mean, an ignorant and tyrannical oppressor has no discretion but uses all sorts of men for his purposes, without regard to their character or real worth.

11. An obstinate "fool" is well-nigh incurable. It is "impossible," without God's grace to renew him to repentance.

13. "The slothful," &c. Idle, lazy people are always imagining difficulties, which they make no effort to investigate, still less to overcome.

14. "A door on its hinges." It turns mechanically but makes no progress.

16. "Seven men," &c. The number seven denotes completeness (see ch. ix. 1.). The writer means that even the united judgment of a number of wise men (see ch. xi. 14.) is less firmly fixed than the obstinate ignorance of one who is either incapable of making inquiry into any matter, or too indolent to do so, but remains satisfied with himself and his own decision. We may remark that there is a lesson in these words for people who serve on juries in our own country.

Taking the four verses together, 13 (and perhaps 12.)—16, we notice some of the leading characteristics of indolence both of body and of mind, but the one, it may be remarked, does not always accompany the other. These characteristics are: 1. a disposition to see and raise difficulties. 2. Simple bodily laziness, which refuses active exertion, even such as is

PROVERBS, XXVI.

- 17 He that passeth by, *and* ² meddleth with strife ² Or, *is*
belonging not to him, *enraged.*
is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.
- 18 As a mad *man* who casteth ³ firebrands, arrows, ³ Heb.
and death, *flames, or,*
sparks.
- 19 so *is* the man *that* deceiveth his neighbour,
and saith, ^k Am not I in sport? ^k Eph. 5. 4.
- 20 ⁴ Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out : ⁴ Heb. *With-*
so ¹ where *there is* no ⁵ talebearer, the strife ¹ ch. 22. 10.
⁶ ceaseth. ⁵ Or, *whisperer.*
- 21 ^m As coals *are* to burning coals, and wood to fire ; ⁶ Heb. *is*
so *is* a contentious man to kindle strife. ^m ch. 15. 18.
& 29. 22.
- 22 ⁿ The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds,
and they go down into the ⁷ innermost parts of ⁷ Heb.
the belly. *chambers.*
- 23 Burning lips and a wicked heart
are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.
- 24 He that hateth ⁸ dissembleth with his lips,
and layeth up deceit within him ; ⁸ Or, *is*
known.
- 25 ^o when he ⁹ speaketh fair, believe him not : ^o Ps. 28. 3.
for *there are* seven abominations in his heart. ^o Jer. 9. 8.
- 26 *Whose* ² hatred is covered by deceit,
his wickedness shall be shewed before the *whole* ² Or, *hatred*
congregation. *is covered*
in secret.
- 27 ^p Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein : ^p Ps. 7. 15, 16.
and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon ^q & 9. 15.
him. ^q & 10. 2.
& 57. 6.
ch. 28. 10.
Eccles. 10. 8.

necessary for bodily sustenance. 3. Indolence of mind which shrinks from the trouble of thought and inquiry, and which has the same effect as self-conceit.

17. "He that passeth by," &c. To interfere in quarrels when we have no call to do so is likely to embroil us on both sides.

18, 19. To practise deception upon others, as by false reports uttered or circulated in jest, or by those stupid impertinences which are called practical jokes, is not only as dangerous as the amusements of mad men, but also wrong and inexcusable in itself.

23. "Burning lips." Deceitful caresses are like a fair but deceitful covering spread over a worthless vessel (see 2 Sam. xx. 9. St. Matt. xxvi. 49.).

24. "Dissembleth." The text here is to be preferred to the margin.

25. "Seven." A full number (see above, ver. 16.).

26. "Where hatred," &c. A secret enemy becomes manifest at last.

27. "Whoso diggeth a pit," &c. A man who contrives mischief for another is very likely himself to suffer by it.

"Rolleth a stone." He who carelessly or mischievously rolls a stone down hill causes mischief for which he may hereafter have to pay the

PROVERBS, XXVII.

- 28 A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it ;
and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Observations of selflove, 5 of true love, 11 of care to avoid offences, 23 and of the household care.*

- ^a Luke 12. 19, 20.
^b Jam. 4. 13, &c.
² Heb. *to morrow day.*
^b ch. 25. 27.
³ Heb. *heaviness.*
⁴ Heb. *Wrath is cruelty, and anger an overflowing.*
^c 1 John 3. 12.
⁵ Or, *jealousy?* ch. 6. 34.
^d ch. 23. 23. Gal. 2. 14.
^e Ps. 141. 5.
⁶ Or, *earnest, or, frequent.*
⁷ Heb. *treadeth under foot.*
^f Job 6. 7.
- 1 **B**OAST ^anot thyself of ²to morrow ;
for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.
- 2 ^bLet another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth ;
a stranger, and not thine own lips.
- 3 A stone *is* ³heavy, and the sand weighty ;
but a fool's wrath *is* heavier than them both.
- 4 ⁴Wrath *is* cruel, and anger *is* outrageous ;
but ^cwho *is* able to stand before ⁵envy ?
- 5 ^dOpen rebuke *is* better than secret love.
- 6 ^eFaithful *are* the wounds of a friend ;
but the kisses of an enemy *are* ⁶deceitful.
- 7 The full soul ⁷loatheth an honeycomb ;
but ^fto the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.
- 8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest,

cost. See the case of Abimelech, Judges ix. 53. Perhaps there is an allusion to the law of Num. xxxv. 23.

28. "A lying tongue," &c. It was remarked by the great Roman historian Tacitus, that men are apt to hate those whom they have injured. We may add that the author of evil is the bitter enemy of man, and deceives in order that he may ruin him.

This chapter reminds us, (1) of the perverse obstinacy of the foolish and transgressors ; (2) of the conceit, the cowardice, and the apathy of the slothful ; (3) of the mischief caused by slander ; (4) of the danger attending a quarrelsome temper ; (5) of the deceitfulness and cruelty of deceit.

CHAPTER XXVII.

3. "Heavier than them both." Because it has no reason in it.
4. "Outrageous." Lit. as the margin says, an overflowing. The cruelty of wrath and the overflowing of anger are grievous, but envy is worse than either of them.
5. "Secret love." Love that gives no outward proof of its existence.
6. "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful." For "deceitful" the margin has "abundant." If this be the true interpretation, the meaning will be, The more abundant they are, the less trustworthy they are likely to be (see xxvi. 23.).
7. "The full soul," &c. Even a honeycomb cloy on the appetite of one who is already satisfied.
8. "As a bird," &c. On earth, the notion of home is one of security

PROVERBS, XXVII.

- so is a man that wandereth from his place.
- 9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart :
so *doth* the sweetness of a man's friend ² by ² Heb. *from the counsel of the soul.*
hearty counsel.
- 10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake
not ;
neither go into thy brother's house in the day of
thy calamity :
for ⁵ better is a neighbour *that is* near than a ⁵ ch. 17. 17.
brother far off. & 18. 24.
See ch. 19. 7.
- 11 ^h My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, ^h ch. 10. 1.
ⁱ that I may answer him that reproacheth me. & 23. 15, 24.
ⁱ Ps. 127. 5.
- 12 ^k A prudent *man* foreseeth the evil, *and* hideth ^k ch. 22. 3.
himself ;
but the simple pass on, *and* are punished.
- 13 ^l Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, ^l See Exod. 22. 26.
and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. ch. 20. 16.
- 14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice,
rising early in the morning,
it shall be counted a curse to him.
- 15 ^m A continual dropping in a very rainy day ^m ch. 19. 13.
and a contentious woman are alike.
- 16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind,
and the ointment of his right hand, *which* be-
wrayeth *itself*.

and comfort. A man who is banished from his home, or one who deserts his proper work and line of duty, is like a bird that either deserts or is cast out of its nest. But the Christian's true home is not here (Heb. xi. 13, 14.).

9. "By hearty counsel." The margin has "From the counsel of the soul." The true rendering seems to be, "Better than counsel of the soul." That is, "Better than a man's own counsel." Friendly advice is sometimes sweeter and better than one's own counsel.

10. The meaning may be thus expressed. Some friends are nearer and better than even brothers and blood-relations. In time of trouble it is better to go to such friends than to relations who are not friendly.

11. "I may answer him that reproacheth me." I may, as a father or a teacher, have one who will stand by me in time of trouble.

14. "He that blesseth his friend," &c. Ill-timed, exaggerated praise brings no credit to him who bestows it.

15. "Dropping." The roofs of Eastern houses are often made of earth rolled smooth, and if neglected are liable to crack and let in the wet. Any one can understand the discomfort of this.

16. "Ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself." Lit. "will call out." The meaning of the whole is: You may as well attempt to lock up the wind, or to conceal the smell of perfume

PROVERBS, XXVII.

- 17 Iron sharpeneth iron ;
so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.
- ⁿ 1 Cor. 9. 7, 13. 18 ⁿ Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof :
so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.
- 19 As in water face *answereth* to face,
so the heart of man to man.
- ^o ch. 30. 16. Hab. 2. 5. 20 ^o Hell and destruction are ² never full ;
so ^p the eyes of man are never satisfied.
- ² Heb. *not*. ^p Eccles. 1. 8. & 6. 7. 21 ^a As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold ;
so *is* a man to his praise.
- ^r ch. 23. 35. Isai. 1. 5. Jer. 5. 3. 22 ^r Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar
among wheat with a pestle,
yet will not his foolishness depart from him.
- ³ Heb. *set thy heart*. 23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
and ³ look well to thy herds.
- ⁴ Heb. *strength*. ⁵ Heb. *to generation and generation?* 24 For ⁴ riches *are* not for ever :
and doth the crown *endure* ⁵ to every generation ?

which you have on your hand, as to repress the ill-temper of a quarrelsome woman.

17. "Iron sharpeneth iron." Congenial minds cheer and encourage each other.

18. "Whoso keepeth the fig-tree," &c. As a careful cultivator will reap the fruit of his labour, so will a faithful servant be rewarded by his employer.

19. "As in water," &c. As water reflects the features of a face, so a man's conduct is reflected in his countenance. As an instance of this we may refer to Acts vi. 15. Or, Every man's heart finds some point of sympathy or correspondence in the hearts of others.

20. "The eyes." The appetite, the lust (see 1 St. John ii. 16.).

21. "As the fining-pot," &c. As metal is tried in the furnace, so the praise which a man receives must be tested by his conduct.

22. "Bray a fool," &c. To "bray" is to bruise; and therefore to bray wheat in a mortar, is to beat it with the pestle, in order to separate the chaff from the grain. In the East there was formerly a cruel punishment of which the instruments were a pestle and mortar of large size. The meaning is, that it is hopeless to extract anything but folly from a foolish man by any process however severe or searching.

23. "Be thou diligent," &c. Let no one imagine that any work, especially agricultural and pastoral work, will go on well unless he looks after it himself. Therefore if he is wise a man will do his best to place his property in as sound a condition as possible, that when a storm comes he may be the better able to meet it.

24. "Doth the crown," &c. The margin renders literally, "Is there

PROVERBS, XXVIII.

- 25 ^aThe hay appeareth, and the tender grass shew- ^s Ps. 104. 14.
 eth itself,
 and herbs of the mountains are gathered.
- 26 The lambs *are* for thy clothing,
 and the goats *are* the price of the field.
- 27 And *thou shalt have* goats' milk enough for thy
 fool,
 for the food of thy household,
 and *for* the ² maintenance for thy maidens. ² Heb. *life*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

General observations of impiety and religious integrity.

- 1 **T**HE ^a wicked flee when no man pursueth : ^a Lev. 26. 17,
36.
Ps. 53. 5.
 but the righteous are bold as a lion.
- 2 For the transgression of a land many *are* the ² Or, by
men of un-
derstanding
and wisdom
shall they
likewise be
prolonged.
 princes thereof :
 but ² by a man of understanding *and* knowledge
 the state *thereof* shall be prolonged.
- 3 ^b A poor man that oppresseth the poor ^b Matt. 18. 28.
³ Heb. *with-
out food*.
is like a sweeping rain ³ which leaveth no food.

“a crown to generation and generation?” That is, “Do not reckon upon the continuance to succeeding generations of riches or titles.”

25. “Hay.” Grass cut for fodder. In Palestine, as in other hot countries, there is no hay-making properly so called (see Ps. xc. 6.), but the best grass of course grows on the higher lands.

“Herbs of the mountains.” Grass from the higher pasturages.

26. “Goats are the price of the field.” Goats are much more commonly used in Palestine than with us. They serve to help in paying the expenses of the land.

Among the lessons of this chapter are the following: (1) the value of true friendship; (2) the real dignity of modesty; (3) the uncertainty of riches; (4) the value of industry, and the duty of attending carefully to every matter of business with which we are concerned, whether great or small.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. “The wicked flee,” &c. Shakespeare says, “Thus conscience does ‘make cowards of us all’” (*Hamlet*, iii. 1.). On the other hand, we remember that St. Stephen before the council was “bold as a lion” (*Acts* vi. 15.).

2. “Many are the princes thereof.” Either, the rulers follow each other so quickly that the government is unsettled, as was the case in the later days both of Israel and Judah; or, many pretenders to power rise up and waste the land by their contentions.

3. “A poor man,” &c. It is often found that poor men are more severe and exacting towards each other in their dealings than those who are in higher stations. And especially in the East it is the case that men raised from lower stations are more oppressive as rulers than others.

“A sweeping rain.” A storm that causes inundation and destruction of crops.

PROVERBS, XXVIII.

c Ps. 10. 3.
& 49. 18.
Rom. 1. 32.
d 1 Kin. 18.
18, 21.
Matt. 3. 7.
& 14. 4.
Eph. 5. 11.
e Ps. 92. 6.
f John 7. 17.
1 Cor. 2. 15.
1 John 2. 20,
27.
g ch. 19. 1.
ver. 18.
h ch. 29. 3.
2 Or, *feedeth
gluttons.*
i Job 27. 16,
17.
ch. 13. 22.
Eccles. 2. 26.
3 Heb. *by
increase.*
k Zech. 7. 11.
l Ps. 66. 18.
& 109. 7.
ch. 15. 8.
m ch. 26. 27.
n Matt. 6. 33.
4 Heb. *in
his eyes.*
o ver. 28.
ch. 11. 10.
& 29. 2.
Eccles. 10. 6.
5 Or,
sought for.
p Ps. 32. 3, 5.
1 John 1. 8,
9, 10.
q Ps. 16. 8.
ch. 23. 17.

- 4 ° They that forsake the law praise the wicked :
d but such as keep the law contend with them.
- 5 ° Evil men understand not judgment :
but f they that seek the LORD understand all *things*.
- 6 s Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness,
than *he that is* perverse in his ways, though he,
be rich.
- 7 h Whoso keepeth the law *is* a wise son :
but he that 2 is a companion of riotous *men*
shameth his father.
- 8 i He that by usury and 3 unjust gain increaseth
his substance,
he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.
- 9 k He that turneth away his ear from hearing the
law,
l even his prayer *shall be* abomination.
- 10 m Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an
evil way,
he shall fall himself into his own pit :
n but the upright shall have good *things* in pos-
session.
- 11 The rich man *is* wise 4 in his own conceit ;
but the poor that hath understanding searcheth
him out.
- 12 ° When righteous *men* do rejoice, *there is* great
glory :
but when the wicked rise, a man is 5 hidden.
- 13 r He that covereth his sins shall not prosper :
but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall
have mercy.
- 14 Happy *is* the man q that feareth alway : .

7. "Shameth his father." Makes his parents ashamed of him for his misconduct.

8. "He shall gather it," &c. His wealth, acquired by bad means, will at some time come into the possession of one who will use it in a better and more liberal manner.

12. "Great glory." Exaltation.

"A man is hidden." Men hide themselves for fear, or from dislike.

13. "He that covereth his sins," &c. We need only refer to the case of David to remind us that evil, however carefully concealed, does not prosper at last, and the same well-known history reminds us of the value in God's sight of confession of sin. See 2 Sam. xi., xii., and St. Jas. v. 20.

14. "Feareth." Fears to commit sin. One whose conscience is tender.

PROVERBS, XXVIII.

- ^r but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. ^r Rom. 2. 5. & 11. 20.
- 15 ^s As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear ; ^s 1 Pet. 5. 8.
^t so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. ^t Ex. 1. 14, 16, 22.
- 16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor : ^t Matt. 2. 16.
 but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.
- 17 ^u A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit ; let no man stay him. ^u Gen. 9. 6. Ex. 21. 14.
- 18 ^x Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved : ^x ch. 10. 9, 25.
 but ^y he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. ^y ver. 6.
- 19 ^z He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread : ^z ch. 12. 11. ^a ch. 13. 11. & 20. 21. & 23. 4. ver. 22.
 but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough. ¹ Tim. 6. 9.
- 20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings : ² Or, unpunished.
^a but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be ² innocent. ^b ch. 18. 5. & 24. 23. ^c Ezek. 13. 19.
- 21 ^b To have respect of persons is not good : ³ Or, He that hath an evil eye
 for ^c for a piece of bread that man will transgress. ⁴ hasteth to be rich.
- 22 ³ ^d He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, ^d ver. 20.

15. "Ranging." Going about in search of prey. In this we have a picture of tyrannical and covetous rulers, such as are often found in the East.

17. "A man . . . shall flee to the pit." Under the Law of Moses the wilful murderer was liable to death without reprieve (Num. xxxv. 17.). He might thus be said truly to be on the way to the "pit," that is, destruction.

"Let no man stop him." Rather, perhaps, "men will not stop him in it." That is, men will not interfere to stop his execution, which cannot be prevented (see 1 Kings ii. 31, 32.). As Christians we may add, that unless he repents he is on the way to eternal punishment.

19. "He that followeth after vain persons." See the Parable of the Prodigal Son (St. Luke xv.).

20. "He that maketh haste to be rich." He who is over anxious about making money quickly is very likely to be tempted to do so by unlawful means (see 1 Tim. vi. 9.).

21. "To have respect of persons," &c. The fear of God, and not the fear of man, ought to be our rule of conduct. He who makes man's judgment his rule is liable to transgress "for a piece of bread," that is, to do wrong for the sake of some temporal advantage, even of a trifling kind.

22. "He that hasteth to be rich," &c. Rather, as the margin

and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

° ch. 27. 5, 6. 23 ° He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour

than he that flattereth with the tongue.

24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, *It is no transgression* ;

the same ^f *is* the companion of ² a destroyer.

^f ch. 18. 9.

² Heb. *a man destroying.*

^g ch. 13. 10.

^h 1 Tim. 6. 6.

25 ^g He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife :

^h but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool : but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

ⁱ Deut. 15. 7, 27 ⁱ He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack :

&c.
ch. 19. 17.
& 22. 9.

but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

renders, "He who has an evil eye hasteth," &c. A selfish, corrupt man uses unlawful means to enrich himself, but instead of riches he often meets with poverty.

23. "He that rebuketh a man," &c. Honest rebukes, though unpleasant at the time, will afterwards be valued. We may compare together the history of St. Paul's rebuke to St. Peter and St. Peter's language in later days concerning St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11, and 2 St. Pet. iii. 15.).

24. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for their scandalous perversion of the Law in a matter of this kind, and shewed by their own example how they were leading others into sin (see St. Matt. xv. 5. St. Mark vii. 11, 12.).

25. "Shall be made fat." Shall prosper. For the temporal blessing here indicated we may, as Christians, substitute the eternal reward of the Gospel.

26. "He that trusteth in his own heart." See the remarks on self-conceit in ch. xxvi. 12—16.

27. "Hideth his eyes." Turns aside, and pretends not to see the distress of the poor.

Among the lessons contained in the foregoing chapter, perhaps the most important are those which are concerned with (a) government, (b) worldly riches. The misery caused by unjust rulers cannot be over-rated. In Eastern countries, where the form of government was, and still is for the most part, despotic, the ignorant, unjust, tyrannical prince must be the cause of infinite sorrow, mischief, and distress among his subjects, for not only would the chief man in the state be an oppressor, but his subordinates would be sure to follow his example. But the worst instance of this would probably be found in the needy man who is raised from poverty to a post of honour, and who would seek to enrich himself by his office. It was said by the wise and observant historian Tacitus of Felix, the Roman governor of Judæa, that he exercised his office, which was virtually that of a sovereign, with the temper and spirit of a slave. That is, he ruled rather with the temper of a conspirator against the

PROVERBS, XXIX.

- 28 ^k When the wicked rise, ¹ men hide themselves : ^k ver. 12.
ch. 29. 2.
1 Job 24. 4.
but when they perish, the righteous increase.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 *Observations of publick government. 15 and of private. 22 Of anger, pride, thievery, cowardice, and corruption.*

- 1 ^{2 a} **H**E, that being often reprov'd hardeneth ² *Heb. A man of reproofs.*
his neck, ^a 1 Sam. 2. 25.
² Chr. 36. 16.
ch. 1. 24,—
27.
shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.
- 2 ^b When the righteous are ³ in authority, the people rejoice : ^b Esth. 8. 15.
ch. 11. 10
& 23. 12, 23.
but when the wicked beareth rule, ^c the people mourn. ³ Or,
increased.
^c Esth. 3. 15.
- 3 ^d Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father : ^d ch. 10. 1.
& 13. 20.
& 27. 11.
^e but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth *his* substance. ^e ch. 5. 9, 10.
& 6. 26.
& 28. 7.
Luke 15. 13,
30.
- 4 The king by judgment establisheth the land :
but ⁴ he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it. ⁴ *Heb. a man of oblations.*
- 5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.
- 6 In the transgression of an evil man *there is* a snare :

lives and welfare of the people, than with a view to their benefit. Such a ruler is indeed like a sweeping rain causing inundation which destroys crops and leaves no food. Not far apart from this temper is that of the man who "makes haste to be rich," whether by "usury and unjust gain," or by defrauding those whom he ought to support. His course is not likely to be "innocent," for he is sure to use ways of enriching himself which are at first of doubtful propriety, which by-and-by become less and less justifiable, and which are sure to end in mischief both to others and to himself. A great warning is contained in this precept to all gamblers and rash speculators in money matters, still more to those of whom we hear or read from time to time, who, by their thirst after gain, or in order to repair their losses and extravagance, are led on to the commission of heinous sins and atrocious crimes, robbery, murder, and the like.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. "Hardeneth his neck." Obstinate refuses to listen ; see the history of Eli's sons, 1 Sam. ii. 23—34.

3. See above, ch. xxviii. 7.

4. "He that receiveth gifts," &c. We may refer to the case of Samuel's sons contrasted with the conduct of their father, 1 Sam. viii. 3 ; xii. 3, and to Isa. i. 23. Ezek. xxii. 13. Amos ii. 6 ; v. 12.

5. "Spreadeth a net for his feet." Deceives him, and so leads him to deceive himself.

6. "In the transgression," &c. The sins of bad men lead them on

PROVERBS, XXIX.

- but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.
- f Job 29. 16.
& 31. 13.
Ps. 41. 1. 7 ^fThe righteous considereth the cause of the poor:
but the wicked regardeth not to know *it*.
- g ch. 11. 11.
2 Or, set a city on fire.
h Ezck. 22. 30. 8 ^g Scornful men ² bring a city into a snare:
 but wise *men* ^h turn away wrath.
- i Matt. 11. 17. 9 *If* a wise man contendeth with a foolish man,
ⁱ whether he rage or laugh, *there is* no rest.
- 3 Heb. Men of blood.
k Gen. 4. 5, 8.
l John 3. 12. 10 ^{3 k} The bloodthirsty hate the upright:
 but the just seek his soul.
- 1 John 3. 12.
m Judg. 16. 17.
ch. 12. 16.
& 14. 33. 11 A ^l fool uttereth all his mind:
 but a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards.
- n ch. 22. 2. 12 If a ruler hearken to lies,—all his servants *are* wicked.
- 4 Or, the usurer.
m ch. 22. 2. 13 The poor and ⁴the deceitful man ^m meet together:
ⁿ the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.
- o ch. 20. 28.
& 25. 5. 14 ^o The king that ^p faithfully judgeth the poor,
 his throne shall be established for ever.
- p Ps. 72. 2, 4, 13, 14.
q ver. 17. 15 ^q The rod and reproof give wisdom:
 but ^r a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.
- r ch. 10. 1.
& 17. 21, 25. 16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth:
^s but the righteous shall see their fall.
- s Ps. 37. 36.
& 58. 10.
& 91. 8.
& 92. 11.

to further transgression, and to their own destruction, while the righteous man rejoices thankfully that he has been preserved from falling.

8. "Scornful men," &c. Probably, as the margin says, "will set a city on fire." That is, will stir up commotion within, or bring enemies upon it from without.

9. "If a wise man contendeth," &c. For a wise man to argue with a self-willed, wrong-headed man, whether he reason well or ill, is of little use. The other is sure either to fall into a passion or to jest idly (see St. Matt. vii. 6.).

10. "Seek his soul." Seek to preserve his life.

12. "If a ruler," &c. A ruler who listens to tales, without inquiry as to their truth, creates a habit of untruth among those who are about him, for his willingness to listen creates and promotes the inclination to provide the food of scandal and gossip in which he takes delight.

13. "The deceitful man." More properly, "the oppressor." Both the debtor and the hard-hearted creditor stand alike in God's Presence. It is from Him that both of them derive the light of life, if they are willing to receive it, and by His grace turn it to account, otherwise the light that is in men becomes darkness (see St. Matt. v. 45; vi. 23.).

PROVERBS, XXIX.

- 17 ^t Correct thy son, and he shall give thee ^t rest ;
 yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. ch. 13. 24.
& 19. 18.
& 22. 15.
& 23. 13, 14.
ver. 15.
- 18 ^u Where *there is* no vision, the people ² perish :
 but ^x he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he. ^u 1 Sam. 3. 1.
Amos 8. 11,
12.
- 19 A servant will not be corrected by words :
 for though he understand he will not answer. ² Or, *is made
naked.*
- 20 Seest thou a man *that is* hasty ³ in his
 words ?
^y *there is* more hope of a fool than of him. ³ Or, *in his
matters ?*
- 21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from
 a child
 shall have him become *his* son at the length. ^y ch. 26. 12.
- 22 ^z An angry man stirreth up strife,
 and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. ^z ch. 15. 18.
& 26. 21.
- 23 ^a A man's pride shall bring him low :
 but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. ^a Job 22. 29.
ch. 15. 33.
& 18. 12.
Isai. 66. 2.
Dan. 4. 30,
31, &c.
Matt. 23. 12.
Luke 14. 11.
& 18. 14.
- 24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own
 soul :
^b he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth *it* not. Acts 12. 23.
Jam. 4. 6, 10.
1 Pet. 5. 5.
- 25 ^c The fear of man bringeth a snare :
 but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD ⁴ shall
 be safe. ^b Lev. 5. 1.
^c Gen. 12. 12.
& 20. 2, 11.
- 26 ^d Many seek ⁵ the ruler's favour ;
 but *every* man's judgment *cometh* from the LORD. ⁴ Heb. *shall
be set on
high.*
^d See Ps. 20. 9.
ch. 19. 6.
⁵ Heb. *the
face of a
ruler.*

18. "No vision." No direct teaching from God through prophets (see 1 Sam. iii. 1 ; xxviii. 6.).

"Perish." The margin says, "is made naked ;" that is, they are left destitute of counsel ; but in such a case they must have recourse to the written law of God, which is a safe guide of conduct.

19. "A servant," &c. In Solomon's time slaves were liable to personal chastisement from their masters. But at all times a slavish, obstinate spirit is unwilling to receive a reproof, however well deserved.

21. "He who delicately," &c. It was literally true in Solomon's day that to educate one born in an inferior station as if he belonged to the higher, was a dangerous experiment ; but at all times over-indulgence is injurious and dangerous.

24. "Hateth his own soul." Endangers his own safety both here and hereafter.

"Heareth cursing." That is, the oath which a judge administers either to the accused person, to make him plead, or to the witnesses, to make them give their evidence (Lev. v. 1. 1 Kings viii. 31.). An accomplice who, when put on his oath, conceals the truth, is guilty of a great sin.

25. "Bringeth a snare." Is full of risk (see Jer. xvii. 5.).

26. "Every man's judgment." The Lord is, after all, the true discernor of hearts, and the true judge of conduct.

PROVERBS, XXX.

- 27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just :
and *he that is upright in the way is abomination*
to the wicked.

CHAPTER XXX.

¹ *Agur's confession of his faith.* ⁷ *The two points of his prayer.* ¹⁰ *The meanest are not to be wronged.* ¹¹ *Four wicked generations.* ¹⁵ *Four things insatiable.* ¹⁷ *Parents are not to be despised.* ¹⁸ *Four things hard to be known.* ²¹ *Four things intolerable.* ²⁴ *Four things exceeding wise.* ²⁹ *Four things stately.* ³² *Wrath is to be prevented.*

- ^a ch. 31. 1. **T**^aHE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *even*
the prophecy : the man spake unto Ithiel,
even unto Ithiel and Ucal,
^b Ps. 73. 22. **2** ^b Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man,
and have not the understanding of a man.
3 I neither learned wisdom,
² Heb. *know*. nor ² have the knowledge of the holy.

27. "An unjust man," &c. There can be, as St. Paul says, no agreement between Christ and Belial (2 Cor. vi. 14.). And so the evil and the good can have no real sympathy with each other. The life of bad men is a continual sorrow to the good, while that of good men is a continual reproof to the bad.

In this chapter we have warnings, (1) against debauchery and extravagance; (2) against injustice, corruption and negligence, in rulers; (3) against hastiness of temper, pride, and fear of man instead of trust in God.

And, as is so often the case in this Book, we are reminded of the importance of training children rightly.

CHAPTER XXX.

This chapter forms the fifth division of the book, but concerning the author of it we know nothing.

1. "Agur, son of Jakeh." Some have thought that the name Agur, which means "collector," denotes Solomon, in which case the name Jakeh, which means "pious," would denote David. But there is no proof of this, nor whether these names, as well as the others here mentioned, denote real or only imaginary persons. There are other readings of the passage which give to it a totally different meaning, but there is no solid ground for adopting them. It is obvious that the style and method of treating the subjects contained in this chapter differ greatly from those of the preceding portions of the book, and also that the description given in verses 2 and 3 is by no means suitable to the character of Solomon.

"The prophecy." The divine utterance (see 2 Kings ix. 25. Isa. xiv. 28.). Some think that the word in the original denotes a country called Massah, of which Agur's mother was the ruler or queen (see Gen. xxv. 14. 1 Chron. i. 30.).

2, 3. Perhaps the writer only intends to speak modestly, in Oriental fashion, of his own talents and acquirements (see Amos vii. 14.).

3. "The knowledge of the holy." That knowledge which holy persons possess.

PROVERBS, XXX.

- 4 ^c Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? ^e John 3. 13.
^d Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? ^d Job 38. 4,
 Who hath bound the waters in a garment? ^{&c.}
^e Who hath established all the ends of the earth? ^{Ps.} 104. 3,
 What *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if ^{&c.}
 thou canst tell? ^{Is.} 40. 12, &c.
 5 ^e Every word of God *is* ² pure : ^e Ps. 12. 6,
^f he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in ^{& 18. 30.}
 him. ^{& 19. 8.}
 6 ^s Add thou not unto his words, ^{& 119. 140.}
 lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar. ² Heb.
 7 ¶ Two *things* have I required of thee ; ^{purified.}
³ deny me *them* not before I die : ^f Ps. 18. 30,
 8 remove far from me vanity and lies : ^{& 84. 11, &}
 give me neither poverty nor riches ; ^{115. 9, 10, 11.}
^h feed me with food ⁴ convenient for me : ^g Deut. 4. 2,
 9 ⁱ lest I be full, and ⁵ deny *thee*, ^{& 12. 32.}
^e and say, Who *is* the LORD? ^{Rev.} 22. 18,
 or lest I be poor, and steal, ^{19.}
 and take the name of my God *in vain*. ³ Heb. *with-*
 10 ⁶ Accuse not a servant unto his master, ^{hold not}
 lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty. ^{from me.}
^h Matt. 6. 11.
⁴ Heb. *of my*
ⁱ Deut. 8. 12, allowance.
 14, 17, & 31.
 20, & 32. 15.
 Ncn. 9. 25,
 26.
 Job 31. 24,
 25, 28.
 Hos. 13. 6.
⁵ Heb. *belie*
 thee.
⁶ Heb. *Hurt*
 not with thy
 tongue.

4. "Who hath ascended," &c. Men can have no certain knowledge of God, except such as He has revealed to them.

"What is his son's name?" The words are probably intended to express our general ignorance of God apart from Revelation. Whether any reference is intended to the eternal Son of God cannot be said with certainty (see St. John i. 18.).

7. "Of thee." Of God.

8. "Vanity." Falsehood, evil (see Ps. cxix. 37. Jonah ii. 8.).

"Convenient." Sufficient, suitable.

9. "Full." Abounding in wealth, and therefore puffed up with pride (see Deut. xxxii. 15. Rev. iii. 17.).

"Take." The words "in vain" are not in the original. The word "take," therefore, means take for a bad purpose. The whole passage is remarkable for the sound wisdom which, short of the Gospel, it displays in respect of an earthly lot. The writer seeks to be delivered (a) from direct transgression, (b) from those extremes of worldly condition which are likely to lead to temptation; and he aims at that one which lies between these two, and which, if not the highest to be aimed at, is, in a worldly sense at any rate, perhaps the safest for most people.

10. "Accuse not a servant," &c. The meaning is probably, Do not induce a servant to speak ill of his master, for not only may he turn upon you, and speak ill of you, but perhaps you yourself may be found wanting in the very points in which you wish to find him guilty (see St. Matt. vii. 3—5.).

PROVERBS, XXX.

- 11 ¶ *There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.*
- ^k Luke 18. 11. 12 *There is a generation ^kthat are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*
- ¹ Ps. 131. 1. ch. 6. 17. 13 *There is a generation, O how ¹lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.*
- ^m Job 29. 17. Ps. 52. 2. & 57. 4. ch. 12. 18. 14 ^m *There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, ⁿto devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.*
- ⁿ Ps. 14. 4. Amos 8. 4. 15 ¶ *The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, ²It is enough :*
- ² Heb. Wealth. ^o ch. 27. 20. Hab. 2. 5. 16 ^o *the grave ; and the barren womb ; the earth that is not filled with water ; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.*
- ^p Gen. 9. 22. Lev. 20. 9. ch. 20. 20. & 23. 22. 17 ^p *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of ³the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*
- ³ Or, the brook.

12. No people are more apt to be wanting in knowledge of their own defects than those who are self-righteous (see St. Matt. xxiii. 26. St. Luke xviii. 9, 11.).

15. "The horseleach," &c. Either the leech of medicine is meant, or the horseleech, which is larger than the other. In either case, perhaps, the word is used to denote destruction.

"Two daughters." Two, to denote incessant voracity. When one ceases the other begins. Instead of "crying," which is not in the original, we might perhaps supply "whose names are," &c.

"Three . . . four." A Hebrew way of denoting a full number, which is reached by degrees (see below, ver. 18, and ver. 21 ; and Eccles. xi. 2. Amos i. 3.).

16. "The barren womb" (see Gen. xxx. 1. 1 Sam. i. 6.).

"The earth," &c. In hot climates rain is even more necessary for the ground than with ourselves. We may say truly that it can scarcely ever have enough.

17. "The eye that mocketh," &c. The man who is guilty of this offence shall be denied the rite of burial : his carcase shall be devoured by the vultures, those ever-ready devourers of carrion, and his eyes pecked out after his death by the ravens which haunt "the valley," that is, the water-courses between hills (see Deut. xxi. 21. 1 Sam. xvii. 44, 46. 2 Sam. xxi. 10. 1 Kings xvii. 3.).

PROVERBS, XXX.

- 18 ¶ There be three *things which* are too wonderful
for me,
yea, four which I know not:
- 19 the way of an eagle in the air ;—the way of a
serpant upon a rock ;
the way of a ship in the ² midst of the sea ; 2 Eccl. heart.
and the way of a man with a maid.
- 20 Such *is* the way of an adulterous woman ;
she eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
and saith, I have done no wickedness.
- 21 ¶ For three *things* the earth is disquieted,
and for four *which* it cannot bear :
- 22 ¹ for a servant when he reigneth ; q ch. 19. 10.
Eccles. 10. 7.
and a fool when he is filled with meat ;
- 23 for an odious *woman* when she is married ;
and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.
- 24 ¶ There be four *things which are* little upon the
earth,
but they *are* ³ exceeding wise : s Heb. wise.
made wise.
- 25 ^r the ants *are* a people not strong,
yet they prepare their meat in the summer ; r ch. 6. 6, &c.
- 26 ^s the conies *are but* a feeble folk, s Ps. 104 18.

18, 20. "Three . . . four." The writer points out evil actions which leave no immediate or visible trace behind them. So, says he, the unchaste woman, trusting to escape detection, pursues her course of sin, as if her acts could be effaced as easily as the mouth is wiped after eating.

21, 22. As instances of the character here mentioned, we may mention (1) Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 26—33.), (2) Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37.).

23. "An odious woman." The words may mean a woman who having been disagreeable before marriage, becomes still more so when she has gained a step in the world by marriage, but it is more likely that they mean a woman who, having been formerly slighted, becomes a wife afterwards.

26. "Conies." These animals, mentioned Lev. xi. 5 and Ps. civ. 18, are incorrectly called by this name ; for, though in some degree resembling a rabbit in appearance, they really belong to a totally different order, the one which includes the rhinoceros and hippopotamus. They are common in Syria, and from this circumstance the name by which they are known among naturalists is Hyrax Syriacus. They are sometimes called rock-badgers. They live in rocky places, where they find shelter between the stones, and sometimes set one of their number to watch near their holes, who whistles at the approach of an enemy. It is perhaps this exercise of their instinct which has given occasion to the remark in the text as to their wisdom.

PROVERBS, XXXI.

- yet make they their houses in the rocks ;
- 27 the locusts have no king,
² Heb. gathered together. yet go they forth all of them ² by bands ;
- 28 the spider taketh hold with her hands,
 and is in kings' palaces.
- 29 ¶ There be three *things* which go well,
 yea, four are comely in going :
- 30 a lion *which is* strongest among beasts,
 and turneth not away for any ;
- ³ Or, horse.
⁴ Heb. girt in the loins. 31 a ^{3 4} greyhound ; an he goat also ; and a king,
 against whom *there is* no rising up.
- 32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself,
 or if thou hast thought evil,
[†] lay thine hand upon thy mouth.
- [†] Job 21. 5.
& 40. 4.
Eccles. 8. 3.
Mic. 7. 16. 33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth
 butter,
 and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood:
 so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

CHAPTER XXXI.

¹ Lemuel's lesson of chastity and temperance. ⁶ The afflicted are to be comforted and defended. ¹⁰ The praise and properties of a good wife.

a ch. 30. 1. 1 **T**HE words of king Lemuel, ^a the prophecy
 that his mother taught him.

27. "The locusts," &c. Locusts do not in their flight appear to follow any leader, but their orderly advance is mentioned by Joel, ii. 8.

28. "The spider." More probably the lizard, which is very common in hot countries, and enters the houses quite as much as the spider.

29. "Comely." Skilful, accomplished in their work.

31. "A greyhound." Literally, as the margin points out, one girt about the loins. Some understand the words to denote a horse, others, a wrestler; but reference is probably made to a runner, or courier, who girds up his loins tightly in order to run on a post-journey (see 1 Kings xviii. 46. 2 Kings iv. 29; ix. 1. Job ix. 25. Jer. li. 31.). There is an Indian story told of a courier whose death was caused by being compelled by a cruel king to stoop to the ground when he was thus girded up.

"A king," &c. Perhaps the words should be rendered, "A king: the people is with him." That is, a ruler to whom his subjects are attached.

32. "Lay thine hand," &c. Say nothing, keep thine own counsel.

33. "The churning . . . the wringing." The same word is used in all cases, and means "pressure." As the pressure of milk produces butter, so the compression of the nose draws blood. So also needless provocation, pinching as it were men's feelings, produces strife.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1—9. The Sixth Division of the Book.

Its author is unknown. Some have thought that the name "Lemuel"

PROVERBS, XXXI.

- 2 What, my son? And what, ^bthe son of my womb? ^b Isai. 49. 15.
And what, the son of my vows?
- 3 ^cGive not thy strength unto women, c ch. 5. 9.
nor thy ways ^dto that which destroyeth ^dDeut. 17. 17.
kings. Neh. 13. 26.
ch. 7. 26.
Hos. 4. 11.
- 4 ^eIt is not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings ^eEccles. 10.
to drink wine; 17.
nor for princes strong drink:
- 5 ^flest they drink, and forget the law, f Hos. 4. 11.
and ²pervert the judgment ³of any of the af- ²Heb. *alter.*
flicted. 3 Heb. *of all*
the sons of
affliction.
- 6 ^gGive strong drink unto him that is ready to g Ps. 104. 15.
perish,
and wine unto those that be ⁴of heavy hearts. 4 Heb. *bitter*
of soul.
- 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty,
and remember his misery no more. 1 Sam. 1. 10.
- 8 ^hOpen thy mouth for the dumb
ⁱin the cause of all ⁵such as are appointed to h See Job 29.
15, 16.
i 1 Sam. 19. 4
Esth. 4. 16.
destruction. 5 Heb. *the*
sons of de-
struction.
- 9 Open thy mouth, ^kjudge righteously,
and ¹plead the cause of the poor and needy. k Lev. 19. 15.
Deut. 1. 16.
Job 29. 12.
Isai. 1. 17.
Jer. 22. 16.
- 10 ¶ ^mWho can find a virtuous woman? m ch. 12. 4.
& 18. 22.
& 19. 14.
For her price is far above rubies.
- 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in
her,

denotes Solomon; others, that the word rendered "prophecy," which is also used in chap. xxx. 1, is the name of the country, Massah, of which Lemuel was king. But there is no proof of this.

2. "What, my son?" &c. We may perhaps fill up the sentence thus, "What, my son, shall I say to thee?"

6, 7. "Give strong drink," &c. By "drink" is perhaps meant the stupefying drink sometimes given to criminals in a sort of cruel compassion (see St. Mark xv. 23.). But the passage must be understood in an ironical sense, not as recommending the use of strong drink, but as pointing out its effects in certain cases not likely to occur to grave and wise kings or rulers, and therefore to be avoided by them. Some men will drink to drown care, but the king ought never to have recourse to this fatal expedient.

8. "Appointed to destruction." Lit. "sons of departure," or, as the margin says, "destruction," that is, orphans, destitute children, whose parents are departed, perhaps have perished by violence (see Jer. xxii. 15, 17.).

10—31. The seventh and last division of this book, consisting of a poem of twenty-two verses, each, like Ps. cxix., beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and consisting of praises of the virtuous wife.

PROVERBS, XXXI.

- so that he shall have no need of spoil.
- 12 She will do him good and not evil
all the days of her life.
- 13 She seeketh wool, and flax,
and worketh willingly with her hands.
- 14 She is like the merchants' ships ;
she bringeth her food from afar.
- ⁿ Rom. 12. 11. 15 ⁿ She riseth also while it is yet night,
^o Luke 12. 42. and ^o giveth meat to her household,
and a portion to her maidens.
- ² Heb. *taketh.* 16 She considereth a field, and ² buyeth it :
with the fruit of her hands she planteth a
vineyard.
- 17 She girdeth her loins with strength,
and strengtheneth her arms.
- ³ Heb. *She*
tasteth. 18 ³ She perceiveth that her merchandise is
good :
her candle goeth not out by night.
- 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle,
and her hands hold the distaff.

We may very properly connect with this description the one which St. Paul gives of Christian marriage (Eph. v. 22—32.), which is included among the passages quoted from Scripture at the end of our own Service of Matrimony ; and we shall also not forget the description of the Church of God, the Bride of Christ, under the name of the King's daughter (Ps. xlv. 10—15. See also Rev. xxi. 2.). Some minds will take pleasure in applying to the Church some of the qualities and actions ascribed in the passage before us to the virtuous and careful housewife.

11. "Spoil." Perhaps provision. Provision shall not be wanting in his house. She certainly will not seek to obtain it by any wrong means.

14. "Bringeth her food from afar." She goes to the best market, even though it may be distant, or though the goods come from foreign countries.

15. "Meat." Animal food.

"A portion." The daily task to be performed by her servants. The early rising is one of her good qualities.

16. "Considereth . . . buyeth." Considers before purchasing. By the fruits of her industry she is enabled to add to her husband's possessions. So the Church should ever be bent on extending the area of the Lord's vineyard.

17. "Girdeth her loins with strength." Uses her best endeavours to fulfil her duty.

18. "Perceiveth." Tests by experience the goodness both of what she buys, and what she sells.

"Her candle goeth not out by night." Rising early, and going to bed late, she employs all her time (see Ps. cxxxvii. 2.).

PROVERBS, XXXI.

- 20 ^{2 P} She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ;
yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the
needy. ² Heb. *She spreadeth.*
^P Eph. 4. 28.
Heb. 13. 16.
- 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household :
for all her household *are* clothed with ³ scarlet. ³ Or, *double garments.*
- 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ;
her clothing *is* silk and purple.
- 23 ¹ Her husband is known in the gates,
when he sitteth among the elders of the land. ¹ ch. 12. 4.
- 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it* ;
and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
- 25 Strength and honour *are* her clothing ;
and she shall rejoice in time to come.
- 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
- 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
and eateth not the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed ;
her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

20. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor." Amidst all her care for her own household the poor are not forgotten, but on the contrary are for this very reason better cared for. Her thoughtful industry has always a remembrance of the wants of others.

21. "Scarlet." More probably, "double garments," suitable for cold weather.

22. "Coverings of tapestry." Bed-coverlets (see vii. 16.).

"Silk." More probably, fine Egyptian linen (see 1 Kings x. 28, 29.).

23. "Gates." Public places (see i. 21 ; viii. 3 ; xxiv. 7.). The husband of such a wife can hardly be one who is unworthy of her. The character of the one is reflected upon the other, and they even assist each other mutually both by words and deeds. See ver. 28.

24. "Girdles." Properly, "a girdle." The girdle is an important part of Eastern dress, and is often made of costly materials (see 2 Sam. xviii. 11.).

"The merchant." Lit. the Canaanite, that is, the Phœnician trader, with whom the Hebrews in the time of Solomon had great commercial intercourse. See 1 Kings v. ; ix. 26, 28.

25. "Strength and honour," &c. Her garments are substantial and comely. So will the robe be of the Spouse of Christ when He comes to take her to Himself (Rev. xxi. 2—27.).

"She shall rejoice in time to come." She looks forward to the future with cheerful confidence.

26. "In her tongue," &c. Her words are full of kindness and courtesy, not scolding or reproachful.

28, 29. The person speaking is now changed, and the husband addresses the wife (see viii. 4.).

PROVERBS, XXXI.

² Or, *have gotten riches.*

- 29 Many daughters ² have done virtuously,
but thou excellest them all.
- 30 Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain :
but a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall
be praised.
- 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands ;
and let her own works praise her in the gates.

29. "Have done virtuously." Lit. "have done strength." This is explained by the margin to mean, "have acquired wealth;" but it probably means, "have acted with vigour and industry, and also virtuously" (see above, ver. 10.).

31. "Give her of the fruit," &c. Let her enjoy the fruit of her labours. They speak for themselves, for they are in the mouth of every one, and are published in "the gates," that is, the public places of the city.

We cannot imagine a more fitting conclusion to the great book of moral wisdom than the one with which it ends. The character of the wife is of the greatest importance to every household, to make or to mar it. But clear and great as was the superiority of the Jewish view of marriage, to that of other nations, and noble as is the conception here expressed of the value of a good and virtuous wife, we must remember that it is the Gospel only which has fully raised the wife, and woman in general, to her right position, as the help-mate of man. By so doing it has conferred a blessing upon society which was before unknown, and which even in the present description is shadowed forth rather than fully described. Christian marriage, therefore, has a value and a sanctity which fills up all that is wanting in the description, and adds to it features which it could not possess before the Incarnation of the Son of God.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER.

INTRODUCTION.

ECCLESIASTES always formed part of the Jewish Scriptures, being one of the lesser Hagiographa or holy writings, which are made up of the Song of Songs, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes. There is a tradition that in the formation of the Canon "the wise men" employed in the task hesitated for a time about adopting Ecclesiastes, on the ground (1) that it contained passages at variance with passages in the Psalms and also in other parts of the Book itself, and (2) that its morality was not in accordance with the stricter precepts of the Law; but that, on a fuller examination, they discovered that the objections were invalid, and admitted the Book. This tradition indicates that the difficulties of Ecclesiastes were early felt and considered, and found to be capable of solution. The Hebrew title is *Koheleth*, which though feminine in form, may be used as the name of a person, i. 2, 12; xii. 8, 9; in vii. 27 the verb is in the feminine to agree with the feminine noun. But although *Koheleth* denotes a person, the form may be adopted in a somewhat abstract sense, equivalent to *the voice of the Preacher*, as the Baptist is called "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (St. Mark i. 3.). The word *Koheleth* is connected with *Kahal* (*ecclesia*), a congregation or assembly of people, and so means *one who gathers or addresses a congregation*. So the Greek Version rendered it *Ecclesiastes*, and hence, as usual, the title came, through the Vulgate (or Latin Version), to our English Bible.

The authorship and date of this book were in ancient days undisputed. It was universally ascribed to Solomon, King of Israel, it being commonly supposed that the Song of Solomon was written by that monarch in his youth, Proverbs in his maturity, and Ecclesiastes in his old age (see Introduction to Proverbs, Sect. 4.) Modern commentators have imagined that they can discover in it traces of a more recent origin. But we may observe (1) that arguments resting upon differences of style are at all times doubtful, especially in Aramaic dialects; (2) that Rabbinical commentators did not discover such discrepancy, that Mendelssohn, an accomplished Hebrew scholar of the last century, had no hesitation in admitting the authorship of Solomon; (3) that the Book contains obvious allusions to the works and character of Solomon, illustrating the account of his reign in the historical books of Scripture. It will be sufficient here to take the title as it stands, especially as the assumption of a later date need not interfere with the canonicity or authority of the book. In ancient days it was not unusual to introduce as a spokesman some well-known person of old times, as in the apocryphal Book of Wisdom; and sometimes in the Book of Psalms an author speaks not in his own name but in that of another person without any intention of asserting that the words were actually those of the so-named speaker. (See *Hengstenberg on Psalms* xlii., xliii., lxxxiv., lxxxvi.) The well-known instance of the introduction of Lælius as a speaker in Cicero's dialogue *De Senectute* is an example in classical writings.

INTRODUCTION.

We may therefore without further discussion assume that it is Solomon who is speaking, especially as commentators have in general spoken of the contents of this Book as *the words of Solomon*, without intending thereby to express any precise opinion of its authorship and date.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has given rise to many commentaries, both Jewish and Christian, from very early times. Of these commentaries a particular account will be found in Ginsburg's exhaustive treatise (*Introduction to Coheleth*). The earliest Jewish commentators, after the method of Midrash, had recourse to an allegorical explanation, and the same method was in general favour with the Christian Fathers. By this mode difficult passages were very easily disposed of. Thus the Chaldean paraphrast finds in "Eat and drink," &c. (ii. 24.), an exhortation to gather strength for the service of God; and St. Jerome sees an exhortation to eat the true bread and drink the true wine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But this evasion of difficulties, by making troublesome passages the text for mystical digression, is now generally abandoned, and explanations are and must be sought by a close examination of the sacred text.

But apart from the method of solving textual difficulties lies the question, What is the main purpose of the book? And this question has been very variously answered. It is not difficult to discover the source of such variety, if we briefly summarize what it contains.

1. A declaration of the vanity of human life, seen in—
 - a. The unalterable round of natural phenomena and events, i. 4—11;
 - b. The unsatisfying character of pleasures sensual and intellectual, i. 16—18; ii. 1—11; iv. 4.
2. A denunciation of the oppression of tyrants, and complaints of the sufferings of the innocent, iii. 16; iv. 1—3; v. 8.
3. Wise maxims as to religion and morals, vii. 1—22; ix. 2, 4, 7—10; x. 1—4, 8—20; xi.; xii. 1, 8, 13.
4. Advice for the conduct of life in this troublesome world, ii. 24—26; iii. 12—14; v. 18—20; vii. 13, 14; ix. 7—10; xi. 9, 10; xii. 1, 13.
5. Admonition to a tranquil enjoyment of the recreations of life, iii. 12—14; iv. 6; v. 19.
6. Intimations of a future judgment, iii. 17; viii. 11—13; xi. 9; xii. 14.
7. Declaration of the mysterious character of the dispensations of Providence, which it is beyond the power of man to explain or fathom, i. 13—15; iii. 11, 21; vi. 12; viii. 17; xi. 5.
8. Panegyric of wisdom, vii. 11, 12; ix. 13—18.
9. Exhortation to the fear of God, v. 7; vii. 18; viii. 12, 13; xii. 13.

The *main purpose* of the Book will be determined according as stress is laid on one or other of these topics. Jerome (followed by most of the early Church Fathers) in days in which an ascetic life was held in high esteem, maintained that the design of Koheleth was "to shew the utter vanity of every sublunary enjoyment, and hence the necessity of be- taking oneself to an ascetic life, devoted entirely to the service of God." Luther, with many of the early Reformers, contending against a false asceticism, held that "the design of this book is to teach us to use with grateful hearts the things present and the creatures of God, which are

INTRODUCTION.

“bountifully bestowed upon us, by the goodness of God, without anxiety about future temporal blessings; to have a quiet and tranquil heart, and to have a mind full of cheerfulness and contentment with the will and designs of God.” Others, seeing that the search after true happiness was a leading subject of inquiry among ancient philosophers, thought that Koheleth was a philosophical disquisition on the Chief Good, shewing in what it did not and in what it did consist.

Some have believed that they can discover in the Book of Ecclesiastes a distinct reference to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies, and have even conjectured that, those philosophies having become in vogue in Palestine, our Author wrote his treatise in order to expose their weakness, and to substitute for them that system of theology which had been developed among the Jews. But a careful examination of the contents of Ecclesiastes will scarcely confirm the supposition upon which the whole theory depends.

The Stoic system of Physics, on which the main stress is laid, was not surely the observation or record of phenomena which were obvious to every one at all times; but the invention of an hypothesis according to which all these phenomena should be reduced to one common law. The prominent features in the Stoic Physics were the recurrence of the order of the universe in fixed cycles with unbroken regularity, each cycle being closed by a conflagration, after which the order of events began anew, the same agents appeared on the scene and the same actions were performed. Of this conflagration, of these cycles, of this reappearance of agents, we discover nothing in Ecclesiastes. What we do read of is the recurrence of sunrise and sunset, the periodical courses of winds, the return of the seasons, the flow of rivers into the ocean, and the like—phenomena which could never have escaped the notice of thoughtful men; which may have suggested, nay, in fact, often have suggested reflections similar to those recorded by the Preacher, independently of reference to or acquaintance with former systems of philosophy. If we turn to Stoic Morals we find the traces still more obscure. One great principle of the Stoics was to live “in conformity with nature,” and this, it is thought, is *distinctly* referred to in Eccles. iii. 2—8, where a fixed season or natural time is assigned to all things. But in Eccles. viii. 6, 7, it teaches us to observe the order of Divine Providence in the “time” (season) “for every purpose.” At any rate, such a reference cannot be said to intimate, much less to prove, that the Author had the Stoic Morals in his mind.

The passages in which a reference is imagined to the Epicurean philosophy (e.g. iii. 22; ix. 7; xi. 9.) are too general and unsystematic to form the basis of any solid argument. The truth is that the questionings of Ecclesiastes are common to all thinkers. In the East, the home of philosophy, to which all Grecian sages owed so much, they were entertained centuries before the birth of Zeno; and without laying too much stress upon his Eastern origin and connections, we may assume that the subjects of Zeno’s thought were those current in the country to which he belonged, and that his task was to mould them into a system. The parallelism of Stoicism and Ecclesiastes are not such as to oblige us to suppose either that Zeno borrowed his philosophy from the Jews, or that the Preacher had studied the writings of Zeno and Epicurus.

Much in the same way the supposed references to Pharisaic (v. 1, &c.), Sadducean (xi. 9; xii. 14.), and Essenian views (ii. 24; v. 18, 19.) are simply warnings against tendencies which were then only in the

INTRODUCTION.

bud, but at a later period attained their full growth and systematic development.

Others maintain that this Book is intended to set bounds to inquiry, and to convince man that his reason is utterly unable to penetrate the ultimate design of the Deity, or even all the secrets of His works in nature; that it can never succeed in discovering all the hidden powers that are at work in the world; and consequently that man has no right to complain of the apparent contradictions that he meets with, much less to suffer himself to be led by them into error.

There is, however, in these various theories less disagreement than might at first sight appear. For, while it is in dispute, which is the *main topic* of the book, it is agreed that the several topics are, each in its turn, treated and enforced. It must be added that among the early Jews, who held to the Solomonic authorship, the opinion was current that the wise monarch wrote it in extreme old age, after he had fallen into sin, and then recovered from it, and that the Book is to be regarded as "Solomon's penitential confession" or "Solomon's recantation." But there is, in truth, no special expression either of repentance or recantation, nor do we find in the historical books any record of such repentance (see 1 Kings xi. 4—10.). Others, who assign the Book to a later date, conceive that it was intended to comfort and instruct the Jewish people when they were in a state of suffering under foreign oppressors. Others, observing the diversity of certain passages, regarded the Book as a dialogue, and have suggested ingenious arrangements to reduce the Book to such a form, or have found in it two voices, one that of the dissatisfied inquirer, the other of an answerer and reprover.

With certain modifications this last-named view seems to throw light upon the Book before us. The Preacher exhibits, for the purpose of correcting, the despondency of one who, distracted by the contemplation of the evils of the world, is in danger of losing his faith in God's Providence, and his hope of contentment and satisfaction; and guides the complainer to see in the very dispensations which confuse him indications of present government and warnings of future judgment, and so enforces practical lessons of wisdom, patience, and obedience, and the fear of God.

But it must not be forgotten that the Preacher even in his morbid complaints often touches a real evil—and the fault lies not in the recognition but in the exaggeration of this evil, and in the failure to discover good underlying the evils of the world. Revelation can give the true solution to the riddle of the universe. See Rom. v. 3—5; 1 St. Pet. iv. 12, 13. The Preacher teaches acquiescence, the Apostle joy in suffering.

The connection between the various parts of the Book will be examined in the course of this Commentary.

The Author begins in doubt and perplexity; and although light gradually breaks in upon him, the same doubts recur (a circumstance highly natural and pathetic), and knowledge is only partially supplied. As he proceeds he becomes more positive in his instructions—he stands, as it were, on firm ground—recognising more clearly the Hand of Providence, and discovering in his very difficulties the necessity of acknowledging some Superior Power. The doctrines of a future life, and a future judgment open upon him, as the solution of his doubts and difficulties, until at last the mist rolls away—earthly enjoyment becomes possible, when seen to be the gift of God, and the whole course of the world, strange and mysterious though it be, leads up to "the conclusion

INTRODUCTION.

“ of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep His commandments : for this
“ is the whole duty of man ” (xii. 13.).

The tone of mind here seen, and its remedy, may be illustrated by the well-known incident in the life of Elijah, when he lay in despondency on Mount Horeb. The apparent triumph of evil over good, the wrongs and miseries of the world, had led him to utter the weary cry, “ It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life ; for I am not better than my “ fathers ” (1 Kings xix. 4.). In answer the Lord discovers in the earthquake and the storm a part of His ways, encourages the Prophet with His presence in the still small voice, strengthens him with Angels’ food, and sends him back invigorated and reassured to the duties that were yet before him.

“ Back then, complainer ; loath thy life no more,

“ Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore,

“ Because the rocks the nearer prospect close.

“ Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes

“ That day by day in prayer like thine arise :

“ Thou know’st them not, but their Creator knows.

“ Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast

“ Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last

“ In joy to find it after many days.

“ The work be thine, the fruit thy children’s part :

“ Choose to believe, not see : sight tempts the heart

“ From sober walking in true Gospel ways.”

(Keble, Ninth Sunday after Trinity.)

Many of the doubts and difficulties raised by sceptics in the present day may be found in the morbid utterances of Koheleth in his despondency ; and they may be traced to the same sources. Luxury and wealth, flowing into Jerusalem, led Solomon to the self-indulgence of body and mind, which, knowing no trouble, finds no permanent enjoyment. The minute study of material things shut his eyes to spiritual truth, and induced him to limit his researches to the objects of his senses, and to expect to find herein answers to his inquiries. The speculative doubts of Koheleth were those of a luxurious and intellectual age. Human nature is ever the same, and under the same circumstances the same mental phenomena arise. As we read this Book, we see that many would-be philosophers of our own day are only wandering in the mazes in which the Hebrew was well-nigh lost, but from which he found the clue for escape (xii. 13.).

Ecclesiastes is one of the so-called Poetical Books. The structure is not indeed rhythmical, but has that arrangement of words and phrases which is characteristic of Hebrew poetry (see Introduction to Proverbs, Sect. 6.).

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, Who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto Thy people, that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ECCLESIASTES, I.

CHAPTER I.

- 1 *The preacher sheweth that all human courses are vain: 4 because the creatures are restless in their courses, 9 they bring forth nothing new, and all old things are forgotten, 12 and because he hath found it so in the studies of wisdom.*

^a ver. 12.
ch. 7. 27. &
12. 8, 9, 10.
^b Ps. 39. 5, 6.
& 62. 9.
& 144. 4.
ch. 12. 8.
^c Rom. 8. 20.

- 1 **T**HE words ^a of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.
- 2 ^b Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, Vanity of vanities ; ^c all *is* vanity.
-

CHAPTER I.

1. The Person who speaks.

1. "Preacher." On the original word *Koheleth*, see Introduction.

"The son of David." On the question of the authorship of this book, see Introduction. The person who is represented speaking can scarcely be other than Solomon, a king who made Jerusalem famous as the capital of his dominion, the place of his abode, eminent above all other kings for riches and wisdom.

The Subject of the Book—The Vanity of Human Life.

2. "Vanity of vanities." The Hebrew mode of expressing a superlative degree. Comp. Dan. ix. 24, "the most holy," literally, "Holy of holies." Comp. Exod. xl. 10. Lev. ii. 3. See note on Cant. i. 1. The Hebrew word for "vanity" means literally "breath" or "vapour." Hence the phrase "vanity of vanities" is a forcible expression for "utter emptiness." This is used to denote either the emptiness and worthlessness of all outward objects as in ii. 15, 19 ; viii. 10, 14. (comp. Rom. viii. 20 ;) or the emptiness and futility of man's thoughts and strivings, as in i. 14 ; ii. 11.

The feeling which prompted this cry was not that of mere satiety after a long life of indulgence,—the weariness of spirit, when the sweets of earth pall upon the appetite, and what once pleased can please no more. To this stage indeed Solomon had come, but the prevailing feeling here is a sense of man's insignificance gathered from the survey of the world around him, when earth, sea, and sky seem to proclaim with one voice, "Man is a thing of nought." Such a thought often arises in minds of the highest order. The student of nature is oppressed by the vastness of his subject, the man of science awed by the uniformity of the laws which he investigates, the philosopher is bewildered by his speculations, and over each in turn comes the darkling thought What is man ? for what purpose is he here ? Under such a feeling the Preacher opens his subject. But this book is not simply a record of the feelings of any individual, however great and wise. It is the Divine recognition of a state of mind natural to man when unenlightened by wisdom from on high, and it is delivered to us that we may not think this fiery trial strange, as though some new thing were happening to us, and that we may hear the words by which God in old time allayed such misgivings. We must, however, remember that this treatise was written before the Son of God brought full light into the world, before the true dignity of man and the purpose of his being was revealed by the Incarnation of Christ. It was

ECCLESIASTES, I.

- 3 ¶^d What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? d ch. 2. 22.
& 3. 9.
- 4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh:
^e but the earth abideth for ever. e Ps. 104. 5.
& 119. 90.

only when Christ had elevated our nature by taking it upon Himself, and having ascended up on high "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 6.), that the true solution was made fully known, and the emptiness of human life was filled with all the fulness of God. Comp. 2 Tim. i. 10.

The utterances of the inspired Preacher did indeed point forward to this solution, as the prophets spake of Christ yet "vainly tried the deeps to sound even of their own prophetic thought." We must not forget in reading this Book the difference between the Old Testament and the New.

3—11. The Reign of Law:

The unbroken succession of the operations of nature impresses upon the mind the insignificance of man, and the fruitlessness of his labours (ver. 3.). One generation after another passes away and leaves the earth unchanged, the same sun rising, the same winds blowing, the same rivers running into the same sea (vv. 4—7.). All is perpetual motion, in a circle (ver. 6.). Everything repeats itself (vv. 9, 10.). New actors are performing the same drama which former actors, now forgotten, performed (ver. 11.). He who observes this must see that all is vanity. On the doctrine of the Stoical Round, and its bearings on this Book, see Introduction.

3. "Which he taketh." Lit. "which he laboureth," a form of expression denoting severe labour. "Under the sun" (a phrase common in this book), i.e. upon earth, so long as he lives, i. 14; ii. 11; and elsewhere.

4. The succession of generation to generation has always suggested the idea of man's insignificance. "As of the green leaves on a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood, one cometh to an end, and another is born" (Ecclus. xiv. 18.).

"The earth abideth for ever." Mendelssohn discusses the question whether this text asserts the eternity of the earth; and while he denies that the text declares that the earth existed from all eternity, which would be contrary to the teaching of Moses, he seems to infer, as some Jewish doctors did, that the earth will last for ever. This is a specimen of the verbal method of interpretation common with Jewish rabbis, but not suitable to Christian liberty. Viewed with its context, it is plain that all which is expressed is the continuance of the earth compared with earth's inhabitants. It is the same earth which former races have peopled and which coming races shall people, when we have passed away. Is not this a thought especially suggestive of the nothingness of man? I have seen one of the early numbers of the *Times* newspaper. It contained an announcement of one of Nelson's victories, the story of crimes then committed, of events which had just occurred, a list of births, deaths, and marriages,—and the thought came over me: so shall others in future years read the newspaper of to-day—there will then perhaps be battles and victories, and crimes, certainly births,

ECCLESIASTES, I.

^f Ps. 19. 5, 6.

5 ^f The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and ² hasteth to his place where he arose.

² Heb. *panteth.*

^g John 3. 8.

6 ^g The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north ;
it whirleth about continually,
and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

^h Job 38. 10.
Ps. 104. 8, 9.

7 ^h All the rivers run into the sea ; yet the sea *is* not full ;

unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they ³ return again.

³ Heb. *return to go.*

deaths, and marriages, but the names and the persons will be different: "one generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth."

5. "The sun ariseth." The repetition of sunrise and sunset at exact intervals has ever been seen to be a striking instance of the constancy of the laws by which God orders the world—but besides this, the sun's continuous rise or decline in the heavens presents a natural image of human life, which every poet has been accustomed to employ. The two ideas are both suggested here, the regular rising and setting, and the hastening to run his course.

"To his place." The accents in the Hebrew text shew that this clause is literally, "even to his place, rising, panting thither;" not, as in our Authorised Version, "where he arose," but the place destined for him, the place of his rest. The two participles express an action combining the notion of each verb, "rising" and "hastening" the sun is hurrying on as he rises. No sooner has he risen, than he draws on towards his setting,—a suitable image of ceaseless and yet uniform change.

6. "The wind . . . turneth about." Modern investigations have discovered the circular character of atmospheric changes. Not only do storms move in circles, eddying round a centre, but the whole atmosphere is in perpetual circulation; the hot air rising from the equator, and flowing northward and southward to be cooled at the poles, and thence returning to be again heated, and to repeat the like process with currents regular and defined. Some have recognized in this verse an anticipation of scientific discovery. But it is enough to suppose that Solomon, a careful observer of nature, had seen in the recurrence of certain winds (such as the trade winds), at certain periods of the year, the ebb and flow which it is here his purpose to illustrate.

"It whirleth about continually." Lit. "it goeth round and round," descriptive not so much of the whirling of the wind, as of its coming back to its accustomed quarter at the appointed season.

7. "Thither they return again." The latter part of this verse may be translated thus: to the place "whither the rivers are going, thither they will be going again." If the reading of our Authorised Version be retained, it expresses that the waters which are carried into the sea are in some way or other drawn back again to supply their sources afresh—but the latter rendering is more in harmony with the context. In future ages, as now, the rivers will be still flowing towards the sea, ever flowing, never overflowed. Men may come, and men may

ECCLESIASTES, I.

8 All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*:

ⁱ the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear ⁱ Prov. 27. 20. filled with hearing.

9 ^k The thing that hath been, *it is that* which shall be; ^k ch. 3. 15. and that which is done *is that* which shall be done:

go, but the stream flows on for ever. How many a man has stood beside some river and bethought himself how this same river was flowing, when different races, with different habits, were standing upon its banks watching, as he himself is watching now, the motions of its waves. And has not there then been impressed a thought of the fleeting nature of man's existence. "What is your life? It is even "a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (St. James iv. 14.).

8. "All things are full of labour," are wearied with constant motion. The same word "weary" is used in Deut. xxv. 18 of one faint and weary with a long journey.

"Man cannot utter it." The weariness is past description.

"The eye . . ." This constant motion of all things round us is like the constant activity of the bodily senses. The eye and the ear are never at rest, a restlessness which suggests and causes the lassitude under which the Preacher is now labouring, tired of seeing, tired of hearing, and yet constrained to see and hear, and then to ask himself, Oh! when shall the weary be at rest?

9. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." This recurrence of natural phenomena is paralleled by the recurrence of human actions and human thoughts. There are the same virtues, the same vices, the same successes, the same failures, the same efforts, the same disappointments. Ancient monuments have shewn how like men's ordinary occupations are now to what they were some thousand years ago. Remarkable inventions of modern days have been anticipated in times of a remote civilization. The appliance of modern machinery cannot erect more magnificent structures or produce more exquisite fabrics than were erected and produced in Egypt before Moses was born. But we need not insist on the literal exactness of this description. It is not the fact but the feeling which is recorded. Here are the morbid utterances of a desponding spirit, which finds in all around a mere wearisome routine, and incapable of enjoyment, cries out in despair, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Seneca furnishes a striking comment to this paragraph. "There comes over "men, sometimes, a sense of weariness; they are tired of seeing and of "hearing, and view life, not with hatred, but with disgust. They glide "on into this state of mind, under the impulse of philosophy itself, "and ask themselves, How long is everything to be the same? Must I for "ever be waking or sleeping, now hungry and now full, now hot and now "cold? nothing has an end, but all move round in a circle of perpetual "sequences. Day follows night, night day—summer declines into autumn, "autumn is displaced by winter, which in turn gives way to spring. All "things pass away and return again; I see nothing new—I do nothing "new. At times this too is bitter to the taste—and life becomes, not a "misery, but a superfluity" (*Senec. Epist. xxiv.*).

and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new?

It hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

^{i ver. 1.} 12 ¶ ¹I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom

12—18. The Enquiry undertaken, and the Results unsatisfactory.

Sensible of this condition, the Preacher sets himself to inquire into the cause, and finds the inquiry laborious and painful. He had looked into all that was being done under the sun, and he saw evil without a remedy, perversity incapable of correction (vv. 13—15.). Gifted with more than ordinary wisdom, he proceeded to investigate the distinctive characters of wisdom, and of madness and folly, and he could discover nothing that was not vain and unsubstantial (ver. 16.).

12. "Was king over Israel in Jerusalem." The Preacher declares his rank in order to shew that he had all the advantages of position to enable him to carry out his inquiry. Solomon was king "over" united "Israel" in Jerusalem, where he built the Temple and his own palace. Some Rabbinical commentators explain "I was king" as implying "I am king no more;" and the desire to obtain this meaning seems to have given birth to the legend that Solomon, having departed from the ways of the Lord, was dethroned by Ashmodæus, king of the Dæmons, and was expelled from his capital, as an example of the effects of sin; that then the ex-monarch went about the provinces of the land of Israel mourning his guilt and saying, "I am Koheleth, whose name was formerly Solomon, who was "king over Israel in Jerusalem, but through my sins have been driven "from my throne;" and that finally, on his repentance, he was restored to his kingdom (*Ginsburg, Introd. p. 33.*). The Scripture narrative not only gives no countenance to this legend, but is clearly inconsistent with it. Ginsburg maintains that the legend being inadmissible, the phrase "I was king" proves that the book was written by some other than Solomon, who never ceased to be king. But besides that the usage of the Hebrew tenses is not very exact, no other than the past tense could have been used here in any language. The writer recurs to a past time, when he "made great works," "builded houses," "planted vineyards;" he kept great state, and the fame of his wisdom went out into the whole earth. What could he say but "I *was* king?"

13. "By wisdom," by philosophical inquiry. The scientific study of "wisdom" or philosophy among the Hebrews was essentially religious,

concerning all *things* that are done under heaven :

^m this sore travail hath God given to the sons of ^{m Gen. 3. 19.}
man ² to be exercised therewith. ^{ch. 3 10.}

14 I have seen all the works that are done under ^{2 Or, to}
the sun ; ^{afflict them.}

and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

15 ⁿ *That which is crooked cannot be made straight* : ^{n ch. 7. 13.}

based upon the laws of God as revealed in the Old Testament. It was distinguished by its practical character from the Greek and Roman philosophy, which embraced so much of the theoretical. The Hebrew philosopher did not concern himself with the source of being or the origin of evil, but made the subject of his inquiries how man might order his life so as to secure the favour of God, and such happiness as the world might afford. The inquiry which the Preacher here describes was distinctly an application of Hebrew philosophy (*Lange's Introduction to the Proverbs of Solomon*, § 2.).

"**This sore travail.**" This clause is parenthetical. The Preacher in his present mood finds everything painful and laborious. The investigation which he is conducting is one of those toils which God imposes upon man, exercising him thereby in work which produces unsatisfactory results, for the inquiry of philosophers leads to no certain conclusion.

14. "**I have seen.**" Rather, "I saw;" as in ver. 13, "I gave," and ver. 16, "I communed;" for the Preacher is narrating his experience, and tells us how, when he turned himself to investigate philosophically the subject before him, he examined "all the works that are done," not merely man's works, but all that is going on, and found them to be vanity.

"**Vexation of spirit.**" The word rendered "spirit" means also "wind;" and since the original for "vexation" is rather derivable from a verb signifying "desire," "pursuit," the phrase would be more exactly rendered "a following after the wind" (comp. Hos. xii. 1.), empty and fruitless research. The phrase occurs seven times in this Book (here and ii. 11, 17, 26; iv. 4, 6; vi. 9.), and nowhere else. "Vexation of spirit," though rather a paraphrase, conveys the idea tolerably well, and has in fact become a proverbial expression. But the original is more forcible (see on ii. 11.).

15. This was what he saw. He saw in fact the anomalies and imperfections, both moral and physical, which this world presents to the searching inquiry of the philosopher. This has at all times perplexed those who have proceeded to the search simply upon philosophical principle. Revelation gives the only true account of the existence of evil, while at the same time it reveals the remedy, shewing how in the redemption of mankind by Christ the crooked shall be made straight, and that which was lacking shall be supplied. But in Solomon's day this was very imperfectly made known even to the wisest and the holiest of men—so that we are not to be surprised at the wise king's failure. May it not teach us, even in the present day, that such inquiries, if conducted independently of revelation, in reliance upon the power of human intellect, are no less likely to fail?

² Heb.
defect.

and ²that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying,
Lo, I am come to great estate,

^o 1 Kin. 3. 12,
13. & 4. 30.
& 10. 7, 23.
ch. 2. 9.

and have gotten ^omore wisdom than all *they* that
have been before me in Jerusalem :

³ Heb. *had*
seen much.

yea, my heart ³had great experience of wisdom
and knowledge.

^P ch. 2. 3, 12.
& 7. 23, 25.
1 Thes. 5. 21.

17 ^P And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to
know madness and folly :

I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

^q ch. 12. 12.

18 For ^qin much wisdom *is* much grief :
and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth
sorrow.

“That which is wanting cannot be numbered.” Rather, “cannot be made up, cannot be supplied.” The original word for “numbered” means, to add in reckoning that which is lacking to make up a full number.

16. “I am come to great estate.” Lit. “I made great.” In ii. 9, “I was great,” is expressed by a different form of the verb. In the Hebrew there are two verbs both governing wisdom. “I made great, “and I added wisdom.” I amassed wisdom, ever adding to my store, more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Comp. 1 Kings iv. 29—34.

17. “To know wisdom, and to know madness and folly.” This means to distinguish between wisdom on the one hand, and madness and folly on the other. This investigation is pursued in ii. 12, &c. “Madness,” the word means properly, “vain boasting, self-glorification.” Hence “loss of understanding.”

18. “In much wisdom is much grief.” The study of wisdom brings with it vexation and disappointment. The philosopher in the course of his researches finds out difficulties which had not before occurred to him. The problems of life press for solution, and the more earnestly he thinks, the more is he perplexed and confused. All this is intended to lead up to the recognition of the truth, that knowledge is from God, and that man must receive Divine illumination in order that he may have satisfaction in the pursuit of wisdom. This is drawn out more distinctly in viii. 16—ix. 1.

“Let Philosophy say what she will, the fact remains unshaken. It is “the consciousness of the deep wants of our human nature, that awakens “God’s presence in the soul. It is by adapting His Revelation to those “wants, that God graciously condescends to satisfy them. The time “may indeed come, though not in this life, when, these various manifesta- “tions of God ‘at sundry times and in divers manners’ (Heb. i. 1.), “may be seen to be but different sides and partial representations of one “and the same Divine Reality; when the light which now gleams in “restless flashes from the ruffled waters of the human soul will settle “into the steadfast image of God’s face shining on its unbroken surface. “But ere this shall be, that which is perfect must come, and that which “is in part must be done away. But as regards the human wisdom

ECCLESIASTES, II.

CHAPTER II.

1 *The vanity of human courses in the works of pleasure.* 12 *Though the wise be better than the fool, yet both have one event.* 18 *The vanity of human labour, in leaving it they know not to whom.* 24 *Nothing better than joy in our labour; but that is God's gift.*

1 ^a I SAID in mine heart,
Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth,
therefore enjoy pleasure:
and, behold, ^b this also is vanity.

^a Luke 12. 19.

^b Isai. 50. 11.

“which would lead us to this consummation now, there is but one lesson it can teach us; and *that* it teaches us in spite of itself. It teaches the lesson which the wise king of Israel learned from his own experience: ‘I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit’ (Eccles. i. 13, 14, 17.). And if ever the time should come to any of us, when, in the bitter conviction of that vanity and vexation, we, who would be as gods in knowledge, wake up only to the consciousness of our own nakedness, happy shall we be, if then we may still hear, ringing in our ears and piercing to our hearts, an echo from that personal life of Jesus, which our philosophy has striven in vain to pervert or to destroy: ‘Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God’” (*Mansell's Bampton Lectures*, Lect. v. *sub fin.*).

CHAPTER II.

The Processes by which the Preacher arrived at his Conclusion.

The processes were twofold. (vv. 1—11.) He made trial of all which earth could afford (1) in the pleasures of sense (vv. 1, 2.), and the more refined pleasures in which the mind was cultured at the same time that the body was indulged (ver. 3.). The construction of great works, gardens, pools, conduits, and the like, gave room for the exercise of the mind (vv. 5, 6.): so also the adornment of the palace, the sweet strains of music, delights of eye, ear (vv. 7—10.), but all in vain. (2) The second process was different, but grew out of the first. Finding that mere enjoyment (whether sensual or intellectual) was unsatisfactory, the Preacher proceeded to a more thorough investigation of the nature of wisdom and folly, in order to discover if the difference might not depend upon whether such enjoyments were accompanied by wisdom or by folly. He had had every opportunity of investigating the matter, for he above all men had been both wise and prosperous (ver. 12.). At first it seemed indisputable that wisdom was better than folly, as light is better than darkness. A wise man can guide his steps aright, and avoid many a snare into which the fool falls,—and yet the like accidents happen to the wise and to the foolish, and this seems to contradict the former position (ver. 15.). Then it may be said that the wise man, if he passes away, leaves behind him an honourable name and a sweet memory,—and yet how short-

ECCLESIASTES, II.

- ^c Prov. 14. 13. ch. 7. 6. 2 ^c I said of laughter, *It is mad* :
and of mirth, *What doeth it?*
- ^d ch. 1. 17. 3 ^d I sought in mine heart ² to give myself unto
² Heb. *to draw my flesh with wine.*
wine,
yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom ;
and to lay hold on folly,
till I might see what *was* that good for the sons
of men,
which they should do under the heaven ³ all the
days of their life.
- ³ Heb. *the number of the days of their life.* 4 I made me great works ;
I builded me houses ; I planted me vineyards :

lived is the remembrance of the best and wisest (ver. 16.). Or again, it may be thought that a wise man's works endure, he forms plans which succeed after his death,—and yet what is more common than an unworthy successor, undoing all that the wise man has provided? (vv. 18, 19.), and besides, the labours of the wisest and best do not always bear fruit. It seems then, after all, that wisdom cannot make provision for the future, and that it is best to secure present enjoyment. But then even this is not in man's power, but at the absolute disposal of God (vv. 24, 25.), so that wisdom, when tried every way, is found wanting. This Section is the expansion of i. 17, 18.

We must remember that the words of the Preacher are not meant to represent always sound conclusions, but rather the morbid views of one who is disgusted with life, because he has failed to find in it the satisfaction that he had hoped for. These views are corrected in the course of the Book (see Introduction).

2. "What doeth it?" What good does it produce?

3. "I sought in mine heart to give." I set myself upon the search how to give. "Sought." The verb is the same as that rendered "search," i. 13; and is properly to go about and examine carefully as spies search a land (Numb. xiii. 32.). "To give myself to wine." Lit. "to hold up my flesh" (to strengthen myself) "with wine" (comp. Ps. civ. 15.). This does not imply excess. His study was to find out how to use the pleasures of sense so wisely as to get real good out of them. The same "search" as i. 13.

"Yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom." Not abandoning, but rather courting intellectual enjoyment.

"And to lay hold on folly." "Folly," not recklessness, but simply the pleasures of sense as contrasted with the pleasures of the intellect, which he calls "wisdom" (i. 17.).

"What was that good." What was the best thing for men to do. The purpose was to find out by experiment, whether by care of the body or cultivation of the mind, what was the true good at which men should aim upon earth.

4. "I made me great works." Comp. 1 Kings v., vii., x. 2 Chron. ix.

"I planted me vineyards." Comp. Song of Solomon viii. 11: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon."

ECCLESIASTES, II.

- 5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all *kind of* fruits :
- 6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees :
- 7 I got *me* servants and maidens, and had ² ser-² Heb. sons of my house.
vants born in my house ;
also I had great possessions of great and small cattle
above all that were in Jerusalem before me :
- 8 ^e I gathered me also silver and gold, e 1 Kin. 9. 23. & 10. 10, 11, 21, &c.
and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces :
- I gat me men singers and women singers,
and the delights of the sons of men, ³ as ³ musical Heb. musical instrument and instruments.
instruments, and that of all sorts.

5. "Gardens and orchards." Solomon enclosed a garden in a beautiful valley at the foot of the mountains near Bethlehem, a garden filled with fruit trees of all kinds. Comp. Song of Solomon iv. 12, 13.

6. "Pools." These "pools" were reservoirs in which water was gathered and distributed by aqueducts throughout the city and neighbouring land. The pools of Solomon are still shewn not far from the garden which he constructed near Bethlehem. Comp. 2 Kings xx. 20. Neh. iii. 15, 16. Isa. xxii. 11.

"The wood that bringeth forth trees." Plantations in which young trees were reared and cultivated.

7. "Born in my house." Slaves, the children of slaves. Comp. Gen. xiv. 14 ; xv. 3 ; xvii. 12, 27.

"Great cattle" were oxen, asses, camels ; "small cattle," sheep and goats.

8. "Silver and gold." Comp. 2 Chron. ix. 20, 27. 1 Kings x. 27. "The king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones," 2 Chron. i. 15.

"Peculiar treasure." The original word means that which is much in request and precious, kept in a treasury to take pride and delight in, and which is only found in particular provinces (*Mendelssohn*). Such treasures were brought in from the subject provinces to Solomon (1 Kings iv. 21.).

"Men singers and women singers." These are mentioned by Barzillai as part of David's court. "Can I hear any more the voice of "singing men, and singing women?" (2 Sam. xix. 35.). Music was a constant accompaniment of feasts among the Hebrews (Isa. v. 12. Amos vi. 5.).

"Musical instruments, and that of all sorts," Rather, "a plentiful "store." The Hebrew words have been very variously translated. The plurality is expressed by a noun in the singular coupled with the same noun in the plural (see *margin*) ; as in Judges v. 30, "a damsel or two." The noun is most probably derived from a verb "to spoil." Hence "spoils of all sorts." This may include the captive women which Solomon gathered together, but does not specially allude to them.

ECCLESIASTES, II.

- f ch. 1. 16. 9 So ^fI was great, and increased
more than all that were before me in Jerusalem:
also my wisdom remained with me.
- 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not
from them,
I withheld not my heart from any joy;
for my heart rejoiced in all my labour:
and ^gthis was my portion of all my labour.
- g ch. 3. 22. &
5. 18. & 9. 9.

10. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired." We need not suppose that Solomon refers to sinful pleasures; but the mere gratification of natural appetite, even though innocent, and the exercise of mental faculties, though in some sort praiseworthy, failed to satisfy. So Moses desired to see "God's glory."

"Yet not that gorgeous place, nor aught
Of human or angelic frame,
Could half appease his craving thought;
The void was still the same.
"Shew me Thy glory, gracious Lord,
"'Tis Thee,' he cries, 'not Thine I seek.'—
"Nay, start not at so bold a word
From man, frail worm and weak:
The spark of his first deathless fire
Still buoys him up, and high above
The holiest creature, dares aspire
To his Creator's love."

(Keble, Christian Year.)

St. John mentions "the lust of the eyes" as "not of the Father, but of the world" (1 St. John ii. 16.). The Apostle supplies the comment which the experience of Solomon should have suggested: "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 St. John ii. 15.).

"My heart rejoiced." This "joy" was however fallacious, it was akin to the "mirth" of which Solomon had already said "what doeth it?" (ver. 2.).

"This was my portion." Comp. St. Matt. vi. 2: "They have their reward." "This passing enjoyment was all that accrued to me from my labour, just the pleasure of doing it, with no good result, no lasting profit." Is not this the experience of many a man who devotes himself to the business in which he is engaged? He sets himself resolutely to do what is before him, to take all the enjoyment that he can from so doing; and then when the business is over his pleasure is over too. There may be weariness of body, and yet there is no sense of enjoyment in rest. Occupation is wanted, even when it is accompanied with labour—for man is trying to derive from the world or from outward life a satisfaction which they were not intended to supply. If we are employed for the good of others we may make to ourselves friends of the manmion of unrighteousness; if all our work is for ourselves, then we have our reward, the enjoyment of occupation—and this alone is the profit of all our labour.

ECCLESIASTES, II.

- 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands
 had wrought,
 and on the labour that I had laboured to do :
 and, behold, all *was* ^hvanity and vexation of ^hch. 1. 3, 14.
 spirit,
 and *there was* no profit under the sun.
- 12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, ⁱ and ⁱch. 1. 17.
 madness, and folly : & 7. 25.
 for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the
 king ?
- ² *Even* that which hath been already done. ² Or, *in those things which have been already done.*
- 13 Then I saw ³ that wisdom excelleth folly,
 as far as light excelleth darkness.
- 14 ^k The wise man's eyes *are* in his head ;
 but the fool walketh in darkness :
 and I myself perceived also that ¹ one event hap-
 peneth to them all. ³ Heb. *that there is an excellency in wisdom more than in folly, &c.*
^k Prov. 17. 24. ch. 8. 1.
- 15 Then said I in my heart,
 as it happeneth to the fool, so it ⁴ happeneth ¹ Ps. 49. 10. ch. 9. 2, 3, 11.
 even to me ; ⁴ Heb. *happeneth to me, even to me.*

11. "Then I looked on." The original is somewhat more forcible, "Then I turned to." After the works were completed he turned to contemplate what he had done, and the result was simply the conviction that to attempt to derive from them profit or real satisfaction was but to follow the wind, and to grasp a shadow. All was empty and unsubstantial. Alexander is said to have wept that he had no more worlds to conquer, and many a man who has struggled through difficulties and obstacles with content and even delight, has found when all obstacles have been removed, that he has been pursuing a mere phantom, and that the pleasure of the chase was the utmost fruit of his pains.

12. The Preacher now enters upon the second part of his experiences—the investigation of the difference between wisdom and folly. See heading of Section.

"For what can the man do." I undertook the investigation the more readily, because no one that should come after me could do so with more advantages for finding out this difference. He could only go over the ground which others had trodden before him.

13. "Then I saw." I saw indeed. This at least seemed clear.

14. "The wise man's eyes are in his head." The wise man can see his way, and so escape many an evil, into which a fool heedlessly runs. Comp. vii. 12.

"And I myself." "And yet I." The same person who had seen so clearly that wisdom was better than folly, found that notwithstanding all the precautions which wisdom can take, the wise man is liable to the same accidents as the fool.

15. So it appears that there is little advantage in wisdom over folly, so far as concerns providing against the accidents of life.

ECCLESIASTES, II.

and why was I then more wise ?

Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity.

16 For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever ;

seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten.

And how dieth the wise *man* ? as the fool.

17 Therefore I hated life ; because the work that is wrought under the sun *is* grievous unto me : for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

² Heb.
laboured.

18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had ² taken under the sun :

^m Ps. 49. 10.

because ^m I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool ?

Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured,

and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun.

This *is* also vanity.

20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.

21 For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity ;

16. The argument in favour of wisdom's superiority is not stated but implied and answered. See heading of Section.

18. Another reason why wisdom has no advantage over folly. See heading of Section.

19. "Who knoweth." We can scarcely fail to recognize some allusions to the foolish Rehoboam. The wise king could scarcely have failed to discover the true character of the son who should succeed him—and knowing the thought and care by which he had himself achieved the greatness which gave to Jerusalem for the time the predominance in the world, he could not but be aware that all this glorious fabric depended upon a wise ruler, and must in the hands of a foolish king break up and pass away. The order of Providence, according to which good and wise kings have so often been succeeded by bad and foolish successors, is too evident to be overlooked. In Judah Ahaz follows Jotham, Marnasseh Hezekiah, the excellent Josiah gives place to his unworthy sons. So in other history, Commodus is the son and successor of M. Aurelius, Edward II. of Edward I. of England, and Richard II. is the grandson of Edward III.

ECCLESIASTES, II.

yet to a man that hath not laboured therein
shall he ²leave it *for* his portion.

² Heb. *give*.

This also *is* vanity and a great evil.

22 ^a For what hath man of all his labour, and of ⁿ *ch.* 1. 3.
the vexation of his heart, & 3. 9.

wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

23 For all his days *are* ^o sorrows, and his travail ^o *Job* 5. 7.
grief; & 14. 1.

yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.

This is also vanity.

24 ^p *There is nothing better for a man*
than that he should eat and drink, ^p *ch.* 3. 12,
13. 22, &
5. 18. & 8. 15.
and *that* he ³ should make his soul enjoy good in ³ *Or, delight*
his labour. *his senses.*

This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God.

21. "His portion." The portion of the heir to do what he pleases therewith. The miser must bethink himself how the wealth he has accumulated with so much pain will be at the mercy of his heir, who will probably waste and misuse it. The owner who takes delight in cultivating and improving an estate, must remember that his heir will very probably care little for it, perhaps neglect and dispose of it. How often have men endeavoured to avert this by their wills, to keep a hold as it were on their goods even after death, and how conspicuous has been the frustration of all such endeavours.

22. The Preacher, by the consideration that all his acquisitions must be left to his heirs to dispose of at their pleasure, is led to moralize upon the uselessness of all the trouble and toil which has occupied his whole life. "It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest" (Ps. cxxvii. 2.). And it would indeed be vain, if all our ends were to get profit for ourselves out of what we have done or gotten. This underlies the whole complaint of the Preacher, uttered by him in a morbid state of mind, or rather intended to describe an unhealthy feeling, which he is about to set himself to correct. If we look for selfish profit from our labours on earth, we find that the very best we can obtain is such a transient pleasure as they may yield at the time we are engaged in them.

24. "There is nothing better for a man than." *Than*, as the italics shew, is not in the original. Its insertion, with the comparative, alters the whole sense of the passage. Probably our translators, like many recent commentators, thought that it had fallen from the text, and corrected it by iii. 12, where the Hebrew words are the same with the addition of *but*. "There is no good for man" (not "a man" but man generally), but that he should rejoice, &c. The same result is obtained in the Vulgate and by Luther by making the sentence interrogative, "Is it not good?" and this is perhaps more suitable to the context. In despair the Preacher asks at last, "Is it not good," &c.

"Make." Rather, "let his soul enjoy good." Man cannot *make himself* but only *let himself* be happy.

"This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God." I saw

ECCLESIASTES, II.

25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto*, more than I?

² Heb.
before him,
Gen. 7. 1.
Luke 1. 6.

26 For *God* giveth to a man that *is* good ²in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy :

but to the sinner he giveth travail,
to gather and to heap up,

⁴ Job 27. 16,
17.
Prov. 23. 8.

that ⁴ he may give to *him that is* good before God.
This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER III.

1 *By the necessary change of times, vanity is added to human travail. 11 There is an excellency in God's works. 16 But as for man, God shall judge his works there, and here he shall be like a beast.*

that this very power of enjoyment was not in man's power, but of God's will.

25. "Who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto more than I?" If this reading be retained, it means that Solomon above all men had the opportunity of making the experiment. But it would be better to read, "who can eat, or who can enjoy apart from Him¹. The Hebrew verb "hasten" (*hereunto* is not in the original) means, to be in haste, and hence actively to enjoy with the senses.

26. The Preacher now is led to enunciate a dogmatic truth (comp. Rom. ii. 5—10, where, as might be expected, the future judgment is more clearly brought out) : but in this truth the Preacher finds no rest. Nay, his remaining hopes are dashed by the sense of man's powerlessness, and so even the assertion of God's Almighty power leads to the reiteration of the cry—"This also is vanity." See remarks at the opening of the chapter. It seems as though Solomon was struggling into light, and that the thought, though as yet imperfectly comprehended, crossed his mind that he had forgotten God and sinned against Him, and that this might be the root of his bitterness. It is remarkable that in the apocryphal book of Wisdom much of the complaint contained in the early part of Ecclesiastes is put into the mouth of the ungodly. "For the ungodly said, "reasoning with themselves, but not aright, Our life is short and tedious, "and in the death of a man there is no remedy" (Wisdom ii. 1. and the following verses).

CHAPTER III.

1—15. The First Remedy against Despondency, Acquiescence in the Will of God.

The Preacher has hitherto only stated his difficulty, but in the stating, it has been brought a step nearer its solution. He *now* observes that the events of life are not accidental, but disposed in due order, each having its appointed season (vv. 1—8.). There must then be a purpose and design, though men may not be able to find it out. All must be suitable in its own time (vv. 9—11.), and therefore it is man's part cheerfully to acquiesce in what God appoints for him (vv. 12—15.). Comp. viii. 6, &c.

¹ In Hebrew the particle *him* () differs very slightly from *me* (), and the original is much more accurately represented by *apart from* than by "more than." The former reading is that of eight Hebrew MSS., the LXX. and Syriac Versions (*Lange*), and suits the context better than that in our Version, so that we need not hesitate to adopt it.

ECCLESIASTES, III.

- 1 **T**O every *thing there is* a season, and a ^a time ^{a ver. 17.}
ch. 8. 6.
to every purpose under the heaven :
- 2 a time ² to be born, and ^b a time to die ; ² Heb.
to bear.
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that* ^b
Heb. 9. 27.
which is planted ;
- 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal ;
a time to break down, and a time to build up ;
- 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh ;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance ;
- 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather
stones together ;
a time to embrace, and ^c a time ³ to refrain from ^c
Joel 2. 16.
embracing ; 1 Cor. 7. 5.
³ Heb. *to be*
far from.
⁴ Or, *seek.*
- 6 a time to ⁴ get, and a time to lose ;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away ;
- 7 a time to rend, and a time to sew ;
^d a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ; ^d Amos 5. 13.
- 8 a time to love, and a time to ^e hate ; ^e Luke 14. 26.
a time of war, and a time of peace.
- 9 ^f What profit hath he that worketh in that ^f ch. 1. 3.
wherein he laboureth ?

1. "A season." We have here the correction of the morbid thought. True all things recur, but they recur at seasons appointed by God, and therefore though they bring sorrow, they cannot be a mere breath and vapour, a mere gust of wind of which we cannot say whence it cometh and whither it goeth. See on i. 14.

3. "A time to kill, and a time to heal." There are times (such as those of war) in which even "killing" has its purpose and end.

"For working out God's pure intent,

"Are men on mutual slaughter bent."—(*Wordsworth.*)

And there is a time in which, by God's help, the art of the physician is enabled to find remedies for disease—to bind up wounds, and to strengthen the feeble limbs.

5. "To cast away stones." To clear the ground of stones for the purposes of cultivation.

"To gather stones together." For the purpose of building houses or fencing off the fields.

7. "A time to rend." Such was the time when "David rent his clothes" (2 Sam. i. 11.).

"A time to sew." As the time when David put off signs of mourning (2 Sam. xii. 20.).

9. "What profit." This same question was put before, i. 3, and then introduced a mournful strain of disappointed hope and ineffectual desire. Now it is repeated in order to open a more cheering view of life, by leading the mind up to God. When we seem to stand alone in the vast universe all is blank despondency, but we look up again so soon as we understand that God is over us and among us.

ECCLESIASTES, III.

but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

13 And also ^k that every man should eat and ^k ch. 2. 24. drink,
and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever :

¹ nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken ¹ Jam. 1. 17. from it :

and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

15 ^m That which hath been is now ;
and that which is to be hath already been ;
and God requireth ² that which is past.

^m ch. 1. 9.
² Heb.
that which is driven away.

continuance of all anxious labour after worldly goods. But he has advanced beyond the gloomy state described in the first two chapters, when he sees that "the good of all his labour" is of God, and therefore that he may rightfully take that which is assigned to him, and in taking it find the satisfaction which is the reward of a thankful heart.

"There is no good in them." Rather, "for them," i.e. for men (see ver. 11, *their* heart). Comp. ii. 24, "For a man," or, rather "for man" (see note on ii. 24.).

"To do good." Here is an important addition. In ii. 24. we find "to enjoy good," here "to do good." Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 3. It is related of a worldling who complained that there was nothing worth living for, that a friend replied, Did you ever try doing good?

14. "Fear before him." Comp. Ps. xxxiii. 8.

15. The order of the world is now distinctly ascribed to the will of God. It is because God doeth it, because the decrees of God cannot be changed by men, that all appears to go on in unbroken irresistible uniformity (comp. viii. 6.). When man seems to be a mere puppet moved by a blind destiny, as by some machine unintelligent and un pitying, all is indeed dark and dreary—but substitute for blind destiny a personal God, there necessarily come into the heart thoughts on eternal purposes of wisdom and of love, and although we are yet, and ever shall be, far from fathoming the unsearchable wisdom and riches of the Divine counsels, yet we may know in part, and be assured that if "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together "until now," yet all things "work together for good to them that "love God." Comp. i. 9. with Ps. cxxxix. The recognition of God's Providence is then the first remedy against despondency.

"Requireth." Rather, "restoreth," lit. "seeketh," seeks out in order to bring it back in its due season. Thus God brings again the day after it has given place to the night, summer when it has been replaced by winter. He brings again fresh generations to labour as others have laboured before them. The will of God purposing to uphold the universe as He ordained it, accounts for the perpetual recurrence of all that we observe in it.

ECCLESIASTES, III.

- ^a ch. 5. 8. 16 ¶ And moreover ^a I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there ; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.
- 17 I said in mine heart,
^o God shall judge the righteous and the wicked :
for *there is* ^p a time there for every purpose and for every work.
- 18 ¶ I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men,

^o Rom. 2. 6,
7, 8.
² Cor. 5. 10.
² Thes. 1. 6,
7.
^p ver. 1.

16, 17. The Future Judgment of the Wicked.

Another difficulty arises from the consideration of the anomalies in the world, the power and prosperity of the wicked ; and this suggests and is solved by the thought of a future judgment.

16. "The place of judgment." "The place of righteousness" (comp. Ps. ix. 4.), the place where rulers sit, and are bound to judge righteous judgment. For it is the highest function of an earthly sovereign to act as a judge. Herein he is the representative and vicegerent of God, and if in this very act he is found wanting, God shall arise, to displace His unworthy minister, and execute true judgment for His people. Comp. Isa. v. 7 : "He looked for judgment, and behold oppression ; for "righteousness, and behold a cry." The prosperity of the wicked has ever been a marvel and often a stumbling-block to thoughtful men. This is expressed forcibly in Ps. lxxiii. 12—14 (comp. Jer. xii. 1.) ; and no explanation was found till the Psalmist went into "the sanctuary "of God." There he learnt that this prosperity was only apparent, and often reversed even in this world. So also in Ps. xlix., where the prospect of deliverance after death is held out in ver. 15. The circumstance that this reversal does not always take place in this life, coupled with the fact that wickedness does often manifestly lead to misery, proves that the same God Who thus exhibits His judgment now, will hereafter carry out this His law in a future state. See Butler's *Analogy*, pt. i. ch. 2. The children of Israel were so much governed by administrative temporal judgments, that the future life was not so clearly set before them as it is before us ; but God led them up to this truth by His works and words. The book of Job is especially intended to prepare the mind for its full recognition, and in Ecclesiastes we find that the thoughtful survey of the world's anomalies issues in the conviction that God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.

17. "A time" of account as in viii. 6. "There," beyond the grave.

18—22. The Animal Nature of Man.

Here there is a great break in the argument. The light of which the Preacher has had a glimpse, is darkened, and he reverts to his former theme of the nothingness of the life of man. It is hard to find any essential difference between man and beast. All are alike creatures of chance (vv. 18—22.), and the inference seems to be, "Let us eat and "drink, for to-morrow we die" (1 Cor. xv. 32.).

18. "I said in mine heart." This introduces a new section, as

ECCLESIASTES, III.

² that God might manifest them,
and that they might see that they themselves
are beasts.

² Or, *that they might clear God, and see, &c.*

19 ¹ For that which befalleth the sons of men be-
falleth beasts ;
even one thing befalleth them :
as the one dieth, so dieth the other ;
yea, they have all one breath ;
so that a man hath no preeminence above a
beast : for all *is* vanity.

¹ Ps. 49. 12,
20. & 73. 22.
ch. 2. 16.

above, i. 13, while the same phrase in the preceding verse gives an inference. In each case the English phrase "I bethought myself," will be equally appropriate. Here we come to a new topic. The thought that after all there is no substantial difference between man and other animals, and that both alike are mere creatures of chance, is one that has been brought prominently forward in the present day; it is interesting to see this thought expressed as one which troubled the mind of the wise old king, who however announces it not as a triumphant discovery, but as a sad perplexity. The inspired writer is guided to lay bare this thought, lest it should be imagined in late years that this difficulty had been lost sight of. The book of Ecclesiastes recognizes it as the result of morbid reflection, which it proceeds to correct by truer precepts and reasoning. It must be carefully remembered that this whole section is the statement of a *false* view. The translation of this verse in our Authorised Version is not happy nor very intelligible. It would be more correctly rendered as follows:—"I said in my heart concerning the sons of men, with respect to God's choosing them, and to their seeing that they themselves are mere beasts: that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, one thing befalleth them." And the general meaning is this. Pondering upon the question whether God has chosen men to be superior to the rest of creation (Gen. i. 26.), or, whether we can see in ourselves nothing which distinguishes us from the beasts of the field, I bethought myself that what befalleth, &c.

19. "They have all one breath." The word for "breath" or "spirit" is the same in Hebrew. The reasoner did not accept the statement in Gen. i. 26, 27, but conceived that "the breath of life" was all one in man and beast.

18. "Concerning the estate of." Heb. "in regard to." So vii. 14, "to the end that man," Heb. "in regard to (the end) that man;" viii. 2, "in regard of." Compare Gen. xii. 17, "because of:" "that God might manifest them." The word rendered "manifest" may also mean "separate" or "select" (1 Sam. xvii. 8.). The phrase is made up of a preposition "to" and an infinitive "separate" with a suffix "them," followed by the word "God," and may be rendered literally "to God's separating them;" "and that they might see," lit. "and to seeing."

When two phrases are placed as alternatives to be distinguished from each other, they are in Hebrew placed side by side with the simple connective particle. So i. 17, "to know wisdom and to know madness," i. e. to know and distinguish between wisdom and madness. So here in ver. 19, the particle rendered "for" may also mean "that." "I bethought myself with regard to the sons of men as to God's separating them (from other animals), and on the other hand as to their seeing that they are mere beasts."

ECCLESIASTES, III.

- ^r Gen. 3. 13. 20 All go unto one place; ^r all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.
- ^s ch. 12. 7. 21 ^s Who knoweth the spirit ² of man that ³ goeth upward,
² Heb. *of the sons of man.*
³ Heb. *is ascending*
 and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?
- ^t ver. 12. 22 ^t Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better,
 ch. 2. 24. & 5. 18. & 11. 9.
 than that a man should rejoice in his own works;
- ^u ch. 2. 10. for ^u that *is* his portion :
- ^x ch. 6. 12. & 8. 7. & 10. 14. ^x for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him ?

20. Man was indeed to return to the dust from which he was made (Gen. i. 24; ii. 7; iii. 19. Job xxxiv. 15.), but to man has been given the promise and the earnest, that through the resurrection of our Lord, he shall arise out of the dust (1 Cor. xv. 47—50.). In one sense the death of man resembles that of beasts—the difference lies in the hope of immortality. In Ps. xlix. this common liability to death is introduced as an argument to convince the wicked of the instability of their tenure of earthly riches. “Man being in honour (however “rich in worldly honour) abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish,” Ps. xlix. 12. But the same Psalm teaches us that *the righteous* has a hope which raises him above the beasts. “But God will redeem my “soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me” (Ps. xlix. 15.).

21. “That goeth upward.” The particle rendered “that” may be an interrogative particle, and this suits better with the context. It is all part of a morbid utterance, which asks pettishly “Who knoweth “whether the spirit of man goeth upward, and whether the spirit of “the beast goeth downward to the earth?” In either case there is here an intimation of the distinct character of the soul of man. In the Authorised Version it is plainly stated that there is this difference. If we adopt the other view, the question implies that it was a truth commonly stated, although the reasoner in his despondency calls it in question.

22. “Wherefore I perceive.” He recalls the words used before. In ii. 24, he had pointed out that the enjoyment of worldly blessings depended not on a man’s own will, but was the gift of God, and that it is therefore good to accept at God’s hand what He bestows. In iii. 12, 13, he had praised the grateful acceptance of these gifts. See also viii. 15. But here it is simply the Epicurean maxim, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” And if we look closely there is a difference; in iii. 12, 13, a man is “to do good,” which is omitted here, and “to rejoice in his “labour because it is the gift of God;” here it is simply “in his own “works.” And this is the essential difference between the rejoicing of the religious and of the worldly man. The former may rejoice always in God’s gift, the latter may rejoice, if he can, in his own works, and will not find his soul satisfied therein.

ECCLESIASTES, IV.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *Vanity is increased unto men by oppression, 4 by envy, 5 by idleness, 7 by covetousness, 9 by solitariness, 13 by wilfulness.*

1 SO I returned, and considered all the ^a oppress- ^a ch. 3. 16.
sions that are done under the sun : & 5. 8.
and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed,
and they had no comforter ;
and on the ²side of their oppressors *there was* ² Heb. *hand*.
power :
but they had no comforter.

CHAPTER IV.

1—16. Fresh instances of the Vanity of Human Life.

The Preacher recounts other experiences which make him loathe life : (a) unjust oppressors (vv. 1—3.), (b) jealous envy (ver. 4.), (c) foolish idleness (vv. 5, 6.), (d) selfish loneliness (vv. 7—12.), (e) folly in rulers (vv. 13, 14.), (f) fickleness in subjects (vv. 15, 16.). The train of thought is this. Examine the nature of man. Mark the cruel oppressor, the diligent worker toiling from jealousy of his neighbour, the miser slaving for no purpose, the foolish king jeopardising his crown, the fickle multitude crowding after the coming ruler,—and ask yourself, Is the nature which these men possess superior to that of the brute creation ?

There is, however, in this section a glimpse of comfort. The “good reward for their labour” when two work together, “the threefold cord, “which cannot be broken,” “the poor and wise child,” all point to some remedy or alleviation of vanity.

1. “Oppressions.” The observation of the wrongs done in the world and the misery of the oppressed has often produced the feeling described. In times in which might made right and the poor groaned under the tyranny of robber-lords, St. Francis of Assisi and his followers abjured all the possessions and all the enjoyments of the world. It was this that led Savonarola to abandon the occupations of ordinary life, overcome by the sight of the misery occasioned by the cruel oppression of the rich and powerful in Ferrara. It has been said that the condition of things here is inconsistent with the state of the people in Solomon’s reign (1 Kings iv. 20, 25 ; x. 6, 9.), and agrees rather with that under later kings, especially Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 16.). But that in the latter part of Solomon’s reign there were burdens and discontent is clear from 1 Kings xii. 2—4, and we must remember that the Preacher is here noting generally what is done.

“Under the sun,” i. e. in the whole earth, not especially in the land of Israel. In the morbid state of mind here evinced man is awake to every anomaly, depressed by the sight of evil that lies beyond his control, and inclined even to exaggerate it ; and Solomon knew well that even under the best government there will be some injustice, and that at least in the regions outside of his own dominions deeds of cruelty and wrong were daily done in the face of heaven.

ECCLESIASTES, IV.

- b Job 3. 17,
&c. 2 ^b Wherefore I praised the dead which are already
dead
more than the living which are yet alive.
- c Job 3. 11,
16, 21,
ch. 6. 3. 3 ^c Yea, better *is he* than both they, which hath
not yet been,
who hath not seen the evil work that is done
under the sun.
- ² Heb. *all the
rightness of
work.* 4 Again, I considered all travail, and ² every right
work,
that ³ for this a man is envied of his neighbour.
This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.
- ³ Heb. *this
is the envy
of a man
from his
neighbour.*

2. "I praised the dead." Such was the bitter complaint of Job in his misery (Job iii. 1, &c.), and of Jeremiah in his despair (Jer. xx. 14.). In both cases the language of despondency is recorded, not approved.

"Which are already dead." Rather, "which have been long since dead," dead and forgotten, a fate so much dreaded by the Easterns.

3. Such sentiments were not uncommon among ancient classical authors. Lange quotes from Theognis a passage which may be rendered thus,—

"Not to be born nor e'er draw vital breath,

"Of earthly portions this I deem the best;

"Next, soon as born, to pass the gates of death

"And, earth heaped high above us, lie at rest;"

and refers to many other passages of the like kind. But that which the heathen deemed the conclusion of a high philosophy, Scripture represents as a morbid feeling to be corrected, not praised. "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before the Lord in the light of the living?" (Ps. lvi. 13.)

4. "Right work." Not morally right, but done aright, according to right rule, and therefore successful (see the margin).

"For this a man is envied of his neighbour." Rather, "this is man's jealousy of (lit. "from") his neighbour." It is not the envy which a success provokes, but the jealous feeling which stirs to rivalry. The Preacher thought that he had discovered that all man's most successful works are prompted by jealousy of his neighbour. Emulation is in fact no ignoble motive for exertion, but a morbid mind sees all in a false light, and puts evil for good. The complaint, however, was not altogether groundless. In an age which in some respects resembles that of Solomon (see close of Introduction), we can estimate the complaint against excessive competition. The result is an increasing disregard of excellence of work for its own sake, the chief aim being to produce with the least trouble to the artisan, and the least cost to the employer. Hence come ill-paid labour, and careless work—overgrown capital, and ill-conceived combinations—and where there is selfish gain and not honourable remuneration, the result is ruinous to all alike. No doubt in Solomon's day, as in our own, there was a better class of employers and employed—but his utterances, if exaggerated, may at least remind us of the Scriptural injunctions, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles ix. 10.), and "not with eye-service as men-pleasers" (Eph. vi. 6.); "that there be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. xii. 25.).

ECCLESIASTES, IV.

- 5 ^d The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth ^d Prov. 6. 10. & 24. 33.
his own flesh.
- 6 ^e Better is an handful *with* quietness, ^e Prov. 15. 16, 17. & 16. 8.
than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.
- 7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.
- 8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second ;
yea, he hath neither child nor brother :
yet *is there* no end of all his labour ;
neither is his ^f eye satisfied with riches ; ^f Prov. 27. 20. 1 John 2. 16.
^g neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and ^g Ps. 39. 6.
bereave my soul of good ?
This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.
- 9 Two *are* better than one ; because they have a
good reward for their labour.
- 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow :
but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth ;
for *he hath* not another to help him up.
- 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat :
but how can one be warm *alone*?

5. As the diligent man is vain, being actuated by mere jealousy of his neighbour, so on the other hand is the idle man vain, who taking no pains to provide for his wants, "eateth his own flesh," consumeth his goods, and comes to want (Prov. vi. 10 ; xxiv. 33.).

6. Coverdale's version supplies "saith he," making the verse the reply of the sluggard to the over-busy man. But it is better to consider this verse to be the true close of the Preacher's argument directed against the over-busy man, and ver. 5 to be introduced by way of contrast (Jer. v. 3.). True that it is "the fool" (and the fool only) "who foldeth his hands," &c.; still "better is an handful with quietness." Rather, "of quietness . . . two hands full of travail." A handful of quiet is worth two of travail and vexation of spirit.

7. The vanity of human life is seen again in the selfish and profitless labours of a solitary miser.

8. "There is one alone, and there is not a second." There is one that is alone in the world, with no one besides himself for whom he cares and with whom he can or will co-operate.

"Neither saith he." These words are not in the original. Their addition makes the sense clear enough, but we should probably express the same idea by the use of the third person, thus; "and for whom does he labour and bereave his soul of good?"

9—12. The truth which contradicts the false notion of the solitary miser.

9. "One." Lit. "the one," the solitary man. So again in vv. 10—12. "They have a good reward." The labour of those who work together brings in a better return than the labour of a solitary man.

10. "If they fall," is put generally, if there be a fall. The case contemplated is rather that one of the two might fall, in which case the

- 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him ;
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
- 13 Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, ²who will no more be admonished.
- 14 For out of prison he cometh to reign ;
whereas also *he that is* born in his kingdom becometh poor.
- 15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun,

² Heb. *who knoweth not to be admonished.*

other would help him up. The "fall" denotes by a metaphor a fall into sickness, into poverty, or into any other misfortune.

12. "One prevail against him." "One," lit. "the one" is not the subject but the object of the verb "prevail." "If an enemy prevail against the solitary one, two surely will withstand him" (*Ginsburg*). Concerted action is no less useful in spiritual than in temporal affairs (comp. Phil. i. 3—11.). "Not only does an holy longing draw man to man, unite the like-minded, and bind close together sympathetic hearts, but we can neither enjoy our happiness nor bear our trials with firmness, nor press forward cheerfully on the way to virtue and holiness, if we are without true friends. Oh! how holy then are the ties which join together man and wife, parent and child, friend and friend!" (*Lange*.)

13—16. The Preacher now turns to consider the relations between king and subjects, and finds them unsatisfactory and vain. Vv. 13, 14, give sayings which must have been common in Jerusalem at the time of Jeroboam's rebellion (see 1 Kings xi. 26.). Some consider that they were quoted by Solomon to be answered by what follows. But it is not unlikely that Solomon adopts these sayings as true in themselves although wrongly applied, and this in order to impress upon Rehoboam, whose character he must have regarded with mistrust, the importance of wisdom in a king. The folly and obstinacy of rulers is a sore evil, and if this be seen even in the case of an old king, who is found inferior to one low in birth and origin, much more must it be true of a young man who has the folly without the age. Comp. x. 16.

14. "He cometh." One cometh. A general proposition giving a reason for the former statement. Solomon had probably in his mind the case of Joseph (Gen. xli.) brought from prison, and of David from the sheep-folds (Ps. lxxviii. 70.), and might at the same time suggest to Rehoboam the possibility of a similar reversal of fortune in the case of Jeroboam.

"Whereas he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor." Rather, "yea though in his kingdom he be born poor." Our Translators have been guided by the Latin Version. The Hebrew has no finite verb, but is literally rendered thus:—"for also in his kingdom born poor." *Lange* points out that the "for also," after the "for" in the former clause, does not assign a reason for that clause, but an additional reason for what had gone before. It is not only that the future king has been subjected to imprisonment (as often royal princes were, if suspected of conspiracy), but even if of poor and humble birth, one often becomes king—"in his kingdom," in the land which is to be his future kingdom.

ECCLESIASTES, V.

with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

16 *There is* no end of all the people, *even* of all that have been before them :

they also that come after shall not rejoice in him.

Surely this also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Vanities in divine service, 8 in murmuring against oppression, 9 and in riches. 18 Joy in riches is the gift of God.*

1 **K**EEP ^athy foot when thou goest to the house a See Ex. 3. 5. Is. 1. 12, &c. of God,

15. "With." Siding with, following to court the favour of.

"The second child." The youth who will arise "second" to, succeeding to the place of the old king.

16. "Of all that have been before them." Rather, "of all before whom he has been," before whom he has stood as a leader, as Jeroboam did (1 Kings xi. 28.). Comp. Num. xxvii. 17 : "Set a man before the congregation, that he may go out before them." Comp. 1 Sam. xviii. 16. A crowd of flatterers is ever ready to make court to the coming prince.

"Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead ;

"The swarm that on the noontide beams were borne

"Gone to salute the rising morn—

"Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm." (*Gray*.)

"Shall not rejoice in him." This was emphatically verified in the case of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, "who made Israel to sin." Comp. 1 Kings xiv. 7—16.

The general purport of vv. 13—16 is this:—An old and foolish king who will listen to no counsel is a sad spectacle. A successor will arise, it may be out of a prison, it may be of the lowest birth ; all the people will side with him to whom they look as his successor. They will crowd around him who has stood forth as their leader ; but in the end they may rue their choice.

CHAPTER V.

1—20. Vanities to be watched and avoided.

The exhibition of vanity here takes the form of exhortations to avoid it. This implies a more hopeful view of life, and, while the predominant feeling is still one of sadness, there comes out a trust in superintending justice, and in providential goodness. Vain repetitions of prayer (1—3.) ; vows made but not kept (vv. 4—7.) ; unjust oppression, not unregarded by God (ver. 8.) ; the unprofitableness of riches, and the vanity of labouring to acquire them (vv. 9—17.), are noticed, and we are again reminded that the goods of life are to be accepted as the gift of God (vv. 18—20.). We thus come again to the first remedy (iii. 12.), but further thoughts point to further alleviations.

1. "Keep thy foot." Comp. Ps. cxix. 59. Prov. iv. 26. The main point is to watch the heart, but even the gait and outward demeanour reveal the real state of the heart. Therefore the author says "keep thy foot ;" because out of the abundance of the heart the very foot

ECCLESIASTES, V.

- b¹ Sam. 15. 22.
Ps. 50. 8.
Prov. 15. 8.
& 21. 27.
Hos. 6. 6.
- and be more ready to hear, ^b than to give the sacrifice of fools :
for they consider not that they do evil.
- 2 Be not rash with thy mouth,
and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any*
² thing before God :
for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth :
therefore let thy words ^c be few.
- c Prov. 10. 19.
Matt. 6. 7.
- 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business ;
and ^d a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words.
- d Prov. 10. 19.
- e Num. 30. 2.
Deut. 23. 21,
22, 23.
Ps. 50. 14.
& 76. 11.
- 4 ^e When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it ;
for *he hath* no pleasure in fools :
for ^f pay that which thou hast vowed.
- f Ps. 66. 13,
14.
- g Prov. 20. 25.
Acts 5. 4.
- 5 ^g Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow,
than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.
- 6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin ;

moveth. There may be an allusion to the Oriental way of shewing reverence by taking off the sandals on entering holy ground (Exod. iii. 5.).

“Be more ready.” Rather, “better draw nigh to hearken,” than to give the sacrifice of fools. Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Ps. xl. 6. Prov. xxi. 3. Isa. i. 11. Hos. vi. 6. “Hear,” to hearken and obey (comp. Jer. vii. 22—28.). The fool here is not the inattentive listener (though that is folly) but the hypocrite, who with sin unrepented of, lays his gift before the altar and goes his way, thinking that all is done. Comp. St. Matt. v. 23.

2. “Hasty,” so as to speak without thought. “Before God,” that is, in the Temple, the place of His peculiar presence. Comp. St. Matt. vi. 7, “they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

3. Rather, “For a dream cometh in the multitude of business, “and a fool's voice in the multitude of words.” As a dream is the result of a multitude of occupations, and presents many images without arrangement or order, so in the many words which a fool employs there is indistinguishable confusion. The comparison is expressed by a simple copula (comp. iv. 6.), as in Prov. xxv. 23.

4. “Defer not to pay.” Comp. Deut. xxiii. 21, “when thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it;” “for He hath no pleasure in fools.” The distinct character of “fools” is set forth here, that they are careless, heedless in their speech, uttering words without meaning, making vows which they do not trouble themselves to perform.

5. “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow.” Comp. Deut. xxiii. 22: “But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.”

6. “Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin.” This is to be explained by the context; the “sin” is that of not performing a vow (see on ver. 5.). “Thy flesh,” thyself. It is in the flesh that man sins (see Gal. v. 17.). Take care lest a heedless vow bring thee to

ECCLESIASTES, V.

^h neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* ^{h1} 1 Cor. 11. 10.
an error :

wherefore should God be angry at thy voice,
and destroy the work of thine hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many
words

there are also divers vanities :

but ⁱ fear thou God.

ⁱ ch. 12. 13.

8 If thou ^k seest the oppression of the poor,
and violent perverting of judgment and justice
in a province,

^k ch. 3. 16.

marvel not ² at the matter :

² Heb.
at the will,
or, purpose.
¹ Ps. 12. 5.
& 58. 11.
& 82. 1.

for ¹ *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth ;
and *there be* higher than they.

sin, either in doing wrong, or in breaking thy oath. Such was Herod's vow, St. Matt. xiv. 9.

"Neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error." "Angel," lit. "messenger," one sent to claim the performance of the vow, to demand payment of that offering which had been publicly promised. In Malachi ii. 7, "the priest" is called "the messenger" (angel) of the Lord. Do not offer excuses for not making the payment, by pretending that the promise was made in error, or was misunderstood: "wherefore should God be angry at thy voice?" why should heedless and careless utterance bring upon thee destruction, as a punishment for having mocked thy God. The warning is throughout to put a watch upon the lips. Pray in earnest, not with the lips only. Make no rash vows with heedless tongue.

7. This verse in the original is very laconical, and seems to break off abruptly; literally it stands thus, "for in the multitude of dreams, "and vanities, and words in plenty" (see note on x. 11.).

Dreams are introduced by way of comparison, as in ver. 3: In the multitude of dreams surely there are vanities; so also in the multitude of words. Comp. St. James iii. 5. The special offence of the tongue to which reference has been made, was rash utterance of vows; but the Preacher passes to a more general view of the subject, and declares the vanity of a multitude of words.

"But fear thou God." Accordingly, let thy fear of God teach thee to avoid idle words. He who truly fears God will never say ought before Him but that which comes from the bottom of his heart, and which he is resolved to keep inviolable to the last.

8. "He that is higher than the highest." Lit. "a high one above "a high one," one ruler above another. As upon earth there are degrees of authority, and in this way the oppressed has an appeal from his immediate governor, so there is One higher than all, the Supreme God Who shall bring all to judgment. The same topic of consolation is suggested in iii. 17.

"There be higher." "Higher" in the original is in the plural. The plural expresses dignity—the Highest. So in Josh. xxiv. 19, "He "is an holy God," the adjective is plural to express supreme holiness.

ECCLESIASTES, V.

- 9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all :
the king *himself* is served by the field.
- 10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with
silver ;
nor he that loveth abundance with increase :
this *is* also vanity.
- 11 When goods increase, they are increased that
eat them :
and what good *is there* to the owners thereof,
saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?
- 12 The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether
he eat little or much :
but the abundance of the rich will not suffer
him to sleep.
- ^{m ch. 6. 1.} 13 ^m There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under
the sun,
namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to
their hurt.
- 14 But those riches perish by evil travail :
and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing
in his hand.

Marvel not, if wrong for a time prevail, all will be set right. There is ruler over ruler, and God ruleth over all.

9. The purpose of this verse is to shew that the land yields profit to the whole community—"the king himself is served by the field"—when therefore king and people alike must find their support from the land, what is the good of heaping up silver and gold?

10. "Silver." Money, as in Gen. xxiii. 9; xlvii. 8. It is proverbial that as money is accumulated the love for it increases.

11. The richer a man, the more dependents and servants he has to maintain; the owner can do no more than feast his eyes by gazing on his treasures, or at best, look on while others feast at his cost.

12. "The abundance of the rich." Want of sleep may be caused either by satiety, which deprives the rich man of the sweet sleep which labour brings with it, or by the anxiety which the rich man feels for the security of his treasures. The latter interpretation seems preferable.

14. The gist of the evil lies in this. These riches kept to a man's hurt (for they involve the trouble and anxiety just described) are, after all, dissipated by "evil travail," unfortunate speculations, un-

9. The explanation above follows the Authorised Version. Others prefer the following translation: "A country's good" (lit. "the profit of a land"), is the good of the whole community; a landowner has his servant, lit. "is served," which may be explained thus: Think not too much of particular wrongs; it is the general good which human society secures, nei-

ther chafe at government by subordinates. It must always be so; every landowner must do his work by means of servants. The anomalies which spring from this constitution of society are corrected by the fact that God the Supreme Judge will order all things aright.

- 15 ⁿ As he came forth of his mother's womb,
 naked shall he return to go as he came,
 and shall take nothing of his labour, which he
 may carry away in his hand. ⁿ Job 1. 21.
 Ps. 49. 17.
 1 Tim. 6. 7.
- 16 And this also *is* a sore evil,
that in all points as he came, so shall he go:
 and ^o what profit hath he ^p that hath laboured ^o ch. 1. 3.
^p Prov. 11. 29.
 for the wind?
- 17 All his days also ^q he eateth in darkness,
 and *he hath* much sorrow and wrath with his
 sickness. ^q Ps. 127.
- 18 Behold *that* which I have seen :
² *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and
 to drink, ^r ch. 2. 24.
 & 3. 12, 13,
 22. & 9. 7.
 & 11. 9.
 1 Tim. 6. 17.
 and to enjoy the good of all his labour that
 he taketh under the sun ² Heb. there
 is a good
 which is
 comely, &c.
³ all the days of his life, which God giveth him : ³ Heb. the
 number of
 the days.
^s for it *is* his portion. ^s ch. 2. 10.
 & 3. 22.

foreseen calamity and the like; and the man who has been labouring all his life to secure, perhaps, riches for his son, finds that he will leave indeed a son behind him, but will leave him a beggar.

15. All his labour will have been unprofitable, and he will die as poor as when he came naked into the world. Comp. Job i. 21.

16, 17. Besides the evil that he has lost all that he had acquired, there is also the evil that in acquiring it he has undergone privation, and toil, labouring for nought, with vexation for all his pains. The Preacher repeats words used in the previous verse to introduce a fresh topic of evil. Yes,—he will die as poor as he was born, and all the profit he will have will be that he has been a slave all his life—for nothing.

The tenses of the verbs in the original are the same, while in the English Version we have “**hath laboured,**” and “**he eateth.**” This obscures the sense, which will be best given if we render “**what profit hath he had . . . he hath eaten in darkness.**”

17. “**In darkness.**” Some explain thus: He has been so busy all day, that he could not take his meals before night came on; “**ye so late take rest.**” But it is far better to suppose darkness to represent the gloom of a miser’s life. “**He hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.**” Rather, “**he hath had sorrow, sickness, and vexation.**” The “**wrath**” is the angry irritation which he has felt when things have gone wrong. “**To eat in darkness**” is to pass our lives in gloom. “**The covetous man ever finds something which he would have but has not, some reason for murmuring and complaining.** He cannot eat or drink with cheerfulness, but has ever something to make him sick and sorry” (*Luther*).

18. The Preacher now recurs to the maxim which he had laid down, iii. 12, not in recklessness, as in iii. 22, but in all seriousness. See on iii. 12. It is true wisdom to take the good things of this

ECCLESIASTES, VI.

- * ch. 2 24. & 3. 13. & 6. 2. 19 [†] Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth,
and hath given him power to eat thereof,
and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour ;
this *is* the gift of God.
- ² Or, *Though he give not much, yet he remembereth, &c.* 20 ² For he shall not much remember the days of his life ;
because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.

CHAPTER VI.

1 The vanity of riches without use. 3 Of children, 6 and old age without riches. 9 The vanity of sight and wandering desires. 11 The conclusion of vanities.

- * ch. 5. 13. 1 ^a **T**HERE is an evil which I have seen under the sun,
and it *is* common among men :
2 a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth,
and honour,

life, neither forgetful of the goodness of the Giver, or thinking little of the enjoyments which He provides, nor on the other hand over anxious about securing them, or labouring to multiply riches and pleasures of our own seeking.

20. "Joy of his heart." The same words as in Prov. xv. 13, "a merry heart." We shall not disturb this Heaven-sent calm by remembering too much the days of our past life, its trials, troubles, and sorrows, but shall find for uneasy questionings an answer from God, in the joy which He has implanted in our heart, and in the gifts which He bestows. This is a foretaste of the future happiness of the blessed.

"How wilt thou then look back and smile
"On thoughts that bitterest seemed erewhile,
"And bless the pangs that made thee see
"This was no world of rest for thee."

(*Keble, 11th Sunday after Trinity.*)

CHAPTER VI.

1—9. The vanity of unsatisfied desires.

This is a natural sequel to the preceding chapter. There we were taught the wisdom of a due enjoyment of the gifts of God. Here we are reminded that the power of enjoyment is also a gift of God, and are shewn the vanity (1) of a rich man incapable of enjoyment (vv. 1—6.), (2) of a craving appetite (ver. 7.), (3) of fruitless aspirations of a poor and wise man (vv. 8, 9.), (4) the transitoriness of human life and human labour (ver. 12.).

1. "Common among men." Rather, "great upon men." The Hebrew adjective may mean *much* or *many*. Our Translators took it in the latter sense—but elsewhere, especially with "evil," it is used in the former. So ii. 21, "a great evil." Comp. viii. 6.

2. This is not the case in ii. 18, where present enjoyment is

ECCLESIASTES, VI.

^b so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of ^b Job 21. 10.
all that he desireth, &c.

^c yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, Ps. 17. 14.
but a stranger eateth it: & 73. 7.

this *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease.

^c Luke 12. 20.

3 If a man beget an hundred *children*, and live many years,

so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good,

and ^d also *that* he have no burial;

^d 2 Kin. 9. 35.

Is. 14. 19, 20.

Jer. 22. 19.

I say, *that* ^e an untimely birth *is* better than he.

^e Job 3. 16.

Ps. 58. 8.

ch. 4. 3.

4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness,

marred by the thought that it cannot be permanent, nor that in ii. 23, where a man loses enjoyment in the labour of acquiring the means, nor again that in v. 11, &c., where the pleasure of present possession is disturbed by anxiety for its preservation; but it is the case of one who is not labouring to acquire, nor fearing to lose, and yet finds himself, it may be from a morbid state of body or mind, or it may be from some other cause, utterly unable to take pleasure in the abundance which surrounds him. This was the experience of the Preacher himself (i. 10, 11.), and this is now recounted as a proof of the vanity of human nature.

3. In iv. 8, it was mentioned as a cause of misery, that a man might have no child or friend to whom he would care to leave his possessions; but now the Preacher goes further, and says that he may have many children, may live many years, yet, if he has no power of enjoyment, it had been better for him never to have been born.

“And his soul be not filled with good,” and yet he finds no satisfaction in the goods which are in his hands: “and also that he have no burial.” The ancients set a high value on an honourable burial (comp. Jer. xxii. 19.). It was a special misfortune to have none to make lamentation over the dead (Jer. xvi. 5—7; comp. viii. 10.). The burial which was accompanied by signs of mourning shewed that the dead had friends who loved him, and whom he loved—but in the case contemplated here, the rich and honourable man can take no delight in his riches while he lives, and has not a friend to cheer him now, or to pay respect to him at his grave.

“Mighty Victor, mighty Lord,

“Low on his funeral couch he lies,

“No pitying heart, no eye, afford

“A tear to grace his obsequies.”

(Gray.)

4. “For he cometh.” “He” in this verse is not the friendless rich man, but “the untimely birth,” the still-born child to which he is compared. That untimely birth “cometh in,” entereth into the world “in vanity,” without life, and so not a real child, “and it departeth in darkness,” passes out of sight and is forgotten.

ECCLESIASTES, VI.

and his name shall be covered with darkness.

5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known
any thing:

this hath more rest than the other.

6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice *told*,
yet hath he seen no good :

do not all go to one place ?

† Prov. 16. 26. 7 † All the labour of man *is* for his mouth,
and yet the ² appetite is not filled.

² Heb. *soul*.

8 For what hath the wise more than the fool ?

There is a comparison in each particular. Like "the untimely birth," the unhappy rich man comes into the world as in a vain dream, lives in obscurity, doing good neither to himself nor to others, his body is removed out of sight, with none to mourn for him or pay him respect. "His name shall be covered with darkness," he will not be remembered with respect, but his memory will perish from the earth, as though he had never existed upon it.

5. "He hath not seen the sun." Comp. Ps. lviii. 8, "like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun."

"This hath more rest than the other." This untimely birth, miserable as it is, without light or life, has more rest than the rich man before described; it has at least the rest of unconsciousness, instead of the gnawing sense of unsatisfied desire.

6. "Hath he seen no good." "To see good" is to enjoy the good things provided. So in v. 18, "to enjoy the good" (lit. "to see"). The verse may be rendered thus:—"Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet hath seen no good" (has been without enjoyment), "what profit is it?" (to be understood from the previous sentence) "do not both" (both the untimely birth and the unhappy rich man) "go to one place?"

"To one place." The phrase of iii. 20 is repeated here. In ii. 16 the wise man and the fool were said to die alike, but here "the untimely birth" and the rich man are said to be gathered into one place illustrating the argument which morbidly maintained that the nature of man differs in nothing from that of the beasts that perish.

7. A new paragraph begins here, not in ver. 6. The Preacher has now disposed of the case of the unhappy rich man, and proceeds to other instances of the vanity of human desires. The first instance is that of the appetite; man's first pressing desire is for food. This desire is however insatiable. Supply it and it still cries out. So long as man lives, his appetite is ever craving to be satisfied. Comp. Prov. xvi. 26: "He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him." Comp. also Prov. xviii. 20.

8. "For what hath the wise." He has shewn the vain desires of the unhappy rich man, who may well seem to deserve the name of "fool." But the wise man too (such is the morbid complaint) has his unsatisfied desires. Formerly he spoke of the equality of wisdom and folly, because each was alike subject to the reign of law (ii. 15.); now he sees the same equality in the constitution of their mind, the objects of the wise man's desires may be better than those of the

ECCLESIASTES, VI.

What hath the poor, that knoweth to walk
before the living?

9 Better *is* the sight of the eyes ²than the ²Heb. *than*
wandering of the desire: *the walking*
of the soul.
this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

10 ¶ That which hath been is named already,

fool, but there is the same want of satisfaction; they crave more than they can attain, and this is vanity.

“What hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?”¹ The complaint is urged to shew the vanity of *all* that is human. “What advantage hath the wise man over the fool; what (advantage) is it to the poor man of understanding to walk in the land of the living?” “To walk before the living” contrasted with “departeth in darkness” (ver. 4.). Comp. Ps. lvi. 13.

9. “The sight of the eyes.” The actual sight of the object of the desires. Comp. xi. 9.

“The wandering of the desire.” The restlessness of unsatisfied longing. The Latin translation renders this verse with great force: “*Melius est videre quod cupias, quam cupere quod nescias;*” i.e. It is better to see what you long for, than to long for what you know not. Perhaps there is a reference here to the contrast of the brute creation, who know of nothing beyond the present life, with that of man, ever looking to something that lies beyond. In the morbid feeling which sees no advantage of man over beast (iii. 18.) the Preacher puts the case to the disparagement of human nature. This thought is admirably answered by Tennyson—

“I envy not the beast that takes
“His license in the field of time,
“Unfettered by the sense of crime,
“To whom a conscience never wakes.
“Nor what may count itself as blest,
“The heart that never plighted troth;
“But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
“Nor any want-begotten rest.
“I hold it true whate’er befall,
“I hold it when I sorrow most,
“’Tis better to have lov’d and lost,
“Than never to have loved at all.”

10—12. A Summary.

The Preacher sums up his arguments—and brings them all to the point from which he started—that all is vanity.

10. The Preacher recurs to his former complaint of the ever-recurring round of fate in which all things are involved, and laments in a morbid strain that man is but the passive subject of a power mightier than himself.

“Is named already.” Rather, “was named” (lit. “the name of “it was already called”) not in the counsel of the Most High, as in Isa. xlvi.

¹ The accents in the original separate | “poor that knoweth,” or the poor man of “that knoweth” from “to walk”—“the | understanding.

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

and it is known that it is man :

^e Job 9. 32.
Isai. 45. 9.
Jer. 40. 19.

^e neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better ?

² Heb. *the number of the days of the life of his vanity.*

12 For who knoweth what is good for man in *this* life, ²all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as ^h a shadow ?

¹ P. 102 11.
& 109. 23.
& 144 4.
Jam. 4. 14.

For ⁱ who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun ?

ⁱ Ps. 39. 6.
ch. 8. 7.

CHAPTER VII.

¹ Remedies against vanity are, a good name, ² mortification, ⁷ patience, ¹¹ wisdom. ²³ The difficulty of wisdom.

^a Prov. 15. 30.
& 22. 1.

1 **A** ^a GOOD name is better than precious ointment ;

3, 4 ; lvi. 5, but in the sphere of bygone ages of which the present age is a mere repetition. This is a general statement, having reference not to man only, but to the whole creation.

“That it is man.” Rather, “that such is man.” It becomes manifest that man is such as I have described, a mere creature of blind fate.

“Neither may he.” Rather, “and that he cannot contend with one that is mightier than he.” This is part of that which, according to the morbid view of the Preacher, became known to him. He is not thinking of God, of Whom this might be justly said, see marg. ref. ; but of some power which he only feels to be fettering, mastering him against his will.

11. “Many things.” Such as riches, learning, and the like, which all merely prove to be mere vanities, and so what good does man get out of them? Comp. ii. 11, “there was no profit.”

12. “Who knoweth.” Comp. ii. 19. “All the days of his vain life.” Whereas in an ordinary mood he would have said “all the days of his life,” here, in the spirit of complaint, he says “all the days of his *vain* life.”

“As a shadow.” Lit. “the shadow,” like the shadow upon a dial, which passes over it and leaves no trace behind. So “shadow” is used (2 Kings xx. 11. Comp. Jer. vi. 4. Ps. cii. 11.).

CHAPTER VII.

1—22. Answers to Complaints.

In the Hebrew Bible this chapter begins with an enlarged letter. A few such letters occur in different parts of the Sacred Volume, and are generally supposed to have been intended by the Masoretic revisers as a guide to readers or copyists. Here it seems rather the mark of a principal division. Hebrew commentators divide the Book of Ecclesiastes into four great sections, the third of which begins here (see xii. 13.). At this point the Preacher answers in turn some of the complaints of the murmurer. We might have expected that he would have done so by philosophical reasoning ; and we might have looked for an argument

and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 *It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting:*

intended to close the debate at once, and fitted to answer conclusively objections rife at the present day, and to still doubts which at all times have arisen in thoughtful minds. This, however, is not the method here adopted: maxims are laid down and precepts delivered as with authority, in which we find answers without discussion, and exhortations to practical duties, which in the long run will best quiet an uneasy spirit (see on v. 1; and x. 1.). This is in accordance with a common mode of Scriptural revelation. Rules are laid down, not in the first instance to be apprehended intellectually, but to be learned practically. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (St. John vii. 17.). With these exhortations are interwoven commendations of wisdom, whose excellence the complainer failed to see. This section may be divided into three portions, in which the Preacher prescribes as remedies for the evils before stated: (1) the true estimation of worldly good (vv. 1—6.); (2) patience under oppression (vv. 7—14.); (3) conduct of life according to the rules of true wisdom (vv. 15—22.).

1—6. The True Estimate of Worldly Good.

1. "Better." There is less reason to complain of the emptiness of worldly joys when we learn that there is something better.

"A good name." This answers ii. 16. The good, upright man is remembered, and it is no slight blessing for a man to leave behind him an honoured name for virtue and integrity. Comp. Prov. xxii. 1. The immediate reference is to a name for righteous dealing during life—but we are reminded of a yet more precious name, the "new name" which Christ promised to write upon "him that overcometh" (Rev. ii. 17; iii. 12.).

"Precious ointment." "Ointment" or oil. The "anointing oil" in the Mosaic law was prepared with peculiar rites, and held specially sacred (Exod. xxx. 23—33.). This was one of the "precious things" shewn by Hezekiah to the messengers of Merodach (Isa. xxxix. 2.). Ointment was among the Israelites of special value (Ps. cxxxiii. 2. Cant. i. 3. Micah vi. 7. Also St. Matt. xxvi. 7.).

"The day of death." This had been urged by the murmurer (iv. 2, 3.), but in a very different spirit. "The day of death" is to the righteous man the happy close of a life of trouble. In the Old Testament we find even among the men of God a melancholy strain when they contemplate death (comp. Isa. xxxviii. 17, 18. and Ps. lxxxviii. 10—12.). There were indeed intimations of the coming life (Ps. xvi. 10.), but it was reserved for the Gospel to throw full light upon the grave. St. Paul could teach and feel that "to die is gain," if we live to Christ (Phil. i. 21.); and it is "a voice from heaven" which says, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; . . . that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13.).

2. This verse answers ii. 22; iii. 22. In a certain sense cheerfulness

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

- 5 ^c *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise,
than for a man to hear the song of fools.
- 6 ^d For as the ² crackling of thorns under a pot,
so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.
- 7 ¶ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad;
^e and a gift destroyeth the heart.
- 8 Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning
thereof:
and ^f the patient in spirit *is* better than the ^f proud in spirit.
- 9 ^g Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry:
for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

^c See Psalm
141. 5.
Prov. 13. 18.
& 15. 31, 32.
^d Ps. 118. 12.
ch. 2. 2.
² Heb. *sound*.

^e Ex. 23. 8.
Deut. 16. 19.

^f Prov. 14. 29.

^g Prov. 14. 17.
& 16. 32.
Jam. 1. 19.

5, 6. Solomon had tried the delights of music and the like, but in vain (ii. 8.). He now tells us that the grave rebuke of the God-fearing man, setting forth righteousness and truth, and reproving sin, is better than the songs and the music which are in the entertainments of the godless (comp. Isa. v. 12.). The hollowness of the fool's laughter is compared to "the crackling of thorns under a caldron." Palestine abounded in thorny plants, which it was customary to use for this purpose (Ps. lviii. 9.); just as the blaze of such kindling passes quickly away and leaves no trace behind, so passes away the noisy laughter of fools.

7—14. Patience under Oppression.

7. "Oppression." Not the *suffering* but the *doing* wrong, makes a wise man lose his senses. The prevalence of "oppression" and the injustice of judges had given special occasion for complaint (iii. 16; iv. 1.). The Preacher now reminds his readers that an oppressor ceases to have any claim to wisdom, and becomes a fool ("mad"), and that bribes destroy and ruin him who receives them. Comp. Deut. xvi. 19, where men are exhorted not to "take a gift," because "a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the cause of the righteous." Cruelty deprives a man of reason and so brings him to destruction, according to the old proverb, expressive indeed of a heathen, rather than a Christian sentiment, *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*; i.e. God blinds the man whom He would destroy. Comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 25, "Nabal (fool) is his name, and folly is with him," and Ps. lxxv. 4.

8. The oppressor has been warned that oppression will in truth be his ruin; the oppressed is now encouraged to wait patiently until the end. We are reminded of the Apostolic injunctions (Gal. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 2. Rom. xii. 12.), but, above all, of the teaching of our Lord, Who elevated the state of suffering by His own precept and example (St. Matt. v. 38—48.). The meaning of the sorrows of the oppressed, which we pity but cannot relieve (iv. 1.), is found in the words of comfort, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1 Thess. iii. 3.).

9. "Angry," "anger." The word is generally rendered "grief" ("sorrow," in ver. 3.), and expresses vexation of spirit rather than indignation. Adopting this sense, the present verse may be connected with the

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

10 Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these?

² Heb. *out of wisdom.*

For thou dost not enquire ²wisely concerning this.

³ Or, *as good as an inheritance, yea, better too.*

11 Wisdom is ³good with an inheritance: and *by it there is profit* ^hto them that see the sun.

^h ch. 11. 7.

⁴ Heb. *shadow.*

12 For wisdom is a ⁴defence, and money is a defence:

but the excellency of knowledge is, *that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

13 Consider the work of God:

for ⁱwho can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked?

ⁱ See Job 12. 14. ch. 1. 15. Isai. 14. 27.

foregoing exhortation to long-suffering and patience. Do not quickly give way to vexation and grief at that which befalls you. Such impatience belongs to the godless, who, being without true support, fret in vain at the lot assigned to them.

10. This verse continues the warning against discontent. "Thou dost not enquire wisely." The original is rather more forcible: "It is not from wisdom that thou askest this" (see margin). Such impatient complaints come not from "wisdom." This leads up naturally to the commendation of "wisdom" which follows.

11. "With an inheritance." The particle rendered "with" is often equivalent to "as well as" (see margin). Above, ii. 16, "There is no remembrance of the wise man *more than of* [with] the fool;" Ps. lxxiii. 5, "Neither are they plagued *like* [with] other men." Here this meaning should be adopted. "Wisdom is as good as an inheritance." Comp. ver. 12: "Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence," i. e., wisdom as well as money is a defence.

"To them that see the sun," "to the living." The Preacher declares the benefit of wisdom in this life. This truth had dawned upon him before (ii. 13.), but had been dismissed. It is now reasserted and enforced. Compare the praises of "wisdom" (Prov. viii. 11—36.).

12. "Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence." Lit. "In the shadow of wisdom, in the shadow of silver;" i. e. If you have the protection of wisdom, you have all the protection which riches can afford. Comp. Isa. xxx. 2, 3. Ps. xci. 1. Much has already been said as to the vanity of riches, because the possession does not secure the enjoyment of them (vi. 2.). Here is the answer. Riches bring some security, and so does wisdom; but the security of wisdom transcends that given by riches, because it gives life to its possessor (Ps. xvi. 11.). Perhaps in the Preacher's mind the tranquil enjoyment of the present life was the predominant idea, but we may see in these words a fuller and a deeper truth. "Godliness" (which is identical with "wisdom," rightly so called), says the Apostle, "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8. Comp. St. John xii. 50. Rom. vi. 22. 1 St. John v. 13—20.).

13. The "crooked" and the "straight" are both God's work, and

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

14 ^k In the day of prosperity be joyful,
but in the day of adversity consider:

^k ch. 3. 4.
Deut. 28. 47.

God also hath ²set the one over against the ² other,
to the end that man should find nothing after
him.

15 ¶ All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity :

both have their uses. An answer to i. 15. The complaint had been partially answered (i. 26.—ii. 14.), but the answer here is more full and satisfactory. The inference had been, Enjoy what God provides (iii. 12.), but now it is shewn that “adversity” no less than “prosperity” has its uses, and it is to be accepted not merely as inevitable, but as full of blessing.

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,
“Which, like a toad, ugly and venomous,
“Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.”

(Shakespeare).

14. “Consider.” Contemplate, so as to understand. Comp. St. Matt. vi. 28.

“Hath set the one over against the other.” Hath ordained both pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, success and failure, in such measure that one answers to and fills up what is wanting in the other. Comp. Ecclus. xxxiii. 14, 15: “Good is set against evil, and life against death; so is the godly against the sinner, and the sinner against the godly. So look upon all the works of the Most High, and there are two and two, one against another.” It would not be well for men on earth to have unmixed good or unmixed evil. Therefore God tempers the one with the other, and makes “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. viii. 28.).

“To the end that man should find nothing after him.” So that man should not discover what is to come after; that is, what future shall befall either him or his descendants. Comp. iii. 11. There is reference to the complaint in vi. 12; the answer being that this disposition, whereby the future is concealed from man, is purposely ordained by God, Who, assigning to each man evil as well as good, mercifully hides from him the future, lest the expectation of future sorrow mar the enjoyment of present felicity. Thus what at first seemed an evil, turns out to be a blessing.

“Oh! blindness to the future kindly given,
“That each may fill the circle mark'd by heaven.”
(Pope).

15—22. Conduct of life by the rules of true wisdom.

15. This is not stated as a complaint, but as an obscure fact, which leads up to the precepts which follow. These precepts are in the main based upon prudential considerations; and these are not to be disregarded by the servant of God. Our Lord did not disdain to appeal to them, St. Matt. v. 25; x. 23.

“All things.” Lit. “the whole;” not all things of every kind (as in i. 14.), but all which concerns the question before him. “I have seen all things,” &c. I have taken a comprehensive view of the whole subject.

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

¹ ch. 8. 14.

¹there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness,
and there is a wicked *man* that longeth his *life* in his wickedness.

^m Prov. 25. 16.
ⁿ Rom. 12. 3.

16 ^m Be not righteous over much; ⁿ neither make thyself over wise:

² Heb. *be desolate?*

why shouldst thou ² destroy thyself?

17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish:

^o Job 15. 32.
^p Ps. 55. 23.
^q Prov. 10. 27.

^o why shouldst thou die ³ before thy time?

³ Heb. *not in thy time?*

18 *It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this;*

“In the days of my vanity.” In the course of my life. Comp. vi. 12.

“In his righteousness;” “in his wickedness.” Not so much because he is righteous, or wicked, as notwithstanding he is righteous or wicked. Our Lord taught us that the wicked are “in their generation “wiser than the children of light” (St. Luke xvi. 8.); and as by this wisdom the wicked often prosper, so for lack of wisdom the righteous fail. We must remember that our Lord taught us to be “wise as serpents,” St. Matt. x. 16, and that this need not hinder our being “harmless as doves.”

16. “Be not righteous overmuch.” Some have thought this to be a warning against an affectation of righteousness or wisdom; but, in connection with ver. 15, it must be taken as a prudential instruction (comp. iii. 1, 7.), like that of our Lord, “Cast not thy pearls before swine, lest they turn and rend you” (St. Matt. vii. 6.). We need not expose ourselves to unnecessary danger, or unnecessarily interfere even to vindicate justice, or proclaim wisdom.

“Why shouldst thou destroy thyself?” Rather, “why shouldst thou be brought to confusion?” The verb more commonly means, to be amazed or put to confusion, and is here so rendered by the Latin Version. This seems to be better, the consequence of excess in this direction being less disastrous than of excess in the other. Thus a person who in an excess of righteous zeal unduly interposes even in a good cause may expose himself to shame and loss, but not to destruction.

17. “Be not overmuch wicked.” The repetition of “overmuch” points out that the stress is to be laid in this second injunction. Excess in maintaining right and truth may put a man to confusion, but excess in wickedness leads to ruin and death.

“Neither be thou foolish.” “Foolish” is here, as throughout, godless. Comp. Ps. ix. 17: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and “all the nations that forget God.”

18. The former “this” refers to ver. 17, the latter to ver. 16. The verse would be better rendered, “It is good that thou shouldst take hold “of this” (i. e. the precept, “Be not overmuch wicked”), “and also from “that” (the precept “Be not righteous overmuch,”) “withdraw not thine “hand, for he that feareth God shall come forth from both of them” (i. e. from both of the two excesses).

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand :
for he that feareth God shall come forth of
them all.

19 ^p Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten ^p Prov. 21. 22.
mighty *men* which are in the city. & 21. 5.
ch. 9. 16, 18.

20 ^a For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that ^a 1 Kin. 8. 46.
doeth good, and sinneth not. 2 Chr. 6. 36.
Prov. 20. 9.

21 Also ² take no heed unto all words that are ² Heb. give
spoken ; not thine
heart.

lest thou hear thy servant curse thee :

22 for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth
that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

23 ¶ All this have I proved by wisdom :

^r I said, I will be wise ; but it *was* far from me. ^r Rom. 1. 22.

“He that feareth God” the same as the “wise” man, extolled throughout this chapter. Comp. Prov. viii. 13.

19. “Wisdom” is again exalted, in answer to ii. 15, 16. All true wisdom is based upon “the fear of God ;” but the “fear of God” is not inconsistent with such wisdom as leads to a prudent conduct of life.

20. The connection is this: There is need of true wisdom to keep us in the right way, because of the infirmity of our nature. This verse is in accordance with, perhaps a quotation from, Ps. liii. 3. See marg. reff. This verse also is closely connected with the following.

21. “Also take no heed.” Inasmuch as no man is free from faults, we need not be very indignant if men sometimes disparage us, nor must we forget that we ourselves sometimes speak ill of our neighbours behind their backs.

“Curse.” Rather, “make light of.” The original meaning of the verb is “make light,” and hence “hold up to contempt ;” and this is here more appropriate than “curse.” The remembrance of man’s sinfulness and of our own faults should create in us humility, and this thought will help us in times of sorrow and distress. This will shed light upon the dark ways of Providence, this will still the tumult of soul, this will animate hope. In merited suffering we recognize His footsteps, and gather assurance from the presence of Him Who is no less merciful than just.

23—29. The Corruption of Mankind.

The Preacher had reminded his readers of man’s sinfulness, in order to teach them patience and humility. He is led by this thought to dwell upon the depravity of man and woman alike ; and he concludes that this has arisen from man’s perversion of God’s original gift of righteousness.

23. “All this.” All that is contained in the foregoing section. “I proved by wisdom.” Comp. i. 13 ; ii. 3. “It.” Lit. *she*, i. e. wisdom in the abstract ; the personal pronoun in the original is better preserved. Comp. Prov. i. 20. Ecclus. xxiv. 1, &c. Though the Preacher had acquired much wisdom in particulars, yet when he looked after “wisdom” in its perfection, he found it to be far from him.

ECCLESIASTES, VII.

- ^s Job 28. 12, 24 ^a That which is far off, and ^t exceeding deep, who can find it out?
²⁰,
¹ Tim. 6. 16.
- ^t Rom. 11. 33. 25 ^{2u} I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things,
² Heb. *I and my heart compassed*,
^u ch. 1. 17. & 2. 12.
 and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness :
- ^x Prov. 5. 3, 4. & 22. 14. 26 ^x and I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands :
- ³ Heb. *he that is good before God*. ³ whose pleaseth God shall escape from her ; but the sinner shall be taken by her.
- ^y ch. 1. 1, 2. 27 Behold, this have I found, saith ^y the preacher, ⁴ counting one by one, to find out the account :
- ⁴ Or, weighing one thing after another, to find out the reason. 28 which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not : ^z one man among a thousand have I found ; but a woman among all those have I not found.
- ^z Job 33. 23. Ps. 12. 1. 29 Lo, this only have I found, ^a that God hath made man upright ; but ^b they have sought out many inventions.
- ^a Gen. 1. 27.
^b Gen. 3. 6, 7.

24. This is closely connected with the preceding verse.

"Far off" and "exceeding deep," i. e. very remote was wisdom, and therefore not easily to be found. Comp. Job xxviii. 12, &c.

25. Comp. i. 17 ; ii. 12.

26. "I find more bitter than death." More exactly, "I find something more bitter than death,—the woman," &c. Of all wickedness, and of all follies and madness, the most dangerous are those which arise from a depraved woman. Solomon had sad experience of this (1 Kings xi. 4—8.), and depicts it in the book of Proverbs (Prov. ii. 16 ; v. 3 ; vii. 6, &c. ; xxiii. 27.).

27. "Counting one by one, to find out the account." "Comparing "one thing with another in order to arrive at a just estimate" (see margin).

28. "Seeketh," "find." Rather, "sought," "found." He is recounting his experience. He sought long in vain, and at last the result of his search was to find indeed, but only here and there, one man such as he desired to see; "one man among a thousand." Job ix. 3 ; xxxiii. 23. "A woman among all those have I not found." The Preacher does not mean to deny the existence of virtuous women (comp. ix. 9 ; and Prov. v. 19 ; xviii. 22 ; xxxi. 10.); but here he is speaking of the sensual, and means to declare that women, when once given to sensuality, are more irreclaimable, more desperately wicked than men. Compare the account of man's fall (Gen. iii. 16.) with St. Paul's reference to woman's part in it (2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 14.). See also Eccles. xxv. 24 ; xlii. 12—14. This thought of woman's part in the Fall was probably in the Preacher's mind.

29. The corruption of mankind, indirectly stated in ver. 20, is here brought forward as a fundamental truth, which alone can explain

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Kings are greatly to be respected.* 6 *The divine providence is to be observed.* 12 *It is better with the godly in adversity, than with the wicked in prosperity.* 16 *The work of God is unsearchable.*

1 **WHO** is as the wise man?

And who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?

^a A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and ^{2b} the boldness of his face shall be changed.

2 I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, ^c and that in regard of the oath of God.

^a Prov. 4. 8, 9. & 17. 24. See Acts 6. 15.

² Heb. the strength.

^b Deut. 28. 50.

^c 1 Chr. 23. 24. Ezek. 17. 18. Rom. 13. 5.

the condition of the world. This is the Scriptural account of the matter, Gen. i. 27; Gen. iii.; Rom. i. 20, &c. "Since the fall man has forgotten his true position, the position of a recipient of the wisdom which is from above; and follows, instead, the devices of his own wandering heart. The only way of recovery from this sickness, of escape from these fancies of the brain, is to betake ourselves to man's true position; under the Almighty's ruling hand, to renounce all wisdom of our own, and be content to learn of God" (*Hengstenberg*).

CHAPTER VIII.

1—4. Counsels of Submission to Rulers.

Many of the evils before noted were political, and to these a corrective must be administered. In the latter part of Solomon's reign the condition of the people suffered much from a spirit of rebellion and turbulence. Hence the remedy proposed is submission to legitimate authority. We are not to expect to find here a true system of politics, any more than to find in Scripture a system of philosophy, or a system of science. The Scriptural plan of dealing with politics is to lay down principles applicable to things as they are, but capable of application when a better state shall prevail. So in the New Testament submission to tyrannical rulers, and the obedience enjoined to slaves rest on the general duty of submitting to the ordinance of God (Rom. xiii. 1—7. Titus iii. 1. 1 St. Peter ii. 13—16.).

1. A prefatory commendation of wisdom, with a view to its application to political life. "Who is the wise man?" The leading thought here is not the search after wisdom, as vii. 23, but simply an appeal to the wise man, as alone fitting to judge in such matter; as in Ps. cvii. 43.

"His face to shine." Ps. civ. 15. Job xxix. 24.

"Boldness of his face." The same words rendered "fierce countenance," Deut. xxviii. 50. Dan. viii. 23; "impudent face," Prov. vii. 13. "Changed." Wisdom brings with it gentleness and softness, instead of hard obstinacy.

2. "In regard of the oath of God." Oaths of allegiance, even to a tyrant, bind one who has sworn them. It was reckoned as a grievous sin in Zedekiah, that he had broken his oaths to the Babylonian oppressor (Ezek. xvii. 15, 16.).

ECCLESIASTES, VIII.

- ^d ch. 10. 4. 3 ^d Be not hasty to go out of his sight :
stand not in an evil thing ;
for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.
- ^e Job 24. 18. 4 Where the word of a king *is, there is* power :
and ^e who may say unto him, What doest thou ?
- ² Heb. *shall know.* 5 ¶ Whoso keepeth the commandment ² shall feel
no evil thing :
and a wise man's heart discerneth both time
and judgment.
- ^f ch. 3. 1. 6 Because ^f to every purpose there is time and
judgment,

3. "Out of his sight." Lit. "from his face." Do not too hastily withdraw thyself from his countenance and favour.

"Stand not in an evil thing." Take no part in any evil counsel of rebellion. The king is powerful enough to repress such attempts. This may not improbably refer to Jeroboam and his flight (1 Kings xi. 26—40.).

5—13. Submission to the dispensation of Providence, and obedience to the commandments of God.

The foregoing precepts are introductory and illustrative of what follows. As it is the part of prudence to obey an earthly ruler, because he can punish offenders, so the wise (God-fearing) man will keep the commandments of God, being sure that there will be a day of account.

The wise man obeys God's law, knowing that all things are ordered by Him, and have their appointed judgment (ver. 5.). There is a set time, though the ills of man are many, and he knows not what is coming upon him, nor has he any power to avert the hour of death (vv. 6—8.). There is indeed a time at which the wicked seem to prosper, and end their days with honour, while the righteous are disregarded, and men seem to think that because sentence is delayed, the wicked shall escape with impunity (vv. 9—11.). But in the end right shall prevail (vv. 12, 13.).

5. The new paragraph should begin here, not at ver. 6. Our Translators were probably guided by the repetition of an "evil thing" from ver. 3. Observe that the English word "commandment" represents a different Hebrew word in ver. 2 and here. Here it is the word which specially denotes the commandment of God (Prov. xix. 16.). "Feel," lit. "know" (margin), the same word as is rendered "discerneth." There seems to be a link between the paragraphs in the repetition of words, but a link with a difference. He that keepeth the word (lit. "mouth") of the king shall not devise evil (ver. 2.); he that keepeth the commandment of God shall not know evil (Ps. ci. 4.); and a wise man's heart knoweth "time" (the appointed season for each event as in ch. iii.), and "judgment," the retribution of Divine justice.

6. "Because," . . . "therefore." Rather, "for there is a time "and judgment to every purpose, because the evil of man is great "upon him." See on vi. 1. There is a set time when man's work

ECCLESIASTES, VIII.

therefore the misery of man *is* great upon him.

7 ^g For he knoweth not that which shall be :
for who can tell him ² when it shall be ?

^g Prov. 24. 22.
ch. 6. 12.
& 9. 12.
& 10. 14.

8 ^h *There is* no man that hath power ⁱ over the
spirit to retain the spirit ;
neither *hath he* power in the day of death :
and *there is* no ³ discharge in *that* war ;
neither shall wickedness deliver those that are
given to it.

² Or, *how*
it shall be ?
^h Ps. 49. 6, 7.
ⁱ Job 14. 5.

³ Or, *casting*
off weapons.

9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto
every work that is done under the sun :
there is a time wherein one man ruleth over
another to his own hurt.

10 And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come
and gone from the place of the holy,
and they were forgotten in the city where they
had so done :
this is also vanity.

shall be brought to judgment, because the evil to which man is subject lies heavily upon him. The particle rendered "therefore" is that which is commonly "because," as in the beginning of this very verse. The evil was the cause, not the consequence. But it is often hard in the dispensations of Providence to say which is the *because* and which the *therefore*.

"**Misery.**" Not the grief which man feels, but, as elsewhere, the "evil" which he suffers.

8. "**Spirit.**" Spirit of life. Man has no power to retain his life at pleasure. Death comes certainly, and from death there is no release. The wicked may therefore be sure that judgment will overtake them. Comp. Ps. lvi. 7.

9. "**To his own hurt.**" Rather, "to his hurt," i.e. to the hurt of the subject, not of the ruler. It is the case of the *oppressed*, as in iv. 1, not of the *oppressor*, as in vii. 7. The Preacher now proceeds to solve the difficulty.

10. "**The wicked buried.**" Honoured with the rites of sepulture. See on vi. 3. So in St. Luke xvi. 22, "the rich man died, and was buried." "**From the place of the holy,**" from the holy city, Jerusalem. They had "come and gone from," i.e. lived in the city, and passed away.

"**Had so done.**" Rather, "had done right."¹ This clause is in contrast to the former. The Preacher had seen the wicked live and die in honour, and the just forgotten. This is in direct contradiction to the assurance of Prov. x. 7. According to the Authorised Version, they who are forgotten are the ungodly men,

¹ The word rendered "so" may also mean *right*. It is so used with the verb "do" in 2 Kings vii. 9, "we do not well." In Prov. xv. 7, a similar correction seems desirable in our Authorised Version, "the heart of the foolish *doeth* not so," rather, "is not right," i.e. upright. (See *Furst's Lexicon*.)

ECCLESIASTES, VIII.

- ^k Ps. 10. 6. 11 ^k Because sentence against an evil work is not
& 50. 21. executed speedily,
Isai. 26. 10. therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully
set in them to do evil.
- ^l Isai. 65. 20. 12 ^l Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and
Rom. 2. 5. his *days* be prolonged,
yet surely I know that ^m it shall be well with
^m Ps. 37. 11, 18, 19. them that fear God, which fear before him :
Prov. 1. 32, 33. 13 but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither
Is. 3. 10, 11. shall he prolong *his days*, *which are* as a
Matt. 25. 34, 41. shadow ;
because he feareth not before God.
- 14 ¶ There is a vanity which is done upon the earth ;
ⁿ Ps. 73. 14. that there be just *men*, unto whom it ⁿ happeneth
ch. 2. 14. according to the work of the wicked ;
& 7. 15. again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it hap-
& 9. 1, 2, 3. peneth according to the work of the righteous :
I said that this also *is* vanity.
- ^o ch. 2. 24. 15 ^o Then I commended mirth,
& 3. 12, 22. because a man hath no better thing under the sun,
& 5. 18.
& 9. 7.

who seem indeed prosperous and honourable, but are in the end forgotten. In this way the latter part of the verse corrects the former, and the thought is like that in Ps. lxxiii. 18—20. But the close of the verse, “*this is also vanity,*” precludes this explanation. The correction is not given until ver. 13.

11—13. The answer is that punishment, though it may be tardy, is sure. Comp. 1 Tim. v. 24.

viii. 14.—ix. 1.

The Preacher now recapitulates the stages of feeling through which he passed (vv. 14—17.) in order to arrive at the recognition of the truth that all things are ordered by God (ix. 1).

The first verse of chap. ix. in our Authorised Version should rather be attached to the preceding chapter, as it expresses the general conclusion from the preceding verses. But it is also closely connected with what follows. For from this point to the end of the Book, it is the Preacher's purpose to shew that the world being under God's government, life may be, and should be so conducted, as to lead to happiness and content through observance of the rule of true wisdom, which consists in the fear of God.

14. This is the same difficulty which has been stated before, ii. 15. Placed as it is here in connection with the declaration of “*a time and judgment for every purpose*” (ver. 6.), it finds its answer in the mysterious yet deliberate order of Divine Providence.

15. This had been already urged by the Preacher in a different frame of mind, see on ii. 23—26 ; iii. 12, 22. Here he tells us how he had once been led to think present enjoyment the utmost attainable by man.

ECCLESIASTES, VIII.

- than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry :
 for that shall abide with him of his labour the
 days of his life, which God giveth him under
 the sun.
- 16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom,
 and to see the business that is done upon the
 earth :
 (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth
 sleep with his eyes :)
- 17 then I beheld all the work of God,
 that ^p a man cannot find out the work that is ^p Job 5, 9.
 done under the sun : ^{ch. 3, 11.}
^{Rom. 11, 33.}
 because though a man labour to seek *it* out,
 yet he shall not find *it* ;
 yea farther ; though a wise *man* think to know
it, ^q yet shall he not be able to find *it*. ^q Ps. 73, 16.

16, 17. Comp. ii. 22, 23. When the Preacher applied his heart to wisdom, in order to see and understand the meaning of man's ceaseless toil upon earth, he recognized the hand of God in all which is going on, incomprehensible indeed, and past finding out, yet so plainly due to a Divine Author, that the Preacher comes to the same conclusion as Job, "I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job xlii. 3.).

Nor is this merely a confession of impotence. Man's ignorance of the future and dependence on God for life, for death, and for all things, furnishes an answer to objections raised on the ground of the immutability of the laws of nature advanced in ch. i. "The astronomer, who can predict the exact position of a planet in the heavens a thousand years hence, knows not what may be his own state of health to-morrow, nor how the wind which blows upon him will vary from day to day. May we not be permitted to conclude, with a distinguished Christian philosopher, that there is a Divine Providence in this arrangement of nature: that, while enough is displayed to stimulate the intellectual and practical energies of man, enough is still concealed to make him feel his dependence upon God" (*Mansel's Bampton Lectures*, Lect. vi.). Mansel quotes from *M'Cosh, Method of the Divine Government*, pp. 172, 174 (4th edition).

16. "The business that is done." Not the business of life, as in ii. 23; v. 3, but the *travail* (as in i. 13.) of seeking and searching out what is done under heaven; "for also there is . . . his eyes." This should not be parenthetical, it is the description of the *travail*.¹

¹ The Hebrew word is rendered "travail," i. 13; ii. 23, 26; iii. 10; iv. 8; v. 14; "business," v. 3. It implies distressing labour of body or mind, generally the latter. This clause would be better and more exactly rendered "to see the *travail* that is endured upon

"the earth, *that neither by day nor even by night doth man see sleep with his eyes.*" i.e. to observe the restless *travail* to which man is subjected in his fruitless search after the inscrutable operations of God.

ECCLESIASTES, IX.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Like things happen to good and bad.* 4 *There is a necessity of death unto men.* 7 *Comfort is all their portion in this life.* 11 *God's providence ruleth over all.* 13 *Wisdom is better than strength.*

² Heb. I gave, or, set to my heart.

1 **F**OR all this ² I considered in my heart even to declare all this,

^a ch. 8. 14.

^a that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God :
no man knoweth either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them.

^b Job 21. 7, &c.
Ps. 73. 3, 12, 13.
Mal. 3. 15.

2 ¶ ^b All *things come alike* to all :
there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked ;
to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean ;
to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not :
as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner ;

CHAPTER IX.

1. "For." The connection is this:—I found out how inscrutable were the works of God; "for I considered all this," &c., "even to declare," to make clear, or explain. This "no man knoweth either love or hatred," rather, "whether it be love or hatred," i. e. none knoweth whether God afflicts him in love or in anger, whether for correction or for punishment.

"By all that is before them." Rather, "all is before them," i. e. all is in the future unknown until it comes to pass.¹ "Before" does not mean here present to their eyes, but at a distance which they have yet to reach. This corresponds to vii. 14, where "what is after them" corresponds to this "before them."

2—12. The Uncertainties of Human Life.

Fortified by the assurance of a superintending Providence the Preacher examines afresh the anomalies of the world. In the present Section he states again what had before troubled him, but not in the same spirit. The purpose of this summary of uncertainties must be estimated by what follows—as though the Preacher were to say, True, such is life in its outward aspect, such is its vanity, if we look only to the present moment; yet there are intimations of something superior to the mere enjoyment of the passing hour, and proofs that wisdom has its advantages even now (ver. 13, &c.). See the heading of the next Section.

2. "The clean, and to the unclean." Comp. ii. 14, 15. The words especially belong to ceremonial uncleanness. The care taken to "make a difference between the clean and the unclean" beasts (Lev. xi. 47.), and the exclusion of the "defiled" from the congregation (Num. v. 2.), were parts of the system whereby the necessity of purity was inculcated. Comp. Isa. xxxv. 8.

"To him that sacrificeth." He that performs the prescribed rites of the Mosaic Law. Comp. Job i. 5.

¹ The Hebrew accents mark clearly shew how our translators have inserted that this is an independent clause: words which are not in the original. the italics in the Authorised Version

and he that sweareth, as *hè* that feareth an oath.

- 3 This is an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun,
that *there is* one event unto all :
yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil,
and madness *is* in their heart while they live,
and after that *they go* to the dead.

- 4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope :

“He that sweareth,” not profanely or falsely, but enters into a solemn covenant. Comp. Gen. xxiv. 8. Ex. xxii. 11.

“Feareth an oath.” Shrinks from binding himself by a solemn obligation. When Saul adjured the people under the pain of a curse to abstain from food for a time, it is said that they “feared the oath” (1 Sam. xiv. 26.). In that case the “fear” kept them from a seasonable refreshment—fear of a similar consequence would make some abstain from taking an oath at all. External marks of religion are not always found to agree with the circumstances of their possessor. In a dispensation in which national righteousness had so large a share in producing temporal prosperity, it was natural to expect that the laws which connected blessings with obedience would be productive of uniformity whether as respects a nation or an individual. Experience shewed this not to hold, and a correction was supplied by the thought that the show and the reality of piety do not always go together, either in the case of nations (Isa. i. 10.), or in the case of individuals (1 Sam. xv. 22. Ps. l. 8.). Thus the apparent failure of a law led to the discovery of a higher law, viz. that it is the spirit not the letter which profiteth. Comp. St. John vi. 63. But if spirit and letter coincide, if the righteousness be not only apparent but real, may we not expect that the law according to which God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, will prevail in this life? So thought Job’s friends, and against this Job protested (Job xxi. 7—27.); and here again the supposed failure of a law, led to the recognition of a higher law, partially discovered by Job and Solomon, but fully revealed by Christ and His Apostles, viz. that suffering is not necessarily an evil (1 St. Pet. iv. 12.).

3. “An evil among all things.” Things is not in the original. “An evil among all” means, an evil conspicuous among all evils. In one verse he sums up the evils of the condition of man. Of all the evils under the sun, the worst is that men are all alike subject to the same accidents (as in ii. 14.), and further that the hearts of the sons of men are evil (so vii. 29 ; viii. 11.), and after they have lived a life of mere madness and folly, they pass away and are gone (viii. 9, 10.).

4. “For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope.”¹

¹ The Hebrew here is capable of a different translation, and there is a striking variety in the reading of the *Ketib* (the written Hebrew text), and the *K’ri* (the reading proposed in the margin). The verb rendered after the *K’ri*, “is joined,” would, according to the *Ketib*, mean *is chosen*. “Who is chosen among all the “living?” i.e. who is chosen to be exempted from the common lot? No one.

In the Karlsruhe Bible it is paraphrased thus: “Choose what miserable man you please among all the living, you may be assured, that a living dog,” &c. literally, “who shall be chosen among all the living? there is strong assurance, that,” &c. The word rendered “hope” occurs only twice more in the Hebrew Bible, 2 Kings xviii. 19. Isa. xxxvi. 4, where it is rendered “confidence.”

ECCLESIASTES, IX.

- for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
- c Job 14. 21.
Isai. 63. 16.
- d Job 7. 8, 9,
10.
Isai. 26. 14.
- e ch. 8. 15.
- 5 for the living know that they shall die :
but ^c the dead know not any thing,
neither have they any more a reward ;
for ^d the memory of them is forgotten.
- 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy,
is now perished ;
neither have they any more a portion for ever
in any *thing* that is done under the sun.
- 7 Go thy way, ^e eat thy bread with joy; and drink
thy wine with a merry heart ;

The general statement is no doubt this:—The Preacher sums up: sad is life, precarious, sinful, and soon to end; sad is life, and the end sadder still. For, after all, the most wretched of lives is better than the nothingness of death. A gloomy view of death (vv. 4—6.) (in contrast to iv. 2.), is expressed in more than one Psalm (Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9; xxxix. 5, 6; cxv. 17.), and above all, in that most melancholy of all thanksgivings, the song of Hezekiah on his recovery from sickness (Isa. xxxviii. 9, &c.). It is the despairing outcry of the natural man, who knows death as it presents itself to his eyes, but knows nothing beyond the grave. This was not indeed the abiding feeling of the saints of old, but was possible with them, because they had not reached that fulness of knowledge on this subject which was reserved for the times of the Gospel. Well may St. Paul teach us to thank Him Who has robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory (1 Cor. xv. 54, &c.).

“**A living dog.**” An Arabian proverb. The “dog” is in the East reckoned the lowest of animals. 1 Sam. xvii. 43; xxiv. 14. 2 Kings viii. 13.

5. “**The living know that they shall die.**” The very apprehension of death is possible only to a living man, and so is a token of life. To the dead there is a mere blank, no exercise of the mind or body; no striving after any object. The memory of them passes away. The passions which agitated the breast, love, hatred, envy, and the like, agitate it no more—but the stillness is worse than tumult.

6. “**A portion.**” To a Hebrew to lose his “portion” was to be excluded from a share in the land of promise, to be severed from his people, an outcast, an alien. Comp. Ps. xvi. 5, and Prov. ii. 22.

7—10. All that remains is to enjoy the present moment, as much as is in our power. There is a certain sense in which the thankful enjoyment of the gifts of God is allowed and even enjoined. See above, iii. 12; v. 18; viii. 15. But here, mixed up as the precept is with the declaration of the vanity of life, the exhortation cannot be given without reserve. The best which we can arrive at, if we look merely on the outward aspect of life, is to take without thought that which is before us, conscious that it is fleeting away. Catch the passing hour. Such was the constant advice of the Epicurean poet Horace, and few of the heathen could advance beyond his philosophy.

7. “**Go thy way.**” The Hebrew word is rendered “come” in

ECCLESIASTES, IX.

for God now accepteth thy works.

8 Let thy garments be always white ;
and let thy head lack no ointment.

9 ² Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest ² Heb. *See,*
all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he ^{or, Enjoy}
hath given thee under the sun, all the days of
thy vanity :

^f for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy ¹ ch. 2. 10, 24.
labour which thou takest under the sun. ^{& 3. 13, 22.}
^{& 5. 18.}

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with
thy might ;

Hos. vi. 1, and elsewhere, expressive of a serious invitation. Our English Version shews a certain degree of irony with the advice (as in Judg. x. 14.). The pleasures here recommended are innocent ones, and the frame of mind is not quite that which appears in the early part of the treatise, which regarded this life as nothing but

“A round of listless joy and weary strife.”

In his present mood the Preacher has an intense perception of the advantages of life, and yet contemplating as he is now doing the vanity of life, because it is transitory, he can go no further than to say, amidst the changes of life, and the gloomy shadows of death, I could discover nothing profitable except the enjoyment of the present hour. This forms part of his summary of life's uncertainties, and is mentioned as the grain of sweetness in the bitter cup.

“Bread,” “wine,” and “oil,” are to the Eastern mind among the chief gifts of God to man (Ps. civ. 15.).

8. These were accompaniments of a feast, which might be, but was not always innocent enjoyment. Ps. xxiii. 5. Amos vi. 6.

White garments were constantly worn at feasts among the ancients. In the Old Testament scriptures however there is no mention, except here, of *white* garments for such occasions; perhaps because white linen garments were the special dress of priests. In the Revelation “white” garments are often mentioned (Rev. iii. 4, 5; vi. 11; xix. 14.), but as that book represents figuratively the holy people as a priesthood unto God, the mention of “white” garments there has a special reference to holiness and purity.

9. “The days of thy vanity.” Comp. vi. 12. This phrase, though not to be pressed too far, at any rate denotes that the thought of the unsatisfactoriness of worldly life and its pleasures is not absent from the mind of the Preacher.

“That is thy portion.” Not, as some have thought, that is all thy portion, expect no more; as in St. Matt. vi. 2. “they have their reward:” but, that is the portion assigned to them by God, and therefore to be accepted as a real though imperfect blessing.

10. The uncertainty of life is an argument not only for innocent enjoyment, but for honest, earnest labour. So our Lord said of Himself, “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work,” St. John ix. 4, and comp. Rom. xiii. 11, 12.

ECCLESIASTES, IX.

for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge,
nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

^g Amos 2. 14,
15.
Jer. 9. 23.

11 I returned, ^g and saw under the sun,
that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle
to the strong,
neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to
men of understanding,
nor yet favour to men of skill ;
but time and chance happeneth to them all.

^h ch. 8. 7.

12 For ^h man also knoweth not his time :
as the fishes that are taken in an evil net,
and as the birds that are caught in the snare ;
so *are* the sons of men ⁱ snared in an evil time,
when it falleth suddenly upon them.

ⁱ Prov. 29. 6.
Luke 12. 20,
39. & 17. 26,
&c.
¹ Thess. 5. 3.

13 ¶ This wisdom have I seen also under the sun,
and it *seemed* great unto me :

11. "I returned." The partial character of the earthly blessings is again sensibly felt by the Preacher, who closes his review of the uncertainties of life by a recapitulation of the chances to which man is subject.

12. "Man also knoweth not his time." Man is the sport of accident. He knows not the time of his death, nor the time of anything that is to befall him. How then can the event answer to the calculations of man who cannot foresee one event which is to occur to him? These are morbid views stated in order to be subsequently corrected. See headings of this and the following Section.

13—18. Sufficiency of Wisdom by an Example.

The Preacher finds in the course of the world instances in which fortunes depend upon wisdom and prudence. From such instances an inference may be drawn as to the ways of Providence, corrective of the despair which is disposed to attribute all to blind chance. This is the kind of argument employed by Bishop Butler—"Every man, in every thing he does, naturally acts upon the forethought and apprehension of avoiding evil or obtaining good: and if the natural course of things be the appointment of God, and our natural faculties of knowledge and experience are given us by Him; then the good and bad consequences which follow our actions are His appointment, and our foresight of those consequences is a warning to us how we are to act" (*Butler's Analogy*, Pt. ii. c. 2.).

13. "This wisdom." In the original Hebrew these words are separated, and the "also" is united to "this"—"this also" being equivalent "to moreover," like the Latin *præterea*. The verse would then run: "Moreover, I have seen wisdom under the sun, and it was great (highly esteemed) with me." Notwithstanding all man's want of power, this also is clear that wisdom has its worth in the world.

ECCLESIASTES, X.

- 14 ^k *there was* a little city, and few men within it ; ^k See 2 Sam. 20. 16,—22.
 and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it :
- 15 now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city ;
 yet no man remembered that same poor man.
- 16 ^l Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength : ^l Prov. 21. 22. & 24. 5. ch. 7. 19. ver. 18.
 nevertheless ^m the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard. ^m Mark 6. 2, 3.
- 17 The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.
- 18 ⁿ Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war : ⁿ ver. 16.
 but ^o one sinner destroyeth much good. ^o Josh. 7. 1, 11, 12.

CHAPTER X.

1 Observations of wisdom and folly: 16 of riot, 18 slothfulness, 19 and money. 20 Men's thoughts of kings ought to be reverent.

- 1 **D**EAD ² flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour : ² Heb. *Flies of death.*

15. A notable instance of wisdom's outweighing power and wealth.

“No man remembered.” Rather, “no man had been mindful of.” The same word is rendered “be mindful of” in Neh. ix. 17. Ps. cxv. 12. Isa. xvii. 10. Ps. viii. 4: “What is man, that Thou art *“mindful of him?”* It scarcely agrees with the argument to say that no man *remembered* the poor man *after* he had delivered the city. What is said is that no man *had thought of him before*. The Hebrew past tense is often used as a pluperfect.

16. “The poor man's wisdom is despised.” This is too often the case. Such an instance as the foregoing should teach us better. Perhaps this general statement influenced our Translators in the preceding verse.

17. “Ruleth among fools.” Which implies the character of the ruler himself. The quiet counsels of a wise man are of more avail than the clamorous cries of foolish rulers (comp. vii. 19.).

18. “One sinner destroyeth much good.” One wise man is a surer defence than a multitude of armed men. And on the other hand, one (fool or) sinner is an element of weakness which may bring ruin upon thousands. “By one man's disobedience many were made sinners” (Rom. v. 19. Comp. also Rom. v. 12.). This leads up to the next verse.

CHAPTER X.

1—20. Proverbs illustrative of the excellence of Wisdom.

The Preacher, as before (see in vi. vii. 1.), sets forth his principles by a series of maxims and proverbs. “It is a characteristic feature

ECCLESIASTES, X.

so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour.

2 A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand ;
but a fool's heart at his left.

3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, ² his wisdom faileth *him*,

^aand he saith to every one *that* he *is* a fool.

4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee,
^bleave not thy place ;

² Heb.
his heart.
^a Prov. 13. 16.
& 18. 2.

^b ch. 8. 3.

“of the ethical teaching of the Old Testament that it constantly (not, “as in other philosophies, occasionally) takes the form of maxims and “proverbs. This results naturally from its general aim, concerning “itself very little with the speculative, and very much, if not exclusively, with the practical” (see *Lange's Introduction to the Book of Proverbs*).

1. This verse is in close connection with the last clause of the preceding chapter. There is a peculiarity in the grammatical construction of this sentence in the original, according to which the meaning is, “one dead fly,” &c.

“A little folly.” One little sin defiles the whole man, just as a dead fly causes fermentation and spoils precious ointment. So St. James of the tongue: “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth” (comp. St. James iii. 5, 6.). We see melancholy instances in which an evil deed puts an indelible blot on the character of a man whose general life has been of excellent reputation. We cannot mention the name of David without thinking of his sin in the matter of Uriah (1 Kings xv. 5.). The right doing of Joash king of Judah during all the days of Jehoiada, was marred by the murder of Zachariah (2 Chron. xxiv.). The fair fame of Theodosius the Great is irretrievably sullied by his cruelty to Thessalonica. The offender may repent, be forgiven, but his character can never entirely recover from the stain. So also in books. We too often see works of the highest intellectual power, and containing many noble sentiments and high thoughts, marred by the introduction of some few passages, irreligious or impure, which make them unfit for at least younger readers ; and tales are written and published indicative of brilliant talent, wherein “the dead flies” of immoral sentiment make the precious ointment to stink.

2. “Heart.” Here for understanding (Prov. xiv. 33.). In the following verse “his wisdom” is literally “his heart” (see margin).

“At his right hand.” Ready for use and for dexterous application (comp. ii. 14.).

3. “He saith to every one.” Rather, “he saith it of himself,” not in so many words, but by his actions. A fool is known by his folly (comp. Prov. xiii. 16.), or he saith it to every one else, ascribing to them the folly which belongs to himself.

4—10. The superiority of wisdom over folly is shewn by a reference to the case of unworthy governors, who though for a time they seem to prosper, yet in the end are sure to be found out. This incidentally answers the objection

ECCLESIASTES, X.

for ° yielding pacifieth great offences.

° 1 Sam. 25.
24, &c.
Prov. 25. 15.

5 There is an evil *which* I have seen under the sun,

as an error *which* proceedeth ² from the ruler :

² Heb. *from before.*
d Esth. 3. 1.

6 ^d folly is set ³ in great dignity,—and the rich sit in low place.

³ Heb. *in great heights.*

7 I have seen servants ° upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

° Prov. 19. 10.
& 30. 22.

8 ^f He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it ; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

^f Ps. 7. 15.
Prov. 26. 27.

9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith ; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength : but wisdom *is* profitable to direct.

raised in iii. 16. by way of analogy. It seems strange that unworthy men should bear rule in the earth. Look at the case of earthly princes—they sometimes promote unfit men to represent them, but their folly is soon discovered. Ver. 4. is a counsel of prudence which in itself presupposes that there is a power in wisdom to affect the fortunes of men. But further, here it teaches acquiescence in what seems inevitable evil. If the spirit of an earthly ruler rise against thee, submit thyself—for submission turneth away wrath. Much more acquiesce in the order of a Heavenly Ruler, Whose decrees may for the time seem, but are not, evil.

“Leave not thy place.” “Be not transported with indignation.”

“Pacifieth great offences.” Lit. “layeth to rest great sins,” i. e. the sins of violence and oppression (comp. Prov. x. 12.).

5. “As an error.” This inversion of right, by which wise men serve and fools bear rule, is in the case of earthly sovereigns the result of error and mistake, and this error will bring with it its punishment.

7. “Upon horses.” A mark of dignity (Esth. vi. 9.). In Palestine where asses were used instead of horses, dignity was conferred by the similar use of asses (Judges v. 10 ; x. 4 ; xii. 14. 1 Kings i. 44.).

8, 9. Proverbs to shew that ruin follows unwise counsels. The king who appoints a foolish governor, is like a man who digs a pit, into which he will fall himself (Ps. vii. 15 ; ix. 15.); like one who breaks through a stone fence, and is bitten by a serpent lurking within it ; like one who removing stones is injured by their fall.

10. The king who employs foolish subordinates is like an unskilful woodcutter who uses a blunt axe. If a woodcutter whets not the edge of his tool, he will have to use much more exertion to do his work ; and as prudence will avail the workman—so wisdom is profitable in the direction of the affairs of government.

ECCLESIASTES, X.

- g Ps. 58. 4, 5. 11 Surely the serpent will bite ^g without enchantment ;
 Jer. 8. 17. and ² a babbler is no better.
- ² Heb. *the master of the tongue.* 12 ^h The words of a wise man's mouth *are* ³ gracious ;
^h Prov. 10. 32. & 12. 13. but ¹ the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.
- ³ Heb. *grace.* 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* foolishness :
¹ Prov. 10. 14. & 18. 7. and the end of ⁴ his talk *is* mischievous madness.
- ⁴ Heb. *his mouth.* 14 ^k A fool also ⁵ is full of words :
^k Prov. 15. 2. a man cannot tell what shall be ;
⁵ Heb. *multiplieth words.* and ¹ what shall be after him, who can tell him ?
- ¹ ch. 3. 22. & 6. 12. & 8. 7. 15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them,
 because he knoweth not how to go to the city.
- ^m Is. 3. 4, 5, 12. & 5. 11. 16 ^m Woe to thee, O land, when thy king *is* a child,
 and thy princes eat in the morning !
- 17 Blessed *art* thou, O land, when thy king *is* the son of nobles,

11. "Surely . . . better." Rather, "If the serpent bites before the 'enchantment, there is no profit to the charmer." The proverb alludes to the Eastern custom of charming serpents (Ps. lviii. 5. Jer. viii. 17.). The ability which God gives us must be made use of at proper seasons. Of what use is it to have the ability to speak well, if the opportunity of so speaking goes by unheeded. If the serpent bites before the charm be uttered, of what good is his art to the charmer ?

14. "A man cannot tell." A fool feels no difficulty in discoursing about what is to be, and the like, but the future is hidden from man, and so this readiness of tongue is only an evidence of folly.

15. "Every one of them." Every one of the foolish. "He knoweth not." The foolish man is like one who, not knowing his way to the city whither he is going, wanders about in all directions, losing time and labour, because he is ignorant of the right way of proceeding.

16, 17. The distinction between wisdom and folly is further enforced by connecting the happiness or misery of a nation with the good or bad character of its ruler. Mendelssohn draws attention to the contrast "eat in the morning," and "eat in due season." "Woe be to thee when thy king is childish, and neglects to administer the affairs of the kingdom, and thy princes feast in the morning before they have transacted the public business, contrary to the injunctions of Scripture,

11. "Surely." The original word may be here rendered *If*: "and the babbler." The particle commonly used for *and* is here in apodosis, marking the commencement of the principal sentence ; if translated at all it should be rendered *then* ; *babbler*, lit. *lord of the tongue*, i.e. one who is a master of words. Comp. ver. 20, "that which hath wings," lit. *master of wing* ; xii. 11, "masters of sentences" see note ; Ezra iv. 8, "chancellor," lit. *master of counsel*. The rendering "babbler" seems taken from Luther, who translates, or rather paraphrases, the verse :—"A babbler is no better than a serpent which is not charmed." Luther was probably guided by the Latin Translation : "If a serpent biteth in silence, no better is he who backbites secretly." The LXX. render "the word charmer" not literally, but agreeably to the sense of the passage. See on v. 7.

ECCLESIASTES, XI.

- and ⁿ thy princes eat in due season, for strength, ⁿ Prov. 31. 4.
and not for drunkenness !
- 18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth ;
and through idleness of the hands the house
droppeth through.
- 19 A feast is made for laughter, and ^o wine ² maketh ^o Ps. 104. 15.
merry : ² Heb.
maketh glad
the life.
but money answereth all *things*.
^p Ex. 22. 28.
Acts 23. 5.
- 20 ^p Curse not the king, no not in thy ³ thought ;
and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber :
for a bird of the air shall carry the voice,
and that which hath wings shall tell the matter. ³ Or,
conscience,
figure like.
Luke 10. 40.

CHAPTER XI.

¹ Directions for charity. ⁷ Death in life, ⁹ and the day of judgment in
the days of youth, are to be thought on.

- 1 **C**AST thy bread ^{a2} upon the waters :
^b for thou shalt find it after many days.

^a See Isaiah
32. 20.
² Heb. upon
the face of
the waters.
^b Deut. 15. 10.
Prov. 10. 17.
Matt. 10. 42.
2 Cor. 9. 8.
Gal. 6. 9, 10.
Heb. 6. 10.

“Execute judgment in the morning” (Jer. xxi. 12.). The contrast between the early days of Solomon and of Rehoboam cannot be absent from our thoughts (comp. Prov. xxviii. 16.). Instances of selfish luxury were too common in the decline of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (comp. Jer. xxii. 15.).

“A child :” not so much in years as in understanding. “Nobles :” not so much in lineal descent as in nobility of disposition. But the evil of having a child for a king when so much depended upon the personal action of the monarch, was very great.

18—20. Further considerations based upon the thought that much of man’s earthly welfare depends upon his conduct. Industry must provide safety (ver. 18.), diligence must procure means of enjoyment (ver. 19.); caution must preserve us from ruin (ver. 20.).

18. “Idleness of the hands.” Comp. Prov. vi. 10; xxiv. 33. “The house droppeth through.” The roof not being repaired, lets the water through.

19. “Money answereth all things.” Provides all that is needed.

“Scilicet uxorem cum dote fidemque et amicos

“Et genus et formam regina pecunia donat.”

(Horace, Ep. i. vi. 36.)

This is an argument to shew the necessity for diligent labour, in order to secure the enjoyments of life.

20. The necessity of caution in our speech, especially in reference to rulers.

Thus by maxim and precept the Preacher has impressed upon his hearers that, great as are the ills of life, and inevitable as they may appear, much misery may be avoided by prudence, a fact which may inspire more hopefulness in our general views of the conditions of life.

CHAPTER XI.

1—6. Actions and their consequences.

The Preacher having shewn how much in this life depends upon

ECCLESIASTES, XI.

- 4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow ;
and he that regardeth the clouds shall not
reap.
- 5 As ^fthou knowest not what *is* the way of the ^fJohn 3. 8.
spirit,
^gnor how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her ^gPs. 139. 14,
that is with child :
even so thou knowest not the works of God who
maketh all.
- 6 In the morning sow thy seed,
and in the evening withhold not thine hand :
for thou knowest not whether ²shall prosper, ²Heb. *shall*
either this or that, ^{be right.}
or whether they both *shall be* alike good.

“opportunities, if we have neglected them. Indeed the general course of nature is an example of this. If, during the opportunity of youth, persons are indocile and self-willed, they inevitably suffer in their future life, for want of those acquirements which they neglected the natural season of attaining. If the husbandman lets the seed-time pass without sowing, the whole year is lost to him beyond recovery. In like manner, though after men have been guilty of folly and extravagance *up to a certain degree*, it is often in their power, for instance, to retrieve their affairs, to recover their health and character, at least in good measure; yet real reformation is, in many cases, of no avail at all towards preventing the miseries, poverty, sickness, infamy, naturally annexed to poverty and extravagance exceeding *that degree*. There is a certain bound to imprudence and misbehaviour, which being transgressed, there remains no place for repentance in the natural course of things” (*Butler’s Analogy*, Pt. i. ch. 2.).

4. “He that observeth the wind.” The due time for action must be seized. If we wait for the removal of every possible hindrance we shall infallibly lose what we might have secured. Felix put aside St. Paul’s teaching, waiting for a convenient season which never came (Acts xxiv. 25.).

5. “Way of the spirit.” Rather, “way of the wind;” the same word as in the previous verse rendered “wind”—it should be so rendered here. Comp. St. John iii. 8: “The wind bloweth where it listeth,” &c. We are ignorant of the processes of nature, and even of the nature of our birth, much more are we incapable of comprehending the modes of Divine operation (St. John iii. 12.).

6. “In the morning sow thy seed.” The same metaphor is applied by St. Paul to almsgiving (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.). “Thou knowest not.” Though results commonly follow certain actions, yet God keeps in His own hands the disposal of events, whose very uncertainty thus becomes an argument for the Divine government (Prov. xvi. 33. 1 Cor. iii. 7, 9.).

- 7 ¶ Truly the light *is* sweet,
h ch. 7. 11. and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes ^h to
 behold the sun :
- 8 but if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in
 them all ;
 yet let him remember the days of darkness ;
 for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity.
- 9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ;
 and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy
 youth,
i Num. 15. 33. ⁱ and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the
 sight of thine eyes :
- k ch. 12. 14.
 Rom. 2. 6,—
 11. but know thou, that for all these *things* ^k God
 will bring thee into judgment.
- 2 Or, anger. 10 Therefore remove ² sorrow from thy heart,
1 2 Cor. 7. 1.
 2 Tim. 2. 22.
 m Ps. 39. 5. and ¹ put away evil from thy flesh :
^m for childhood and youth *are* vanity.

7—10. Closing Admonitions.

The Preacher has now passed finally from the region of speculation. He has for some time been dwelling on the practical rules of life, and he now sums up the whole of his argument by an admonition to live in the fear of God, with a tranquil contemplation of the day of death, and with the certainty of the day of judgment.

8. "The days of darkness." The day of death. Comp. Job x. 21. Ps. lxxxviii. 12. "All that cometh is vanity." Everything upon this earth is unsubstantial and transitory.

9. "Rejoice . . . but know." Some have thought that the former part of this sentence is ironical. Indulge thyself, as it may please thee ; but for all this thou shalt be brought to judgment. But this is not to be so taken. Tranquil and trustful enjoyment of the good things of this life, as the gifts of God, is in itself a duty (comp. on v. 18.). All such enjoyment is indeed to be limited and controlled by the thought of an account which we must one day render unto God. But this thought is not intended to prevent the innocent enjoyment of life (comp. Phil. iv. 4. St. James i. 17.).

10. "And put away." The Hebrew particle "and" is often equivalent to "but." So in ver. 9, "but know," Hebrew, "and know." There is here the same compensation as in ver. 9. Rejoice, but temper thy joy by the thought of a future judgment. So here, put away grief and gloom, but heedfully abstain from the evil lusts of the flesh. "Keep "thy body in temperance, soberness, and chastity." Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 13. A cheerful spirit, and a body undefiled, may and should ever go together.

"Childhood and youth." The first of the two words is properly "youth," having the same root as "young" man ; the second word is probably derived from a word signifying "morning dawn." The two together are equivalent to "the morning of life."

"Vanity." As in ver. 8, evanescent and transitory. The morning of life quickly passes away. Comp. Ps. xxxix. 6.

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The Creator is to be remembered in due time.* 8 *The preacher's care to edify.* 13 *The fear of God is the chief antidote of vanity.*

- 1 **R**EMEMBER ^a now thy Creator in the days ^a Prov. 22. 6.
Lam. 3. 27.
of thy youth,
while the evil days come not, nor the years
draw nigh,
^b when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in ^b Sec 2 Sam.
1 J. 35.
them ;
2 while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the
stars, be not darkened,
nor the clouds return after the rain :
3 in the day when the keepers of the house shall
tremble,

CHAPTER XII.

2—7. These verses have been generally understood as a poetical description of old age, and its effects upon the bodily frame. Other views have been advanced, but none is so suitable as this, the oldest interpretation.

2. Some think this is to describe the failing powers of vision, but as these are more distinctly noticed in ver. 3, it is more natural to suppose this verse to denote the failing power of enjoyment at the approach of old age, when those things which seemed so beautiful in early years lose their charms. Death is often spoken of as darkness in contrast to the light of life. Comp. Job xxxiii. 28.

“Clouds return after the rain.” After rain in the ordinary course comes sunshine. When clouds gather after rain, it is “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Joel ii. 2).

3. The decay of man's bodily powers is represented by the figure of a house falling into ruin : several organs of the body correspond to several parts of the house, but it is the figure, not the thing itself, which is portrayed. This will be best seen by viewing the picture as a whole.

The house is falling into ruin : in front, where once stood bold guards, are now trembling watchers ; the supporting columns, “the strong men,” are giving way ; the women at the millstone, “the grinders,” are few, and they have little to do ; the bright eyes that once looked forth from the lattice, “those that look out at the windows,” are dim ; the doors once open to the streets to admit guests and travellers are now shut ; instead of the merry voices of busy handmaids, there is heard but the low sound of one or two women grinding at the mill, “the voice of the grinding is low ;” the few and feeble inmates remaining tremble at every sound, “they rise up at the voice of the bird ;” silence reigns where once were heard the joyous notes of the musicians, “the daughters of musick shall be brought low ;” the lamp that lit up the hall, “the golden bowl,” lies broken, the chains by which it hung, “the silver cord,” having given way ; by the fountain lies a broken pitcher no longer needed ; and the wheel for drawing water from the well is out of gear.

3. “The keepers of the house.” “The house” is the human body,

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

and the strong men shall bow themselves,
 and ²the grinders cease because they are
 few,
 and those that look out of the windows be dark-
 ened,
 4 and the doors shall be shut in the streets,
 when the sound of the grinding is low,
 and he shall rise up at the voice of the
 bird,
 and all ^cthe daughters of musick shall be
 brought low ;
 5 also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which*
is high,
 and fears *shall be* in the way,
 and the almond tree shall flourish,
 and the grasshopper shall be a burden,
 and desire shall fail :

² Or,
 the grinders
 fail, because
 they grind
 little.

^c 2 Sam. 19.
 35.

“the house of clay” Job iv. 19. Wisd. ix. 15. Comp. 2 Cor. v. 1. The “keepers” are the arms, because they are the body’s weapons of defence.

“The strong men,” the legs, the body’s strength and support. Comp. “his legs are as pillars of marble,” Cant. v. 15. Ps. cxlvii. 10.

“The grinders.” The noun is feminine; “grinding women.” To grind corn was a common employment of women, and so the expression is a proper figure for the teeth. The figurative character of the expressions must be especially noted. “The teeth” are not described as grinding instruments, but figured by the women employed in this act (Exod. xi. 5. St. Matt. xxiv. 41.) “They that look out of the windows:” the eyes. Comp. Judges v. 28. 2 Kings ix. 30.

4. “The doors.” The lips. Comp. Job xli. 14, “the doors of his face,” Ps. cxli. 3. Men weakened by age are slow to use their mouths whether for eating or for speaking. “When the sound of the grinding is low.” When men eat slowly and leisurely. “He shall rise up at the voice of a bird.” Short and broken slumbers take the place of the sound sleep of youth. Wakefulness in the early morning is a characteristic of old age. “The daughters of musick:” the musical tones of the voice.

“His big manly voice turning again towards childish treble.”

(Shakespeare.)

There is a transition here common in Eastern allegories. The Preacher is passing from the figure of the house to other figures more directly descriptive of old age.

5. “Afraid of that which is high.” Afraid of steep paths and high ascents; a characteristic of old age. “Fears shall be in the way.” An old man cannot walk boldly, but is afraid of every obstacle in his path. “The almond tree shall flourish.” Grey hairs on the head are like the white blossoms of the almond tree. “The grasshopper shall be a burden.” Weakness shall make the slightest weight burdensome. “Desire shall fail.” Old age deprives men of the power of enjoy-

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

- because man goeth to ^d his long home, and ^e the ^d Job 17. 13.
 mourners go about the streets : ^e Jer. 9. 17.
- 6 or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden
 bowl be broken,
 or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the
 wheel broken at the cistern.
- 7 ^f Then shall the dust return to the earth as ^f Gen. 3. 19.
 it was : ^f Job 34. 15.
^f Ps. 90. 3.
- ^g and the spirit shall return unto God ^h who ^g ch. 3. 21.
 gave it. ^h Num. 16. 22.
^h & 27. 16.
^h Job 34. 14.
^h Isai. 57. 16.
^h Zech. 12. 1.
- 8 ¶ ⁱ Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher ; all ⁱ is
 vanity. ⁱ Ps. 62. 9.
ⁱ ch. 1. 2.

ment. Comp. 2 Sam. xix. 35. "Mourners go about the streets."
 An Eastern custom. Comp. Jer. ix. 17.

It is interesting to note that among the ancient Egyptians it was customary for every great lord to build close by his mansion a house which was to contain his embalmed body after his death ; this house was called "the house of eternity" (see *Nations Around*, p. 49.).

In the above verses, then, old age is poetically described as a time when arms tremble, legs totter, teeth chatter, eyes are dim, lips mumble, slumbers are broken, every noise agitates, the voice has lost its music, the feet can scale no hills, hair is grey, the lightest weight is a burden, and there is no sense bringing gratification.

6. We have passed from the effects of old age upon the bodily frame to the hour of death and mourning. We need not therefore seek (as some have sought) for members of the human body to answer to "the silver cord," "the golden bowl," "the pitcher," "the fountain," "the wheel," and "the cistern:" but this verse recurs to the figure of the house. Death is represented by apt figures: (1) of a lamp hung from the ceiling, whose chain being broken, the oil is spilt, and the light extinguished; (2) of a pitcher for fetching water from a fountain, broken and therefore useless; (3) of a wheel and bucket of a well, dislocated and of no avail.

"The silver cord:" the chain by which the lamp is suspended.
 "The golden bowl:" the body of the lamp holding the oil, which passes from it through tubes to the branches (Zech. iv. 2.). "The wheel;" round which the rope passes to draw up the bucket from the well or cistern.

7. "Here the wise king develops his opinion in a form agreeable with the law and with sound wisdom, that the soul of man is given him by the Former of all things, and that it is not a mere accidental quality of the body, but a being distinct and created separately from it, not circumscribed by the limits of space, but surviving the death of the body, and then returning to the God Who gave it when the body returns to the dust; and now it is clear that it was never Solomon's intention to raise doubts as to the fundamental principle of the law without afterwards removing them" (*Mendelssohn in Preston's Ecclesiastes*).

8—12. The Purpose of the Book.

As the book began, so the Preacher takes up the subject, and shews

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

² Or, *the more wise the preacher was, &c.*

^k 1 Kin. 4. 32.

³ Heb. *words of delight.*

9 And ² moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and ^k set in order many proverbs.

10 The preacher sought to find out ³ acceptable words: and *that which was written was upright, even words of truth.*

11 The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd.

how with this subject before him, he sets himself to apply wisdom to its consideration.

9. "Many proverbs." 1 Kings iv. 32. Prov. i. 1, and foll. (see Introduction to Proverbs, Sect. 3.).

11. This verse may be rendered thus: "The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails driven home *are* (the words of) masters of assemblies; they are given from one shepherd." There is a parallelism, characteristic of the Hebrew, lost sight of in our translation; the ellipse "words of" is very simple.

"Goads." Properly for oxen (1 Sam. xiii. 21.). The words of the wise stimulate to good actions. "Nails;" "tent-pegs," which, being driven in, keep the tent firm and strong. Comp. Ezra ix. 8. Isa. xxii. 23. In later days it was customary among the Jews to have "assemblies" or councils of learned men, whose special business it was to consider the canonicity of Scriptures, and their interpretation. Such were "the men of Hezekiah" (Prov. xxv. 1.), representing a college of doctors of the Law formed under that great monarch, which was continued, vacancies being supplied from time to time, from B.C. 724—444. The latter date is that of a similar college, the Great Senate, which lasted from B.C. 444—196, and was succeeded by the Tannaites, who remained in activity until B.C. 32. There is a tradition that the book Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) was edited and arranged by the "men of Hezekiah" (*Fürst, Kanon*). Considering the literary activity of the Hebrews under the guidance of Solomon, it is far from improbable, though we have no distinct proof, that such councils may have existed in his days, and that the college of Hezekiah was a revival of an ancient system. If so, the mention of "masters of assemblies" or "members of council" may be an allusion to an institution of Solomon's age. Or it may be that this verse was added by those who arranged and edited the Book, annexing to it a commendation of the works of such councils (see Introduction to Proverbs, Sect. 4.).

"Masters of," "members of." "Assemblies." The original word occurs here only. It is a plural participial form, like our word "gatherings," which may either be gatherings of persons (assemblies), or gatherings of words *collectanea*. The doctors might either be called "masters of assemblies" or "masters of sentences." Gesenius (*Heb. Lex.*) compares phrases common among the later Jews, "Masters of Masora," "masters of Midrash," "masters of Agadah." See note on x. 11.

"Which are given from one shepherd." They are all the utterances

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

- 12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished : ¹ ch. 1. 18.
of making many books *there is* no end ; and ² Or, *reading.*
¹ much ² study *is* a weariness of the flesh. ³ Or,
The end of the matter,
13 ³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : *even all that hath been heard, is.*
^m Fear God, and keep his commandments : for ^m Deut. 6. 2.
this *is* the whole *duty* of man. & 10. 12.

of one ruler. For "shepherd" comp. Ps. xxiii. 1. Isa. xlv. 28. Ezek. xxxiv. 2.

This sentence sets its seal to the whole Book, whether the "one shepherd" be the king who composed it, or the ruler under whose authority it was issued. But we, to whom the name of "shepherd" at once suggests the Good Shepherd, our Blessed Lord, our only Ruler and Guide, may remember that in one sense this like all other parts of Scripture, proceeds from His inspiration, and is stamped with His authority. He while on earth spake in proverbs. The proverbial form (so closely akin to that of parables) is seen in much of His teaching. The Sermon on the Mount, for instance, abounds in proverbs. The wise sayings of men of old, incorporated in His addresses, acquire a new scope and meaning. The answers to complaints or objections of the enquirer are no longer those of a wise philosopher, but are to be regarded as the utterance of the All-wise Ruler of the universe, and as being in the highest sense "given by One Shepherd" (see Introduction to Proverbs, Sect. 3.).

12. "And further, by these, my son, be admonished." The address "my son" reminds us of Prov. i. 8, and elsewhere, and of Rehoboam. The accents here suggest a different rendering, which also throws much light on the whole verse. "And more than these, be admonished, my son." "But more than to all the contents of books, take heed, my son, to attend to the advice of wise counsellors, and to walk in their ways. For recondite learning and research are not the fundamental and chief matter, but practice. This it is which constitutes the radical principle of all perfection. It is impossible for everything to be contained in books, and it is necessary for the wise man to *hear* and to increase learning for himself, not to confine himself exclusively to the study of authors; for much study, without mental profit, wearies the flesh and is of no good to body or mind" (*Mendelssohn*). The writings of the Greek philosophers were very voluminous. Epicurus is said to have written 300, and Chrysippus more than 700 volumes.

13, 14. Conclusion.

Here is the true remedy against the despondency which a view of human misery is calculated to engender. Here is the answer by which our perplexities are to be removed. The thought of a future judgment will go far to allay doubts arising from the inequalities of life. That all men shall be equitably dealt with we may be assured. How this will be carried out we know not—enough that we have revealed to us in Holy Scripture the righteous Judge Who will render unto every man according to his deeds (Rom. ii. 5—16.). Enough that we have the commandments of God to be a lantern unto our feet and a light unto our paths. To know the mysterious ways of God we must first know His plain

ECCLESIASTES, XII.

ⁿ ch. 11. 9. 14 For ⁿ God shall bring every work into judgment,
Matt. 12. 36. with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or
Acts 17. 30, whether *it be* evil.
31.
Rom. 2. 16.
& 14. 10, 12. 1 Cor. 4. 5. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

commandments. "Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts; so
"shall I talk of Thy wondrous works" (Ps. cxix. 27.).

13. This paragraph begins in the Hebrew with an enlarged letter (see
on vii. 1—22.). Here it marks, no doubt, the importance of the sentence.
In the two last verses we have the key to the whole book.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Song of Solomon, i. 1 (comp. i. 5; iii. 7, 9, 11; viii. 11, 12.), is the only one left to us of the thousand and five songs spoken of in 1 Kings iv. 32. The Hebrew title, The Song of Songs, is taken from the opening words of the Song; the name Canticles, often given to this book, is from the Latin.

Short as this book is, it has probably been the subject of more discussion than any other book of Holy Scripture, and it seems necessary to prefix a few words on some of the difficulties and peculiarities which it presents. At first sight, the book seems to be altogether earthly and amatory, not only without any mention of the name of God¹, but without any religious sentiment or devout utterance of any kind. But we can hardly conceive that if the compilers of the Canon of the Old Testament had supposed it to be no more than this, had supposed it to be a mere love song, or a collection of several love songs, they would have admitted it into the sacred volume: it would seem that they must have believed the Song of Solomon to have had some moral and spiritual meaning, to have contained matter fitted for the edification of those who read it. They looked, therefore, not so much to the literal expressions as to the latent mystical meaning, and understood, as so many in later times have done, the whole book as a parable or allegory, setting forth, under figures taken from earthly love, the love between God and the soul of man, a love which was afterwards to find its highest and most complete expression in the love between Christ and His Church.

Holy Scripture constantly employs worldly things as parables of things spiritual, and uses the desires and longings of human nature to illustrate the eagerness with which men ought to seek after the things which are above. They are bidden, for instance, to search for divine wisdom with something of the same earnestness and reality with which men seek for wealth and treasure; to long for righteousness as hungry men long for food and drink: the satisfaction which God hath in store, both here and hereafter, for those who serve Him, is set forth under the description of a rich feast. (See, for example, Prov. ii. 4; iii. 14, 15. St. Matt. xiii. 44; v. 6. Isa. lv. i. 2; xxv. 6. Prov. ix. 2—5. St. Matt. xxii. 3.)

Not otherwise is it with the passion which in many natures is the strongest of all, the love of man for his brother, or the love between man and woman. Love to God is, we are expressly taught, to be learned by love to man (1 St. John iv. 20.): and if this be true of the calmer love of brother to brother and brother to sister, it is not less true of the more absorbing and tender love of those who are betrothed or married, or

¹ The idiom in such a passage as viii. 6 can hardly be considered an exception.

INTRODUCTION.

seeking to be married or betrothed. And when we reflect how many things have been in all ages sung and said on the love of man to woman and the love of woman to man; how many tales and stories, true or fictitious, many most beautiful and touching, have been written on this subject, it would be something strange and contrary to the way in which Holy Scripture teaches men, if it had made no parable of the universal passion. The intense absorbing longing which the beloved feels for the beloved; the joy felt in the presence of the beloved; the self-denial, the toil, the self-sacrifice, the waiting (comp. Gen. xxix. 20.), often gladly endured for the sake of the beloved; the full happiness in the possession of the beloved, are surely as apt, as worthy, as expressive parables as can be found within the range of human thought and feeling, under which to give some conception of what God, Who is love, may be to the souls of them that love Him.

Without here bringing forward the illustrations which may be found in Oriental literature, the following passages in Holy Scripture may be referred to, as among those in which human love, the marriage state, whether chastely observed or shamefully violated, are used in illustration of the relations between God and His people. The forty-fifth Psalm is in some respects remarkably parallel to the Song of Songs; and the Prophet Hosea (ii. 14, 16, 19, 20.) thus concludes the metaphorical expressions in which he had set forth the going astray and the restoration of Israel: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her . . . and speak comfortably "unto her . . . and it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt "call me, My husband, . . . and I will betroth thee unto me for ever . . . "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know "the Lord." See also Isa. lxii. 4, 5; liv. 5. The prophets, following out the intimation given in the Law (Exod. xxxiv. 15. Levit. xvii. 7; xx. 5. Deut. xxxi. 16. Judges ii. 17.), when they would arouse the people to repentance and recall them from their idolatries, can find no more forcible method of awakening them to shame and sorrow and indignation, than by holding them up to themselves, in a parable, as like to the virgin that hath lightly regarded her maiden chastity, or the once-honoured wife that hath shamelessly committed adultery (see Ezek. xvi.; xxiii. Jer. ii. 2; iii. 1—11, 20. Hosea ii. 2, 4, 5, 7, 13. Isa. lvii. 7—9. Comp. Rev. ii. 22.).

In the New Testament, St. John the Baptist (in words which may be thought to contain a reference not only to such places as Isa. lxii. 5, but to the Song of Songs) announces our Lord as the Bridegroom that hath the Bride (St. John iii. 29.); our Lord employs the same expression of Himself (St. Matt. xxv. 1.); and the bliss of the redeemed, united for ever in heaven to their Lord, is described under the emblem of the marriage of the Lamb to the Bride that hath made herself ready (Rev. xix. 7—9; xxi. 2, 9. See also St. Matt. xxii. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 25—27, 32. In Eph. v. 27 may be discerned an allusion to Song of Solomon iv. 7; comp. also v. 2 and Rev. iii. 20.).

There is therefore nothing in itself improbable that Holy Scripture should employ images taken from the fervour and intensity of earthly passion in order to help men to feel somewhat of the real force of the first Commandment of all, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy "heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And, even if we could assume as correct that view of the Song of Songs which seems to find favour with many in recent times, viz., that it describes a maiden of humble life exposed to temptation, brought to the palace of the king,

INTRODUCTION.

who seeks to win her love, yet amidst the allurements which wealth and splendour can offer still remaining true to the beloved on whom her early affections had been placed,—there would be no impossibility in seeing herein an allegory of the faithful soul which the world cannot seduce from its “first love” (Rev. ii. 4.).

These suggestions, it is hoped, may be found useful in removing some difficulties from the mind of the devout reader, and may dispose him to accept that view which seems most edifying, that the Song of Solomon is a mystical and spiritual allegory, wherein the soul may learn to seek with ardent longing after God; and may learn something of the happiness of loving God, and hoping that it is loved by God; may enjoy sometimes, in moments of sweet communion with God, a foretaste of the full security and peace of possession, when, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, it shall exclaim, “My beloved is mine, and I am His” (ii. 16; vi. 3; vii. 10.). Such a reader would see in the description given of beauty of person or of ornaments (i. 10, 11^o, 15; iv. 1—15; vii. 1—8, &c.) an allegory, as in other parts of Holy Scripture (for instance, Ezek. xvi. 10—14. Ps. xlv. 11, 13, 14. Rev. xix. 8.), of the graces and virtues with which are adorned the souls of those who seek to cherish the gifts of the Spirit of God.

And this last remark may help us to answer an objection to which it may be well to attempt to give in a few words some reply. It may be said that, after all, the ideal presented in this book is a low one, that frequent and elaborate descriptions are given of mere animal and outward beauty, but nothing is said of any high moral or intellectual endowments: the Bride is praised, not because she is good and wise, but because she is fair. The son of Sirach had a nobler conception when he wrote, “Forego not a wise and good woman, “for her grace is above gold” (Ecclus. vii. 19.). It may be said that all that is repeated so often in this book about eyes, and lips, and hair, and breasts, is lower in dignity, and purity, than that portrait of the good wife in the later portion of the Proverbs, “Who can find a virtuous woman? “for her price is far above rubies; . . . favour is deceitful, and beauty “is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. xxxi. 10—31.). Without admitting that such a representation is altogether accurate (see for instance iv. 11, 12, *note*), it is to be observed that the Song of Solomon is not a didactic poem, but a song of earthly love, which we take to serve as a parable of the love of God, and therefore of all that is like God, all that is good, and true, and kind, and wise.

Such a parable takes its framework, as do those other parables, about the “hid treasure” (Prov. ii. 4.), or the mingled wine and the furnished table (Prov. ix. 2, 5.), from things which to the children of men seem, without question, desirable. Its very purpose is by those things which men *do* love, to teach them what is meant by loving things which men *ought* to love. The parable and its lesson are distinct.

That men ought to love goodness and wisdom more than bodily beauty, which through sickness, or time, is so liable to decay, is most true; it is a part of the interpretation of the parable, for it is loving wherever they are seen, even when imperfectly displayed, resemblances of the eternal attributes of God: yet all men do not love even God, but they do love and admire beauty. And if a parable of this kind is to be made effective, it must be taken from some of those things

INTRODUCTION.

which are incontestably the objects of some of the strongest passions and desires of men. And it may be added, that of all earthly and material things personal beauty is the most attractive, and the least unworthy to stand as the symbol of that which is as much better than itself, as the soul is better than the body. For physical beauty may as God's workmanship rightly claim its due meed of admiration and praise; it may lead the hearts of men to look up higher, and to seek after the "first author of beauty" (Wisdom xiii. 3.), with the same intense desire as they seek after such partial and imperfect images of the beautiful as may be seen by the outward eyes.

The brief limits of this commentary almost entirely preclude the attempt to set forth the allegorical interpretations which have been offered of every line, it may be said, and word of this book. Some few hints are occasionally given in the notes. For, indeed, the mystical interpretation of details, such as those in the Song of Solomon, notwithstanding the piety and ingenuity which have been bestowed upon their elaboration, and the profit and pleasure which some may derive from them, as expanded in varying ways in homiletic or devotional exercises, must remain in uncertainty, and it must be left for each individual to make such personal application of them as his own feelings and spiritual needs may suggest. The headings of the chapters in the English Translation give an outline of the view, which Christians generally from very early times have been ready to adopt, that the Song of Solomon proclaims in allegory and prophecy the mutual love of Christ and His people.

It will be seen at once that, from the nature of the allegory, a modest reserve is necessary in commenting upon the literal framework in which, under poetical figures, is set forth the longing of the beloved for the beloved (ii. 5; v. 8.), and the enjoyment of the beloved by the beloved (ii. 3, 6, 16, 17; v. 1; vi. 2, 3; vii. 8, 9.). A parable of this kind, however delicately and gracefully its primary meaning may be veiled, is easily perverted (comp. 2 St. Peter iii. 16.). It must not however be forgotten that though, through human sinfulness and the many corruptions of society, such a book as the Song of Solomon may not be fitted for public reading in a mixed congregation, or even for private reading by the impure in heart, yet that as human love within the limits assigned by God's law is holy and good, so is the simple expression of its emotions innocent and pure. Many devout men have studied this book, and commented upon it with profit and delight; and to those who can receive it, there is no more effectual way in which could be set forth the power and the sweetness of the love of God, when it hath once filled the soul, than by images taken from the absorbing earthly passion which often takes such complete possession of the hearts of the children of men.

There are no events in the life of Solomon, as related to us elsewhere, which supply any explanation of this book; and with respect to its general structure and outward form, it may be said that though many have attempted to arrange the whole as narrating a continuous plot or story with a succession of events following each other in due course, the difficulties in the way of so arranging it in any clear connected story seem well-nigh insuperable. The most opposite theories have been ingeniously and elaborately worked out. It would rather seem that instead of any supposed narrative of actual events, we have a series of odes, more or less resembling each other, in which Solomon sets forth an ideal of human love in various aspects, with references

INTRODUCTION.

more or less distinct, as is natural to all poets, to his own experiences, and the circumstances and scenery of his own times. The Song of Solomon may in one respect be compared to the book of Ecclesiastes; in the one Solomon shews how he saw through the vanity of all the earthly grandeur which surrounded even a great king, as compared with quiet contentment and obedience; and the Song of Solomon, written by the master of a great harem, shews that he had still conceived something more to be desired than all these wives and concubines, something which even those in humble life might enjoy, the devoted love of one to one, marriage as instituted by God in Paradise, and given back to man by Christianity (chap. vi. 8, 9. St. Matt. xix. 4, 5.).

Whether the writer of the Song of Solomon had any consciousness of a higher meaning underlying the outward framework of his poems is a question which the book itself does not enable us to answer; but as the leading idea of the whole book serves as a parable of heavenly love, so often, as in the Psalms, the way of expressing earthly things has been so guided that the words have been as it were instinctively seized upon, and made to serve for many generations as the utterances of the longings of devout souls.

One main division of the book would seem to be made after v. 1; and other divisions appear to be marked by the recurrence, as a kind of refrain, of the charge to the daughters of Jerusalem; so that the Song of Songs may be divided into five, or rather into six, portions (see on v. 2; vi. 10.). The first, i. 1—ii. 7. The second, ii. 8—iii. 5. The third, iii. 6—v. 1. The fourth (or, the fourth and fifth), v. 2—viii. 4. The last, viii. 5—the end. The division into eight chapters is modern: the division of the Bible into chapters being first made for convenience of reference in the Latin Bibles in the thirteenth century, and afterwards, with some slight variations, adopted in the fifteenth century in the Hebrew Bibles.

The various portions of the book are cast in a dramatic form in which the chief speakers are the Bride, her Beloved, and a "chorus," so to call it, of the daughters of Jerusalem (i. 5.): and the scene appears, during some portion of the poem, to be laid at Jerusalem. The time is the spring (ii. 11, 13; vi. 11; vii. 12.). One of the characteristics of the Song of Solomon is the frequent reference made to the objects of outward nature, especially plants and flowers. Comp. 1 Kings iv. 33.

COLLECT.

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The church's love unto Christ.* 5 *She confesseth her deformity, 7 and prayeth to be directed to his flock.* 8 *Christ directeth her to the shepherds' tents: 9 and shearing his love to her, 11 giveth her gracious promises.* 12 *The church and Christ congratulate one another.*

^a 1 Kin. 4. 32. 1 **T**HE ^a song of songs, which is Solomon's.

2 ¶ Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth :

^b ch. 4. 10.

² Heb.

thy loves.

^b for ² thy love is better than wine.

3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments

CHAPTER I.

1. "Song of songs," i. e. the most excellent of songs. This way of expressing the superlative is the same as in the expression "Holy of holies," which so constantly occurs in the Hebrew, though rendered "most holy" in the English Version. Compare also the expressions, "Heaven of heavens," 1 Kings viii. 27. "God of gods," Dan. ii. 47. "King of kings, Lord of lords," Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16. "Vanity of vanities," Eccles. i. 2; xii. 8. "Servant of servants," Gen. ix. 25.

The summaries prefixed to the chapters, like the division into chapters and verses, are retained for the sake of some who might miss them. These summaries or headings, though in some points open to objection, may be taken as representing in a general way the traditional interpretation of the Song of Solomon which has from very early times prevailed. Without wandering into merely fanciful details, the reader may see in them suggestions for gathering spiritual lessons from pictures of earthly love.

i. 2.—ii. 7. The First Song.

The Bride, a lowly maiden, is brought to the house of the King whom she loveth, and by whom she is loved.

2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." It has already been intimated that throughout this Song, earthly love—its desires, its endearments, its hopes, its longings—may be taken as a parable of heavenly love. And here in the opening words of the Song in which the Bride utters her longing for the outward signs and tokens of affection, the seals of the love of her Beloved, the reader seeking for a spiritual lesson may discern an emblem of the soul praying for some manifestation of the love of God; "some token for good" (Ps. lxxxvi. 17.), which may encourage its hopes of acceptance with Him Whose "loving-kindness is better than life" (Ps. lxxiii. 3.). And as the greatest proof of God's love to man is the gift of His Son (St. John iii. 16.), those who make devotional application of the words of the Bride, may feel that as Christians to whom this fuller revelation of God's love has been made known, they do not go beyond that which may come within the spirit of the inner and mystical meaning of the words, when they have in their thoughts those infinite blessings in time and eternity which have been bestowed through the Messiah; the heavenly Bridegroom (St. John iii. 29.) Who hath espoused to Himself the church of redeemed souls (2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 25, 27.).

"Thy love is better than wine," iv. 10.

3. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments," &c. The

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

thy name *is as ointment poured forth,*
therefore do the virgins love thee.

- 4 ° Draw me, ° we will run after thee :
the king ° hath brought me into his chambers :
we will be glad and rejoice in thee,
we will remember thy love more than wine :
² the upright love thee.

- 5 I *am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jeru-
salem,

c Hos. 11. 4.
John 6. 44.
& 12. 32.
d Phil. 3. 12,
13, 14.
e Ps. 45. 14,
15.
John 14. 2.
Eph. 2. 6.
² Or, *they*
love thee
uprightly.

reason given does not seem quite clear, and a slight alteration of the rendering would make the meaning of the sentence plainer. "For savour (because of savour, on account of their fragrance), thy ointments are good; as ointment poured forth (and thus diffusing abroad its fragrance), is thy name; therefore do the virgins love thee." There is a similar comparison and a like play upon the words used in the Hebrew in Eccles. vii. 1, "a good name is better than precious ointment." Compare also Eccles. x. 1. Eccles. xlix. 1. This would seem to suggest that 'name' here signifies, as it so often does (e.g. Isa. lxiii. 12. 1 Kings i. 47; iv. 31. Gen. vi. 4, &c.), fame, renown, glory, praise, spread far and wide, like the ointment spreading its sweet odour. Otherwise, perhaps, the words might rather be taken as pointing out how sweet to those who love is even the sound of the name of one to them very dear, its very mention having power sometimes to stir deep feelings, and to move to joy or tears. Christians have written hymns on the name of Jesus.

"Thy ointments." Comp. Ps. xlv. 7, 8. Eccles. xxiv. 15.

"The savour of thine ointments." The same words with a slight difference of translation are used with reference to the Bride (iv. 10.). Such passages as 2 Kings xx. 13. Isa. xxxix. 2, may serve to remind us how highly precious ointments were prized in ancient times.

4. "Draw me, we will run after thee." An allegorical interpretation may be suggested by reference to such passages as Jer. xxxi. 3, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Hos. xi. 4, "I drew thee with the cords of a man, with bands of love." Compare also St. John vi. 44; xii. 32. Phil. iii. 12-14. Rev. xiv. 4.

"The upright love thee." The rendering suggested by the margin is probably the more correct. "Therefore do they (the virgins) justly, with good reason, love thee." The Bride uses the plural, though referring to herself, as if to give expression to the thought that her loved one might rightly claim the love of all. "Thou art so deserving of all love, that none can fail to love thee."

5. "Black." Dark or sunburnt, ver. 6. The word rendered "black" is literally, dusky, like the twilight of the dawn; it differs only in grammatical form from the word which in vi. 10, and elsewhere often, is rendered "the morning." Black as the tents of Kedar, yet comely as the curtains of Solomon. The dark tents of goats' hair are still used by the moderns as by the ancient wandering tribes of Arabia.

"Comely." Comp. ii. 14; vi. 4.

The explanation given in the heading prefixed to the chapter, "she

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

- as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
- 6 Look not upon me, because I *am* black,
because the sun hath looked upon me :
my mother's children were angry with me ;
they made me the keeper of the vineyards ;
but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

"confesseth her deformity," seems to have arisen from some misapprehension, and is appropriate neither to the literal nor to any allegorical interpretation. The whole context shows that "deformity" is out of place here, for one most prominent feature throughout the Song of Songs is the beauty of the Bride, who immediately afterwards, as elsewhere (ver. 8 ; v. 9 ; vi. 1 ; comp. iv. 7.), is addressed as "thou fairest among women." So that in expanding any allegorical application of the beauty of the Bride, it is the virtues and holiness rather than any of the infirmities of the saints, which would have to be kept in view. Comp. Ps. xlv. 11 ; Eph. v. 27, and such passages as Gal. v. 16, 24. Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

"Kedar" was a son of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 13.). The word means "black," and comes from the same root as Kedron, the dark ravine, the black valley, outside of Jerusalem. Kedar, see Ps. cxx. 5. Isa. xxi. 16, 17 ; xlii. 11 ; lx. 7. Jer. ii. 10 ; xlix. 28. Ezek. xxvii. 21.

"Curtains." That is, of a tent (as for instance of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, Exod. xxvi. &c.): these in the tents of great personages, on occasions of state and magnificence, would be beautiful and costly.

"The daughters of Jerusalem" are addressed frequently in this book, ii. 7 ; iii. 5, 10 (11, "daughters of Zion") ; v. 8, 16 ; viii. 4. Our Lord uses the same words (St. Luke xxiii. 28.).

6. "Black, because the sun hath looked upon me." This shews that "black" here, as in ver. 5, means sunburned ; but it is added, ver. 5, that there was no real impairing of beauty. The glow of health produced by rural toil more than compensated the darkening of the complexion by the sun. The epithet "fair," so often applied to the Bride in this Song (i. 8, 15 ; iv. 1, 7 ; v. 9 ; vi. 1, 4.), does not imply fairness of complexion, but is used in the sense of beautiful, as indeed it is rendered, vi. 4.

"My mother's children." Comp. Deut. xiii. 6. Judges viii. 19. Ps. l. 20 ; lxix. 8 ; and below, viii. 1. The "sons of my mother" would not mean quite the same thing as "my brothers." In households like those of Jacob and David in which there were several wives, the children of the several mothers would often be almost like separate families, more or less jealous and hostile, while the bond of union would be more closely drawn between those who, like Joseph and Benjamin, were the sons of the same mother. The brother by the mother's side would be looked upon as the champion of his sister (comp. 2 Sam. xiii. 20, 22, &c.), so that there would be an aggravation of her sorrow when the bride says that the "sons of her mother" turned against her and were angry.

"Mine own vineyard have I not kept." There is a play on the word vineyard, which, when it occurs the second time, is used in a metaphorical sense. The Bride means by "mine own vineyard"

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

- 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where
 thou feedest,
 where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon :
 for why should I be ² as one that turneth aside ² Or, as one
 by the flocks of thy companions ? <sub>that is
veiled.</sub>
- 8 ¶ If thou know not, ¹ O thou fairest among women, ¹ ch. 5. 9.
 & 6. 1.

(viii. 12, where see *note*), my heart, myself. I have not kept mine own heart closely guarded, but have left it open for the entrance of the Beloved, so that it is now filled with love for him, and I am no longer mine own, but altogether his.

7. "Thou whom my soul loveth." The same appellation of endearment is four times repeated in iii. 1—4, and the devout reader may see in such expressions a parable of the higher love which He may claim Who created in man's soul the capacity of loving; a type of the longing of the heart that panteth after God. (Comp. Ps. xviii. 1, 2; xlii. 1, 2; lxiii. 1—3; lxxiii. 25, 26; lxxxiv. 2.) While the reference to the shepherd's office may not unfitly bring back to recollection those passages of Holy Scripture in which God is described under the same figure, or in which there are applied to the Son of God such titles as the "Good Shepherd," the "Great Shepherd." See for instance Ps. xxiii. Isa. xl. 11. St. John x. 1—16. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 St. Pet. ii. 25; v. 4.

"Makest thy flock to rest at noon." In the ancient poets may be found many references to this part of the duty of the shepherd. "Makest to rest." The same word, not always translated in the same way, occurs as applied literally to the flock, Jer. xxxiii. 12. Isa. xiii. 20: and as applied by a figure to the sheep of God's flock, Ezek. xxxiv. 15. Ps. xxiii. 2.

As the scene is supposed to be in the King's house (i. 4, 12, 17; ii. 4.), the question may be asked why he should be addressed as a shepherd, and as one absent feeding his flock. Are we to suppose that the King, disguised as a shepherd, had come to seek and win her love, and that she still speaks of him in figures drawn from the character in which he first was known to her? or are we to suppose that she expresses herself altogether figuratively, and speaks of the King as the shepherd of the people (comp. for instance Ps. lxxviii. 70—72.), appointed to rule and protect the "Lord's flock?" (Jer. xiii. 17. Ps. xcv. 7. Ezek. xxxiv.)

"Why should I be as one that turneth aside?" The marginal translation, "as one that is veiled," is the more correct, so that the intended meaning is, Tell me where thou art; why should I have to bear the shame and suspicion of wandering forth veiled (see v. 7.) (as a harlot, Gen. xxxviii. 15.), inquiring for thee among the flocks of the other shepherds?

This same thought, the seeking the Beloved during the temporary withdrawal of his presence, is repeated, and more fully worked out (iii. 1—4; v. 6—9.).

8. "O thou fairest among women." As on two other occasions (v. 9; vi. 1.) the daughters of Jerusalem thus address the Bride, they would seem to be the speakers now. These their words of praise

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

- g ch. 2. 2, 10,
13. & 4. 1, 7.
& 5. 2. & 6. 4.
John 15. 14,
15.
h 2 Chron. 1.
16, 17.
i Ezek. 16. 11,
12, 13.
- 9 ¶ I have compared thee, ^g O my love,
^h to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
- 10 ⁱ Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,
thy neck with chains of gold.
- 11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs
of silver.
- 12 ¶ While the king *sitteth* at his table,
my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

and admiration (comp. also vi. 9.), are often repeated and enlarged upon in the speeches of the Bridegroom. See for instance, iv. 1, 7; vi. 4, 10; vii. 6. Comp. also i. 15; ii. 10. Ps. xlv. 11. This answer of the women seems to carry on the figure in ver. 7, and to say somewhat mockingly, If he hath left thee, and thou knowest not where he is, go and seek thy shepherd, as thou callest him, in places where shepherds and their flocks may be found.

9. The King now speaks. There is another instance (vi. 1—4.) where, immediately after a question which seems to imply his absence, the Beloved appears as it were suddenly and addresses the Bride.

“I have compared thee to a company of horses.” We should with the old Greek translation (“my mare”) refer this to one rather than to many. The comparison of a beautiful woman to a beautiful mare is not an unfrequent one in the ancient poets, and is intended to express the highest admiration and praise.

“Pharaoh's chariots.” That is, rich and magnificent chariots, such as would be fitting for the state use of a king of Egypt. It was from Egypt that Solomon imported horses and chariots (1 Kings x. 26, 28, 29. 2 Chron. i. 14, 16, 17.).

11. “Borders” (translated “rows” in ver. 10.), “Studs;” the words thus rendered do not occur elsewhere. The ornament intended to be described seems some kind of chaplet going round the head, with pendants hanging down over the cheeks.

12. The Bride speaks. Nard (iv. 13, 14. St. Mark xiv. 3. St. John xii. 3.) was a costly and highly-prized Indian perfume, often spoken of by ancient writers, though in the Bible it is only mentioned in the Song of Solomon, and in the account of our Lord's anointing at Bethany. It is obtained from a plant growing on the Himalaya mountains, and the name *spikenard* given to it in the English Version refers to one of the peculiarities of its growth, viz. that it has many hairy spikes growing from one root.

“The smell thereof.” Its true and genuine odour. The Bride was perfumed with the richest unguents (so iii. 6. Comp. Esther ii. 12, and contrast the threatening in Isa. iii. 24.), in order to increase delight in her presence, that every sense might be gratified. In iv. 10, the Bridegroom commends the smell of her ointments as better than all

SOLOMON'S SONG, I.

- 13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my wellbeloved unto me ;
 he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
- 14 My beloved *is* unto me *as* a cluster of ² camphire ² Or, *cypress*,
 in the vineyards of En-gedi. ^k ch. 4. 1.
 & 5. 12.
- 15 ¶ ^k Behold, thou *art* fair, ³ my love ; ³ Or, *my*
companion.

spices. The ancients were fond of unguents at banquets, and in the classical writers there are frequent allusions to their use on festive occasions. See also Amos vi. 6.

13. "Myrrh." See on iv. 12—14. On these, as on all other passages of this Song, elaborate allegorical expositions have been written, in which allusion is made to incidents like those in St. Luke vii. 37. St. John xii. 3. The odour of the ointment is made a type of the loving zeal of devout hearts ready to offer their best to the Lord: the Lord sitting at His table is taken to prefigure His presence in the Holy Eucharist: the bundle of myrrh is Jesus Christ, especially in His sufferings and death held closely to the heart of those who seek Him.

13, 14, 16. "My Beloved." This title (in ver. 13 translated "well-beloved"), so often applied to the Bridegroom in this book (ii. 3, 8—10, 16, 17; iv. 16; v. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 16; vi. 2, 3; vii. 9—11, 13; viii. 5, 14; see also Isa. v. 1.), is not in any way related to the word translated "my love" (see on vii. 13.). It is also used not only for the object of love, but in this Song (i. 2; iv. 10; vii. 12.) and elsewhere, for love and the blandishments of love; in v. 1 it is addressed to the friends of the Bridegroom. For the spiritual application see on ver. 7, "O thou whom my soul loveth."

14. "Camphire" (iv. 13.). Neither "camphire," which is an older way of writing "camphor," nor *cypress*, the rendering of the margin, gives the true meaning of the word here used (Copher), which denotes the Henna, a well-known plant, from the dried and pounded leaves of which is made a paste by which the palms of the hands and nails are dyed a reddish colour; the flowers are fragrant.

"Camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi." En-gedi (1 Sam xxiii. 29; xxiv. 1.), on the western shore of the Dead Sea, is the only place in Palestine where the Henna is now found; but the vineyards are desolate. "En-gedi is so hot from its low situation by the shores of the Dead Sea, that the vine could only be cultivated by continual labour and abundant watering. Did not the terraces still remain, we might doubt the reading in the Song of Solomon, but on the hill sides to the north of the springs, they exist as perfect as when first formed, with a provision seen nowhere else, large rock-hewn cisterns lined with cement on each terrace, by which the water was conducted by cemented tubes, and neat channels formed of lime running along the edge of the terraces by which the water could be turned on to the root of each plant successively" (*H. B. Tristram*).

15. "Behold thou art fair," iv. 1, 7; vi. 4. (there rendered "beautiful"). Comp. ii. 10, 13, "my fair one;" and ver. 8; v. 9; vi. 1, "O thou fairest among women." See Ps. xlv. 11. Ezek. xvi. 13, 14. 1 St. Peter iii. 3, 4.

Behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes.

16 ¶ Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
also our bed *is* green.

17 The beams of our house *are* cedar,—*and* our
² rafters of fir.

² Or,
galleries.

“My love.” Margin, “my companion,” the most frequent appellation of the Bride (ii. 2, 10, 13; iv. 1, 7; v. 2; vi. 4.). The word, in its masculine form, translated “my friend,” is applied by the Bride to her Beloved (v. 16.), and by the Beloved to his “friends,” (v. 1.). Other titles given to her are, “my fair one” (ii. 10, 13.): this epithet “fair” is often applied to the Bride (see above). “Dove” (ii. 14; v. 2; vi. 9.). “My dove, my undefiled” (v. 2; vi. 9.). “My sister” (v. 2.). “My spouse” (iv. 8, 11.). “My sister spouse” (iv. 9, 10, 12; v. 1.). We have here, as elsewhere in this Song, the expressions of a mutual love; and as it has been pointed out in the Introduction and in the note on ver. 7, that the love of the Bride to the Beloved may stand as the symbol of the love with which the devout soul clings to its God, so, carrying out farther the same figure, we may with reverence venture to say of these and the other similar places referred to in the earlier part of this note in which the Bride is addressed in terms of endearment, that we may see a shadowing forth of the love with which God, the Creator and the Redeemer, looks upon His own, the obedient and faithful and true, who love Him with all their heart and soul. He promises to give to His restored Zion a new name, “My delight is in her” (Hephzibah). He vouchsafes to speak of one of His saints as the “greatly beloved.” “Beloved of God” is a title applied to Christians. Jesus Christ Himself calleth His disciples His “friends” (Isa. lxii. 4. Dan. ix. 23; x. 11, 19. St. John xv. 15. Rom. 1. 7.). The love indeed of Him Who confers benefits must ever be greater than the love of him who receiveth; and those, whose souls have burned most warmly with the pure flame of divine love, have felt most truly that that love “passeth knowledge” (comp. Eph. iii. 19. 1 St. John iv. 19.).

“Thou hast doves' eyes.” See also iv. 1; v. 12; that is, dove-coloured, soft and beautiful.

16. “Behold thou art fair.” Verse 15 is addressed to the Bride, who now with the same words begins her reply.

“Pleasant.” Not only was the Beloved fair to look upon, but his society was delightful; he was sweet and gracious in speech, winning and pleasant in manner (see also iv. 3.). Comp. vii. 6. 2 Sam. i. 26; and see Prov. xxii. 18; xxiv. 4.

“Our bed is green.” “Green” is translated “flourishing” (Ps. xcii. 15; Dan. iv. 4.), and has a similar meaning here and in other places. Our marriage bed is bright, happy, and prosperous.

17. “Rafters.” By “rafters” here we should probably understand a fretted wooden ceiling; the beams, carved and painted, crossing each other, and leaving sunken ornamental spaces between. Our Translators, by putting “galleries” in the margin, seem to have considered the word as virtually the same as the very similar word which they have rendered “galleries,” vii. 5, where see *note*. Some have supposed that “beams” and “rafters” are used figuratively, and that the Beloved and the Bride are in a grove or avenue of cedars and firs, whose spreading arms reach

SOLOMON'S SONG, II.

CHAPTER II.

1 *The mutual love of Christ and his church.* 8 *The hope, 10 and calling of the church.* 14 *Christ's care of the church.* 16 *The profession of the church, her faith and hope.*

1 I am the rose of Sharon,—and the lily of the valleys.

2 ¶ As the lily among thorns,—so is my love among the daughters.

over and cross each other as beams in a lofty chamber, while the "green bed" is the fresh turf which serves as a couch on which to rest: it would seem, however, from i. 4, 12; ii. 4, that the scene is supposed to be within the King's house.

CHAPTER II.

1. "I am the rose," &c. The dialogue between the Bride and her Beloved is still continued on from the end of chap. i.; and it is better to consider ver. 1 as spoken by the Bride, rather than, with some commentators, to take it, as well as ver. 2, as spoken by the Beloved.

"Rose." It is uncertain what flower is meant by "rose" here and in Isa. xxxv. 1. Perhaps the narcissus; the original word suggests some flower with a bulbous root. The old Greek and Latin translations render indefinitely "flower of the plain."

"Sharon;" or (as the article is prefixed), "The Sharon," or level district, about ten miles wide, extending between the central mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. The Sharon is the northern part of the maritime plain, and reaches from Joppa to Carmel. It was noted for its fertility (see Isa. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2; lxx. 10. 1 Chron. xxvii. 29. Acts ix. 35.).

"Lily." The "lily" is mentioned in this book more frequently than in any other (ver. 16; iv. 5; v. 13; vi. 2, 3.); but there has been some difference of opinion as to the flower denoted by the word in the original. It must have been some flower growing abundantly in the valleys (ii. 1.), among the thorns (ver. 2.), in the plains where the roes feed (iv. 5.), or in gardens (vi. 2.); brilliantly coloured (St. Matt. vi. 28, 29.); often red, as the lips are compared to "lilies" (v. 13.). The white lily seems unknown in Palestine as a native plant. The anemone (one of the flowers called Susan by the Arabs), of various colours but generally a brilliant scarlet, seems perhaps best to meet all the requirements. The anemone is said to be "the most gorgeously painted, the most conspicuous in spring, the most universally spread of all the floral treasures of the Holy Land. . . . It is found everywhere, on all soils, in all situations" (*H. B. Tristram*).

2. "As the lily among thorns." "Thorns:" the word is variously rendered in our Version, not unfrequently it is translated "thistle." To the allegorical interpreters the word "thorns" suggests the trials, anxieties, persecutions, in the midst of which the soul, full of faith in Christ, still lives and grows; and from this point of view they have said many things pious and edifying. But the turn of the original and the parallelism of ver. 3 does not suggest this; the thought rather is, So much does the Bride excel all other daughters, that in comparison with her they seem but as the rough thorns and brambles contrasted with a fair flower.

- 3 ¶ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among the sons.
2 I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.
5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples:
for I am sick of love.
6 His left hand is under my head,
and his right hand doth embrace me.
7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,

² Heb. *I*
delighted
and sat
down, &c.

^a Rev. 22, 1, 2.

³ Heb. *palate.*

⁴ Heb. *house*
of wine.

⁵ Heb.
straw me
with apples.

^b ch. 8. 3.

⁶ Heb. *I*
adjure you.

^c ch. 3. 5.

& 8. 4.

3. "Apple tree," viii. 5. Joel i. 12; "apples," ver. 5; vii. 8. Prov. xxv. 11. The Tappuach, so named from its fragrance (comp. vii. 8.), can scarcely be our apple, which, it is said, barely exists in Palestine Proper: a few trees with a wretched wooden fruit live in the gardens at Jaffa. The quince and the citron have been suggested: more probably, the tree meant by Tappuach would seem to be the apricot, which has a deliciously-perfumed fruit, and, with perhaps the single exception of the fig, is the most abundant fruit-tree of the country: everywhere it flourishes, and yields a crop of prodigious abundance. "Many times," says one who knows the land of Israel well, "have we pitched our tents "in its shade, and spread our carpets secure from the rays of the sun" (ver. 3.), *H. B. Tristram*.

4. Spiritual allegory applies "the house of wine" and "the King sitting at his table" (comp. i. 12.) to the Holy Eucharist; and the festivity of the rejoicing guests is an emblem of the gladness of the loving heart in the enjoyment of the presence of Christ. See Prov. ix. 5.

5. "Stay me." That is, support, sustain me, who am sick and faint.

"Flagons." The original word, which is translated "flagons" in all the other places where it occurs (Hosea iii. 1. 2 Sam. vi. 19. 1 Chron. xvi. 3.), seems rather to mean a cake made of dried and pressed grapes.

"Comfort me." This is probably the best rendering, though our Translators seem dissatisfied with "comfort," "refresh," and have in the margin given another rendering, taking the word in the same sense as in Job xvii. 13.

"Sick of love." Repeated, v. 8: sick with love, faint through the intensity of its longings.

6. When this verse is repeated, viii. 3, our Translators render it as expressing a wish. It would apparently have been better if the translation in viii. 3 had been the same as in this place. The old Greek and Latin translations take the verse in both places as a prediction. The spiritual application may suggest a comparison with Deut. xxxiii. 27.

7. "By the roes and hinds of the field." This adjuration occurs again (iii. 5.). The "roe," i. e. the gazelle, the most graceful, and shy, and swift among the beasts of the field. The Hebrew name for the gazelle, reproduced in a later form as Tabitha, in Greek, Dorcas (Acts ix. 36.), signifies also beauty, and often occurs in that sense. In 2 Sam. i. 19, "the beauty of Israel" should rather have been rendered "gazelle," this

SOLOMON'S SONG, II.

that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he
please.

8 ¶ The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh

name being given to Jonathan in praise of his comeliness and swiftness of foot: comp. 2 Sam. ii. 18. 1 Chron. xii. 8. It is used, as a word to express endearment and admiration, more than once in this book (ii. 9, 17; viii. 14.). The gazelle (Arab. *Ghazal*) is now by far the most abundant of the large game in Palestine; small herds are to be found in every part of the country.

“Hind.” The hind stands, in Prov. v. 19, as the emblem of the tender and loving one. The speed and beauty of the hart are referred to in vv. 9, 17. of this chapter; comp. viii. 14; and Isa. xxxv. 6. 2 Sam. xxii. 34 (Ps. xviii. 33.). Hab. iii. 19. Deer were once common in Palestine, and more than one locality seems to have derived its name (Ajalon) from their abundance in the neighbourhood. Comp. 1 Kings iv. 23. Deut. xii. 15, 22, &c. It seems, however, doubtful whether either fallow deer or red deer are still to be found there.

“That ye stir not up, nor awaken my love, till he please.” The English Version takes this verse as if it were a charge on the part of the Bride not to awaken the Beloved who is asleep while he embraces her. But as the word rendered “love” is feminine, others (Luther, for instance, in his German translation), rendering the last words “till *she* please,” would take the passage as spoken of the Bride. “My,” however, is an insertion of the Translators; and as there is no neuter in Hebrew, which uses the feminine instead, we may translate, “That ye stir not up nor awaken love, till it please;” and perhaps the least unlikely explanation of this rendering of this difficult verse may be that given by Bishop Patrick, “I charge you that ye discompose not nor disturb this love, but let it enjoy its satisfaction to the height of its desires.”

“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,” &c. This same charge is repeated in iii. 5; viii. 4, and seems each time to mark the completion of one of the divisions of the poem, which starts again with a new scene, and new circumstances and emotions.

ii. 8—iii. 5. The Second Song.

The Bride recounteth the visit and wooing of the Beloved, and his winning her for his own. She telleth how, when she had once missed him for a while, she sought him and found him, and held him fast, and brought him to her home.

8. “The voice of my beloved.” The words occur again in a different connection (v. 2.). It has been proposed that, instead of “voice,” we should here substitute “sound” or some similar word, as if it were the sound of His footsteps approaching from afar which heralded the coming of the Beloved. The word might indeed be so rendered (as for instance, in 1 Kings xiv. 6. 2 Kings vi. 32, “sound (voice) of feet”), but the present translation is on the whole to be preferred; it is more forcible and poetical. For though it is not till ver. 10 that the Bride begins to relate the words which the Beloved spake, yet she seems by this sudden exclamation, forming the opening words of this portion of the Song, to express the delight she found in each word of her Beloved, and to tell forth how fondly she listened to the very sound of His voice.

SOLOMON'S SONG, II.

leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

- ^d ver. 17. 9 ^d My beloved is like a roe or a young hart :
 behold, he standeth behind our wall,
 he looketh forth at the windows,
² Heb. *flourishing.* ² shewing himself through the lattice.
- ^o ver. 13. 10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,
^e Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
- 11 For, lo, the winter is past,—the rain is over *and*
 gone ;
- 12 the flowers appear on the earth ;

9. "Like a roe or young hart" (ver. 17; viii. 14.). See above, on ver. 7.

"He looketh forth at the windows." Rather to be rendered, He looketh through the windows, by means of the windows, into the house, upon the Beloved within.

"Shewing himself." The margin gives "flourishing;" and this or some similar rendering is the meaning of the word elsewhere (as for instance, Ps. lxxii. 16; ciii. 15; cxxxii. 18. Isa. xxvii. 6.). So that the meaning here seems to be, Looking in with glad and cheerful face, blooming as some bright flower.

10. "My beloved spake." To those who love each other dearly, the sound of a voice, the mention of a name, can bring a thrill of pleasure; words which appear but as ordinary words of welcome and greeting seem to have a hidden depth of meaning and sweetness; the expression of a wish is law. In like manner, it may perhaps be thought not altogether out of place to suggest how the signs of earthly love may serve as teachers of the signs of heavenly love, and how precious will be the Word of God to those who delight to do His will: it will be to them as the voice of their Beloved. All that God saith is felt by a religious mind to be not only profitable, but sweet; not only wise to direct the footsteps and to guard from evil, but pleasant to study, delightful to remember. Ps. cxix. may be cited as an illustration of the joy which devout spirits find in the words of God. "I will delight myself in Thy commandments which I have loved." "O how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (vv. 47, 97, 16, 24, 72, 97, 103, 111, 131. See also Ps. xix. 7—11.).

10, 13. "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." The invitation to the Bride begins and ends with the same words.

"My love, my fair one." See on i. 15.

"Come away;" iv. 8, "Come with me." An allegorical interpretation may suggest here an emblem of the divine voice calling the soul (St. Matt. xi. 28. Rev. xxii. 7.), and bidding it draw near in its newly-awakened spring-time of love and penitence, when the winter of sin and coldness of heart and alienation from God is passed away, and softer emotions of yearning after holiness are springing up in the soul.

11—13. Elsewhere in this Song there are other signs of the season, such as the abundance of the dew (v. 2.), the budding of the pomegranates (vi. 11; vii. 12.), which fall in with the season indicated here, the season of spring.

SOLOMON'S SONG, II.

- the time of the singing *of birds* is come,
 and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;
 13 the fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
 and the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good*
 smell.
 † Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. † ver. 10.
 14 O my dove, *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in
 the secret *places* of the stairs,
 let me see thy countenance, † let me hear thy † ch. 8. 13.
 voice ;
 for sweet *is* thy voice, and thy countenance *is*
 comely.

12. "Of birds" is an insertion of the Translators ; if it be rightly supplied, this would seem to be the only passage, besides Ps. civ. 12, in which reference is made in Holy Scripture to the glad songs of birds. Other places (such as Eccles. xii. 4. Isa. xxxviii. 14 ; lix. 11. Ezek. vii. 16.) are mournful ones, and the voices of birds are spoken of as causing restlessness rather than delight.

"The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." "Search the glades and valleys even by sultry Jordan at the end of March, and not a turtle-dove is to be seen. Return in the second week in April, and clouds of doves are feeding on the clovers of the plain. They stock every tree and thicket" (*H. B. Tristram*).

13, 15. "The vines with the tender grapes." The word rendered "tender grapes" only occurs again, vii. 12, and probably, as in the old Greek Version of the Septuagint, should rather be rendered "blossom."

14. "O my dove (v. 2.) that art in the clefts of the rocks." "The myriads of rock-doves in Palestine are beyond computation . . . few countries are so admirably adapted for them, abounding as the Holy Land does in deep gorges or wadys with precipitous cliffs of soft limestone honeycombed in all directions by caves and fissures" (*H. B. Tristram*).

"Stairs." Perhaps rather, "cliff," or some similar word. Many take "stairs" to denote a rugged mountain path, but the preceding words would seem to suggest that by "secret place of the cliff" (stairs), we should rather understand a secure hiding-place in the side of some precipitous and not accessible cliff. The word rendered "stairs" only occurs elsewhere in Ezek. xxxviii. 20, where (in the text) it is translated "steep places."

"Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice." See also viii.

13. An allegorical interpretation may be suggested here corresponding to that suggested on ver. 10. God loveth those who love Him (Prov. viii. 17.), and their voice uplifted in prayers and praises, in glad thanksgivings and fervent supplications, in devout confession, earnest intercession, grateful thanksgiving, are a sacrifice well-pleasing in His sight; as it is said "the prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. xv. 8. Comp. Ps. l. 14, 15, 23. Heb. xiii. 15. Rev. v. 8 ; viii. 3, 4.).

"Thy countenance is comely," i. 5 ; vi. 4.

SOLOMON'S SONG, II.

- ^h Ps. 80. 13. 15 Take us ^h the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the
 Ezek. 13. 4. vines :
 Luke 13. 32. for our vines *have* tender grapes.
- ⁱ ch. 6. 3. 16 ⁱ My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his :—he feedeth
 & 7. 10. among the lilies.
- ^k ch. 4. 6. 17 ^k Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
 turn, my beloved,

15. It has been thought by some that this verse is intended as a fragment of some rustic song, which the Bride sings in answer to the invitation in ver. 14. The allegorical interpreters, comparing Ezek. xiii. 4, take these foxes of false teachers and heretics. Others again would take the "little foxes" of little sins, "little failings, little self-indulgences, little falls," which "spoil the tender grapes;" "those proofs and actions of grace which are not yet strong, still new, and as "it were untried."

"Take." Not addressed to the Bride, but spoken generally; "Take ye for us the foxes," &c. (masc. plural).

16. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Comp. vi. 3; vii. 10. Here again we may with reverence venture to take the earthly as the image of the heavenly, and behold in the joy of two loving hearts united in the consciousness of each other's mutual love, a type of that holy and perfect love with which the soul shall be united to God, through the Incarnate Son, in that day when His redeemed "see Him as He is" (1 St. John iii. 2.). The affections are the most active part of the soul of man, and till these affections rest on their object, there is in the soul longing and unrest. In this world, indeed, through the imperfection of all earthly things, disappointment or satiety may come afterwards, but for the time, there is joy and happiness when the affections have found their resting-place, when the victory of love is won, and longing ceases in the attainment of its hopes. The more worthy and noble the object on which the affections have been fixed, the more noble and worthy is the love; the more lasting, the more unalloyed the enjoyment from possession. God Himself, as the best of all beings, is the most worthy of love, and the only Being Who can fully satisfy the affections of man's soul. To Him all love is due, for all that is most loveable in man or woman is but a shadowing forth of Him in Whose image man was made; all that is winning and attractive in the highest and most beautiful human character is but the imperfect resemblance of Him who is perfect goodness. The love of God is its own reward, part of its sweetness cometh now (St. John xiv. 23.), as the foretaste of its blessedness in that hereafter where we hope to have the fruition of His glorious Godhead. To love God, as it is here the chief duty, so will it be hereafter the supreme bliss of man; as it is written "God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3.).

"Feedeth among the lilies" (ii. 1.). Comp. iv. 5; vi. 3.

17. "Until the day break" (iv. 6.), where the margin gives the literal translation "breathe." It does not seem quite clear whether we should understand this of the morning or evening: our translation, "till the day break," would seem to point to the morning, but the words "till the day breathe," are perhaps more applicable to the evening breeze (comp. Gen. iii. 8, margin). The "fleeing away of the shadows" may be

SOLOMON'S SONG, III.

and be thou ¹like a roe or a young hart
upon the mountains ²of Bether.

¹ ver. 9.
ch. 8. 14.
² Or, of
division.

CHAPTER III.

1 *The church's fight and victory in temptation.* 6 *The church glorieth in Christ.*

a Isai. 26. 9.

1 **B**y ^anight on my bed I sought him whom my
soul loveth :

I sought him, but I found him not.

2 I will rise now, and go about the city
in the streets, and in the broad ways
I will seek him whom my soul loveth :
I sought him, but I found him not.

b ch. 5. 7.

3 ^bThe watchmen that go about the city found me :
to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul
loveth ?

4 *It was* but a little that I passed from them,
but I found him whom my soul loveth :
I held him, and would not let him go,

understood either of the disappearance of the lengthening shadows in the darkness (comp. Ps. cii. 11 ; cix. 23. Jer. vi. 4.) ; or of the passing of the shades and gloom of night before the brightening day (see iv. 6.).

“Be thou like a roe or young hart” (ver. 7.). Comp. ver. 9 ; viii. 14.

“Upon the mountains of Bether,” or, of division, margin. “Mountains of division” as “mountains of myrrh” (iv. 6.), “mountains of spices” (viii. 14.), would seem to be metaphorical expressions. If a literal local meaning is to be sought for “mountains of division,” the words may be taken as denoting a mountain district, broken up and divided by intersecting valleys and steep ravines. A similar word is used, with the article, of a region beyond Jordan (2 Sam. ii. 29.), they “went through all the Bithron.”

CHAPTER III.

1, 2. Comp. v. 6, 8, the withdrawal of the Beloved. Those who apply the passage allegorically for devotional purposes, may refer to such places as Ps. x. 1 ; xiii. 1 ; xlv. 24 ; lv. 1 ; lxxxviii. 14 ; lxxxix. 46. Isa. xlv. 15. Jer. xiv. 8, 9.

1. “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.” The reference to Isa. xxvi. 9, “with my soul have I desired thee in the “night,” suggests a spiritual application to those who would desire to turn to good account the lonely hours of sleeplessness by seeking to remember God and His past mercies. Comp. Ps. lxiii. 6 ; xlii. 8 ; cxix. 55, 62, 147. See on i. 13. “Him whom my soul loveth.” This tender appellation, which is four times repeated in these four verses, has been employed before (see on i. 17.).

3. “The watchmen.” So v. 7.

4. “I held him, and would not let him go.” With the allegorical interpretation comp. Gen. xxxii. 26.

SOLOMON'S SONG, III.

- until I had brought him into my mother's house,
and into the chamber of her that conceived me.
- ^{c ch. 2, 7.} 5 ^{& 8, 4.} I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he
please.
- ^{d ch. 8, 5.} 6 ¶ ^d Who *is* this that cometh out of the wilder-
ness like pillars of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
with all powders of the merchant ?
- 7 Behold his bed, which *is* Solomon's ;
threescore valiant men *are* about it, of the valiant
of Israel.

“Until I had brought him into my mother's house.” See viii. 2. Comp. Gen. xxiv. 28: “The damsel ran, and told them of her mother's “house these things.” Ruth i. 8.

“My mother . . . she that conceived me.” A similar repetition is twice again used: “Thy mother . . . she that bare thee” (vi. 9; viii. 5). 5. See on ii. 7, and comp. viii. 4.

The Third Song.

iii. 6—v. 1. The Procession of the Bride; the Meeting and the Welcome; the Marriage Feast.

6. “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?” Comp. also in viii. 5 a similar commencement of a new scene or division of the Song. The question is the expression of admiration rather than the inquiry of those who desire to know. The pronoun and participles (Heb.) in this verse are feminine, and (as in viii. 5) it is the Bride who is spoken of. Perhaps it might not have been amiss if this passage had been given, “Who is she (as in vi. 10.) that cometh?” &c., as then all risk would have been avoided of supposing that Solomon is spoken of: a mistake into which Bishop Heber for instance falls (*Indian Journal*, c. iv.), when this passage is brought to his mind on seeing the bride and bridegroom borne in palanquins at a Hindoo wedding.

“Like pillars of smoke.” These words seem to point to the abundance of the perfumes burned to welcome the bride and rising up like wreathed clouds as the procession moved on.

“Myrrh and frankincense.” See on iv. 14.

“With all powders of the merchant,” i. e. powdered perfumes of the spice merchant. See 1 Kings x. 15 (where instead of “merchant” the word is rendered “spice merchant”). Gen. xxxvii. 25.

7. “His bed.” A reclining couch or palanquin, with poles by which it was carried: the “chariot” of ver. 9, borne not by horses but by men, and attended by a guard of honour of sixty of the most valiant of Israel. The King had sent his own litter (more fully described, ver. 9.) to convey the Bride, with a guard of honour of chosen men, “expert in war.” On her arrival he goes forth to meet her, crowned for the marriage.

SOLOMON'S SONG, III.

- 8 They all hold swords, *being* expert in war :
every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh because
of fear in the night.
- 9 King Solomon made himself ²a chariot of the ²Or, *a bed*.
wood of Lebanon.
- 10 He made the pillars thereof *of* silver,
the bottom thereof *of* gold,—the covering of it *of*
purple,
the midst thereof being paved *with* love,
for the daughters of Jerusalem.
- 11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,
and behold king Solomon with the crown where-
with his mother crowned him
in the day of his espousals,

9. "A chariot." A state sedan or palanquin, another word for the "bed" of ver. 7, with "pillars" (ver. 10.) or columns of silver supporting a covering or canopy over it.

10. By the word rendered "bottom," which is of uncertain meaning, may perhaps rather be meant the sides and back; for "covering," a better rendering would be "seat."

"For the daughters of Jerusalem." Should be rather, "From the daughters;" and the meaning of the passage seems to be that the middle of this litter or portable throne was covered with tapestry of embroidered work, wrought in imitation of a tessellated pavement, an offering of love presented from the daughters of Jerusalem.

11. "Daughters of Zion" (Isa. iii. 16, 17; iv. 4.). The expression is varied, but there does not appear to be any real distinction between the daughters of Zion and the daughters of Jerusalem spoken of in the last verse, and elsewhere so frequently addressed by the Bride (i. 5; ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4.). Zion and Jerusalem are often mentioned together; compare, for instance, Ps. cxxxv. 21; cxlvii. 12. Amos i. 2. Isa. ii. 3; xxxvii. 32.

"The crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals." *Espousals*, or rather perhaps, "marriage;" the word, which does not occur elsewhere, is but slightly altered in form from the word rendered "Bridegroom." There are many references in ancient writers to the custom among the Greeks, and also among the Romans, of wearing a crown or garland by the bride and bridegroom. Among the Hebrews the crown worn by the bridegroom is said to have been made of various materials, such as silver, or gold, or olive, or myrtle. This passage is the earliest allusion to the wearing of the marriage crown. In the Greek Church at the present day, the crowning still remains as an important part of the marriage ceremony, so that to "crown" is an ordinary phrase, in some cases, for to "marry." This wearing of crowns is spoken of by some of the early Christian Fathers; and St. Chrysostom would look upon it not merely as one among the usual signs of festivity and rejoicing, but draws forth its symbolical teaching, that as victors in the athletic contests were crowned, so were the Christian bride and bridegroom crowned, in token that they too

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

CHAPTER IV.

¹ *Christ setteth forth the graces of the church. 8 He sheweth his love to her.*
¹⁶ *The church prayeth to be made fit for his presence.*

^a ch. 1. 15.
& 5. 12.

1 **B**ehold, ^a thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair;
thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks:
thy hair *is* as a ^b flock of goats, ² that appear
from mount Gilead.

^b ch. 6. 5.
² Or, *that*
eat of, &c.
^c ch. 6. 6.

2 ^c Thy teeth *are* like a flock of sheep that are even
shorn, which came up from the washing;
whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren
among them.

came as victors to the marriage bed, unconquered and undefiled by lawless pleasures.

“In the day of the gladness of his heart.” Thus Isaiah (lxii. 5.) speaks of the rejoicing of the bridegroom over the bride. And the phrase is frequent in Jeremiah in which he joins together “The voice of joy, “and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of “the bride” (vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10; xxxiii. 11.).

CHAPTER IV.

1—6. Comp. vii. 1—8.

1. “Behold, thou art fair.” Repeated again in this address to the Bride (ver. 7.). See also i. 15.

“Doves' eyes.” Comp. i. 15; v. 12.

1, 3. “Within thy locks” (vi. 7.). The word rendered “locks” in these passages and Isa. xlvii. 2, should perhaps rather be translated “veil.” Following out the hint given in St. Paul's words, “Her hair is given her “for a covering” (1 Cor. xi. 15.), we might perhaps combine the two renderings.

1. “Thy hair as a flock of goats.” So again vi. 5. The goat of Syria is black with long hair: black hair is again (v. 11.) spoken of as a mark of beauty.

“Mount Gilead” (vi. 5.) denotes here not any particular mountain, but, as in Gen. xxxi. 25. Judges vii. 3, the hilly district beyond Jordan, elsewhere spoken of as Gilead or the land of Gilead, extending back eastwards from the river between the southern end of the sea of Galilee and the northern end of the Dead Sea. Gilead—“a wide table-land “tossed about in wild confusion of undulating downs clothed with rich “grass throughout”—had been from old time noted as a place for cattle (Num. xxxii. 1. Comp. Mic. vii. 14.).

2. Another pastoral image, repeated vi. 6. The whiteness of the teeth are compared to a flock of sheep newly washed.

“Whereof every one beareth twins, and none is barren among “them.” It would perhaps have been clearer if these words had been translated in a less literal manner, and had been rendered in the sense which seems meant to be suggested by their literal meaning. The teeth are all ranged in pairs (like to like, as twins; thus the word is rendered

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

- 3 Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy
speech *is* comely :
- ^d thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate ^d ch. 6. 7.
within thy locks.
- 4 ^e Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded ^e ch. 7. 4.
^f for an armoury, ^f Neh. 3. 19.
whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all
shields of mighty men.
- 5 ^g Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that ^g See Prov.
are twins, 5. 19.
ch. 7. 3.
which feed among the lilies.

“coupled together,” Exod. xxvi. 24 ; xxxvi. 29.), and not one of them deprived of its fellow, the one corresponding to it (“bereaved” “robbed” of young, Jer. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Prov. xvii. 12. Hos. xiii. 8.). As by the first clause the whiteness, so by the second clause is denoted the completeness and the regularity of the teeth.

3. “Thy speech is comely.” Some would render, “thy mouth is beautiful,” and there can be no objection to such a rendering, especially as in this whole passage the description is of features of outward beauty ; but if we keep to the present rendering, which is supported by the ancient Versions, we have intimated a charm and attraction beyond that which meets the eye. A harsh voice and foolish talk would mar the beauty of the sweetest lips and the best formed teeth ; but here the voice is sweet and soft, and the way of speaking graceful ; while, it is added ver. 11, that from these fair lips come forth wise and pleasant words.

3, 13. “Pomegranate.” The same comparison is found again (vi. 7.). The pomegranate (often mentioned in this book, vi. 7, 11 ; vii. 12 ; viii. 2.) was cultivated in Egypt (Num. xx. 5.), and flourished in Palestine (Num. xiii. 23. Deut. viii. 8. 1 Sam. xiv. 2.), where it gave its name, Rimmon, to some towns and villages. Pomegranates were among the ornaments of the priest’s robe (Exod. xxviii. 33, 34.), and of the temple of Solomon (1 Kings vii. 18.).

The word rendered “temples,” which only occurs elsewhere in Judges iv. 21, 22 ; v. 26, is apparently here used to include the cheeks, compared in their soft colour to the bright ruddy tint of the piece of the pomegranate.

4. Of “the tower of David” nothing is known ; we may infer, however, from the comparison here made between this tower and the neck of a beautiful woman, that it was built of fair smooth white stones (comp. vii. 4, “Thy neck is as a tower of ivory”) ; and perhaps the mention of the shields hung round the armoury may have been suggested by the necklace around the neck of the Bride. The reference in the margin to Neh. iii. 19, intimates that, in the opinion of some, this tower escaped when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians ; though it must be observed that the word here, in ver. 4, rendered “armoury,” which occurs nowhere else, and is of uncertain meaning, is quite a different word from that rendered “armoury” in Neh. iii. 19.

5. This verse is repeated vii. 3. Comp. Prov. v. 19 : “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and the pleasant

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

^h ch. 2. 17.
² Heb.
breathe.

6 ^h Until the day ² break, and the shadows flee
away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to
the hill of frankincense.

ⁱ Eph. 5. 27.

7 ⁱ Thou *art* all fair, my love;—*there is* no spot
in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with
me from Lebanon:

look from the top of Amana, from the top of
Shenir ^k and Hermon,

^k Deut. 3. 9.

“roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou always
“ravished with her love.”

“Two young roes.” For the roe see ii. 7.

6. “Till the day break.” See *note* on ii. 17. These words, if
taken to refer to the break of day, may be allegorized in some such
way as this:—I will come to visit the faithful soul, patient in self-
denial (myrrh); constant in prayer and praise (frankincense): I will
stay to comfort and console till the shadows of the dark night of toil
and watching flee away, and there spring up the fresh breezes of the
morning of hope and joy, the symbol of that bright day after which
there cometh no more night.

“The mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense.” These
seem to be poetical descriptions of the Bride, who afterwards compares
herself to a garden of spices (iv. 16.): under which figure she is also
spoken of by the Bridegroom (ver. 14; v. 1.). Comp. viii. 14.

7. See ver. 1; and comp. Eph. v. 27.

8. “Come with me.” Other invitations may be found in ii. 10, 13;
in vii. 11, is the invitation of the Bride to the Beloved.

“Come with me from Lebanon,” &c. As it would seem that the
locality of this portion of the Song is intended to be placed near Jeru-
salem (iii. 11.), we are not to suppose that the scene and the speakers
are actually taken away to the neighbourhood of Lebanon, but the
words are rather intended to bid the Spouse forget her own people and
her father’s house, and to come and share her life with the Beloved,
away from her former home in the wild mountains, the haunts of savage
beasts. As if the words were in effect meant to say,—With me now,
away from Lebanon, come and dwell; with me now, away from the top
of Amana and the place of the lions’ dens, come and look on other
sights and scenes. The two first clauses of the verse begin in the
original with the words “with me,” which are emphatic and thus
bring out in an impassioned manner the leading thought of the
sentence.

“Amana” would appear to be the name of some mountain form-
ing part of the range of Anti-Libanus. In some copies of 2 Kings v.
12 (see margin), Amana is read instead of Abana, and the river may
in that case be supposed to be connected in name with that part of
Anti-Libanus from which it flowed. The whole scenery of the gorge
of the Barada (as the Abana is now called), the river winding down
through the Anti-Libanus to Damascus, is described as of singular
beauty and sublimity. Here probably we may infer from the last clause-

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the
leopards.

9 Thou hast ²ravished my heart, my sister, *my* ²*Or, taken
away my
heart.*
spouse ;

of the verse, it is intended to remind the Bride that her former dwelling-place was rough and rugged, one which she might be well content to leave.

“**Shenir**” or **Senir** (mentioned with Lebanon, Ezek. xxvii. 5.) is given in Deut. iii. 9 as a name of mount Hermon or Sirion (Ps. xxix. 6.). In 1 Chron. v. 23, Hermon and Senir are, as in this place of the Song of Solomon, distinguished from each other. Senir was probably the name of one of the peaks of mount Hermon (Jebel esh Sheikh), the culminating point towards the south of the range of the Anti-Libanus, and was sometimes applied with a more extended signification. A description of the vast panorama to be seen from Hermon may be found in the *Handbook for Palestine*; and in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* (January to March 1870) is given a plan of the summit of Hermon with the temple; the height of the loftiest of the three summits is there given as 8700 ft. above the Mediterranean.

“**Lions' dens, mountains of the leopards.**” The lion, once common, is now extinct in Palestine; but the leopard (Isa. xi. 6. Jer. v. 6; xiii. 23. Dan. vii. 6. Hosea xiii. 7. Hab. i. 8.), whose footsteps have been by some travellers mistaken for those of the lion, is still in some districts so common as to be troublesome to the herdsmen.

“**Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse.**” An early Christian writer in the second century after Christ, probably the earliest of those who have quoted with an allegorical application the Song of Solomon (Tertullian, see his book against Marcion, iv. 11.), has cited these words as a prophecy of the call of the Gentiles. Without noticing the reason which he gives, which, like other attempts to work out into minute allegorical exposition each detail of this Song, is but fanciful, it may yet be said that in the image of the Bride leaving her home and giving herself to the Beloved, who is to be to her henceforth more than anything in the past has been, those who love to discern in the Song of Solomon a hidden meaning deeper than that which meets the eye, may see as it were a parable of the soul giving up all for the love of God and the love of truth, and following without delay the voice of the divine calling. And as this allegory of the voice of God and the soul of man—the voice calling the soul, and the soul feeling the love of God stronger and more constraining than all the associations and habits of the past—is not for any peculiar people or privileged race, is not of any local or temporary application, but of universal interest, for the heart of man everywhere, and in all times, such readers seeking for an inner sense may find herein a shadowing forth of the calling of the nations to the faith (comp. Ps. xlv. 10, 11.).

“**My spouse**” (ver. 11.). Comp. Isa. lxii. 5. Rev. xix. 7—9; xxi. 9.

9. “**My sister, my spouse**” (vv. 10, 12; v. 1, 2.). The original runs, “my sister spouse,” the second “my” being inserted by the Translators (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 5.). “*Sister*” is used of a wife in Tobit vii. 16; viii. 4, 7. These titles, “spouse,” “sister spouse,” are only used in this third part of the Song of Solomon.

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine
eyes,
with one chain of thy neck.

10 How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* spouse!

¹ ch. 1. 2.

¹ how much better is thy love than wine!
and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

11 Thy lips, O *my* spouse, drop *as* the honeycomb :

^m Prov. 24.
13, 14.
ch. 5. 1.

^m honey and milk *are* under thy tongue ;
and the smell of thy garments *is* ⁿ like the smell
of Lebanon.

ⁿ Gen. 27. 27.
Hos. 14. 6, 7.

² Heb. *barred*.

12 A garden ² inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse ;
a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with
pleasant fruits ;

“With one of thine eyes.” Comp. vi. 5.

10. “Better is thy love than wine.” Repeated from i. 2, where these words are spoken by the Bride.

“The smell of thine ointments.” Comp. i. 3.

11. “Thy lips drop as the honeycomb.” The expression is proverbial; it is found in the ancient poets, and in Prov. v. 3 the same words are applied to the flattering lips of the “strange woman.” Here they are used as a figurative description of the wise and pleasant speech of the Spouse. So Prov. xvi. 24. Comp. v. 13, and contrast such expressions as “the poison of asps is under their lips” (Ps. cxl. 3. Rom. iii. 13, 14. Ps. lvii. 4.). See Eccles. xxxvi. 22, 23: “The beauty of a woman cheereth the countenance, and a man loveth nothing better; if there be kindness, meekness, and comfort in her tongue, then is not her husband like other men.”

“The smell of Lebanon.” In Hosea xiv. 6 there is the same reference to the pure, fresh mountain air, fragrant with the resinous odour of the cedars and the pine woods.

12. “A garden . . . is my spouse” (ver. 16; v. 1; vi. 2.).

“A garden inclosed.” And not only inclosed, but having its gates barred or locked; the same word, when repeated immediately afterwards, is translated “shut up.”

“A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” These figures express very forcibly and beautifully the chaste purity of the Spouse, whom her husband alone was permitted to embrace. Water was precious in the East, and fountains were carefully guarded, often covered with a heavy stone (Gen. xxix. 3, 8, 10.); here, moreover, the stone is represented as sealed. “A spring, a fountain.” Comp. Prov. v. 15, where the exhortation to conjugal fidelity is conveyed under similar figures: “Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.”

13—15. These verses are an expansion in fuller detail of the comparison which has been made (in ver. 12.) of the Bride to a garden and a fountain. The garden is a paradise of all choice trees; the spring, a full and abundant spring of living water. The spiritual application of verses 13, 14, may be suggested by such passages as Ps. i. 3

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

14 ²camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; ²Or, *cypress*,
 calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frank-
 incense;
 myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

Jer. xvii. 8. Ezek. xlvi. 12. Eccles. xxiv. 14: and of verse 15, by St. John iv. 14; vii. 38. Comp. Isa. lviii. 11: "Thou shalt be like "a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (see also Jer. xxxi. 12.). The spring or pool, or some other sufficient means of irrigation, was indispensable in a garden in Eastern lands. Comp. Eccles. ii. 5, 6. Eccles. xxiv. 31; and contrast the denunciation in Isa. i. 30; "Thou shalt be . . . as a garden that hath no water."

13. "Orchard." Park or paradise, which latter word is an imitation of the Hebrew word here used; a word derived from the Persian, and occurring also in Neh. ii. 8. Eccles. ii. 5.

"Pomegranates" (ver. 3.).

14. "Camphire" (i. 14.).

"Spikenard" (i. 12.).

"Saffron." Saffron, which comes to us from the Arabic word *zafrán*, yellow, is the name given to the dye, condiment, and perfume obtained from the crocus: many species of crocus abound in Palestine, where saffron has always been esteemed as a perfume, and from most of these saffron is obtained. The Hebrew word here used only occurs in this place, but still survives in the name by which the Arabs call the crocus.

"Calamus." Some kind of aromatic *cane*, as the Hebrew word implies (Exod. xxx. 23. Isa. xliii. 24. Jer. vi. 20. Ezek. xxvii. 19.). Several kinds of aromatic reeds are found in India.

"Cinnamon" (Exod. xxx. 23. Prov. vii. 17.). The word is the same in the Hebrew; and Herodotus (iii. 111.) notes that the Greeks also took the name cinnamon from the Phœnicians.

"Frankincense." The Hebrew word denotes a *white* fragrant gum, here and in iii. 6. used as a perfume (comp. Rev. xviii. 13.), and also burnt in religious services as one of the ingredients of the holy incense (Exod. xxx. 34.). It is often mentioned in the Old Testament, and appears to have been obtained through Arabia (Isa. lx. 6. Jer. vi. 20.). The frankincense used in modern times is procured from an Indian tree.

"Myrrh." Heb. *Mor*, and the name is much the same in all languages, was the resinous fragrant gum produced by the juice of some tree, or perhaps, in ancient times, of several trees, growing in Egypt and Africa, and possibly in parts of Palestine. In modern times myrrh is obtained from a low thorny shrub (*Balsamodendron Myrrha*) growing in Arabia. Myrrh was one of the ingredients of the holy oil (Exod. xxx. 23.); was used as a perfume (Cant. i. 13; v. 5. Ps. xlv. 8. Prov. vii. 17.); and was employed in purification (Esther ii. 12.), and in embalming (St. John xix. 39.). Myrrh, with frankincense, was among the gifts presented by the Wise Men to the infant Saviour (St. Matt. ii. 11.).

"Aloes." The word reproduces pretty closely the Hebrew word, which is found only here and in Ps. xlv. 8. Prov. vii. 17; and in Num. xxiv. 6, where possibly some other tree may be intended: see also St. John xix. 39. The aloe of Scripture may perhaps be identified with a lofty tree (called by botanists *Aquilaria Agallochum*)

SOLOMON'S SONG, IV.

° John 4. 10. 15 a fountain of gardens, a well of ° living waters,
& 7. 38. and streams from Lebanon.

16 ¶ Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;
blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof
may flow out.

growing in Cochin China and northern India, from which a costly perfume is obtained. It need scarcely be added that the "aloes" here spoken of has nothing to do with the aloes of medicine, which is obtained from plants connected with the Lily tribe growing in the West Indies and Cape of Good Hope.

"Frankincense, myrrh, aloes." Comp. iii. 6, "Frankincense and myrrh." "Myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon" (Prov. vii. 17.). "Myrrh and aloes" (St. John xix. 39.). "Myrrh, aloes, and cassia" (Ps. xlv. 8.).

12—15. Those who take a pious delight in beholding in the Song of Solomon a picture of the love between the Lord and each devout soul that truly seeketh to love Him in return, may find here in allegory a description of the garden of the soul, full of Christian graces and the fruits of holiness (comp. Phil. i. 11. Col. i. 10. Heb. vi. 7, 8.);—the garden enclosed by the hedge of devout observances, of sacred ordinances, and careful rules of holy living, and watchfulness and prayer, which may keep out the spoiler with his temptations:—the garden watered with the perennial stream of grace flowing from the rock of ages:—the garden full of trees and herbs, choice and fair and fragrant, love and gentleness, and courage, and purity, and patience, which its Lord beholding may rejoice. Tender and poetic minds have often been fond of seeing in flowers and shrubs, as in parables of nature, emblems of the virtues which adorn the soul. The vineyard and its vines are in several places of Holy Scripture employed in this metaphorical way. See Isa. v. 1—7, and the other places referred to in the *note* on viii. 12.

15. "A fountain of gardens." A fountain whose waters do not run to waste, but water the garden, causing it to bring forth its fruits (comp. Eccclus. xxiv. 30.).

"Living waters." The words are very expressive to describe waters which are not stagnant, but run with a swift clear stream. The same translation is given Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13. Zech. xiv. 8; elsewhere the words are rendered "springing water" (Gen. xxvi. 19.), or "running water" (Lev. xiv. 5, 6, 50; xv. 13. Num. xix. 17.); but "living" is sometimes placed in the margin.

16. Allegorical interpreters see here a prayer for the Holy Spirit (St. John iii. 8.) to breathe over the soul the breath of life; a prayer that from any quarter, from north or south, by any dispensation of joy or sadness, there may come—so only that there come—the life-giving wind of heaven. As an illustration of the minuteness with which out of every word there is sometimes pressed a spiritual lesson, the following passage may be taken. "Blow upon *my* garden, mine, "because its dryness and barrenness, and want of verdure are indeed "mine—my fault, my own fault, my own grievous fault. But let "the Holy Ghost once have come, and the phrase changes directly. "Let my beloved come into *His* garden, and eat *His* pleasant fruits." "No longer into my garden, but into His. His, indeed, for His own

SOLOMON'S SONG, V.

¶ Let my beloved come into his garden,
and eat his pleasant fruits.

¶ ch. 5. 1.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ awaketh the church with his calling.* 2 *The church having a taste of Christ's love is sick of love.* 9 *A description of Christ by his graces.*

1 I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* ^a ch. 4. 16.

I spouse :

I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ;

^b I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ;

I have drunk my wine with my milk :

eat, O ^c friends ; drink, ² yea, drink abundantly, ²

O beloved.

^b ch. 4. 11.

^c Luke 15. 7,
10.

John 3. 29.
& 15. 14.

² Or, and be
drunken
with loves.

“good Spirit has vivified it. His, indeed, for He gave the seed, He “sent the blessed dew, He charged the north and south wind to come “on their errand of love” (*Sermons on the Song of Songs, by the late J. M. Neale*).

“Let my beloved come into his garden.” The invitation of the Bride. The reply, “I am come into my garden,” follows in v. 1. “Let my beloved come,” comp. vii. 11, “come my beloved,” &c.

CHAPTER V.

1. “I am come into my garden,” &c. The invitation in iv. 16, is now answered ; and the expressions used in this verse seem to be a poetical way of describing the enjoyment of the company of the Bride (comp. iv. 6.).

“My sister, my spouse” (see on iv. 8, 9, 12.).

“My spice.” Though the word rendered “spice” is in this Song (iv. 10, 14, 16 ; viii. 14.) and elsewhere used apparently in a general sense, yet probably here, and perhaps also in v. 13 ; vi. 2, it is used with a more definite meaning to denote a plant known to the Greeks and Romans by a name, Balsam, very like to its Hebrew name, *Basam*. Josephus and others speak of the Balsam tree as yielding the most precious of all ointments, composed of the gum distilling from an incision made in the wood. It was a tree of moderate size, and grew in the warm climate of Jericho (see *Josephus, Antiq.* xiv. 4. 1 ; xv. 4. 2. *Tac. Hist.* v. 6.). Josephus (*Antiq.* viii. 6. 6.) relates a tradition that the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings x. 2, 10.) brought the root to Solomon. No trees or shrubs corresponding to the Balsamum are now found in Palestine, and the exact species is yet unknown.

“Eat, O friends ; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” These words appear to be an invitation to the friends of the Bridegroom (comp. St. John iii. 29.) to join in the feast on the consummation of the marriage. *Friends* (see on ver. 16.) ; the word is the same as that which, in its feminine form, is applied to the Bride, “my love” (see on i. 9, 15.). “Drink abundantly (comp. St. John ii. 10.). *Beloved* : The companions of the Beloved are here addressed by the name which is so constantly given to himself.

The full possession of each other's love, the crown of a chaste and holy marriage, may be made a parable of a diviner mystery (Eph.

SOLOMON'S SONG, V.

- 2 ¶ I sleep, but my heart waketh :
d Rev. 3. 20. *it is the voice of my beloved ^d that knocketh, say-
ing,*
Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my un-
defiled :
for my head is filled with dew,
and my locks with the drops of the night.
- 3 ¶ I have put off my coat ; how shall I put it on ?
I have washed my feet ; how shall I defile them ?

v. 25—32.), though the spiritual interpretation of the parable is left here, as throughout this Song, to the spiritual discernment of him that readeth (1 Cor. ii. 14.). With the figures here used of the union of Bride and Bridegroom, and the feast of rejoicing friends, comp. Rev. xix. 7—9.

One main division of the book seems to end here.

v. 2—viii. 4. Fourth Song.

If this portion is to be considered as one whole, it is the longest and most complex of the divisions of the Song of Solomon: it is the only one which contains any detailed description of the Beloved. It begins in a less joyous tone than any of the other portions, and works out more fully the thought of loss and separation, which had been hinted at in the first Song (i. 7, 8.), and partly developed in the second (iii. 1—3.). It ends with combining the thoughts, and to a great extent repeating the words, which conclude the first two parts; the bringing the Beloved by the Bride to her mother's house, his embracing her with his arm, her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem not to waken her love till he please (comp. viii. 2—4, with ii. 6, 7, and iii. 4, 5.).

It is, however, very doubtful whether it would not be better to consider v. 2—vi. 9, as a complete Song in itself, to which we might give the title, *The Losing, The Seeking, The Finding*: and at vi. 10 (see *note*) with the words "who is she?" which, in their form of a question, are the words with which two other divisions begin (iii. 6; viii. 5.), to suppose that there begins the fifth Song, *The Shulamite*.

2. "The voice of my beloved." See ii. 8.

That knocketh . . . open to me." Comp. Rev. iii. 20.

"My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." The dews are very copious in Palestine in the spring, and it is thought dangerous to sleep on the roof in the open air, exposed to the dew, till they cease sometime in May: on wetting with dew, comp. Dan. iv. 15, 23, 25, 33. This copiousness of the dew would fall in with the other notes of time (ii. 11, 12; vi. 11.), which would place the period of the poem in the spring, when the flowers were appearing and the pomegranates in blossom.

3. "Coat." The word rendered "coat" is used also 2 Sam. xiii. 18, 19, of the garment of a woman: and so also, it may be presumed, in Acts ix. 39.

She puts off the Beloved with excuses, that it was too much trouble

SOLOMON'S SONG, V.

4 ¶ My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,

and my bowels were moved ² for him.

² Or, (as some read) *in me*.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved ;
and my hands dropped *with* myrrh,
and my fingers *with* ³ sweet smelling myrrh,
upon the handles of the lock.

³ Heb. *passing, or, running about*.

6 I opened to my beloved ;
but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone :

my soul failed when he spake :

^c I sought him, but I could not find him ;

^c ch. 3. 1.

I called him, but he gave me no answer.

to rise and dress, and soil her feet in crossing to open the door, as does the man in our Lord's parable of the friend who came at midnight (St. Luke xi. 7.).

The reference already made in the note on ver. 2, calls attention to the resemblance between that place and our Lord's words, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and open to me," &c. (Rev. iii. 20.). And the spiritual interpretation which may be drawn, conveys the warning that those who delay to open their hearts to receive the gracious approaches of God's Spirit, and holy influences for good, may afterwards have to seek His presence with much trouble and many hindrances. Happy those who, after seeking, find; but it may come to pass that as He called, and they would not hear, so they shall cry, and He will not hear (Zech. vii. 13. Prov. i. 24.).

4. "Put in his hand." As if with the intention of trying to open.

"My bowels were moved." With pity and remorse at having refused to open. The words occur not unfrequently to express strong and agitating emotion; they are not always translated in the same way: Isa. xvi. 11, "my bowels shall sound;" Jer xxxi. 20, "are troubled." See also Isa. lxiii. 15; and Jer. iv. 19; xlviii. 36, where we have instead of "bowels" "my heart."

5. "Sweet-smelling myrrh." Rather, "overflowing;" denoting, it would seem, the abundance of myrrh.

6, 7. See on iii. 1, and comp. iii. 1—3, where there is the same thought, the withdrawal of the Beloved, and the seeking him in loneliness and sorrow.

6. "My soul failed when he spake." As it is not said that the Beloved had spoken any words of reproach and tenderness as he departed, this would appear to refer back to his words in ver. 2, so that the Bride seems to intend to say that her soul failed her (went out of her, comp. Gen. xlii. 28.); her spirits sank with sorrow and regret, because of his word, on account of that which he had spoken; when she remembered his call for admittance which she had delayed to grant.

"I sought him, but I could not find him." Repeated from iii. 1.

"I called him, but he gave me no answer." Comp. Job xxx. 20. Ps. xxii. 2. Lam. iii. 8. Hab. i. 2. St. Matt. xv. 23.

- † ch. 3. 3. 7 † The watchmen that went about the city found
me,
they smote me, they wounded me ;
the keepers of the walls took away my veil from
me.
- ‡ Heb. *what*. 8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if ye find my beloved, ² that ye tell him,
that I *am* sick of love.
- § ch. 1. 8. 9 ¶ What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved,
[§] O thou fairest among women ?
What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved,
that thou dost so charge us ?
- ¶ Heb. a standard-bearer. 10 ¶ My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
³ the chiefest among ten thousand.
- ¶ Or, curled. 11 His head *is as* the most fine gold,
his locks *are* ⁴ bushy, *and* black as a raven.
- ¶ ch. 1. 15. & 4. 1. 12 ^h His eyes *are as the eyes* of doves by the rivers
of waters,

7. There would be an impropriety in the conduct of a woman, young and fair, thus wandering by herself about the streets of a city.

“My veil.” See note on i. 7.

8. “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem.” A like adjuration to the daughters of Jerusalem is found in ii. 7 ; iii. 5 ; viii. 4, though the purport of the charge given them is not the same as in this place.

“I am sick of love,” repeated from ii. 5.

9. “O thou fairest among women,” i. 8. note ; vi. 1.

10—16. There are three descriptions (see on vii. 1—8.) of the person and beauty of the Bride, but only this one of the Beloved. Comp. Ps. xlv. 2, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.”

10. “White and ruddy.” The same words (in another grammatical form) are used (Lam. iv. 7.) to describe fulness and fairness of body. “Ruddy” here denotes the glowing colour of health and youth, but in the description given of David (1 Sam. xvi. 12 ; xvii. 42.), which may be compared with this passage, the similar word, there rendered “ruddy,” rather seems to mean, as in Gen. xxv. 25, “red haired.”

“The chiefest among ten thousand.” This seems a better rendering than the margin, and is confirmed by the ancient Versions : it fairly represents the original word, which denotes one eminent, lifted up as a banner. The same word, in another form, occurs in vi. 4, 10. Of Absalom it is said that in his faultless personal beauty he excelled all Israel.

11. “His head is as the most fine gold.” The hands also (ver. 14.) and the feet (ver. 15.) are compared to gold ; in the original more variety is given by varying the words used to express gold. As the hair was black, “gold” here seems used to give the idea of something very rich and bright.

12. It would seem that we have here a description of the brightness

SOLOMON'S SONG, V.

washed with milk, and ² fitly set.

13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as ³ sweet flowers :

his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl :

His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold :

² Heb. *sitting in fulness*, that is, *fitly placed*, and set as a *precious stone in the foil of a ring*.
³ Or, *towers of perfumes*.

of the eyes ("rivers of waters" being perhaps an image, like that in vii. 4, "thine eyes like the pools in Heshbon"): of their fulness ("sitting in fulness," margin): and their beauty, in the contrast of the dove-coloured eye with the clear white surrounding it, "washed with milk." The words "as the eyes of" are supplied by the translation; the eyes themselves are compared to doves (see i. 15; iv. 1.). Such would appear to be the general sense of this difficult verse; but it is not easy so to arrange and explain the figures and comparisons used, as to clearly work out from them the ideas which they are apparently intended to suggest.

13. "A bed of spices," vi. 2.

"As sweet flowers." Lit. as towers of perfume (margin), or perhaps of sweet-smelling or aromatic plants; the meaning is somewhat doubtful. As is often the case in Hebrew poetry, the words seem to be a repetition and expansion of the clause which precedes. The full cheeks (i. 10.) with their scented hair and beard are compared to a garden-bed of spice-bearing plants, even raised beds of sweet-smelling herbs.

"His lips as lilies." From this we may infer that the lily (see ii. 1.) here spoken of was a red flower; comp. iv. 3: "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet."

"Dropping sweet smelling" (see on ver. 5.) "myrrh." A poetical description of the graciousness of the speech of the Beloved (see iv. 11. Comp. Ps. xlv. 2. St. Luke iv. 22.).

14. "Beryl." It is not known what stone is denoted by the Tarshish (Exod. xxviii. 20; xxxix. 13. Ezek. i. 16; x. 9; xxviii. 13. Dan. x. 6.), which is always rendered "beryl" in the English Version. It has been conjectured that some yellow stone, perhaps the topaz, may be meant.

"Ivory." Comp. vii. 4: "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory."

"Sapphires." Comp. Lam. iv. 7. The name is the same in Hebrew, though it has been doubted whether the gem be the same as that which we now call sapphire. From Exod. xxiv. 10. Ezek. i. 26; x. 1, it would seem that the "Sappir" was blue and transparent. Perhaps here and in Lam. iv. 7, the sapphire is used indefinitely for any precious stone, as an emblem of brightness and beauty.

15. "As pillars of marble." The original word implies *white* marble: Esther i. 6, where in the margin, it is translated alabaster.

"Sockets," or bases; the feet being, as it were, the foundations upon which the body rests. In the symbolical description (Rev. i. 15. Comp. Dan. x. 6.), the feet are said to be of "fine brass."

SOLOMON'S SONG, VI.

his countenance *is* as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

² Heb. *His palate.* 16 ² His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely.

This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VI.

¹ *The church professeth her faith in Christ. 4 Christ sheweth the graces of the church, 10 and his love towards her.*

^a ch. 1. 8.

1 **W**hither is thy beloved gone, ^a O thou fairest among women?

Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

“His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.” There is no object in nature more magnificent than the lofty mountain covered with perpetual snow; and this comparison, in which the Beloved is likened to the mighty Lebanon with its forests of cedar (comp. Isa. lx. 13.), receives an additional aptness and force by contrast with vii. 5, where the Bride with her beautiful and abundant hair is compared, in her more gentle loveliness, to the wooded slopes of Carmel.

16. “This is my beloved.” Comp. i. 7, 13, 14. The reader may gather a spiritual application by calling to mind the words of the Psalmist, expressing his devout and fervent love to the God Whom he felt to be the strength of his life and his portion for ever; “Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee,” Ps. lxxiii. 24, 25.

“My friend.” This is the masculine form of the word which is so often rendered “my love” in this Song (i. 9, 15; ii. 2, 10, 13; iv. 7; v. 2; vi. 4.). It is a common word for friend or companion (v. 1, *note*); but here, as in Hosea iii. 1. Jer. iii. 1, 20, it is used for one nearer and dearer than all others; “lover” and “husband” are the renderings given in the places cited from Jeremiah. Compare the use of the word in Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 5.), “Art thou gone so? love! lord! ay—husband, friend!” “A friend and companion never meet amiss, but above all is a wife with her husband” (Ecclus. xl. 23.).

CHAPTER VI.

1. In reply to the adjuration to tell her if they found the Beloved, the daughters of Jerusalem ask two questions concerning him—What is he like? (v. 9.) Whither is he gone? To the first question the reply is the description of the beauty of the Beloved (v. 10—16.). To the second, the reply is brief (vv. 2, 3.), as he is now returned, and is with the Bride. By the “garden” and the “beds of spices” she means herself, carrying on the same figure as in iv. 12; v. 1. It would make the meaning clearer if instead of he “is gone down,” we rendered he “is come down” into his garden.

In i. 7—9, there is another instance of the sudden re-appearance of the King, and his addressing the Bride, immediately after words which would seem to shew that he was absent.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VI.

- 2 ¶ My beloved is gone down into his garden, to
the beds of spices,
to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
- 3 ^b I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine : ^b ch. 2. 16.
& 7. 10.
he feedeth among the lilies.
- 4 ¶ Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
comely as Jerusalem,—^cterrible as *an army* ^c ver. 10.
with banners.
- 5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for ² they have ² Or, *they*
overcome me : *have puffed*
me up.
thy hair *is* ^d as a flock of goats that appear from ^d ch. 4. 1.
Gilead.
- 6 ^e Thy teeth *are* as a flock of sheep which go up ^e ch. 4. 2.
from the washing,
whereof every one beareth twins, and *there is*
not one barren among them.
- 7 ^f As a piece of a pomegranate *are* thy temples ^f ch. 4. 3.
within thy locks.

2. "My Beloved . . . into his garden." So iv. 16 ; v. 1.

"To gather lilies." To gather the flowers of the garden, seems to be only another metaphor of the same kind as to eat the pleasant fruits of the garden ; that is, to enjoy the presence of the Bride, and receive from her tokens of love and affection.

3. "I am my Beloved's." This first clause occurs again (vii. 10.) ; comp. for the whole verse ii. 16, from which the words "he feedeth among the lilies" are repeated.

4. "Tirzah." "Delight;" a city of the Canaanites (Josh. xii. 24.), afterwards chosen as the seat of the kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to Omri (1 Kings xiv. 17 ; xv. 21, 33 ; xvi. 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 23. 2 Kings xv. 14, 16.). Though the beauty of the situation is here celebrated as worthy to be set in comparison with Jerusalem (Ps. xlvi. 2.), the site of Tirzah has not been identified, though with some probability it has been suggested that it stood where now stands the small town of Telluzah, some six miles east of Samaria.

"Comely as Jerusalem." Comp. Ps. xlvi. 2.

"Terrible as an army with banners." Repeated vi. 10. Other poets have used a similar comparison in describing victorious love, and have celebrated the conquering power of woman's beauty as mightier than man's instruments of war. Unarmed, woman has weapons more resistless than sword or spear (ver. 5. Comp. iv. 9.). The arrows shot from the eyes pierce deeper than those shot from the bow.

4—10. Compare the descriptions given of the Bride in iv. 1—7 ; vii. 1—10. There are thus three descriptions given of the Bride, and with these may be compared the description of the Bridegroom (v. 10—16.).

5—7. Several clauses are repeated from iv. 1—3, for instance :

5. "Thy hair is like a flock of goats," &c. (iv. 1.).

6. "Thy teeth like a flock of sheep," &c. (iv. 2.).

7. "As a piece of pomegranate within thy locks," &c. (iv. 3.).

SOLOMON'S SONG, VI.

- 8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,
and virgins without number.
- 9 My dove, my undefiled is *but* one;
she *is* the *only* one of her mother,
she *is* the choice *one* of her that bare her.
The daughters saw her, and blessed her;
yea, the queens and the concubines, and they
praised her.
- 10 ¶ Who *is* she *that* looketh forth as the morning,
fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
⁸ *and* terrible as *an* army with banners?
- 11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the
fruits of the valley,

⁸ ver. 4

8. Solomon, in the latter part of his life at any rate, had many more wives and concubines than these (1 Kings xi. 3.).

9. "My dove, my undefiled." Repeated from v. 2.

"Is but one." One true love is better than all this multitude of women, too many to be even familiarly known, and serving only as instruments of sensuality (comp. St. Matt. xix. 4, 5, and Introduction).

It is, as intimated on v. 2, probable that the words "who is she that looketh forth" should form the commencement of a new song, which we may entitle, The Shulamite. Two other divisions of the Song begin in a similar way with a question, "Who is she that cometh?" verse 9 would form a suitable and appropriate conclusion; and by making vi. 10—viii. 4 into a separate portion, we avoid the inconvenience of having two descriptions of the Bride in the same ode or division of the Song. Still, however, in the absence of the words which seem to mark elsewhere (iii. 5; viii. 4; and ii. 7.) the ending of a separate Song, we may hesitate before giving a decided opinion.

10. "Who is she (comp. the same expression iii. 6; viii. 5.) that looketh forth." That is, as it would seem, from her window: which words are indeed often added after this verb, as in Gen. xxvi. 8. Judges v. 28. Prov. vii. 6. 2 Sam. vi. 16. 2 Kings ix. 30. 1 Chron. xv. 29.

"The morning," i.e. the dawn.

"The moon . . . the sun." Lit. the White One; and Heat, or Burning: the same poetical designations of the sun and moon are used also in Isa. xxiv. 23; xxx. 26. In Job xxxi. 26. the sun (light) when it shineth and the moon walking in brightness, are selected as the most beautiful and glorious of those outward things which might tempt men to the worship of nature. Comp. Eccles. xxvi. 16: "As the sun when it ariseth in the high heavens, so is the beauty of a good wife for an ornament of her house."

"Terrible as an army with banners." See on ver. 4.

11. "The garden of nuts." The original word, which is not found elsewhere, appears to denote the walnut, which is extensively cultivated in the colder parts of Palestine, and has been recently planted on the site of Solomon's gardens near Bethlehem. Josephus (*Wars*, iii.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VI.

and^h to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the^h ch. 7. 12.
pomegranates budded.

- 12 ²Or ever I was aware, my soul ³made me *like*² Heb. I knew not.
the chariots of Ammi-nadib. ³ Or,
set me on
the chariots
of my will-
ing people.
- 13 Return, return, O Shulamite ;
return, return, that we may look upon thee.
What will ye see in the Shulamite ?
As it were the company ⁴of two armies. ⁴ Or, of
Mahanaim,
Gen. 32. 2.

10. 8.) speaks of the abundance of walnut trees in the region of Gennesareth.

“To see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.” Repeated vii. 12. The verb rendered “flourish” might have been rendered, as in Gen. xl. 10. Num. xvii. 5, 8, “bud.” The note of time here, the season of birds and blossoms, is the same as that in ii. 11—13, the bright and glad spring.

12. “The chariots of Ammi-nadib.” The allusion, whatever it may be, is now lost, if Ammi-nadib be a proper name; but this is quite uncertain, see the margin. The whole passage is obscure, but the general meaning of this verse would seem to be:—“before I was aware, my soul was carried away by love, as one hurried along in a swiftly drawn chariot.” “Or ever.” That is, before, as for instance Ps. xc. 2. Prov. viii. 23. Dan. vi. 24. Ps. lviii. 8. (Prayer Book).

13. A new chapter begins with this verse in the Hebrew Bibles; but whether we take it with the sentences which precede, or with those which follow, the connection and meaning are uncertain.

“O Shulamite.” The name Shulamite is so similar to Shunamite that some, here detecting an allusion to Abishag the Shunamite, have thought that they have found a clue to 1 Kings ii. 17—25. The liquids l and m are easily interchanged: in the Vatican copy of the old Greek translation, the Septuagint, the name here is written as Shunamite; while the name of the town Sunem (in Issachar, Josh. xix. 18. 1 Sam. xxviii. 4. 2 Kings iv. 8.) was Sulcm in the time of Eusebius and Jerome, and is now Sôlam. Others would prefer to take Shulanite as a name formed to correspond with Solomon (the Peaceable). A similar name, Shlomith, occurs as a name both for men and women: for instance, Levit. xxiv. 11. 1 Chron. iii. 19; xxiii. 18.

“As it were the company of two armies.” If we retain the rendering “company,” we must understand a company of dancers; the word, indeed, is always elsewhere rendered “dance” in our Version; and the meaning may perhaps be explained thus. The Shulamite in reply to the call, “Return, that we may gaze upon thee,” answers in a modest self-depreciatory tone, “What will ye see in her, if she does return; what is there so much worth looking upon?” To this the reply is made, that she combines in her own person all the charms of a whole company of chosen maidens going forth to the dance, divided into two bands (“armies”), singing and dancing in alternate order, celebrating a victory, or joining in a religious festival. See for instance the use of the word in Exod. xv. 20; xxxii. 19. Judges xi. 34; xxi. 21. 1 Sam. xviii. 6; xxi. 11; xxix. 5; and compare also the kindred word in Jer. xxxi. 4, 13. Ps. cxlix. 3; cl. 4.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VII.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *A further description of the church's graces.* 10 *The church professeth her faith and desire.*

^a Ps. 45. 13.

1 **H**ow beautiful are thy feet with shoes, ^a O prince's daughter!

The margin suggests the reference to Gen. xxxii. 2; and there are those who would see in the "armies" here an allusion to the angels,—the most perfect examples that could be chosen of gracefulness, brightness, and beauty.

CHAPTER VII.

1—10. There are two other descriptions of the beauty and graces of the Bride (iv. 1—11, and vi. 4—10.), from which some comparisons are here repeated; for instance, "Thy two breasts," iv. 5. "Thy neck," iv. 4. Those descriptions, as also that given of the Beloved (vv. 10—16.), begin with the head, this begins with the feet, and ascends upwards. Those who as they read are anxious to discern a spiritual lesson, may, as intimated in the Introduction, find in these descriptions of outward and physical beauty, an allegory of the higher and diviner beauty of holiness and virtue. The beautiful woman as here portrayed, lovely alike in face and form, whose charms are set forth by successive comparisons with those things which were thought to be most beautiful in the works of man or the works of God, the well-proportioned tower, the lofty palm, the deep clear pool, the lily, and the gazelle,—such an one, fair and stately, winning from all admiration and love, may well seem no unfitting emblem of the purer and more enduring attractiveness of goodness: the beauty of body which charms the eyes of man, may serve as an allegory of the graces of the soul which God Himself vouchsafes to bless and to love. And indeed the common language of men bears unconscious witness to the fitness of an analogy of this kind, when they apply the same words which are used of bodily beauty to those things which are morally and spiritually beautiful, and speak for instance of conduct or action, as fair, or graceful, or becoming. The New Testament supplies a multitude of illustrations. We are bidden to practise "whatsoever things are lovely;" things "beautiful" in the sight of God and man; "beautiful deeds" the "fair fruits" of the "fair tree" of Christianity, which shall lead those who behold them to glorify God. See Phil. iv. 8. Rom. xii. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 1. St. Matt. iii. 10; v. 16; vii. 17. 1 St. Pet. ii. 12. Gal. vi. 9. 1 Thess. v. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 12, 13, 18. Titus ii. 7, 14; iii. 8. St. James iii. 13; iv. 17, &c. In these and very many other places "good," "honest," represent a word which in the original means "beautiful."

If any should prefer to take a wider view, and to see here a figure of the Church, rather than of the individual soul, they may compare the parable used by the prophet Ezekiel, who represents the Church of the elder covenant under the figure of the maiden, once left neglected and deserted, now grown up to womanhood and married to him who had rescued and nourished her, who had richly decked her with jewels and placed a crown upon her head. "Thou wast exceeding beautiful," continues the prophet, carrying on his metaphor and describing the religious prerogatives and gifts of Israel of old,—"thou wast exceeding beautiful . . . and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty," Ezek. xvi. 13, 14. Comp. Lam. ii. 15.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VII.

- the joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels,
the work of the hands of a cunning workman.
- 2 Thy navel *is like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth
not ² liquor : ² Heb.
mixture.
- thy belly *is like* an heap of wheat set about with lilies.
- 3 ^b Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes *that* ^b ch. 4. 5.
are twins.
- 4 ^c Thy neck *is* as a tower of ivory ; ^c ch. 4. 4.
thine eyes *like* the fishpools in Heshbon, by the
gate of Bath-rabbim :

1. "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes." Comp. Judith x. 4 ; xvi. 9: "Her sandals ravished his eyes, her beauty took his mind "prisoner."

"Jewels." Such as pearls for instance.

2. "Lilies." See ii. 1.

It has been thought that in some parts of these descriptions there is reference to the garments rather than to the person. It is not impossible that here, or in v. 14, there may be allusion to a tunic with a girdle of precious stones, or a border of some bright colour, enhancing by contrast the fairness of the limbs. Jewels and perfumed garments are indeed spoken of (see for instance i. 10 ; iii. 6 ; iv. 4, 10, 11 ; v. 7, and compare Ps. xlv. 8, 13—15. Isa. xlix. 18 ; lxi. 10. Jer. ii. 32. Rev. xxi. 2.), as things with which the Bride was arrayed at fitting times and seasons, but it can hardly be supposed that the Beloved was enraptured by the mere clothes of the Spouse. Garments were not herself, and garments, however splendid, might be arranged so as to conceal ugliness or deformity. It is not to be forgotten that, as observed in the Introduction, physical beauty, whether of form or face, is God's workmanship, and is meant to win admiration and love. Unhappily, through corruption of manners and evil imaginations, there may be with many but too great danger in contemplating beauty (Ecclus. ix. 8.), or reading descriptions of it, and it is needful that over many things a veil of reserve be thrown. Yet as there was a time in the "days of man's innocency," when there was no shame (Gen. ii. 25.), so this Song, with the simplicity and openness of its love, its varied reference to the objects of outward nature and rural scenes and work, takes back the thoughts to Paradise, the garden of delight in which man once was placed to dress it, and to keep it. Something of Eden is by a holy marriage given back to the chaste and pure: God then Himself lifts up the veil which hides things hitherto kept secret, and blesses the knowledge which, snatched at prematurely in forbidden ways, brings with it a curse. The first miracle of the Gospel was to provide wine at a marriage feast.

4. "Fishpools." It is not quite clear why in this place alone our Translators should have rendered by "*fish*-pools" the word which so often occurs as the usual word for pool ; e.g. Eccles. ii. 6. Neh. iii. 14 ; iii. 15, "Pool of Siloah." 1 Kings xxii. 38. 2 Kings xviii. 17, &c.

"Heshbon." The capital of Sihon king of the Amorites (Num. xxi. 26.), on the boundary line between Reuben and Gad (Josh. xiii. 17.). The extensive ruins of Heshbân are some twenty miles east of the Jordan.

"By the gate of Bath-rabbim." If Bath-rabbim be a proper name,

SOLOMON'S SONG, VII.

thy nose *is* as the tower of Lebanon which looketh
toward Damascus.

² Or,
crimson.

5 Thine head upon thee *is* like ² Carmel,
and the hair of thine head like purple ;
the king *is* ³ held in the galleries.

³ Heb. *bound.*

6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for
delights!

7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
and thy breasts to clusters of *grapes*.

8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of the boughs thereof :
now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the
vine,

it would seem to be intended to denote some gate of Heshbon, looking towards some town of that name. The old Greek and Latin translations however render it as if they understood it to mean the gate where multitudes assemble.

“The tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.” Of this tower, on the slopes of the Anti-Libanus, commanding the magnificent prospect of the plain of Damascus, nothing is now known. We can but infer, from the comparison now made, that it must have been built of goodly stones, and in fair and symmetrical proportions. Comp. iv. 4, “Thy neck is like the tower of David.” The buildings which Solomon had built in Lebanon are mentioned 1 Kings ix. 19. 2 Chron. viii. 6.

5. “Thy head upon thee is like Carmel.” The text here is better than the margin, in which it is proposed to substitute for Carmel a word, written nearly in the same way, which occurs in 2 Chron. ii. (6) 7, 14 ; iii. 14, and is rendered Crimson.

“Carmel” (“the garden,” or “the park”) was of old celebrated for its beauty and the abundance of its woods (Isa. xxxv. 2 ; xxxvii. 24. Micah vii. 14.) : many noble trees still remain, and modern travellers seem to vie with each other in describing the varied scenes of sylvan beauty which it everywhere presents. One of the most recent of them, describing Carmel in the spring, speaks with admiration of the wonderful profusion of its flowering shrubs, with their masses of perfumed blossom, and the endless variety of flowers covering every fragment of open space ; “it was the garden of Eden run wild” (*H. B. Tristram, Land of Israel*, p. 492.). To the rich foliage clothing the sides and summit of Carmel are compared the abundant tresses on the head of the Bride ; its softer beauty is contrasted with the sterner majesty of Lebanon with its cedars, to which the Bridegroom is compared in v. 15. Lebanon and Carmel are mentioned together Isa. xxxiii. 9 ; xxxv. 2 ; xxxvii. 24.

“Galleries” (see the margin of i. 17, where the Hebrew word is very nearly the same as that used here) would seem here to denote the interlacings and plaitings of the abundant hair with whose beauty and plaitings the King was held bound.

8. Appears to express, under other figures, the same thought as

SOLOMON'S SONG, VII.

and the smell of thy nose like apples ;

9 and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine—

¶ for my beloved, that goeth *down* ² sweetly, ² Heb. *straightly.*
causing the lips ³ of those that are asleep to speak. ³ Or, *of the ancient.*

10 ^d I am my beloved's, and ^e his desire is toward me. ^d ch. 2. 16.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ; ^e & 6. 3.
let us lodge in the villages. ^e Ps. 45. 11.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards ;

let us ^f see if the vine flourish, *whether* the ^f ch. 6. 11.

tender grape ⁴ appear,

⁴ Heb. *open.*

and the pomegranates bud forth :

there will I give thee my loves.

13 The ^g mandrakes give a smell,

^g Gen. 30. 14.

and at our gates ^h are all manner of pleasant ^h Matt. 13. 52.

fruits, new and old,

which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

that in iv. 16 ; v. 1 ; vi. 2, 3, the enjoyment of the presence of the loved one.

“Apples.” See ii. 3.

9. “For my Beloved.” As this name “Beloved” is used in this Song some five-and-twenty times of the Bridegroom, and here in the verses which immediately follow is three times applied to him, we must suppose, as there are no grounds for altering the text, that they are spoken of him now. So that we have here the words of the Spouse who breaks in suddenly, interrupting his praises. Taking up his last comparison of wine, she finishes the sentence herself. “Thy “mouth like wine”—“for my Beloved pleasantly to drink.” If my mouth be sweet as best wine, it is for my Beloved tenderly to kiss ; whatever I have that seemeth fair to thee, all is thine own to enjoy. The meaning of the clause that follows is quite uncertain ; the word translated “causing to speak,” is not found elsewhere ; the words rendered “that goeth down sweetly,” occur also in Prov. xxiii. 31, where they are differently translated.

10. “I am my Beloved's.” Repeated from vi. 3. Comp. ii. 16.

“His desire.” The same word as in Gen. iii. 16.

11. “Come my Beloved.” “Let my Beloved come,” iv. 17. As we have had the call of the Beloved, “Rise up, my love, and come away.” ii. 10—13, and again, iv. 8 ; so here (comp. iv. 16 ; viii. 14.) we have the invitation addressed to the Beloved by the Bride.

12. “Tender grape appear.” See ii. 13. Rather, “whether the “blossom be open,” as margin.

13. “Mandrakes.” See Gen. xxx. 14—16, the only other place where they are mentioned. The same word with a slight difference of pronunciation is used in this Song for Beloved : and the mandrake as formerly, so now, by the natives of Palestine is believed to have power to produce love and assist conception. The mandrake (*Mandragora officinalis*), a plant with broad leaves, something like a primrose, and a central bunch of dark blue-bell shaped flowers, is universally distributed in Palestine.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The love of the church to Christ.* 6 *The vehemency of love.* 8 *The calling of the Gentiles.* 14 *The church prayeth for Christ's coming.*

1 **O** that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!
when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;

^a Heb. *they should not despise me.*

yea, ² I should not be despised.
2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me:

^a Prov. 9. 2.

I would cause thee to drink of ^a spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

^b ch. 2. 6.

3 ^b His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

^c ch. 2. 7. & 3. 5.

4 ^c I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

CHAPTER VIII.

1. "None would despise me." As if I were in this doing something strange and immodest: like her spoken of in Prov. vii. 11—13.

2. "I would bring thee into my mother's house." The same thought as in iii. 4.

"Who would instruct me." That is, apparently, with the special knowledge needful for one newly married. The Hebrew, however, might be translated, "Thou shalt instruct me." This rendering lends itself more easily to an allegorical application, which may be brought out by comparing Isa. liv. 13 (St. John vi. 45.). Jer. xxxi. 34.

3. The direct form of address is now changed: the words are repeated from ii. 6, though our translation renders them here as a wish instead of an assertion. It would have been perhaps better if the rendering in ii. 6, "his right hand doth embrace me," had been followed here, as it would seem that after the longing, or (for the words may be taken as futures) the resolution or promise in ver. 2, the Bride now declares that she has gained her wish, and the Beloved is close to her once more.

4. Repeated from ii. 7; iii. 5.

viii. 5 to end. The last Song.

The Might of Love. The Call to the Beloved.

This, though the most brief, is perhaps the most difficult of any of the portions of the Song of Solomon. It would almost seem as if the key to the closed meaning of several passages in this chapter, as indeed of not a few other places in this book, had been lost and not yet recovered. We may say of them, in the words of an old Bishop commenting on the fifth verse, "Whichsoever way we take them, the sense is very hard to find." It does not seem needful to repeat the various guesses which have been made. But even here, while we must be content to leave some portions as obscure, the striking passage, vv. 6, 7, will live in the memory as long, it may be, as any part of this Song. It is true, even according to the letter,

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

² that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please. ² Heb. *why should ye stir up, or, why, &c.*

5 ¶ ⁴ Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? ^d ch. 3. 6.

I raised thee up under the apple tree :
there thy mother brought thee forth :
there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee.

6 ^e Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
as a seal upon thine arm : ^e Isai. 49. 16.
Jer. 22. 24.
Hag. 2. 23.

for love *is* strong as death ;
jealousy *is* ³ cruel as the grave : ³ Heb. *hard.*

of a pure earthly love, which death cannot destroy, and which hopes to live beyond the grave through eternity.

5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness." Repeated from iii. 5 ; but now there is added "leaning upon her beloved."

"I raised thee up," &c. If we adopt the pointing of the Hebrew Bibles, and take these pronouns as masculine, the latter portion of this verse is to be understood as an address of the Bride to her Beloved.

"Apple-tree." See ii. 3.

"Thy mother . . . she that bare thee." Repeated from vi. 9. Comp. iii. 4.

6. "As a seal." Comp. Jer. xxii. 24. Hag. ii. 23.

"Love is strong as death." The noble passage, Rom. viii. 35—39, may serve to point the spiritual application ; and the stories of the lives of the servants of God, who through bitter trials, or persecution, or martyrdom have been called to prove their steadfastness, may help to shew the might of that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear" (1 St. John iv. 18.), even the fear of the most cruel death and the most agonizing tortures. That love which has made the timid brave, and the weak strong ; that love which afflictions could not drown nor the many waters (comp. Ps. lxxix. 1, 2, 14, 15.) of tribulation quench ; that love which neither the threatening of the world could terrify, nor the bribes of the world seduce (comp. ver. 7.).

"Jealousy is cruel (hard) as the grave." A love which is not jealous, which does not feel pain and indignation at seeing affection which is rightly due transferred to some unworthy object, is not true love. Nor may the mistakes and follies of jealousy, any more than the follies and mistakes of love, blind us to its real dignity. Thus God's servant speaks of himself as "very jealous for the Lord God "of Hosts" (1 Kings xix. 10.). And in other places (where sometimes "zeal" or "zealous" is given in the translation) we find commendation of the unselfish devotion which is eager at all risks to vindicate the honour of Him Whom it loves, and feels any slight to Him as its own (see Num. xxv. 11, 13. Ps. lxxix. 9.). And God, speaking after the manner of men, speaks of Himself as a "jealous "God" (Exod. xx. 5. Deut. v. 9. Exod. xxxiv. 14. Deut. iv. 24 ; vi. 15.). He Who is the rightful object of all love cannot allow with impunity the children of men to dishonour Him and degrade themselves by giving to another the honour which is His (Isa. xlii. 8.).

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

the coals thereof *are* coals of fire,
which hath a most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can the floods drown it :

† Prov. 6. 35.

‡ if a man would give all the substance of his
house for love,
it would utterly be contemned.

§ Ezek. 23. 33.

8 ¶ We have a little sister, and she hath no
breasts :

what shall we do for our sister in the day when
she shall be spoken for ?

9 If she *be* a wall, we will build upon her a palace
of silver :

and if she *be* a door, we will inclose her with
boards of cedar.

10 I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers :

then was I in his eyes as one that found
‡ favour.

² Heb. *peace*.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon ;

“Coals.” Flame or burning would better express the meaning :
“The burnings thereof are burnings of fire, a most vehement flame ;”
lit. flame of Jah (Jehovah, which name of the God of Israel the English
Version renders “The Lord”). This may either signify the lightning,
to whose resistless power love is compared ; or, as our Version takes it,
may be an example of the frequent idiom by which the strongest form
of the superlative is expressed by the addition of the name of God. As
for instance : Gen. xxiii. 6, “A mighty prince” (a prince of God) ;
Ps. lxxx. 10, “goodly cedar trees” (cedars of God) ; Jonah iii. 3, “an
“exceeding great city” (city of God) ; Acts vii. 20, “exceeding fair.”

7. “Many waters cannot quench love.” As love is compared
(ver. 6.) to fire, there is a poetical fitness in thus selecting the waters to
represent the obstacles which hinder and the influences which oppose
themselves to love. For an allegorical interpretation, see the note on the
preceding verse, “Love is strong as death ;” and compare, in addition
to Ps. lxix. 1, 2, 14, 15, Pss. xviii. 4 ; xlii. 7 ; lxxxviii. 17. Isa. xliii. 2.

“If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it
“would be utterly contemned.” True love is not to be bought for
money. If a man would give all that he possesses, his “house full of
“silver and gold” (Num. xxii. 18.), so far from being able to purchase
love, he would find his bribe rejected with utter disdain.

8. “In the day that she shall be spoken for.” Asked in marriage.
The same word is used in a similar sense in 1 Sam. xxv. 39. The
proposal was made rather to the father, or relatives, than to the damsel
herself (Gen. xxiv. 50 ; xxxiv. 4, 11. Judges xiv. 2. 2 Kings xiv. 9.).

11. “Baal-hamon.” The name seems to signify a place peopled
with a great multitude, but nothing is known of the locality. By some
it has been conjectured to be the same place as Balamo, near Dolhaim,
in Samaria, mentioned in Judith viii. 3.

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

^h he let out the vineyard unto keepers ; ^h Matt. 21. 33.
 every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a
 thousand *pieces* of silver.

12 My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me :
 thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand,
 and those that keep the fruit thereof two hun-
 dred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
 the companions hearken to thy voice :
ⁱ cause me to hear *it*.

ⁱ ch. 2. 14.

“He let out the vineyard unto keepers.” Comp. St. Matt. xxii. 33. It may be conjectured from ver. 12 that the gross produce of each keeper's share of the vineyard was considered to be twelve hundred shekels, of which the cultivators retained a sixth part, or two hundred shekels, while a thousand shekels were paid as rent.

“A thousand (pieces) of silver.” Probably shekels are meant. Shekel is inserted Gen. xxiii. 15. Lev. xxvii. 3, 6. Josh. vii. 21 ; and omitted, Gen. xx. 16. xxxvii. 28 ; xlv. 22. Deut. xxii. 19, 29. 1 Kings x. 29. Hosea iii. 2. Our translation sometimes supplies “shekels,” sometimes “pieces.” The same amount is mentioned in Isa. vii. 23, “A thousand vines at a thousand silverlings.”

12. “My vineyard, which is mine.” Here, as in i. 6, by the vineyard she seems to mean herself. In iv. 12, 13, the Bride had been spoken of as a garden full of all choice trees, now she describes herself as a vineyard : and though for want of fuller information we may not now see the exact force of the allusion in ver. 11, yet she appears to contrast the great vineyard, yielding a large revenue, let out to many keepers, each of whom was to pay a thousand pieces of silver, with her own more modest vineyard of which she is the keeper for the King. She makes one a parable of the other, and as it were interpreting her parable, implies by her words, “Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand” (the return of rent just above spoken of as due to the owner), that the full possession and enjoyment of herself as Bride should be given to the King, but that some reward of praise (the “two hundred” reserved for the keepers) was due to herself, who had so cultivated the vineyard of her heart and affections that it brought forth the fruits of goodness and love.

In Isaiah v. 1—7 there is a similar parable, in which “the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel ;” and this comparison is not an unfrequent one in Holy Scripture (St. Matt. xxi. 33—41. Comp. Ps. lxxx. 8—16. Jer. ii. 21.).

13. “The companions” (i. 7.) are perhaps the friends (v. 1.) of the Bridegroom.

“Cause me to hear it.” These are the last words of the Beloved to the Bride, and contain the same request as in ii. 14, where the Beloved asks that he may hear her voice, for it is sweet. She who is there addressed as the rock dove, dwelling in the sides of the cliffs, is now the dweller in the gardens ; having been already compared, herself, to a garden (iv. 16 ; v. 1.).

SOLOMON'S SONG, VIII.

^k See Rev. 22. 14 ^{k 2} Make haste, my beloved,
17, 20. and ¹ be thou like to a roe or to a young hart
² Heb. upon the mountains of spices.
Flee away.
¹ ch. 2. 17.

14. The last reply of the Bride.

“Make haste.” With this rendering comp. Ps. xl. 13, 17; lxx. 1; lxxi. 12.

“Like a roe.” See on ii. 7.

“Or young hart” (ii. 17.).

“Mountains of spices” (iv. 6.).

“Make haste, my Beloved.” The longing of the heart for the presence of one loved with a true and deep earthly love, may teach how real and fervent ought to be the longing of the soul after God (comp. also Ps. xlii. 1.); and the reference to Rev. xxii. 17, 20, is well placed in the margin, to remind us that our prayers for the great Advent of the Son of man should be the prayers of those “who love His appearing” (2 Tim. iv. 8.).

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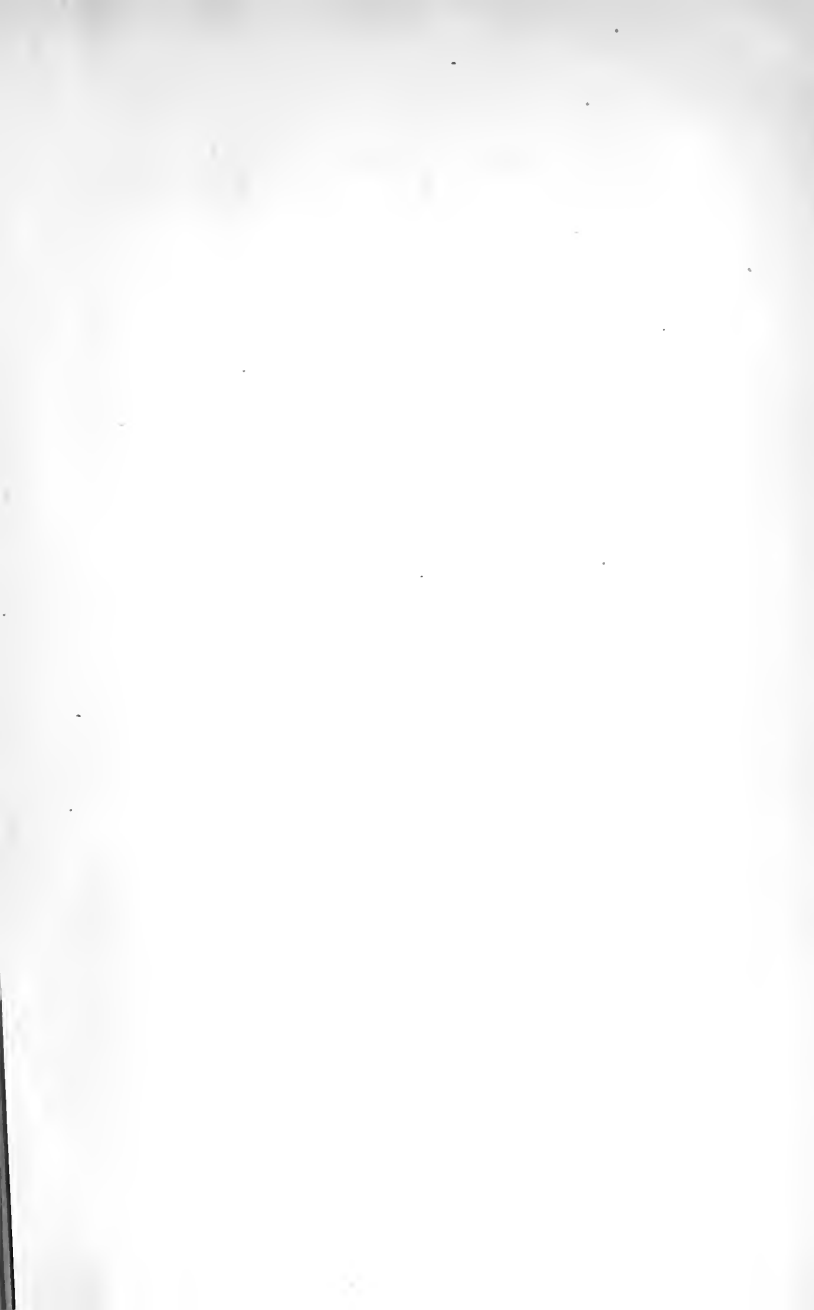
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