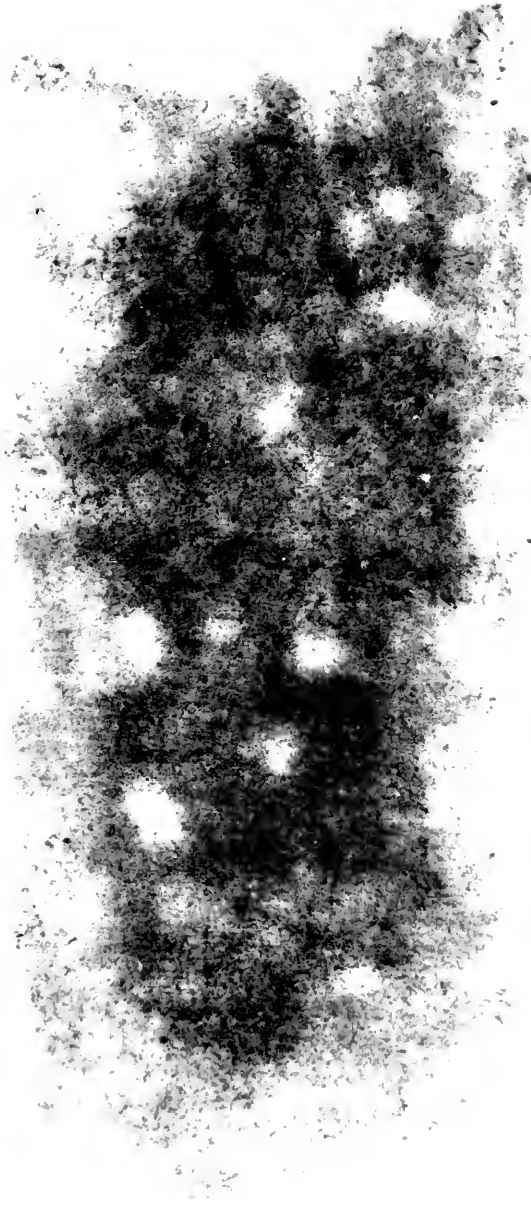

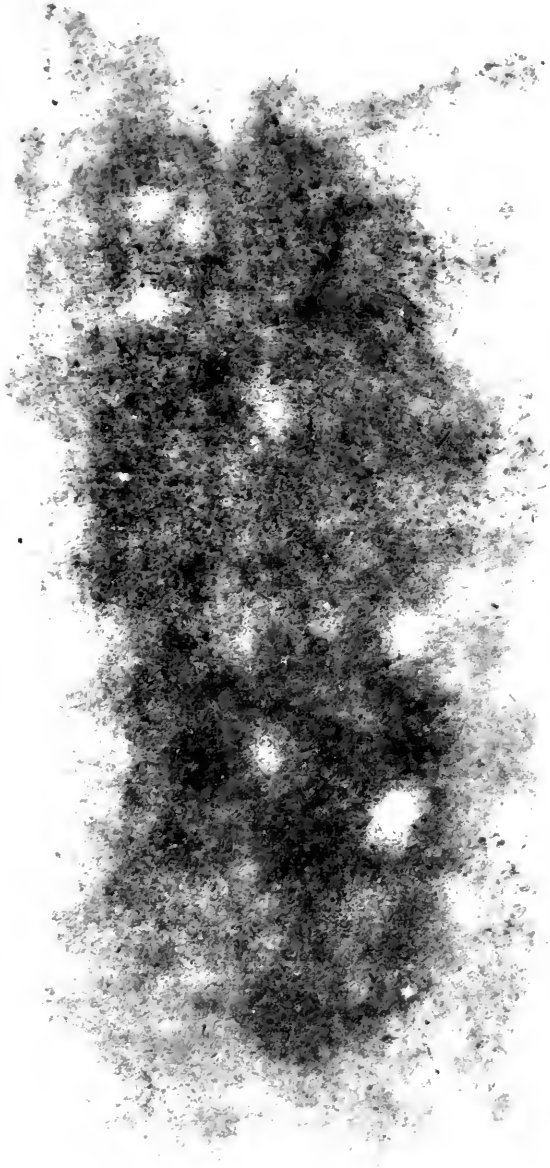

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF THE

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

EDITED BY THE

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VOL. III.

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1848.

Horae Biblicae Quotidianae.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

BY THE LATE

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PSALMS.

Before entering on this rich and precious department of Scripture, let me lift up a solemn prayer to God, that He would enable me to gather from it those fruits unto holiness, the end of which is life everlasting; and that the same Spirit which animated the Psalmist would enlighten and impress me with all the fervour and devotedness which burn and breathe throughout these sacred compositions—a treasure and blessing to the Church in all ages.

Psalm i.—Dr. Good, in his Historical Outline of the Psalms, states that this was written by David previous to his entry on public life. I am not sure that I will frequently advert to the occasions of the different Psalms. But let me, O God, drink in the spirit and sentiment of these blessed effusions.... The scorner is the infidel of these times, who poured mockery on the ways of God and on His people; and the Psalmist, disowning such, pronounces on the better part of him whose delight and meditation are the law of God.—O my God, let me shun

the partial and constrained views of those who speak of it as the only end of Thy law, that it should convince of sin. Let me recognise it in all its prominency and all its preciousness—and this to men after conversion as well as before it. May it be put into my heart, and yield there, as from a root, all the fruits of righteousness. And while the wicked are filled with the fruits of their own ways, may I flourish and prosper, O God, before Thee.

PSALM II.—There was doubtless enough in the history of David to supply him with immediate topics for the composition of this psalm. He had the combinations of hostile kings to make head against; and he was helped to prevail over them; and he was at length established in the city of Jerusalem, as the seat of his government; and it had been the wisdom of his enemies to enter into peace with him. But notwithstanding all these obvious adaptations, a greater than David is here; and the testimony of Scripture itself to this, (Acts iv. 25,) forms a warrant for the double sense, not of this passage only, but of many others which have not been so expressly referred to. There is a call here even to the present kings and governments of the world, and more especially to our own rulers, who are but rejoicing in the secular prosperity of the kingdom, but do not rejoice with trembling.—O may the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And may I, Heavenly Father, be drawn into close fellowship with Thy blessed Son, and have the blessedness of those who put their trust in Him.... Throughout the psalm, and more especially at its conclusion, there is an obvious expansion beyond the primary meaning and application of it to David.

PSALM III.—This psalm is thought to have been composed by David on his flight from Absalom. It applies well to his situation at that time. He retains, in the midst of his disasters, unbroken confidence in God—he sustains himself on the Rock of Ages. This and other psalms seem as if composed piecemeal, and at intervals between one part and another; for with the prayer for victory going before, there is afterwards the victory itself recorded, though verse 7 may refer to his past experience. The word Selah, which occurs so often in the Psalms, is regarded by many as a mark somehow related to the music; and certainly it occurs nowhere else in Scripture. By others it is looked upon as indicative of a pause for the purpose of giving greater solemnity and emphasis to the utterance which had gone before.—Let my refuge, like that of the Psalmist, ever be in God, nor let the most adverse and menacing events ever dispossess me of my confidence.... Though the reference to our Saviour is not here so obvious as in the last psalm, yet, without overstraining, may it well be applied to Him when in the Garden of Gethsemane.

PSALM IV.—Neginoth signifies, it is most likely, "stringed instruments;" and this psalm, said to be the composition of David, seems addressed to the chief of the performers on these, that he may set it to the music of his particular band. The subject-matter is exceedingly precious; and though perhaps written for a particular occasion—it may be for the victory over Absalom—yet are its spirit and sentiments adapted to the state of the godly in all ages. Enlargement in distress is what we have often a call to pray for; and to Thee, O Lord, would I apply for the

deliverance which I need. There is a glory—that of effecting a conquest over the ignorance and wickedness of a city district—which some, I fear, would rejoice in turning to shame.—O expel their jealousy, and put truth into their inward parts. Hear me when I call; and may I have the blessedness of those who fear always, and who so shun or resist temptation, that they may refrain from sinning. Set me apart for Thyself, and teach me to combine the sacrifices of obedience with thorough confidence in Thy mercy. Lord, let me not set my affections on any created thing—not even on an enterprise of Christian good, in such a way as to withdraw me from that direct intercourse with Thyself, in which I meet with the light of Thy countenance, and rejoice in the Lord. May I be glad, not in this world's riches, but in Him who giveth all things richly to enjoy. In Thee, O God, may I have safety and peace.

PSALM V.—This psalm, too, is ascribed to David, and addressed to the chief performer upon wind instruments. It is imagined by Dr. Good to have been written before the victory over Absalom, but of which he either gives forth the prophetic anticipation, or perhaps subjoined the celebration in some additional verses after its achievement. He had great comfort, and often great confidence, along with intense earnestness, in prayer. He not only prays, but looks up, as if waiting for an answer.... The prophecy of verse 6 is repeated in the language of prayer in verse 10; yet, after all, may in this form be but a prophecy still. Even though a prayer, it is but a justifiable prayer for victory, and so for the defeat of his enemies. He predicts his return to that temple and those services in which he

delighted, though for a time exiled from Jerusalem.... What an expressive prayer for direction, "Make Thy way straight before my face!"... To put our trust in God, and to be righteous, are ascriptions applied interchangeably to the same people; and as such, or as at once trustful and obedient, are they called upon to rejoice, for that God will bless them and favour them.

PSALM VI.—This is addressed to the chief musician on stringed instruments; and it is added "upon Sheminith," (1 Chron. xv. 21,) probably signifying the eighth band, which was a band of harpers. It, too, is supposed to have been written during the rebellion of Absalom, and certainly in a spirit of greater anxiety and distress than the preceding. He prays under a sense or fear of displeasure, and with a deep feeling of his own helplessness. There is here the language of importunate entreaty. He speaks as if apprehensive that he was to fall in battle, and that his season of service to God was like to be soon ended. To "deliver my soul," seems tantamount to "deliver my life"—keep me still in the land of the living. The dread of his enemies kept him awake, and in agony, during the night: but the spirit of re-assurance visits him; and with the utterance of his purposes to have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity, he expresses his confidence that the Lord had heard him, and that He would confound his enemies.

August, 1845.

PSALM VII.—Shiggaion is of difficult explanation, but it is understood to be descriptive in some way of the psalm. ... Cush some would understand to be Saul, the son of Kish. There is no recorded name elsewhere in Scripture

of Cush the Benjamite; but as it signifies *black*, it may be expressive of moral turpitude, and so be an epithet laid upon Shimei.... David was sorely exercised by the hostility of those who rose up against him; and an internal evidence may be struck out from the harmony which obtains between his compositions and his personal history. Throughout this psalm there is evidently a confidence in his heart towards God, and on the ground that his conscience did not condemn him. He appeals to his own conduct towards his enemies, in contrast with their conduct towards him. And let it be observed, that his prayer against his enemies is that they might be overthrown for the sake of the congregation, or that the people of Israel might be brought back to their allegiance, and compass about the ordinances of the temple, now forsaken in the flight of the king from Absalom.—"Return thou on high;" show Thyself a God of judgment from above.... He prays for the overthrow of a wicked, and the establishment of a righteous government. He again appeals to God, the Searcher of hearts—and prays that he, as upright in heart, might be saved; and concludes with an expression of full reliance on the equity of God's distributions.

PSALM VIII.—Gittith has a near affinity to a word signifying a wine-press, and the psalm may have been composed, it is thought, for the feast of tabernacles. But let the occasion be what it may, the subject-matter is very palpable and very precious. God performs great things often by weak and unlikely instruments—as when through the preaching of the Gospel by illiterate men, babes in this world's wisdom, He overthrows even principalities

and powers; and Satan is thus made to fall as lightning from heaven.... Verse 2 points, I think, very obviously to a link, which might well conduct us from the natural to the spiritual contemplation. And we have the express warrant of the Apostle for applying this psalm to Christ; and it is indeed wonderful that humanity should be so exalted as to have all put under its feet—insomuch that Christ, in the form of a man, bears universal rule, and is all in all. But the primary and more obvious application of the sentiment, too, is worthy of being dwelt upon.... The reference to the moon and stars, apart from the sun, makes for this psalm being a nocturnal meditation on the heavens —in the splendour and magnitude of which, it is matter both of admiration and gratitude, that man should have been so endowed and honoured as we find him to be. And if the heavens be above the earth, how excellent in all the earth, and how vastly higher than all who are therein, is "He that is above the heavens!" Christ in His humiliation was placed lower than the angels, but by His exaltation rose immeasurably above them.

PSALM IX. 1-10.—Muthlabben has been regarded as a chorus of damsels—some say responded to by youths—and it may be addressed to the chief of the female choir. See the Pictorial Bible.... Higgaion signifies meditation, and may be regarded as a call to ponder well what had just been said before.... How strong and constant are the aspirations of the Psalmist after God! This psalm is supposed to have been written after the defeat of a powerful confederacy; and throughout there is in it a thankful acknowledgment of God, who had maintained his right and his cause, and that against the heathen, or nations—

of whose combinations against him we read both in Scripture and in Josephus. Their destructions had now come to a perpetual end, for they had destroyed many cities; but God had put them down, so that no memorial was left of them. He then contrasts their ephemeral prosperity with the endurance of the everlasting God, whose judgments are all in righteousness, and who is a refuge for the oppressed.—Let me trust that in seeking Him He will not always hide Himself, but be at length found of me, and will never forsake me.

11-20.—He on these premises calls for the praise of God from all his worshippers, who will remember His people, and take vengeance upon their adversaries. And he prays for God's special mercy to himself, and for security from his enemies—that he might stand forth as a monument of God's goodness, and show forth all His praise, even in the gates of Zion—in Jerusalem, the place of His habitation.... When speaking of the sure destruction of the wicked, what a warning, and what a weight of conviction lie in the announcement, that "they who forget God shall be turned into hell!"—Let me feel my ungodliness, and never cease my prayers for the removal of this sore inveteracy. But the circumstances of David give him a special direction towards God as the avenger of the poor and needy, as the Righteous Judge of the nations of the earth, on whom he prays for such manifestations of the Divine justice, that they might feel their subordination to Him who sitteth on high.

PSALM X.—He again, under the exercise of annoyance from his wicked enemies, addresses himself to God in prayer. Good imagines that this psalm was written after

Absalom's return from banishment, and when the courts of justice dealt iniquitously against the poor and the innocent. The wicked boasted at that time of the prosperity of their cause—it may be through the covetous judges whom themselves had bribed. (verse 3.) . . . What another trait of character for general conviction—that "God is not in all his thoughts!" He then in fuller detail sets before us the doings of the ungodly oppressor and man of violence. He hath cast off the fear of any coming judgment at the hand of Him who sits invisible in the heavens; and under the imagination that God regardeth not, takes his measures of deceit and cruelty against the helpless. But God will "require" it. He will prove Himself the Helper of those who have no help in man. He will take full vengeance on the oppressor, and leave none of his delinquencies unreckoned with or unpunished. He is King for ever, and as Judge of all the earth will do right. There seems to have been a present exemplification of this in the defeat of the hostile nations who had invaded the Holy Land—a specimen of the general deliverance which He will effect in favour of the injured.

PSALM XI.—This psalm is supposed to have been written at the time when David had taken refuge from the persecutions of Saul in a heathen court, and was there exposed to the mockeries of the profane on the score of his religion. They, perhaps in irony, asked him of his God, and bade him flee for refuge to that Being whom he professes to be the mountain of his security. But the Psalmist will not be turned aside from his confidence in God; for if that foundation were destroyed, what could the righteous do

for their own preservation? But the Lord seeth from above, and will protect His own—thus manifesting Himself to be a lover of righteousness. And He will rain vengeance on the wicked—thus manifesting Himself to be a hater of iniquity. He beholdeth the upright with favour, lifting upon them the light of His countenance. It is an enduring testimony for all ages, that "His eyes do behold, and His eyelids try, the children of men."

PSALM XII.—This psalm seems to have been composed at a time of great national degeneracy; and certain it is, that in the direct history we read much both of deceit and violence. There was much of dissimulation and artful policy among the courtiers—nay, in the very household and family of David. There were men who felt themselves as if emancipated from the law of truth —and this on the strange plea, that as their lips were their own, they might say what they liked with them; as if on the principle that a man might turn his property to any use he pleases, or do what he will with his own. And they added oppression to falsehood; puffing at, or making contemptuous and menacing demonstrations against the objects of their hostility. (Psalm x. 5.) And here, too, the sure refuge of the Psalmist is in the Lord.... What a precious saying, and how it should aliment and uphold our faith, when told that "the words of the Lord are as tried silver."—On the warrant and encouragement of this saying do I pray, O God, that Thou wouldest keep me from violence.... How true it is, that wicked officials bring out wicked characters in abundance over a land.

PSALM XIII.—This psalm must have been composed by

David when greatly urged and like to be overborne by his enemies. Perhaps the enemy here spoken of is Saul. He was greatly tried and afflicted by the oppositions of men; and let me not think that any strange thing hath happened to me when exercised in like manner. Let me seek, as the Psalmist did, unto God. Hide me, O Lord, from the strife of tongues. Save me from the pain of those nervous and imaginative apprehensions, to which I too much give way. Let my trust be in Thy mercy; and O restore to me the joys of Thy salvation. I brood a great deal too much, taking such counsel in my soul as keeps up a perpetual fear and sorrow in my heart, often allied with the fancies of solitude, and which the converse and society of my fellows, even in the very scene of the dreaded conflict, tend to do away. But let my great remedy be in converse with God; and in the believing thought, that He will make all things work together for good to me. But that I may have a title to appropriate this promise, let the love of God be shed abroad in my heart; and then, instead of my enemy rejoicing over me, will I rejoice in God, who shall compass me about with songs of deliverance.

PSALM XIV.—We have here, too, the same complaints of a prevailing wickedness, amounting even to atheism. The description here given is applied by the Apostle to the general state and character of mankind. Their ungodliness is the copious fountain of all profligacy; and whether this profligacy be realized or not in the overflowings of an outward disobedience, still, how strikingly true is it of us all, that by nature we do not understand, neither seek after God. He alternates in his regards

between the wicked upon earth and the righteous God in Heaven. He charges them with the ignorance of Him who follows up their cruelty to the poor by the terrors of His vengeance. They slight and disregard Him throughout the season of their wickedness; but have at length to tremble before Him. They may insult for a while the religious confidence of the good; but God will manifest Himself at length as the patron and protector of the generation of the righteous. This is still, however, only in prospect, and therefore does he pray that God would hasten it.... The allusion here to a captivity makes me all the more doubtful of the occasion of this psalm.

PSALM XV.—This psalm is thought to have been composed on the setting up of the Ark; and it sets forth the characteristics of a true worshipper in Zion, and more especially of an abider or dweller or citizen therein, and therefore in particular of its priests and office-bearers. It is an admirable representation of a good and faithful man; and an impressive example of the way in which the moral is blended with the religious or sacred throughout the whole of Scripture. There is a portraiture here, both of the walk and of the disposition of righteousness, both as in the outer and the inner man—the walk and work of righteousness, the truth in the heart. He is free of the vices of calumny and detraction; yet, though not permitted to speak evil with the tongue, there is a warrant given for a strong inward contempt, not only for wickedness, but for wicked persons.—Let me be rigid in the fulfilment of my promises, though I should suffer much by them, both in the loss of time and property. On the other hand, let me beware of covetousness; and as David was

greatly exposed to corrupt judges, he instances one exemplification of it in those who took reward against the innocent, and brought them in as guilty. "He that doeth these things," says the Psalmist, "shall never be moved," and, says the Apostle, "shall never fall." (2 Pet. i. 10.)

PSALM XVI.—For the title Michtam, see Pictorial Bible. ... This psalm must have been written in a season of great external idolatry, from which the Psalmist turns to take refuge in God. And there was the occurrence of many such seasons in the chequered reign of David. There are many precious things in this effusion—the appropriation of God as my God—the insignificancy and utter nothingness as to merit of our own goodness in the sight of God, yet the availableness of this for the service of God's people. If ye love not your fellow-Christian whom you do see, how can you love God, whom you do not see? ... We have here the wretchedness of idolatry; and in contrast with this the determination to keep by the true God as our alone portion, and the maintainer to us of all that He hath assigned to be ours.—My God, give me the obvious comfort and sense of sufficiency which the Psalmist enjoyed, even in the midst of all the wickedness and hostility by which he was surrounded. Be Thou always before me, and give me to be secure and satisfied in the conviction that Thou art on my side .... The "glory which rejoiceth," (verse 9,) is here the tongue, the glory of man —or the instrument by which he glorifies God .... What a noble testimony here to the doctrine of the resurrection; and let me not forget the Apostolic reference to verse 10 (Acts ii. 31; xiii. 35) as Scriptural and authoritative for Christ in the Psalms.

PSALM XVII.—David had powerful confederates against him, both at home and among his foreign enemies. But he turns him, as his habit is, to God. He prays with the testimony of a good conscience, which causes confidence towards God. At the same time, under a sense of frailty, he prays to be upheld in his goings. He perseveres in that holy importunity which might well be termed wrestling with God. His is the case of a man who trusts in God, and therefore counts on being saved by Him from those who rise up against him. He had prosperous and powerful adversaries plotting against him. He describes their malice and wickedness; and their intent or steadfast aim to bow him down to the earth. He calls the wicked God's sword, and the men of mischief His hand —instruments as they often are of the Divine chastisement and discipline.... To "fill with God's *hid* treasures," expresses that the treasures are from God—that they are His, laid up or kept by Him—the term being expressive of custody as well as concealment.... There is here another glorious testimony to a resurrection and future life, and certain perennial forms of expression for all ages, as the prayer of verse 5 and of verse 8—"hide me under the shadow of Thy wings."... In the phrase to "behold God's face in righteousness," there is an essential reference to the righteousness of Christ, but not exclusively of our own personal righteousness.

PSALM XVIII. 1-6.—This psalm must have been composed by David after he had risen to a state of secure prosperity, through much opposition and many obstacles. In the midst of all his creature comforts, his soul ascends upwardly to God, on whom his affections are set, and to

whom he ascribes all his deliverances. Among the ascriptions—and they are such as a warrior would make—which he accumulates in the statement of what God had done for him, there occurs the "horn of salvation"—the horn being the emblem of power and glory. There is a vivid description given of the dangers and the menaces by which he was surrounded.... The "sorrows of hell" might here signify the terrors of death; and many were the snares which met him on his path, and arrested his movements. His refuge was in God. His cry arose to the Lord of Hosts.—O that such were at all times the upward direction of my thoughts, when beset by the conflicts of human opinion, and in the strife of tongues. And so it was, that he obtained salvation from his enemies.—After the mention that God had heard his prayer, he proceeds to describe the way in which it was responded to; and nothing can be imaged of a more magnificent character and bearing than the representation which follows.

7-16.—There is the grandeur of high inspiration in this passage; and so much beyond the dimensions of the literal history as to impress the conception that for this history there must be an antitype. I cannot resist the feeling that a greater than David is here; and that the description applies more to the final conflict dimly pourtrayed in the Book of Revelation, and which terminated in an overthrow of the powers of darkness, and the ushering in of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is thus that, when applied to David, it is regarded as a figurative description; so that when literally understood, it must be held to signify the victory of the Son of God, when he puts all things under him—the most impressive

part of this truly overawing representation. It may also be held as applying to that mysterious conflict when Christ spoiled principalities and powers, and was drawn out of the agony which well-nigh overwhelmed him. To me the most powerful stroke in this magnificent sketch, is that by which "the channels were seen, and the foundations of the world discovered."

17-27.—To "prevent" here means to lay an obstacle or annoyance in the way. The description may still be held as applying to Christ, whom God did exalt, and who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard by Him that was able to save Him from death. In the estimation of many orthodox, this passage would bear exclusively upon Christ, whose perfect righteousness could, without any qualification, be pled as the judicial reason of Christ's rightful deliverance from His enemies. And yet, I hold that there is nothing in the Scriptural theology which forbids the application of it to David, and that just because of the innocence and righteousness according to which the Lord rewarded him. With an upright man, the Lord shows Himself upright. God dealt differently with David and his enemies, because of the difference which obtained between their respective characters. He loved David, and hated the adversaries of David, because of His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. With the froward, the impetuous, the headstrong, the men who act from the impulse of their own intractable wills, God will evince a strength and determination of will that shall utterly overmaster and overthrow them. It is thus, that while He saves the afflicted people, He brings down the high looks.

28-39.—The light here spoken of may be the light of prosperity, as opposed to the darkness of adversity; or it may be the light within of joyful confidence in God. It seems to refer in this place more to the former; and altogether in this passage the literal is less overshaded by the figure, nor does the type expand so visibly into its antitype.... The great burden of the acknowledgments here made is for success in war. David was helped by God to disperse his enemies, and to scale the walls of the besieged. Hence the homage of his ascription to God, both for His way and for His word; and precious is it indeed to be told that "the word of the Lord is tried."... There is always a reference to the false gods of the heathen in such questions as those of the 31st verse.—Then follows what God had done in girding and guiding him for the battle—enduing him with strength and speed, and setting him on places of security. He also made him dexterous in arms, and compassed him about as with a shield, and upheld him by His right hand, and by His merciful and fatherly treatment made him to increase. He was set on a large and sure place; and in every way so armed and accomplished for the warfare, that he was enabled to overthrow all his enemies.

40-50.—He then describes the prostration of his fallen enemies, and his own supremacy and power over them. When he speaks of being made head of the heathen, he accurately describes the mastery that he had gotten over all the countries around or near to the land of Israel. And he concludes all with some beautiful devotional sentences; and instead of luxuriating in the contemplation of that homage which was rendered to him by foreign nations, both far and near, he directs the homage of his own heart

upwardly to God. He ascribes all the exaltation and glory to the God of his salvation, or the God who had saved him from his adversaries. He gives thanks among the heathen, so that the idolatrous nations of that period were presented with a testimony on behalf of the living and true God. It is thus that God did not leave Himself without a witness; and history, as well as nature, gave evidence to His reality and His power.... There is embosomed in this psalm the evidence of David being at least the subject, if not the author; for which last, however, we have the testimony of the title.

PSALM XIX.—This is truly a pre-eminent psalm, and entitled to the admiration of all ages, for the representation here made both of the glories of God's world, and the excellencies of His word. The material heaven bears witness to all the earth of His skill and greatness. The line or course of the bodies in the heavens goes over the whole of our globe: in the heavens hath He set a tabernacle for the sun. And the moral part of this noble composition is still more precious—dealing with the high properties of the law and the testimony.... There is a copious treasury here of texts to be preached from, more especially on the inherent satisfactions of obedience to the will of God, and its effect both to enlighten and to gladden the heart of man. The Lord is holy, and the fear of Him is clean, because leading to holiness. What a pregnant truth, that in the "keeping of the commandments there is great reward."—Let me repeat the concluding prayer of the Psalmist; and I write this with a feeling of earnestness—My God, search me and try me. I know that my errors are manifold; but O keep me from presumptuous

sin. Be my strength and my Redeemer, O God, that though sin dwell in me, it may not have the dominion over me. May Thy judgments, or thy laws, be sweet unto my taste.

PSALM XX.—This psalm illustrates well the theory that, along with many others, it was so constructed as to be sung in parts. The distinction between these is here marked by a change of persons. The first four verses are held to be an invocation from the general assembly for blessings upon the king; the fifth verse to be a reply from the military band; and the sixth a blessing from the high-priest: after which the band are conceived to come forth with a reply in the seventh and eighth verses; when at last the general chorus strikes in with the concluding prayer, which some would make clearer by interpreting thus—"Lord, save the king, and hear us when we call." The words as they stand, however, admit also of a meaning, though not so obvious or distinct as the one now given. There are weighty petitions here, applicable to other parties, and which might be adopted for themselves by private Christians—as, Hear me, O Lord, in the day of trouble; Help and strengthen me out of the sanctuary; Counsel me aright, and fulfil it, along with all my petitions.... This psalm is supposed to have been written on the occasion of David setting out with his army against a mighty combination of foes.

PSALM XXI.—This psalm is supposed to have been written on the occasion of that victory over the Ammonites which was followed up by such appalling severities on the conquered. (2 Sam. xii. 31.)... Salvation then had a

more special and limited sense than now—deliverance from the power of enemies, which on this particular occasion had been David's heart's desire, and the request of his lips. ... To "prevent with blessings," is to give more or sooner than one had been seeking or working for. The crown of the king of the Ammonites was put upon his head; and he obtained a prolongation of his life and house, after the great sin he had committed in the matter of Uriah, by which both might have been righteously forfeited.—Then follows a description of such awful cruelties as had been perpetrated on the poor children of Ammon.... There is much in the history of David as a warrior which serves to throw light on his maledictions; and which might perhaps supply a principle on which they might be palliated or vindicated, at least as far as war is capable of being so.

PSALM XXII. 1-10.—This psalm is supposed to have been written amid the hot persecution of Saul his enemy. Its title is not well understood: in English it is the "Hind of the Morning," which seems so inapplicable to the subject-matter of the psalm, as to warrant the hypothesis of its being merely the name of the tune to which it was sung. However this may be, it was obviously composed at a time of deep dejection; and the application of its very first words by our Saviour on the Cross to his own mysterious sufferings, gives a certain dread and august solemnity to the outset of a psalm, which all over is full of Christ. Its character as a typical composition is fully authenticated by the quotations from it in the New Testament. David and the Son of David are intermingled throughout; and in such a way, that sometimes the type,

and sometimes the antitype, is the more prominent of the two. Who can mistake, for example, the application of the seventh and eighth verses to the historical scene of our Lord's crucifixion? On the other hand, there are verses which, of themselves, would not carry us beyond their primary sense, as felt and uttered by him who spoke them at the first—as David's appeal to God's dealings with the former generations of Israel. There is also a very distinct reference to his own personal fortunes, in the acknowledgment which he makes of all God's care and goodness to him from his birth up. The deep piety pervades both the type and its counterpart.—"Holy Father" came direct from the lips of our Saviour on earth; "But Thou art holy," says the Psalmist, "O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!"

Barnsmuir.

11-18.—The type and the antitype are closely blended in this passage. If David was abandoned by many, Christ was abandoned by all—even by His twelve disciples, who all forsook him and fled. If David was beleaguered in the midst of enemies, so also was Christ, both at the tribunal of the high-priest, and when suspended on the Cross, when they gaped upon Him with their mouths, and poured forth upon Him their mockery and derision. And the personal sufferings here described are more specially applicable to the blessed Saviour—to His agonies, His exhaustion, His thirst, and all the various sensations of that dark and awful period, when He bare our sins upon the tree. But the most express, and indeed exclusive references to Him—fortified, moreover, by the distinct mention of them in the New Testament—are the parting of His raiment, and the piercing of his hands and feet—evidence

the most decisive that Christ actually is in this Psalm, and therefore may be in others to a greater extent than can be gathered or defined from the instances in the later Scriptures.

19-31.—Both David and Christ are very palpable in these verses. Our Saviour cried unto God with supplications and tears. He prayed both for his own deliverance and that of His elect (perhaps the "darling" of verse 20) from enemies. And there was a contest that we know little of—with a great adversary, at the head of principalities and powers; and God heard him when he prayed from the "horns of the unicorns"—from the midst of His potent adversaries. We have very express authority for the application of verse 22 to the Saviour, (Heb. ii. 12); and this is further illustrated in John xx. 17, Rom. viii. 29.—Then follows a call upon Israel, not inapplicable to the Church in all ages; and to the Church it is that the concluding predictions of this psalm are pre-eminently applicable—the conversion of the whole world unto Him who was at once the Lord and the Son of David—the universal helplessness of men for their own redemption, but the resort of many unto Him, the Saviour of souls; and so a seed to serve Him—a generation of true worshippers—a peculiar people, to be born unto God from all the nations of the earth.

PSALM XXIII.—This psalm is one of the most precious gems in the Church's treasury of things new and old—written, it is thought, by David, after being anointed by Samuel, (verse 5,) and having had the prospect given to him of dwelling in the house of the Lord.—O that I could realize the peace and the enjoyment which are so

beautifully imaged forth in this exquisite ode! What I most pray for and most need, is the restoration of my soul.—Thou knowest, O God, how liable it is to be unhinged by controversy, and led away by the instigations, if not laid prostrate under the power of those base and evil affections which war against the soul. Recover me, O Lord, from all the snares of the devil, and cause me henceforth to walk in charity and holiness, even to the end of my days. My death is rapidly approaching—prepare me, O God, for the encounter. Under the care and keeping of Him who is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, let me fear no evil; and let Thy goodness and Thy mercy follow me to the end.

PSALM XXIV.—This, too, is a most illustrious psalm; first recognising the Supreme as the Lord of Creation, and then as Lord more peculiarly of His own people joining together in the services of the Church to celebrate His holy name. Under this latter division, the question is put as to the personal qualifications of those who should draw near to God in the sanctuary.—O give me, Almighty Father, the pure heart; and let me beware of the idols that, were I to give way to nature, would so soon and so miserably lord it over me. Let holiness and integrity and truth so characterize as to mark me for Thine own, and of the generation that serve and seek the God of Jacob.... This sublime ode is conceived to have been sung in parts on the introduction of the Ark into the sanctuary that had been prepared for it. One can image nothing more magnificent than these closing verses, set to music, and sung in prescribed order by the Priests and Levites and general congregation.

PSALM XXV. 1-7.—This psalm, though in danger of being overshaded by the pre-eminence of the two which go before, is really one of the richest and most savoury in the whole collection. It is understood to have been written in a season of great domestic affliction, as well as formidable hostility from without. But, as in all similar trials, he lifts up his soul unto God: he prays with a reference to his enemies; and waits upon the Lord both for deliverance and for direction. But he prays also for his own moral and spiritual wellbeing, and evidently under the deepest consciousness of being a sinner. How precious are these petitions, both in the substance and the words of them—"Shew me Thy ways;" "Teach me Thy paths;" "lead me in Thy truth, and teach me."—O let me wait upon God all the day for the fulfilment of these things. And what a fine attitude for the creature towards the Creator—that of waiting on Him. Let this be my constant position and constant exercise; and surely well may I join with David in his cry for mercy: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions, O God."

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8-22.—Then follow the ascriptions of the Psalmist to God.—Let us thence gather that the wrath of man neither worketh righteousness, nor leadeth to a way of wisdom. It is the meek, and not the wrathful, that He guides and teaches; and the effect of this teaching from above is the meekness of wisdom, or rather the wisdom of meekness.... And what a precious evangelical conjunction is here stated between mercy and truth; and then how completely it proves that God's ways are not as man's ways; and how great the encouragement to trust in Him, when

we read of the pleas for forgiveness which Himself hath dictated—even that our iniquity is great. The fear of the Lord is a precursor to a right understanding of His way. And O how pregnant with importance of meaning, that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and that "He will show them His covenant!"—Then follows the Psalmist's importunate prayer.—Give me to imitate the habitual posture of his soul, in that his "eyes were ever towards the Lord." How often he prays that he may not be ashamed, as if he longed to recover from the shame of his fall.... A psalm of great weight and substance.

Kirkcaldy.

PSALM XXVI.—This psalm is supposed to have been written in early life, and there is certainly a resemblance between it and the first Psalm. It is like the application to himself here of what he had generally described there. He appeals for his integrity to God;—I slide because I trust not. It is a precious prayer to be examined and proved and tried; and the result in my case will be a more thorough conviction of my own vileness. I have not walked in Thy truth; yet I will not let go my hold on Thy loving-kindness. Save me, O God, from the company of the vain and hypocritical; and let the wickedness of the wicked be far from me. I have compassed Thine altar, even officiated there, and yet not washed my hands in innocency. Give me, O Lord, to extricate my affections from things below, and set them on the place where Thine honour dwelleth. Let me not be gathered, when I come to die, with sinners or men of violence: but let me die the death of the righteous. O grant me redemption and mercy; I stand in need of both—of a forgiveness by the

blood of Christ:—grant me this, and then let me walk in mine integrity. Then only will my feet stand in an even place, and with an undisturbed conscience join in the exercise of Thy worshipping assemblies. I desire to be humbled unto the dust; and well may I call out, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

PSALM XXVII.—This is a most congenial psalm, though the two parts of it seem to have been placed together by mistake, being different both in their strains of sentiment and in their versification. To the seventh verse, the language is that of security; and from that verse, it speaks of hostility and danger. In both states, however, it is with the Lord that David holds communion, whether in thankful acknowledgment or in prayer. In the joyful celebration of the first half, the Lord is all the salvation and confidence of the Psalmist; and he there tells of the overthrow of his enemies. And his desire is towards the Lord and his holy services; and the unshaken faith of his heart is in the sure help of the Almighty against all that is most formidable or menacing around him.—O to be hid in the pavilion of the Most High, and in the secret of His tabernacle, and to be established as on a rock! And when distress comes, may I seek unto Thee, and be taught and led of Thee, and be sustained by the hope of Thy goodness, and wait on the Lord for courage and strength in times of controversy.... A psalm to feed upon, and to be helped with in prayer.

PSALM XXVIII.—This psalm is conceived to have been written in the very midst of David's persecutions by Saul. ..The "holy oracle," or oracle of God's sanctuary, may still

be regarded as the place whence the answers to prayer come.... He was sadly beset by the treacheries of men to whom he had done service, and who kept up the semblance of regard to him—speaking peace, yet devising mischief. I can enter more into the maledictions and adverse prayers of David, when I view him as a man of war; for if war be lawful at all, surely one might wish for victory as well as fight for it; nay, might pray for victory, which is tantamount to praying for the defeat of enemies. How applicable still to the infidelity of the present day, the saying—"that it regards not the Lord, nor the operation of His hands."... The upshot of his prayers in the former part of this psalm, is the deliverance which he celebrates in the latter part; and of many such enlargements do we read in the history of David.—Let me trust as he did, and I shall be helped as he was. The Lord is the strength of His people, and the strength, also, of His anointed. By this time David had been set apart for the monarchy of Israel, and he prays like a monarch.... To "feed" may also signify to rule.

Burntisland.

PSALM XXIX.—This is a truly noble hymn, and is supposed to have been written by David after the full establishment and security of his kingdom from enemies abroad. Such acts and expressions of the homage here rendered to the true God, are conceived to have been peculiarly called for, as a counteractive to the infidelity that was professed by a powerful party at home; but surely irrespective of this, and without the necessity of any such hypothesis, we may well imagine of this pious monarch, that under the spontaneous impulse of his own feelings, though both the impulse and consequent utterance were

given by inspiration, he gave birth to this glorious effusion, both as the native forthgoing of his own heart, and for the purpose of sustaining and elevating the devotion of all God's worshippers. However this may be, we feel that, without any amplification or vain attempt at enhancement, this lofty and sacred composition had far better be left to itself.—Give me both to relish and exemplify, O Lord, the beauty of holiness .... In verse 6, they are perhaps the cedars of Lebanon and Sirion which are meant .... It may be the lightning that is adverted to in verse 7 .... In verse 9, "making the hinds to calve," is rendered by Dr. Mason Good, "splitting the oaks."... The conclusion of the psalm suggests the prayer, that He who is so strong and powerful in the kingdom of nature, would put forth His might in the kingdom of grace; and more especially that He would perfect His strength in our weakness.

PSALM XXX.—This psalm seems to have been written by David, either on his recovery from sickness or from the danger of death at the hand of enemies, or perhaps from both. It suits well the hypothesis of its being framed on the occasion of his victory over Absalom; in which case the strong feelings of nature must have been overborne by the inspiring energy under which he wrote. There seems the commemoration here both of rescue from enemies, and of recovery from disease. At all events, there are very precious utterances in this psalm, and of permanent application .... There is great depth of sentiment in the call to "give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness." It implies that supreme holiness and supreme happiness are essentially interwoven. And how finely brought out here is the false confidence in the day of prosperity—the chas-

tisement and correction thereof: but at length the return of God's mercy, when humble prayer was made to Him, so that joy was restored, and the darkness and distress issued in praise and thanksgiving.

PSALM XXXI. 1-15.—This psalm is thought to have been composed after David had betaken himself to the wilderness of Ziph, and so effected his escape from the treachery of the Keilites. His refuge now was the rock, instead of the house or the strong city—(verse 2)—though he looks beyond all secondary causes, and recognises God as his Rock and his Fortress. He was pulled out of the net, and redeemed from the hands of the men whose duplicity and ingratitude he hated.... With what enhanced reverence do we read the first clause of verse 5—as presenting us with the very words which Christ uttered on the cross. The literal application, however, predominates on the whole; and most strikingly when he says, that God had not "shut him up into the hand of the enemy, but set his feet in a large room." Still he was in great trouble, and in the midst of hazards great and manifold. When he says that his "strength faileth because of his iniquity," he seems rather to point at the guilt of his transgression in the matter of Uriah, followed up by repeated and signal chastisements—so that instead of his escape from Keilah, he may have poured forth this effusion on his escape from Jerusalem, now in the hands of the friends of Absalom. It is likelier Keilah, however—(verse 21, and 1 Sam. xxiii. 7)—though both suppositions are in keeping with the prayers here made by David unto God.

Skirling.

16-24.—He was sadly tried by the deceitfulness of old

friends, but never fails to take refuge in God. The shame against which he prays, is here the shame of defeat, which shame he wants to be transferred to his enemies. It may at times be the shame of exposure, that he may not be disgraced, which would cause his enemies to triumph. The former shame might be followed up by death, or silence in the grave—the latter by mortification, followed up by the silence of conscious dishonour, when their falsehoods had been made manifest. Doubtless, in his seasons of desertion, he had both the pride and contempt of his enemies to endure. But how blessed his expressions of trust and security in God!—O to be hidden from the strife of tongues—that in Christ I may have peace, when in the world I have tribulation. Let God be our retreat and our sanctuary, and we need not fear what man can do unto us. God shows us marvellous kindness in a strong city, when He appoints salvation to us for walls and bulwarks. (Isa. xxvi. 1.) Let us not, on the impulse of sudden despondency, cast our confidence away from us; but strengthen our hearts in the God who is our hope, and whom, because we trust in Him, we love.

PSALM XXXII.—This might well have been written on the restoration of his soul, after the great transgression in the matter of Uriah. It is a psalm full of evangelical savour and comfort.—My God, let me forget not, that to realize the blessedness here spoken of, not only must my sin be pardoned, but in my spirit there must be no guile. Let me not put asunder the things which God hath joined. So long as he confessed not his sin his misery was extreme; but at length he confessed, and was forgiven. He prayed to God, who proved his hiding-place, and

compassed him about with songs of deliverance. But it is not enough that sin be confessed—it must be forsaken; and, accordingly, after the pardon is granted, and the reconciliation entered on, there is a process of instruction that must be gone through, and practically followed. God hath promised His aid, and tells us not to resist His lessons. The justification and the sanctification are inseparable.... The wicked are contrasted in verse 10 with those who trust in the Lord: and they who so trust will cease from their wickedness; and so at the beginning of the psalm it is the blessedness of them who are forgiven that is celebrated; whereas at the end of it, it is the blessedness of them who are personally righteous.

PSALM XXXIII. 1-9.—This is a psalm of triumph, and it is supposed to have been written after David's first great victory over the Philistines, when king of Jerusalem. And he does not confine himself to the celebration of the Almighty for His help in war; he makes mention of His general faithfulness, and righteousness, and goodness, and power; he does homage to Him both as the God of nature and the God of Providence; he goes back to the primary act of Creation, and speaks of it as done by the Word —true, both in the sense of God having "said and it was done;" and true also in the sense of its being the Logos —the Eternal Son, by whom He created all things. He also brought order out of confusion by the breath or spirit of His mouth, and by the Holy Spirit, too, moving on the face of the waters at the first—educing then harmony out of the material chaos; and out of the moral chaos still educing what will prepare for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But in what

He hath evinced of power and lordship already, in having made the earth and sea, and all that are therein, all the world is called upon to worship and stand in awe of Him.

10-22.—He now speaks of God as the Governor of the world, having before spoken of Him as its Creator. God's way and will must carry it over all the conspiracies of all the nations; and should He favour one of these nations, all the hostile designs or efforts of the others can be of no effect. God knows most thoroughly the hearts of men, which Himself hath fashioned—and He considers from their works whether they have chosen or rejected Him as their God; and His eye or favour is upon them whose God is the Lord, and who at once both fear Him and trust Him—revering His authority, and justice, and power, while they hope in His mercy. In defence of such a nation He will prevail over the most formidable armies, however composed, or whatever be their number and prowess. In the confidence of this, David, at the head of His chosen people, waits upon God, and relies upon Him for help and safety. He realizes both qualifications of fear and hope. We see him in the concluding verses, both observant of God as his rightful Governor, and yet rejoicing in Him as his Father and Friend. He had before said that "the eye of the Lord was for good upon them that hoped in His mercy;" and now professing Himself to be one of such, he prays that God's mercy might be upon him and his people, according as they hoped in Him.—Give us, O Lord, to conjoin such a hope with such a fear—a fear compatible with trust, and so not the fear of terror, but the fear of reverence.

PSALM XXXIV. 1-9.—The occasion of this psalm is mi-

nutely specified in a prefatory note which I believe is not questioned.... It is interesting to contrast the secret and real with the ostensible state of David at this period. It was a time of great humiliation in the eyes of men, yet a time of triumph and security in God; and so he blessed Him at this as at all times. His immediate deliverance from the hands of Saul was the topic of his gratitude and gratulation. How delightful to follow him in the language of his holy confidence, in his sense of safety under the guardianship that was over him from above—in his consciousness that God was with him, and that the angels of God were to him the ministers of protection and defence! We see here, in the testimony which he lifts up for God, how beautifully combined the trust and the fear are with each other. Under the one sentiment we recognise the Divine goodness; under the other the Divine truth and power. Both meet together in the expression —that "there is no want to them who fear Him."

10-22.—He proceeds to unfold the character and dealings of God—as the bountiful Rewarder of those who seek Him; but, at the same time, as having respect unto all their ways. And so he lessons us in the fear of God, which, if it really operate within our hearts, will lead us to sin not. "Stand in awe, and sin not!"... The good of our temporal life, both then and now, and more distinctly the good of our eternal life now, hinge upon our deportment and doings in this world.—My God, enable me to bridle my tongue, to lay a restraint upon those ebullitions which I am too apt to indulge in; and, as far as possible, as much as lieth in me, to live peaceably with all men. Let me but trust and obey—trust in the Lord, and be doing good; and His ears will ever be open unto my cry.

The distinction between the good and the evil, the righteous and the wicked, is as palpable, and should practically be as much proceeded on under the new covenant as under the old. But how manifold, alas! are my deficiencies; yet let me not despair—for the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Thou wilt deliver me, O God, out of all my troubles: I may be cast down, but not destroyed. I meet with sore bruises; but let my confidence be this—that not a bone of me shall be broken.

PSALM XXXV. 1-16.—Dr. Mason Good looks upon this psalm as having been written during the history of David as recorded in 1 Sam. xviii. 17-30. At all events, we have in these psalms the secret of David's good conduct, and of his marvellous escapes from the hand of designing enemies. We see him daily exercised unto godliness; and in answer to his prayers, he received both wisdom and protection from Him to whom he was in the habit of resorting continually. He prayed that his cause might be pled with Saul, and fought with the Philistines. There were many who sought his life, and devised mischief against him—the court flatterers of the Israelitish monarch, and the abettors of his cruel policy. Doubtless the expressions here used may be well applied in characterizing their wiles, and their conspiracy against the life of David—"Without cause they hid their net" for him; and "without cause they digged for his soul."... I begin more and more to see the maledictions of David in a different light: they are directed against those who were his enemies in war, or who were plotting in secret for his assassination. If it be lawful to fight or to strive

against these, even unto their death, or shameful overthrow, is it not lawful to pray against them to the same extent? And his prayer was at length heard—for though only in prospect as yet, he could predict with confidence that his soul should be joyful in the Lord, and should rejoice in being saved by Him from his enemies.... The verses 11-16 I hold to be literally applicable to David; and though applicable to Christ also, I can scarce agree with Horsley in thinking that they apply more literally and exactly to Him than to any other.

17-28.—But the application to our Saviour brightens as we proceed. It seems quite clear that Psalm xxii. 20 was spoken by Him; and this is nearly identical with verse 17 here. There is the same analogy between xxii. 22, and our verse 18. And to complete the proof, the clause in verse 19—"that hate me without a cause," is expressly quoted and applied by the Apostle (John xv. 25) to Jesus Christ; or rather, He whose discourse is there recorded applies it to Himself. Yet David appears palpably and prominently enough in the verses that follow: he makes a vivid representation of his state as surrounded by contemptuous, and proud, and resentful enemies—from whom he as usual turns him for help to the God on whom all his confidence was laid. He doubtless prays against them; yet, if it was right in him to defend himself against them, and attempt such an exposure of their falsehood and malice as would bring them to shame—could it be wrong in him to pray for this consummation—to pray that they should be ashamed and brought to confusion who rejoiced at his hurt—even as he prayed that they should triumph and be joyful who

favoured his righteous cause?... I am strongly inclined to the theory of a progressive moral education, from age to age, as the explanation both of David's imprecations, and other examples of a rude and defective, yet tolerated morality, in the ages before him.

PSALM XXXVI.—This psalm, according to Mason Good, corresponds with the history in 1 Sam. xix. 4-7.... David is still in trouble, and compassed about with the machinations of wicked and ungodly men. In the description of such, he presents us with one lineament which we would do well to profit by. It might warn our conscience when asleep in the midst of such secret indulgences as, if exposed and laid open, would bring down upon us the contempt and hatred of society. The words are those of verse 2; and there is a mischief of another kind than that of violence, which one might devise and dwell upon in his bed, and which marks him who can even think of it with toleration as one that abhorreth not evil. Our best escape from all such imaginings is such a contemplation of God alone as is here set before us.—In the blessed conjunction of Thy mercy and Thy righteousness let me ever, O Lord, rejoice. Make me to drink of the river of Thy pleasures; and in Thy light may I see light. Make me upright in heart, and give me to increase in the knowledge of Thyself. Give me to have peace in Thee, amid the world's tribulations.

PSALM XXXVII. 1-10.—This psalm is supposed to have been written by David during the evening of his days, and when at rest from all his enemies;—more a psalm of general instruction in piety and righteousness than of an

occasional character. I delight in it greatly, both for the truth of principle and the experimental wisdom which mark its lessons.... The dissuasive against fretfulness is most strikingly and peculiarly applicable to myself; and as grounded, too, on the consideration, that they against whom I fret will soon be brought to a common reckoning with myself. "Grudge not one against another: the judge is at the door." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings."... To "trust in the Lord and do good," is a comprehensive description of what subjective Christianity is in the general, as made up of faith and works; but it also has a special application here to the case of those antagonists whose will or opinion is at the time wrongously carrying it over ours. God, if we but trust in Him, and do His will, may do us justice even on this side of death —giving us even here, if we but delight in Him, those other objects of delight on which our worthy and good desires are set—bringing to pass the way as we want it, if we but commit it to Him—and making the goodness of our cause manifest to all men. Meanwhile, let us be still in God, and wait patiently for the further evolutions of His Providence, and fret not ourselves because of the temporary influence and advantage over us which are possessed by other men. Let me in nowise fret against them, or indulge in that wrath which worketh not the righteousness of God. If our counsel be His counsel, it shall stand and be established. Let me in all cares, therefore, and cogitations about what is best for our Free Church, ever exercise myself unto godliness; possessing my soul in patience, because assured that, if the counsel of them who are opposed be not of God, it will come to nought.

11-20.—Give me the grace of meekness, O Lord; I

shall not have less of standing ground for my own counsel and views in consequence. And O for peace, for peace against enemies, and above all for the abundance of that peace in Christ which He hath promised to His disciples, while He warns them that in the world they shall have tribulations.... The hostilities which David experienced were of a grosser kind than those by which I am exercised; but the lessons and the exercises which he observes or prescribes under them, are fully applicable to controversies of another sort—such as the confidence that whatever is the purpose or design of the Lord, that shall stand—that whatever of malice or artifice has been employed against those of upright conversation, will in His good time be exposed and overthrown—the superiority which the man of a pure and honest policy, with the little he yet has gained for it, has over adversaries of another spirit, though for the present carrying all before them—the certainty of a final triumph for all that is right and reasonable, and defeat of the opposite.

21-28.—May I be willing to distribute, and ready to communicate, O God: and enable me to form a right estimate of my fellow-men, that I might not call evil good and good evil. Thou estimatest aright, and disposest aright, of all men according to their character and works. Order my steps in Thy way, and thus shall I delight in Thy way made my way.—And let me trust in the Lord, who will sustain me in the walk of obedience, and will not leave either me or mine in want of all that is needful, whether for life or godliness. Let me but depart from evil and do good; and then shall I be established and abide in the house of my God for ever.... The judicial righteousness which Christ hath brought in supersedes not the judg-

ment that will proceed upon men according to their deeds; and thus they are the saints, the personally good and holy, who will be preserved, while the wicked will be cut off.—For the joy that is set before me, O God, in the land which Christ hath purchased for his people, may I throw aside every weight, and the sins which most easily beset me, and run in the way of holiness to heaven with all perseverance.

29-40.—Let me abstain from idle words, and let my speech be seasoned with grace and heavenly wisdom. And as the mouth speaketh out of the abundance of the heart, O may Thy law maintain occupation and ascendency there, and then shall I delight myself greatly in Thy commandments. Thus shall I be delivered from the snares and machinations of all adversaries, if I but wait on the Lord, and keep His way. Why should I feel discomfiture or discomfort in their temporary prevailings, when there is such a patent way of overcoming them who are opposed to me—even by steadily persevering in the way that is right, and committing all to the heavenly witness and Counsellor who is above me. The prosperity here held out to the righteous, and the overthrow of the wicked, have their decisive and most emphatic fulfilment in the day of that final judgment which assigns their respective destinations throughout eternity. But let us not confine the sayings of the Psalmist to these. In his eye they had their verification on this side of death. This was the chief if not the sole meaning which he put upon them; and it is a meaning, though not the only or the principal one, which may still be put upon them in these days. Godliness has even now the promise of the life that is present as well as of the life that is to come. We have peace in

Christ even in the midst of tribulation; though it holds pre-eminently of every one who is perfect in Him, that the end of that man is peace.—Let me die the death of the righteous; and while it is my current experience, that the Lord is my strength even in time—"in the *time* of trouble," may it be the experience of my death-bed, that in the last trouble, and amid the agonies of dissolution, He is my helper, and the strength of my heart, because my trust and rejoicing are in Him as my everlasting portion.

PSALM XXXVIII. 1-9.—There seems to have been a fearful prevalence of wickedness and infidelity in Israel previous to the breaking out of Absalom's rebellion, and which perhaps may have prepared the way for it. It is highly probable that David's own great and flagrant transgression may have both spread and strengthened this spirit throughout the land, and hence an irreligious faction, the fruit and the natural penalty of his own delinquency. He seems to have written this psalm under the pressure of these accumulated evils which bore him down, and may have even affected his health. And so he lifts up the prayer of one who felt himself a sufferer because of sin, or because of God's anger and his own foolishness. He thus gives utterances both to the cries of a sufferer, and the confessions of a penitent looking upon his very disease as a judicial infliction under the hand of Him who was laying rebuke and chastisement upon himself as a grievous offender. Nevertheless he turns him to the God by whom he is stricken, kissing the rod and Him who hath appointed it, and venting forth his desires before Him in supplications and prayers. He by this

exercise, too, recalls the wholesome recollection of his own sinfulness, as in the title of the psalm.

10-22.—He continues the description of his state, the distempers of his own person, the desertion of his friends, the active and malicious conspiracies of those who were deceitfully plotting against both his kingdom and his life. He saw what was devising and going on against him, but said nothing. He made no remonstrances with his fellow-men, but made his requests unto God. Nor had hope clean gone from him. It is true, that because his foot had slipped, his enemies did magnify themselves; and this is the cruel advantage given by any misconduct of ours to the adversaries of truth and righteousness. Meanwhile, he himself was in great heaviness of heart because of his sin, and of the scandal that he had brought upon the cause of God and of goodness, which imparted great animation and strength to them who were opposed to him. His repentant and returning goodness just multiplied his enemies, and made them all the more fierce against him. They hated him all the more because he followed the thing that was good; and, hardest to bear, they to whom he had done service, returned him evil for his kindness. His refuge is in prayer; and there truly did his wisdom and his strength lie: for who shall harm us if we be followers of that which is good?

PSALM XXXIX.—This psalm is ascribed by Mason Good to the period when Ziklag was destroyed by the Amalekites, and David's family taken captive—though it seems to agree better with a season of deep sorrow for some such recorded sin as that in the matter of Uriah, when the enemies about him triumphed, and the poor mourner felt

constrained to silence in their presence. But he could not keep himself long from the utterance of what was good; and so, in the fulness of his heart, gave vent to the prayers and wise maxims of piety. Let me adopt these prayers.—O that I proceeded on a right estimate of the brevity and the vanity of those interests which so much engross me! Give me a realizing view of death. Let me not set my heart upon this world's goods. My heart is greatly set on a right economy, both for our Church and its College; but even this let me subordinate to Thy will, and take the perversities and oppositions of men as trials permitted by Thee, and under which it is my part to be rightly disciplined and exercised. Let me not be disquieted in vain.... "Surely every man walketh in a vain show," is with me one of the most precious memorabilia in Scripture. At all events, let me follow the Psalmist in turning myself to God.—The concluding sentiments and supplications bespeak one who had fallen into some great transgression, and was in tears because of it; and at the same time was suffering under some great infliction because of his iniquity, and took it submissively as the doing of the Lord.

PSALM XL.—We have positive Apostolic authority for the reference of this psalm to Christ. (Heb. x. 5-9.) And yet how much more palpably applicable in many of its verses to David—though even in these we do not need to lose sight of the antitype in the type. For did not Christ cry unto God? and was not He plunged into the mire of a deep humiliation? and was He not enlarged, and brought out of them all by Him who raised Him from the dead? and was it not His meat and His drink to do God's

will; and also to declare it in the Church, by those whom He commissioned to go abroad over the earth, and who formed a great company of publishers? The message wherewith they were charged was indeed a message of God's loving-kindness—of truth met with mercy—of peace in fellowship with righteousness!—Give me, O Lord, to love Thy salvation, and to have Thy law in my heart. In myself I am poor and needy; but I would rejoice in Thee as God in Christ, able and willing to help me. O shine upon me speedily with the light of Thy reconciled countenance.

Home.

PSALM XLI.—We must not only compassionate but consider the poor; and how precious are the promises annexed to our doing so—of safety from our enemies—of the Divine care upon our sick-beds. Yet, after having done all, we are unprofitable servants; and well may we join the Psalmist in prayer for the health of these our guilty and distempered souls. I have sinned: my God, let my ways please Thee, and then shall mine enemies be at peace. Are there none waiting for my death? Let me think the best, and have the charity which thinketh no evil.... This psalm is supposed to have been written after the relief which he got from Barzillai and others, and before the defeat of Absalom; and hence a blessing on those who provided for his necessities, and a complaint on his treacherous foes. The "familiar friend" is supposed to be Ahithophel. And as another decisive instance of the typical character of these psalms—our Saviour applies verse 9 to Himself in John xiii. 18.... David's prayer is that of a warrior against his enemies; and the confidence that he here expresses in God was not put to shame.

PSALM XLII.—This psalm is supposed to have been written at the time of David's flight from Absalom, and before he crossed Jordan. It is throughout a most beautiful and affecting aspiration, and expressive of a determined longing after God, and a cleaving unto Him under all his trials.—Let me thus thirst after God; and as David mourned over his present exile from the sanctuary, may I seek for spiritual fellowship with God in the place where His honour dwelleth. And let me along with him rebuke my heaviness—chide the despondency of my spirit, and still trust in the living God.... Verse 6 is in keeping with the conceived occasion of this most impressive ode. And with all the terrors and troubles by which he was surrounded, David does not let go his faith and hope, but mingles these with all his complaints and remonstrances—because of the oppression of the enemy. He still cleaves to God as his Rock, even at the very time when disposed to question the reason of his having been forgotten. It was a cruel aggravation of his sufferings when his enemies interpreted his misfortunes to his being forsaken of God, even as did the enemies of our blessed Saviour, when He was suspended on the cross. But David, notwithstanding, kept by his confidence, and effectually rebuked his soul out of its disquietudes.

October, 1845.

PSALM XLIII.—This, too, is an illustrious psalm, of a piece with the preceding, and apparently written on the same occasion, when a gleam of light from the sanctuary alleviated the surrounding darkness, and bore him up amid all his earthly dangers, and desertions, and discomforts. He was at this time at a distance from his wonted

place of meeting with God in the solemn assembly, and like to be borne down by the strength of his cruel and perfidious enemies. An ungodly nation, even his own infidel and rebellious people, were against him; but as usual his refuge is in God. He prays for the light and truth which we too should pray for to irradiate our own souls. But there is also a more external thing than this that he prays for—even that he may be led back again to Mount Zion and its tabernacles, from which he was now driven forth. Then would he go back to the altar and the services which he loved. He chides his soul out of its despondencies, and cheers it on to confidence in God.... A most precious psalm.

PSALM XLIV. 1-14.—This psalm is conceived to have been written at the time of the Babylonian Captivity, though the complaint, "Thou goest not forth with our armies," would seem to indicate a yet independent nation, though in adverse circumstances. The title implies, also, that the old divisions of the public religious service of the Hebrews were still kept up. At all events we must refer this composition to another psalmist than David. It begins with the contrast between their former triumphs and their present distress. The proudest achievements, however, in the history of their nation are here piously referred unto God, and He is still professed to be all their confidence and hope. But notwithstanding this, they were still kept in a state of degradation and distress, subject to cruel enemies, and in captivity far scattered among the heathen.... Verse 12 is well illustrated by Isaiah lii. 5, and Ezekiel xxxvi. 20. Israel had been given up by God to the heathen, which, so far from redounding

to His glory among the nations, caused His religion to be derided, and His name to be blasphemed by them.

15-26.—The pronoun alternates between singular and plural, as it seems to have been a joint utterance at a public service, both by each for himself and by all collectively.... Their Babylonish oppressors were blasphemers also; and might well be termed avengers as well as enemies —they being God's instruments for the punishment of His rebellious people. But this expostulation seems now to have come from a repenting people in the act of their turning to God, and imploring His acceptance and favour. They might not be dealing falsely now, though they did before; but the season of suffering is often prolonged beyond the point of conversion from sin to righteousness. And so they were still kept for a time in the place of dragons—of men fierce as dragons towards them. They were now withstanding idolatry, and not taking part with their persecutors in the worship of their strange gods.... I can scarcely view the Babylonish captives as types of the persecuted Christians; so that the quotation of verse 22 by Paul, in Rom. viii. 36, ushered in by the words, "It is written," seems to be an instance of a mere adoption of Scriptural language in the description of a present case. This, perhaps, would clear up other instances of the New Testament references to the Old.... The captives conclude this ode by a pleading appeal and prayer to God.

PSALM XLV.—This is obviously a prophetic psalm, full of Christ—the testimony of whom is the spirit and life of prophecy. By its title it is denominated an instructive Song of Loves.... Shoshannim signifies "lilies," though it may be the name of an instrument, and perhaps a six-

stringed one. Be that as it may, in substance and savour it is a very lofty composition, and bears a strong analogy to the Song of Solomon, which is confirmatory of that part of Scripture as sacred and inspired.... The "pen of a ready writer," is a memorable Scripture expression.... It soon appears that one greater than Solomon is here—one higher than any of the children of men. There is that combination of meekness and majesty which is only realized in Him who, in the Book of Revelation, is called the Word of God, who made war upon His enemies and overcame them. See Heb. i. 8, 9, where we are told that verses 6 and 7 were said unto the Son.... The remainder of this psalm applies as literally to Solomon as do the Canticles; yet when so obviously capable of a spiritual application here, why not also there?

PSALM XLVI.—Alamoth may be an instrument of music or tune. It signifies "two secrets," and therefore may characterize the subject as being of God's secret counsels respecting the Church. However this may be, the psalm itself is a very noble composition.... There are various theories of the occasion on which it was written. Some think it was when Jehoshaphat overthrew his enemies, as recorded in 2 Chron. xx. See in particular verses 13, 17, 28, 29, 30, of that chapter; verse 10 of the psalm is in good keeping with verse 17 of the record; and it seems quite obvious that there was a public celebration.... What rich materials both for prayer and for such reflections as serve to animate and support the pious spirit!—My God, be Thou a present—a very present help to me in every time of trouble. Out of the river of Thy pleasures may I be made glad.... Jordan and its streams are identified, and some of

its tributaries passed by Jerusalem.—May Thy living water refresh and rejoice my soul. And O, amid the ills and disappointments of life, may I be still, and know that Thou art God.

PSALM XLVII.—Some would render "for," in the titles of the Psalms, into "by"—so that this psalm would seem to have been composed by the sons of Korah. When the musicians are adverted to in these titles, whether as authors or performers, the presumption is that the psalms were composed for a public service. The present is well adapted for such an occasion. All the people are called upon, and in verse 6, all the people appear to join in a grand chorus of praise. It is obviously an ode of triumph sung in the midst of a great convocation, headed by the princes and chief men of Israel. The multitude are called upon to signify their grateful exultation unto God—of whom a magnificent description is set forth by the inspired bard. He is God on high, a terror to the enemies of Israel, and of power over the whole earth, who should subdue the nations, and place them under the feet of His own beloved people—the people whom He selected for Himself, and to whom He gave the inheritance of the heathen.... The "excellency of Jacob" may be that very inheritance by which He signalized them, and in which they gloried. ... It is a striking combination, that of "praise with understanding."—Renew me in knowledge, O God; teach me to praise with understanding.... The occasion of this psalm is thought to be the bringing up of the Ark from Obed-edom. (1 Chron. xv.)—Give me, O Lord, to stand in awe of Thy power and Thy holiness; for such is the character of Thy throne, and Thine is the strength of all armies.

PSALM XLVIII.—This psalm is supposed by Dr. Mason Good to have been composed after a victory, recorded by Josephus, over a formidable combination brought to bear upon the Israelites from all quarters—both by sea and land. It may have been written by the sons of Korah, as a song of triumph, in which the strength and beauty of Jerusalem are celebrated, and God acknowledged as her refuge.... The allusions to Zion in any psalm may be regarded as evidences that it was composed subsequently to Jerusalem having become the capital of the nation.... The dispersion of confederated kings, and also of a fleet by the tempest Euroclydon, may be assuredly gathered from the stanzas of this illustrious ode.... The clause—"As we have heard, so have we seen," admits of a very precious application to the experimental evidence of Christianity—"As we have heard, so have we found." The Word of God, or the preaching of it, tallies with our own experience.... The defence and delivery of their nation had been made the subject of grateful commemoration in the midst of their public services. Does the temple in verse 9, not indicate a later period for this psalm? At all events, it seems the celebration of a great national deliverance, the fame of which had gone abroad to the ends of the earth, and which led the people to exult in the fortifications of their city—ascribing, at the same time, all their safety and triumphs to the God of armies.

PSALM XLIX. 1-9.—This psalm, too, may have been composed not only for, but by the sons of Korah.... A parable is properly a figurative representation, conveying a moral; and there are similitudes in this psalm for giving it this

designation. But a parable is sometimes so called, though the lesson be not couched in figures. This tallies with the progress which is frequent with words, from their primary to a more extended meaning. The composer of the psalm says, "I will incline mine ear;" and so had prophets often to do with the products of their own inspiration. (1 Pet. i. 10-12.)..."The iniquity of my heels" may be such sins as those to which I have been tempted by him who, though he cannot bruise my head, yet bruiseth my heels. I will wash them out in the blood of the Lamb, who died a ransom for the sins of His followers: not so those who trust in wealth, which can ransom the souls of none, so as that they should live as Christ, who saw not corruption, and His redeemed, who, because He lives, shall live also. Whereas the offered redemption by corruptible things, as silver and gold, is utterly worthless, and will not achieve a thing so costly as the redemption of any soul, which, if it once pass into eternity with its sins unexpiated, must thenceforth give up all hope of a future salvation, as now impossible.

10-20.—Yet when, or though, he seeth that all die, the godly and the wicked—still there is the cleaving imagination of an eternity on this side of death. He builds as securely on the world as if the world were to last for ever. Such is the false maxim and fancy of the worldling, not rooted out when he comes to die himself; for the worldly generation that succeed him admire his wisdom, honour him for the prosperity to which he has risen, praise him for the success of his own selfishness, even as he congratulated his own wisdom and good fortune whilst he was alive. Nevertheless, man in high earthly honour abideth not if he understandeth not, (verses 12 and 20,) wanting the

wisdom of him who rightly considereth the number of his days, (Psalm xc. 12,) and so will be like the beasts that perish. He brought nothing into the world, and certain it is that he can take nothing out. (1 Tim. vi. 7.)—Let us not, therefore, stand in awe of man, or carry our respect to him so far as to argue our preference, too, of the earthly to the spiritual and eternal.... The Psalmist's expression of his faith in being received by God, and redeemed by Him, not from captivity or from the hand of enemies, but from the *grave*, seems a decisive recognition of immortality in the Old Testament.

PSALM L. 1-15.—This is a remarkable psalm, and the subject of it seems to lie within the domain of unfulfilled prophecy. There has been no appearance yet from Mount Zion at all corresponding with that made from Mount Sinai. And I am far more inclined to the literal interpretation of this psalm, than to that which would restrict it to the mere preaching of the Gospel in the days of the Apostles. It looks far more like the descent of the Son of Man on the Mount of Olives, with all the accompaniments of a Jewish conversion, and a first resurrection, and a destruction of the assembled hosts of Antichrist. The saints here summoned are those within the pale of the everlasting covenant ratified by the blood of the sacrifice of Christ. The address here given is like that from the Son of God, now manifested to the Jews, who had returned, though yet unconverted, to the Holy Land; but who, now hearing the words as well as seeing the person of Him whom they had pierced, are born in a day by the impressive remonstrance and overpowering spectacle. In saying that He would not reckon with them on their daily

sacrifices and continual burnt-offerings, but that His call upon them now was for their gratitude and their obedience, and their prayers, He as good as presses on them the change of their Old for the New Dispensation; and they henceforth, and as the fruit of their national conversion, now render glory to Him whom, with wicked hands, their ancestors had crucified and slain.

16-23.—The prophecy, if prophecy it should be called, assumes now more of the instructive than of the predictive character. It may be applied to the destruction of Christ's enemies in the day of Armageddon, but seems far more directly applicable to those hypocrites whose service lay exclusively in the rites and observances of the ceremonial law. The lesson given here is often repeated by the prophets, when they urge that obedience is better than the fat of lambs. What have such Pharisaical teachers to do with the lessons of righteousness? or is it for them to declare the will and the ways of God? Let me take this to myself; and if it be a grievous delinquency that one should be a hearer and not a doer—how much more grievous that one should be a teacher and not a doer!—Save me, O God, from being a partaker in others' sins, and more especially in that sin which most easily besets me. Save me from the delusion of thinking Thee to be like unto myself; and give me to know how enormous in Thy estimation is the mere forgetfulness of God, and how awful are Thy dealings with it. What a precious connexion is here stated between the ordering aright of our conversation, and the insight that we shall obtain of the salvation of God.... There are weighty and most important lessons to be gathered from the closing verses of this psalm.

PSALM LI.—This is the most deeply affecting of all the psalms, and I am sure the one most applicable to me. It seems to have been the effusion of a soul smarting under the sense of a recent and great transgression.—My God, whether recent or not, give me to feel the enormity of my various and manifold offences, and remember not against me the sins of my youth.... What a mine of rich matter and expression for prayer!—Wash, cleanse me, O Lord, and let my sin and my sinfulness be ever before me. Let me feel it chiefly as sin against Thee, that my sorrow may be of the godly sort. Give me to feel the virulence of my native corruption—purge me from it thoroughly, and put truth into my inward parts, that mine may be a real turning from sin unto the Saviour. Create me anew, O God. Withdraw not Thy Spirit. Cause me to rejoice in a present salvation. Deliver me, O God, from the blood-guiltiness of having offended any of Thy little ones; and so open my lips, that I may speak of the wondrous things Thou hast done for my soul! May I offer up spiritual sacrifices: and O, let not any delinquencies of mine bring a scandal upon the Church; but do Thou so purify and build her up, that even her external services, freed from all taint of corruption or hypocrisy, may be well-pleasing in Thy sight.

PSALM LII.—David was in circumstances of great peril when he indited this psalm, directed against one of his deadliest enemies—Doeg the Edomite—at that time a mighty man, for in great favour at court. (1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 9.) He was a man of deep craft, and withal a most ferocious man of blood. (1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19.) His words were indeed devouring words; yet David, in the face of

all the danger which he incurred from this formidable adversary, encourages himself in that God whose goodness endureth continually. And so he prophesies destruction to the Edomite, and the consequent triumph and exultation of the righteous: they shall "see," and it is added "fear." The judgments of God should make us fear, lest we bring them upon ourselves.... It is a pregnant expression—that of "making God our strength."—Let us trust not in deceitful riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. Let us but trust in Him, and then shall we flourish in His favour, and within the precincts of His blessed family. Let us wait on His name—even though our powers of conceiving him go little beyond the name, still even in that name let us trust. It is a good name, and it is good to wait on it. It is a good thing for one to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God.

PSALM LIII.—This is nearly identical with Psalm xiv. We are not to wonder that the very peculiar devotedness of the monarch to God and to His service, should call forth a reaction of natural enmity among the grandees of his court, and give rise to an infidel party. The captivity here spoken of may be the exile from Jerusalem which David underwent by the rebellion of Absalom. He charges the oppressors of the people with their tyranny, but ascribes to them a fear of vengeance, the fruit not of sensible appearances—for all might look secure and promising to the eye of flesh—but the suggestion of consciences not at ease; and also of memory recalling what God hath formerly done against the enemies of Zion. ...The last clause of verse 5 seems to speak a different

meaning from the analogous clause of xiv. 6. The despising here is on the part of God Himself; and Zion, or God's Israel, or His true Church in the nation, can put the object of this contempt to shame, because despised and abandoned by God.

PSALM LIV.—This psalm, we have reason to believe, was written in circumstances of danger, from the treacherous hostility of the Ziphites. (1 Sam. xxiii., &c.) He has recourse, as usual, to prayer, which he lifts up with unshaken confidence, notwithstanding the adverse appearances by which he was surrounded. In characterizing his enemies he speaks powerfully home to the consciences of those who are awakening to a sense of their enmity against God. It is a strikingly descriptive trait of such—that "they do not set God before them"—so descriptive that it would form a fit text from which to convince men of their native ungodliness. God helped David by the instrumentality of friends—and being with them who upheld his soul. It was God working in and with Jonathan when he strengthened his hand in God. (1 Sam. xxiii. 16.) David therefore did not let go his triumphant anticipation of better days, when he should be restored to his country, and to the full enjoyment of its ritual and religious services. The conclusion of this psalm seems to suit the conclusion of 1 Sam. xxiii., where we read that David obtained a temporary deliverance, by the withdrawment of Saul and his forces from their pursuit after him.

PSALM LV. 1-11.—This psalm, written for instruction, as its title imports, is addressed to the chief performer on

stringed instruments. The occasion of it is understood to have been the flight of David from Absalom; and it is certainly the effusion of one who was sore beleaguered by enemies who hated and accused him. The author of it pours forth both the agonies and terrors of one who had been grievously injured, and even looks forward to a violent death at the hand of his cruel adversaries. His aspiration for a tranquil and safe retreat, at a distance from all the trouble by which he was beset on every side, are very eloquently given—even that he might "flee away like a dove" to the lodge of a wayfaring man in the wilderness, where he might be at rest from the storms and agitations of an evil world. His prayer that "God would divide their tongues," was signally fulfilled in the overthrow of the counsel of Ahithophel, to which instrumentally David owed his preservation. He knew that there were the elements of turbulence and dissension in the city, and that strong measures were required to keep down the outbreaks of a lawless and licentious population; and on this, too, he founds a hope that the rebellion will not keep together. He gives a vivid picture of the wickedness and disorder that reigned in Jerusalem.

12-23.—The general understanding is that Ahithophel is here singled out for the animadversions of the Psalmist —at one time the friend, and pleasant counsellor, and fellow-worshipper of David. Had he been an open enemy to the king he could have shunned and avoided him, so as to have secured himself against his machinations. The prayer of David against his enemies is surely as legitimate as the defence of himself against them, though even unto their death, or descent into the grave, into Hades, and not the hell of everlasting punishment. Surely when turning

to God in prayer, after he had poured these maledictions upon his enemies, this inspired man did not incur the condemnation which James pronounces on those from whose mouth proceed at the same time, blessing and cursing.... Are there not here the indications of that progressive morality which we have before adverted to? But there is much of the permanent and unchangeable, too, in these verses; and more especially in the clause—that "because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God"—an admirable text for a sermon on the security of worldly men. And then what a noble direction to the anxious Christian—"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." Ere the psalm concludes there seems in it a second recurrence to the treacherous Ahithophel.

PSALM LVI.—Dr. Good inclines more to the literal, and Bishop Horsley to the spiritual, in their respective works on the Psalms. The former makes the occasion of this psalm to be David's distress at the court of Achish, as recorded in 1 Sam. xxix. The latter entitles it a prayer of the Messiah. Both may be true. Certain it is that the conduct of Christ's enemies in watching Him, and lying at ambush, and wresting His words, are here strikingly pourtrayed. And there is nothing to discredit this interpretation in the earnestness and felt dependence of these petitions; for Christ did supplicate the Father with cries and tears. But whichever of these views be taken, the lesson is the same to us, in that we should turn confidingly to God when like to be overborne by our enemies. There seems an allusion to verses 4 and 11 in Heb. xiii. 6. ..The putting of the Psalmist's tears into His bottle is

like a treasuring up of the sufferings and merits of Christ, that they might avail for the sins of those who believe. Some of Horsley's renderings might be adopted, though there seems no obscurity which requires to be cleared up.... The word Jonath-elem-rechokim has greatly exercised the critics. Horsley's explanation of it is descriptive enough of David's situation—as a dove, or one of God's saints, in a far country, exposed to the hatred and ridicule of the heathen.

PSALM LVII.—This, too, is termed by Horsley, a prayer of the Messiah. Al-taschith signifies "Destroy not." It is a prayer that might well be lifted up by one who is assailed with evils on every side, hiding himself in God until the calamities be overpast.—What a blessed conjunction are the mercy and truth—both, by the economy of the Gospel, on the side of the believer! David's enemies on earth may be but the typical representatives of those hostile principalities and powers with whom Christ held a mysterious combat, and against whom He implored succour from on high.... The phrase "to swallow up," might be rendered into "trampled under foot," or bruised; which last expression brings this psalm nearer to the likelihood of being an utterance as from the Captain of our Salvation, whose heel Satan did bruise.... At verse 7 the Psalmist breaks forth into confidence and praise, as if his supplications had now been heard, and God had interposed for his deliverance and triumph.... There is a concluding and most comfortable allusion again to God's mercy and truth. The celebration of God among the people and the nations, might suit either the type or the antitype.

PSALM LVIII.—There is a great plausibility in the supposition that this psalm was written soon before the breaking out of the rebellion of Absalom, who boasted that he would administer justice so righteously in the land. "Do ye indeed speak righteousness?" "do ye judge uprightly?" It is quite obvious that the time of its composition must have been a time of great wickedness and ungodliness in Israel: they weighed, or concerted, their measures of violence in the land; they resisted the pleadings of justice, however skilfully or wisely they were framed.... Verse 5 is one of the special memorabilia of Scripture.... Here we have the prayers of David against his enemies—as lawful, I should think, as the strivings of war against them.... Horsley says that a greater than David is here, and calls this psalm a prediction of God's just judgment against the unjust judges of our Lord; and certainly it is not unsusceptible of such an explanation.... The suddenness of the wicked's destruction is signified by an image in verse 9, the latter part of which has been rendered, "In whirlwind and hurricane He shall sweep them away." Horsley would further translate "the righteous" into "the Just One," and "the wicked" into "the impious one;" thereby importing the victory of Christ over Satan.

PSALM LIX.—Dr. Mason Good holds the occasion of this psalm to be the history in 1 Sam. xix. 9-12. Horsley sets aside this hypothesis, notwithstanding its agreement with the title, and assigns a distinct literal occasion, while he holds it to be a prayer and prediction of the Messiah. There are verses which suit very well with the former supposition—more particularly the description, applicable enough to the pursuers of David, as given in verses 6, 14,

15. He speaks as if he foresaw their failure, and his own safety by the return of the morning. Still, I would not call it a stretch of imagination to apply it to the Redeemer also, whose persecutors were the Jews; and in the sufferings of whose dispersion, we have a most adequate fulfilment of the prayers and prophecies of this psalm—sufferings expressly entailed on them for having crucified the Lord of Glory. Our Saviour could emphatically say of the endurance which was laid upon Him, that it was not for His transgression, and not for His sin.... The seventh verse seems peculiarly applicable to the conduct of the multitude around Him when suspended on the cross. And truly the children of Israel were scattered by the power of Him to whom He committed His cause.

PSALM LX.—Whatever may be made of it, Shushan-eduth, if literally translated, is "the lily of the testimony." ...The occasion of this psalm seems to have been some menacing combination of enemies on all sides, against whom David lifts up the cry of distress to God...."To drink the wine of astonishment," is a singularly expressive and memorable saying....The psalm begins with despondency and terror, and ends in triumph. Not that we think it was composed at different times, but that the light of prophecy was given in answer to prayer; and so David, previous to their fulfilment, could look forward to such victories and restorations of state as are recorded in 2 Sam. viii., 1 Chron. xviii. After describing the miseries of their condition, he, in verse 4, recollects God's favour to the righteous; and the glorious anticipations of verses 6-8, seem a reply to the supplication of verse 5...."Philistia, triumph thou because of me," has been rendered, "Over

Philistia is my shout of triumph."... David's renunciation of all earthly confidence, and his confidence in God, form a most natural and becoming conclusion to this war-song. ... Aram-zobah in the title, is conceived to be the Zobah of Scripture history; though it is difficult to make out a coincidence with the direct narrative.

PSALM LXI.—This is supposed by Dr. Mason Good to have been written after the defeat and death of Absalom; so that, while there is the language of deliverance, there is also that of distress, or of a spirit overwhelmed, as David's was upon that occasion. The Psalmist cries from the end of the earth, or, as Good would have it, "from the outskirts of the land"—that is, from beyond Jordan, where David at that time was...."Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I," may at all times be adopted as our prayer. It was most natural for David to felicitate himself on the prospect of abiding in that tabernacle, which was his delight, and from which he had been exiled. The restoration of his heritage, and prayer for the prolongation of the king's relief, are both in keeping with the hypothesis.... The blessed conjunction of mercy and truth, which occurs so frequently in these inspired songs, occurs here again, and always with fresh delight to my heart.—May I know what it is, O Lord, daily to perform my vows.... Horsley says that the king here is evidently the Messian.

PSALM LXII.—This psalm is supposed to have been on the historical occasion of 1 Sam. xxiii. 14. But it is of most precious and permanent application in all ages.... To wait on God and not be greatly moved by the adversities

of the world, is at all times a high spiritual achievement. ... Horsley translates the "tottering" into a "shaken" fence.... The charge which the Psalmist lays upon his soul, when beset by the machinations of the wicked, is a truly impressive one. It is truly instructive to observe how he stays himself upon God—all his expectation being from Him—all his salvation and glory being in Him.—Let me follow the earnest call here given to confidence in God, and to the pouring forth all our inmost wishes and thoughts before Him. Let me not trust in the arm of flesh. At one time I have built too much on the simplicity of the humbler classes, and too much on the honour and patriotism of the higher. I have been disappointed in both; high or low—they are men, and as such I am bidden to beware of them. Let me set not my heart upon riches, but on Him who is able to give us all things. It is of God's mercy, and not of His justice, that our works are admitted to any consideration, or at all rewarded by Him.... Horsley, as usual, states the parties in this psalm to be the Messiah and His enemies. And there is much to countenance this idea.—He was persecuted by the rulers, He was forsaken by the multitude.

PSALM LXIII.—A psalm said to be written by David in the wilderness of Judah, on his return from the defeat of Absalom, and hastening back to Jerusalem, where he might worship as aforetime in the sanctuary. But well is it suited to every pilgrim upon earth, whose desires are pointing heavenward; and so will this composition be dear to the feelings of every aspirant after God and goodness, even to the end of the world.—Enable me, O Lord, to

say in faith, Thou art my God. Admit me to behold the glories of Thy character; and O that the spiritual appetite were given to me of thirsting after God. Let me ever esteem Thy favour as better than life; and may my soul be satisfied with good things. Give me in my bed at night to delight myself with God: and O that I knew what it was to have my soul following hard after Thee. Give me, O Lord, the power and the habit of godly meditation: and amid the annoyances of an outer world, be Thou the habitation to which I may resort continually.... The last verse is quite in keeping with the supposed occasion of this psalm.

PSALM LXIV.—Dr. Mason Good fixes on 1 Sam. xix. 1, 2, as the historical occasion of this psalm, which obviously is a prayer for deliverance from the hand of enemies. And it was a time, too, of secret counsel and laying of snares against David, as well as insurrection. There were both treachery and malice at work and plotting for his destruction: and thus doing, the adversaries of David may be said to have been shooting at the perfect. They watched him for the purpose of entrapping or waylaying—wresting what he may have spoken, and misinterpreting all that concerned him. And they prosecuted their object with diligence and deep cunning; yet could David, amid all his dangers, take comfort in the sense of his own integrity, and cast himself upon God....The psalm accords, too, with Horsley's view, who regards it as a prayer of the Messiah—He being subject to the identical treatment that we have now been describing. And what is here predicted against His enemies, signally befell the Jews; while more emphatically than any of the sons of men,

could the Saviour make His boast in God, and plead a perfect righteousness before Him.

PSALM LXV.—This exquisitely beautiful psalm is supposed to have been prepared for one of the Jewish festivals. Horsley, in verse 3, renders it, "The account of iniquities is too great for me," which harmonizes better with the truth as it is in Jesus, than "iniquities prevail against me." However great the account of our iniquities, they can be purged away in the guilt of them by the Atonement. But the promise is, that we shall be delivered from the power of them; so, though sin dwells in these vile bodies, it shall not have the dominion over us. —Give me, O God, thus to experience, and also to taste the high and positive enjoyment of a direct spiritual intercourse with Thyself: and when Thy judgments are abroad in the world, may I learn righteousness. Thou hast all power in heaven and earth, reigning supreme over the mental as over the material world. Do thou still the tumults within me of the old man, and give me both the life and the peace of those who are spiritually-minded. The earth to its remotest bounds stands in awe of the Divine manifestations, when, in tempest or in thunder, He makes known His power. But He has other exhibitions in nature, where, as in a mirror, we can discern the gentler characteristics of the Deity; nor in the whole range of poetry do we know any pastoral description so full of loveliness, so lighted up with all that is glad and graceful in the choicest panorama on the face of the world. Let me single out the paths which drop fatness, and the little hills which rejoice on every side. Altogether it is about the noblest composition in the psalmody of Scripture.

November, 1845.

PSALM LXVI. 1-9.—This psalm accords well with the hypothesis of its having been written after David's return from the defeat of Absalom, and on his first public approach to the service of the ritual, whether at Mount Zion or in Gibeon . . . ." All the lands," and "all the earth," may signify either all Israel, or the whole world. He invokes them to join in his triumph, and to celebrate, along with himself, the high praises of God. There is an appeal made to the miracles by which their nation was signalized; and never surely had any nation a prouder history. It seems as if the passage of Israel over the Red Sea was here referred to; yet, on Horsley's supposition of this psalm being a public thanksgiving of the Messiah, on the final deliverance of the Jews, it may refer to the signs and prodigies wherewith the next dispensation will be ushered in. There is word of the destruction of the tongue of the Egyptian sea, of another highway being prepared for the people, like as it was to the passage under Moses, so that verse 7 may apply to this futurity also; and certainly there is more of a wide regard cast throughout on the world and its nations, than is altogether suited to the circumstances of David.

10-20.—David had indeed been well proved and disciplined by the rebellion of his son, and, we have no doubt, refined by it, even as silver is by the operation of the furnace, when like it brought through fire and water. He was at last brought, however, into a wealthy place, where all the tribes of Israel vied with each other in their protestations of loyalty and returning allegiance. He had now the prospect of resuming those ritual and religious services which he loved, and of paying the vows which he

lifted up in the days of his adversity.—Give me, O Lord, to have the materials and the experience on which I might declare what great things Thou hast done for my soul. To assure the fulfilment of this we are here told of the efficacy of believing prayer; but let me ever proceed on the memorable saying, that "if I regard iniquity the Lord will not hear me." Let me henceforth record my own sense of the chief *notabilia* of Scripture; this just quoted from verse 18 is one of them. All is profitable; but there are some of its sayings which I feel disposed thus to single out, and to affix this note to them.... How beautiful the counterpart clauses are of the last verse, "He hath turned not away my prayer, nor yet His mercy from me."

PSALM LXVII.—This is regarded as a song for the feast of tabernacles, at the time of the ingathering, when a sense of gratitude to the bountiful Provider of all things was mixed up with the joys of a harvest-home. In our translation it reads like a conjunct prayer and prophecy, and impresses the idea of a prosperous spiritual harvest—the fruit of a successful mission, by which the Gospel was made known to all nations, and that greatest of all blessings, here expressed by the significant phrase of "saving health," was diffused universally. When God's face shines upon the preachers, it mightily conduces to the spread and efficacy of their message. The psalm surely points to a time when there shall be a plentiful ingathering of human souls, and so a renovated moral world; for one cannot see the connexion between a good crop in Judea, and such a season of general light and religiousness and enlargement as is here spoken of. But yet the future is convertible into the past, so as to warrant the translation that "the

earth hath yielded her increase," in which case the literal harvest in Judea is made the type of a rich spiritual harvest over the whole earth.—My God, avert from our land at this time the horrors of an impending famine; and let the fruit of Thy righteous judgments be, that all nations shall fear Thee, and be converted, and rejoice.

PSALM LXVIII. 1-6.—The literal occasion of this psalm is conceived to have been the great procession which took place at the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom. The Psalmist is reminded of the analogous march of the ark and people of God through the wilderness. Accordingly, we find that there is the same invocation at the outset of this psalm, which Moses lifted up when the ark was set in motion. (Num. x. 35.) There was much to suggest the notion of enemies at the time of this celebration—for it was in virtue of a rescue from their hands, even the hands of the Philistines, that they had now the ark to bear forward, and that they could lift their song of triumph. And associated with the security which Israel now enjoyed, could the hymn of grateful acknowledgment be raised to the God of battles, for His restoration of the desolate families, and relief of the captives, of their sorely harassed and subjugated, but now victorious nation. When God appears in behalf of the righteous He scatters their oppressors—as the Philistines when driven to the wilderness; or even the Egyptians, when punished by the drying up of that river on which they depend for all their fertility.

7-17.—I am not sure if I ever experienced such a feeling of the sublime as in reading this description of Israel's march through the wilderness—and it is fully kept up in

our metrical version—"Thy glorious marching was." And the effect is heightened as if by contrast, when followed up with the exceeding softness and beauty of what comes after—when "God sent His plentiful rain, and confirmed His inheritance when it was weary." There are probably various deliverances celebrated in this psalm—not only the past deliverance from Egypt, historically, but the great final deliverance—and perhaps that from the captivity of Babylon, prophetically. Then Israel was made to dwell in the place which God had prepared for them. This proclamation to march out of Egypt had many to bear and spread it abroad through the hosts of Israel. There was often the flight and overthrow of kings when God appeared for His people. And what a contrast between their state of degradation when captives or slaves, and their state of glory when the victory was theirs!—Then follows the signalization of the hill over all other hills, where the sanctuary is in which God dwells, possessed of all the power which He manifested in Sinai, when a retinue of all the agencies in nature was visibly at His command.

18-35.—But mixed up with all the literalities of the typical, the great Antitype shines forth in this high, sacred composition. We have positive evidence for Christ in this psalm, in Eph. iv. 8—after which we need be at no loss for objects in the future triumph and victory of His cause adequate to the loftiest expressions which we here meet with. The Ascension is quite obvious. The "leading of captivity captive" may signify—Thou hast made innumerable captives—or perhaps, Thou hast captivated him, even Satan, who had brought our whole species into captivity and bondage. Who can fail to

recognise, in the gifts which he received for the rebellious, His dispensation of the Spirit to them who believe on Him? What is to issue from death, whether a resurrection of life or of damnation, is at His sovereign disposal. There is every likelihood of allusions here to the great contest of the Book of Revelation.... What a significant expression for the impenitent—"that he goeth on still in his trespasses." But God has in reserve for His people still another restoration. "He will bring them again, as of old, from Bashan and the Red Sea to their own land. His people will "see Him whom they have pierced," perhaps when His feet stand on the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem will again become the great central sanctuary, by becoming the metropolis of the Christian world. God hath made strong the "Man of His right hand;" and in the name of the Lord our strengthener do we pray that God would confirm and perfect His own work in our souls.... Verse 30 is difficult. There are translations (Horsley's) which make as if the customs of the nations which are here meant were adverted to—though the conversion of Egypt and Ethiopia is afterwards more plainly set forth.... This magnificent ode closes with an ascription of glory to the Supreme Governor of all nations, and more especially of His own people.

PSALM LXIX. 1-12.—This is conceived by Mason Good to have been written when David was in greatest peril and perplexity from the rebellion of Absalom. It suits the supposition of its having been written while David was smarting under the remorse and disgrace of his humiliating fall. Then his enemies would arise in full cry against him; and his very piety would afford matter

of provocation and triumph to his deriding and ungodly adversaries. We can imagine that in the softness of his contrite feeling and abashment, he would concede more to his persecutors than he ought—were it but to purchase their silence. He appeals to God, who knew what his guilt was; and as in another psalm, confesses that against Him, and Him only he had sinned. He prays that the pious among the people might not be put to shame because of his scandal—seeing that his very devotedness to God, and zeal for His service, made him more the song of drunkards, and the contempt of those of his own kindred, than he would otherwise have been. But let me not overlook the direct application of verse 9 to Christ, by His disciples, in John ii. 17—though not expressly sanctioned by the evangelist himself. It proves a prevalent disposition among the Jews to interpret of Christ much in the Psalms where the reference is not altogether obvious.

13-28.—What a blessed phrase—"the truth of Thy salvation!"—Let me build my confidence upon it, that with a full reliance on the truth and mercy of God, my prayer may be acceptable. These prayers and pleadings, and professions of helplessness are, nevertheless, suited to our Saviour in His humiliation; and that they are actually His we have an argument from the gall and vinegar of verse 21, administered to Him on the cross. See particularly John xix., where we read that vinegar was given to Him in consequence of His saying "I thirst," —which saying He uttered that "the Scripture might be fulfilled." Again, the imprecation of verses 22, 23, is expressly referred by Paul to the unbelieving and persecuting Jews as the objects of it. And most true it is, as in

verse 26, that it was God who had smitten the Saviour, and wounded Him for our transgressions: and further true, that the Jews did add iniquity unto iniquity; and that all who were not of the election were blotted out of the book of life, and were not written with the righteous. Yet David is the author here—(Rom. xi. 9)—though I believe the psalm to be rightly characterized by Horsley as "Messiah's complaint of the impenitent Jews—His enemies." It is interesting to mark the strong Scriptural evidences of application to Christ in the Psalms.

29-36.—This passage is not to be deemed inapplicable to the Saviour because of its professions of helplessness—for we know that He was in such circumstances as reduced Him to cries and tears, and strong supplications; and we also know that He was delivered from death in that He feared, and so experienced a salvation. He was also set up on high by the Father, who exalted Him to His own right hand. It is true that for some of the clauses here we find a more direct explanation in viewing them as the utterances of David regarding himself—as when he speaks of praise and thanksgiving being better than sacrifice—though some would be carried forward to the sacrifice of the cross, as being better than the offerings of the law. The humble are encouraged by the experiences of those who obtain relief and enlargement from God.—O may I seek God more diligently and live. He is the hearer and answerer of prayer; and will manifest a greater salvation than has yet been realized, in the return of Israel to their own land, and the spread of Christianity among the nations.

PSALM LXX.—This psalm is substantially a repetition of

the last part of Psalm xl—which may have been a prayer that availed him on some former occasion of distress, again lifted up on the recurrence of a new occasion of the same kind. According to its title, it is a psalm of recollection. Bishop Horsley conceives the fortieth psalm to be the utterance of Messiah risen from the dead, returning thanks for the accomplishment of His work, and praying for its final effect. This does not seem to comport well with the latter half of that psalm, and more especially with the last part of it, which is identical with the present psalm. The way in which both he and Bishop Horne get over this is by the supposition that Christ is here praying in the name of that Church, which was one with Himself, in virtue of the mystical union between Him as the Head, and the Church as the body. It is in this sense that they understand His importunities to be in behalf of those for whom He ever liveth to make intercession; and that thus He could implore help, and pray against enemies, and profess Himself to be poor and needy. Certain it is, that while verse 4 is peculiarly appropriate, as from Christ, for those that were seeking after God through Him, it is also a prayer that we might well lift up for ourselves.—Give me joy in believing. Let me love Thy salvation; and enable me, in the secure possession of it, to magnify, and gratefully to praise Thy holy name.

PSALM LXXI. 1-11.—This psalm seems to have been composed by David late in life; when he still experienced that in the world he had tribulation, though in Him who ruleth the world and all its concerns, he had peace. He made his escape from the evils of life to the

right quarter; and I mark it as one of the chief notabilia of Scripture, he made God the habitation to which he resorted continually.—Be Thou at all times my refuge and my hiding-place, O God.... Horsley is at a loss in regard to this psalm, as not suiting David, because he had no trouble; and not suiting Jesus Christ, who had no old age. I believe that David had his troubles, though not expressly recorded; but they may be well imagined from the very existence of Joab, whom he had still to endure, and from the outbreaking of Adonijah, who had a powerful party to go along with him. Let us therefore not only ascribe this composition but apply it to David, who here celebrates the goodness of God to him from his youth up —taking a retrospect of all the hazards and vicissitudes through which he had passed, and his escape from which made him a wonder to many. That there were still conspiracies and plottings and calculations upon his weakness in old age, is too manifest.

12-24.—He turns from his enemies to God in prayer, confident that He would bring them to shame, and do mercifully and righteously by himself.—Ever blessed be Thy name, O God, that Thy righteousness is so bound up with Thy salvation, that Thou canst at once be a just God and a Saviour.... To "go in the strength of the Lord," and to "make mention of His righteousness, even of His only," (another of the notabilia,) is to combine the work of our sanctification with justification by faith alone. David had in many compositions made declaration of God and His works; and he prays to be spared for further declarations—not having, as it were, yet uttered all His mind.... This and the next psalm are conceived by Mason Good to have been his two last.... To increase the

greatness of David, may have been to increase that of his house, by the triumphs of that kingdom over which there reigneth Him who is both David's Son and David's Lord —the root and the offspring of Jesse.

PSALM LXXII. 1-11.—This noble composition bears an undoubted reference both to Solomon and to Christ. The spirit of judgment was given abundantly to Solomon, and the history of his reign bears testimony to the righteousness and wisdom of his judicial sentences. But the prophecy soon expands to the character and doings of Him who is greater than Solomon.... If verse 3 receive the literal application, it may signify that the strongly garrisoned mountains, and the strictly administered justice on those banditti who lurked among the hills, would secure the protection and tranquillity of Judea; if the spiritual, it might describe the blessed state of the land when the Messiah Himself ruled over it. The endurance of this reign is stated by such expressions as can only have their adequate fulfilment in Christ.—O may the living water of which Thou spakest to the woman of Samaria be poured upon me abundantly. The extent of the kingdom, too, is applicable, in all its completeness, only to the Saviour. It is true that Solomon received great homage in his day from the potentates around him; but these offerings were only the typical samples of that universal lordship which Christ will exercise over all kings and all nations.

12-20.—This passage, though applicable both to type and antitype is far more obviously and prominently so to the latter. The preciousness of the subjects' blood in the sight of their monarch, seems to denote the favour

which Christ bears to His martyrs, far more than the tenderness of Solomon for the lives of his people. Again, the prayer that should be made for him suits better with the human and earthly monarch. But, on the other hand, the productiveness of the corn here spoken of seems to denote a great deal more than the fertility of Judea—even the rapid extension of the Church from small beginnings, like the growth of the mustard tree from its minute seed, or the working of leaven throughout the mass wherewith it is incorporated. And who can mistake the application, as to any other than Christ, of what is here said respecting both the universality and perpetuity of the kingdom described by the prophet and in his eye? Surely it is He who is meant in whom the promise made to Abraham had its fulfilment—even "that in His seed all the families of the earth should be blessed." It is only of Him we can say, that "the whole earth shall be filled with His glory."... Horsley imagines the last verse to be referable not to the whole of David's written prayers collectively, but to the prayers of this particular psalm, as if he had said, "I have now uttered all the wishes of my heart. Grant me but the petitions of this psalm, and I am fully gratified."

PSALM LXXIII. 1-14.—God is good to the "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," even to such as are of a clean or sincere heart. But the psalmist, who is here not David but Asaph, was on the eve of slipping away from this confidence; and this because of the prosperity of the wicked.... The psalm is conceived to have been written on the eve of Absalom's rebellion, when the irreligious party were in great force, and had become boastful and

violent, and in the proud consciousness of strength were emboldened to all sorts of lordly and insolent oppression —defying God in heaven, and walking lawlessly abroad upon the earth. This was very staggering to Asaph and to all God's people who were on the side of piety and loyalty.... Horsley translates verse 10 into—"Therefore his people sit wo-begone, and waters are abundantly wrung from them." Certain it is that their outward state was in complete contrast with that of the prosperous ungodly, who even denied the omniscience of the all-seeing God; and so they were tempted to think that all their faithfulness to God, and all their freedom from the transgressions of His law, were of no avail to them—so as almost to join the wicked in their infidelity, and to say with them, "Is there knowledge in the Most High?"

15-28.—The psalmist here corrects his last words, and admits them to be such as if, unrecalled, might have the effect of seducing, and proving a stumbling-block to the children of God. It was a great perplexity to himself till he explored the secret of God's dealings with men, and looked at their consummation in the latter end of the wicked, who were nourished unto the day of slaughter—the day of reckoning and vengeance for their misdeeds. What a contrast between their fair-show prosperity, and the humiliation which they are brought to at last! But while the enigma was unresolved, he had well-nigh slipped—he had almost sunk into the mire of ungodliness. And yet all the while God was with him, even throughout the season of his doubts and murmurs; and he had brought him forth of these by the light which He poured into his mind—so that he could now say, even amid the decay of all his carnal securities,

that, nevertheless, "God was the strength of his heart, and portion for ever." This last I would put among the notabilia; and so also the precious 24th verse, where the psalmist relies upon his God for guidance here, and glory hereafter.—Let this prove my experience, O God. Let me ever draw near unto Thee, and experience so as to declare how good a thing it is to have my faith and fellowship in God.

PSALM LXXIV. 1-11.—The occasion of this psalm is referred, and with probability, to the invasion of Shishak, under the reign of Rehoboam. (2 Chron. xii. 9.)... Asaph is held to have been a descendant of the first Asaph, having the same name...."The rod of thine inheritance" is conceived to have been a phrase grounded on the Jewish custom of dividing the lots, whether of tribes or families, by measuring with a rod, or even casting the lot for the determination of respective portions, done in some way by means of a rod. We read of a divining rod. The prayer is that God would stir Himself, and draw nigh to the scene of those violences which had been perpetrated everywhere under the hostile standard of invaders, and which were still going on. They had burnt up the places of worship, and were now proceeding against the temple, which they partially spoiled, and had perhaps begun to destroy, when arrested by the overruling power and providence of God. What made them more helpless was that there was then no seer amongst them—as in the days (1 Sam. iii. 1) when the word of God was precious, or scarce, and there was no open vision. And so Asaph was thrown upon the resource of a direct application to God in prayer.

12-23.—The psalmist recurs to the ancient doings of God on behalf of the now oppressed and sorely afflicted Israel; and so he adverts to the miracles of deliverance in Egypt and the wilderness.... Leviathan and the dragons are understood to be Pharaoh and his mighty men. There is then a reference made to the still more ancient work of Creation—where we meet with the singularly beautiful expression—"Thou hast set all the borders of the earth." Thus fortified in his assurance of God's power, he recurs to importunate solicitation for help against the enemy. The reproaches and blasphemies of the heathen, when victorious over Israel, against Israel's God, are frequently noticed in Scripture. He reminds God of the covenant, and deprecates the transportation of his countrymen into those idolatrous lands where all sorts of cruelty and suffering awaited them...."Return ashamed," in verse 21, is translated by Horsley, "sit ashamed." It forms a good and right argument with God, when the object for which suit is made is represented to be His, and He is asked to plead His own cause.

PSALM LXXV.—Al-taschith means to "destroy not."... Though the psalmist here is said to be Asaph, yet he personates David, and probably on the eve of his succeeding to the monarchy of all Israel, when he transferred his government from Hebron to Jerusalem. He promises that when he receives the power he will use it aright; and more especially that he will restrain wicked rulers. He acknowledges God to be the all in all of his coming promotion; and renouncing all dependence on the creature, gives the glory of all his prosperity and preferment to Him who sitteth above, and to whom all the vicissitudes

of fortune among men ought to be referred. He was sorely exercised at that time by the wickedness and violence of such men as Joab and others; but in the righteous vengeance of the Judge on high, he prophesies the destruction that awaits them. So long as we apply this composition to David we may conceive of "the earth" in verse 3, that it is but the land or country of Judea; but let it be understood as a personation of the Messiah, and the earth should be viewed in its most extensive sense, as that to which the administration of the exalted Redeemer is fully commensurate, whose day of vengeance on His enemies is drawing nigh—even the day of the Son of Man.

PSALM LXXVI.—This psalm seems as suitable to the destruction of the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time, as to any event during the reign of David. Asaph might have been the usual family name of that musical race.... Some conceive verse 4 to be an apostrophe to Mount Zion; others would have it to be the kingdom of Judah that is here spoken of as more illustrious than the kingdoms that pour forth their invaders upon other territories than their own. I have conceived that a mountain of prey, the delight of huntsmen in pursuit of game, would be greatly prized by them, and might suggest an image expressive of the value which the psalmist felt, whether for Mount Zion, or the kingdom of which it was the emblem, or lastly, the King who ruleth over all.—Give me to stand in awe of Thee and of Thy judgments, O God. Keep me from all those sins for which the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. Let me fear Thee and not man. Enable me to pay unto Thee my vows. Thou art to be

had in reverence, O God; nor should we stand in dread of man, the excesses of whose wrath Thou canst control.

PSALM LXXVII. 1-12.—Some ascribe this psalm to the time of the invasion under Rehoboam, and others to the Babylonish Captivity.... Jeduthun is thought by some to be a proper name; others interpret the title as to the Supreme on this Dispensation. It was evidently written for a time of distress, whether by Asaph, an individual, or for the band of Asaph, and perhaps by one of their number—it being supposed that the various official bands in the Temple were designated by the names of their first or chief leaders. At all events, we have here the breathing utterance of one who felt God to be his only help and refuge in the day of calamity; and who, when overwhelmed, went to the Rock that was higher than he. .. The "soul refusing to be comforted" is a notabile.—Save me, O God, from those sores of the spirit which might well be called running sores, on which the soul broods and dwells, and gives itself up to painful reveries, which pass like streams through the inner man, made up of the waters of bitterness. But he lays an arrest upon himself, and recalls this process. He recurs to seasons of former joyfulness, even in his own personal history, and, farther still, to the past history of God's dealings with His people. He rebukes himself for his despondency as he thinks of these things, and stays his confidence on the unchangeable God —remembering the years of the right hand of the Most High, when He gloriously manifested His power on the side of Israel.

13-20.—There is a momentous principle in the assertion of "God's way being in the sanctuary." It is this which

gives rise to all the difficulties that are felt here, and it is this which will explain all hereafter. The whole procedure of God bears upon the designs of a great moral administration, and can only be understood by a reference to the things of heaven and not of earth, or to things, the purpose and final issue of which we still behold but darkly. To our limited discernment, there is still much to wonder at. The strength of the Godhead is palpable, but there remains a deep enigma upon His counsels, and the policy of His government. By His power He hath done great things, which are here enumerated—His miracles of might in conducting Israel out of Egypt, of which we are presented in this psalm with a magnificent outline. He is here set before us as the Omnipotent, yet incomprehensible God, whose footsteps are not known. How applicable to the secrets of geology—to the processes now going on at the bottom of the sea, and in the deep places of the earth! What a mystery is the interior of our globe; and how impenetrable by us the purpose of those successive revolutions whereof our earth has been the theatre! Yet what a manifestation withal of the Divine force and sovereignty in those great catastrophes which terminate an old and usher in a new era! Mark, however, the subserviency of the physical to the moral, and in this instance of the miracles at the Red Sea to the history of the Church.

PSALM LXXVIII. 1-8.—This psalm is generally regarded to have been prepared for one of the public and national festivals. It may be called an historical psalm, being chiefly a rehearsal of the perversities of rebellious Israel —so that it may be termed a confessional psalm; while,

no doubt, the continued forbearance and goodness of God, in the midst of such multiplied provocations, should have enhanced the gratitude of the worshippers. Though it be called a parable, this does not necessarily imply either an enigmatical or a fictitious composition—the appellation being extended to any grave or weighty piece of instruction. ... One likes to contemplate the securities which obtained among the children of Israel for an authentic tradition from one age to another of their old history. It was laid, indeed, as a solemn duty upon them, that they should hand down, from generation to generation, "what the Lord had done for them;" so that parents were bound to inform their children in the historical, as well as to instruct them in the preceptive and doctrinal, parts of their religion. (See Deut. vi. 7; xi. 19; Josh. iv. 21, 22, &c.)—O my God, let my heart be set aright, and my spirit be steadfast with God. This last expression I should rank among the notabilia of Scripture.

9-18.—What is ascribed to Ephraim need not be understood as cowardice on any particular occasion; but faithlessness to their outset professions—more especially in that they kept not the covenant to which they had repeatedly made themselves a party, as in the days of Joshua—and, doubtless, on many other solemn and public occasions.... The defections of Israel might well be called wonderful—phenomena in the moral world almost as marvellous as were those miracles which, though fresh in their recollection, utterly failed in keeping them steadfast with God. These miracles are here enumerated, in the face of which, and after the brief interval of strong sensation for a time, they sinned yet more against God, and provoked Him by their constant waywardness and per-

versities. They tempted God, tried His patience over and over again, made as it were another experiment upon it; and, from the expression of "tempting Him in their heart," it would seem as if they had made it a thing of mental calculation whether He would still bear with them.

19-28.—But they did more than thus tempt God in their hearts. They spake openly with their mouths against Him.—It was a truly marvellous audacity in the midst of such miracles and of such manifestations; and the psalmist seems quite alive to its enormity. No wonder that the anger of heaven should have been kindled against such daring challenges as they uttered in the face of those manifold signs and wonders that had been exhibited before them.—And let us, too, feel the criminality of not believing and not trusting. Let us take warning from the results of the provocation in the wilderness, lest we fall, too, after the same example of unbelief.... The manna is perhaps called "angels' food," on the same principle that rain is called the "river of God," coming, as it did, from above, wherewith we associate the locality of heaven. There are various other interpretations given of it; but the very expression of its being "the corn of heaven," seems to warrant the view I have just now given of it. Could it be that the psalmist's notion was the same with that which might have obtained among the Jews in general, as if this manna was literally the food of those who inhabited the upper regions, and accordingly that he set forth this his notion in the composition now before us? Though it were so, this would not shake my faith in the plenary inspiration of this psalm—even as Paul's introduction of some of his own notions, when he spoke as a

man, shakes not my faith in the plenary inspiration of the epistle which contains them.

December, 1845.

29-39.—Before they were estranged from their lust, or before they had begun to nauseate the flesh they were eating (See Num. xi. 20)—"He slew the fattest of them," or "slew them in the midst of their fatnesses"—that is, of their gluttonies. The obstinacy of their unbelief is again adverted to, and mark the identity, in verse 32, of their sinning and not believing; on which, see also Heb. iii. The result was, that God did consume them in the wilderness, where they had to remain forty years.... It is altogether worthy of observation, that whereas the distress inflicted upon them by God did extort their cries and their confessions—which, so far from being the outpourings of pure and genuine repentance, were but the utterances of flattery and fear, their hearts not being right with God, nor steadfast in adherence to Him upon His terms; yet, even because of their misery alone, was the compassion of God called forth in their favour. There is herein a view of pity in its state of singleness—not mercy, or the pardon of sin because of repentance—but pure commiseration for the wretchedness of its objects. True, it is said to be forgiveness, because the forbearance of due punishment; not, however, reconciliation.... We see more nakedly in this exhibition the amiable tenderness of God.

40-49.—The psalmist continues, or rather reiterates, the narrative of the rebellions of Israel.... Horsley, instead of "limited," proposes "challenged," in verse 41. Each furnishes a suitable meaning; for not only did they challenge God, they distrusted Him, as they would one

whose power and inclination together were not large enough for their deliverance from evil. And all this distrust and disavowal of God were in the face of the many signal evidences He had given of Himself, and which must still have been fresh in their recollection. These were still in their remembrance, though they did not call them to remembrance; and therefore it is said, that "they remembered not His hand, nor the day of their deliverance." They must have recollected the facts, but did not turn them to the purpose of fortifying and preserving their faith in God. These facts are here presented to us in fuller detail and enumeration than before, being the plagues of Egypt.... Horsley gives a good illustration, in his notes, of verse 49, in that he regards it as descriptive of the terror and distraction and mental anguish into which the Egyptians were thrown by these inflictions of evil angels. Which angels, however, it might be remarked, are not necessarily the angelic spirits, but might denote the material agencies which were the messengers and instruments of the Divine wrath.

50-64.—After finishing his description of Egypt's calamities and plagues, he contrasts with these the favour and protection and guidance bestowed upon Israel, whose Shepherd He was—tending them like a flock through the wilderness...."This mountain," in verse 54, might be the land of Canaan, so called because of its alpine character. (See Deut. xxxii. 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 2.) And this land, as being the Holy Land, might be denominated a sanctuary. Or it may be Jerusalem, and even Mount Zion or Mount Moriah, which was on a border of the Israelitish possession, even to the time of David, and from which the Jebusites were cast out by him. It was the right hand of

God, and not an arm of flesh, that purchased or acquired for the children of Israel all their conquests. But soon after their settlement in the promised land, did they fall into their wonted relapses; they turned adrift and aside from the way in which God would have them to walk; they moved God to anger with their idolatries, times and ways without number, till at length that sorest of all inflictions came upon them, the captivity of the Ark—(1 Sam. iv.)—when the priests Hophni and Phinehas were slain, and the widow of the latter did not live to lament him, but, overborne by a sense of the public, more perhaps than the private calamity, gave up the ghost.... The Ark is in verse 61, termed "the strength and the glory of the God of Israel."

65-72.—The Lord did awake, and interpose on behalf of Israel, in that He called David from the sheep-folds to be monarch in Israel; but first of all on behalf of His ark—the ark of His strength—by which he overthrew Dagon, and scattered dismay among the Philistines.... For the explanation of verse 66 see 1 Sam. v. 6, 9.... How rapidly in these descriptions does the Psalmist go over large stages of history—in keeping with the procedure of Him who "knoweth the end from the beginning," and with whom "a thousand years are as one day." He concludes with the elevation of David to the throne, and with the selection of Judah as the metropolitan tribe of Israel. ..."The sanctuary" here spoken of may be referred to the temple of Jerusalem, which, though not yet built, may have been seen by David in prophetic vision—nay, was in great part provided for by his care. No doubt the temple has long been razed from its foundations; but the great spiritual temple, of which it is the type, is stable as the

earth; nay, will outlast the present economy of things. What a noble conjunction of properties for a ruler in the king of Israel—integrity of heart and skilfulness of hands! Grant both, O Lord, to the men whom Thou mayest raise up for the prosperity of Thy kingdom and Thy cause in our day.

PSALM LXXIX.—Mason Good refers this psalm to the reign of Rehoboam, and Horsley to that of Manasseh. There is no symptom throughout of a general captivity at this time; and Jerusalem had only been defiled, not demolished. The Israelites were still in the midst of their old neighbours—the objects of their reproach and hostile triumph. It accords very well with the ascription of this psalm to Rehoboam's reign, that whereas the psalm is a deeply penitential confession and prayer, we read that the forces of the enemy were withdrawn, because the people had humbled themselves—perhaps joining publicly in the service which this hymn set before them.—Let Thy mercies prevent us—let them come before, or anticipate a destruction that will be also inevitable. It was a frequent argument with the penitent Israelites—that God would pity them for the glory of His own name; and that the heathen might not speak reproachfully of Him or of His cause.... It is possible that the "sighing of the prisoner" might refer to Manasseh, then in Babylon, and that some of his fellow-captives may have been appointed to die. In whichever of the two reigns this psalm was composed, it would seem from the history that its prayer had been answered.

PSALM LXXX.—This psalm is fastened, by various critics, to various periods of the Jewish history. If it be true

that the ascription to God of His dwelling between the cnerubim is more ancient than what more commonly obtained after that Zion had become His dwelling-place, this might favour the notion of its having been written in the reign of David. Its title would imply that it was intended as the memorial of a happy escape. It is an extremely beautiful composition. How endearing the title of the "Shepherd of Israel!" and how descriptive of Him who guided His people through the wilderness like a flock! (Psalm lxxviii. 52.) What importunate pleadings!—Let me adopt them, and pray that God would turn, and cause His face to shine upon me, and save me. What a noble specimen of poetry in the figure here, so well sustained and amplified! What a misconception of Johnson's—that sacred subjects did not admit of poetical embellishment; and how decisively met by that best of all refutations, even Scriptural example...."The Man of God's right hand," and "the Son of man," whom He had made strong, may have been literally and primitively David or some other conqueror; but surely it admits of emphatic application to Christ.—O quicken me together with Him, that henceforward I may call, in the spirit of adoption, upon Thy name.

PSALM LXXXI.—Though opinions are various as to the date of this psalm, it seems generally agreed upon that it was composed for the feast of trumpets. It bears every internal appearance of this—as being an ode of high gratulation, and where the performance was aided by high sounding instruments. The reference to a statute and law, as the warrant of their celebration, marks it to have been done on one of their appointed days.... The language

of Egypt was not understood, according to some, by the Israelites—according to others, by God, who speaks often of people as not knowing them—not recognising them as His, looking on them as aliens, refusing to acknowledge either their worship or their ways.... The "secret place of thunder" is understood to be Mount Sinai, where God held converse with the people of Israel. He tells them that if they will only hearken unto Him, He will at all times be their oracle and their Guide—will favour them with His counsel and testimonies; but they must not lapse into idolatry, or go after the false oracles, that will but deceive and lead them astray...."Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," is one of the most precious of our Scripture notanda.—My God, let my faith be large as Thy faithfulness. What an impressive utterance from God, and how demonstrative of His wish for our obedience and safety—"O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" There is to us a deep mysteriousness in all this; but the desire of God for our salvation, and right moral state, is here most obviously manifested; and let us proceed on that which is obvious, not on that which is obscure.

PSALM LXXXII.—This psalm, though applicable to the times of David, has been referred by Horsley to Jesus Christ in the hands of His judges and persecutors.... The appellation of "gods" to human officials has been most weakly and unwarrantably pled by the Socinians against the real Godhead of Christ.... David had much to try and exercise him in the wickedness of the magnates by whom he was surrounded, and under whom there was much of violence and anarchy in the Jewish commonwealth. And

to walk on in wickedness is to walk on in darkness; and nothing is more fitted to disturb all the relations of society than iniquity in high places, or when iniquity is clothed with the authority of office, and framed by a law. Then, truly, all the foundations of the earth, or of the land rather—all the securities for social order or the stability and wellbeing of the state, are out of course.—Then follows a denunciation on these haughty oppressors, with a prayer to God that He Himself would take upon Him the judgment, which He will do when He asserts His power and supremacy over all nations.

PSALM LXXXIII.—If Assur here be the tribe of Asher, which is not unlikely, from the rebellious character of that tribe, this psalm may have been composed by David about the time of his ascending the throne of all Israel, and when many confederates were opposed to him. He prays here for protection against these. He was beset with the craft and force of a great multitude of enemies, who are here enumerated as bent on the destruction of Israel, and the extirpation of its name from the earth. Asher, on the confines of Tyre, may have entered into the same combination; in which, we have no doubt, that the old and still subsisting enmity of the world to the Church had a large share. Israel must not only have been a singularity, but an offence and an eye-sore amongst the surrounding nations. The psalmist prays that they might waver, and be unsettled as a wheel, or light as stubble which the wind carrieth away.... The preservation of the name and worship of the true God in the world is often pled in argument and prayer for the protection of Israel against the heathen, who beset them on every side.

PSALM LXXXIV.—What a preciously evangelical psalm this is, full of savour and substance, and in full unison with the faith and spirit of an advanced Christianity! We have here the longings of a gracious soul after God, and its consequent delight in every sensible approach to Him; and so dear to the taste of such are His tabernacles and holy services—such is his affection for the very localities of God's house, that he may be said to regard with envy the swallow which builds its nest near the altars. His strength is in God, and it is upheld and refreshed by ordinances as from a pool; and thus does he meet with cordials even in this vale of tears, so as to proceed from one degree of strength to another, till at length he appears perfect before God.—Let me reiterate the heartfelt prayer of the psalm. My God, look on the face of the Messiah. He is my shield in whom I trust, and on whose righteousness alone it is that I ground all my hopes and all my rejoicing before Thee. O let my delight be in Thy service, and give me a more intense liking than heretofore for social worship, and for the fellowships of the faithful.... And what a pure gospel essence in the petition here poured out for grace and glory—grace here, and glory hereafter—grace as the step and the preparative for glory.—Be a light and a defence to me, O God, and thus at once my sun and my shield; and O let me experience the truth of the promise given here to them who walk uprightly. Enable me so to walk by ordering my steps in Thy word; and give me the blessedness of him who trusts in Thee, both for pardon and for the grace of obedience to Thy will.

PSALM LXXXV.—Another psalm replete with the flavour

of evangelism. It may have been written for the return of the Jews from some of their earlier captivities, but would suit very well the times of Ezra, when God had on a large scale brought back the captivity of Jacob. It is full of application and of matter both for gratulation and prayer to every returning sinner.—Turn me, O God, and revive me; and hide not the light of Thy countenance from me any longer. I pray for Thy mercy and salvation, O God. And let me, when admitted to peace, be saved from relapsing into wickedness or folly; so that while a peace, which through Christ is at one with the righteousness of God, it may also be a peace which is not only at one with but through the Spirit, productive of my own personal righteousness. Cause Thy salvation to be nigh unto me—even that salvation which harmonizes Thy truth with Thy mercy. And O let truth be put into my inward parts, that it may spring upward and take a just and right hold of the righteousness which looketh down from heaven.... Verses 9 and 11 of the former, and verses 10 and 11 of the present psalm, are clearly among the highest and most memorable of the notanda in Scripture. —O do Thou, the very God of peace, sanctify me wholly.

PSALM LXXXVI.—As in this psalm, so frequently, David begins with prayer in terms of dejection, and rises in the course of it to exultation and confidence. The petitions are here alternated with pleas, grounded sometimes on himself and sometimes on God: as first, that he is needy; second, holy or devoted to God, whom, therefore, he asks to preserve his soul; then, that he trusts in God; then, that he is in the daily habit of prayer; then, that he is ever aspiring upwardly to God. The pleas which he

grounds on the character of God are truly precious.—Let me put verse 5 among the highest of the notanda, and found an appropriation on the plenteousness of God's mercy to all who call upon Him. Let my soul also magnify God in the terms of this psalm; and O may He *unite* my heart, so as to fasten it singly upon Himself, and devote it wholly to His fear. Verse 15, and first clause of verse 17, should be also enrolled among the notanda—"Shew me, O Lord, a token for good"—a providential token if Thou wilt, but more especially a gracious one—Thy Spirit, more particularly, as the earnest of my inheritance.

PSALM LXXXVII.—This was quite a psalm to evoke the genius of Horsley; and without attempting to estimate his translations in detail, I am much pleased with his general view. The psalm is a eulogy on Jerusalem, on whose holy mountains the buildings of God were raised. Glorious things are spoken, and still more glorious predicted of the city of God. The Gentiles will come to know that this Man—the man or chief of ten thousand, was born there. It is this which sheds its highest glory on Jerusalem. This and that man, or every man, shall say of Zion, "that the Messiah was born there." "And He shall establish her"—this last prediction being yet short of its final accomplishment.... The most important emendation made by Horsley is on verse 6, where, for the clause, "when he writeth up the people," he substitutes in the "scriptures of the people;" that is, in the New Testament, or record of the universal faith, circulated among all nations, shall it be narrated, that Christ was born in Judea. Yet there is a considerable latitude

in all this interpretation: Christ was not born in Jerusalem.... Horsley's treatment of this psalm reminds me of a similar treatment bestowed by him on the 18th chapter of Isaiah.—Let me, however, cherish the reflection, that all my springs are in Christ; and out of His fulness, as from a fountain, let me draw all that can aliment either my peace or holiness.

PSALM LXXXVIII.—Horsley designates this psalm "the Lamentation of the Messiah," and Mason Good "the Complaint of Heman in prison during the rebellion of Absalom." It is throughout an utterance of deep suffering, without one ray of hope to enliven it, excepting that the calling upon God, as the "God of my salvation," implies a hope not wholly extinct on the part of the supplicant. —In the darkest passages of my mind or history, let me never lose hold of God as the God of my salvation.... "*Free* among the dead," may mean separated, cast out among the dead—as entirely removed from society as if laid in the grave.... "Cut off from Thy hand"—from Thy care, or it may be by Thy hand. In the troublous times of party and civil commotion, those who formerly liked might now abominate us. Who knows how soon this may be our own lot!... The psalmist prays against death, as would a prisoner in fear of execution, or as did our Lord when He said—"If it be possible let this cup pass from me." And well do the concluding verses apply to Him in that sore and dreadful agony, when distracted by the terrors of the violated law, and when the fierce wrath of the Lawgiver went over Him; and all enhanced by the desertion of His friends, who hid themselves in lurking-places, and so kept away from Him.

PSALM LXXXIX. 1-10.—This is a very noble composition, whatever age may be assigned to it, and holds an elevated place in this collection of sacred poetry. It opens with the precious conjunction of God's mercy and God's faithfulness. Both are built up and established in the heavens for the everlasting security of those who were sinners, but have been redeemed. And the idea of a covenant, too—that word expressive of all those rights and securities which stand associated with a contract between true and just and honourable parties—is here introduced to our further confirmation. And it is well when the high ascriptions of the natural are mixed with those of the evangelic theology—God's wonders in the heavens, even the material heavens, forming an ingredient in the anthem of praise, along with His faithfulness in the congregation of the saints—His might, as Ruler of the nations, along with His rightful property in the adorations and obedience of the Church—the power of control He has over the elements of nature, along with the reverence in which His name is held in every assembly of the saints. ...He broke Rahab, or Egypt, in pieces, on that ever memorable occasion when He commanded the sea to give way for the deliverance of His people.

11-18.—The psalmist, in a strain of simple but sublime eloquence, further dilates on the power and sovereignty of God—intermingling the natural with the moral attributes —His might and majesty in creation with His equity, and clemency, and truth as the Governor of men. One likes the freedom and fulness wherewith Scripture expatiates upon the wonders of the Divinity, both in His works and ways—more especially when compared with the narrow and scholastic representations of those who confine them-

selves within the limits of an artificial and cabalistic orthodoxy. Yet with all the descriptions here given, on the field of what may be termed natural Theism, there is a very near and sensible approximation to the Theism of the Gospel—and this not only in the objective view given of the Deity, as set forth in the union of truth and mercy, but in the subjective, given of His elect and peculiar people—as a people who know the joyful sound, (John x. 4;) and who, believing in its glad announcements, walk in the light of God's reconciled countenance, with His righteousness as their plea, and His strength as their support for the work and warfare of the new obedience.

19-29.—"Holy One" should, in the opinion of many, be in the plural. Thou didst reveal to Thy saints that Thou hadst "laid help on One who is mighty." This was made known to Samuel in reference to David; but obviously a greater than David is here—even He who is not only the offspring, but the root of Jesse—the Anointed One—the Messiah. God's faithfulness and mercy met with Him in the work of our Redemption; and who does not see that the description expands greatly beyond the monarchy and duration of the literal David—in that not only was His hand set in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers, but in that His seed is to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven. There is nothing incompatible with this in that He sent forth cries and supplications—which He did in those days of humiliation which ushered in the glorious days of His exaltation and everlasting triumph. God's mercy is kept for Him evermore, in that He is the Dispenser thereof to His own people, whom He redeemed by His blood, and of whose

grateful acknowledgments and songs He will be the theme throughout all eternity.—Give me, O Lord, to take hold of that covenant which standeth for ever fast. I do not sufficiently look at the way of salvation in the aspect of a covenant.

30-37.—There seems to be a twofold instruction in this passage. We are told first of God's procedure with the Jews nationally, who had often rebelled against Him, and been punished accordingly—yet who, in spite of their manifold provocations, were not only often recalled when their season of penitence or prayer came round, but who will at length, after their present long dispersion and infidelity, be restored to their own land, and the promises made to David and his seed will have their ample fulfilment. But we are not only told in these verses of what He did and is doing to the nation of Israel historically; we are further instructed in the methods of His disciplinary administration individually, with His people of all countries and all ages. They too sin—but not the sin unto death. They too have their spots—but still they are the spots of God's children. They, too, at times break the statutes, and fall away from the commandments, and are visited because of it with chastisements from the hand of God; yet they are not cast out of the covenant—if indeed the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We doubt not that when it is said—"I will not take my mercy from *Him*," there is a reference to Christ. I shall not take my mercy from Him—that is, from His real disciples; for thereby I should be breaking my covenant with David, or with David's Son, to whom I will not lie. He will not cast off utterly His erring children, nor fall from the faithfulness of the promise—that

He will perfect the good work which He had begun in their souls.

38-52.—The psalmist now remonstrates with God, and complains of the degraded and oppressed condition of Israel, notwithstanding of these magnificent predictions and promises. Mason Good fixes the date of this psalm in the reign of Rehoboam, but Horsley at the death of Josiah. Certain it is that Judea was often in the circumstances set forth in this passage, when the crown was profaned, and the throne cast to the ground. Horsley and others devise certain parts by different speakers, to account for the sudden changes of subject and sentiment which often take place among verses that lie contiguous, as in verse 47, where the supplicant is conceived to be pleading with God; and verse 48, which is understood to be the reply given from above—after which the expostulation is resumed, and, among other arguments, it is alleged that the servants of the Lord, and more especially the composer of the psalm himself, has to bear the reproach of their powerful and victorious enemies. The Church is often in similar circumstances, and may be held as the true antitype of this complaint—trodden under foot by power, and calumniated by her adversaries; yet a day of final triumph will at length arrive; and therefore may the last verse of this glorious psalm well be one of blessing and gratulation.

PSALM XC.—There is a great weight of opinion on the side of this being the earliest of the psalms, and the production of Moses on his being asked (Numb. xxi. 7) to pray for the people when bitten with serpents. It is thought that at this time, too, the life of man was short-

ened down to seventy years, though there were a few exceptions then that went greatly beyond this. It is one of the most memorable and most familiar of our psalms. How magnificent the outset description of God's eternity, and of the sovereignty in which He is throned. St. Peter seems to allude to verse 4 in 2 Pet. iii. 8. How affecting the rise and disappearance of man's puny generations, although the destructions of a fatal plague seem to be adverted to in this place, when God visited the people in His anger, and cut off thousands in Israel.... Verse 12 ranks high amongst the notanda of sacred writ. The psalm, though occasional, is also of general and enduring application.—Let me reiterate its closing prayers. Satisfy me, O God, with a view of Thy mercy, with the accomplishment of Thine own work upon me, and with such an establishment of mine own work as to prove that it has been done in the Lord, and not done in vain. Let us not think lightly of God's wrath—(verse 11)—we cannot fear it too much: it is truly as great or greater than we apprehend.

PSALM XCI.—Said by Mason Good to be a psalm of Moses, and entituled by Horsley—"God's love to the Messiah," and divided by him into parts. A most precious composition. ... He that taketh refuge hideth himself in God—shall be sheltered by Him from all evil.—Let me hide myself in the pavilion of Thy residence till all calamities be overpast. God is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. No external violence will come near thee, so as to land in a final overthrow. The great lesson is the sure help and protection by God of all who trust in Him. Satan tried to turn one of the expressions here, so

as that our Saviour might be led, instead of trusting God, to tempt Him. The calamities against which God stands pledged to defend us are those which beset us, not those which we ourselves rush upon.—Give me, O Lord, to set my love upon Thyself; and let me glory only in this—that I understand and know God. Shew me Thy salvation. May I know the gift of God, or the things freely given to me of God; and then in the train of my confidence will come affection for my Father in heaven.

PSALM XCII.—These are very fine devotional verses wherewith this psalm opens. Let me not undervalue instrumental music in Church, when I find that here it is called in to give utterance and effect to such sentiments as are breathed forth in this ode. Mark the contrast here made between the works of God and His thoughts: His works are great, patently so even to sight, and brought within our ken by the palpable revelations of astronomy. But how deep withal are His thoughts—how inscrutable to us is the policy of the Divine government, and how profound the enigma which rests upon His ways, and upon His end in the creation of all things! Men immured—we might say imbruted—in the strongholds of sense and matter, have no perception of this; but in the final development of things, when the destruction of sinners comes to pass, it will be found how vain and ephemeral their security is. God will endure for evermore, and His purposes will all be accomplished in the ruin of the wicked and triumph of the righteous. Note their flourishing in verse 12 as counterpart to that of the wicked in verse 7. Horsley makes the righteous here to be the righteous One. —My God, let mine, if it be Thy blessed will, be a fruitful

old age. Let me flourish permanently, and for ever... God's faithfulness appears in the fulfilment of His promises to the righteous. (Psalm xviii. 25.)

PSALM XCIII.—It is fortunate, amid the conflicting theories in regard to the occasions of different psalms, that the spirit and sentiment are so clear and applicable to the state of the Church in all ages. Verse 1 is like Psalm xcvi. 10. Altogether this is a most stirring and impressive composition—a psalm of lofty adoration, and wherein the greatness and the sovereignty, and the high state of the Eternal King are most powerfully set forth.... The tumults of the people, and strength of warring elements, are here represented as under the absolute control and check of Him whose power and dominion are from everlasting. What a noble description is here placed before us of the Lord on high, and who "is mightier than the noise of many waters!" Yet, with all the magnificence of His natural attributes here done homage to, the great moral characteristics of the Divinity are not overlooked—His truth and His holiness.—While I rejoice, O Lord, in the testimony of my acceptance through Christ, let me never forget that the fellowship to which I am thereby admitted is a sacred fellowship—a fellowship with a God who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity.

PSALM XCIV. 1-11.—This psalm is referred by Mason Good to the period of Absalom, but receives at the hands of Horsley a spiritual and higher application. It seems the prayer of a man beset by proud and powerful enemies. ... The sentiment of verse 1 is the same with that of Rom. xii. 19, in as far as the ascription to God is concerned;

but the lesson given to man in the later Scripture is of a higher and more advanced cast of morality than we find exemplified even by the inspired writers of the Old Testament. This complaint may have been directed either against rebels, or against iniquitous judges, with both of whom David was abundantly exercised. They had cast off the fear of God, and even denied His omniscience. The argument that is brought against this infidelity of theirs, deserves a high place among the notanda of Scripture—an argument grounded on the faculties of man's percipient and intellectual nature, and concluding for the like faculties in the God who has thus furnished and endowed us. A powerful consideration truly, and on which—reasoning from the superiority of the Creator to the creature—we might infer that God not only knoweth as man does, but knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

12-23.—The sentiment of Heb. xii. 6, &c., is here given forth as in other places of Scripture. It is in seasons of chastisement that righteousness seems as if forsaken by God; for these, too, may be seasons of triumph for the wicked. But the just will at length be prepared for them, and then judgment will return to the open manifestation of itself as being on the side of the good, and against the evil. God does not cast off utterly, which encourages the psalmist to ask who will rise up for him against the wicked, when he comforts himself in God, and proclaims the support and consolation which He had vouchsafed to him.... Verses 18-20 are all three specially noticeable; and 19 deserves to be enshrined among the highest of our Bible notanda.—My God, at any time when like to slip, do Thou hold me up; and at all times may Thy consolations

delight my soul. And forgive, O Lord, that multitude of disquieting thoughts by which I so often vex myself in vain. There is sin in such thoughts, as prompted by and tending to those anxieties which are expressly forbidden by Him who tells us to "be careful for nothing."... The expression of "framing mischief by a law," is a truly memorable one, and singularly applicable to the conduct of those persecuting governments that would either enforce the decisions of a tyrannical, or give forth their persecuting edicts against the liberties of an evangelical Church.

PSALM XCV.—Now follows a succession of most savoury and heart-inspiring psalms—full of thanksgiving, and of affectionate as well as sublime and elevating piety—mingling joy, because of God's goodness, with the loftiest ascriptions to Him of greatness and sovereignty. He is both the Rock of Salvation and the Monarch of Heaven and Earth. These appeals to His works confer a sanction on our study of them; and in the wonders both of geology and astronomy, we should recognise the mighty power of Him who sits enthroned in the midst of all those glories by which He is surrounded. Let us behold Him in the earth and sea, and all the variety and magnificence of Creation; but let us not be satisfied with the theology of external nature, and charge ourselves, moreover, with the obligations and lessons which are carried home by the theology of conscience. Against these let us no longer harden our hearts. "To-day let us hear His voice," and commit ourselves both to His guidance as our Shepherd, and His grace as our Sanctifier.—Do Thou both direct and sustain us, O God. Feed our souls, so that they may be

nourished into a maturity and a meetness for the everlasting fold in the Paradise above.

PSALM XCVI.—The spirit of the last psalm is fully sustained, nay, elevated in this. We have direct, and not merely conjectural evidence for so many of these compositions having been framed on the occasion of great solemnities and service-days. We find a great part of this psalm in 1 Chron. xvi. 23-33, delivered by David into the hand of Asaph and his brethren on the day that the Ark of the Lord's Covenant came out of the house of Obed-edom. Some part of this psalm will be also found in Psalm xxix. 1, 2.... Verse 4 is a notandum. What a tribute to astronomy in that the Lord is so often done homage to as having made the heavens! Let the theology of nature be blended with the theology of conscience—a full recognition of the strength and the glory which shine palpably forth in the wonders of Creation, with the spiritual offerings of holy worship and holy service. We are called upon to be joyful because God cometh in judgment. It will be a day of terror to the wicked, but of triumph and establishment to the righteous—when the new heaven and the new earth shall emerge from the wrecks of an older economy.—On that day may we be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man. May we lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh. On this last day of the year, may I be impressed with the evanescence of things present, and look onward to "the city that hath foundations."

January, 1846.

PSALM XCVII.—This psalm, too, is in a similar strain of high gratulation and praise. The earth is called on to

rejoice because the Lord reigneth; and well it may, on the day of its enlargement and final emancipation from evil, which seems to be here set forth—a day of judgment, and so also a day of terror and destruction to the enemies of God and goodness—a day when at His presence "the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" but his own righteousness and glory shall be manifested in the sight of all people. Then will the worldly, who serve idols in loving the creature more than the Creator, be confounded and overthrown; but then, too, will the righteous lift up their heads and rejoice because of God's judgments.... Verses 11 and 12 are both most savoury and precious notanda.—Give me to experience, O Lord, those revelations which follow in the train of obedience; and O that I felt the charm and enjoyment of holiness, so as to give thanks, in the reflection that with a holy God holiness is an indispensable requisite for our appearing in His presence. We should further, and be grateful because of this essential attribute in the Godhead; for it is in virtue of His holiness that evil cannot dwell with Him, and that the world will at length be delivered, and this conclusively, from the wickedness and malice and vile sensualities by which it is now so disquieted and deformed.—Hasten this consummation, O Lord.... The evolutions of prophecy seem to be thickening around us; and at the commencement of 1846, it may be well to notice, that interpreters, though they may be wrong, have many of them fixed on 1847 as the era of a great crisis.

PSALM XCVIII.—A noble, spirit-stirring psalm. It may have been written on the occasion of a great national triumph at the time; but may, perhaps, afterwards be

taken up at the period of the great millennial restoration of all things. The victory here celebrated may be in prophetic vision, and that at Armageddon. Then will salvation and righteousness be openly manifested in the sight of the hostile nations. Israel will be exalted; and the blessed conjunction of mercy and truth will gladden and assure the hearts of all who at that time are Israelites indeed. Godliness will form the reigning characteristic of the whole earth.... These appeals to nature in her great departments—of the sea in its mighty amplitude, and the earth with its floods and hills—form, not a warrant, but a call on Christian ministers to recognise God more in their prayers and sermons as the God of Creation, instead of restricting themselves so exclusively to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. Do the one, and not leave the other undone.

PSALM XCIX.—In Psalm xcvii., because the Lord reigneth the earth was bidden to rejoice; but here, because "the Lord reigneth" the people are bidden to tremble, and the earth to be moved. And there are many who, on the day of the establishment of God's kingdom in the world, will be cast into the pit of destruction. But the subject of this psalm seems to be more exclusively Jewish, as describing God's place in the Temple and His supremacy in Zion, whence, however, he ruleth with a high hand over all nations. Thrice is God's holiness here spoken of; and thrice are we called, on account of it, to exalt and hold Him in highest reverence. And though strong, He is also just and righteous in all His ways. His is not a strength put forth on arbitrary acts of mere pleasure. All His dealings and intercourse with His people through

their heads and representatives, were in perfect equity and rightness—so that either He upheld them against their enemies, and was the avenger of their wrongs; or if they erred from His ways, although He forgave them, yet did He chastise them for their waywardness and their wanderings.—O may I never be cast off from Thy paternal regards, even though I should offend and suffer because of it.

PSALM C.—This is one of our highest psalms, and perhaps the most frequently sung of any in our churches. It may have been also a great church psalm in Judea, and sung at their festivals. It is a psalm of high gratulation and gladness.—O may I catch its inspiration, and know what it is to delight myself greatly in God—not relinquishing prayer, but rising often above it to the higher platform of praise. What a warrant, not for music only, but for joyful music in our sacred services; and especially in these days of brighter revelation, when encouraged to joy in God through Him by whom we have received the Atonement. There is a call upon all lands to join in this celebration; and on this week, set apart for prayer in behalf of Christianity at large, let our desires and our sympathies go abroad over the face of the earth.... What a simple, yet stupendous truth, that "the Lord is God!" and what a weight in the sentiment, easily uttered, but never adequately felt, that "He made us, and not we ourselves." Horsley translates it—"He made us, and His are we."—O that I felt as I ought the dependence and submission which this impressive consideration should carry along with it. Elevate me, O God, to the faculty of benediction and praise; and while I rejoice in Thy goodness,

let my heart be also staid upon Thy truth—blessed attributes, in the conjunction of which lies the essence of the Gospel salvation.

PSALM CI.—This, apart from the title, has the strongest internal evidence of its being a psalm of David's—as his resolution to promote the faithful of the land, and keep the wicked aloof from his presence; and to punish all those evil-doers who would disturb the city of the Lord, which is Jerusalem. But though the composition of a king, and specially expressive of his purposes as such, it breathes the spirit and sentiments which are proper to every individual servant of God.—Let me sing of mercy and judgment—that precious conjunction of perpetual recurrence in the Psalms. Let me behave wisely, both to them who are without, and more especially to those of my own household. And, O Lord, keep all wickedness, and more particularly such as is fitted to tempt and to inflame, away not from my eyes only, but from the thoughts and imaginations of my heart. Frowardness is one of my besetting sins; by which I understand *from-wardness*—giving way to sudden impulses of anger, or quick conception, and casting it forth in words or deeds of impetuous violence.

PSALM CII. 1-11.—Now follows a succession of psalms, the familiars and favourites of our churches, and replete with the best and richest material for devotional exercises. ...This psalm is conceived by Mason Good to have been composed on the occasion of the hostile edict which put a stop for a time to the building of the second Temple, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish Captivity;

and appropriately counterpart to this, it is entitled by Horsley—the Prayer and Lamentation of a Believer in the time of the last antichristian persecution. The psalm itself is in keeping with both of these hypotheses; and on the principle of type and antitype, both may be true. The passage immediately before us is one of deep distress, and of importunate prayer to God for enlargement from it. Who knows but that it may soon be the complaint and utterance of the Christian Church, as it may have been at one time of the personified Jerusalem? The "lifting up" and the "casting down" tally well with the history in Ezra; and we, now lifted up because of popular support and favour, may yet be cast down by irreligion and infidelity in power.—Prepare us, O Lord, for the whole of Thy blessed will—merciful though mysterious God.

12-28.—The complainer now turns him to God, and rises to the language of hope. There was enlargement granted to the Jews; and let us look for a similar enlargement. There is a set time in the counsels of God for the establishment and final triumph of the Gospel upon earth; but it looks as if it would be preceded by the oppression and distress of a suffering Church. But let us take comfort in what is written here—written, doubtless, for our admonition, on whom the latter ends of the world have come. God will at length release His prisoners; and the great victory of truth and righteousness will be achieved at Jerusalem over the assembled hosts and powers of this world. The complaint, however, is again resumed; for ere the ultimate deliverance comes, the trial of the Church will form a stage in the process. Its strength will be weakened in the way, and its days of prosperity will be made to cease

for a time. But amid these fluctuations and frailties below, how cheering to think that we are in the hands of the everlasting, and withal, wise and righteous and merciful God! And oh, how precious to know, from the application made by the Apostle in Heb. i., of these concluding verses, that Christ is God, and that it is He who is here spoken of—the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. By Him the heavens were created, and the foundations of the world were laid. He will deliver and exalt His Church. All the kingdoms of the earth shall perish; and this to make way for His own everlasting kingdom, when power will be given to His saints, and they will be established for evermore.

PSALM CIII. 1-11.—A truly precious composition;—and enlarge me, O God, into a full sympathy and participation with all its utterances. I pray for my ascent into the higher region of praise; and that Thou, O God, mayest be the object of my heart-benedictions, as well as of my supplications and requests. Let me stir up all that is within me—and so consecrate every faculty and feeling to the exaltation of God. Thou hast laden me with innumerable benefits; and enabled me to say with unfaltering faith—Thou hast forgiven all mine iniquities! And do Thou not only forgive, but heal, with spiritual health in my soul. How responsible I am for the vigour of my old age!... There is a view taken here of God's goodness to Israel; and much is to be gathered from His forbearance and favour to that wayward and stiffnecked people. Well may it be said of Him on this review, that He is merciful and gracious, and slow to anger, and easy to be entreated. Truly He dealt not with them nor with me, according to

their sins. So high is His mercy, even high as the heavens above the earth—to them that return and repent in fear.

12-22.—My God, let my sins be as if cast into the bottom of the sea, or carried to a land that is not inhabited, and where no more mention is made of them. How endearing the representations here given of Thy fatherly compassion! And how fine the contrast between the ephemeral frailty of man and the enduring mercy of God! All that is in us is fugitive and precarious; but that in God which there is to make up the defect of the creature is stable and everlasting, and firmly to be depended on.—Give me, O Lord, to keep Thy covenant and do Thy commandments. What a noble representation of the Divine sovereignty—"His kingdom ruleth over all!" —not the seat of His authority, but the authority itself: Thy kingly power ruleth over all.—Let me be elevated as I should by the magnificent closing summons to the higher orders of being, and the creation in general. Give me to feel the intimacy of my own personal dependence on God for all that relates to myself; but give me at the same time to expand in the contemplation of all that the Almighty hath created. Surely there is nothing created by Him unworthy of my regard.

PSALM CIV. 1-9.—This psalm begins as the former, but on a different subject—the last being addressed to God, as sitting on the throne of grace; the present to God, as sitting on the throne of nature and of creation;—and never have the works of God, and His sovereignty over them, been so magnificently set forth. The glory of the Divinity is in this made more palpable, through the medium of the senses—whereas in the former, it is beheld by the

eye of faith. God in Himself is clothed with honour and majesty; but His "covering with light," in verse 2, seems the first forth-putting of His creative power, as in Genesis, when He said—"Let there be light, and there was light." It probably means His first investiture of the field of creation with light. The psalmist contemplates nature as it appears to the eye, and so figures the sky to be a canopy, and the dome of the heavens to be resting around the horizon on pillars or beams placed in the waters of a great circumambient sea. And then how august the representation of the clouds being the chariot of God, and of His walking "on the wings of the wind!" As he in this passage is describing the material framework, there is not probably any allusion here to angels or spirits; and Campbell's translation seems the sound one—"who maketh the winds His messengers, and the flaming fire His servant."... There is obviously here a description of the flood, and of its retirement from the face of the earth—when at the bidding of the Lord the waters from up the mountains, and down along the valleys, found their way to the place He had assigned for them.

10-23.—Then follows a descriptive sketch of the world now emerged from the flood, and its inhabitants. Though it were but a Flemish picture, yet, as being a just and true representation of nature, though it be more than this, it could not fail to be beautiful—as when it is said, that by the sides of the rivers which run down the valleys, the fowls of heaven sing among the branches of the trees which skirt their banks. The water is here conceived to come down from the chambers of the sky, which now disposes me to think that the "chambers" of verse 3 may be figured to have had their beams laid in the waters above

the firmament, and not under it. (Gen. i. 7.)... The trees of the Lord may be so named from their size and stature —this name being used as a superlative in the Hebrew, or to denote aught which is great and extraordinary. It is a fine conclusion or climax to this description, after having set forth the vegetable creation, and its subservience to the animals whose habits are here pourtrayed, to finish off with man going forth to his labour through the day, and returning in the evening to his rest.

24-35.—The manifold works, all made in wisdom, attest what the Apostle (Eph. iii. 10) calls the manifold wisdom of God. These contemplations of nature by an inspired writer, should expand our theology, and lead us to contemplate God in the wonders and works of Creation, as well as in the economy of grace.—Let us participate more in this relish of the psalmist for the beauties and characteristics of the grand visible panorama around us, consisting of the earth in the fulness of its riches, and of the sea, enlivened by shipping, and peopled with a zoology of its own. How stately a representation is here given of the universal dependence throughout the universe on the universal Parent and sustainer of all its generations and tribes; and how well to look upward, from the glorious spectacle before our eyes, to Him who made all, and who upholds all!—Give us to recognise Thee, O Lord, in all the vicissitudes which take place on the surface of our globe—in the succession of the seasons, and in the disappearance as well as renewal of one generation after another. Why should the God, from whose wondrous mind there have emanated all the greatness and variety of this vast and voluminous world—why should He be a weariness unto us, or as a land not inhabited? Let us no longer

think of Him as a shadowy abstraction; but viewing Him in His works, let our meditation of God be sweet; and let us ever dwell with full interest upon Him, who will at length banish all that offendeth from His empire of truth and love and righteousness.

PSALM CV. 1-4.—The two following are historical psalms, and are conceived by Mason Good to have been prepared after the Babylonish Captivity, and re-establishment of the Jews in their own land. The opening verses of this psalm, down to verse 15, are chiefly taken from David's hymn in 1 Chron. xvi.; and we can also notice resemblances to Psalm lxxviii. The commencement is most savoury and precious, and very often sung in our churches. Throughout it may be regarded as an ode of high gratulation and thanksgiving. And what a memorable notandum have we in verse 3—"Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord!" Even before finding Him, and when yet only setting out in search of God, are we called to enter upon the task with confidence and gladness. And why not?—when we have the blessed assurance that he who seeketh findeth.—Let me then address myself with joy to the work, seeking till I find—nay, seek His face evermore, as if for brighter and brighter manifestations of His reconciled countenance. There are many who say, who will show us any good? but Lord do Thou lift the light of Thy countenance upon me; and give me to lay hold of Thy strength, that Thou mayest make peace with me—even the strength of Thy salvation.

5-15.—The retrospect of God's dealings with Israel begins after the preliminary invocation; and it is confirmatory as well as interesting to mark the accordancies

between this poetical celebration of the great events in the history of the peculiar people and the direct narrative. The word which He commanded, or which He ordained, should take effect throughout a thousand generations. "Even to the tenth generation" is looked upon as equivalent to for ever; and so this last clause in verse 8 may well be regarded as a counterpart repetition of the first clause, in which He declares His covenant to be everlasting. The recital or rehearsal here given, in very brief and general outline, of their national annals, begins with the promise made to Abraham—a promise which still waits its ultimate fulfilment—even that the land of Canaan should be their enduring and undisturbed inheritance. Their history in patriarchal times is here briefly but graphically rendered. The protection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, amid the potentates around them, is amply told in Genesis.

16-37.—This passage begins with the occasion of Israel's journey to Egypt—the famine which spread from that country into other lands. It is strongly expressive of the Providence which overruled this history, that Joseph is here spoken of as having been sent before the famine was brought on, and sent by God. His word came to pass —that is, his interpretation of the dreams of the butler and baker was fulfilled; and then he was made trial of for the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream sent by God, and so called the word of God. The counsel of Joseph influenced and instructed all the other counsellors of Egypt—while the power which he received authorized him with full command over all the dignitaries who were beneath Pharaoh. After this came down his father and family; and here have we the distinct information of

Egypt—and so Africa, whereof Egypt was the key, being the land of Ham. Then follows a brief notice of the sore oppressions which the Israelites underwent in their land of bondage—after which follow the account of Moses and Aaron being sent for their deliverance, and a rehearsal of the memorable plagues, after which they came forth, enriched with the spoil of the inhabitants of the land, among whom they had acquired great consideration and even favour, they being regarded as a people in whose behalf the God of heaven had obviously manifested His power. One of the greatest miracles attendant on this great translation out of Egypt, and which does not seem to have been recorded in the direct narrative, is, that there was not one feeble person in the whole of this mighty host. One gathers much of what is additional and supplementary by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

38-45.—The personification of a country affects one as poetical and sublime—as here, where Egypt is said to be glad at the departure of the Israelites. The psalm concludes with a very cursory sketch of their transition to, and settlement in, the land of Canaan. There is notice taken of their miraculous guidance by day and by night; and omitting altogether the passage of the Red Sea, there is notice taken of the miracles in the wilderness. All these are spoken of as fulfilments of the promise and the covenant, from which the psalmist set out at the commencement of this his historical sketch. The point to which it is brought here is that of grateful acknowledgment to God for His faithfulness and goodness to Israel. At the same time, the whole of this rehearsal is brought to bear upon the people, in the form of argument and moral suasion for their obedience to the statutes and laws

of the God of Israel. The history is not carried farther down than to Israel's possession of the promised land. The whole, perhaps, would have been too unwieldy for one service; and so we have another psalm, both to extend the history, and supply the omissions of the present one.

PSALM CVI. 1-5.—This, too, is an historical psalm, and of which Horsley, in agreement with Mason Good, thinks that it was written after the Babylonish Captivity. Before entering on the recital there is a devotional opening, a call to the worship of God, and prayer to Him for His countenance and blessing. These verses at the commencement are among the most familiar, and most frequently sung of any in the whole compass of our Church psalmody. Let us, on whom the latter ends of the world have come, testify to the endurance of God's mercy.—Raise me, O God, to the high spiritual platform of praise, yet without relinquishing prayer. Enable me to join the power of celebrating Thy perfections and Thy ways, with the habit of supplicating Thy clemency. Remember me, O Lord, with that love which Thou bearest to Thine own, and give me to see the good of Thy chosen. More especially, do Thou visit me with Thy Spirit, whose fruit is in all righteousness, and goodness, and truth; and then shall I indeed know that I have part in the election of God.

6-14.—The rehearsal of Israel's sins and rebellions commences from this verse—with a confession of themselves as sinners as well as their fathers, to whom their attention is carried back, and of whose various perversities and acts of disobedience they make the enumeration. The provocation at the Red Sea was committed before they crossed it; and when they murmured against Moses

because he had brought them into a position where the hosts of Egypt were like to overwhelm them. They indeed evinced the grossest want of understanding and memory, in not adverting to the miracles so recently wrought in their favour, and which, for the purpose of awakening in them either gratitude or confidence, seemed so wholly thrown away upon them. Truly it was for His own name's sake, and not for any goodness in them, that He did so much for the Israelites. It is true that their momentary trust was again revived, after He had conducted them over the cloven waters, and brought them out safe from the enemies whom He destroyed. Then it is said they believed and they praised Him—joining, we have no doubt, with all their hearts, in the songs both of Moses and Miriam. But how evanescent were these emotions; and how soon did they forget His works.—Neither did they wait the evolution of His designs: they confided not in the general assurance that God would not leave them to perish, but constantly anticipated, by their own murmurings, His methods of relief and delivery. They tempted God—they desired an experiment or trial of His power; and by the doubts mixed up with this desire, they held both His faithfulness and His ability to be things uncertain or problematical.

15-33.—The "leanness" is rendered "loathing" by Bishop Horsley—which accords with the literal state of the case; but I think leanness, as applied to the soul, is exceedingly descriptive of its spiritual barrenness and emptiness of aught like Divine tastes or enjoyments. The chief of these other palpable transgressions are here enumerated—as the striking rebellion, with its awful consequent judgment executed on the followers of Dathan and

Abiram; and their worship of the golden calf, traced to what appears in our eyes their strange forgetfulness of all the miraculous salvations which God had wrought for them. Moses, acting as their mediator with God, is a type of Christ, who stands before God in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He should destroy us.—Save us from the infidelity of the Israelites—so that we look not on heaven as a vision, but proceeding on it as a great reality, may we venture all, and sacrifice all for a blissful eternity. For the particulars of their defection and punishment at Baal-peor see Numb. xxv.; and also the remarkable distinction conferred on Phinehas—the righteousness that was counted to Him—the everlasting priesthood that was conferred on him.... There seems a chronological retrogression in following up with the incidents which took place at the waters of strife.

34-48.—The psalm now passes on to his statement of the conduct of the Israelites after the settlement of Canaan. They were mingled among the heathen, and were corrupted by them, partly in virtue of their own disobedience to the order of a full extermination, and partly as a judgment from God, and for a trial, or the purposes of discipline. And they were tried and found wanting; and so the great bulk of their history is made up of provocations on the one hand, and punishments on the other.... This psalm may well have been as late as is commonly imagined—that is, after their return from the Babylonish Captivity; for all the previous national rebellions may be included in the expression that "*many times* did He deliver," but they again provoked Him. And, besides, the Babylonish Captivity is the only one of which we can distinctly say—that God made them to be pitied of those who

had carried them away. The gathering back into Judea was not completed, but in progress only; or at least there were many still among the heathen, respecting whom the prayer of verse 47 could be lifted up, even so late as the time of Nehemiah.

PSALM CVII. 1-7.—This is a psalm of great poetical and literary merit—a celebration of God's providence as exemplified both in the guidance and guardianship of His people as a nation, and in various states of private life. It begins with the acknowledgments and invocations of gratitude to the Father of all; and a few opening verses seem to fix its occasion and date to the period of the return from Babylon. He had then redeemed Israel from the hand of their enemy, and gathered these poor children of a wide dispersion from all quarters. Their wandering and friendless state when in captivity, is here feelingly represented—many of them far from the abodes of men, glad to flee and hide themselves from their cruel mockers and persecutors; and often overtaken, in the pathless deserts of the country to which they had been carried, by hunger and thirst in all their extremity. It would look as if their sufferings had increased upon them by a process of aggravation, which at length reduced them to cry unto the Lord in their uttermost helplessness, and He responded to the voice of their supplication. He turned the hearts of kings to favour them; and by them, as the instruments of His goodness, He led them to Judea, and to Jerusalem its metropolis—their own city, for a city of habitation. He conducted them by the right way, not only directing, but by His Providence watching over them.

8-22.—The verse of invocation to praise and grateful acknowledgment, and which comes in at intervals as a sort of chorus or interlude, seems not so much the preface of its succeeding as the conclusion of its foregoing passage. The first of the two passages under our present consideration is fully as applicable to the case of the Jews when in Babylon, as the former or preceding passage was to their case when in the act of returning from Babylon. There they were captives bound in affliction and iron, because of their rebellion against God, and their contempt of His counsel. There, too, they longed after Jerusalem, (Psalm cxxxvii.) and at length were satisfied. For when their hearts were brought down with hard labour they "cried unto the Lord, and He heard them;" and the gratulation of verse 15 is called forth because He cut asunder those bars and bands which are adverted to in verse 14. The next passage does not stand peculiarly related to the Jews in Babylon, but to a common experience among men of those visitations, in the form of disease, which they bring upon themselves by a life, it may be, of sinful indulgence. These, too, when reduced, as the captives of the former passage were, to their prayers, experience the compassions of our Almighty Father, and obtain at His hands a healing deliverance, the acknowledgment for which is given in verses 21 and 22.

23-32.—Then follows another variety of human experience, here rendered with great force and fidelity of description: the case of mariners who "go down to the sea in ships, and behold the wonders of the Lord in the great deep." These, too, are often brought into extremity, and reduced to the felt necessity of crying unto Him who alone can still the tumults of the sea, for deliverance from a

storm, even as He can still the tumults of the people when cried unto for deliverance from the fierceness and the power of enemies. The despair of the sailors, and their reeling to and fro in the sorely vexed and agitated vessel, are very graphically set forth; and only equalled by the gentleness and beauty of those sentences which record the peaceful termination of their dangers—when, after crying unto the Lord, He brings them out of their distresses, and brings them into their desired haven, making the storm a calm, and causing the waves to be still, so that the affrighted seamen are glad because they are quiet.

33-43.—What remains is of a more miscellaneous character, presenting us with additional instances in detail of vicissitudes in the lot and circumstances of men, and connecting these with the moral administration of Him who is the maker and governor of all. It is because of the wickedness of them who dwell therein that He turns the fruitful land into barrenness. Emigrant settlers in that nomadic age, on the other hand, hungry and destitute though they be, yet if they turn and please God, will have the wilderness turned into a fertile region, where they might sow and plant, and build cities, and become wealthy and flourishing. But they are not secure from vicissitudes, for again may they be brought low, through the vice and violence of their rulers; who, in their turn, however, may be cast down from their proud elevation, while the victims of their tyranny are not only delivered but advanced to prosperity and honour.—Let us make a study of these vicissitudes, and we shall learn what the way and the designs of Providence really are—that the regards of Him who sitteth on high rest upon the good—that He loveth and patronizeth righteousness—

that He hateth and will inflict its merited doom upon all iniquity.

PSALM CVIII.—This psalm is a compilation from two former ones, of lvii. 7-11 and lx. 5-12. It is the effusion of a warrior who had had experience of adversities. God had cast him off at times—(verse 11)—but still he had not lost confidence, for still his hope is in God. Through Him it is his assured expectation that he shall do valiantly —that he shall tread down his enemies. But though this primarily be the psalm of a monarch and a commander, there is much in it that is signally applicable to all God's servants. The praise might be fully concurred in by all; and more especially in celebrating that blessed conjunction of truth and mercy, which is the great principle of the Divine economy, and foundation of all our hopes. And ours, too, is a warfare in which we have many enemies, and for success in which we have to cast ourselves on Him who is the "Lord our strength, the Captain of our salvation," and our great refuge and deliverer from the troubles of life.—Let us not trust in an arm of flesh. Let us not trust in man, but in God. I may, perhaps, even now be entering on a painful collision with my fellows. Let me neither fail in duty to them, nor in dependence on Thee, O God.

PSALM CIX. 1-8.—Mason Good conceives this psalm to have been prompted by the treachery of Ahithophel; while Horsley entitles it—Messiah's Prophetic Malediction of the Jewish Nation—a prophecy, and not a prayer, though delivered in the form of complaint and imprecation; but really having nothing in it more offensive than

the prophetic curses of the patriarchs. For aught I can see, though Horsley's hypothesis might be sound, yet Good's may be a true one; in which case I would say, as before, that if lawful to war for the destruction of enemies, it should be as lawful to wish for, and why not as lawful to pray for it? But if there be aught in the progressiveness, which I have often had occasion to remark as being one of the properties or characters of God's moral administration, all such wishes are proscribed by Christianity, even that Christianity which will at length put an end to all wars. For the Bishop's theory, it may well and forcibly be said that the opening verses are striking descriptions of our Saviour's enemies, even those enemies for whom He prayed, and more especially of Judas, at whose hand Satan stood when he instigated him to betray Jesus. But more than this, Peter, in Acts i., expressly refers to Judas the prophecy or prayer here uttered, that another should take his office, or charge, or bishopric—επισκοπη, both in the Septuagint version and Greek New Testament. —My God, save me from the awful judgment of my prayer becoming sin.

9-20.—There are prayers here which will not admit of the explanation or vindication that I have already given —that is, if it be lawful to war for the destruction of enemies, why may it not be lawful both to wish and to pray for it? But there is more here than the destruction of enemies that is prayed for, and that is, the wretchedness and poverty of their children; unless, indeed, it shall be pled, that the posterity of defeated and destroyed warriors inherit their quarrels, and are actuated by their spirit of revenge. Yet, on the whole, I do not feel in dependent of the hypothesis, that these prayers are the

predictions of inspired men, speaking not of themselves, but as moved by the Holy Ghost. They read better as denunciations than as prayers; and I must confess a certain revolt from such sentences, if considered to be petitions, as—"Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children." Viewed as denunciations, they strongly indicate God's corporate dealing with races and families—the punishment of fathers extending to children, and men suffering for the sin of their ancestors—the iniquity of their fathers being held by God in continual remembrance, and the sin of their mothers not blotted out.

February, 1846.

21-31.—Let me at least pray that none may speak evil against my soul. Thou knowest, O God, how poor and needy I am, and what it is that wounds my heart. Deliver me, O God; save me from morbid anxieties; and enable me to walk wisely and warily. Let not the reproaches of my adversaries come upon me: neither let there be a shaking of the head on the part of those who would triumph in my fall. I need, O God, to be importunate in my reiterations for help, and guidance, and extrication. Let it be made manifest that Thou favourest me, O God. Rich in Thy blessings, let me rejoice even in the midst of cruel mockeries and maledictions on every side of me. Cause me to praise Thee, O God. With this manifestation I so much desire of Thyself as the living God, instead of viewing Thee, as heretofore, as but an abstraction, or a principle, or a name: with this entertainment of Thee as a person, rather than a principle, help me to praise as well as pray. Be at my right hand, O God, to save me from the accuser of

the brethren, and from all whom he would instigate to condemn my soul.

PSALM CX.—This is a truly noble psalm, notwithstanding its obscurities. The application to the Messiah is clear and undoubted. (See Mark xii. 36, and Heb. v. 6, vii. 17.) The exaltation of Christ and triumph over His enemies form the themes of this lofty composition.... By "the rod of His strength," we understand the sceptre of His power, wherewith He subdues and gains the mastery over all who are opposed to Him.—In the day of Thy power, O God, may I "be made willing," even through the power of Christ resting upon me—that regenerative power which will extend to a host whom no man can number—so as to make the progeny of the Redeemer more numerous than dew-drops, these children of the morning. Give me, O Lord, the beauty of holiness; and forgive my wretched deviations therefrom in the times that are past, so that no more mention shall be made of them. Thine, O Saviour, is an everlasting Priesthood. From the place whereunto Thou art exalted do Thou look down upon me, and "see of the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied." The day is yet coming when the little stone shall wax into a great mountain and occupy the whole earth—when the kings of the earth shall be overthrown, and their kingdoms become the kingdoms of the Messiah.... Is it death that is signified by His "drinking of the brook in the way?"—that river of separation which flowed between us and God. Is it His drinking of the cup which His Father put into His hands that is here meant? and was it therefore that His head was lifted up? It was because He underwent the

death of the cross that God highly exalted Him. (Phil. ii. 8, 9.)

PSALM CXI.—We are now in the midst of very precious psalms.—Give me, O Lord, in the spirit of the admirable one before me, to praise Thee with my whole heart. Lift me, O God, to a faculty for this high exercise. And O that I had more of social religion, more of fellowship with others in the assemblies and congregations of the saints.... There is a high sanction given here for the religious study of the works of nature. But the works which are specified throughout these verses are more the works of Providence, and such as illustrate the moral perfections of God, and the character of His government and dealings with the children of men—as His righteousness and compassion, and fidelity to His covenant, and those wonders of power by which He ushered His people from Egypt to Canaan. Let me be rightly impressed, O God, by the sureness and stability of Thy commandments, and of all Thy testimonies: they stand fast and for ever. Let me evince my good understanding by the faithful observance of them. Let me be wise in Thy fear; and let me ever have a revering sense of Thy truth, and justice, and holiness.

PSALM CXII.—This is a pre-eminent psalm.—Give me, O Lord, to delight greatly in Thy commandments, and so that my spiritual or inner heaven may commence, and be carried forward here. Let me not be anxiously fearful for my children, but cast this care, too, and with all confidence, upon God. He will provide; and O grant that I may leave them an inheritance in a light shining before

men. Fix upon me all the characteristics of an upright and good man—integrity and generosity, and sensibility to the wants and sufferings of others. I long for the light of further manifestations. Thou knowest my state of darkness, and what the engrossments are which most absorb and occupy my thoughts. Set me free from these, O God, that henceforth I may serve Thee without distraction. Give me discretion in the management of my affairs, that I may not be moved or terrified for evil tidings of disaster of any sort. May my ways please Thee, O God, and then shall I have peace on every side. Let my heart be fixed, trusting in Thee as the Lord my Helper; and then shall I not be afraid of what man can do unto me. Let my desire upon my enemies be for their conversion, O God. I feel how deficient I have been in the liberalities of Christian benevolence. May I so acquit myself as to inherit Thy promises, O God; and save me from the destruction which cometh on those whose god is this world, and who mind earthly things.

PSALM CXIII.—A joyful effusion of thanksgiving and praise. It is an ascription of glory to the Lord throughout all time and all space—from this time forth, and for ever, (verse 2,) and throughout the whole world. (verse 3.) He is represented as the Head of the moral world, being above all nations, and the Head of the material, as being above the heavens, (verse 4;) so that well may it be said of Him—"He dwelleth on high." (verse 5.) Yet, though high, He humbleth Himself to view the various departments of His own creation. Even to look on the things in heaven is a condescension by Him who chargeth His angels with folly. But He stops not here: He dwells

with the lowly on earth.... Let us here remark the elevation which it was held to be in these days for a wife to become a mother, and have children. This is acknowledged, in various places of Scripture, as a deliverance and preferment akin to that of raising men from the humiliations of poverty, or enslavement, or disgrace among men. Witness the effusions of Hannah in the Old Testament, and of Mary and Elizabeth in the New. This psalm is regarded by many as a composition set forth by the captives on their return from Babylon. The sentiment accords well with this supposition, though there seems no very distinct evidence to prove it.

PSALM CXIV.—The reference to Judah in verse 2 makes it probable that this psalm was composed after Jerusalem had become the seat of the Hebrew monarchy, and before the disseveration from it of the ten tribes—for then, too, Israel was within its dominion. The events which are here celebrated date a far way back; but then the historical recollections of the olden times were incorporated with the religion of the chosen people; and their frequent anniversaries gave frequent opportunities for the poetic and devotional recitation of them. Both Jordan and the Red Sea attest the part which God had in the translation of His own people from those of a strange language. "The sea saw it"—saw or felt the power of God upon them, and obeyed it. The hills bounded, or heaved, as at the giving of the law, when Sinai, with all its eminences, quaked before the presence of the Most High —even of Him who caused waters to arise in the desert, nay, struck a fountain out of the hard and flinty rock. A triumphant commemoration.

PSALM CXV.—This psalm seems to have been composed after a victory—the merit of which the Israelites here disclaim for themselves, and ascribe wholly to Him who is the God of battles—whose mercy and whose truth are alike done homage to. The consideration that they were heathen over whom they had prevailed, leads to the institution of a contrast between their gods and the true God in the heavens. After a just account and appreciation of the vanity of idols, they call on the people of all classes to transfer their confidence, and place it in the right quarter, even on the Lord Jehovah, who had been their help and defence against all enemies. They who fear the Lord are probably the stranger proselytes, who are thus distinguished from the priests and people of their own nation. The same threefold distinction is repeated in verses 12 and 13. There are promises addressed to them of temporal good things in the increase of their wealth and their families; and the pure theology of the composition stands nobly distinguished from the senseless and degrading superstitions of the people around. He who dwells in the heavens, and who made both heaven and earth—the latter for a habitation to men—He is the God of their acknowledgments and worship. They had been saved from death and destruction, and were still in the land of the living—therefore would they praise the Lord, and trust in His preservations for ever.

PSALM CXVI.—If the former was a national, this is more of a personal psalm; and it shines forth in the collection as a star of the first magnitude. Many commentators ascribe it to Hezekiah, on the occasion of his recovery from threatened death; and it is certainly in keeping

with tnat event. The first verses, more particularly, are well suited to the state of Hezekiah's mind, under what he had been led to apprehend as his mortal disease, and also the whole of it to that enlargement and gratitude which he felt when the prolongation of his life was granted to him.—Give me to love Thee, O Lord. Give me to say of Thee unto my soul at all times—"return unto Thy rest." May I walk before Thee, O God, and be of service to Thy cause in the land of the living. Open my mouth that I may speak; and give me such a faith as will prompt the utterance. Lord deliver me from all rash suspicion of my fellows; yet let me trust in Thee, and not in men. Loose me from the bonds of my guilt and corruption, that henceforth I may go onward with alacrity and vigour on the walk of new obedience. May my whole life be one of dedication, and thanksgiving, and praise.

PSALM CXVII.—This, the shortest of the psalms, is altogether attuned to praise. O that I could rise to this more elevated platform of the spiritual life; and having my own heart filled with gratitude and a sense of God's glory, could call upon all around me to join in the lofty celebration of Him who sitteth on high, and ruleth over all. Out of the depths would I cry unto Thee, O Lord, that I may be brought out of the miry and the horrible place, and placed on that secure and serene summit, where I may descry Thine excellencies, and rejoice in the contemplation of them. O give me to make mention of Thy merciful kindness, and let my mouth be opened, so that I can proclaim to others what the Lord hath done for my soul. The call here to praise the Lord is addressed to all nations, and to all people; and, as frequently in these

sacred compositions, the mercy and the truth are spoken of together. (See the analogous Psalm lvii.)

PSALM CXVIII. 1-16.—This seems to have been composed after a victory, as a number of the psalms undoubtedly were, according to the following important testimony from Josephus—"And now David being freed from wars and dangers, and enjoying for the future a profound peace, composed sacred songs and hymns in various metres, some of which were trimeters, and others pentameters. He also constructed instruments of music, and taught the Levites to chant hymns to God, as well on the Sabbath day as on other festivals." But how precious, besides, is this psalm to the private Christian—for he, too, is often in distress and difficulties, till set by the Lord in a large place. Let me not fear what man can do unto me. Let me trust not in man, but in God. Let me see my desire on mine adversaries; but let this desire, O God, be for their repentance and salvation. What dangers and difficulties David was helped through! let me look unto God and take courage.... In verse 13, *Thou* must refer to one of David's enemies. We might well apply it to Satan.—O God, enable me to resist him, that he may flee from me. Help me to do valiantly in the Christian warfare, that I might pass onward from the exclamation of—"O wretched man" to the acclamation of—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord." Thus will the Lord become my strength and song, because my salvation. Then shall I rejoice in love and liberty.

17-29.—My God, I pray for enlargement, and for deliverance from Thy chastening hand. Above all things, lead me in that patent way, and through that open door,

by which alone I can win to salvation, and righteousness, and spiritual life. O may I not only live, but live to declare the works of God. This passage is full of gospel, and parts of it are referred to as such by the Saviour Himself. The corner stone, and the blessedness of Him who cometh in the name of the Lord, clearly relate to Him. Though at its first composition then, the gate here spoken of may have been understood as the gate of the Temple, and the day may have been some Jewish anniversary—yet now let us apply them to the gate of Christ's mediatorship, and to His proclaimed day of salvation. Let me forthwith enter that gate; and to-day, while it is called to-day, let me harden not my heart, but let me rejoice and be glad therein. Save me from guilt, O Lord, and send the grace which will cause my soul to prosper and be in health. In Thy light may I clearly see light; and now that I am reconciled by the sacrifice of Christ, give me to offer up the spiritual sacrifice of all my evil affections—binding them unto the altar, to be utterly consumed as burnt-offerings were. Then will I praise God at liberty, and make mention of His goodness to my soul.

PSALM CXIX. 1-8.—The general lesson of this noble psalm is the supreme worth and importance of God's revelation to man, designated in various ways—as His word, His law, His testimonies, His statutes, His judgments. The inestimable properties of this revelation are largely descanted upon, in a multitude of distinct sayings, the weight and preciousness of which are felt by every spiritual mind. The outset is remarkably the same with that of Psalm i. —O Lord, cleanse me from my defilements, that henceforth

I may walk in Thy law. Give me to treasure up Thy testimonies, and to seek Thee, not with a divided, but with the whole heart. My God, where is my diligence in keeping Thy precepts, so as to do no iniquity? I truly need Thy direction, and the impulse of Thy Spirit, to the work of obedience. Enable me, O God, to lift up my face in society without shame, on the strength of my past sins being now blotted out, and my present, honest, consistent, and aspiring Christianity. Put uprightness and truth into my inward parts. Let me be wise and understanding to know what the will and the judgments of the Lord are. Leave me not, then, in darkness, O Lord; but enlighten me in Thy way, and enable me to keep on it.

9-16.—O for purity on a religious principle, and grounded on an earnest attention and respect for the Word of God. The psalmist had, in the last stanza, pronounced on the blessedness of those who seek the Lord with the whole heart; and here he says in prayer—that thus have I sought Thee. Let me be enabled to say so in truth. Let me not deviate from the path of Thy commandments; and to ensure this, let me lay up Thy word in my heart, and cherish a fearful sense therefrom of the evil of sin. O my God, Thou knowest how foreign from the whole set and habit of my mind is that of respect unto Thee as a master and commander. Set up thine authority within me, and remind me at all times what that is which Thou wouldst have me to do. For what title have I to take up Thy words in my mouth, so as to speak of them to others, unless I observe them for myself. Restore me to the paths of righteousness, and then by Thee shall my lips be opened. And let me not only meditate on Thy precepts, and keep them in remembrance, but may they prove the

rejoicing of my heart—may I delight in them as in the very comfort and sustenance of my soul.

17-24.—Deal bountifully with me, O God, in the way of clearing off all my present anxieties, and introduce me to light and life, and enlargement.... Verse 18 is among the most precious of our Scriptural notabilia. I indeed feel myself a stranger—and have marvellously little sympathy with my fellows; but hide not from me the knowledge of Thy will, nor suffer me to hide myself from those of my own flesh. I have long fixed on verse 20 as the most descriptive of my own state and experience of any in the Bible. What straining have I had after a right understanding of God and His ways, more especially the way of salvation!—Give me greater clearness and fulness of understanding, O God. Save me, save me, O God, from reproach and contempt: I cannot say—because I have kept Thy testimonies; but oh, accept of my contrite acknowledgments, and let me henceforth not only meditate on Thy words, but let them both rejoice my heart and regulate all my goings. Then will I rise above my fellows who would triumph over me. Save me from their calumnies, O Lord: save me from the children of pride and of power. But let me bear a constant respect to Thine all-seeing eye; and in the moments of collision and controversy, let me look upward to Thee for the wisdom and the charity which might teach me rightly to acquit myself.

25-32.—Verses 25 and 32 I mark as eminent among the notabilia of Scripture. How strikingly descriptive of myself, and I believe of every natural man—that "my soul cleaveth unto the dust," unto the things of sense, and sight, and materialism—so as to be dead unto God and the things of faith! Quicken and make me alive unto

Thyself, O God; and let me add with the psalmist—"according to Thy word;" a clause subjoined to other petitions beside this—as in verse 9, where, through the directions of the word, its disciple is said to be purified; and verse 28, where, by the encouragements of the word, strength is prayed for; and here, where it is still according to the word, or, by a right sense of its doctrines and declarations, a living faith is imparted to the soul. It is thus that all the influences of the Spirit are, by and through, and according to the word, wherewith He entirely quadrates in all His motions and revelations. It is when thus operated upon, and converted and enlightened myself, that I am both incited and enabled, out of the fulness of a renewed heart, to speak to others also. (verses 26 and 27.) So, then, enlarge my heart, O God. Loose all its bands and straitenings. Let me break forth and beyond the sense of guilt, and the power of corruption; and then shall I walk and not be weary, run and not faint.

33-40.—Let me persevere in obedience, for it is only by maintaining this unto the end that I shall have any part in the perseverance of the saints. Let me be understanding what Thy law is, and this will enlist my affections into the work of obeying it. How the moral and intellectual act and react on each other! Yet we have not to pray only for the one, in the confidence that the other will of course follow. We have to pray for both—not only for the instruction and the understanding, as in verses 33 and 34, but for the willingness, as in verse 36.—My God, let me ever prefer Thy service to that of Mammon; and let me delight myself greatly in Thy commandments.... Verse 37 has been long one of my notabilia. Let me shrink from the first beginnings of evil, by shutting or turning away

the inlets of temptation; and O that instead of being so alive unto sin, I were made alive unto God, and to the righteousness which He loves! Let me dedicate myself unto Thee, and be stablished in every good word and work, and may I see Thy way clearly before me. Turn away from me, O God, the reproach which I fear—a fear wherewith even now Thou art exercising me, perhaps in judgment for my past sins; but let me be assured a good judgment, and may good come from it to my soul. I long to be as I ought. Set me right, O God, and give me a just and quick sense of my obligations thereto.

41-48.—O God, confer on me Thy mercies, and let me trust in Thy word; and thus armed, let me be able to turn away the reproach of my fellows. Teach me how to answer when there is a strife of tongues. May Thy word dwell in me richly in all wisdom. May it never fail me, but in every hour of necessity may I be ready to give an answer to every man. Let me have the hope, both of glory in heaven and grace upon earth, according to Thy testimonies; and thus shall I be enabled to keep Thy law for ever and ever—that is, both here in time, and hereafter in eternity—even the law of love, which is a law of liberty; that law to which I aspire with the earnest expectation of being delivered from bondage, and translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus fortified and upheld, let me not be ashamed of the testimony of Christ, even before the great and the learned of this world. Above all may I love the work of obedience; and in virtue of the new taste given to me, let duty be my delight and my best loved employment. And let not only my heart and mind be engaged in Thy service, delighting therein, and meditating thereon; but let my hands, the

whole of the outer man, be put into requisition—that I may glorify the Lord with my body too, as well as my soul and spirit.

49-56.—Let my hope rest on the actual word; and let me plead for God's fulfilment of it, His own actual declaration. Give me, O Lord, to abound in this hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the word which quickens and comforts; and let me here refer to Dr. Buchanan's precious treatise upon affliction. May the occupation of my mind with the law, and the magnitude of its cognate interests and relations, enable me to brave the mortifications which man would lay upon me, and to rise above them. Let me learn more and observe more of the ways of God in history—regarding all history, in fact, as being a history of providence. O that I could share more in the abhorrence here expressed for that which is evil; that I felt more of that hatred of iniquity which is felt by the great Exemplar of all righteousness in the heavens. I should rank verse 54 among the notable sayings of Scripture.—Give me, O Lord, to delight in Thy commandments, and let my meditations of Thee and of Thy statutes be sweet unto my soul. Let my relish for the law of God, and my practical observance thereof, keep pace the one with the other. They have a reciprocal influence. If I have pleasure in thinking of God's law in the night watches, it is because I keep God's precepts.

57-64.—Be Thou my portion, O Lord, and the strength of my heart; and then shall I not be dejected by the adversities of life, not even by the desertion of friends; and so will I be saved from the sorrow of this world, which worketh death. With my whole heart would I entreat Thy favour—with my whole soul would I thirst

after God. Lord, give me to renounce the old man: henceforth may all things become new with me. I have little time to lose. Well may I now make haste, and turn me to the paths of righteousness. O may Thy testimonies be more to me than all the riches of this world; and henceforth let the rule and principle of my existence be the will of God. Let me commit my cause unto God; and know what it is to rejoice amid the worst tribulations which man can lay upon me. Let me not forget Thy law through the day; and at midnight I shall feel gratitude and gladness. The same connexion is stated in verses 55 and 56.—Let my converse henceforth be with the excellent of the earth—with them who fear God. I want to have the whole set and habit of my life changed towards God and godliness. Teach me Thy statutes, and help me to keep them; and let me rejoice in the fulness of Thine innumerable mercies.

65-72.—My God, give me the faith that overcometh, and the charity that endureth all things; and this will indeed be dealing well with me, whether or not Thou removest the external tribulation wherewith I am now exercised. Let me well understand that the precepts form essential ingredients of sound doctrine; and that belief reaches to commandments as well as truths. The commandment for the present is not to be careful about many things, or any thing, but to cast all my care upon God. My afflictions will indeed be good for me if they teach me this lesson, and loosen my affections from the world. Teach me, in Thy goodness, O Lord, both to know and to do Thy statutes.... The first clause of verse 68 is a notabile. Let not the provocations of calumny draw me from Thy good word and way. May I realize the experience

of the Apostle, who delighted in the law of God after the inward man. O may this be the fruit of my affliction—that I learn Thy statutes. There is a moral smart in my present trial. In as far as it involves the loss of money, let me amply console myself in this—that if the effect of the discipline shall be that I learn Thy law, this will be far better than thousands of gold and silver. Give me even now to taste the comforts of the new obedience of the Gospel.

73-80.—The first clause of verse 73 is also a notabile.—O that I felt as I ought the subordination and dependence of myself, as a thing formed, on Him who formed and fashioned me.... How often are the commandments of God spoken of as the objects not of our practical observance alone, but of our understanding. (See Eph. v. 17.)—Let me not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Let me be sound in the statutes of the Lord, having a right intelligence, as well as maintaining a practical observance of them. O let my hope be in Thy word of promise; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. ... Perfect, if it be Thy blessed will, my views and purposes in regard to the West Port. Let the religious lookers on have cause of triumph there. Thou art pleased to exercise my faith and patience; but let me trust in Thee, who wilt thus exercise me in faithfulness, and wilt yet comfort me with Thy lovingkindness—so as that my confidence shall not be put to shame. I look unto God. Let my chief care be to be well with Thee. Let my designs and doings be ever such that the pious and the good would rejoice in their prosperous consummation, and none be mortified thereby but the enemies of truth and righteousness.

81-88.—My soul doth faint for a something which I

feel I have not got hold of; but failing my adequate conception of its archetype realities, let me meanwhile place reliance, both for the present and the future, upon Thy word. Assuredly I am in that very state of distance and deficiency which the psalmist complains of—a longing for what I have not attained, for a comfort and confidence which I yet am short of. I may well be compared to "a bottle in the smoke," in virtue of the obscuration which lies between me and the distant unseen objects of faith; but how admirably in keeping is such a state with the resolved purpose of remembering the statutes and doing them, in the train of which doing Christ hath promised to manifest Himself. (John xiv. 21.) The objects of faith in the heavens may be hidden from the view of my conceiving faculty; but the doings upon earth are matters on hand · and let me be faithful in these, even till my light shall break forth as the morning. Thus let me work for comfort and clearness.... What a noble text is verse 83, and let it henceforth be one of my notanda.—My God, in the midst of injustice and hostile machinations, let me adhere to Thee with firm trust and purpose of heart. Quicken and enlighten and enlarge me, O God; and let me confide in the promises given to them who obey.

89-96.—This accordance, in point of stability and sureness, between the utterances of God's word and the ordinances or laws of God's world, carries a precious lesson along with it—teaching us to rely, with as great security, on the fulfilment of Bible promises and Bible declarations as on the constancy of Nature.—Let me be as settled, O God, in the truth of Thy word as I am in the anticipations of light in the morning, or of the courses of the sun and moon in the firmament. Thus, O God, thus

may I be settled and grounded in the hope of the Gospel, so as never to be moved away from it. Against all the likelihoods and fears of nature let me ever maintain a steadfast faith in the faithfulness of God. Thus fortified, let me, amid the afflictions of life, have recourse to the book of Thy law—that in the occupations and exercises of the new obedience, and in the prospects of a land of rest and rejoicing, I may be saved from despair, and quickened to other desires than such as Thou mightest be pleased to disappoint and mortify in the administration of a wholesome discipline. Take me, O God, as one of Thine own. Form me to Thyself. Give me more diligence in seeking Thee and Thy precepts. Let me be shielded by faith and charity against the hostile or the unjust, who seek to overbear and oppress me. O let me consider the precepts of the New Dispensation, and put its blessed injunction of patience and peace and love, even to adversaries, into full accomplishment and effect. ... To "have seen an end of all perfection," is to have tried the world, as Solomon in Ecclesiastes says he had done, and learned its vanity; but along with this, let me learn also the fulness of God's word, which provides a rule for all cases, and a remedy against all evils.

97-104.—My God, let me ever meditate on Thy law, because I love it, and then shall I have great peace—nothing will offend me; then shall I have the life and peace of those who are spiritually minded. Surely the right moral would lead to a far sounder intellectual state. And how much wiser would it make me than those whose wisdom lies in skill to overreach and deceive. By dwelling on Thy testimonies, I become wiser than all the teachers of secular learning; by keeping Thy precepts, I

get more understanding than was possessed by the mere scholars and discoverers of former days. Let me be most observant of Thy word, most studious in the avoidance of all that is forbidden by it. Let me not depart, O God, from Thy counsel, by walking in counsel of my own. But may Thy spirit be ever present with His lessons, and keep them in my remembrance. And give me to feel the sweetness of religion, the pleasantness of all its ways, the peace that is in its paths.... The great lesson of this passage is the wisdom of piety—the connexion between the good and the true. Every evil way is a false way. Therefore let me hate it with a perfect hatred—abhorring the evil, cleaving to the good.

March, 1846.

105-112.—May the entrance of Thy words give me light, O Lord.... Verse 105 is one of the notables of Scripture.—Let me dedicate myself to Thy service; and bind me to that covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure. Lord, quicken me in the affliction that now lies upon me. Make me alive unto Thy word; and then will the cares of an evil world lie light upon my heart. Accept, O God, of the free-will-offerings of my mouth—the aspirations which I lift up spontaneously and habitually. My God, sustain these as prayers; and give me the comfort of knowing that they are prompted by a spirit of grace and supplication which Thou hast poured upon me. O teach me, in return for the frequent up-looking to Thee for my guidance in the various circumstances of life.... "My soul being continually in my hand," signifies the precariousness of the psalmist's life, as ready at all times to be snatched from him by his enemies. Let not the worst of dangers so engross me as

to shut out, or lead me to err from Thy law. May Thy word be my constant companion, in which is all my joy, and to which are all my inclinations.

113-120.—Deliver me, O God, from the power of vain thoughts, from the imaginations of licentiousness, from the broodings of felt or fancied injustice. May I turn from these to the study of Thy law; and then great will be my peace. Be thou my refuge, O God; and when Thy manifestations fail me, let me, though in darkness and having no light, still trust in Thy word. Let me shun the fellowships of the ungodly; and observe the law of God in all its spirit and extent, even though I should become very peculiar thereby. O Lord, put not my confidence—the confidence I have in Thine own sayings—put it not to shame. Let me be upheld by Thy strength along the walk of obedience, and then my footsteps shall not slip. But let me not count on Thy sustaining grace, if I respect not Thy statutes, but deviate therefrom, and handle Thy testimonies deceitfully. Let me have respect unto Thy dealings with the wicked; and let me tremble lest theirs should be my portion also. Let all the appliances of Thy word—its invitations, its promises, its terrors—have each their due and right effect upon my soul. Let Thy threatenings drive me from the fellowships of the world. Let Thy blessed offer of welcome and good-will draw me into fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and with the household of God. Then, after the terrors of Thy law have done their part in persuading me, the faith of Thy Gospel, working by love to God and goodness, will do its part in imparting peace and joy to my soul, and inspiring me with delight in the testimonies of God.

121-128.—Give me the spirit of equity, O Lord, that on this ground I may ask, and do ask, for deliverance from them who would oppress me. I will devolve my cause upon Thee. Save me from the insolence and injustice of men. O Lord, I long to be found in the righteousness of Christ, and to have a firm hold of His salvation; but let me well observe how much the knowledge and the observance of Thy statutes have to do with these high privileges. Let me, therefore, even from the outset, and before I count myself to have attained, give me to esteem highly the work and the ways of obedience, and to shun with abhorrence all that is false and evil. Give me to understand and do Thy plain biddings; and this will open the way for my understanding of higher mysteries. May Thy precepts every day become dearer and more delightful to me. Thus may I escape the evil that is to come; for surely, O God, we may well look for Thy judgments in an age when Thy law is so openly violated. Will not the public and legalized desecration of the Sabbath bring speedily upon us a day of vengeance?—Let me maintain my steadfastness, and be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man at His coming and appearance in the world.

129-136.—Open Thou mine eyes to behold the wonderful or admirable things which are contained in the Book of Thy law and testimony, and let me not be satisfied with admiring them; but make this the reason for also observing them.... Verse 130 ranks high among the notanda of Scripture. We have here the self-evidencing power of the Bible.—Give me through it, O Lord, of that wisdom which Thou revealest unto babes. Truly I long for brighter assurances and larger manifestations. Let

me read and pray for them. Guide me in the way of Thy commandments. Take pity on my darkness and helplessness, O Lord. And in the absence of clear spiritual views, may my steps—at least my palpable and everyday steps—be ordered according to the plain directions of Thy word; and save me from every sin that doth easily beset, and would lord it over me.... Verse 133 is also one of the Scripture notanda.—Deliver me, O God, from the injustice which I fear; but however this may be, let nothing so offend or seduce me as that I shall lose my hold of Thy statutes; and thus may I be shone upon at last by the light of Thy countenance. Teach and enlighten me from first to last; and O endow me with the right sensibilities as well as the right perceptions; for where, alas! is my grief or affliction, because of the world's ungodliness?

137-144.—My God, placed as I am amid the conflicting judgments of my fellows, let me look upwardly to Thee and to Thy righteous judgments, and be still. Let me repose in the faithfulness of Thy word. But O how little am I jealous for God, or with a godly jealousy. They are the injuries inflicted upon self which affect me. My God, give me to feel more for Thine honour, and less for the concerns or the cares of my own selfishness. Let Thy word be my treasure. Let me love it for its freedom from all the alloy of weakness or imperfection of any sort; and therefore more to be desired than gold, even the finest gold. Save me from all undue affection for this world's wealth; and yet let me not be despised because of my excessive facility or the fear of man. Give me to attach myself to that which is everlasting; and let it be my portion. If I but love Thy law, nothing will offend me.

O that I could delight myself therewith, even in the midst of tribulations. Give me the victory over my present difficulties and trials—a serene confidence in Thyself, and a resolute clinging unto Him in whose fulness I am invited to rejoice. It is exceedingly wrong to be thus depressed and distracted by the unexpected treatment of men whom I trusted, when I have such a God for my help and refuge. Give me, O Lord, a right spiritual understanding; and then shall I be alive unto Thyself, and dead unto the world and its evils.

145-152.—Let my cry unto God be at all times with my whole heart; and in all circumstances may it be my firm resolve that I shall keep His precepts. Save me, O God, from my present perplexities. Let me be extricated from these, and, undistracted by this world, let my incessant meditation, night and day, be upon Thee and upon Thy word. Thou knowest, O God, how much I stand in need of Thy compassionate regards. Keep me right amid the difficulties which now encompass me; and let not the urgency either of this world's interests or provocations, drive me from the contemplations and higher cares of eternity. O that I were more quick and alive to the things of faith, and then sense and time would have less effect upon me; and instead of being kept awake by broodings on the injustice or adverse disposition of man, the Word of God, and the great and wondrous things therein, then would keep me awake. When hemmed in by enemies may I think of the friend above who is nearer to me than they, and sticketh closer to me than a brother. Let me repose at all times on the stability and truth of Thy blessed testimonies. Give me, O Lord, a part and an interest in this as most suitable to my actual circumstances,—

"The troubles that afflict the just
In number many be,
But yet at length out of them all
The Lord shall set them free."

153-160.—I need deliverance from a special affliction or trial at this moment. Let not its urgencies, O God, expel Thy word from my recollections and regards. I have also a cause to plead. Carry me through it, O God, in safety; and let me all the while be alive to Thy will as made known in Thy word.... How instructive to be told that salvation is far from us, if God's statutes are not cared for or sought after!—Let not a misunderstood orthodoxy seduce or turn me from these. The mercy of God is the fountain-head of regeneration. (Titus iii. 5.)—According to that mercy do Thou revive and quicken me. I am beset with adverse interests and wills: O let me not decline from charity and justice in the midst of this turmoil. But O what a discovery of myself to find that I am more grieved because of their injuries to me than because of their non-observance of Thy law. Create the right sensibility within me; and give me the love of thy precepts, for I can more confidently say that I desire to love them than that I love them actually. Quicken me, therefore, O Lord, so as that I may delight in Thy law after the inner man. And let me repose on the stability of Thy word, which will hold true from everlasting to everlasting; and the power of which over me should surely carry it over the power of that world which passeth away.

161-168.—Let me "not fear what man can do unto me;" but let me stand in awe of God and sin not. May the fear of Him supplant every other fear, and the love of Him subordinate every other love. May the precious Bible be at all times my treasure, the joy of my heart, the

consolation and delight of my soul.... I would make a notabile of verse 162.—Let me hate the remotest tendency to falsehood; and let simplicity and godly sincerity mark all my correspondence. Give me, O Lord, such a love to Thy law that nothing may either disturb my peace or offend me. O that I could attain to the frame of habitual praise! May Thy righteous judgments evoke the gratitude and admiration of my soul.... What a high place belongs to verse 165 among the notabilia or memorabilia of Scripture! and verse 166 is one of the most important that can be adduced for the theology which advocates the inseparable alliance of faith and works, *ab initio,* or from the very outset of the Christian life.—Lord, let me at once and from this time forward, ever hope for Thy salvation and do Thy commandments. Let my observance extend to all Thy testimonies, be they doctrinal or preceptive, and if I but keep them entire, I shall exceedingly love and rejoice in them. May all Thy word be before me, even as all my ways are before Thee, O God.

169-176.—This concluding stanza presents us with the last and closing importunities of the psalmist; and we may look here for the objects to which his aspirations and wishes were chiefly directed. And so it is with a beseeching earnestness that in this final passage he seeks for the understanding of God's word, and for the delivery from all evil which it promises to the soul. Mark well in these verses the connexion between plain and palpable obedience on the one hand, and on the other the higher spiritual accomplishments of the religious character. The utterance of praise, for example, by the lips, comes after the being schooled into the commandments. The choice of the precepts, the prayers for help to perform them, the

being taught not only to know the statutes but I apprehend also to do them—these, if they do not precede must at least go along with our earnest desires for salvation, and our delight in God's law—the law of our duty from the first, and afterwards our most congenial and best loved employment. It is thus that the judgments, comprehending all the rules and principles of His most righteous administration, are helpful to the life of the soul, and to the higher functions and exercises of spiritual religion.—Seek me out, then, O God, and restore to me the joys of Thy salvation, while I am seeking the way of life, and bearing in mind the requirements of that law which is a schoolmaster for bringing unto Christ.... Let me remark, on parting with this distinguished psalm, that it is more remarkable for the intense and emphatic weight of its few great lessons than for the number or variety of these.

PSALM CXX.—Thou, O God, art a very present help in time of trouble. Let my cry, then, ascend unto Thee at all times. Thou hearer of prayer, deliver me more especially from the falsehood of lying tongues; but O may all the semblances of deceit to which I am exposed, and all the suspicions which the conduct of those whom I at one time trusted might awaken in my bosom—let not these extinguish the principle of charity within me. My God, save me from so great a transgression. It is not for me to lift the hand of vengeance;—"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;" but I do feel in a land of strangers. The atmosphere that gets up among the competitions of interest is most uncongenial to me. I long for peace and confidence between man and man. I never could breathe with

comfort in the stormy element of debate; and more especially when the hateful ingredient of money or selfishness in its grossness formed the matter of controversy betwixt the parties. I pray for the charity that seeketh not its own.

PSALM CXXI.—Whatever occasion shall be conjectured for this celebrated and very precious psalm, it is a psalm for all ages—whether as sung by the pilgrims Zionward from all parts of Israel, to their great public festivals, when travelling to the hills that were round about Jerusalem, or for the Christian pilgrim of the present day looking upward to God, and onward to eternity.—O that I could thus cast my care and confidence on the God of heaven and earth, and that I felt the security which is here expressed in His ever wakeful and all superintending Providence. My God, I look up to Thee for guidance and protection in all my movements. He will ward off from me all external violence. He will uphold my goings out and comings in. He will enable me to steer aright in the midst of plotting and artful adversaries; and O how ample His guardianship is—even from this time and for evermore! Let me include, therefore, my spiritual safety in the promise that He "will preserve me from all evil:" and indeed it is so expressly. The "preservation from all evil" implies mainly and pre-eminently a preservation from all those evil influences which war against the soul. "He shall preserve thy soul."—Present me faultless, O God, before the presence of Thy glory. (Jude, verse 24.)

PSALM CXXII.—A fine ecclesiastical psalm, and calculated to foster a spirit of patriotism among priests and

worshippers towards their Church. The critics, from the structure of this and many other psalms, conclude of them that they must have been performed in parts, which they distribute among the various interlocutors.—Let my delight be more, O God, than heretofore in the exercises of social and public worship; and the want of this forms a sad defect in the habit of my mind.... In times of general repair towards the great metropolis of their religious services, this psalm must have been a frequent exercise with the children of Israel...."The testimony of Israel" might be translated the "congregations of Israel"—a more pertinent meaning in verse 4. One can imagine the taste and enjoyment wherewith this psalm would be repeated, even along their journey, by the travellers Zionward—coming from all the tribes with their offerings of gratitude. One can enter into the affection that would be felt for Jerusalem, and the elevating effect of these great periodical occasions on the collective mind of the Hebrews.—For the sake of family and neighbours, let me seek for the good of the Church, and ever pray for her prosperity and peace.

PSALM CXXIII.—There is great verisimilitude in the supposition that this was a psalm for the Babylonish captives, who longed for deliverance, and looked waitingly and wistfully to God, that He might have mercy upon them. They lifted up their eyes to Him who dwelt in heaven above, imploring His protection, and that He would rescue them from their earthly tyrants. Matthew Henry is copious on the expression of the masters' and mistress' hand, to which servants look for guidance and supply, and defence, and correction. So did these unhappy Israelites look to the

highest Master of all, amid the contempt and cruelty to which they were subjected—the scorning of those who mocked at them and their religion. (Psalm cxxxvii.) And this, too, should be our habitual attitude—the attitude of dependence and humble expectancy.—Enable me, O God, to realize it. Let me be ever looking upwardly to Thee. Incline the heart of him with whom I am now at variance to penitence and peace. And, O my God, save me from the agitations of a sore controversy.

PSALM CXXIV.—A "song of degrees" is said to be a march-song, implying, therefore, a musical procession and concert. This one, in particular, has been ascribed to David, after the victories which secured him the throne at Jerusalem. It is finely expressive of the power and formidableness of his enemies, and of his danger in the midst of them—a danger, his rescue from which he ascribes to the Lord being upon his side. Many rose up against him previous to his settlement in the monarchy of all Israel, who would have swallowed him up, even as the waters of the Red Sea would have swallowed up the Israelites, had it not been for the mighty and miraculous power which conducted them in safety to the opposite side, and so made good for them their escape from the enemies, who fell into the destruction themselves in which they sought to involve the people of God.... One can imagine the triumph and the enthusiasm wherewith the performers would join in this joyful celebration, and with what heartfelt felicitation and gratitude they would lift up their voices to Him in whom their help was.—My God, give me to experience a like deliverance from becoming the prey of human injustice, or falling into the snare which artful men may have

laid for me. For this I pray now; and O give me for this to praise Thee hereafter.

PSALM CXXV.—This is also conceived to be a warlike march-song, composed in the days of Jehoshaphat, when he returned to Jerusalem victorious and safe from his enemies. The lesson, however this may be, is of general and permanent application.... What privileges are annexed to our simply trusting in God! Let me so trust that I never may be moved. Lord, Thou knowest what it is that now agitates and tries me; yet I would cast all this care, and all my confidence, on God—trusting in Him with my whole heart, and not afraid of what man can do unto me. May I be compassed about with Thy favour as with a shield. May my citizenship be in Heaven, even in the Jerusalem that is above; and then shall the Lord be round about me, even as the mountains are round about the Jerusalem below. Then the rod of the wicked may come upon me, but it will not rest upon me. The iron hand of injustice may be lifted up to cast me down, but it will not destroy me. Let not, however, any measure or degree of successful oppression tempt me from righteousness to sin. Make me good, and put truth into my inward parts; and then, when my heart condemns me not, shall I ask with confidence for peace and protection at Thy hands, and shall not be disappointed. Then may I trust in the Lord; and He will not remove me from the place of useful influence that I now occupy, but cause me to abide and to prosper therein.

PSALM CXXVI.—This psalm is doubtless the song of returned or returning captives. We can well imagine how

the decree of Cyrus would both astound and delight the families of Israel. Even the heathen who had before mocked and persecuted them, spoke the language of respect and congratulation—doing homage to that sacred name which they had been in the habit of blaspheming—even they ascribing their deliverance to the interposition of their God, whom they acknowledged as the author of the great things which had been done for them, to which the Jews most heartily responded, and for which they were so grateful and glad.... Verse 4 is variously interpreted. Some conceive of the "south" that it is the south wind, which, blowing on the snowy heights at the elevated sources of rivers, reinforced the waters, even as the Israelites were swollen in number by every accession to the multitude on their march to their own land. However this be, there is no mistaking of the precious and consolatory lesson—that affliction of the right kind, and rightly improved, issues at length in permanent good and enjoyment, and so is a blessing in disguise.—May such be my finding, O God. But let my sorrow not be of this world, which worketh death, but that sorrow after a godly sort, which worketh salvation.

PSALM CXXVII.—The opening sentiment of this psalm is the vanity of all our intense care in the acquisition or accomplishment of any object—seeing that without the Divine co-operation and blessing all will be fruitless. It is utterly in vain that we should labour for that on which our heart is set, so as to leave ourselves neither rest nor comfort, if the counsel of the Lord, which alone can stand, be adverse to our views. Duties are ours, events are God's; and the way is to do these duties free from

anxiety, because trusting in Him; and He will give us all that He knoweth we have need of—and, to the bargain, that peace which passeth all understanding. Let us only have His love, and then may we repose in the confidence that all is well.... The title of this psalm connects it with Solomon, Jedidiah the beloved; and it is regarded by many as a marriage song for him; and so the promise of a family, which in these days was regarded as a blessing, in proportion to its largeness and vigour—the vigour of youth.

PSALM CXXVIII.—This psalm is supposed to have been an address from the priest to an offerer, either on the occasion of his marriage, or on his payment of tithes. I pray for the blessedness of the religious and the good. Let me stand in awe and sin not, but walk in the ways of God. The temporal good things which are here promised belong to the earlier economy; but let me not despise these, seeing that the declaration still holds true—"that godliness is profitable unto all things."—Let me have the counterpart spiritual blessings. Let me be filled with the fruits of righteousness. As the effect of my labour in the service of God, let the love of God be shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. And O give me the comfort of a prosperous family—prosperous in the truest sense of the word—their souls prospering and in health. And beside the good of my own household, let me see the good of Thy Church—the good of Jerusalem, ere that this toilsome life shall have come to an end. Let me do all for the West Port in the fear of the Lord, that He may countenance and bless that enterprise. O may prosperity and peace rest upon it; and may what we now do there

prove a blessing to many successive generations. Send, O God, the needful grace from the upper sanctuary, and all will be right.

PSALM CXXIX.—This is conceived by some to have been the song of the Jews who accompanied Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem ; and seems applicable enough to the circumstances of that event. Often, indeed, had the children of Israel been afflicted, but not oftener than they had sinned; though the instruments of their chastisement were not justified in the cruelties and exultations which they indulged against these persecuted people. But God punished them in measure, and took compassion on them, while He inflicted vengeance on their enemies. There is a lesson to us here.—Let us not fret because of evil-doers. All will be redressed and rectified at the last. They who hate the good and the upright will at length be brought low. The righteous Judge above concerns Himself with the doings of men, and will decide equitably between them. And He is at the door—a consideration that might well make us patient under injuries. To this patience, O God, may I add charity. (2 Pet. i. 7.) The "grass on the housetops" was of sickly growth .... It marks the immutability of eastern customs, that the salutations here spoken of prevail there to this day. The neglect of these is felt to be a studied insult—so that poverty and contempt are here denounced on the enemies of Zion.

PSALM CXXX.—What a noble composition—among the most illustrious in the whole collection. Out of the depths of nature's darkness and nature's depravity do I cry unto Thee, O Lord. Hear my prayer, that cometh

not out of feigned lips. Judge me not, O God, according to mine iniquities, else I perish. Extend to me the forgiveness and grace of the Gospel; but let me not turn that grace into licentiousness. Teach me the secret of Christian godliness—rejoicing in the pardon of my sins, and yet standing in awe so as to sin not.... What a pregnant sentence, that the forgiveness of God is a forgiveness that He might be feared.—Let me wait, O God, for Thy salvation—for a present and near salvation, as well as for a future and distant one—a present light, a present love in my heart, a present holiness in my walk and conversation. Lord, I would pray and watch for this blessed translation; this passing from spiritual death unto spiritual life; this light of Thy countenance; this joy of Thy salvation. Give me of Thy plenteous redemption, both from the power of sin and from its punishment.

PSALM CXXXI.—The lesson of this psalm is a truly important one; and there is in it what I should call the very essence of the Christian philosophy—which forbids our intruding into things unseen, or exercising ourselves with matters too high for us. How many such great matters and high things present themselves to our thoughts at least, if not to our view, when we soar upward among the summits of theological speculation!—Do Thou chasten and restrain this spirit, O Lord. Do Thou teach me the respectful observance of that limit which separates the secret things which belong unto God from the revealed things which belong unto us and to our children. Cast down all my lofty imaginations; and sitting at the feet of Christ my teacher, let every thought of my heart be brought into captivity to His word and will.

Give me, O Lord, that humility of the true faith which is akin to the modesty of true science. Wean me from my own conceptions, which might often be well denominated my own conceits. Let me become as a fool that I might be made wise—as a little child, that I might be qualified for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Let not this hope abandon me; but let it be a hope altogether according to Thy word, or grounded on Thy word. Give me, with all docility and humbleness of mind, to take my lesson from the Bible, and walk submissively and duteously on its bidden path.

PSALM CXXXII.—The occasion of this psalm is conceived to be the placing of the ark in Solomon's temple, as detailed in 2 Chron. v., and not the removal of it from the country to Mount Zion, though this in verse 6 be retrospectively or historically made mention of. The reference to David, and his vow and his afflictions, are also conceived to be retrospective. The anointed, or Solomon, prays for the Divine countenance upon himself, (verse 10,) for the sake of David his father. The promise to David, identical with the promise to Abraham, is here adverted to—though probably not understood in the spiritual and high meaning of it. Solomon's views probably reached no farther than to the continuance of his own family upon the throne. He did much towards the forfeiture of the promise by the violation of its conditions. He kept not the covenant nor the testimony of God—though we doubt not that on the penitence and restoration of Israel, an illustrious fulfilment is still awaiting us.... Verse 16 is one of the notabilia of Scripture.—My God, do Thou give effect to its blessed declaration in our own Church. Give to its ministers the

spirit of their office, and make its people willing and joyfull in the day of Thy power. May the word of salvation be freely given forth on the one side, and gladly accepted upon the other.—A beautiful psalm.

PSALM CXXXIII.—Let me therefore, if it be possible, and as much as lieth in me, live peaceably with all men. And O what a desirable thing is union among Christians—both good and pleasant—most agreeably odorous, like the ointment poured forth, and fruitful as is the dew of Hermon, spreading abroad a most diffusive satisfaction among all; and who can question its productiveness of conversion, in the face of our Saviour's prayer that all may be one—and this in order to the world's believing in the Father and in the Son.—Enable me, O God, both to judge and to act wisely in regard to the Evangelical Alliance. O that it could be carried forward prosperously, and with good effect on the Christianity of our land. Teach me to think aright, and to propound aright what I do think upon this subject. I pray for the unity of Christians, a marked and ostensible unity—such as the world can take knowledge of, and so as to draw from it the old exclamation of—"Behold these Christians, how they love each other!" Let there be a Zion in our day, a one visible Church, instead of our present divided and parti-coloured Christendom—a fountain-head, whence the blessing might go forth even unto life everlasting. But can this be done in any other way than by Christ in person? The pretended vicar is an antichrist.

PSALM CXXXIV.—This psalm—which, like a good many others, is entitled a "song of degrees," or march-song—is

conceived to be made up of two benedictions—the one from the patrol, or watchmen outside of the temple, and addressed to the priests within—and the other from these priests, in the way of response back again. There is something impressive and full of interest in these cordial reciprocations of piety and good brotherhood, which Horsley, however, conceives to have taken place between the priests retiring from the temple, and the priests who were left behind at the shutting of the gate for the night. The outgoing priests bid those who remain lift up their hands and bless the Lord in the sanctuary—the solemn temple, made no doubt with human hands, yet in which God delighted to dwell. This temple was a lofty object of veneration to every Jewish heart; yet it is worthy of being noted, that in the valedictory sentence of the priests within to those without, God is spoken of in a higher character than as the Deity of their temple—even as the God who made heaven and earth—that earth on which the party without were now treading, and those heavens to which they could look up as a nobler vault than that which had been raised in Jerusalem, and was the admiration of the surrounding people. We should prize every display of such an expansion.

PSALM CXXXV. 1-7.—There is a strong general resemblance between this and the 115th Psalm. It may have been written, as Good supposes, after the overthrow of Sennacherib's army, and certainly after the establishment of the monarchy in Jerusalem. (verse 21.) The praise and the grateful acknowledgments are in keeping with its being the occasion of a recent deliverance from enemies, which would naturally suggest the idea of God's signal

protection being connected with His choice of Jacob and of Israel for His peculiar people. It is worthy of note, however, and gives a more catholic idea of Jewish theism, that such frequent ascriptions are given to God as the Sovereign of nature, and so often, as to take the precedency of their acknowledgment to Him as the God of their own nation. The greatness of the true God—His superiority above all gods—His unlimited power in heaven and earth, and sea, and under the earth—His operations in the atmosphere, so as to effect all the changes and phenomena of weather—these are deferred, and done homage to previous to the celebration of what God had done (verse 8) for their own countrymen. It is interesting to mark, in verse 7, God's intromission with the anterior and secondary causes.

8-21.—There is now a commemoration of the national mercies—going back to the miracles of Egypt, more especially to its last, and greatest, and most decisive miracle—the death of all its first-born. No wonder that a history so signal and marvellous should have been bound up with the faith of the people, and its events so often and publicly made mention of. The progress from Egypt to Canaan is briefly and generally narrated; and indeed it may well astonish us that Israel should have so frequently fallen away from the recollection of these things. It recurs to the celebration of them now in a period of reformation, and when God had just interposed for their delivery from the hands of a mighty and idolatrous conqueror. This leads to a comparison of the gods of the nations with the true God of heaven and earth, and who, repenting Himself concerning His servants, had just appeared, not as an avenger, but a Saviour from the power

of their enemies, who are here characterized as being like the senseless idols which themselves did worship. The concluding invocations fix down this psalm as a temple service.

April, 1846.

PSALM CXXXVI. 1-9.—This psalm is conceived to have been prepared for a great public occasion after the return of the Jews from Babylon. In subject-matter, and often in expression, it bears a strong resemblance to the last psalm. The chorus seems to have been frequently used in the services of the Temple. (See 2 Chron. v. 13, 14; and Ezra iii. 10, 11.) O that the frequent repetition of this blessed chorus were to fix my confidence in the Divine mercy; and that I had more adequate sense of the goodness of God, as well as adequate gratitude for all His lovingkindness and care. Here, as in the preceding psalm, we find Him done homage to as the God of nature, and distinct from this as peculiarly the God of their own nation. And, accordingly, mention is first made of His superiority to all idols, as being the God of gods, and Lord of lords, as having been the Creator of heaven and earth—(where notice the expression of the heavens being made by wisdom, as indeed they were by a most skilful and profound geometry)—more especially of His having formed the lights, and so made the heavens above subservient to the accommodation and benefit of the earth below—a constant benefit, through the sun to rule by day, and the moon and stars by night.

10-26.—The psalmist now proceeds to the commemoration of God's wonderful dealings with Israel, and is more full and particular in the enumeration of these than the writer of the preceding psalm. After referring to the

last and most fearful of the Egyptian plagues, he traces the whole of the miraculous way by which the people of God were conducted to their settlement in the promised land. The most stupendous of these miracles certainly was the passage over the Red Sea, with the signally awful destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts.... Verse 23 is in keeping with the hypothesis that this psalm was prepared for some great celebration after the return of Israel from captivity, though many similar occasions occurred in the course of their history. Often were they reduced to a low estate, and as often again redeemed from their enemies.... The psalm concludes with a recurrence to the more general Providence of God—His maintenance of all that lives, and His authority in heaven.—O let me ever trust in His mercy, yet forget not that His is a mercy that He may be feared. Let me not abuse the goodness of God. Let me not despise the riches of His forbearance and long-suffering.

PSALM CXXXVII.—This is a truly affecting ode, sung by the Israelites on the eve of their return from Babylon, or perhaps soon after it. There is more of pathos and power in it than in any poem of the same dimensions which I know. How exquisitely beautiful the image of the harps upon the willows: and altogether what a strain of tenderness! One can enter into the agonies of the Jews under the contempt and cruelty of their jeering enemies, and fully sympathize, both with their revolt at the profanation of singing a sacred hymn for *their* entertainment, and with their longing desires and remembrances after their much loved Jerusalem.—Let me share in their affection for Zion; and O forbid that the secula-

rities of the world should lead me to forget God, or to forego the services and the spirit of godliness.... The three concluding verses form the utterance of a ruder and lower morality than the Gospel will now tolerate, and the mixture of it with what went before marks strikingly the earlier character of the old Dispensation.

PSALM CXXXVIII.—The Septuagint has it that—"before angels I will worship Thee." It may be demons or idols. (Psalm xcvii. 7.)... How precious the conjunction of constant occurrence—"Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth!" The last clause of verse 2 stands high among my notabilia.—My God, in the absence of all those manifestations by which conception is superadded to faith, let me magnify Thy word by resolutely believing therein. Strengthen me, O Lord, with strength in my soul.... The gods of the nations, spoken of in verse 1, shall be displaced from the faith and worship of the kings of the earth, when converted to the living and true God, the knowledge of whom shall at length cover the whole world....Verse 6 is also a notabile.—My God, I do walk in the midst of trouble—revive and strengthen me. Save from mine enemies; and in the strength of Thy right hand let me not be moved by them. Forsake me not, O Lord, for I am Thy creature, the work of Thine hands; and I desire to feel all the subordination of the creature—the lowliness which Thou hast respect unto.... Verse 8 is a decided notabile, the subject of a most appropriate prayer to all who are earnestly looking and feeling their way Zionward. "Perfect that which concerns me."—Perfect my understanding in Divine things, that in Thy light I may clearly see light. Perfect that which is "lacking" in my faith. Make me

a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Give me to be perfect even as Thou art perfect.

PSALM CXXXIX. 1-12.—This is a most precious and profitable psalm, eminently suited for bringing us near to God, even as it represents God being very near to us. He intimately knows me, observes all my doings, penetrates my thoughts in their first rising, besets me everywhere, is acquainted with all my doings, and all my sayings. Take me, O God, such as I am—make me such as I should be; and this by the power of Thy hand upon me. I cannot comprehend how I should be thus most entirely and throughout known to God; but there is comfort in the thought of it. His intelligence reaches my whole case; and O may He, by His goodness and power, bring a whole remedy to bear upon it; and then will my secret faults be cleansed thoroughly. And what an enlargement in the thought of His omnipresence as well as omniscience! I cannot repair beyond the limits, either of His sight or His sovereignty. And how beautiful the image of taking the wings of the morning!... The heaven and the hell of verse 8 may signify the locale of "above and below the earth;" and so complete the sentiment, that neither height nor depth, neither length nor breadth, can carry us beyond the domain of His cognizance and control; nor can even thickest darkness hide us from His all-seeing eye.

13-24.—From the greatnesses the psalmist passes on to the profundities of nature.... Verse 14 is one of the highest of our Scripture notabilia. The being "fearfully and wonderfully made" is strikingly descriptive of the human framework, so abounding as it does in complexities and delicacies and hidden relationships, the contem-

plation of which might well fill us both with fear and wonder. What a deep mystery lies both in the processes and the product of this marvellous creation !... There is an obscurity in the phrase of "the lowest parts of the earth," though it makes a plausible meaning to understand by it that the body is made of the least and ultimate parts of matter, the primordia of all things, the dust of the ground. Surely He who so elaborated us at the first does not withdraw His care from us afterwards.—Let me, therefore, cast my care upon Him; for very precious are His thoughts towards us. May my first waking thoughts be always of God. And save me from enemies; and let my chief antipathy towards them be because they are Thy enemies. But let not malice, or uncharitableness, or selfishness, mingle with these feelings. Search and prove me thoroughly. Purge away all that there is of the opposite to that love which remaineth always, and is everlasting.

PSALM CXL.—There is much comfort in these psalms, when beset whether by the hostility or the deceitfulness of man. I am exercised at present, I fear, in the latter. But preserve me from uncharitableness, O Lord; and whatever befall, let my resort be continually to Him who judgeth righteously. The lessons given forth to David when thus circumstanced are eminently fitted to console and guide those who are in any way preyed upon by the ungrateful rapacity of those with whom they have to do. —Deliver and preserve me, O God. I pray for peace. I pray also for protection. Enable me to appropriate Thee to myself, and to say, "Thou art my God."--Verse 6 is a notabile. Let my appropriating faith cause my prayer to rise with acceptance. Be Thou the strength of my

salvation. Shield me from the devices of the wicked, and disappoint them of their evil intentions, O God.... Verse 9 may be read thus: "As for those who lift up the head about me," &c. The way now to heap burning coals on the head of an adversary, is to relieve him and do him good. What a comfort it should be to men of generosity and integrity, that God will redress all their wrongs!—Let me, therefore, be patient under injuries; and this on the legitimate consideration that the Judge is at the door.

PSALM CXLI.—What a press of importunity there is in the opening words of this psalm.—Teach me to pray; and let me not think that I am to be heard for much speaking. Let the heart be rightly set, and this will give right utterance to the mouth. And do Thou not only guide me in prayer to Thyself, but do Thou regulate and restrain the efflux of my converse with fellow-men. And save me not only from the converse of the profligate, but from that of the ungodly. Increase my love for the brethren; and let me ever prefer the truth from their lips over the flatteries and applauses of the world.... Verse 6 is conceived by some to refer to the virtual overthrow of Saul by David at the cave of En-gedi, when his words were those of friendship and peace to his deadliest enemy. There is great obscurity in this place.... Verse 7 refers to some defeat in which their dead lay unburied. However deficient in conscience, or however unfeeling, nay cruel, my enemies might be, let my eyes be directed towards God. —My God, guide me in safety through my present exigencies. Let not mine adversaries triumph over me. Provide me with a secure escape from the art and malice of those who seek my hurt.

PSALM CXLII.—This psalm looks like a sequel to the last, in which David promised that his words should be sweet unto his enemies after that they were overthrown. He is represented in the title as being now in the cave, previous to his rencontre with Saul. We can image in these circumstances all the distress and despondency which are here depicted; and what more natural than in such as David having recourse to prayer. And there was a confidence that mingled with his fears and held him up in the midst of them. That "no man cared for his soul," might mean with him that no man cared for his life—none would interpose to protect him from the arm of Saul, lifted up for his destruction. Yet the frequent application of this clause to the *soul*, so as to make it express the indifference of men to the spiritual interests of others, makes it one of the notabilia of Scripture.—Let me, in the midst of destitution and abandonment, turn me to God. Be Thou my portion even here. O shine upon my soul; and make Thyself manifest to me as my reconciled Friend and Father. Deliver me from men; and release me, O God, from the imprisonment of darkness and spiritual death in which I have been held so long. Put me into the hands of the righteous, saving me from evil men.

PSALM CXLIII.—Another outset of importunity, with an appeal to the truth and righteousness of God.... Verse 2 is one of the notabilia.—My God, give me a refuge from judgment in Thy propitiated mercy. The Psalmist was urged to these earnest pleadings by the hardships he endured at the hand of enemies. This might have been done in the way of chastisement; but he prays for mitigation. I can imagine that if former sins have put one

in the power of enemies, these may be let loose upon him, and overwhelm him with disgrace, and expose him to the abandonment of society.—I have much to meditate on in the way of past sinfulness. Thou hast preserved me hitherto. My God, let the end be peace and the light of Thy countenance. O that my soul thirsted after God. Hide Thy face no longer. Command the light to shine into my heart. Let me trust even now, and before the manifestations which I pray for. Let me trust at present, even though I should not hear Thy lovingkindness till the morning, and not know the way I should walk in till Thou hast further revealed it to me. When mine enemies assail me, let my hiding-place be God.... Verse 10 is quite notable. Heaven is the land of uprightness. —Quicken and deliver me, O Lord; and meanwhile let me give myself up to Thy service.

PSALM CXLIV.—This psalm, like the ninth, seems to have been a thanksgiving for a national deliverance. It is obviously the song of a warrior. It is a magnificent poem. ...Verses 3 and 4 are notabilia.—Humble me, O God, in the thought of my own insignificance, even as David was when he ascribed his deliverance from enemies to the special interposal of God's power and providence. Make me to feel as he did the evanescence of man's life here below. What need there is now for some express manifestation to arouse the world from its ungodliness—a world overrun with strange children, with men estranged and alienated from God. O deliver Thy chosen out of their hands, and put a song into their mouths. Hasten the emancipation of the human family from the thraldom of him who still wields the ascendency over them. And let the young

generation arise as a seed to serve Thee. O may they be the supports of the Church when we have left this weary wilderness. Bless them with all spiritual blessings; but let us not despise the good things of this life, whereof godliness has the promise, as well as of the life which is to come. They formed the rewards of obedience under the old Economy; and in the keeping of the commandments may we still experience that there is a great and a present reward.

PSALM CXLV. 1-9.—This is a truly noble psalm, and occupies a very high and distinguished place in the collection. I may here notice that the comparative celebrity of psalms depends a good deal on the merits of the version sung in churches. The present one has been well rendered; whereas there are many others to which great injustice is done in the metrical psalms, and for obtaining a full and fair impression of which, we must read them in the Bible.... Verse 3 is a notabile.—Give me to feel, O Lord, the humility of my own conscious ignorance.... Then follows a description, first of the greatness, and then of the goodness of God.—Let me be solemnized and stand in awe of the one; let me confide in the other. The representation of His goodness is mixed up with that of His righteousness and holiness; so that while His natural attributes of greatness and unsearchableness and power are most spoken of down to verse 7, the moral attributes form the chief theme of what remains in this affecting composition.—O my God, grant that I may have a fuller and freer confidence than heretofore in Thy great goodness. Why should I remain so unmoved by the assurances and demonstrations so urgently and repeatedly given of

it. And it is a goodness which extendeth to all—a tender mercy that is over all.

10-21.—This is throughout a memorable psalm. Both the kingdom of nature and that of grace are included in verse 10; and both, throughout this and the two following verses, are made alike the tributaries and the witnesses to the greatness of the Divinity. The eternity of God's power—His compassion—His diffusive liberality—His righteousness and holiness—are all most impressively set forth in these verses. And so far from this God of might and glorious majesty being distant and inaccessible, He is said to be nigh—nigh "to all that call upon Him;" but—let me not forget the qualification—"who call upon Him in truth."—My God, so qualify me. Put truth into my inward parts. Let mine be a real and honest call upon God. Teach me to pray. Give me to pray in faith, that according to my realizing sense of my own dependence and of God's sufficiency, so it may be done unto me. Put the fear of Thee into my heart, and fulfil its desire. Hear my cry and save me, O God. O may the love of Thee be shed abroad in my heart; and then shall I be preserved, and have all things working together for my highest good—even the good of my soul. O that I reached the length of praise! Thy kingdom come, O Lord—when all shall worship and give thanks at the remembrance of Thy holiness, from the least to the greatest.

PSALM CXLVI.—This is supposed to have been sung by the captives after their return from Babylon; and it is probable, from verses 3 and 4, that it was after the disappointment they sustained at the hand of the Persian court, when the work of rebuilding the Temple had an

arrest laid upon it. It is a noble resource for the pious when they can cast themselves upon God under all the wrongs which they may sustain from the treachery and faithlessness of men. They contrast His power and truth with the frailty and falsehood of men who, even in their best estate, "are altogether vanity." His peculiar relation to themselves in their peculiar circumstances is palpably set forth in His executing judgment for the oppressed—in His loosing the prisoners—in His raising them who are bowed down—and, finally, in His preserving the strangers. ... The psalm concludes with the confidence that all will yet go well for Jerusalem, and that Zion will be the metropolis of the whole earth.—Speed this blessed consummation in Thine own good time, O Lord.

PSALM CXLVII. 1-11.—Several of the psalms are assigned to the feast of tabernacles, or harvest-home, as their occasion; and this may have been one of these. But there is over and above a great likelihood of its having been a prepared song for the captives from Babylon—and this after they had been released from the prohibition of building their temple under the government of Nehemiah. ... His "building up of Jerusalem," and His "gathering together of the outcasts of Israel," in verse 2, form strong verisimilitudes in favour of this supposition. How nobly the recognition of God, as the Lord of Nature, mingles with the grateful acknowledgment of His goodness as the Shepherd of Israel—the greatness and wisdom of the Supreme, with His condescension to the meek and humble! —Give me to stand in awe of Thine infinite understanding, and be restrained thereby from all presumptuous speculation on matters too high for me.... The effusions

of praise correspond here with all these different views of the Deity. His providential care of man and beast is set forth with great beauty; and it is not obscurely intimated in verses 10 and 11, that it is not by armies—not by might—that the Lord grants deliverance to His people; but that His pleasure is directly to aid all those who fear and trust Him.

12-20.—To "strengthen the bars of the gates of Jerusalem," is an expression in keeping with the hypothesis, that this psalm is a celebration of God's blessings to those who had just finished the building of their city. The peace and the plenty which they then enjoyed are also fitting subjects of gratitude and gratulation. There is a fine intermingling here, too, of what is done by God in the kingdom of Nature, as well as in the kingdoms of Providence and Grace. It looks as if these verses had been both composed and sung by men who had had access to higher and colder climates than is the general climate of Judea—by men familiar with snow and ice and hoar-frost, and the process of thawing by which these are melted and give rise to inundations.—Let us recognise God by His doings in the world, as well as by His sayings in the Word. Let us have respect unto both, and more especially to the latter. Shew me, O God, Thy word by Thy Spirit. Teach me the way wherein I should walk. Select me from a world lying in wickedness and darkness; from which do Thou translate me into the marvellous light of the Gospel. Let me not hold it enough to be on a level with the Jews, in that I have access, as they had, to the oracles of God. What does this profit, if I read with the veil upon my heart?—May that veil, O God, be taken away; and let Thy blessed Gospel come to me

with power, and with the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance.

PSALM CXLVIII.—A noble hymn, and from which we should learn to have a higher consideration for natural theology. What a magnificent survey is here taken of Creation—beginning with the heavens and coming down to earth. The inhabitants of heaven, the angels and hosts of the celestial, are included in this invocation, along with the materialism of these upper regions—as the sun, moon, stars, and the waters that were above the firmament. Then, in counterpart to this, we have the animate and inanimate of the world below—the deep, with its sea-monsters—the earth, with its cattle and fowls and insects; and last of all, its rational occupiers, in calling upon whom, the psalmist passes onward from kings and all people, to saints and those who are near unto Himself—thus making transition from the natural to the spiritual, and exhibiting such a combination as we would do well to imitate both in our public and private devotions.—Save me from that exclusiveness of view which is too frequent among churchmen!

PSALM CXLIX.—This psalm is also referred to the period after the return from Babylon. We can enter into the affection of the Jews for their Zion, now re-occupied, and again become their own.—Give me to joy in God, and to regard Him more practically and habitually in my heart as Him who made me. O admit me to the intimacies of such a fellowship with Thyself as I earnestly aspire after. Give me to apprehend vividly and aright Thine affection for Thy children, and the pleasure Thou hast in them,

such as a father hath for his family. O if I could thus be made to rejoice and to glory in God! Find an entrance for Thyself into my bosom, so that Thou mayest dwell and walk in me all the day long, and I may have sweet meditation of Thee in the night season and upon my bed. And with this elevation of heart towards God, let there be a resolute and intrepid opposition to all which is opposed to Him in the world. We are forbidden the use of carnal weapons; but the weapons of our warfare are yet "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds"—such weapons, for example, as Stephen used, when the enemies of the faith were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Such a victory and triumph are awaiting the saints; nor are we prepared to say that they will not take part in the battles which seem to be predicted in the Book of Revelation, before that the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of Christ, when the execution of the judgment there written shall take effect on the potentates of the world.

PSALM CL.—The Psalms have their final and most appropriate outgoing in praise—that highest of all the exercises of godliness. And this psalm is not a hymn from the Church alone, but from the temple of nature—seeing that it calls on men to "praise Him in the sanctuary," and to "praise Him also in the firmament of His power." —O that I could rise to the lofty strain of this invocation; and that I was more alive to the excellent greatness of Him who is the Lord of Creation, and of all its wonders—so that I might praise Him for His mighty works in Nature, for His mighty acts in Providence and History.... But this is pre-eminently the composition of

a saint; and so, while he calls on everything that hath breath to praise the Lord, he invokes Him also as the Head of the Church, and calls to his aid the glorious symphonies of the temple. Altogether, it forms a noble concert—a grand valedictory celebration, winding up, as it were, the magnificent series of those devotional odes which have formed the delight and exercise of the Church in all ages.... The order of these psalms seems to have been in no way chronological. Yet Ezra, who is understood to have been the collector, brings the whole, by his selection of Psalm CL., to a most appropriate close.—I shall never again so dwell upon them on earth.*—My God, prepare me for heaven, and for joining there in the songs of the redeemed in the high services of eternity.

PROVERBS.

PROVERBS I. 1-9.—Proverbs are sayings of weight and wisdom, whether the meaning be veiled in figure or not—though the translation of the Septuagint into παροιμιαι would seem to intimate the figurative character of a proverb. It, however, is not so necessarily, and not so in the vast majority of that precious collection here spread out before us. The inspired authorship of Solomon has a high place in the Bible, and more especially the Book on which we now enter—than which none is more frequently quoted in the New Testament—that most powerful of all witnesses to the canonicity of the various pieces which make up the Old. The word in Hebrew signifying proverb comes from a radical which means *to rule*—thus

* In penning this I did not advert to the "Horae Biblicae Sabbaticae."—What room for enlargement!

implying that it is a sentence of commanding authority, and which should bear a corresponding sway over the mind of the reader. The authorship of the Book is most decisively stamped upon it at the outset; and the subject so defined as to include in the practical wisdom, or wisdom of life, whereof it treats, both the moral and the experimental—the light of conscience as well as the light of observation. The "knowledge and discretion" of verse 4 hang chiefly upon the latter, as being founded on a knowledge of the world and its ways. The "dark sayings" of verse 6 imply enigma—or truth and wisdom under the concealment of a figure.—My God, put Thy fear into my heart. Give me hold of this great master-principle of all wisdom. Seeing that Thou demandest knowledge, let a sense of duty to Thee impel me onward to the prosecution of it.... Solomon speaks as a father—and perhaps to a son under immediate tuition of both his parents. Knowledge and wisdom confer a truer dignity than all the insignia of rank.

10-19.—Verse 10 is one of my Scripture notabilia. In these days of robbery and violence the dissuasive is against companionship with thieves and murderers; but now it may be directed generally against all such converse with the irreligious and the profligate as might expose to the evil communications which corrupt good manners.... Verse 16 is in all likelihood the verse referred to by the Apostle in Rom. iii. 15. But in making haste to shed the blood of others, they land themselves in their own ruin. Destruction and misery are in their ways—but it is destruction and misery to themselves, though so intent on mischief to others, that they do not see the way on which they are rushing to be that of their own final perdition

and wretchedness. Their lives will pay the forfeit, at the last, of their foul and ferocious misdeeds. But in the blindness of their infatuation they do not perceive this, and so they precipitate themselves forward to their own final undoing—so as to fall beneath the inferior creatures in sagacity and reach of sight—such as the bird, which sees the snare that is laid for it, and shuns it accordingly. But perhaps this parenthetic 17th verse may be addressed to the son of Solomon, who has had the hazards of evil companionship set before him, and who, under the figure here used, is taught how to apply the warning to himself.

20-33.—This whole passage ranks very high among the memorabilia of Scripture—teeming throughout with most precious and important lessons in theology, as the universality of the call from God to man—"Turn you at my reproof;" the effect of so turning, that God will pour out His Spirit, so as to prove the antecedency of what is done by man—not to the first, but to subsequent influences and manifestations of grace from on high—the blessed harmony between the Spirit and the Word, as if the object or end of giving the Spirit was to make known the Word; then the consequences of a refusal—that though the Spirit would be given should they turn now, it followed not that He would be given though they should call afterwards—the bitter fruit of impenitency, the fruit of its own way, the reaping of that which was sown, the natural and inherent misery, in short, that attaches to sin and to all ungodliness.—Give me, O Lord, to hearken unto Thee, and hearken unto Thee diligently, even that my soul may live.

PROVERBS II. 1-9.—To "hide my commandments" signifies to lay up my commandments—laid up not for

concealment, but for custody. To "hide the Word in one's heart," and, the "life hidden with Christ in God," and similar expressions in certain other places, seem all to require being understood in this way. The connexion between seeking and finding is here very strongly and urgently set forth.—O may I therefore put forth far more of diligence and strenuousness in the work of seeking after the knowledge of God—more precious than all silver or hid treasure. And what a glorious acquisition, to understand the fear of the Lord—a singular expression for a most singularly valuable accomplishment. But let me combine prayer with exertion for this object—seeing that this wisdom is a gift from above, not to supersede our efforts, but that we might superadd dependence and prayer to them. And it is further worthy of remark, that the righteousness of our conduct contributes to the enlightenment of our creed. The wholesome reaction of the moral on the intellectual is clearly intimated here—inasmuch as it is to the righteous that God imparteth wisdom—besides being a buckler to them, giving wisdom to His saints, and preserving their way. The understanding here spoken of is chiefly the right discernment of the moral—of the righteousness, and the judgment, and the equity, and of good paths, even as of the fear of the Lord.

10-22.—We have here both the pleasantness and the profitableness of knowledge and wisdom, with the safety which there is in discretion and understanding. It is chiefly a moral wisdom, or right moral understanding, which is spoken of in this passage. And the great achievement which is celebrated and held forth in these verses, is the cautious avoidance of evil company—whether of men given

to deceit and violence, or of women who, by luring to the paths of licentiousness, do in fact lure to the paths of destruction.... There is a word that occurs more than once in these verses, and which occurs frequently throughout this Book, and whereof I have not met with an exactly defined signification—"froward." Some understand by it peevishness or perverseness. Were I to consult its etymology, I should rather conceive that it was *fromward;* and so, impetuous headstrong acting, on the impulse of whatever feeling is uppermost in the mind, unrestrained by calculation or conscience, and therefore the opposite of discretion. The precise meaning will be further evolved, perhaps, in future passages.

PROVERBS III. 1-10.—The lesson at the outset of this chapter may be regarded either as filial obedience, if we look upon it as addressed from a father to a son; or if it be an address from the Wisdom which inspired this Book to its readers, then may it be understood as a general lesson of obedience to God's moral and unchangeable law. There are temporal blessings annexed to this obedience; but of such a specific kind, that they may be spiritualized into eternity, and the life and peace of the spiritually minded.—O my God, write on my heart the mercy and the truth which enter into such blessed conjunction with each other, and which conjoin the favour of God with that of men. And what a precious notabile is comprised in verses 5 and 6!—My God, enable me to realize the lesson of these verses; and under all the urgencies of my lot, may I know what it is to look upwardly for guidance to Thyself, and to be still—in the knowledge that Thou art God. Give me the health of a well-conditioned soul;

and O may I know what it is to honour the Lord with what He gives me in stewardship and trust, and in the faith, too, that ultimately I shall not lose by it.

11-18.—Verses 11 and 12 form the subject of an undoubted quotation in the Epistle to the Hebrews—far the strongest and most satisfactory species of proof for the inspiration of this Book, and the others which are so quoted in the New Testament.—Then follows a memorable passage translated into one of our most popular paraphrases. The superiority of mental and moral to all material wealth, is here put forth in weighty sentences, and by apt illustrations. The blessings here annexed to wisdom are no doubt of a temporal character; but it is well to remark, that, apart from eternity, the mental, in respect of present happiness, is superior to the material. There is a peace and a pleasure in goodness, which makes even the enjoyment, for the time being, far higher than any gratification that worldly riches might enable us to obtain. But even riches are often added to the more direct and immediate felicities attendant on wisdom and worth—these last, however, distributed by the left hand, as of lesser consideration than the length of days that is given by the right.... What a blessed image is that by which wisdom is likened to the tree of life—having which, we are made for ever happy in Paradise!

May, 1846.

19-35.—As the highest recommendation of wisdom, the reader is carried up to Him who is the Author of all things, and who in wisdom made them all. It is interesting to find in the sacred volume, the heavens—the geometry of which is so profound and perfect—thus

represented as a product of the Divine understanding. And so wisdom is urged upon man as both of vital use and of adornment—"grace unto thy neck." Then there is the safety which it ensures to its possessor.—My God, be Thou my confidence, and let me not be afraid of the assaults of popular violence. And let me do good; but only when the good is a reality, and not a semblance to which I am urged by the clamours whether of misguided zeal, or of a devising and deliberate malignity. But what my hand findeth to do in the way of clear duty, let me do it instantly and with all my might. Save me, O God, from so much as the wish to do hurt; and let me not enter into controversy without a sufficient cause.... Then we have the froward contrasted with the righteous. I find that *froward* is a translation from words that differ between themselves in the Greek Septuagint, and which I should have rendered by unfaithful, (ch. ii. 12,) perverse, (ch. ii. 14,) unlawful, (ch. iii. 32,) or transgressor of the law. It is in conformity with the Septuagint that the "scorners" here are the "proud" in the quotation of verse 34 by James.

PROVERBS IV. 1-17.—The wise man still speaks in the parental character of a father addressing his children—even as he himself (Solomon) alleges that he was instructed and warned by his father David. He was the object of his father's preference, and the special favourite of his mother, as we learn from the history; and the coincidence here with the direct narrative is very interesting. And it is a further coincidence, that as the fruit of David's endeavouring to press upon him the value of wisdom, this is what he selected above all others, as

the thing he would ask of God—because the principal thing. And so he in turn presses the same lesson upon his own son—who, if Rehoboam, did not profit much by Solomon's attempts to lead him in the right path.... What an important caution have we in verse 15, to avoid evil, to shun temptation, not to come near it, not to look on it; but turn, and so as that it shall not be present to the eye of the senses!—Neither, O God, let me suffer its being present to the eye of the mind. These precautions apply to the temptations of licentiousness in all ages. In that age, when rapine and lawless violence were abroad, they are applied as warnings against another sort of companionship.

18-27.—Verse 18 is a decided notabile, and points decidedly to the connexion between the moral and the intellectual, and the influence of the former upon the latter. The closer our walk with God, and so the way of conformity to His enjoined righteousness—the clearer will be our discernment of all spiritual truth, the brighter will be the light within, or the candle of the Lord in our hearts, and the brighter also will our light shine before men. In counterpart to this, the way of the wicked is as darkness. (See Ps. lxxxii. 5, and Job xviii. 5, 6.)... The life and the health of wisdom are here emphatically stated: verse 23 is another most decided notabile.—My God, may I be enabled to keep my heart in the love of Thyself; and blessed be Thy name for the specific directions Thou hast given for this task. (See Jude 20, 21.) May I be strenuous and constant in the exercises of faith and prayer; and direct my thoughts aright, that I may keep my affections and feelings right. Let the fountain be pure, and pure will be the streams that flow from

it.... It is not easy to gather the precise meaning of the *froward* that occurs so often in our translation, as the original words for it, both in Greek and Hebrew, are so various.

PROVERBS V. 1-14.—See how closely allied throughout these instructions is the wisdom here enjoined with moral character and conduct. The evils of licentiousness form a frequent theme with this great teacher, and urgent and manifold are the cautions which he advances against the fascination of this most ruinous and deceitful of all the vices. We have often thought that the indulgence, with its consequent shame and suffering, and all sorts of agony, which so quickly follow it, make out a miniature exhibition of God's method of administration in the analogous relationship which He has instituted between the present and the future life. Let us not deceive ourselves by the imagination that because our tendencies to the world are so very natural, and many of them with so little power to alarm the conscience, and stir up a present remorse or remonstrance in our bosoms—they will therefore not be followed up by the dire and dread eternity of that hell into which are cast all they who forget God. For the same process is exemplified in that process, when man without compunction at the time, gives way to the blandishments of sensuality; and is often punished even here with the ruin of all his earthly interests, with the loss of character, and the felt humiliation of his own disgrace—and this a punishment lasting at least as a whole lifetime here.

15-23.—We have here the testimony of the Old to a sentiment given in the New Testament, on the honour-

ableness of marriage.... Verse 16 does not seem very intelligible, and might almost be construed into a sanction for polygamy. From this passage, however, we may learn how intense the affection is which is due from the husband to his wife, and his obligation to the strictest faithfulness.... The morale of Heb. xiii. 4, is diffused over the verses which lie before us. We there read who they are whom God will judge; and in counterpart to this, we here read "that the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings." How expressive of a great moral law, when told that his own iniquities shall take the wicked himself. He becomes the slave of the sins in which he indulges. With a will that might lay claim at the outset to some degree of sovereignty, he chose sin, but it soon tyrannized over him, and depriving that will of all power to resist, soon reduced it to a state of helpless and irrecoverable bondage. His iniquities seize upon him, and keep him as it were within their grasp, so that he is holden with the cords of his sins. This is pre-eminently true of the habits both of intemperance and licentiousness.

Craigholm.

PROVERBS VI. 1-5.—There is nothing more palpable in this Book of Proverbs than the protest which it lifts against suretiship. I think that in comparing Scripture with Scripture this should be taken into account, when adjusting and regulating our practice by the directions of the New Testament in regard to giving. There is positively nothing which I should do with greater reluctancy and aversion than to give my name as a surety —a distinct sort of giving from that of direct and im-

mediate conveyance, and subject I should hope to different rules and different principles. Certain it is that to give away and be done with it, leaves one in a wholly different state from coming under an engagement to give on some uncertain contingency, the occurrence of which would lay upon us the burden of a responsibility that we would far rather discharge now than expose ourselves to the hazard of its being brought upon us afterwards. To do this is to open a door through which a crowd of anxieties and fears would enter in, and make my heart the prey of feelings insupportable. I am relieved to think that the sanctions of Scripture are so much at one with my own inclinations. Certain it is that from the moment of my becoming a cautioner, I should not be able to give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eye-lids. Such are my tendencies.

6-19.—The passage respecting the ant is one of our Scripture memorabilia.—The lesson of the passage I desire to practise, but with better ends than I have done hitherto—not to be slothful—but what?—but "followers of them who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises." Let the objects of my diligence be higher than they wont. Keeping my heart with all diligence —hearkening diligently—being diligent to be found without spot and blameless—giving all diligence—(2 Pet. i. 5) —to realize the graces and virtues of the Christian life. The world call me an industrious man; but has my industry been directed aright, or expended on ends worthy of it?... In the next passage the character pourtrayed seems to be that of craft and policy and wily malice—of a man who can plot and contrive, and make beckonings and secret intimation to his associates in wickedness.

It is remarkable that the end of him is described in the same terms with that of him who hardened himself against frequent reproof. (Prov. xxix. 1.) The end of both is sudden and irremediable destruction.... In the third of these passages the hatred of God is denounced against pride, and falsehood, and violence, and artful machination, and delight in executing as well as plotting mischief, and finally the stirring up of quarrels—and quarrels among brethren, too, the very opposite to the vocation of the peace-maker, whose delight it is to reconcile enemies.

20-35.—He now recurs to one of his most frequent lessons, and prefaces it with a general monition of the greatest importance—a constant remembrance of and reference to God's law, the setting of this continually before us, so as to ensure what the Romans called, a perpetual will to do good.—May I carry this about with me, O Lord, at all times; and be ever recurring to it as the standard and regulator of my conduct in all its conceivable varieties. With this preparation, and on this principle, let me trifle not with the fascinations against which he here warns us. Turn, O God, my sight and eyes from viewing vanity. Let me combat the evil of which the Mentor here speaks, in its first beginnings. Let me, in this department of human conduct, aim at a high morality—the morality of the thoughts and affections. For both looks and thoughts are forbidden in verse 25, even as both are by the Saviour in Matt. v. 28. There is allowance made by men for the hunger that impels to theft, though even this does not exempt it from punishment. How much surer, then, the punishment, the disgrace, and the vengeance—for no allowance will or

ought to be made for the strength of the other appetite, which leads to adultery! It meets even here with a day of relentless and unsparing vengeance; and how much more in the great day of the manifestation and reckoning of all things.

PROVERBS VII. 1-10.—To "keep the commandments and live" is still what takes effect under the new Economy, but in a different way from what "Do this and live" would have taken effect under the old. The latter is now exploded, because the life which it stipulated was of judicial import, and he who obtained it won for himself a right to life. But under the other economy it is not the right to life which is meant, but the life itself; and obedience is life, just as spiritual-mindedness is life and peace. How closely and constantly we are required to keep by the law—laid up in our hearts—guarded with all tenderness as the apple of one's eye—kept in perpetual remembrance even by artificial signs fastened upon our fingers—written on the tablet of the inner man! All is necessary for our guardianship from the allurements of a world lying in wickedness, and ever exciting those lusts which war against the soul. To keep ourselves safe, we must put on the defensive armour both of wisdom and principle, wanting which a simple youth is here represented as taken in the toils of a seducer.... A dissuasion against the temptations of licentiousness forms one of the strongest and most frequent lessons in the Book of Proverbs.

11-27.—Both the fascinations of a most deceitful and destructive vice, and the ruin attendant on our giving way to them, are here most strongly and fully given. Well

are we made to understand from this representation what is meant by the phrase—"the deceitfulness of sin," and how lusts are said to be deceitful. And, indeed, apart from the external blandishments which are pourtrayed in this passage, there belongs to them a power of internal deception the most fallacious and insinuating—and this not merely because of their strength, and of their fitness to engross the whole man when once they take possession of him, and so to shut out all reflection and seriousness—these counteractives to evil passions; but because of their alliance with, and the affinity which they bear to, the kindly and benevolent and good feelings of our nature. As the poet says—himself a wild and wayward and most dangerously seductive writer—the transition is a most natural one, from "loving much to loving wrong." —Let all such affections be sedulously kept at bay, and the occasions of them shunned and fled from, rather than hazarded and tampered with. Let them never be wilfully encountered, or presumptuously braved and bid defiance to, lest the victory be theirs; and no sooner do they win the heart than they war against the soul. They bring forth sin, even the sin which, when finished, bringeth forth death.

PROVERBS VIII. 1-9.—These incessant and repeated calls on the side of what is wise and good remind one of the Apostle's saying, that "to write the same things, while to me not grievous, for you is safe." There is not only reiteration here, but the reiteration of such mere generalities, as that knowledge and understanding are good things, and righteousness is a good thing, and truth is a good thing. In fact, the object of preaching—and this Book of

Proverbs, as well as of Ecclesiastes, may be regarded as a continuous preaching—its main object is not to inform but to remind; or, in the language of Peter, to "stir up by way of remembrance." It is to recall what, if not present to the mind, leaves it exposed and abandoned to the influences—often bad—of whatever may cast up or come within the sphere of vision along one's daily history. The sense of a something higher and more enduring than the flitting and fugitive objects of an hour, forms a stay and a preservative to the soul; and to uphold this sense it is well that wisdom should assert her claims, and that we should in practice acknowledge them, to be listened to at all times and upon every occasion—in high places or on the wayside—abroad in the city, or at home within the privacy of our own habitations. It is well that the simple and the thoughtless should thus be summoned from their heedlessness, and so ever and anon be solemnized and made serious.

10-21.—Many of the things here said are so very familiar that they are utterly devoid of all the peculiar interest which attaches to novelty; yet the repetition of them, if only attended to and dwelt upon, has a good wholesome effect on the moral temperament at large. And besides these generalities of statement and reflection which are occurring constantly, there are certain specific things put forth worthy of being particularly noticed—as here, the superiority of wisdom to wealth and all things, and also the power of wisdom to gain wealth. The precise distinction between wisdom and prudence it would not be difficult to define, or at least to describe; but let it suffice us for the present to remark on the two-fold exercise of wisdom—first, in selecting the best ends, and secondly,

in devising, as well as putting into actual operation, the best means for the attainment of them.—O that my hatred of seen evil were the distinct effect of my fear of the unseen God. May Christ be made unto me wisdom and strength—for it is He who here speaketh, verse 14. ... Verse 15 is a notabile.—Let me love Christ, and if I love Him I will keep His commandments; and He will love me, and take up His abode with me, when, as the fruit of my early and earnest seeking, I shall have succeeded in finding Him.

22-36.—There is a loftiness of representation in this passage unsurpassed in all other literature, profane or sacred. I recognise the wisdom here set forth, as the Logos —even Him who was in the beginning with God, and was God—a truth made clear as noon-day in our later revelation, but not the less impressive or at all diminished in the grandeur of its aspect and bearing, when thus made to beam upon us from the records of a more distant and higher antiquity. We can image nothing more magnificent than the description here given of the Creation of our world, when God by His word made the heavens and the earth. And though we must not intrude, beyond what is written, into the unseen things of God, or theorize on the interior constitution of the Deity—yet we do feel an interest when told, as we are here, of the intense, though by us ineffable, social enjoyment that was felt and harboured there:—the Father's daily delight in the Son, and the Son always rejoicing in the Father. And how nearly should it come home to ourselves, that He who thus rejoices always in the presence and the intimate converse of God—that He rejoices, too, in the habitable parts of the earth, and that His delights are with the

sons of men.—Let me, therefore, assure my heart before Him. Let me feel the whole force and charm of this high encouragement. And ever from this time forward may I hearken unto Christ—sitting at my Master's feet to hear all His lessons, and learn so as to keep all His ways. If I find Christ I find God; and on the virtue of His mediatorship obtain the favour of the Most High.

PROVERBS IX.—Fresh from the last chapter, I read this as if Christ and His ministers were speaking to me. Let me come in at the voice of the invitation of His free and universal Gospel. Let me receive the atonement by eating of the body and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. But I am not only told what I have to come to, but what I must forsake. Let me in turning to Christ forsake the foolish and live. Give me the life and peace of those who are spiritually minded, and I pray for the understanding that knoweth what the will of the Lord is. —Then follow some important specific directions full of wisdom; and of these, I stand more especially in need of being taught when to refrain from the task of remonstrating or instructing, and this because of the perverseness and hopelessness of the subject.... Verse 10 is a very high notabile.—Give me the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of the Holy; that as the effect thereof, I may exemplify the alliance which obtains between duty and wisdom, between goodness and truth.... The chapter concludes with a repetition of the lesson so often given against one of the most flagrant and destructive of all sins—in the very secrecy, because disgracefulness, of which there lies a power to deceive and to fascinate.

PROVERBS X. 1-10.—Now follow what are expressly entitled, and therefore ought to be more strictly held as the Proverbs of Solomon. Perhaps they might be reduced to a few leading principles. One of the most prominent of these is the effect that the character of children has in ministering, whether to the comfort and joy, or to the sorrow and heaviness of their parents. Then there are the consequences of righteousness and wickedness even in this world—more palpable then, under an economy of temporal penalties and rewards. The characteristics and results both of diligence on the one hand, and of sloth on the other, form very common topics of observation. I should say of the first clause of verse 7, and also of the first clause of verse 9, that both of them are notabilia. ... One does not just see how the two clauses of verses 6 and 8 respectively are counterparts to each other, or what the parallelism is between them. But one does see very clearly the mischief here denounced, as it is frequently, on excess and volubility of talk. Compare verse 10 with ch. vi. 13, and our remark on the latter.

11-21.—We have here another very prominent lesson of this Book—the regulation of the tongue and the mighty power of speech, whether for good or evil. The blessing which there is in fit and seasonable words, is beautifully represented by a well of life, which issues forth its refreshing and salubrious waters. The mouth is that through which wisdom, or its opposite, passes in efflux, as touched upon in verses 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 21. Verse 19 is an important notabile, from which we learn that in the very multitude of words there is sin.—Teach me, O Lord, to bridle my tongue, (James i. 26,) lest my religion shall prove itself to have been vain.... In verses

13, 20, 21, goodness in efflux is contrasted with evil not in efflux, but in its place or within, whereas we have the opposite of this in verses 14 and 19.... The "love covering all sins," does not mean that the charity of a man will avail for a protection against his own sins, but that it casteth a veil over the sins of others. This may throw light on James v. 20, and 1 Peter iv. 8. We have also, in this passage, the doctrine of the teacher on the subject of discipline, even the use of the rod so much advocated in this Book, however repudiated in modern times. The benefits of wealth and poverty are here strongly set forth (verse 15,) though nowhere do we find more said on the ruin attendant upon ill-gotten wealth, and the superiority or betterness of virtuous poverty. The tendency of righteous labour to life (verse 16) is pregnant with instruction, as teaching us the reflex influence of good deeds upon the disposition and state of the soul; and so also is the tendency of transgressions—which are the fruit of a wicked character—to sin, or the further depravation of that character. The doctrine both of moral rewards and moral penalties is here set before us.

22-32.—I should make verse 22 a notabile. If we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we shall be blessed of God; and all other things—not things sorrowful but things desirable—will be added to us.... To make a mock of sin and to sport in mischief, are alike perverse. The fear of punishment suggested by a remorseful conscience will come to pass; but the desire of the righteous, it being of course a righteous desire, will be granted. He who hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness shall be filled. The prosperity and plans

of the wicked will come to nought; but there is a stability in righteousness, for as *magna est veritas,* so *magna est virtus,* and it will prevail everlastingly—the sentiment of verse 25, and repeated in verse 30.—Then follows the annoyance of a faithless messenger, whether from indolence or the want of punctuality; after which we are told of the temporal rewards and penalties attendant upon good and evil—in length of days and the fulfilment of hope to the one, in the destruction both of hope and of life to the other.... "The way of the Lord being strength to the upright," suggests the reflex influence which the steps of a man's outward history have upon his state, or of conduct upon character—of good deeds in building up and establishing that goodness which the Lord will bless. The chapter concludes with axioms on the frequent topic of speech in both its kinds.... Verse 18 of this chapter pronounces on the folly whether of hidden or outspoken malice.

PROVERBS XI. 1-9.—It is well to observe that the unseen God takes the part that is here ascribed to him in regard to the social and familiar transactions of men. What is wanted is that we should not so dissociate God from the ordinary business of the world. Apart from the thought of Him, we should ourselves abominate a false balance, and delight in strict equity.—My God, am I forming after Thine image, even though there be so little of direct reference to Thyself, in the exercise of those moral feelings and the maintenance of that moral conduct, which are conformable to Thy law?—Then follows the testimony of Solomon against pride and in favour of humility—a lesson of frequent recurrence in this

Book. There is also a general contrast between righteousness and wickedness, in that the former directs and delivers, while the latter destroys. Uprightness is our treasure in heaven, and it is also the best treasure upon earth, and without which riches profit not. The righteous is delivered out of trouble by death, or often in life is rescued from the plagues and the perplexities in which the wicked often succeed him, though they sought to involve him therein. (verse 3.)

10-21.—Passing over the generalities, and what may be termed the almost identical propositions of this passage, we remark from it—first, on the enduring popularity of virtue; and then on its subservience to the wellbeing of a state or a commonwealth.... The despising in verse 12 includes the speaking contemptuously of a neighbour, in counterpart to which we are told of wisdom, that whatever ground there might be for thinking meanly of others it restrains the utterance of such thoughts.... The last clause of verses 14 and 15, are both well entitled to rank as notabilia. In verse 16 we meet with an expression of the homage so plentifully given throughout this Book to feminine worth and excellence. The strength of man might enable him to acquire and retain wealth; but the goodness of woman ensures for her the nobler reward of honour. In verse 17 we are told of the inherent health and happiness that there is in the morally right—the inherent wretchedness and discomfort of the morally wrong. Mercy, over and above the direct benefit which it confers upon its own object, casts back a reflex benefit and blessing on him who exercises it. Cruelty, besides the pain which it inflicts upon its victims, troubles and agonizes the man's own spirit. Let us, therefore, sow righteousness,

and we shall reap the life to which it tendeth—a life that has in it the worth and endurance of a blissful eternity. The opposite is the effect of our performing and pursuing evil. No conspiracy of men can arrest or avert those established tendencies of the good and the evil, or change the dispensations of Him who abominates iniquity and delights in uprightness.

22-31.—The want of discretion may imply both a want of sense and character, so as to mark out a person who is profligate as well as foolish.... Verse 24 is a notabile, pointing out the present and earthly reward, or reward in kind, which is attendant on liberality—whereas verse 25 points more to the spiritual things given back to the soul for the carnal things which it hath willingly parted with. In this view its last clause is a pre-eminent notabile. God in return not only enriches and ministers food to such, but increases the fruits of their righteousness. (See 2 Cor. ix. 6-11.)—There is a keeping up of corn that enriches the holder beyond what even political economy demonstrates to be for the good of the community. Beside the more obvious and general aphorisms of this passage, let me remark on the evil that cometh to him who troubleth his own house—the habit, it is formerly said, of one who is greedy of gain, and inherits only corruption. The natural and rightful subjection of folly to wisdom is affirmed in the last clause of verse 29.... I like exceedingly the images, as they occur, of the tree and the well, to represent the excellence of goodness, both in itself and in its produce or fruit.—Give me, O Lord, the wisdom of winning souls. O that I knew how to impress savingly the hearts and minds of my children! But while immortality is the great and final landing-place to which I

should mainly look and mainly provide for, both as to myself and others, let me forget not that righteousness has a recompense even here, or in the earth.

PROVERBS XII. 1-14.—There are moral truisms in this passage, too, which we shall not repeat; but would advert to his salutary lesson of welcoming reproof, and to the homage he again renders to the worth and importance of female goodness, and the misery which he ascribes to our being associated with the opposite—thus evincing the vast influence of the sex in life and in society.... I understand verse 6 to mean that the wicked deceive their victims into a false security, for the purpose of destroying them; but that they are often delivered from violence and wiles by the cautions and informations of the righteous. He that is despised because of a perverse spirit is surely not better, morally, than he that lacketh bread—though a self-conceited poor man cannot be estimated very highly. The next lesson, however, is new, and most obviously and unequivocally a good one—that of mercy to animals; and indeed cruelty, whether to man or beast, is one of the most hateful features of wickedness.... The good and evil of which the tongue may be the instrument, are again touched upon. Verse 5 may intimate that the acts of the outer take their first origin, and derive their character from the thoughts of the inner man—a lesson thus of spiritual morality.

15-28.—It is a most important warning that we should guard against the self-delusion of being right in our own eyes; and it is well to be told of the folly of outspokenness. There is great wisdom and great respectability in the right command of one's lips, and in maintaining a

prudent silence. The blessings and felicities of wholesome and well-timed speech are beautifully set forth:—"The tongue of the wise is health," and "a good word maketh the heart glad." To every Christian mind there is great joy in the employment, and more particularly if it succeed, of peace-making.... The open proclamations of folly are ever and anon rebuked with great severity. The contrast between diligence and sloth is also very often given.... Verse 26 is a notabile. And from life being said to be in the way of righteousness, I should urge the lesson, that the deeds of the hand have a reflex influence on the state of the heart. There is life in spiritual mindedness; and it serves to aliment this life to walk in the way of obedience.—My God, put truth into my inward parts. Save me from all that is abomination in Thy sight. Save me from those deceitful lusts that lead to deceitful practices.

PROVERBS XIII. 1-12.—We have here several of his customary lessons—as filial obedience and docility—the importance of the government of the tongue—the evils of sloth and good effects of industry—the characteristics and consequences of righteousness and wickedness. He then moralizes on virtuous poverty and ill-gotten wealth—telling us that morally and substantially the rich man might be altogether destitute, while the poor man is full of treasure. The contrast is between one that maketh himself rich and one that maketh himself poor; hinging, therefore, not on the respective states, but on the processes which led to them—the former, it may be presumed, therefore, amassing his fortune unworthily; the latter reducing himself to poverty by his liberalities and sacrifices. —Give me to follow the example of Him who, though

rich, yet became poor.... Verse 8 may mean that the rich man is apt to be reckoned with by tyrants and extortioners, and obliged to pay a ransom for his life; whereas the poor man, of whom they can make nothing, is let alone by them and not quarrelled with. Pride is denounced as the source of contention. The contrast is again repeated between ill-gotten and honestly made wealth.... Verse 12 is a notabile, and strikingly descriptive and beautiful.

13-25.—Save me, O Lord, from the heedlessness of Thy word; and give me to stand in awe of Thy commandment. ... Verse 14 is also a beautiful maxim. Wisdom and understanding are often spoken of as being a moral quality, and they are so looked to in verse 15. Passing over the generalities and moral truisms of this passage, let me instance the simple beauty of the first clause in verse 19. The aphorism on the subject of good and evil company is one of great weight and of frequent occurrence. The temporal prosperity of the righteous is also remarked upon. What pregnancy and force in the observations of Matthew Henry, even on the most apparently trite of these maxims —such as some would denominate trivial! "The diligence of the poor maketh rich," while the greatest estates may be dissipated by want of management.—Then follows the recommendation of corporal punishment for the purposes of discipline, much advocated in this Book; and very frequent is the ascription of their respective blessings to the good and the evil.

PROVERBS XIV. 1-11.—We have a very just and important testimony here to the importance of the wife and of good housewifery.... The speech of a proud man inflicts a blow upon others, but which in the end recoils upon

himself.... The "cleanness of the crib" here may denote its emptiness, even as cleanness of teeth is a Scriptural expression for famine—so that here we have a testimony to the usefulness of the inferior animals.—Then follows one of the many nearly identical propositions in this Book, the use of which I may vindicate afterwards.... The moral quality of the understanding, spoken of in the last clause of verse 6, is obvious from its antithesis to the first clause. ... The direction of verse 7 is a highly important one, and should prove a wholesome counteractive to a tendency of my own—which is to persevere in argument with those who are obviously beyond its reach.... Verse 9 is a notabile; and should impress the flagrancy of our making light of sin—far too serious a subject for levity or ludicrous emotion.... Verse 10 is also a notabile. We can make no adequate conveyance either of our sufferings and wrongs on the one hand, or of our peculiar tastes, and the gratification of these, on the other, to the apprehension of a fellow-mortal.—Let us offer them up to Him who knoweth all.

12-24.—Verse 12 is one of the most impressive warnings against self-deceit which occurs in Scripture.—My God, save me from the deceitfulness of sin and self.... There is a laughter that is wholly disjoined from happiness.... What a world of sound theology lies in the deliverance of verse 14—telling us how much the rewards and punishments of the Divine administration lie in the subjective state, apart from the objective circumstances! The need of circumspection is well stated in verse 15; and the considerate wariness of wisdom placed in the next verse in forcible contrast with the impetuosity and bluster of a fool.—May I be slow to anger, O God, as Thou art; and,

at the same time, let not mine be the calmness of deliberate malignity. Give me, O Lord, not to despise but to honour all men—and with special respect for and interest in the poor. How I delight in meeting here with that blessed conjunction of mercy and truth which occurs so frequently in the Psalms!...The preference of work to talk, as expressed in verse 23, is in keeping with the whole spirit and character of this Book, which, though substantially and throughout spiritual, bears a complexional resemblance to the utilitarianism of Benjamin Franklin and Jeremy Bentham. The riches which enable the wise man to set off and illustrate his character the more, only serve to make folly all the more conspicuous and dangerous.

June, 1846.

25-35.—Fear and confidence are here enjoined, as they are frequently in Scripture; and the explanation of their consistency is not difficult. I very much like the imagery of fountains and wells of living water, as struck out in the mind itself, and sending forth the streams of moral and spiritual health which refresh the soul, and give fruitfulness to the whole life and behaviour. One can understand how—in these days of war, and when a people too numerous for the resources at home, but unrestrained from the practice of invasion, without ceremony, on their neighbours—how the multitude of their people should be so valued by the marauding potentates who were over them. Slowness to wrath is at all times strongly and favourably contrasted with hastiness of spirit in this Book. The true seat of virtue, as being in the heart, is a very precious lesson. The last clause of verse 32 is a notabile. The religiousness of having respect unto the poor is uniformly

insisted on; and so is the superiority of a wise silence to the unbridled effusiveness of all that is in the heart of fools.... Verse 34 is a very high notabile.—O God, do Thou reform our nation, and bless it with a great moral and spiritual revival.

PROVERBS XV. 1-9.—Verse 1 is a notabile for keeping us always in mind of the beauty and benefit of a soft answer.—O that my tongue were at all times under the regimen of wisdom and principle.... Verse 3 is one of the highest among the notabilia of Scripture.—My God, I pray for a sense of Thy constant and universal presence; and O that it had a restraining effect upon me when placed among the miserable temptations to that which is miserably and degradingly wrong.... There is a frequently recurring imagery in the Book of Proverbs, which always pleases and refreshes me—when the moral is illustrated and set forth by the material—as the "wholesome tongue" by a "tree of life." O what a rebuke is administered, and what an alarm should be felt, when told that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord!—Pardon mine iniquity, O Lord, for it is great; and let mine henceforward be the prayer of the upright. And may I know what it is to delight in God, that God may delight in me. Save and sanctify me, O Lord. Often have I fallen into a deed of wickedness; but let not mine be a way of wickedness—whereas, let me both follow after righteousness and abound in the fruits thereof. Let the blood of Christ cleanse me from the sin that I have lapsed into, but with the effect that henceforward I may sin not.

10-22.—I need correction: may I kiss the rod. Enable me to judge myself, and then I shall not be judged.

And O may I ever feel the control of that Omniscience whose eyelids do try the children of men: He to whom Hades and the deepest places are altogether known, He knoweth the hearts of us all—the discerner of the most secret thoughts and intents, and before whom all things are naked and open.—May I rejoice in the Lord. May I in Him have a perpetual feast of the affections. And O let the sorrow which now weighs upon me be of the godly sort, working repentance unto salvation, and leading me to that peace and joy in believing, which might beam forth with beneficial influence upon those of my own household, and all within whose reach of observation I am placed.... Verses 16 and 17 are notabilia; and I desire to have that godliness, with contentment, which is great gain. Let me be rich in love—the love both of God and of my neighbour; and more especially in the pure affections of a pure and happy home. It is well to be told that if but diligent and righteous, the way will be made plain before us. On the subject of filial duty and respect I have much to be forgiven. Let not, O Lord, my taste for the ludicrous displace better and higher things; and give me also to observe a right deference for the opinion of my fellows, seeing that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

23-33.—Always beautiful as well as good on the regulation of the tongue! O that every word I uttered were spoken in due season.—May my conversation, O God, be in heaven, and my affections set on the things above, that I may be rescued from the hell beneath, where all who die in the flesh shall spend their eternity. O my God, enable me to command my thoughts. Give me to feel the control of Thy will over the inner man. Let me aim

at the religion of the heart; and grant that my contemplations be directed aright, and then shall I feel aright.... What wisdom on the affairs of life do we find in verse 27! We have noticed striking examples of the truth of its aphorism. Let the bribery of no offers or temptations whatever seduce me from the consistencies of the Christian profession. O that my heart were such as to secure a right converse both with God and man; then should I answer acceptably and pray acceptably. And yet much of our comfort cometh from without—even from the sensible objects and elements of external nature. Let me ever rejoice with thankfulness in the beauty of landscapes, in the greetings of affection, in the reports of the good that exists, or the good that is done throughout the world. Let me have the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and so humble myself that I may be exalted.

PROVERBS XVI. 1-9.—Let verse 1 be my confidence when called on to speak. Let me not be careful, but trust in Him who prepares the heart, and in the Holy Ghost who gives and directs the utterance. How verse 2 should come home to the conscience!—Save me from self-deceit, and give me a solemn feeling of the Judge who is above.... Verse 3 is one of the most precious notabilia in Scripture.—Lord, may I ever act upon it.... The glimpse that is afforded by verse 4 opens our way so far into the transcendental theology. There is no possible conspiracy that can be of effect against Him who sitteth on high. O for the mercy and the truth, both objective and subjective, that will deliver me from evil. Verse 7 is also a very precious notabile.—My God, deliver me, through the medium of my own conformity to Thy blessed will, from the power and malice

of all my adversaries. How precious, also, is verse 9—a notabile most assuredly! O that I mixed more of prayer and dependence on God, with my own devisings. Establish my thoughts, O God, and direct my steps. (verses 3 and 9.) Give me the godliness with contentment of verse 8.

10-19.—It was quite in keeping that Solomon should moralize on kings also. He had full experience of their power, and of the mighty influence which either their countenance or their displeasure had on the minds of those by whom they were surrounded—a variety of experience in human nature that is quite exemplified in our own day—the charm of court favour—the mortification of court disappointment or neglect. He presupposes, in some of these verses, that the kings are good—a supposition verified, it may be, by his own consciousness up to the time at which he wrote these Proverbs.... The last clause of verse 12 is a notabile. The power of a wise man to pacify the wrath of a king is what he himself may often have experienced, so as to strengthen his admiration, and more abundantly call forth his eulogies of wisdom. I should say that the last clause of verse 17 was also a notabile; and the lesson I should read and give forth from it is—the reflex influence of the outward walk and way on the inner man: "He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul"—an admirable text for a sermon. The condemnation of pride, and praise of humility, occur very frequently among the moral reflections of this Book, as well as the humiliation that awaits the former, and the advancement to which the latter is often carried.—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

20-33.—Observe how trust in the Lord, and handling a matter wisely, both consist together, and each has a

distinct blessing annexed to it. The heart is the well-spring of understanding or wisdom, and the tongue the organ for its conveyance to others; and both are highly signalized among these Proverbs—where we often read both of the sweetness and the wholesomeness of rightly chosen words.... Verse 25 is a notabile.—Save me from my own counsel, and the sight of my own eyes, O God. ... Verse 26 has a spiritual application—not to be slothful in sowing aright, that we may reap aright; for every man shall receive the fruit of his own labour and his own doings. Violence and deceit, through the organ of the mouth, stirs up many a dissension in society. I have no claim whatever to my hoary head being a crown of glory: henceforward, Lord, may I be found in the way of righteousness. Thou knowest my delinquencies, and the sad misgiving of heart to which they have given rise. Disappoint my fears, O God, and let the remainder of my days be consecrated to Thy service, and to a busy preparation for heaven. I am quickly irascible: I have not attained the greatness of self-command over my own spirit. I pray for this attainment; and do Thou enable me not only to repel irritation, but also despondency—or that sorrow of this world which worketh death. Self-rule is a mightier achievement than a victory over outward enemies.—O may I recognise Thee as the Sovereign Disposer of all things—ascribing nought whatever to chance, but ever looking upward to the God who worketh all in all.

PROVERBS XVII. 1-14.—Better is peace with poverty than wealth in the midst of war. Better is wisdom in a low station than a high station in the occupation of

wickedness and folly.—Try me, O God, and guide me in the right way; but O suffer me not to be tried beyond what I can bear. May Thine be a discipline of mercy as well as wisdom. While I abhor evil let me have respect unto poverty: and may I rejoice not either in iniquity or distress. My God, I pray for a blessing on my children, that they may be a credit and comfort to me; and grant, Lord, that in my old age I may bring no disgrace upon my family. Solomon gives forth the lessons of secular as well as sacred wisdom—as in speaking of the charm and efficacy of gifts.... "To cover a transgression" is to keep secret the faults of others. Love disposes to this, and its tendency is to love; while the opposite habit leads to contention.—Give me to feel reproof and to be admonished by it.... The cruel messenger sent against those who rebel, is the signal judgment which at length is sure to overtake him.... Let us shun the encounter with him who at once is senseless and insensate. Let us beware too of ungrateful returns—nay, even of retaliation; and as much as lieth in us let us live peaceably with all men, preventing quarrels if at all possible.

15-28.—Let me not call evil good nor good evil. Man is entrusted with the means of getting wisdom; but he will not get it if he have no heart to it. It is only he who seeketh that findeth.—Give me to bear the burdens of others; and forgive my impatience at the tasks which are imposed upon me. Yet let me mix prudence with duteousness, avoiding in particular the suretiship which I have always hated, preferring to be a giver or a creditor rather than a cautioner. Let me beware of contention, and also of the stateliness which betokens pride and leads to a humiliating overthrow. Let the heart and the

tongue be alike under the restraint and regulation of principle.—My God, make all my children wise unto salvation. Give me to be cheerful in the midst of them, but so as that they may be led to prize the way of pleasantness and path of peace.... The last clause of verse 24 is a notabile. I wish it were applied to the business of Churches, so as to make them more intent than heretofore on Home Missions—and this without prejudice to the habit of doing good unto all men as we have opportunity. I like the repeated testimonies given in this Book to the self-command and the wisdom of silence. Let my understanding have the entire mastery over my tongue; and let me ever be able to bridle and restrain the impetus which would lead to the effusions whether of vanity or violence.

PROVERBS XVIII. 1-12.—I am inclined to the commendatory interpretation of verse 1. In our search after wisdom let us shut out all that would distract our attention from it.... Verse 2, last clause, is a notabile.—Let me restrain the vanity or the excessive appetite for sympathy which inclines me to lay myself bare before the eyes of my fellow-men. Let me feel the disgracefulness of sin as well as its wickedness; and so as ever to prefer and honour the righteous above the transgressors of God's law. How beautifully are both the fountain of wisdom in a man and its efflux, described in verse 4!—Let me set more store than I have done hitherto on the importance of well-directed speech; and be more alive to the mischief that might be done both to myself and others by gossiping and calumnious talk. Give me to feel a responsibility for words as well as works. They can set

the world on fire; and strike very deeply and agonizingly into the sensibilities of our nature. Let me avoid sloth, and what is very deceiving—busy idleness. May I turn my remaining days in this world to the best account, both for my own salvation and that of others. And O let me ever trust in the name of the Lord. To Him may I ever resort as my continual habitation. May He be my strong tower; and righteous both in Christ and as Christ, (1 John iii. 7,) may I rejoice in my safety under God as my helper, and not fear what either man or Satan can do unto me. Let me trust not in uncertain riches; should they increase let me not set my heart upon them. Let me beware of the pride of life; and stand in humility and fear when I think of the law so often announced in Scripture, according to which pride and destruction, lowliness and honour, so often succeed each other.

13-24.—Let me not be precipitate in my judgments or deliverances, lest I should be ashamed of my rashness.... Verse 14 is a decided notabile.—Save me, O God, from the burden of internal remorse, and also of disgrace from without. Either is enough to overwhelm one. Let me prize knowledge, and more especially the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified. Let me both hunger and thirst after this; and also let me hearken diligently. Let me not be betrayed into a hasty judgment by *ex parte* representations. Chasten the impatience and impetuosity of my mental processes.... There is here a sanction given for the use of the lot, with an argument in its favour. Let me be most careful of controversy with relatives or very intimate friends, as a quarrel with them is the most deadly and irrecoverable of all. Again we

read of that highly important and therefore frequently repeated lesson—the right government of the tongue.—Give me, O Lord, to be far more observant of the love and respect which I owe to her whom I should regard as a gift and favour from on high. Let me be more alive to the gratitude and returns which I owe to them who bear a friendship to me; and most of all let the love of Christ constrain me to love Him back again.

PROVERBS XIX. 1-14.—We have here the superior worth of virtuous poverty, and the excellence of knowledge. Let me feel the positive sinfulness of haste—one of my great constitutional infirmities. To fret at the annoyance of untoward circumstances or events, is in fact to fret against Providence and against the Lord. Teach me patience, O God. May it have its perfect work.... Verses 5 and 9 are nearly identical; but to repeat the same things as repeated in Scripture should not be grievous. How I like the aphorisms that tell of the inherent value of the mental and the spiritual—as of the health and goodness for the soul that lie in wisdom and understanding! With all the preference here expressed for virtuous poverty—the seemliness of rank, and the violence done by the upstart rule of the lower over the higher, are not overlooked.... That is a noble lesson of forbearance and self-command which is given in verse 11! The fretting, corrosive, and perpetual annoyance of domestic peevishness is graphically rendered in verse 13. The influence of a king, whether to elevate or depress, is characteristically set forth by our inspired monarch.... Verse 14 is a notabile.

15-29.—The testimony against sloth is often repeated

in these proverbs. In verse 16 we have again the precious doctrine of the reflex influence which the outward history, whether of obedience or wickedness, has upon the inward state. Its first clause is a notabile, and would make an admirable text for a sermon.—My God, give me wisely, and with a deep and duteous sense of obligation, both to devise aright and to do aright for the poor.... The use of the rod is again inculcated, but not in anger—against which, too, there is delivered a sentence of condemnation.... Is there not a testimony for a future state in verse 20?... Verse 21 is a most illustrious notabile; and with full confidence in the Lord, let me henceforth give up—not the deliberations of wise forethought, but all those vain and vexatious cogitations which prey upon the heart or engross it unprofitably. If we desire to do good, but are poor, the will will be taken for the deed; it will be sustained as kindness, and far better than the deceitful promises of the wealthy. Religion may begin with fear, but will end in the sweets and satisfactions of a spontaneous and living principle of righteousness. We must smite the scorner; but it is enough to reprove the man of understanding.... Verse 26 I should make a notabile. It were an admirable text for a sermon to young men entering upon life, and still at the expense of their parents. It is a great enormity either to waste the property of their father when he is alive, or after they have succeeded, to expel the widowed mother from the premises. We are again told, in verse 29, that nothing short of inflictions and stripes will do for certain offenders, to reclaim them. Admonition may suffice for others.

PROVERBS XX. 1-9.—Another testimony against drunk-

enness—the deceitfulness of the habit, and the violence to which it transports its votaries.... Well could Solomon speak from his own experience to the formidableness and the power of monarchs. The wisdom of peaceableness—the folly of meddling with contentiousness—form among the most strenuous of his lessons; and also the evil of sloth. He proves in verse 5 his sagacious observation of human life; and the diplomatic skill that is here so well described we have no doubt he was master of himself. Many are they who feign and profess goodness; but how few there be who faithfully practise it in deed and in truth?... The first clause of verse 7 is a moral truism, of which there are many examples in this Book; but let us not therefore pronounce them to be useless. The very attention drawn to a virtue or a vice, though by only the utterance of its name, presents an object of moral contemplation to the mind, during which the moral feelings might be rightly and healthfully exercised. An identical proposition, therefore, as "that a just man walketh in his integrity," though but the repetition of a name, might of itself work beneficially on the reader.... This passage closes with an emphatic deliverance on the sinfulness of human nature.

10-19.—Then follow the denunciations of the inspired teacher against dishonesty, and idleness, and suretiship, and deceit, and mischievous gossiping—and these intermingled with wise reflections and authoritative sayings on other topics. A moral character may be assigned to the doings even of very young children. The ingredient of the morally good or evil very soon appears in them. We cannot too early watch the symptoms of character, nor too earnestly labour and pray for the rectification of the juvenile

mind.—Let me feel the force of Thy creative intelligence, in that Thou hast given perception and the organs of it to man. Let me regard Thee as a Spirit, and worship Thee, accordingly, in spirit and in truth.... Solomon discovers his shrewd discernment of man in verse 14. How mortifying that such falsehood and selfishness as are here pointed out, should be so general! The superiority of wisdom to wealth, and the benefits of counsel and good advice, are among the aphorisms of this passage.

20-30.—My God, remember not against me the sins of my youth, in the catalogue of which there stands undutifulness to parents. Let me forbear retaliation, and forget not to whom it is that vengeance belongeth. I would wait upon God when under the pressure whether of injuries or annoyances.... Verse 23 is nearly a repetition of verse 10, line upon line—even in behalf of but one lesson.... Verse 24 is a notabile, and a highly important one. Man can no more comprehend the whole meaning of his own history, than he can comprehend the whole mind of that God who is the Sovereign Lord and Ordainer of all things. Our very goings are of the Lord, and make up a way which, as being part of this infinite scheme, is beyond our comprehension.—Make my conscience both vigilant and tender, O God, and fearful of every delusion. ... To bring the wheel over the wicked is to crush them and their machinations.... This is a fine thing which, in verse 27, is said of conscience or consciousness—the light of the Lord within reflecting the light of his outward revelation. In order to salvation, the spirit must deal with the subjective mind, and illuminate the ruling faculty there, as well as set the objective word before us, which is of His own inspiration. A more vivid conscience will give us

a livelier sense of God's law; a more discerning consciousness, reaching to all the thoughts and tendencies of the inner man, will give us a more convincing view of our sad and manifold deficiencies from that law. Everything is comely in its season—the strength of youth, the gray hairs of age.... It argues the severity of a stroke when it leaves a blue colour behind. Solomon is here arguing for the system he so much advocates of corporal discipline—for the salutary effect of outward chastisements on the inward dispositions.

PROVERBS XXI. 1-9.—My God, turn the hearts of all who have the power to annoy me—so that I may be at peace with them, and receive justice at their hands. What a comfort we have here, when placed under an unrighteous government!—Lord, impress me both with the danger and the vanity of all self-delusion, for He that judgeth me is the Lord.... This second verse is a notabile. ..."To do justice" is like what the Bible says elsewhere of mercy—more acceptable than sacrifice.... Ploughing, like sowing, is a preparatory work for some produce that is desired after; and that of the wicked here is for the overthrow of those whom they would oppress and trample on. Diligence is contrasted with sloth in the usual style of reflection; and so also is the misery of ill-gotten wealth, which will, like the robbery of the wicked, destroy its owners. The way of nature is evil; but as to those who are purified by faith, by their works or fruits which are good, we shall know them. Solomon pens some weighty sentences against female termagants—the plague and annoyance of whom seem strongly to have impressed him.

10-19.—The claims of friendship are overborne by the

strength of that evil desire on the part of the wicked, which is bent on the objects of their own selfishness. Note the resemblance between verse 11 and ch. xix. 25.—The fear of punishment may constrain attention; and then attention opens an ingress for the lessons of wisdom. The righteous man frets not at the prosperity of the wicked, whom God will surely and speedily overthrow.—Make me alive, O God, to the distresses of my fellow-men. Solomon was a sagacious observer of human life; and to this we owe many such reflections as occur in verse 14. There is a future destruction to the wicked, but a present joy in acting righteously.... Is not "the congregation of the dead" an expression for the assemblage of the condemned, when in their second death? and is there not something here like the recognition of a future state?—though it be the temporal consequences of dissipation which are pointed at in verse 17.... For verse 18, see ch. xi. 8. The peace and blessing of God on a community are often hinged upon the excision of its most corrupt and unworthy members.

20-31.—The difference between wisdom and folly, between diligence and sloth, as to the respective influences even on this world's prosperity, is again presented to us. Moral conduct obtains a moral reward.—He that followeth after righteousness shall find righteousness.—Let me seek aright, O Lord, first the righteousness of Christ, in whom righteousness and mercy meet together—then under Him my own personal sanctification, in which I shall obtain larger accessions of worth and holiness—with all the life, and peace, and honour, which are attendant on real goodness.... He again reiterates the superiority of wisdom to strength, as also the blessedness of that most

wholesome regimen by which we keep the tongue under a right and well-principled discipline. Experience might tell the effect of a wise and well-guarded silence in keeping us out of trouble.—Let my words henceforth be wisely and well ordered. And observe the disgrace it brings upon us, the stigma of an evil name. If we deal in proud wrath, effusing it on every occasion, and on all around, it will bring on the re-action of an indignant neighbourhood, and fasten an ignominious brand upon us.... Observe in verse 24, the use of a moral truism, when the mere presentation of certain moral characteristics, be they good or evil, has the effect of calling forth the right respondent feelings on the part of the reader. The righteous have the blessedness of being givers—the slothful bring themselves to the necessity of being receivers. It is a mighty aggravation of the guilt of any religious service, when done for a salvo or encouragement to some design of future wickedness.... In verse 28, to "speak constantly" is perhaps to speak consistently. What the upright depones to will stand.—O for the abasement of all human wisdom and strength—that God may be altogether trusted both for counsel and safety.

PROVERBS XXII. 1-12.—Let me seek the applause and affection of men more as instruments of good to others than of my own selfish gratification.... Verse 2 is a notabile.—Give me to honour all men, for all are Thy creatures. Let me be circumspect in all my ways, and prospective also. Give me humility and godliness—that I may realize thereby the promise even of the life that now is. ... Verse 6 is an illustrious notabile.—My God, forgive my negligence of the souls of my children. May they all be

taught of Thee, O Lord. Cause Thy grace to rest on my grandson, now nine years of age; and turn both my own heart and the hearts of his parents more and more towards him.... The rod of a wicked man's anger shall at length become powerless. Pureness of heart leads to grace on the lips. The fountain within has an outgoing; and altogether the man who is, and does as he ought, is at one and the same time acceptable to God, and approved of men. (Romans xiv. 18.)... For verse 12, see ch. ii. 7, 8. —God preserves the Church, and keeps up the knowledge of Himself in the world against all its enemies and persecutors.

13-29.—How frequently do the slothful conjure up pretexts and apologies for their indolent procrastination! He here warns against licentiousness.—Give me not up, O Lord, in judgment to its fascinations.... To "warn against the oppression of the poor" has nothing peculiar in it; but there is in the warning against giving to the rich. The use of the rod is again re-asserted.... The effect of the knowledge of things sacred, is confidence in God. Acquaint thyself with thy Maker and be at peace. And what I trust in for myself, I will make known in its certainty and truth to others. I have believed, and therefore have I spoken. Avoid companionship with an angry man, and not so much for your personal as your moral safety. Avoid suretiship—avoid encroachment on a neighbour's property and rights—while, at the same time, so far from having enjoined on us indifference to property, and the increase of it for ourselves, we are enjoined to be diligent—and diligent in our business too, by prosperity in which, we shall rise to a higher grade than before in society. This is not always unlawful.

PROVERBS XXIII. 1-14.—The direction of verses 1st and 2d and 3d I stand pre-eminently in need of. The care of his regimen as to eating was the scrupulous concern of Jonathan Edwards. Let it be mine also.—Wean me more and more, O God, from a desire for wealth, and from a dependence on my own wisdom. Let me not set my heart upon deceitful riches, but upon the living God, who giveth me all things richly to enjoy. I pray for the same grace in behalf of one who I fear is in danger, from this idolatrous affection. The profession without the substance of hospitality, so common in modern times, is a most hollow and unsatisfactory affair. Let me decline all share in this, whether as a giver or a receiver. But let me repair my deficiencies in the virtue itself, and be really kind to all under my roof—not grudging and not impatient at the intrusions or introductions of strangers. They may be angels unaware; and at all events, their coming is of the Lord.... I am too much given to argue and vindicate in the hearing of those who are either incapable or uncareful of appreciating the case. Let me restrain my appetite for the sympathy of all such; and know when to be silent as well as when to speak. There is a manifest contempt for what is said that should lay instant arrest upon one.... For verse 10, see ch. xxii. 28, where the possessory right is recognised. Here, again, the claim of humanity is superadded to that of justice; and with an awful reference to Him who is the friend and avenger of the defenceless.—Then there follows an earnest persuasive to the acquirement of knowledge for its own sake, with the superaddition of correction when necessary for those in childhood.

15-32.—Let me be wise in heart, and righteous in speech; and above all may I know what it is to be in

the fear of God all the day long. Put this, O God, into my heart that I may not depart from Thee. And let me fret not because of the triumph of the wicked. Let me think of the speedy end of all things. Let me not be satisfied with an avoidance of the excesses here spoken of. Let me be temperate in all things.—My God, forgive the impatience of other days, with my parents who gave me birth. Give up everything for truth, and let no bribery of any sort induce me to surrender it.... Verse 26 is a notabile—whether regarded as the claim of an earthly father upon his children, or of God upon His creatures—which no sinful and no earthly affection should dispossess. ... Verses 31 and 32 form a notabile. They unfold the gradual process and increasing power of temptation, leading onward from one sin and from one enormity to another, till brutalized and stupid, the conscience becomes hard and torpid, and one fit of vicious indulgence is after an interval of stupor followed up by a second and a third, till the ever-recurring tyranny of passion lords it over the drunkard and debauchee.

33-35.—Drunkenness leads to impurity; and so also does fulness of bread. Our Saviour warns against surfeiting as well as intoxication. It were well to have a high standard of abstemiousness in respect to both. Whether there should be seasons of fasting or not, there should be a general habit of temperance; and the command of one appetite strengthens for a like mastery over the others. I pray for self-government, O Lord.... The drunk man is in two particulars like one on the top of a mast. There is a swimming and agitation which bear a strong resemblance to the rolling of a vessel, and there is real danger in the midst of insensibility He is

tossed to and fro as if amid the waves of the sea; and yet is not awake to the hazards of his condition. Verse 35 may describe a drunkard under punishment, and so thoroughly besotted that he had no sense of the shame, and no feeling of the inflictions which were laid upon him. After the fit of intoxication is over, the desire returns—the habit gets more and more inveterate, the temptation ever and anon recurs; and so often as it does, he seeks to the indulgence as passionately as ever.

PROVERBS XXIV. 1-12.—Let us neither envy the prosperity nor desire the fellowship of the wicked. Knowledge is power, as we may gather from its achievements in this passage. In the multitude of counsellors, if they be men of real wisdom, there is safety; but a popular assembly is not the best theatre on which to mature or form the best devices for the good whether of a church or a nation.... The gate of the city was the place of concourse for judgment and deliberation; and where the admittance is indiscriminate, many are the fools who should have no place, nor can speak to any purpose, there. He that deviseth evil, however artfully he may disguise it, and perhaps take no ostensible part in its doings, shall be called a mischievous person—shall have the brand of what he really is, fastened upon him.—My God, give me the control of my thoughts; how grievously I sin in regard to these! Let every wrong and hurtful and uncharitable imagination be resolutely put forth; and let me keep my heart with all diligence—and how easily I am cast down, even by the apprehensions of evil; strengthen me, O God, against its realities. Keep the evil from me, O Lord, if it be Thy blessed will; but if not, keep

me from the evil by perfecting Thy strength in my weakness when under temptation, by bearing up my courage and confidence when under adversity. This verse 10 is a notabile, and so also pre-eminently are verses 11 and 12. How impressively do they rebuke and should they alarm the spiritual cowardice of him who shrinks from the faithful warning that might convert and save souls!

13-22.—Wisdom is to be cultivated because of its pleasantness, even as honey is eaten because of its sweetness. There is a very present reward, as well as a future hope attendant on righteousness. The wicked shall not prevail against the just.—Recover me, O God, from my manifold falls. Make good my rising again, and restore my backslidings.—Verse 16 is a notabile.... The enemies of Israel, though instruments in God's hand for the punishment of His people, were themselves punished because they rejoiced in the downfall which they had effected. This inhuman joy will be disappointed in its own object—for God will because of it turn Him in mercy to the unhappy victims of their triumph.... Verse 19 is nearly a repetition of verse 1; but the reason of the injunction is given in verse 20—the temporary and perishable nature of the wicked's prosperity.... Verse 21 is a clear notabile. It is not change simply that is here denounced, but addictedness to change—the being given to change for change's sake, or from the mere love and habit of innovation. Ruin will come both upon such and those who join with them.

July, 1846.

23-34.—The first four verses of this passage seem intended for judges.... Verse 27 is highly applicable to those who come into the possession of an estate, and are carried

away by the vanity of living in a baronial house, greatly it may be beyond its value. First, see to the productiveness of your acres, and then regulate your expenditure accordingly. Put your ground into a right condition; and afterwards build a house corresponding to the revenue which it yields.... It is pleasant to observe the outgoing of the earlier morality towards the later and more advanced—of that in the Old towards that in the New Testament.—We have here, in verse 29, a prohibition laid on retaliation, or the returning of evil for evil. Then there occurs a picturesque description of the state in which he beheld the premises of the slothful man, and founded upon it a dissuasive from the habit against which so many of these proverbs are directed—the habit of improvident laziness. It is followed up by a decided Scripture notabile, in verse 33; and from which as from a text the preacher may urge his hearers against the evils of procrastination, lest they should be landed in something far more grievous than poverty—a ruined because neglected eternity.

PROVERBS XXV. 1-14.—It is interesting to mark the step here told us in the extension of Scripture. The last chapters being added by Hezekiah, implies that the preceding ones were arranged previously, and may have been left in their present state by Solomon himself. The appendix subjoined by the men of Hezekiah was also the composition of Solomon, though the compilation of a later period.... God's glory is that He is above the comprehension of His creatures; and He needs not to search for anything, as He knows all things intuitively. A king's glory is to search all that he requires to know for the guidance

and policy of his government; while even he participates in the glory of being himself beyond the ken of those who are beneath him.... The silver becomes fit for being made into vessels of honour by having the dross removed from it. The people surrounding the king become fit for his dignitaries and office-bearers by the wicked being put out from his presence.... The analogy is worthy of remark between verses 6 and 7 and Luke xiv. 9. A hasty intermeddling with quarrels is here condemned, as in other places, with great wisdom and effect.... Verse 11 is a most precious and beautiful notabile; and so is verse 12—the cadence of which has often charmed me.... The harvest takes place in the southern countries in very hot weather—when liquids cooled by snow from the mountains, as Lebanon, must be very refreshing.... To "boast of a false gift" is either of receiving or giving—here probably the latter.

15-28.—We have here the moral power of meekness and forbearance—the evil of excessive indulgence—the hazard of too frequent an intrusion upon one's neighbours—the sore infliction that falsehood might make upon peace and honour—the suffering which is incurred by confidence in the false and unfaithful—and the unseasonableness of mirth in the presence of the afflicted.... Verses 21, 22, form a notabile, and all the more prominent from the quotation of it in the Epistle to the Romans. Kindness to an enemy will either melt and subdue him, or else it will aggravate his final retribution.—Then we have the moral power of anger, whether as frowning down injury, or as filling a house with discomfort and misery.... For a righteous man to fall down in disgrace or cowardice before the wicked, or to be trampled upon by their tyrannical

power, is either a sad corruption or a sad tribulation in a commonwealth.... Compare verse 27 with verse 16.—Save me from the contemptible weakness of seeking after praise —for this is most inglorious, and the excess of it, just like honey, is at length nauseous. Give me a command over self—else I am indeed very defenceless; and lay open my subjective nature to all the hazards of the objective world around me.... Verse 28 is a notabile.

PROVERBS XXVI. 1-12.—We have here the want of keeping between folly on the one hand, and either respect or fidelity or effectiveness, whether in doing or saying, upon the other. He stands as much in need of physical constraint and correction as do the inferior animals....Verses 4 and 5 receive illustration from the following dialogue, said to have taken place between Lord Rochester and Bishop Burnet:—

L.—"My Lord Bishop, yours to my knees."
B.—"My Lord Rochester, yours to the ground."
L.—"And yours, again, my Lord Bishop, to the centre of the earth."
B.—"And yours, my Lord Rochester, to the antipodes."
L.—"And yours to the bottom of hell."
B.—"There, I leave you, my Lord."

Scripture tells us to "answer a fool according to his folly, lest he should be wise in his own conceit;" but it also tells us to "answer not a fool according to his folly, lest we be like unto him." The "folly" of this Book implies a moral as well as intellectual deficiency—wickedness as well as senselessness; and the "fool" is distinguished from the "transgressor" of verse 10, as the habit or character is from the acts.... Verse 11 is referred to in 2 Pet. ii. 22. And yet with all this disparagement and

denunciation of folly, is the fool regarded as a more hopeful person than the man who is wise in his own conceit, who receives by this deliverance a fell rebuke and condemnation.—Lord, cast down my lofty imagination, and teach me to think of myself soberly.

13-28.—Our moralist now proceeds to other lessons—as, first, against slothfulness—the frequent theme of his animadversions. And here he remarks how readily it can devise excuses for indulgence—how fastened to its place of repose, even as a door is to its hinges—how adverse even to the smallest and most trifling exertions—and yet withal how conceited and confident. It must cleave, and with great tenacity, to something as a plea and argument for self-justification.—Then comes a wise reflection against the intermeddler with other men's quarrels.—Then against the deceiver, as both mischievous and most hateful.—Then against the calumniator. One should be careful even of the lighter gossipry—for there is no calculating on the evil it might do to its victims, though done by us perhaps in sport. The silver dross which covers the potsherd may form a sort of ornamental dress to it—even as the flattery of an ardent profession may disguise the worthlessness of the inner soul. But this deceitfulness will not avail always. It will at length be laid open to public indignation. And so, too, the artful will meet with punishment, by falling into their own snares.... In verse 28, we are told of the hatred which one feels to those whom he has injured. The hatred and the injury act and react on each other.

PROVERBS XXVII. 1-10.—Verse 1 referred to in James iv. 13, &c.—My God, save me from the sinful love of

praise. Better that others should praise me than I my self; but better still that I should not seek my own glory even at their mouths. (ch. xxv. 27.) Not my own will but God's will—not my own glory but God's glory.... A fool's wrath—unrestrained, unprincipled wrath—is heavy; yet secret, repining, insidious envy is more mischievous still. In beautiful counterpart to this is the elegant verse that follows—one of the most pleasing notabilia in Scripture—expanded in the sixth verse—the "open rebuke" being the "faithful wound," which is better for him who is struck by it than the unknown and inoperative affection even of a real friend, and better far than the flatteries of a disguised enemy.... The hunger which gives a relish and appetency, goes far to equalize the enjoyment of the poor with that of the rich—sated, and it may be to nausea, by the abundance of their good things.—Let me cherish home, and fill up my time there with useful occupations. Let me love to abide where Providence has placed me. I have felt the evils of throwing myself abroad and at large. ... The sweetness unto the moral and mental taste of such elements as friendship and affectionate counsel, is a lesson of exceeding preciousness. Let me feel the obligation of duty to my own friends, and to the friends of my relatives; but friendship is more to be trusted than relationship. Trust rather in the kindness of an affectionate neighbourhood than hazard the exposure of thyself to a cold, or selfish, or alienated kindred.

11-27.—The moralist turns to his son, and begs that the result of his treatment may be such as to vindicate him against the reproaches of those who found fault with it. ... Foresight is recommended by the good of it, and by the evil which issues from the want of it. Suretiship is again

condemned, as in ch. xx. 16; and more especially are we warned to take a pledge of him that is surety for a strange woman.—Let me beware of extravagantly or ostentatiously praising others—an aptitude of mine rather. Then we are told of the unescapable calamity of having a female virago to do with—an object of particular aversion in this Book.... We have here the good of converse in sharpening the faculties, (verse 17,) and of sympathy in revealing both ourselves and others. (verse 19.)—In verse 18 we are told the good of fidelity in trust and service. There is no fulness of satisfaction for our earthly desires —none but in God.... Verse 21 seems to tell us that praise is a touch-stone. Foolishness may be made to depart from the heart of a child, (ch. xxii. 15,) but not of an incorrigible fool.... The chapter concludes with the rewards of diligence, and of vigilant superintendence of one's affairs, as a safeguard against the uncertainty of riches. The security of returns from land, for good and careful husbandry, seems to be contrasted with the precariousness of other wealth, and even of the monarch's crown.

PROVERBS XXVIII. 1-12.—What fearful imaginations the consciousness of guilt inspires us with; but what a noble superiority to all terrors does a conscious rectitude confer! What a testimony is verse 2 against democracy, and for monarchy, provided that the monarch is virtuous! Under the former regimen how often is the evil of verse 3 realized; and how often, also, are the wicked praised in opposition to God's law. He that is spiritual judgeth all things—himself misunderstood by the godless multitude.—Then follow one or two of the moral truisms often repeated in this Book. God often, even in this life transfers the

wealth gotten by the unjust to those who are merciful.—My God, forbid that my disregard of Thy precepts should make my prayer an abomination. God's providence often leads the man who plots against the innocent into snares of his own laying, and ensures to the righteous their possessions.... There is a shrewd observation of life in verse 11. But our moralist was observant of nations as well as of individuals; and how true it is, that under a wicked government the good sink into obscurity.

13-28.—The confession to which pardon is granted is confession unto God. We can not only cover our sin from men, but by our extenuations and light thoughts of it, also from ourselves.—Give me a constant fear of God, that I may harden not my heart.... I pray for the deliverance of all lands from cruel tyranny; and for free and righteous government everywhere. Save me from the guilt of soul murder, lest I incur the doom of him who offends any of Christ's little ones; and against whom He denounces that it were better for him to have a mill-stone put around his neck, and to be cast into the sea.—Then follow some of the usual truisms on righteousness, and diligence, and fidelity. There are precious texts here against hastening to be rich. We are also warned against respect of persons, whom rather we should rebuke, and so obtain their respect afterwards.... Verse 24 were an admirable ground for a sermon to young men attending a seminary, and away from home, when assailed by temptations to extravagance and folly. There is a delusion in their minds, as if it were no great harm, seeing that what they spend is only at the cost of their parents. They who, instead of constantly asserting and contending for their own dignity or right, commit their cause to God, live in

quietness, and will inherit prosperity. To walk warily, instead of having a blind confidence in present impulses, is the way to walk safely. A blessing is pronounced on the friends of the poor; and the last verse of this chapter is nearly a repetition of verse 12.

PROVERBS XXIX. 1-17.—Verse 1 is a notabile. The hardening effect of continued resistance to the application of a moral force is a very great lesson.... In verse 5 I am inclined to think that the snare is for the neighbour's feet. One transgression is a snare shutting up to the repetition of it.—Let me be more observant of the lesson in verse 9, for I am too apt to contend even with a hopeless subject; and also of the lesson in verse 11, for I am too effusive, and not sufficiently retentive of my feelings and thoughts. There is much of the wise observer in verse 12.... Verse 13 I confess to be not very intelligible.—O for a government that will wisely consider the case of the poor. By joining the rod with the reproof, it is clearly intimated that the moral is sometimes the better enforced when there is added to it the physical appliance. Let us not despair because the wicked are preferred to high places, and bring out a multitude of followers in their own likeness. Iniquity will not always be paramount; but, as we are told in verse 16, its overthrow will take place in sight of the righteous, who will obtain the final triumph. The use of correction in education is a frequent and favourite lesson in this Book.

18-27.—(See 1 Sam. iii.) The seers were the instructors of the people in these days: where there is no such instruction, or where the people are left to themselves, they are sure to perish. What a lesson as to the importance

of a Christian ministry.—Verse 18 is a notabile.... There are impracticable servants, callous to reasoning; and it is plainly hinted here, that to have their obedience something more stringent and compulsory must be resorted to.—Save me, O God, from all hasty utterances—a besetting foible. Let me beware also of a fond and over delicate treatment of those who might be spoiled thereby. Let me beware of anger and pride, and be of a genuinely meek and humble spirit. Let me recoil from the wicked, nor be afraid of the hostility of men.... Verse 26 is quite a notabile.—Let me trust in God as my helper, and fear not what man can do unto me. Let me count the favour, or the favourable judgment of man, but a small matter: He that judgeth me is the Lord. The chapter concludes with the mutual repugnance of men of opposite characters.

PROVERBS XXX. 1-9.—There are various conjectures regarding Agur, Ithiel, and Ucal, which we shall not put down. There is deep self-abasement in the profession which he makes—more especially as wanting in wisdom, and the truest of all wisdom too—the knowledge of the Holy.—Give me to increase in this knowledge, O Lord.... There is the ascription of what is lofty and incomprehensible, and all-powerful, to the Divinity, in verse 4; and it is interesting to mark, in these older writings, the embryo revelation of what has been more fully known in later days.... Verse 5 is a very precious notabile. The purity of God's word is its perfect and immaculate freedom from every mixture of the doubtful or the uncertain. In God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.—Let me therefore commit myself, with absolute and unfaltering confidence, to this unfailing word. Let me trust in God;

and shielded by His might and faithfulness, I am safe. And His word is complete as well as pure. Let me not superadd any fancies of my own; for if I give out these in the name of His authority, as if they were Bible intimations or warnings, when they are not, I should thereby falsify the counsel of God.... The passage from verse 7 to verse 9, inclusive, may be regarded as a notabile. I would join in Agur's prayer.—Save me, O Lord, from the temptation to forfeit my integrity for place or pecuniary advantage of any sort. And O let me not trust in uncertain riches, or suffer the gifts of God to seduce my affections from God Himself. The poor man who steals, and has at the same time a religious profession, may be said to take God's name in vain, by the discredit which he brings upon His cause in the world.

10-20.—Wrong not a helpless man, lest his appeal bring down upon you the displeasure of God. There are four hateful and delinquent classes here spoken of.—Forgive, O Lord, my disrespect and undutifulness to parents. Cleanse my heart, O God. I am not pure in my own eyes, but I seek to be delivered from all impurity. Let me not be carried away by any swelling imaginations of my own importance. Correct and chasten this tendency of nature, O God. I can scarcely accuse myself of a cruel or oppressive spirit, yet am I not hereby justified. In many points I offend.... The first clause of verse 15 may be appended to verse 14, and represent the insatiableness of a thirst for money and a thirst for power. He then proceeds to state four things as illustrations of this insatiableness. He then interjects a denunciation against the children who are contemptuous of those who gave them birth. Then come four things which he represents as

unsearchable. The three natural enigmas seem as if introduced, not as analogous to the last, in that it is incomprehensible, viewed as a natural process,—but to set off the deep policy and disguise of a seducer. Were it not, however, for verse 20, all the four would have seemed as if likened to each other in respect of their natural mysteriousness.

21-33.—Then follows the mention of four things as disquieting, and disgusting, and intolerable—all alike in this, that they exemplify the preferment of those who are unmeet for aggrandisement and honour. The second is that of a fool become rich. Afterwards we read of four things not to be despised because of their seeming insignificance —and this because their lack of strength is compensated by the redeeming property of great skill. Among these the locusts go forth in marshalled order, though they have no king to marshal them—as if in virtue of a wisdom diffused through them all. One scarcely apprehends a moral in the next class of characterized instances, which are brought forward apparently in contrast with the preceding, having an imposing air of greatness. There is a dignity of manner sanctioned by all these phenomena, if they may be so called. Though we may lift ourselves up unwarrantably, and in foolish conceit, or perhaps with the evil design of humbling others, for which we ought to be penitent and ashamed, let us not stir up strife by any pride or violence of ours.

PROVERBS XXXI. 1-9.—Neither shall we enter upon the conjectures about Lemuel. His lessons are good. In his charge against drunkenness, as it is delivered to a king, the appropriate argument is used of its unseemliness for those in high station, and more especially if in offices of

public duty or trust. Out of their stores they may give wine for medicine to the diseased, or cordials to those in affliction and want. There is no warrant in this passage for the poor taking up the habit, or as it may be called the trade of drunkenness at their own hands. It is an injunction on the givers of this commodity to others; and for the purpose whether of health or consolation. And King Lemuel is told not to be generous only out of his own personal wealth, but equitable in the affairs of his high administration. And so there is a return made here to pure and virtuous judgment, in particular between the poor and their oppressors—to prevent the perversion of which, he had just been told to refrain from intoxication. ...The opening of the mouth applies both to advocates and judges—though it must have been chiefly in the latter capacity that Lemuel as a king was called upon to act; yet is he told to plead the cause of the dumb and the poor and the needy.... Those who were appointed to destruction may be those sentenced to capital punishment in the courts below. And his pleading may be his setting forth the reasons of his sentence as is done in the charge of judges.

10-19.—The whole passage down to the end of the chapter is a pre-eminent notabile. It is the description of a virtuous woman—in the sense of our old Scotch, by which virtue and thrift are synonymous. It is a eulogy on good housewifery, and a great deal more—for the cares of this notable manager extended beyond those of the mere household, even to the farm, and the merchandise, and the home manufactures. Then we are told that a virtuous woman may be found, though she be spoken of here and elsewhere as a great rarity. The confidence of the

husband, as mentioned in verse 11, does not respect her conjugal fidelity, but her industry and talent for business, the proceeds of which make him independent of booty, as a marauder—a significant clause which tells of the predatory habits of these days. We have here the custom of late so prevalent in our own land, of home-made cloth, by the export of which it is probable that she is represented as fetching her food from afar. And then her internal management is so well conducted—her early rising—her distribution of meals to all the members of her domestic establishment—her husbandry without doors—her operative processes within. There is to me a poetical charm and effect in verse 19.—Altogether she is an illustrious notable.

20-31.—But her noblest characteristic is her kindness to the poor—which at the same time does not infringe on the comfort or even the splendour of her establishment. With all her generosity to the destitute she retains substantial provision, and costly dress, as well as furniture for her own household. It is a fine trait in this description—the contribution she makes to the respectability of her husband. We here read, too, of her fabrics, which she exchangeth with the merchant for his wares or goods from a distance. She becomes strong in credit and honour and security, in consequence of all her praiseworthy doings. But nothing can exceed the beauty wherewith her speech is characterized:—"In her tongue is the law of kindness" is a perfect gem.... Verse 27 is a special notabile, and we hear it repeated with all the frequency and familiarity of a proverb, of the industrious—"that they eat not the bread of idleness." Verse 28 is also very precious.—"The children rising up and calling her blessed." But her crowning

grace is her godliness—a virtue not only compatible with, but the fountain-head of all that can benefit or embellish human life. Favour or the affection of love is often deceitful, but godliness is for honour, as well as profitable to all things.

ECCLESIASTES.

ECCLESIASTES I.—The Commentary which I know best on Ecclesiastes is that of Bishop Patrick, who perhaps inclines too much to methodize it into a continuous argument, though it is evidently not, as the Book of Proverbs, a mere collection of sayings. Its predominant lesson is the vanity of this world in itself, and apart from all that went before or comes after it. No doubt the earth abideth; but how ephemeral is each man, and each generation of men upon it. No doubt there is recurrence or circulation in many things: when the sun sets it is not for ever; when the wind shifts it comes back to its old direction; when the waters of a river empty themselves into the sea they do not abide there so as to make it fuller than before, but they return by evaporation, and descend to their old fountain-heads. Man labours, but not to his own satisfaction, for his eye cannot rest on aught that is new. And the old round of labour and disappointment will just be described by every succeeding generation. This we may be sure of without any distinct records from our ancestors to us, or from us to posterity.... Solomon announces himself as a diligent observer of these things. This of itself is a sore labour, and aggravated by the discovery that all was vanity and vexation. There are deformities and defects innumerable which we cannot mend.

Solomon in his inquiries after truth gave himself not only to know wisdom but to know madness and folly—perhaps by observing them in others, or by making a study of madmen and fools. He had great advantages for the inquiry—and the result was that even in wisdom and knowledge there was grief and sorrow, and so vexation.

ECCLESIASTES II. 1-14.—He had just demonstrated the insufficiency of knowledge for happiness—he now seeks for it in pleasure, and with the same result. He gave himself unto wine and folly—but with the view of experimenting upon them, and so not with the excess which would unfit him for the business of observation. His object was to ascertain what was really best for man; and so he brought together all sorts of luxuries, such as kings only could command. There are various opinions respecting the delights of the sons of men. He indulged in all sorts of magnificence and pleasure; yet not so as to stupify his intelligence, or prevent him from a wise discernment of the character and consequences of the indulgences to which he gave himself up. He did not labour to provide all these things without making trial of the enjoyment that was in them: and yet all was still vexation and vanity. He turned him reflexly on what he had gone through, and could not in spite of his disappointments but acknowledge the superiority of wisdom, which if it take the command will save a man from much evil into which folly here runs itself. But then there is the equalizing death that levels all and absorbs all.

15-26.—This last reflection brings him to the same conclusion of the world's vanity—just and true if this world

be all. It led him to a despairing and distasteful view of life. It gave additional poignancy to this sentiment that the whole fruit of his labour here should quickly pass under the control and ownership of another, who might as readily chance to be a fool as a wise man. It does give a farcical view of life that such should be the upshot of all a man's fatigues and cares and anxieties. And, therefore, better that he should cast off the burden of them, and take with a cheerful and light heart the enjoyments which are within his reach. And certainly on the premise of the world being our all, this were true wisdom. Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die; nay, there may be even a godliness in such contentment and freedom from care, and thankful enjoyment of things present. (See Matthew vi. 31, 34; 1 Corinthians iii. 2; 1 Timothy iv. 4.)... Solomon, in verse 25, seems to claim the acquiescence of others in his views from his larger experience and opportunities. It is a gift of grace from God to be made to use the world without abusing. The sinner is the prey of his own anxieties, and to him it must be vexation that he should heap up for others.

ECCLESIASTES III. 1-11.—It is a main property of wisdom to time things rightly; and it is the part of wisdom to study the congruities of time and place, and to act accordingly. Both animals and plants have their fixed points for the commencement and termination of their being; a time to heal, and a time for giving way to disease as incurable. And so of material as well as living structures. There are also proper seasons for the different affections of the soul: a time to pick up stones and cast them out of the field, and a time to gather them for

its enclosure; a time to indulge in lawful pleasures, and a time to abstain from them; a time for gain, and a time for expenditure; a time for holding in, and a time for liberality or letting out; a time to rend one's garments as in mourning, and a time for the heart being whole and the habits also. There are fit times both for speech and silence—seasons of peace and war. If we work out of season, we work unprofitably; if in season, it is still for a short-lived object. And thus it is with all the labour which terminates in but an earthly acquisition and enjoyment. The adaptations of the ephemeral means to the no less ephemeral ends are beautiful; and the world is so set in the heart of man that he labours for its objects, looking no further—resting in the various objects of his various special affections; and not understanding, scarcely ever carrying his desires beyond what is either before or after—bounded in his views and likings by the horizon of what is seen and temporal.... Verse 11 is one of the most remarkable verses in the Bible, with a preciousness of meaning in it, and great profundity.

12-22.—He here repeats that the only wisdom for this life is to enjoy it with gratefulness and godliness. And we should acquiesce in all events as the doings of God for our discipline, and that we might grow in His fear. It is now as it has ever been, and why then should we think it strange? for in all He does He is but requiring the past, or what has been done already. And it should dispose us all the more to acquiesce, that a time is coming when the righteous judgment of God shall supersede and rectify the iniquitous sentences of wicked men. Apart, indeed, from this faith, and looking only to things, where is the difference between men and the inferior animals? And it were

well if the ungodly could be convinced by God, that wanting the fear of Him, they—proud, and lording it over others as they do—are but like the beasts that perish. And though here there is a distinct admission of man's immortality, yet in ignorance of what it shall be or what shall be after him, does he recur to his former lesson, that it is good to make the most of things present—true in a religious as well as an infidel sense, agreeably to the quotations already made from other parts of Scripture.

ECCLESIASTES IV.—He had now entered on another object of human pursuit—ambition or power; and feelingly laments the evil that is in the world from oppression or tyranny—a heartless spectacle of the vanity of life. If a man succeed in ambition, he is envied—if not, he is a prey to chagrin eating inwardly; and also the man despairing of any good in this world of violence from industry, lives idly, and is in desperation for a maintenance.... Verse 6 is a notabile.... And mark, too, the vanity of these aspirations after grandeur, more especially in him who has none to succeed or to second him in the possession of his great wealth. Better than being thus alone is it to have some one to participate in one's interests or employments—to sustain each other when calamity comes, or to strengthen each other's hands.... It marks the vanity of mere station and power, that wisdom so ennobles the wise above the foolish of highest rank—insomuch that the former may attain to the preferment from which the latter are cast down.... The two last verses seem referable to a king and his heir-apparent. There is no end to the fickleness of popular affection. All before the king and his

son evinced this inconstancy, and so also will the people who come after them; so that the present idol will be abandoned as surely as his father was; and this is another view of the vanity of ambition.

ECCLESIASTES V. 1-7.—Here there comes in a protest against all formal or will-worship.—My God, I am rebuked by the expression of the "sacrifice of fools"—(*ανοητων*)—in the house of God. O that I were more ready to hear; but how I wander, even at the Lord's table! And what a rebuke in verse 2 against long and wordy prayers! —O let my heart prompt my mouth; nor let me think that I shall be heard for my much speaking. God is not pleased with such sacrifices. But though I should not utter prayers by tale and measure, let me ever carry in my heart a prayerful disposition. A multitude of things distracts the mind till all seems as a troubled dream; and so a multitude of words confuses, and, if I may say so, unrealizes all the objects of thought.... Verse 5 is a notabile; and what an admirable sacramental lesson may be drawn from this and the preceding verse!—Let me not vow under the impulse of a fancy that transforms the possibilities of things. Paul charges Timothy before God and the elect angels, who take cognizance of us, and will note when our promises go beyond our weak doings.

8-20.—There be higher than the tyrants and oppressors of this world; and it should abate our wonder at prosperous injustice when we think of the after reckoning by which all will be settled and put right. God, who made the earth for all—and the king is as dependent on its produce as the meanest of his subjects—is no respecter of persons. The desires of the rich and powerful are sources

of misery from their very insatiableness; and it is little of the wealth that comes to the share of its possessors; but it is to him a cause of great and tormenting anxiety; whereas the labouring man has enjoyments which evince a principle of compensation in the ways of God that will be yet more fully developed. And there is so much of vanity or vexation, both in the having of riches and the transference of them to successors, that there seems nothing better than for man to live and enjoy life while he may; and were there no judgment-day after, this were his highest wisdom. Even with a judgment—with all the prospects of revelation full in view—there is a wisdom, though not of itself the highest wisdom, in taking the enjoyment of what God hath given to us. Things present are ours. Every creature of God is good, and not to be refused if received with thanksgiving. And let us by all means dismiss the vain cares of accumulation, and set not our affections upon treasure.

ECCLESIASTES VI.—He is still on the vanity of riches.—Let me not set my heart upon them. Guide me to their right use, and give me the disposition as well as the wisdom so to use them. Where lies the good of all that is objective, if we have not a subjective to be gratified therewith? God might take away our relish for all things, and stamp an utter worthlessness on the money which purchaseth them.—Give me Thyself, O God; and shed abroad in my heart the love of Thyself. Nay, though all he amasses go to his own children after a long life spent in sordid accumulation—so very sordid and sparing upon himself, that he personally had none of the enjoyment of riches—nay, did not even provide for a decent funeral, or

perhaps spent so penurious and discreditable a life, that he was thought unworthy of one by his surviving neighbours and friends;—then, better for such a person were it to have been still-born, and so been saved from the toil and disgrace of such an existence, however lengthened out it might be. The wise in this world share alike with fools in this vanity; for although they should succeed in the supply of their wants, yet there are insatiable desires which spring up and leave them dissatisfied. Even the poor, whose longings terminate in what is necessary to life, and who obtain the enjoyment of them, share with their superiors in that death which brings all to a level. Truly, if this world be our all, it is but a sickening contemplation

ECCLESIASTES VII. 1-10.—A good name even here is precious; but if written in heaven, this will indeed make the day of our death better than that of our birth.—My God, let me feel it good to have been afflicted; and give me to learn wisdom from the deaths and disasters which come on families. May I be disciplined into seriousness; and may the maxims of this passage reconcile me to the adversities and crosses of my earthly pilgrimage. Poverty may be tolerable, but not the poverty which is the result of others' injustice and cruelty. On the other hand, riches may corrupt and destroy.... What a lesson for patience, that in the end all will be well with the righteous! and let us not, therefore, be provoked into a haughty resentment by the humiliations which a successful and over-reaching fraud may have laid upon us. Let me brace my spirit therefore against anger; and let me compose my mind with the reflection, that after all nothing strange has happened to

me; and even in former ages as ill things occurred as now. Let us submit, then, to the ordinations of that all-wise and overruling Providence which will bring everything right at last.

August, 1846.

11-29.—Riches are not to be despised if combined with wisdom, but, like all other creatures of God, are good.—Give me the knowledge and wisdom, O Lord, which are life everlasting. Let me acquiesce in the ordinations of God, however much they might thwart the objects which my heart had been set upon. Let prosperity and adversity be met by us appropriately. They are made to alternate by God, after whose appointments nothing remains for us but submission. Things do not proceed equally in this life.... May not the "over-righteousness" and "over-wisdom" of verse 16, be the will-worship and the intruding into things unseen of Col. ii. 18?... Verse 17 is clear enough as a dissuasive from the reckless dissipations and crimes which bring one to an untimely end; and it is comfortable, amid all these obscurities, to meet with so clear a testimony for the fear of God which will at length extricate us from all difficulties. This is true wisdom, and yet nowhere perfect here, as is intimated in verse 20, which is a decided notabile.—Then follows the wisdom of a proverbialist in regard to our not giving ear to what is said of us. But he complains of a mystery beyond his depths; and at length gives as his experience the bitter evils of licentiousness. It is possible that such may have been his power of seduction, that every woman he attempted gave way before it; and hence his deliverance on the subject. And none of this wickedness is chargeable upon God, but upon man, who was created upright,

but himself went waywardly astray into many devious bypaths.

ECCLESIASTES VIII.—The wise man, if fully so, has the meekness of wisdom, and looks not with severity on others. We have also here the duty of loyalty, and on the principle of godliness, too. Do not offend the king, then, by flying off from him in an insolent or disrespectful way.—Solomon could speak of the power of monarchs. ... Thou shalt avoid trouble by submissive obedience—and act discreetly, fitly, seasonably—for it is by a non-observance of fitnesses that man incurs great misery; and his ignorance of futurity lays him open to much error of conduct. At all events, death is surely coming; and let us cease from the wickedness that will not avail us for defence against the last messenger and enemy. And it is for rulers, therefore, as well as subjects, to be conscientious and sober-minded. And thus, even wicked judges, who sat on the tribunals of the metropolis or holy place, were disgraced and degraded in public estimation after their deaths. The fate of the wicked will certainly be accomplished, however secure or stable they might feel their positions to be.—Verse 11 is a notabile.—However long their tenure of prosperity and power in this world, it will be ill with the wicked and well only with the righteous. Our days at the best are but a shadow. Looking only to these, it does appear both a vanity and an enigma that the like final event seems to happen to all. It were best to enjoy the world while we have it were there no hereafter; better this than the fruitless and fatiguing cares of him who labours to penetrate the unknown and unknowable.

ECCLESIASTES IX.—So enigmatical is our world that though all is in the hand of God, we cannot pronounce on whom He loves, or whom He hates, from their state here. The evil of this is that men abandon themselves to regardlessness. Still life is better than death ; for "while there is life there is hope ;" and in making the most of things present, we may realize something more eligible than mere insensibility.... Verses 5-10 form a notabile ; and verses 10 and 11 special ones. Apart from the faith of immortality, the moral given in these is the wisest for such a condition; and with a well-grounded faith in it, the lesson is one of confiding and thankful enjoyment of "things present."—Let us do what is good with all our might, yet dependingly on Him without whose blessing all human effort is of no avail. After another reflection on the latter end of this our mysterious being, he passes censure on the ingratitude and inconsideration of those who forget their obligation to a poor but wise man.—And then follows verse 17, a very memorable one in these days of mobocracy Whereas he had just stated what service was done by one wise man, he concludes with a statement of the counterpart mischief that might be effected by one sinner.

ECCLESIASTES X. 1-9.—Verse 1, a most interesting notabile.—The "dead fly in the pot of ointment" is a loud call for gravity and well-sustained sense. The "wise man's heart being at his right hand," is more significant of his being set on right objects than of his dexterity in the prosecution of them. The very movements of a fool, or way of going about things, proclaim his folly.... To "leave thy place," may signify to renounce thy duty as a subject.

The charm of yielding is worthy of being specially noted, so as to make the last clause of verse 4 a notabile. He here remarks on the evil and offence of those unworthy preferments which emanate from the chief magistrate.... The circumstance of wealth being contrasted with folly in verse 6, proves that, in association with the former, a fair proportion of wisdom and good sense is presupposed. There is a natural homage rendered to family and fortune; and even this ought not to be unnecessarily contravened in the disposal of dignities; for if not, the public feeling is scandalized, and this in spite of all factitious radicalism, when servants are set on horses, and princes walk afoot. Let there be neither a secret conspiracy against the established order of things, nor a violent inroad on its fences and landmarks; else there may be a recoil on the perpetrators themselves, just as the renders and pullers down of things material are in danger of being hurt therewith.

10-20.—Wisdom is better than strength; and let us therefore proceed warily when bent on the attainment of any good, or the removal of any evil. More particularly, as enchantment will disarm the serpent, so will discreet management the babbler—for it is not by fighting him with his own weapons, but with skill and sound speaking and acting, that he is to be met. The wise man will ingratiate himself by his words—whereas those of a fool will come back with overwhelming recoil upon himself. The outgoings of foolish speech proceed from a fountain-head of folly within; and they end in that violence and mischief which are ascribed elsewhere to the tongue, that setteth on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell. The fool will talk and talk on as confidently

as if he knew all things—whereas man is profoundly ignorant of most things, for the evolution of which in futurity, it is his truest wisdom to wait in silence. The fool will expatiate in speaking and speculating among things profound—whereas he gives proof of his being an incapable, even by his gross ignorance and incompetency in the plainest matters. Let me treasure up this against the transcendentalists, whose perversity in things practical I have so fatiguingly and fruitlessly attempted to withstand. And hence the misfortune of a land being under a childish monarch, as contrasted with its wellbeing when under the worthy son of worthy ancestors.... The chapter concludes with denunciations against idleness and squandering, and at the same time disloyal declamation notwithstanding.

ECCLESIASTES XI.—My God, teach me more and more of the grace of liberality, and let the prospect of coming evils upon our land incline me the more to it. Let us imitate the clouds in their effusiveness, or the trees in their fruitfulness of what is good. We shall be judged by our works: as death found us, judgment will pronounce upon us. And let us not linger among vain calculations, but avail ourselves of present openings for beneficence and charity. Duties are ours, events are God's. Let me not suspend certain and present duties on unknown and distant events. Let what is right be done in its season—committing all futurity to Him who alone hath the full foresight and disposal of it. Light is sweet; life is a great blessing;—but how to prolong this? Death is coming. The days of darkness and unconsciousness are before us. The young may rejoice in his current gratifications, but these will

soon terminate; and God will place us all before His tribunal—an intimation of such a judgment here as is tantamount to the intimation of an immortality after it. To provide for this let us remove every distempered affection from our hearts, and put evil away from our outward doings.—Save me from the sins of my youth, O God.

ECCLESIASTES XII.—The way of prolonging that light and life which are so pleasant to the soul, is to remember our Creator here—that He in mercy might remember us hereafter.—Then follows a most memorable passage from verse 1 to verse 7. The head, and the arms, and the legs, and the eyes, and the teeth, are most elegantly set forth in figures. The whitening of the head is represented by the flourishing of the almond tree. What I myself most feel is the nervousness of fears in the way, and things light as grasshoppers being burdens to me.... How truly beautiful is verse 6, and how decisive of immortality is verse 7! The great moral of the whole is the vanity of this world—if this world be indeed our all; a lesson given forth by him who in his time gave many lessons.—Let his words be my incitements to what is right, and let them adhere to me.... The "masters" here are the writers of Scripture, all furnished by the same Holy Spirit with those truths which it is for ministers to deal forth among their congregations.—Let the Bible henceforth satisfy me more than it has hitherto done, and let me retire from the fatigues and cares of authorship.... How conclusive are these closing sentences; and why is it that after the gleams of light which this Book casts on the doctrine, it should still be doubted whether a future state was known in the days of the Old Testament?

SONG OF SOLOMON.

SONG I.—The authorship of this piece is inscribed upon its forehead.—My God, spiritualize my affections. Give me to know what it is to have the intense and passionate love of Christ. Let me find of this love that it is better than all earthly desires and gratifications. Draw me, O God, to Christ. (verse 4, and John vi. 44.) .... The Church is black, sometimes with misfortune—as when persecuted, at others with corruption—as when tempted.—My God, have I not kept other vineyards than Thine—gone over to the care of secular interests and secular managements, to the neglect of spiritualities! O may I seek first Thy kingdom and Thy righteousness. Let me seek now unto Christ, and not turn aside from Him unto other causes which may appear cognate with His, but which as far as they are good, are best promoted by the direct work of christianizing and spiritualizing the souls of men. Direct me aright, O God. Let me feed from the writings of the inspired men, these shepherds of the Church; and O that experimentally I were conducted to the habit of feasting with Him, and Him with me.

SONG II.—Give me, O Lord, to love Christ both for what He is in Himself and for His love to me. May His love to me constrain me to love Him back again. I long for mutual and confiding intercourse. May He no longer be lightly esteemed by me, but esteemed as altogether lovely. I desire to feast with Him, and Him with me. I would sit down with great delight under the canopy of His mediatorship, rejoicing in the abundance of peace and

love. Let no human companionships, nor representations of human authors, disturb my intercourse with the Saviour, or give me other than the scriptural and spiritual view of Him, though when Himself pleases He withdraws. He at times hides Himself, and keeps back the manifestations of His countenance, and even the power of His word from us. The best way of restoring these is to walk holily, and put away our deceitful—even our least sins. He who hath the Son hath life.—May I have Him, and that He may be mine; and I be of those, to whom it may be said —"ye are Christ's." (1 John v. 12; 1 Cor. iii. 23.) He delights in His Church, rejoicing over it.—Turn unto me, O Saviour, and come quickly.

SONG III.—But He retires into dimness and distance from my soul. Let me search after Him if haply I may find Him. Let me search for Him in His word, or at the mouths of His ministers—those watchmen of the Church, asking counsel of judicious and experienced Christians. After finding Him, O may I retain Him—keeping alive in my heart a sense of His presence, and of His love for me. Possess me, O God, in this way with Christ. Admit me to the intimacy of His fellowship—that I may rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Many of the passages are illustrated by commentators, who cast them into the form of a dialogue.... Verse 6 is conceived to be a question put by spectators, who form a third party between Christ and His Church. The inquiry is thought to regard the Church, made up of multitudes, like pillars of smoke. The subsequent description might relate to the glories of that place into which His disciples are brought, and to the glories of His own character

and person. Though Solomon be named, yet a greater than Solomon is here. He provides a strong and ample guardianship for His people: His angels are ministering spirits, who minister unto the heirs of salvation.—Let us rejoice in the abundance of this security and peace. Christ is highly exalted, and by God the Father, who hath given Him a name above every name. Let us go forth and behold Him. Let us consider Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Let us look unto Jesus. (Heb. xii. 2.)

SONG IV.—This seems a description of the graces of the Church by Him who is her Husband. How much better is her love than wine! To love God is better than all sacrifices and burnt-offerings; and surely not more acceptable to God than delicious to the moral taste of man himself, when regenerated and made a new creature of. O that love to things sacred—and more especially the love which attends fellowship with the Father and the Son—how much more precious is this than the relish of our most exquisite physical gratifications!... It is pleasant to recognise expressions in this Book which harmonize with other Scriptures, and serve to identify it with them as an inspired composition. I therefore seize on the clause in verse 15—"a well of living waters." (See John vii. 38; iv. 14.) Strike out in my heart, O God, a well of living water—that abounding in all fruitfulness I may be well-pleasing in thine eyes, and Christ may see in me of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.—O may the Spirit, who bloweth where He listeth, blow upon His Church, and cause it to abound more and more in all the fair and pleasant fruits of righteousness. Then will He indeed be

satisfied with the travail of His own soul; for the Spirit is the fruit of His purchase, and it is a fruit which is sweet unto His taste.

SONG V.—Verse 1 is a memorabile, often repeated on sacramental occasions, as being Christ's invitation to His guests. But the invitation is often not fully responded to. Excuses are often made for not yielding a present compliance. The invitation may be read, yet not effectually; and doubtless the sloth of the mind, and its aversion to the sacrifices and renunciations which the Gospel requires of us, have an important share in producing our sluggishness and inertness under even the most awakening calls. Yet sinking again under a sense of dreariness and desertion, will we go in quest of Him who should be all our desire, as He is all our salvation. But many are the obstacles in the way—unfaithful ministers, persecutors, spiritual adversaries, all stand as barriers between us and Christ, whose graces and attractions should nevertheless impel our footsteps towards Him.—O may I long vehemently for union with Him, even till it be effected.

SONG VI.—The imagination of a dialogue conducts many a commentator through passages that might be otherwise inexplicable. The question of verse 1 is conceived to have come from the daughters of Jerusalem. It is well said here by Henry, that such a question were indecent if this song is to be understood literally, but not so when taken in the spiritual sense; for all, whether in the Church or out of it, should be desirous of an approach to Christ, and fellowship with Him. Christ's office is to gather lilies—

to gather, from a world lying in wickedness, those whom He might transform into the flowers and fruits of a well-watered garden.... Verse 4, and more especially verse 10, are memorabilia often quoted and applied to the Church. The description here given of her graces is much the same with that of ch. iv. 1-3. In virtue of these she is preferred before all other competitors. She stands alone in the regards of Him who has redeemed her, and redeemed for the end of sanctifying her. He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, and make of it a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.—O my God, thus ally and affiance me with Christ. I want a more intimate and abiding, and withal sensible union to Him. O grant that even they who are without may recognise in me the beauties of the Christian character; and more especially may He Himself who is represented as going down to see the fruits of the valley, see in me the fruits of His own hand as a sanctifier. Thou canst translate me suddenly, or before I am aware, from darkness into marvellous light.... The "Shulamite" is the Church.

SONG VII.—Then follows another description of the Church, it is thought, by Christ. Strength and beauty are united in her composition.—O that Christ so loved me, and that I had a corresponding love to Christ. Grace me, Lord Jesus, with all the virtues which are well-pleasing in Thy sight, that Thou mayest rejoice over me, and say of the new creation what was said of the old, ere deformed and corrupted by sin—"And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good." O that the Son of God might say of me—How

fair and how pleasant art thou! And let me be enabled to say, that I am Christ's, and His desire is towards me. Be my companion, O Lord; and as Thou didst with the disciples in going to Emmaus, open my understanding to understand Thy Scriptures. Let me press onward to higher degrees of communion; and let the outgoings of my soul be ever more and more towards Him. Let me give Him my obedience as the fruit of my love to Him.

SONG VIII.—I long for a more familiar and endearing view of Christ; and though I gave Him my whole heart and soul, so as that men might wonder at the first, yet would I at length gain their respect, even as wisdom is justified of her children. The presence of Christ in the Church makes all its ordinances fruitful.—Let me study to please Christ by the odour of my graces. Then would He take up His abode with me; and O that the world and men of the world had less power to banish Him from my thoughts, or to interrupt the communion betwixt us.... I can understand that verse 5 is first a question respecting the bride from the daughters of Jerusalem; but the latter half is to me very unintelligible. Then in verse 6 she addresses Christ—pressing after Him, and praying for His favour and protection....The "little sister" may be the Gentile Church, not yet in being; or a natural man not yet created anew. Let every good work begun in her be perfected. Let us graft upon her capabilities that which may advance her into a full grown Christianity....The vineyard is a type of the Church. Christ, the Lord of the vineyard, will look for fruit; and they who cultivate it aright will be gainers by their service.

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH I. 1-9.—Prophecy should be deeply studied—yet even to the most cursory reader there are most precious gleanings, which are all we shall aim at, instead of trying in these slight notices to fetch up the treasures which lie beneath. And at the very outset how palpable, yet how weighty are the utterances of Isaiah.... Verses 2 and 3 are memorabilia of a high order. The rebellious ingratitude of man, and his regardlessness of God are chargeable on all men—though the charges are in this instance called forth by the perversity of Israel. It marks very strongly how inveterate their moral disease was, that it was beyond the reach of all outward appliances. Even chastisements but exasperated it the more, and added to its virulence.... The last clause of verse 5 is a notabile. All medicine was thrown away upon them, and therefore it is not administered, and so their visitations come upon them in the form of penalty, and not of chastisement. We can image nothing more beautiful or poetic than the affecting similitudes wherewith the prophet represents the desolations of Zion.... One gladly recognises a verse quoted by Paul on the subject of election; and indeed every trace of a connexion between the Old and New Testament is invaluable.

10-20.—He reprovingly entitles Israel by the names of Sodom and Gomorrah. And what a noble principle is here propounded—the same with that of Hosea—"I will have mercy and not sacrifices." In the progress of revelation downward, the older Economy is more and more refined and purified from its grossness, and the letter

gradually gives way to the spirit. It was indeed a most offensive hypocrisy to Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, when these formal worshippers came forth with the oblations of their outward service, while their hearts and lives were full of all impurity and wickedness. And how the remonstrance breaks forth into a high style of moral injunctions!—O my God, let me not darken these sayings by an artificial orthodoxy, but call on men everywhere to repent, and to do works meet for repentance.... Verses 11-18 make up an illustrious notabile, and the last verse of the passage is pre-eminently such.—Let me preach both to myself and others the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. God's favour or disfavour hinged on the obedience and disobedience of the children of Israel.

21-31.—A fearful account of the degeneracy of Jerusalem—especially in the upper classes, and among the people of station and authority. What an expressive saying—"I will ease me of mine adversaries." The punishment and destruction of sinners are congenial to the Divine nature, and there is a sweet savour unto God—not only in them that are saved, but in them that perish. (2 Cor. ii. 15.)... Verse 24 I hold to be a notabile, and also verse 25, for the sake of the expression—"I will purge thy dross, and take away all thy tin;" after which Jerusalem, restored as at the first, will become a city of righteousness. Thus, too, at the end of the world will the tares be separated from the wheat, and God will ease Himself of them by causing them to be bound up in bundles and burned—after which he will reign over a pure and righteous family, among whom nothing that is unclean or unholy can enter. Judgment and righteousness will preside over the whole

work of the redemption of Zion—whether of Jerusalem or the Christian Church. Obstinate sinners shall be consumed; but the converted shall with penitential shame and sorrow renounce their old idolatries. The wicked, too, will be ashamed of the idols in which they trusted. And they that made them shall be like unto them—like their own useless oak and unfruitful gardens; and both the strong man and his work shall be burned together.

ISAIAH II. 1-9.—Verses 2-4 form an illustrious notabile; and we doubt not that the complete fulfilment of them is still to come.—Hasten it in Thy good time, O Lord. Israel shall at length be exalted to a place above all the powers and dignities of this world; and the kings of the earth, as well as its people will do them homage. A general Christianity among the Gentiles will be the result of that coming restoration of the Jews to their own land, when Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the Christian world, and there will be established there a great central college for the lessons of the Gospel.—Let us call now on the Jews to walk in the light of the Lord, and so speed on this blessed consummation. Still they are a forsaken people—rejected of God because they rejected his Son, and to recall their other sins of former years, because they incorporated idolatrous strangers with themselves, and adopted their practices and ways. And they are given over wholly to the pursuit of wealth, and the god of this world—from the highest to the lowest of them. Therefore are they not yet forgiven.

10-22.—But an awful manifestation is coming—which will overawe and solemnize men, leading them to call on

the rocks to cover them. The earth at present is almost wholly given over to idolatry; but a time is at hand when the Creator will make open assertion of his supremacy over all creatures, and God alone shall be exalted in that day. Our ships, and our commerce, and our political greatness, and our splendid works of beauty and art—these are what we now glory in; but all shall be brought low. And we think that some fearful miraculous demonstrations are awaiting us, by which to bring down the proud confidence of man, and to make us cease from all dependence on our fellows—high it may be in power or fortune or talent, but still weak and sinful and mortal as ourselves. There is doubtless in high places, and throughout the community at large, an exulting hope in the progress and prosperity of the world from secondary causes, and the skill wherewith they are plied by human sagacity for the advancement of our species. All this will be put to shame and to flight, when He the first and only efficient cause shall make direct exhibition of his own high prerogatives, and shall arise to shake terribly the earth. Let us wait for this coming of the Lord.

ISAIAH III. 1-9.—The prophet now turns him more especially to his own country. It speaks much for the gradation of ranks as to consequence, that beside the threatened calamity of famine, there is denounced upon them the loss of their great men—great no doubt most of them in virtue of their personal qualifications; but still it shows the vast importance of government, and one of strength too, that it is spoken of as a great evil when children are princes and babes are rulers, and also when the people themselves are oppressors—for these upstarts are commonly the

worst of tyrants. It was a sad pass for the Jews to be brought to, when in the desperation of their wants and helplessness they went a begging for masters who might govern and command them, and the distinction was refused because of the utter powerlessness on the part of any to do them good. This was all the result of their own disobedience—in word as well as in deed. They insulted Him who is the Lord of glory and cannot be mocked. They brought it all upon themselves; for they gloried in their shame. They proclaimed aloud their misdeeds and boasted of them. There is an infamous species of dissipation which does show itself in the countenance so as to bespeak the worthless debauchee.

10-26.—The respective dealings of God with the righteous and the wicked are here authoritatively set down; and the misery of a weak government again intimated—when women and children are placed over a nation. But besides this there may be a corrupt government misleading the people—and a tyrannical government lording it cruelly and oppressively over them. In the remonstrance with these last, there occurs a notabile at verse 15—the expression of "grinding the faces of the poor." But the most striking passage in this chapter, is that which sets forth the habit and at length the sore humiliation of the daughters of Zion. How it marks the identity of our nature in all ages, to compare the description of the *belles* upwards of two thousand years ago with those of the present day—walking and mincing as they go. They are completely alike—not in their fashions, but in the fantastic variety of fashion, and all its pomps and fineries—the description of which in this place is very spirited and piquant; but what a hideous reverse, when disgrace and defamation

shall be inflicted on the women, and the men shall fall by the sword?

ISAIAH IV.—This chapter takes up a like desolation and distress with what has just been pourtrayed—only it points forward to such a futurity as lies still before us. We cannot apply the bulk of the chapter to the nearer calamity predicted by Isaiah; and we therefore look forward to a time when a refuge will be opened from a general and wide spread distress, and the escaped of God's people shall have a something beautiful and glorious and full of excellence and fruit to which they might resort.... Christ is called the Branch in various places of Scripture—a branch out of the stem of Jesse, &c.... The remnant who shall survive the destruction that is to come among men will be a holy remnant—in part by the removal of all who were polluted by vice and violence, and in part by the reformation of those who have humbled themselves under the chastening hand of the Lord. The latter process seems to be intimated by what our prophet tells of the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. Then will God interpose for His Church, as He did for the Israelites of old —for the Church in the wilderness. Then will be glory, and glory beyond the reach of hostile violence—for upon all the glory shall be a defence. This last expression, too, is a notabile.—O God, may that brilliant era arrive speedily.

ISAIAH V. 1-8.—The similitude here employed of Israel, or of the Church, to a vineyard, bears on the inspiration of the Song of Solomon; and so does the endearing epithet of "my well-beloved." The passage is replete with

instruction.—My God, make me fruitful, and forbid that I should bring forth wild grapes; but such fruits as Thou lookest for, and as are well-pleasing to Thee.... What an impressive appeal is here made—"What more could I have done that I have not done?" Verily we have much to answer for. There has been no want of help, or of appliance, or of provision, for all our moral and spiritual exigencies, on the part of God. We have no excuse in the deficiency of His offers, of which, if we do not avail ourselves, we are the authors of our own undoing, and the blood lieth upon our own heads. He thus vindicates His dealings with Jerusalem; and similar will be His dealings with us, if we yield either a perverse return, or no return at all, for the privileges we enjoy. Our candlestick, too, will be removed; and a sad judgment, we fear, overhangs Christendom at large, and our own land.... Verses 2 and 4 are notabilia.

9-17.—Now follows the denunciation of Israel in less figurative terms—first for the covetousness of those who multiply their houses and their fields, in counterpart to which their houses shall be desolated, and their fields become waste and unfruitful, yielding the miserable return of less than was planted in them.—Then follows another denunciation on a distinct set of transgressors—the intemperate and riotous. How truly descriptive of the votaries of dissipation in our present day—"that they regard not the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of His hands"—an expression this which makes verse 12 a notabile. Hence the captivity of Israel—a judicial infliction for sin. Hell has enlarged itself. The receptacle of the dead, as too narrow for their increasing multitude, is widened for their accommodation. All classes of men

shall be brought prostrate; but the majesty and righteousness of God shall shine forth, and be testified on that day.... Interpreters view the "lambs" of verse 17 spiritually. When the enemies of the Church are destroyed, the Church itself, and children of God, will be at rest and be fed. I should have conceived of animals feeding at large, and strangers making entry on the desolated country.

18-30.—Wo unto them that make a laborious business of sinning—who prosecute it as the system and main concern of their lives, and are even vain in the exhibition of their audacities and follies, bidding defiance to God.... Verse 20 is a notabile.—Heaven defend me from this wo! Let me not gloss over what is evil, nor disparage what is good. And save me from all overweening conceit of myself. There are men who glory in their shame—who make a boast, for example, of their drinking powers. There is utter recklessness in this; and we shall often see, in the ruin of principle, that dissipation and dishonesty go together, so as to corrupt even their social integrity, and make them corrupt ministers of justice, if their station be on the judgment-seat. This is a species of corruption extremely prevalent in these days; hence the anger and the outstretched hand of God against them; hence the visitation upon the land of them who were the angels and the instruments of His wrath—calling upon nations from afar to spoil and chastise His own people. It is a powerfully expressive image, to hiss unto them that they may come speedily.... The chapter closes with the description of these invaders. They shall not tarry, nor will fatigue cause them to lag upon the way. They will not strip themselves for repose. Their weapons are

formidable; and they will have both horses and chariots of war. They will have all the rapacity, and force, and skill of a practised predatory warrior; and desolation and sorrow will overspread the land.

September, 1846.

ISAIAH VI.—This is an important theological chapter, inasmuch as the quotation from it in John xii. 41, identifies the Lord Jesus Christ with Him whom the prophet saw sitting upon the throne—even Jehovah Himself.—O may I learn from this chapter how to reverence my Saviour as thrice holy and the Lord of Hosts, whose glory fills the whole earth. The prophet's apprehension would have been well-grounded, had it been God out of Christ whom he saw; but it was God in Christ—nay, Christ Himself, whom he saw. He was baptized with fire by a live-coal from the altar; for not only must our guilt be removed, but the dross of our corruption must be burned away.—Take away mine iniquity, and purge my sins, O God.... The objective truth, of which Isaiah undertook to be the messenger, was told to Israel; but the subjective operation necessary for their being saved by it was not performed on them. Their desolation and captivity were the results of their continued impenitence; yet a remnant was left—the good and holy few—the salt of the earth—the substance of the land.

ISAIAH VII. 1-11.—The terror of the Jews at the invasion of Syria and Israel is picturesquely set forth. Though Ahaz was a wicked prince, yet God encouraged him in this instance, and appeared upon his side.... Rezin and Pekah are compared to the two tails of smoking firebrands, whose heat would soon be put out. It comported

not with the designs of God that these two invaders should succeed. Let them stay at home—let them be satisfied with their own capitals and their own territories, nor think of possessing Jerusalem and Judah. As for one of them, even Israel, it will soon cease to be a nation.—For the chronological difficulty of sixty-three years, see the Commentators.—Isaiah winds up this comfortable assurance by urging faith in it, and threatening that if they want this, they will not prosper—they will have no stability in the land. But God not only requires our faith, He supplies us with a warrant for it. He does not ask bricks from us without giving us straw: He does not demand belief without evidence. And so He bids Ahaz specify the kind of sign or evidence he would like.

12-25.—Ahaz refuses to ask a sign, on a plausible pretence, too. Yet Isaiah seems offended, and as if charges Ahaz with wilful unbelief and indifference. It is well remarked that Isaiah in verse 11 says of God to Ahaz —"that He is Thy God;" but in his reply speaks of Him only as my God—the prophet's and not now the king's God. And he further proposes a sign—not one that will be available for working belief in the mind of Ahaz, who seems careless in the matter, but highly available for the general encouragement of all who had faith in God, and trusted Him for the fulfilment of all His promises and prophecies.... We have here a glorious prediction of the Messiah. (See Matt. i. 22, 23.) What is said of Him in verse 15 becomes more intelligible, if for "that" we read "when;" or, though miraculously born, He will not be miraculously fed, but will grow up and be maintained as others on the common fare and produce of the country.

... There are difficulties, too, in the interpretation of verse 16.—Some understand that the child here spoken of is one pointed at by Isaiah, and perhaps one of his own sons; others, that before a child shall know how to choose the good and refuse the evil—sooner than by the interval which separates the birth of a child from the dawn of its early understanding—will the land be forsaken of both her kings. This does not nullify the illustrious prophecy which came before; but is rather a guarantee for the fulfilment of it. But the prophet does not leave off till he pronounces judgment, too, upon Ahaz.... To "hiss for the fly and the bee from afar" is extremely poetical and impressive. The invasions of Egypt and Assyria will desolate the whole land, so that few cattle shall be left, and they will have the whole produce to fatten on. Much good land will run into briers and thorns. Men will hunt with arrows and bows where they used to labour with the instruments of husbandry. Uplands taken into cultivation, and fenced about with brier and thorn hedges, shall be laid open; and the animals, fearless of all restraint or obstruction, shall roam at large over them.

ISAIAH VIII. 1-8.—"Maher-shalal-hash-baz" signifies "to hasten the spoil and the prey"—an appropriate title for the prophecy which relates to the invasion of Assyria—the rod, for the time, of God's anger.... A former son of Isaiah was named Shear-jashub, which means "the remnant shall return." The son whom his wife the prophetess now gave unto him received a name of another import, and was expressive of judgment. He predicts that the invasion of Assyria should take place ere this son shall be able to speak.... There were many it would seem in

Judah disaffected to their own government, and in the interest of the kings of Assyria and Damascus, preferring them to their own more quiet and domestic monarchy. He forewarns them of the destruction impending over these their objects of confidence and affection ; nay, even they in Judah would experience his vengeance. They refused the soft waters of Shiloah, and would be visited by the strong waters of Euphrates.... I have long admired the closing cadence of verse 8.... The land of Judah, where Christ was born, is the land of Immanuel.

9-22.—He now turns him to the invaders from afar, and lets them know that their present designs against Judah will be overthrown—for in this land of Immanuel God is with us. And so God warns the prophet, and the people through him, not to give way to the fear of these enemies, not to join in a confederacy with them, nor to be afraid of their confederacies ; but to fear God who would effectually defend them, and be a sanctuary to them, while an offence and a snare to those who were on the side of Assyria, both in Judah and Israel. How strikingly analogous to this were the days of our Saviour?—(See 1 Peter ii. 8 ; see also Matthew xxi. 44.) While Isaiah and the true disciples waited upon the Lord and respected His law and testimony—still His face was hidden from the nation at large.... Clause first of verse 18 is a notabile.... The godly were stared at by the general public, and were also signs or a standing testimony against them. They were forbidden to seek after any but God—as dead idols or diviners that could not profit.... Verse 20, an illustrious notabile of far more extensive application than its primary one.—My God, let Thy law and testimony be my supreme guides both for doctrine and for obedience. The

conspirators shall meet with their doom, be driven to and fro, shall look all ways for relief, but in vain.

ISAIAH IX. 1-7.—The distress just spoken of shall not, however, be so great as on some former occasions. The people even now had a greater light of vision and prophecy among them than in some former times; but the larger accomplishment of this took place in the days of our Saviour. (See Matthew iv. 14-16.) ... "*Not* increased the joy," is understood to be a mistranslation. The suppression of the negative harmonizes the passage. And the deliverance spoken of in verses 4 and 5, though a temporal one there, has respect to a future and higher deliverance: "*For* unto us a child is born," proceeding to one of the noblest passages and prophecies within the compass of the sacred volume. What an example of the expansion that so often took place in the prophetic mind, brightening onwards from the type to the antitype, from the primary and direct object to its grander counterpart in the ulterior and full consummation? The government is upon the shoulders of Christ: He is the Priest upon His throne: He is Wonderful—great is the mystery of God manifest in the flesh: He is the mighty God; and after His ascension, He as God-man received all power in heaven and earth: He is one with the Father, and the Father of the new creation—of the Gospel state—the Alpha as well as the Omega of the regenerated world: He is emphatically the Prince of Peace; and will ever be adding to the extent of His kingdom—the stability and order of which will be eternal. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts is a guarantee for all this performance. It is a zeal for my salvation, and O let me respond to it.

8-21.—The kingdom of Israel had been smitten of the Lord, but not humbled. They boasted that they would more than repair all the loss and destruction which had come upon them. This was a fresh provocation and called for a hotter vengeance.... The adversaries of Rezin were the Assyrians, whom the Syrians themselves the people of Rezin joined, and so made the confederacy against Israel all the more formidable. The repetition of His anger not being turned away, but His hand being stretched out still, is awfully solemnizing—like the knell of another and another visitation. The prophet that teacheth lies is placed the lowest, and basest of all their society—causing the people to err and be destroyed.... The enemies of God are here, as in other places, compared to thorns and briers.—Civil war and famine are threatened against them; nay, such was the extremity of their distress, that they became cannibals—devouring even their own flesh, or that of their nearest kindred; and all this because they turned not to the Lord who smote, sought not after Him, but despised his chastening—nay, were hardened under it.

ISAIAH X. 1-11.—It does not appear whether the denunciation here was uttered against Israel or Judah—though the reason and principle of it are very obvious.... "Where will ye leave your glory," intimates that it should depart from them beyond recovery; because without God, they should be the most sunken and lowest among the prisoners, or the first to fall, and so undermost among the slain. Either captivity or the sword should be their lot.... The Assyrian was the rod or instrument of God's wrath; and their weapons of war, the staff in their hand,

did wreak His indignation on His enemies. To Judah more than to Israel might be applied the charge of being a hypocritical nation; and Assyria utterly subdued Israel, ravaged and distressed Judah. (2 Kings xviii. 10-13.)... Verse 7 is a notabile; and it exemplifies a very general law in the administration by God of human affairs,—He purposing one thing, the men whom He employs purposing another. How often is the good of society educed from the play of individual passions and interests—each man aiming after a personal object of his own, without reference to the great and general result contemplated by the Almighty Governor of all! How often is this evinced both in politics and political economy!—This passage closes with the boastings of the king of Assyria.

12-23.—But God turns to him who was the instrument of His anger against Judah. He first served Himself of the king of Assyria, and after his purpose was done with him, He brought down the high looks of the boastful and haughty conqueror. What a striking lesson of humility to us all who are but tools in the hand of God—shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? How truly the prediction that God should burn up His thorns and briers in one day, was fulfilled in the destruction of the hosts who had assembled round Jerusalem! Very few were left of that great army—though such were the previous devastations suffered in Judah, that comparatively but few of them were left also. They profited, however, by the judgments that had been inflicted on their nation; and no more staying on him who smote them, returned to the mighty God and made Him their dependence. We have already seen that many in Judah, disaffected to their own government, were in the interest of their enemies and

invaders. This return of the few from so great a number is adverted to by Paul in his argument upon election. (Romans ix. 27.) The consumption which God had decreed shall overflow the land, yet be in measure; and will not be indiscriminate but in righteousness—so that a select number will be spared. This part, too, enters into Paul's quotation—though, as made from the Septuagint, it reads somewhat differently.

24-34.—And so the prophet in the name of the Lord dissuades them from being afraid of the Assyrian.—God's anger against Judah would cease, and turning against the Assyrian, for some time the staff or instrument of His vengeance would expend itself on their destruction. For the destruction of Oreb and Zeeb, see Judges vii.—It was effected miraculously and by an invisible power—as was likewise the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. (See also Psalm lxxxiii. 11.)—And so the Assyrian marched proudly through the land of Israel, taking possession of many places, and striking terror into all the rest. He then made up to Jerusalem, and spread himself in array before it. But here the Lord interposed and laid His arrest upon him. The Jews should be delivered because of their anointing, because of their anointed and good king Hezekiah, and to preserve the nation till Shiloh the great anointed of the Lord should come. Their army was thick as the forests of Lebanon; but as if cut down with iron they were felled to the ground; and on the miraculous destruction of their host was this prophecy signally fulfilled.

ISAIAH XI.—The prophecy now points clearly to Christ, to whom the Spirit without measure was given—whose

fruits as here enumerated are chiefly intellectual, but blended with the moral in the remarkable expression which makes verse 3 a notabile—and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And He judged not according to the appearance, but judged righteous judgment. (John vii. 24.)—He will appear for His own, the meek and the poor in spirit, and will visit on the earth its wickedness, that He might establish over it the reign of righteousness and truth. These will be the days of love and universal peace, when the very animals shall cease to devour each other.... It seems a most perplexing law that of animals obviously framed for the destruction of each other; and may we not hope for the literal fulfilment of such a revolution as is set forth in these verses? This regeneration of the world is obviously conjoined with the restoration of the Jews. ... Verse 9 is a most illustrious notabile. The remnant of Israel will be conducted back to their own land. The Gentiles will help on their return; and the two great divisions of Ephraim and Judah will again be brought into one. They shall take possession of the neighbouring countries, and extend themselves probably to Euphrates. God will remove all obstacles—as He did when He dried up the Red Sea. He made then, and He will again make a highway for His people.

ISAIAH XII.—We have here a song of celebration. If at the deliverance from Egypt we had the song of Moses, at the next great deliverance we shall have the song of the Lamb.—My God, give me the faith and the spirit that will join in it. Enable me to say—Thou wast angry, but it is now turned away, and I am comforted. Let me

trust and not be afraid. Be my strength, O Lord, my song and my salvation.... Verse 3 is a most illustrious notabile.—May I ever draw out of the fountain that is opened in the house of Judah for sin and for uncleanness —that I may be washed both from guilt and pollution, and that living waters therefrom may minister to the health of my soul—to the salvation, the σωτηρια in which the health and well-being of my spirit lies.... What a lofty theme for gratulation and praise, more especially from the Jews in that day—the day of the Jews' establishment in their own land—the day of the Church's triumph over all her enemies—the day, in short, that ushers in the millennium. Then will indeed be materials for a call upon the whole earth—for the excellent things done by the Lord shall be universally known in it. And beside this general, there will be a special call to join in these lofty notes of praise on the children of Israel—for well might the inhabitants of Zion shout aloud for joy, when the Holy One of Israel is in the midst of her.

ISAIAH XIII. 1-11.—The harmony of the Bible prophecies and accounts with secular history, strongly confirms the truth of Scripture. Of these prophecies such as relate to Babylon are among the most striking.... "Burden" may signify the matter or essence or subject of any discourse. As when the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, (Numbers xxiii. 5,) and he took it up (ישא) and spake. The burden is (משא) what is thus taken up. The taking of Babylon by Cyrus at the head of his Medes and Persians is the subject of this prediction. God's sanctified ones are those whom He had appointed and set apart for this service. Cyrus was pre-eminently such. (Isaiah

xlv. 1.) The destruction of Babylon was by men, but from God: it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. The terrors of the invaded city are most forcibly depicted.... We have in verse 10 a specimen of the symbolic language of prophecy, according to which the powers of this world are represented by the sun and moon and constellations of the heavens. It was indeed a vengeance on the arrogancy and haughtiness of the proud and terrible.

12-22.—The scarcity of men consequent on their terrible slaughter is here set forth. The heavens and the earth, princes and people, would be in great part exterminated; yet some would escape of this mixed army from among the various countries which had been brought into the vast dominions of Babylon. Their being like sheep that no man congregates, or like scattered sheep, vividly pourtrays the flight and dispersion of the remnant of this mighty host. And there would be a dreadful slaughter along the route, and all the outrages consequent on the sack of cities, and the invasion with the conquest of provinces. The Medes are here characterized as not caring for gold; and so they would not be bought off from their fell purposes of extermination by any ransom—marking how fell and fatal to the conquered their victory should be. We cannot imagine a more eloquent and picturesque description than is here given of the desolation of Babylon, brought down from its proud excellency and beauty, and converted into a bare and frightful wilderness. There is nothing in Ossian, or in any of our historians and poets, that can at all rival the brief and impressive sketch which is here given—no Arabian pitching there, and their houses being full of doleful creatures, and

dragons in their pleasant palaces. And what a verification does the fulfilment of this prophecy give to the Book which contains it!

ISAIAH XIV. 1-8.—The prophecy returns to Israel—connecting the destruction of Babylon with the deliverance of God's own people. That strangers should be joined with them, points to the union which shall take place between Gentiles and Jews, with the subserviency more or less of the former to the latter—at one time helpful to them, and glad to accompany them from a common faith, (Zechariah viii. 23;) at another, their subjects and captives. There is much of these fulfilments still in reserve. The proverb or parable here taken up is one of the finest imaginative compositions extant in any language. It seems to profess itself a fiction, though representative of substantial truth. The humiliation of Babylon as an earthly power, and the consequent enlargement and peace of the nations, are of a literally historical character. But the reception of its king in Hades; and what is figured to be done and spoken there, belong more strictly to the parable—like those of our Saviour, given not as true narratives in themselves, but as allegorical representations for the enforcement of a moral or some great lesson. And never have the vanity of ambition, and the frailty of the highest and proudest grandeur been more impressively given. There is a vast sublimity in the description of this Plutonic or subterranean scene.

9-20.—"Hell" is שאול sepulchrum—in Greek, Hades—the lower parts of the earth—not Gehenna or the place of punishment. Can aught be imaged more impressive than the kings of the nations, raised up from their thrones to

meet the ghost of the king of Babylon? or aught more pathetic and powerful than their reception address? What a humiliating contrast—and with what effect it is given, between him when in glory as Lucifer son of the morning, and him in his grave with the worms spread under him, and the worms covering him! And all this was laid upon him as a punishment for his arrogancy and high thoughts. He was brought down to *Shaol*, (verse 15,) "to the sides of the pit." Bernadotte, after the battle of Leipsic, says of Napoleon in his despatches—"Is this the great captain who made the nations to tremble?" And Sir Walter Scott in his description of the proud barons of Roslin, each in his own chapelle, seems to have caught at least the poetic inspiration of verse 18. As a mere literary composition, the passage before us is beyond all rivalry

21-32.—We now come to the literal and the direct, when the denunciations are uttered against the city and empire of Babylon—given, however, with the same graphic power which characterizes the whole of this chapter, when it is said that it shall become "a possession for the bittern, and pools of water;" and with what tremendous energy are we told that God "will sweep the land with the besom of destruction!" We have God's unchangeable purpose to destroy the Assyrian power, and remove its yoke from the land of Israel—from "my land" and "my mountains." His, and His alone, is the all-prevailing hand stretched out upon all the nations—in contradistinction to the boastful pretensions of the king of Babylon, who would have exalted his throne above the stars of God, and set himself down on the mount of the congregation. (verse 13.) But then God trod him under foot, and caused his yoke to depart from off his people. (verse 25.) .... At verse 28 begins

another *burden*—another subject of prophecy.... Palestina is Philistia. The Philistines rejoiced in the death of Uzziah, who was their formidable enemy and conqueror —(2 Chron. xxvi. 6)—after which they triumphed in turn over Israel. But their triumph was to be short-lived; for out of the same royal family there should arise one, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, who would deliver his land and subjugate its foes, and more especially the Philistines. (2 Kings xviii. 8.) Thus did the Lord appear as the preserver, and will be the restorer of Israel.

ISAIAH XV.—It is not said who they are that were to inflict this pretended vengeance upon Moab. One might have inferred from the preceding context that it might have been Hezekiah, whose triumph over Philistia had just been celebrated. But Henry says, and it is the likelier supposition, that Shalmaneser extended his victories to Moab at the time of his expedition against Samaria. However this be, the desolation of Moab is very impressively told—and most wasting and ruinous it was. In the enumeration of its particulars, one is interested when meeting with the same names of towns which occur in other places of Scripture when Moab is spoken of. The most interesting of these names is Zoar, to which Lot fled for refuge on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.... The significancy of the heifer in verse 5 is problematical. Some would make it descriptive of the crying like a heifer lowing for its calf; others would apply it to Moab, fat and fertile—but now all the more an object for pity that the dread visitation has come upon it.... The being "laid waste and brought to silence" strikingly represent the desolation as the effect of the devastation.

The dispersion, and the famine, and the concealment, or carrying off of provisions, are forcibly set forth as the consequences of war.

ISAIAH XVI.—The first verse may be spiritualized; but its more obvious meaning is an injunction on the Moabites to pay their customary tribute to Judah—(See 2 Kings iii. 4, 5)—else they should suffer all the miseries of a conquered people...." Making thy shadow as the night," if interpreted by the next clause, may signify a sheltering of the oppressed from the heat of persecution—perhaps fugitive Jews—God's outcasts. Befriend them, and it is your policy so to do; for God will soon destroy their enemies, as He did most signally in the reign of Hezekiah. The prediction regarding his throne expands so as to suit the higher and more enduring throne which we still look for. But the pride of the Moabite will refuse the counsel now given, though his lies will not avail him. Therefore their punishment is sure—the invading captains will strip them of all their wide spread luxuriance. They will weary themselves, and pray in vain on their idolatrous high places. This is the word that God hath given regarding Moab since the time of their proud hostility to God's people. The woes foretold should take place in three years.

ISAIAH XVII.—The prophet turns to another neighbouring state, and makes it, too, the subject of his prophetic threatenings. According to Robinson, there is an Aroer in the N.E. by Jordan.... But Israel, also, is included in these denunciations—it having been alike hostile to Judah with Moab and Damascus. The country shall be

gleaned of its people, as are the fields in harvest. Yet a remnant shall be left, as is set forth by a figure not infrequent in the Scriptures. And it shall be a godly remnant, sanctified by affliction.—My God, let mine eye be ever towards Thee; and to Thee may I have respect in all my ways.—Thus it will be with the chastened Israelites, too, at the end of the present Economy, even as it has been in former days, when the effect of the discipline laid upon them was that they abjured idols. But there would previously be great desolation, because of the transgressions of the children of Israel. It is because they had forgotten God that their seed-time of prosperity and hope should be followed by a harvest of desperate sorrow.... There seems a transition to another subject at verse 12. The denunciations now are turned to the more distant invaders of Judah. They shall come like a torrent in its strength; but they shall be arrested and turned back—chased "like a rolling thing before the whirlwind." This last is a fine image. By the destruction of the Assyrian host, these spoilers of Judah, these troublers at the evening-tide, were not when morning arose, but were dead corpses.

ISAIAH XVIII.—Horsley (whom I read long ago) gives a most impressive commentary on this chapter. To the best of my recollection, the "Wo" is "Ho"—not a denunciation, but a call. And there is a general explanation of Ethiopia, which enables him to give forth Britain as the country that is called upon. And he points to some great future service of ours in conducting the scattered of Israel back again to their own land. There may be a miraculous manifestation at that time from heaven—the blowing of a trumpet, the lifting up of an ensign, in

behalf of a nation that had been sadly peeled and plucked and plundered of its own. And they may well be called a nation marvellous and terrible from the beginning.—Meanwhile, God who, Himself undisturbed, regulates and presides calmly over all things, will conduct this process, just as He guides onward the processes of the material world. He will prune away all that is corrupt, and cast it out for destruction. The vine He brought from Egypt will thus be brought into a healthful state, and become fit for being replanted in its own land. It will then be a present unto the Lord—a glorious Church without spot or wrinkling.—Hasten this blessed consummation, O God; and bring Thy people again unto Zion.... One of the most striking prophecies in the Book.

ISAIAH XIX. 1-10.—It makes against Horsley's interpretation that after Ethiopia comes Egypt—the former standing between the latter and Damascus. It looks as if the prophet were dealing in succession with all the countries around Israel; though Horsley's, notwithstanding, may prove the anterior fulfilment of a former one that has long gone by.... What a picturesque description of Egypt! and how closely does the representation here given of it bring up the characteristic peculiarities of that land—its idols, its incantations, its irrigations, its river, the papyrus on its banks, its manufactures, its ponds, and tanks of water!... Its "brooks of defence" were runnels of water—mounded, lest they should overflow; and whether they were drawn around cities, or were carried in furrows to every field, they would contribute greatly to the strength of the country. But whether overrun by invaders or not, the resources of God

for the exercise of discipline are infinite. He could raise a cruel lord—a tyrant Pharaoh—amongst themselves, who might be to them what a former Pharaoh was to the Israelites. Civil war and famine—the result of a failure in the Nile—were to be superadded to their other calamities.

11-25.—And as He made the water of that river in which they gloried to fail, so did He make the wisdom of their counsellors, whereof they were so proud, to fail also. Egypt was proverbial for its wisdom; but He, the Lord of the mental as well as the material, could as easily mingle a perverse spirit therewith, as He could taint or dry up their mighty river. Their manufactures should be extinguished from the want of raw material. And Judah should be a terror unto Egypt in that day; but the description is such as points to a future day. There shall be a remnant in Egypt, who will adopt the words and doctrines of the true faith. Of the five cities of such converts, one shall have undergone so complete a transition that, though for its abundant idolatry and consequent calamitous visitation, it should be called the city of destruction—yet even it should turn unto the Lord. These converts will be oppressed and persecuted, but will receive help, and shall prevail. For the Lord will smite Egypt, to the overthrow of its antichristian power, and the cause of truth shall become triumphant there, as also in Assyria, on the other side of Canaan. Israel, then in possession of its own land, will be a blessing to both—a blessing in the midst of them. What a deeply interesting disclosure of things to come!

ISAIAH XX.—Ashdod was a city of the Philistines, but

perhaps in the possession of the king of Judah at the time of this prophecy. Commentators are not agreed as to the literal fulfilment of the signs given forth by the prophets, in obedience to God's appointment. Some would make Isaiah walk barefoot only once, or perhaps for three days, to signify the three years when his prediction should be fulfilled—enough, it is thought, if He did the thing which was to represent what He foretold, and then declared verbally when it should happen. The object of the prophecy seems to wean those to whom it was addressed from their confidence in Egypt—a habit for which the Jews are often rebuked and chastised by Him in whom all their confidence should be laid. This isle may be Philistia or Judea. The contiguity of the Mediterranean justifies this appellation. And the question is—how shall we escape, if either Egypt or Ethiopia—themselves to be overthrown and put to shame—shall be our expectation? The conjunction of Ethiopia here with Egypt is another proof of the 18th chapter having had some near and literal fulfilment.

ISAIAH XXI.—The extent of overflowing water from the Euphrates caused the environs of Babylon to be termed the desert of the sea. There was also a great proportion of mountainous land inhabited by the Medes and Persians, whence they issued forth on Babylon like a furious south wind. Babylon would fall by the treachery of its own people, as well as by the strength of its plundering foes. The sighing of its captives and prisoners would thenceforth cease; but its own doom was a terrible one. The prophet personates its terror—(verse 5)—describes, in the form of commanding, what the prophet only predicts—the security of the Babylonians, who gave themselves up to

festivity, yet were called to battle during the time of it—in preparation for which they anointed the shield, that the weapons cast at them might slide off, instead of penetrating them. Watchmen were set on the look-out, and sounded "A lion," as an understood note of alarm. The watchman seems to intimate, by stating his vigilance, that his first discovery was the first and earliest appearance of aught approaching to Babylon. The second party whom he observed—and he hearkened diligently for information—made known to him the fall of Babylon—an intelligence which the prophet specially directs to the people of Israel, who were the Lord's threshing, and the corn of His floor. ... Dumah is Idumea, and its *burden* is hard to be understood. There is a question and answer—the former perhaps about the tidings of this adverse time—the latter perhaps entreating that a brief period would intervene, and then the consummation; and that if the questioner chose to know more particularly, he may return and renew his inquiry after that more had transpired.... There is next foretold an invasion upon Arabia, so that its inhabitants should have to hide themselves in the forest; and their services would be called for aid and succour to their flying countrymen.... "A year, according to the years of a hireling," is a precisely reckoned year.

ISAIAH XXII. 1-13.—Judea is the valley of vision—the country which God enlightened through the seers which He sent to them. The city, in a glow with prosperity and pleasure, had an arrest laid upon its gladness. Many of its chiefs were apprehended, and bound by the enemy; and many died of hunger, and other calamities, beside those of the battle. And so the prophet laments bitterly,

as he describes the invasion, it is understood, of Sennacherib. The enemy made the land bare of its defences; and Jerusalem had to look into her magazines, and prepare for the onset. There was much done to fortify themselves against the coming assault; and they trusted in their own measures of defence and precaution; nay, gave themselves up to a sort of infatuated security, or at least carelessness—feasting to-day, even though they should be slain on the morrow. There was an utter neglect of God in all this. Never were a people more called, by their past sins and present dangers, to feelings of alarm and repentance; instead of which they abandoned themselves to all sorts of intemperance and riot.

October, 1846.

14-25.—And because of this God holds a reckoning with Israel—speaking to them as a people hopelessly incorrigible, and whose sins would not be removed from the land but by their death.... The names of Shebna and Eliakim occur in the history of Hezekiah's time. (ch. xxxvi. 3.) The former is fastened on for special denunciation. He had built a stately sepulchre, and thought he was to die in Jerusalem; but God would consign him, for his misdeed, to captivity or banishment into a country large enough for him to expatiate in as a wandering outcast, where he should die—and then be succeeded by another, even Eliakim, who is spoken of in such terms as might well lead us to regard him as a type of Christ. (See Rev. iii. 7.) He had the custody of all David's treasures and precious things; and his office should be for life, as is signified by his being "a nail in a sure place." He would signalize the house of his fathers, and be a glory both to

those from whom he sprung, and to those who should spring from him. And he shall have full charge of all their concerns—his authority and care extending from their greatest to their smallest.... Verse 25 seems a recurrence to Shebna, who thought himself secure; but who, along with all who depended upon him, should be cut off and fall.

ISAIAH XXIII.—Tarshish I associate with Spain, and Chittim with Europe, called here the isle, to reach which we have the sea to pass over. But Tyre is more probably the isle here. Sihor is the river of Egypt. The seed and the harvest suggest a corn-trade, of which Tyre was the great emporium, and is well characterized as the mart or market of the world. Zidon was the parent of Tyre, here called the sea, or strength of the sea, now bewailing her desolation, for that her own posterity, who sprung in common from Tyre and Zidon, as from their mother and grandmother, are dwindled away. The report of the ruin of Tyre would cause as much alarm and sorrow as did that of Egypt. The description of Tyre is picturesque.... Verse 8 is a notabile—applicable to the grandees of other mercantile cities. The merchant-city is a very graphic title. When Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to her, the bulk of the people made off by sea. Her own feet carried her afar off to dwell in other places. God was the prime mover of this great destruction—and for the humiliation of proud man—He who shook the kingdoms; and whose servant the king of Babylon virtually was. Tyre the daughter of Zidon by descent was the daughter of Tarshish by dependence and close connexion. It is the wealth of customers which gives birth to the

wealth of traders. The Tyrians passed over to Europe, and there had no rest. Such of them as made not their escape in this way, were taken captive and hurried landward to foreign places. Let them not flatter themselves in their impregnable security. Assyria was brought low and so will Tyre; but not yet by a final extermination. It fell with Jerusalem, and seems to have been restored along with it at the end of seventy years. It shall recover its prosperity, but its corruption also. Whatever fulfilment the prophecy of verse 18 had in literal Tyre—we doubt not that an antitypical time is coming, when mercantile wealth shall be largely consecrated to the service of Christianity.

ISAIAH XXIV. 1-12.—The prophecy now changes its subject. When we read of the land, we think of the land of Israel—even though it should be rendered "earth" in our translation. But verse 4, where the "world" is spoken of, proves a more extensive signification throughout this chapter. It probably, therefore, relates to the horror and desolation that were spread abroad far and wide by the Assyrians or Babylonians. There was then a general upturning and desolation in many countries—under which all both high and low suffered—and this because of the sad degeneracy and wickedness into which they had fallen. The wine grows sour from the want of people to drink; the vine languisheth from the want of people to cultivate; all mirth is extinguished, as well as festivity. The city of confusion is probably Jerusalem—now in a state of uproar and anarchy, or rather of utter suspension from all ordinary pursuits because of the terror. Decent and regular families shut themselves up in their houses,

while riot and intemperance went on in the streets—though perhaps only on the part of invaders, to whom the gate was now open; and by whom all mirth and joy on the part of the inhabitants were put to flight.

13-23.—A remnant, however, will be left, and a good remnant—and this not confined to the land of Israel, but among all the neighbouring countries that had been laid waste—for the voice of praise was to arise from the sea and from the isles, and this too to God, as the Lord God of Israel. This voice was to arise from the midst of cruel sufferings, even in the fires wherewith (verse 6) the houses were burnt by their invaders. Such songs would arise from the uttermost parts of the earth, whither many of God's people had been carried, and these would celebrate the triumphs which finally the righteous should enjoy. But yet, mixed with this exaltation on the part of a few, there is distress on the part of the prophet in the contemplation of the general calamity, and on the part of those who shared in it. There would be sad misusage of the people—treacherous dealings with them, violence and deceit and ambushments, wrath from above, utter overturnings from beneath. No dignities will be exempted from this awful visitation. Many shall be shut up in dungeons, and, after a time shall be visited—perhaps for their execution, perhaps for mercy. (Jeremiah lii. 32.)... In this prophecy is foreshown a visitation upon the earth still future—which is to emerge in the millennium—how emphatically told in this place—when the Lord shall reign in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.

ISAIAH XXV.—This song may have been called forth by the literal or typical deliverance which it celebrates—

but suits also the antitypical, the great ultimate deliverance and enlargement so impressively spoken of at the end of the last chapter. The topics are, first, the desolations wrought in the Gentile world, many of whose cities should be brought to ruin, and their palaces (the palaces of strangers and foreigners to the Holy Land) should be annihilated. The proudest and powerfullest of nations would stand in awe because of this and give glory to God, and all on the side of the restored Jews and their Christian allies. They shall be protected from the loud menace of their enemies, even as the interposing cloud protects from the heat. The flourishing and lofty branches of their foes shall be laid prostrate. In Mount Zion—now the metropolis of the Christian world—shall there be a great spiritual feast for all people; and more especially shall the veil of carnality and unbelief that overspreads the earth be destroyed, and in Jerusalem too shall there be a brightness, like a light going forth and opening the eyes of all to the truth as it is in Jesus.... Verse 7, a most illustrious notabile.... For verse 8, see 1 Corinthians xv. 54. Can this be that in the millennium there will be no death? Surely they who partake in the first resurrection will not die over again.... The contrast is here strikingly given between those whom He befriends, and who will honour Him as the Captain of their salvation, and those enemies of Israel whose countries He will tread down, and whose works He will destroy.

ISAIAH XXVI. 1-10.—This is in all probability a millennial song. Salvation guarantees protection; and a confidence in this gives a sense of their security to the saved. (See ch. lx. 18; Zech. ii. 5.) The redeemed will enter this New

Jerusalem....Verse 3, a precious notabile.—Let my mind be ever stayed on God. Let Him be the strength of my heart and portion for evermore. Then shall I bless Him who hath showed me marvellous kindness in a strong city. It will not seem out of keeping that salvation should be appointed for walls, to those who can speak of God as their fortress and tower and rock of defence. Contemporaneous with the establishment of this city of the saints will there be the demolition of many proud cities and empires in the world, and by the hand too of the poor and the persecuted, whom God approving of as upright will befriend and give answer to their call. Thou knowest, O God, that the desire of my soul is towards Thee.... Verse 9, last clause, is a notabile. Not that all the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness—not the incorrigibly wicked—for they will not learn, will not recognise the hand of God, even in the great things done for His people in the land of Judea, now called the land of uprightness. (See Psalm cxliii. 10.) Heaven above, as well as earth below in her millennial days, may well be termed the land of uprightness.

11-21.—The obstinate enemies of God do not see His judgments to their own conviction, but they will be made to see them to their own utter confusion and overthrow—for the fire destined for God's enemies shall devour them. How different the fortunes of His own people, who shall have protection and peace, and, above all, grace.... Verses 12 and 13 are eminent notabilia.—Give me the humility, O God, that will refer all which is good in me to Thine own workmanship. Work in me all my working and works—that I may renounce the mastery of all my evil affections, and own Thee as my alone master, which by Thee only I

shall be enabled to do. Crucify my evil affections, O Lord, so that I may say of them as Israel here says o their usurping tyrants, that they are dead. And God did recall them then, and will again recall them from their captivity. They will turn in prayer to God—helpless and agonized as a travailing woman in her extremity. But the relief may not be immediate: there must be a waiting as well as praying. It will take a time, even after they are set upon enlargement, ere the deliverance can be wrought, and their enemies have fallen. But it will come at length, and come gloriously. Then will there be the first resurrection. But amid the portents and throes of the world's regeneration, there will be a dread reckoning and vengeance upon the nations—a season of discharge from heaven upon earth, during which the people are called upon to hide themselves till it shall be overpast. All this bespeaks the commencement of the millennium.

ISAIAH XXVII.—The works of the devil will at length be destroyed, and of all his agents, whether they be powers on earth or powers in hell. But God will protect and fertilize His Church to be gathered out of all nations—and this by means of a free gospel, with its generous assurances and calls.... Verses 4 and 5 form a most illustrious notabile—implying as they do that God has no pleasure in the death or destruction of His creatures, but rather that they should take hold of His strength, and be saved. The prophecy seems to point at Israel in its future state of restoration, when it shall fill the world with fruit, and along with its establishment in its own land, the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in. For He chastises His people, not to their destruction—but in measure for their

discipline and reformation—tempering the severity of His inflictions, or "staying His rough wind in the day of the east wind." The whole design and effect of His dealings with Israel is at length to take away their sin—so as that they shall destroy the altars and groves, and images of their idolatry.... Perhaps the defenced city of verse 10 was Babylon, whose utter extirpation and the reason of it are intimated in verse 11.—Then God did shake off, as wheat from the chaff, many Israelites who returned and rebuilt their city—the emblem of their future return to their own land—a piecemeal return it may be, and that too in obedience to a call which will at once gather the outcasts of Israel, and bring all who are Israelites indeed, whether Jews or Gentiles, within the pale of the Millennial Church.

ISAIAH XXVIII. 1-13.—Those of the kingdom of Israel were pre-eminent for pride and luxury, and their capital, Samaria, overlooked the loveliest landscapes of Palestine. But an instrument of vengeance was preparing, even the king of Assyria, who by strength of hand should take possession and destroy—and Israel should be devoured, as precocious fruit is, the moment it is plucked. But after these desolations there will be a surviving remnant, most of whom perhaps will escape to the still subsisting kingdom of Judah. God will be the glory of all such, and give judgment to their rulers, and strength to their warriors, for turning the battle to the gates of their enemies. But still there will be a strong and lingering corruption amongst them, and more especially a low and loathsome dissipation even among their high dignitaries. But when once there is the habit and the inveteracy of evil, it is a sluggish and unhopeful task to reclaim it. Begin early with education,

and give forth its lessons assiduously.—Verse 10 is quite a notabile.—But as they rejected the plain teaching of God's own prophets, they were punished by the visitation of an obscure, cabalistic, and erroneous teaching, even till the period of their ruin and captivity at the second destruction of Jerusalem. He had pointed out the way to prosperity and rest, but without effect, and their fall was the consequence.

14-29.—They who make lies their refuge, nourish a false security—as if death and hell were at peace with them, and would let them alone. There is a sure way and foundation of peace—a rock on which all may lean, but on which they who stumble shall fall, or if falling upon them, it will grind them to powder.... The application of verse 16 to Christ is undoubted. (1 Peter ii. 6-8.) But He—the Saviour of them who will—is the Judge of them who will not; and on the strict and rigorous application of judgment, will it be found that from death and hell there is no exemption for them. The gospel shall be a sign of their coming destruction to all who oppose it. Its daily testimony, rejected as it is by our secure men of the world, who nauseate the very sound of it, will but aggravate their doom.... Verse 20 is a notabile; and is applied to our own righteousness, and its shortness and insufficiency when compared with the ample righteousness of Christ; but on all who trust in themselves and neglect the great salvation, will God execute His strange work of judgment. And so applying all this to the scornful men of verse 14, the prophet bids them cease from their mockeries, else God will arise in His might, and do against them what He did for them and against the Philistines and Canaanites in former days. (2 Sam. v. 20; Josh. x.) We doubt not that although this passage be pre-eminently

applicable to Christ, it had a nearer and more literal fulfilment soon after the delivery of this prediction.—Let me, O God, try the foundation Thou hast laid in Zion, and I shall find it sure. Let me not be impatient, but quietly wait, and I shall not be ashamed.... The concluding verses tell us of the subserviency of means to ends, and that the instruments of any given work should be appropriate to that work. This is carefully observed by the husbandman, into whom God hath put the wisdom for planning and proceeding in this way. How much more shall we look for such wisdom and such work to God himself, from whom are derived to His own creatures all the skill and strength which belong to them.

ISAIAH XXIX. 1-8.—Ariel is determined to be Jerusalem, by its being the city where David dwelt—signifying the Sion of God. Though they should go on with their ritual observances from year to year, yet they are here told that this will not propitiate Him who loves obedience more than the fat of lambs. Their city should be besieged and taken; and themselves brought low, so as to speak the language either of prostrate suppliants, or of men wounded and moaning towards death. But this prophecy seems to point at the attempt of Sennacherib, rather than at the conquest and capture by Nebuchadnezzar; for though on the former occasion they were sadly terrified and brought low, so as to speak in whispers and with great fearfulness, yet they were delivered from the multitude of their strangers—the mighty host of their invaders, by their instantaneous disappearance, from death, and partly it may be from dispersion. So that though Jerusalem was then compassed about with menacing de-

monstrations, both from her enemies and perhaps from the elements of nature, yet were these enemies made at that time to pass away from her as a dream of the night —that memorable night on which the Assyrians luxuriated in the visionary hope of a rich prey in the morning; but all was suddenly arrested by a miraculous visitation from on high.

9-24.—Verses 9-12 form to me an illustrious notabile, and on which I preached my first sermon in St. John's, Glasgow—strikingly illustrative of nature's blindness and infatuation among all the classes of men.—Then follows what has been signalized by a quotation from the New Testament.—O that our country may be preserved from the wisdom of such rulers as repudiate all sacredness from their systems of policy and legislation! They would subvert all, and take a way of their own—the reverse of God's way, nay as far from it as possible. But they the creature, shall not prevail against Him the Creator, any more than the clay against the potter. God will turn the fertility into barrenness, and the barrenness into fertility. But the changes announced towards the close are all on the side of prosperity and enlargement, when ears shall be unstopped, and eyes be opened, and the meek shall be raised to preferment, and the poor shall rejoice—all which shall receive their highest fulfilment in the illumination and deliverance of God's elect from their enemies and oppressors.... "To make a man an offender for a word" is a memorabile. We have no doubt that the practices of the wicked and powerful against the just here described, were current in these days, and will be current still. But these shall be overthrown; and when Israel shall at length see the converts of his own nation, the workmanship of the

grace of God, there will be a general turning, for the first leaven will leaven the whole lump, and there shall be a national obedience to the faith.

ISAIAH XXX. 1-11.—The expressions in the first verse may be well applied to the whole tendency of man to walk in the counsel of his own heart, and to seek for shelter in some imagined security of his own, but not revealed to him by God. The special occasion of the prophecy before us was the rebellious act of Israel in seeking Egypt for their refuge.... It is interesting to mark the good keeping here of the geographical names that occur. But the Jews would be ashamed of their confidence in a people that were not to profit them. They carried their riches on the backs of horses, these beasts from Egypt, through the fearful wilderness; but whether for the safety of their goods, or therewith to bribe the Egyptians, they should miserably fail in their object.... What a noble notabile is the last clause of verse 7!—My God, let me profit by and apply it. Forgive my restless and gnawing anxieties; let me be still and know that Thou art God.... The "speak unto us smooth things" is also a most precious notabile, and brought here to bear on the Israelites who rejected the counsel of Isaiah because it was not to their own mind.

12-19.—Now follows the denunciation of the prophet on this perversity. By a most significant image, he tells them of the utter ruin in which their false confidence would land them.... Verse 15 is a most illustrious notabile.—My God, give me the rest of quietness and confidence, into which may I labour to enter. But their trust was in horses, on which they fled, but did not conquer or

pursue. They should be so thinned by slaughter, that only one here and there would be left like a solitary ensign. These perhaps signify the remnant to whom the Lord should be gracious; but He must first be exalted as a God of judgment on the wicked, that He may not be misconceived of—the very principle of an atonement, which was rendered that mercy and truth might meet together, and God evince Himself to be at once a just God and a Saviour.—O my God, let me wait on Thee, who Thyself waiteth to be gracious.... There may have been some deliverance now past predicted here; but to be adequately fulfilled, there must be some great antitypical deliverance still to come. Does it not point at the final restoration of the Jews to their own land?

20-33.—The "water of affliction" is a memorable phrase, as is also the "eye seeing our teachers." And verse 21 is a precious notabile.—My God, let me be ever asking counsel of Thee, and ever obtain the reply of this being the way. These promises of spiritual and temporal blessings have never yet been to the full realized. The day of the great slaughter may have been that of the destruction of the Assyrian army; but we read in the Book of Revelation of another tremendous catastrophe, in synchrony with the establishment of a glorious, and we think the millennial economy in our world—the day of Armageddon, to which, and its accompaniments, the language even of our present prophecy seems applicable, when there may be physical, as well as moral and spiritual enlargements.... The "stream which should reach to the midst of the neck," is made to signify a sweeping destruction, that would carry off the whole multitude of the Assyrians, while it left their head at that time untouched—he having escaped,

at least for this turn; though afterwards we read—slain in the house of Nisroch.... The "sifting of the nations with the sieve of vanity" is pre-eminently applicable to the period when the little stone shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, on the ruins of its present economy.... The bridle, causing the enemies of God's people to err, might be some necessity which draws them on to their ruin—while contemporaneous with this there will be joy and triumph to the righteous. The two dispensations of wrath and overthrow upon the one party, of victory and blessing to the other, are commingled in these closing verses. The rod of the Assyrian will be overmatched by the grounded staff in the hand of God; and the Tophet which is ordained for him, strikingly symbolizes that lake of fire and brimstone, into which the impenitent shall be everlastingly thrown.

ISAIAH XXXI.—We do not imagine that these successive prophecies of Isaiah are arranged in the chronological order of their fulfilment.... The confidence of those who trust in an arm of flesh is here rebuked—a lesson applicable to all times. The Lord, in whom they refuse to put their trust, is nevertheless mighty to destroy as well as to save. It is His frequent complaint against Israel—that they leaned upon Egypt. And He here calls upon them to transfer their dependence to Himself, who alone is strong to deliver and powerful to save—promising, at the same time, that He will appear for Jerusalem, would they only turn to Him from whom they had so deeply revolted. Upon their doing this, and casting away their idols, a signal overthrow and discomfiture will be laid upon the whole host of their invaders.... The prophecy

seems quite suited to the achievement of the Angel upon the multitude of besiegers under Sennacherib. They were slain, but not with the sword; and yet many fled in the terror of that invisible sword or agency, by which so fell a destruction had been accomplished.

ISAIAH XXXII. 1-8.—There is much here that bears an undoubted application to Christ, and to those days when the kingdoms of the earth shall become His kingdoms.... What an exceeding precious notabile is verse 2!—My God, I would flee to Thy Son, who at the same time is the Son of man. May I find Him to be not only a covert and a hiding-place, but also a fountain—that as rivers of water in a dry place, the Holy Spirit, even living water, may flow plentifully and refreshingly on this barren soul, in a state of hebetude though it be to the things of God and a spiritual world. In the time predicted here God will lift off the covering from the spiritual eye-sight of all nations. Instead of our own hasty conclusions, we shall have the manifestations of God's own light, and will be able to utter plainly and powerfully to the consciences of those around us; and there will be then no misjudgment of men. The laws, and practices, and connivances, or conventionalities of trade, will not be suffered to disguise the selfishness of men. True liberality will be recognised, and stand firm, both in its own genuineness and in the recognitions of a discerning neighbourhood. He that watereth shall be watered himself; and he will be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man, and obtain the recompense of a good and faithful servant...."Deeply revolted," in the last chapter—a memorable expression, and how applicable to our state with God. Recall me,

Almighty Father, from this obstinate alienation—the radical disease of our fallen nature.

9-20.—God now addresses the two classes, who had just been contrasted the one with the other. And first the careless and luxurious ungodly, who are threatened with the loss of their wealth, and of all its regaling pleasures. ...To "lament for the teats" would signify, according to some, to lament the loss of that field produce which the dairy furnishes; others would have it to mean the wo that should befall the women who give suck in those days. Briers and thorns should spring up in their desolated lands; and more expressive still of the ruin—the wild beasts should expatiate at their pleasure, and the land become "a joy of wild asses." But, as usual, there is a residue, who at length, and in God's good time, shall present the bright side of the picture—on whom God shall pour His Spirit from on high, causing all the blessed fruits of the Spirit to abound in the midst of us. Peace and righteousness will meet together; and the blessed effect will be quietness and assurance for ever. This last is truly a most illustrious notabile, (verse 18,) and the habitations of the good shall be secure, even when tempest and terror are all around them. The city shall be sheltered and safe; and the liberal shall be abundantly rewarded—blessed in all that they put their hands to.

ISAIAH XXXIII. 1-9.—The prophecy seems now directed against the enemies of God's people. The Assyrians had made a treacherous invasion upon Judea: they were to be paid back in their own coin—destroyed by God's direct judgments, betrayed by the treachery of rebels and assassins among themselves. Meanwhile, Israel prays and

waits for the Lord, even as Hezekiah did at the time of this invasion. A signal interposition on the part of God was the answer to this prayer. After their miraculous destruction and dispersion, the spoilers went forth, numerous as locusts, on the booty they had left.—Then follows what we have no doubt had a fulfilment in these days—the blessings of a wise and righteous government; but of which there is a still more glorious fulfilment in reserve.—My God, may the fear of Thee be put into my heart, and prove there a treasure for heaven. After this the prophet goeth back again on the precedent distress and subsequent deliverance.... Verse 7 represents the grief and terror of the Jews. Verses 8 and 9—the violence and deceit of Sennacherib, and his ravages on the way to Jerusalem.

10-24.—God arose in His might, and overthrew their purposes—turning them to their own destruction, and making a thorough work of it. And on this signal manifestation does He lay claim to the attention and reverence of all, far and near—even of ourselves, on whom the latter ends of the world have come. This judgment without the walls of Jerusalem was well fitted to strike a terror into the hearts of those within it—and who were conscious of their secret defections and idolatries from the God of Israel. But it should also strike a terror upon those who indulge in base affections, while they have a name and standing in the Christian world.—My God, may I stand in awe and sin not. Lay an arrest upon me, O God. Give me to feel the power of that dread interrogation which makes verse 14 a most appalling notabile. Let me take earnest heed lest I fall. Shut mine eyes, O God, from seeing aught that can tempt me to evil. Then

shall I be set on high; and, because pure in heart, shall see God—and even now may look hopefully on the land of uprightness, though afar off. But, in the first instance, a number of these sayings apply to the great deliverance of the Jews, who, reflecting on the danger, could now ask —but where is the Assyrian army, with its officers, and those who kept the record of its strength and of its conquests? These foreigners, of strange aspect and language, are now out of sight, and the consequent security and quietness of Zion is described in terms of exceeding beauty, and with graphic impressiveness. But the adequate fulfilment of this representation is still awaiting us. Meanwhile Jerusalem, secure against all invasion by sea or land, had the Lord for her Protector—after that the Assyrian, helpless as a disabled ship, left a booty which even the most decrepit out of Jerusalem could securely seize upon; and the inhabitants, restored to heart and to health again, shall be brought into peace and reconciliation with God.

ISAIAH XXXIV.—The prophecy is now directed against the nations that had been against the people of God and rejoiced in their calamities.... Mark the resemblance between the phraseology and images of verse 4 with those of Rev. vi. 12, 13. The high should be brought down from their places.... What a striking expression—"the sword of the Lord bathed in heaven!" Can it be the slaughter of princes and nobles? or war as decreed by God in heaven, and its weapons there prepared and ordered for the battle? It lights first on Edom, and in reckoning for the controversies of Zion; and a perennial curse, like that on Sodom and Gomorrah, shall rest upon their land. What imagery of desolation is here! far exceeding that of Ossian or any

other poet. It will become a chaos—the confusion and the emptiness being the very terms employed in describing the state of the earth before the work of the six days. There shall be an exact fulfilment of the words of this prophecy, and to ensure it, an unfailing propagation of these doleful creatures from generation to generation, for "none of them shall want their mate," to the extirpation of the race.... There is a challenge here to compare the prediction with the event—a comparison which travellers have often made, to the credit and establishment of the Bible as a book of Divine inspiration.

ISAIAH XXXV.—How beautifully does the prophet now effloresce into a most glorious chapter—too glorious for any fulfilment that has yet taken place, and which will only find its counterpart in futurity, when the desert places of the earth shall rejoice because of manifestations from on high in favour of God's own people—of the Jews first, and also of the Gentiles.—Let us lift up our heads and rejoice. The day of God's vengeance on the enemies of His Church will come; and the triumph of His saints will come. The Spirit will be poured forth, a spirit of light and life and power—even where now all is darkness and lethargy. The influences shall reach even to the habitation of dragons, verse 7, (ch. xxxiv. 13); and a great spiritual, perhaps too a physical, renovation will take place in the most unpromising lands. And there shall be a way from them to the New Jerusalem; but it must be a way of holiness, into which nothing unclean or unholy can enter. It shall only be for those who enter on the narrow path of holiness, whose whole body shall become full of light, and whose way, a way hidden from the

wise and prudent, shall lie patently before them. No obstruction shall arrest these redeemed and ransomed of the Lord, on their road to life everlasting: whither, O God, do Thou conduct my heretofore wandering and uncertain footsteps, that by the preparations of Thy grace here, I may be fitted for that glory hereafter which is to be revealed

ISAIAH XXXVI. 1-10.—We have here the third narrative which occurs in the Bible of the Assyrian invasion in the reign of Hezekiah. The present one resembles that in the Second Book of Kings, where it is more fully given than in the parallel history of Second Chronicles. There is no mention, however, made here of the peace-offering wherewith he tried to arrest the progress of Sennacherib, as if Isaiah, who must have felt it to be wrong, had forborne to record it. The address, however, of the Assyrian messengers to the people of Jerusalem is much the same with that which is presented in the direct history, with certain variations, but still with such a degree of identity as to give the impression that the prophet and the historian had borrowed from the same annals or written documents the accounts which they have respectively drawn out. On the other hand, we, in the Chronicles, have the measures of defence which Hezekiah resorted to, and of which no mention is made in the other two statements of the affair.

11-22.—The resemblance is still more close and decisive of the conclusion, that the two writers, the prophet and the historian, drew from some common narrative, or drew the one from the other; and yet there is sufficient variation—not in the way of contradiction, but of defect or excess—to convince us that there was no

slavish or literal copying, but perhaps a catching up of the substance of whole sentences by as many successive looks, and putting it down, either in their own words or those of the original, as their memory served or their taste inclined them to do. And there is nothing in these suppositions to do away with the plenary inspiration of Scripture, as being made up of the very matter that God willed, and in the very words, too, that He willed. For agreeably to our view of this subject, these words were either prompted by the Spirit, or permitted by the Spirit. If prompted, they must therefore be best; if permitted, it is because they were the best; and thus the optimism of the Bible is secured, while perfectly consistent with those principles of explication which are adduced to account for many of the phenomena of mere human authorship.

ISAIAH XXXVII. 1-14.—The resemblance between the two narratives is fully sustained throughout this passage, and indeed closer than before. Let us, however, though a second time, enter upon the consideration of the subject-matter. First, then, let me follow the example of Hezekiah, in that, when pushed to extremity, he had recourse to prayer.—What time I am overwhelmed and in perplexity, as he was, let me seek to the Rock that is higher than I. I have had experimental verifications of the efficacy of prayer; and let me cherish more and more a deep sense of its efficacy, and of that particular Providence which overrules all the affairs of men. Hezekiah's prayer was associated with but an uncertain hope, a "may be," and yet was answered. But our warrant authorizes us to believe that we shall receive the thing we pray for; and

according to our faith it is done unto us.... We scarcely discern the significancy of the clause in verse 3, as to the children having come to the birth, and not having strength to bring forth, unless it be to represent in a general way a *non-plus*—a time of great pain, without the prospect of any deliverance—of utter distress mingled with utter helplessness.... The distant event which drew away Sennacherib for a season, is a fine specimen of Providence, but which did not restrain his insulting message to Hezekiah.

15-19.—In this prayer there are certain things that deserve to be noted for a direction and encouragement to ourselves. First, the designation of God as "He who dwelleth between the cherubims," which cherubims were placed on each side of the mercy-seat, with their wings extended over it. The mercy-seat was between the cherubims; and what an impressive representation, then, of Him who delighteth in mercy—even of God, who is love; and who should ever be addressed by us in the name of Christ our mercy-seat and propitiation. It is interesting to mark how the grounds of confidence in prayer under the Old and New Dispensations are substantially the same. Again we remark how legitimate it is to urge in prayer the plea of God's own glory, the honour of His attributes and name being concerned in the fulfilment of what we ask. Hezekiah urged the vindication of the true God in the eyes of the idolatrous nations; and we, too, are on the same vantage-ground when urging His own truth in the promises of the Gospel, the honour of Christ and virtue of His sacrifice, as reasons for hearkening to our petitions, lest Satan should have room for exultation and triumph.

20-38.—The identity of the two narratives regarding

Sennacherib's invasion is fully sustained to the conclusion of them.—Let us take courage from the upshot of such a visitation as came upon Hezekiah, and such a conduct as he observed under it. There was a most encouraging answer given through the prophet to his prayer. This answer is so framed as if it were addressed to Sennacherib himself. We know not whether it was ever transmitted to him; but it served its main purpose when made known to the king and those in Jerusalem.—What a rebuke is laid on the proud sufficiency of man when God thus appears in support of His own, and for the assertion of His own sovereignty.... The "hook in his nose" is a most expressive figure; and it is a notable phrase to "take root downward and bear fruit upward."... Through the zeal of God for His people, the survivors of all these calamities shall obtain protection and prosperity at His hands. They who were shut up in Jerusalem, when relieved from the siege, shall go forth to their wonted abodes in the country.

November, 1846.

ISAIAH XXXVIII. 1-8.—The narrative, thus far, is much the same with that in the Second Book of Kings, though somewhat abridged.... It is worthy of all notice that Hezekiah pleads his own personal qualifications for the acceptance of his prayer, and the plea was heard, for his prayer was granted to him. Let us be assured that the theology which forbids such a plea is not cast in the mould of Scripture; and that while altogether entire and intact the doctrine of our being justified by the righteousness of Christ, still in the work and along the progress of our sanctification, there is the feeling of a most legitimate security in reflecting upon our deeds and the state of our character.

The alms and prayers of Cornelius ascended in a memorial before God. God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love. If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.—O blessed Father, I at the same time deeply and intimately feel, that for myself I have wretchedly little to speak of, or that I would desire to be remembered. Remember not mine iniquities, O God. Blot out, as with a thick cloud, my transgression.

9-22.—For this writing of Hezekiah we are exclusively indebted to this Book of Isaiah. It is in keeping with certain other parts of the direct narrative; and whence we gather of this monarch, that with all his piety, he had about him the traits of what I should designate as a soft and timid character. There does not appear to have been much of that faith in immortality which, in the language of Wilberforce, gives a certain firmness of texture to the mind. Perhaps, however, there was spiritual distress, or the fear of God as a Lawgiver, which prompted this effusion, as much as the fear of death—more especially in verse 13, where he seems to speak of God as an enemy and avenger; or as if the intimation of the prophet had been given to him in the form of a threat.—My God, when oppressed do Thou undertake for me. He obviously did recognise the infliction as one of discipline, (verse 15,) and owns it for good that he should be afflicted. (verse 16.) Out and out it was a pleading for forgiveness, followed up by the confidence that he had prevailed. How little did he succeed in making known the truth to his children; and yet Manasseh did repent in his later days—and who knows but it was the fruit of his religious education?

ISAIAH XXXIX.—This is almost a fac-simile of 2 Kings

xx. 12-19—saving that whereas in the historical Book it is said that Hezekiah hearkened unto the messengers of the king of Babylon, in this prophetical Book it is said that Hezekiah was glad of them. The notice of this transaction in Chronicles is very general and brief; but with this important peculiarity—in our being there told, that in the business of these ambassadors God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart—not surely that God Himself might know Hezekiah, but that Hezekiah might know himself; and having been made sensible of an exceeding weakness, might humble himself because of it—might confess, and turn away from the idolatrous affection which had been manifested so palpably. Hezekiah makes incidental exhibitions of himself, which seem to me any thing but magnanimous. It is well to acquiesce in the word and determination of God; but it would appear as if the main ingredient of that acquiescence was that things were to go prosperously in his days. There may have been patriotism, however, as well as selfishness, in that the good of his country was secure, though even but for one generation; and of the two interests—truth and peace—truth is the highest.

ISAIAH XL. 1-8.—The present chapter seems a proper sequence to the last, in that the former announces the peace and prosperity of Israel for a time, and the latter is a pæan of high gratulation; but it becomes at once obvious that it is the celebration of a far greater and more enduring triumph than was ever then, or than has ever yet been realized. It is indeed a noble effusion, poured forth in the full flood of prophetic inspiration, and not to be adequately fulfilled till in a future restoration. There

are certain of the predictions here clearly of ulterior accomplishment to the first restoration, or return of the Jews from Babylon, as that of verses 3 and 4, since which there have not yet been days of glory or felicitation for Israel. It is interesting to mark the quotations of this passage both in the Gospels and in 1 Peter.... The term "double" in verse 2 is variously understood—either as expressive in the general of the ample vengeance that had been laid on Israel, or more particularly of the full discharge that she may now receive—seeing that on the other side of the reckoning, as by the method of double entry, there was now the punishment over and against the iniquity.

9-17.—We cannot think of this prophecy as having yet had its conclusive fulfilment. Does not verse 9 look as far as to that time when the feet of the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives; and the Jews, perhaps restored before they are converted, will be called upon to obey their God? He will then come with strong hand for the work of subduing His enemies, and of ensuring the victory with all its fruits and rewards to His own people. He will deal tenderly with the converts, and more especially the Jews, many of whose eyes will now be opened for the first time to look upon Him whom they have pierced. This God-man is here set forth, not in His gentleness only, but in His greatness—and not in His greatness or power only, but in His wisdom. To that wisdom may we at all times defer—for what are we, either to offer our own counsels to God, or sit in judgment over His—the Governor of all nations, the Lord of the universe?

18-31.—And so he challenges a comparison with the high and incomprehensible Jehovah. The prophet shows

a disposition to irony when making mention of idols in this and other places. Idolatry still is the vice of poor as well as rich. What a sublime representation is here given —as if in rebuke to all these follies—of the true God! Whether we view Him as the Lord of nature, or as the Sovereign disposer of men—what an exalted place of superiority and pre-eminence is here assigned to Him who both stretched out the heavens, and ruleth over the inhabitants of earth—sitting as He does both on the throne of nature and the throne of Providence? The great ones of this lower world can offer no effectual resistance to Him who doeth all things according to His own pleasure, and for the fulfilment of His own good purposes. There is nothing too great for His absolute control, and nothing too small to escape His notice, so as either to be beneath or beyond the limits of His government—not a sparrow falleth to the ground but by His ordination; and what a security is this to His own people—the very argument indeed wherewith our blessed Saviour encouraged the Apostles; and so the prophet remonstrates with them for their despondency, as if God did not observe their state, and had passed away from caring for them. They utterly misapprehended Him, and their own experiences of His answer to prayer should correct the incredulity.... Verses 29 and 31, both of them as notabilia are exceedingly precious.

ISAIAH XLI. 1-13.—God had just said, "They who wait on me shall renew their strength;" and He now says, "Let the people renew their strength;" and for this purpose let them draw near and listen....Though it should be Cyrus who is here spoken of, he is evidently a type of

Christ—even as the return from Babylon was the type of a future and greater restoration.... There is the recurrence of the prophet's usual irony against idolaters; and this followed up by an assertion of the supremacy of the only living and true God. Still it may be Abraham who is spoken of in verse 2, as he is in verse 8; and there might be here not only a prophecy to encourage, but a retrospect to convince the people, of God having been theirs at the first, and that He will also be with them at the last.... Verse 10 is a notabile, and should give heart and happiness to all who trust in God. He can subdue all our enemies and cause them to be at peace with us. Yet surely a greater than either Abraham or Cyrus is here—and a far larger deliverance spoken of than any that the children of Israel have yet experienced.—My God, I pray for help from Thy sanctuary, and for the conversion of all opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus.

14-29.—I am reminded in these verses of Boston's tract —"Worm Jacob threshing the mountains"—through God choosing the weak things of the world to confound those that are mighty.—With Thy help, O God, I can do all things. But let me ever glory in the Lord alone—for not unto me, not unto me, but unto His name be the praise. Nevertheless, not me but the grace of God that is in me. I am poor and needy, O God, and find nothing in myself but leanness and barrenness. O water me with the dews of Thy spirit, and cause me to abound in all the fruits of righteousness; and yet recognise Thee and Thy hand as doing all this.—Then follows a challenge to idolaters, under which term may well be comprehended the ungodly of all ages, and more especially of the present—an age of reasoning infidelity, and alike infidel in its retrospect of the

past and confident anticipations for the future. Their devices for the realization of good to the species will come to nought. These lords of a boastful philosophy will yet come to nought. He who is the great antitype of Cyrus will set up another regimen, when all old things, seen to be vain and impotent, will be done away, as well as the princes and great masters of the schemes and systems that were to regenerate the world. They will not be able to hold up their faces for these; and the first dawning hope for the world will be either in the coming of Christ, or in the anterior notices that the spiritual, who alone judge all things, shall give of His approach. All besides this or opposed to this, will be found to be mere idle declamation and entire disappointment.

ISAIAH XLII. 1-9.—The prophet now gives us the very essence of evangelism; and what he says of the elect servant in the Old is quoted of Christ in the New Testament.... To "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" is to bring and set over them that Divine economy which unites the truth and justice of God with the salvation of man. And what doctrine He proposes He will at length establish; and, unwearied both in Himself and through His messengers, will persevere till He have taken possession of the whole earth.—O, like Him, may I not strive, but be gentle unto all men. Christ glorified not Himself, but He was called of God. He was called in righteousness, a voluntary sufferer for our sakes—that He might make known the righteousness of God in our reconciliation—and our guarantee for the promised and sure mercies of the Gospel, in the light and enlargement of which we are invited to rejoice.—Let us forsake all our idols, and

henceforth give ourselves up unto Christ. Let the new regimen here predicted have the lordship over us.

10-25.—Here is a song of triumph because of the enlargement that Christ was to bring upon the earth. The glory of the Lord shall at length be spread abroad and recognised universally. But this will be ushered in with tempests and conflicts, and fearful struggles against the enemies of the Church. The physical changes here spoken of might be significant of the moral changes that are then to be effected, and which are more literally described in verse 16—a notabile.—Bring me, O Lord, by the right way, even though I should know it not. Lead me and enlighten me, O God.... Intermingled, however, with this wider representation, are references to things present and things of old—the idolatry and darkness of other times. The Jews, who should have been the servants of God—the priests, who should have been His messengers, had their full share in this blindness—though, seeing and hearing many things, they should have known better. But the Lord will vindicate His law upon them—an assertion which, as applied to our Saviour, makes verse 21 a most illustrious notabile. And thus the prophecy returns to Israel, whose sufferings under the oppressor are here stated to be in judgment for their sins.

ISAIAH XLIII. 1-13.—But these judgments and threatenings are followed by words of graciousness. He addresses Israel as his own peculiar and redeemed people—bidding them fear not; and this on the strength of the precious assurances in verse 2—a notabile. He, the Holy One of Israel, promises never to forget them, and appeals to what He had already done on their behalf, when He punished

and brought down the kingdoms of their enemies for their sakes. In this sense He gives men and people to the death for their life. All who stand in the way of their restoration shall be destroyed.... What a striking description here of the recalment of the scattered Israelites to their own land!—Form me, O God, for Thy glory. God pleads His own cause with the idolatrous nations, and challenges them for proof in support of their own divinities—while He seems as if appealing to the Jews as His witnesses; nor can we imagine a more palpable evidence of the presiding authority that regulates and reigns over the affairs of men, than the wondrous preservation of this people—to be enhanced tenfold when the prophecies shall have taken effect upon them.—Verse 11 is a notabile.—He then appeals to what had been done for them at the times when there was no heathen worship among them, and which they can testify to have been achieved for them only by the true God. And long anterior to history God was: His goings forth are of old, even from everlasting.

14-28.—The prophecy now takes a more special direction to its nearer fulfilment, in the destruction of Babylon and the return of the Israelites from their captivity. The cry of the flying Chaldeans would be in ships, for carrying them down the Euphrates. How sublime the ascription to God of making a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters! He compares the present deliverance with the one of old from Egypt. But the new things were to be greater than the old.—For the explanation of this see Jer. xvi. 14, 15; and xxiii. 7, 8. We do not read of miracles in their passage from Babylon to their own land; but the adequate fulfilment is yet to come in a better and more enduring restoration.... Verse 21 is

quite a notabile.—My God, form me to Thyself, that I may show forth Thy praise.... The expression "to be weary of God" makes verse 22 a notabile. He remonstrates with the Jews, and lets them know, that not for their sakes but for His own does He blot out their sins. Not only had Adam sinned, but the princes, who should have been parents to Israel; and hence the vengeance that had come upon their state, and all its dignities, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

ISAIAH XLIV. 1-8.—But as usual the prophet alternates promises with threatenings; and now comes back largely and fully to the great and glorious blessings which are in reserve for the children of Israel.... Jesurun means righteous, and is applied to Israel in some few places of Scripture. But though righteous in the legal sense of the term, or in virtue of the sure and well-ordered covenant, this does not supersede, but on the contrary prepares the way for that influence by which we are made personally righteous. And so this effusion is promised, and in virtue of this many will turn unto the Lord, and subscribe themselves individually as His. Upon this God again makes assertion of His supremacy, and also sets Himself forth as the Redeemer of Israel; and surely nothing will make more patent His reality as the everlasting Governor of men, than the gathering again of His ancient people. They will be most impressive witnesses to the truth of prophecy, and of that word which passeth not away. Let others, if they can, shew the like; but failing therein, the evidence for the true God will outpeer all other evidence, and the truth will prevail. This will prove true in reference to all false systems, as well as to those idols

to which the prophet here makes a more immediate reference—the idols of his own time, to whose vanity their worshippers could all bear witness.

9-28.—In this passage the prophet puts forth all his irony against idols and idolaters; and then follows verse 20, the first and last clause of which are both of them notabilia. How truly may it be said of those who make creature-comforts their all—that "they feed on ashes;" and that the deceitfulness of sin and sense has led them astray from the fountain of living waters—from the alone satisfying portion of the immortal spirit. God again asserts His sovereignty, and His entire claim to it as our Former and Governor, and He whose eye is continually upon us.... "The lie in one's right hand" is a striking expression. It speaks the vanity of idols made with men's hands, and the vanity of thousands of those objects for which and on which men bestow the main labour of their lives—walking in that way and in those pursuits which seem to themselves right, but the end of which is death.... Verse 22 is a notabile.—My God, let me obey Thy precept to return, and confide in Thy declaration that Thou hast redeemed me; and while rejoicing in the enlargements of Thy salvation, let me hail Thee as the universal Monarch, who workest all in all. More especially wilt Thou open up a way for Thy Church through all the obstacles to its final establishment under the conduct of Him who is the great antitype of Cyrus, the restorer of Israel.

ISAIAH XLV. 1-13.—This prophecy was strikingly verified in the capture of Babylon.—"Loose the loins of kings." (See Dan. v. 6.) The opening of "the two-leaved gates" is in itself a picturesque fulfilment. Cyrus is the anointed

of God, because set apart by Him for this service, and endued with the requisite qualifications. The calling of Cyrus by name, for His servant Jacob's sake, gives an impressive view of God as the Lord of all history, both profane and sacred—the one being made subservient to the other. It enhances this lesson that Cyrus was the unconscious instrument of God's will, who called him though he knew it not. Others, however, were made to know His sovereignty in consequence, as the Creator of blessings to the good—of evil to the rebellious and wicked. This lesson will at length be universal from east to west: and O how precious that there is a righteousness which comes upon us *ab extra*, even from heaven, and which, if we receive by faith, will bring forth salvation, and have its fruit in a righteousness springing up from earth.—Let us therefore submit ourselves to this righteousness which God Himself created, and which is therefore called the righteousness of God. He will accomplish all His own designs in the face of all enemies. It is vain to strive with Him; and the restoration of the Jews, and rebuilding of their city, will take effect through Him "whom I have chosen."

14-25.—They were helped by Cyrus, who himself was enriched by the spoil of the countries which he had conquered; and many before aliens gave in their adherence to them. (Zech. viii. 23; Esther viii. 17.) Thou hidest Thyself, O God, in the mysteriousness of those ways which are not as our ways.—Give me, O Lord, the light of the knowledge of Thyself.... Verse 15 a notabile.... What an appropriate text verse 18 would be for an astronomical discourse! He created not worlds in vain, but formed them to be inhabited.... Verse 19 is a notabile. If we

seek we shall find.—Let our seeking be striving; O that we may not be disappointed.... Verse 21 an illustrious notabile—a just God and a Saviour; and so pre-eminently is verse 22.—Incline my heart to this universal call and welcome, O God.... Verse 23, referred to in Philip. ii. 10, also a most illustrious notabile.—Give me, O Lord, give me to have righteousness and strength in the Saviour—justification now and everlasting glory hereafter. These verses are full of gospel.

ISAIAH XLVI.—Isaiah again indulges his accustomed irony against idols; and then speaks of the intimate relation in which the true God stands to the children of Israel. O that we felt a profounder sense of what is due to God, as God, the one God, than whom there is none else—distinguished from all by His foreknowledge and absolute power. There are many earnest and solemn reiterations by this prophet and others at the particular juncture of Israel's restoration from Babylon, of the evils of idolatry, and very frequent appeals on the exclusive right to their homage of Him who alone could effect their deliverance. He called Cyrus from the East, and His hand was to be recognised in every footstep of their return to their own land. And it is worthy of all observation that these manifestations, along with the warnings of their prophets and teachers, seem to have been effectual, inasmuch as we never read after this period of their having again lapsed into the worship of images—a habit so obstinately persisted in throughout so many previous generations. It is indeed a remarkable approximation to the stout-hearted who were far from righteousness, that God should bring His righteousness near and within reach for their salvation.

ISAIAH XLVII.—The prophet continues his denunciations upon Babylon, recognising at the same time the true God who was to execute all these judgments as the Redeemer of Israel. He was wroth for their oppressors in that they showed no mercy—not even to their most venerable elders and dignitaries. (See Lam. v. 12.) But the treatment they bestowed on their wretched captives was to be laid in hardships and humiliations upon themselves.... It is a highly poetical image where Babylon is represented as saying, "I shall be a lady for ever." (See the analogy to this in Rev. xviii. 7.) But this felt and fancied security was soon to be broken up. The coming slaughter would deprive many of their children, and bring many into widowhood. How like to the most civilized nations now, in that their wisdom and knowledge had perverted them; and they are like, too, in the infidelity which prompted the confidence that there were none who saw or would reckon with them. And this threatened evil did come upon them unawares and suddenly. Then the help of the wise men would be vain. Those educated from their youth in astrology and soothsaying would not save them. How strikingly these allusions are in keeping with what we know historically from Dan. ii. to have been the state and habit of the Babylonians. But all should go to wreck, and be utterly brought to nought—by means both of a general corruption (verse 14) and a general dispersion. (verse 15.)

ISAIAH XLVIII. 1-11.—After denouncing these judgments on Babylon, God by His prophet expostulates with Israel —still so named, though Jews, and of the tribe of Judah. Though their professions were on the side of the true God, yet doth He charge them with hypocrisy. He appeals to

the fulfilment of His prophecies that He might win them over to a more faithful allegiance; and every argument was needed—for their obstinacy was such as to call forth the singularly descriptive images of "their neck being an iron sinew, and their brow brass." To turn them from their idolatrous tendencies to Himself, does He appeal to things new and old, more especially to the predictions now given of their restoration, followed up by a speedy accomplishment, and which should have—which had indeed, the effect of putting a conclusive end to at least the literal worship of idols by the Jews in all time coming. There seems to have been an urgency of conviction brought to bear upon them now—and all the more that hitherto they had been so shut against the influence of all former manifestations. Their coming delivery was not for any merit in them, but for the vindication of God's glory in the sight of the heathen, and that Israel too might at last be turned to Him in sincerity and truth.

12-22.—The Lord addresses Israel, making assertion at the same time of His own creative power and sovereignty. What an emphasis does the modern astronomy give to the description of that greatness by which heaven is spanned! He farther challenges their trust in His word, because of His omniscience, in virtue of which it was He alone who made declaration of what was coming. We might well imagine how such prophecies, followed up so suddenly and strikingly by their fulfilment, would tell upon the Israelites; and they are much pressed in argument by the prophet. Let us here note God's love to Cyrus, the chosen instrument of Babylon's overthrow. God spake openly to Israel from the beginning, first from Mount Sinai, and afterwards in open vision by many prophets and righteous

men of old. What a truly affecting expostulation in verse 18 from God to His rebellious children! This is a striking notabile.—O let me feel how much Thou art set on my obedience, and my own miserable shortnesses from Thy will and glory.—Isaiah, I should have remarked, sets himself forth in verse 16 as a special messenger sent by God. The Israelites are bidden by him to flee from Babylon, and they seem to have been miraculously supported on their way to Judea. There is at least express reference made to the miracles of their passage from Egypt to Canaan.... The "no peace unto the wicked" of verse 22 seems in counterpart to the peace spoken of in verse 18 of those who keep the commandments.

ISAIAH XLIX. 1-12.—The address is now directed to the isles and people afar off; and it is obviously Christ who speaketh. He was called by God, even as Himself called the Apostles. (John xvii. 18.) Out of His mouth cometh a two-edged sword, (Rev. i. 16,) and His arrows are sharp, whether for the conviction of men or the overthrow of enemies. (Heb. iv. 12; Ps. xlv. 5.) But He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. He sped ill with the Jews; but, lo! He turned to the Gentiles, and great amongst them were the triumphs of His Gospel; and the barren places of the earth—formerly in thickest darkness, shall be lighted up and fertilized by Him. All obstacles in the way of a general diffusion will at length be removed; and great will be the spiritual blessings poured forth on the many who shall receive the truth as it is in Jesus. In the midst, however, of all this progress and prosperity among the Gentiles, Israel is left desolate; but in the course of this address words of

comfort are given, and prospects of enlargement held out for her also.

13-26.—Notwithstanding the disposition of commentators to apply this passage to the Church at large, we regard it as bearing specially upon the Jews, and their future or antitypical restoration. The general call upon the world to rejoice is because of God's comforting His people—by whom I understand His ancient people the Jews, Zion now complaining of her outcast widowhood. How full of comfort is verse 15—an illustrious notabile. How endearing is verse 16—and how obvious to my view that these walls are the walls of Jerusalem. The Jews are to get homage from the Gentiles. The oppressors in and about Judea shall at length make way; and even their ancient patrimony will be too narrow for them. The Jews after having lost their nation and nationality, shall be abundantly recruited by descendants and Gentiles, who will gladly naturalize with them; and not only so but will help them back to their own land. Even kings and queens will foster—nay, fall down before them.—Verse 23, a notabile.—Thus will Israel be taken from under the power of her enemies, even as when a prey and a captive to Babylon, she was delivered out of their hands. God will rescue His own, and retaliate their wrongs upon His adversaries.

ISAIAH L.—God had not put away Israel, but Israel had renounced God; neither did He give them up to their enemies in payment of what was due to them, but all was the effect of their own transgressions. There was no man that would listen to Him or to His messengers, and not from the want of power in Him, but of duteousness

in them—therefore it was that they had not been delivered.... If Isaiah speaks of himself, it is as a type of Christ.—Verse 4 is a notabile, from its expression of "a word in season to them that are weary." For verse 5, see Psalm xl. 6, 7. Isaiah was helped, and so was the antitype, the God-man, in some mysterious way. And we find verses 8 and 9 referred to in Romans viii. 33, 34. But I know not a more precious or important passage than verse 10—an illustrious notabile.—I may believe in the dark: I may resolutely trust under the greatest heaviness and deadness and dejection of spirits. Even when there is not the light of any cheering manifestation in my soul, I may stay and steady myself upon God.—O let me ever look upwardly to the place where Thine honour dwelleth; and even when there is no light from heaven to shine upon my path, let me walk on earth in the way of all Thy known commandments. And O let the light which shines upon me, ever be the light of Thy word. Let me beware of my own wisdom or my own lofty imaginations—else I shall lie down in sorrow. Deliver me, O God; save me from all my perplexities; save me from the sin unto death.

ISAIAH LI. 1-10.—Those addressed here may be the same with them of ch. l. 10, who are walking and trust.... "The rock whence ye are hewn" makes verse 1 a notabile. Let us take its lesson by thinking well of the guilt and corruption of our natural state. See how the remembrance of His covenant with Abraham operates in favour of Israel, and will to latest posterity. What a brilliant perspective is here set before them! He will establish a jurisprudence that shall enlighten and reach to all people;

and in which the Gentiles shall trust. The offer of salvation has gone forth, and an everlasting righteousness is brought near to all—the perpetuity of which is celebrated in verse 6, a most sublime notabile. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word shall never pass away.—Put Thy law, O God, in my heart; and save me from the fear of man, which is a snare. Let our confidence be in a higher strength than in an arm of flesh—even in that arm which smote Egypt, and the dragon or Pharaoh its king, and dried up the Red Sea that His own might pass over.

11-23.—On these recollections of the past, does the prophet ground his anticipation of future mercies and deliverances for Israel.—Verse 11—a beautiful notabile. What a persuasive follows against the fear of man!—Let me stay myself on the great and all-powerful God, nor stand in awe of the oppressor. Did I but think of man's inherent weakness, and of the helpless death that is coming so speedily on the proudest and most formidable of all, I would not give way before any of my fellow-mortals, when I stood on the side of truth or righteousness. The exile, intent on liberation, is made to know of the power and past doings of God; and by the sure word of prophecy informs us of the new heavens and the new earth, in which Zion will find its dwelling-place. We can have little doubt from verse 16, that a larger and more enduring restoration is here in the perspective than their approaching return from Babylon. The Jews for many generations have been a sadly oppressed and persecuted people. They have suffered a long judicial regimen of pains and penalties; but the cup of trembling, even the dregs of it, which they are now drinking, will be at length

taken out of their hand; and most certain it is, that this cannot be said in reference to their restoration from the captivity of Babylon—for since that they have undergone the dispersion and cruel oppression of many long generations. We should infer from verse 23 that their final return to their own land will also be withstood by those into whose hands the cup of trembling will pass—even to them who will then be the afflicters of Israel.

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ISAIAH LII.—It is quite obvious of this prophecy that it expands beyond the dimension of its typical event, and that it relates not to a past but to a future and final deliverance of the Jews. For very nought they had forsaken God, and incurred His displeasure; but He—not for the sake of any righteousness of theirs, will again recall and be reconciled to them. The deliverances of old times will again be repeated in their favour, to the confusion of infidels and blasphemers. Israel will receive the faith, and so attain the knowledge of the true God.—Verse 7—a most eminent notabile.—Their "seeing eye to eye" makes for the personal reign of Him whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. God's restoration of the Jews will be an event to arrest the wonder of the whole earth; and it will be a leisurely, well-concerted movement, under the guidance of One far more illustrious than the Ezras, or Nehemiahs, or Zerubbabels of the Old Testament; One at the approach of whose reign all the kings of the world will fall prostrate, and at length acknowledge His rightful sovereignty as King of kings, as Lord of lords.... Can the "marred visage" and form of this exalted Servant of the Most High—can He be

any other than the Lord Jesus? Or can the Jerusalem in which it is here required that they should be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord—be any other in point of full and adequate fulfilment than the Jerusalem of Rev. xxi. 27, into which nothing that is defiled should enter?

ISAIAH LIII.—This is indeed a super-eminent chapter, and one that might be read daily and devotionally with the utmost benefit to the soul. Who can refuse its application to Christ—to Him who came unto His own, and His own received Him not? But He stooped to this humiliation that He might become a sacrifice for sin. What a demonstration of native ungodliness, in that we go every man astray, simply when we turn each to his own way!—O that I were more impressed by that meek and patient and uncomplaining spirit, which led Him in love to us to resign Himself as a lamb to the slaughter. How strikingly are the circumstances here foretold of His death and burial, confirmed by the events of His history! —My God, as He poured out His soul unto the death for me, may I give up my soul in absolute and entire dedication to Him, and may He see in me of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. It is by the knowledge of Him that we are justified; and by His intercession may I receive all faith and all holiness. His at length will be the greatness and the victory—when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess. And O how much is to be gathered from "that it pleased the Lord Jehovah to bruise him!" Our redemption takes its origin from the love of God. Let us not frustrate the grand design either by our negligence or unbelief.

ISAIAH LIV.—This chapter is by most applied to the Church generally. We are strongly persuaded of a twofold accomplishment: that, in the first instance, the Gentiles were the desolate and Israel the married wife; but in the second instance, as now, the Jews are the desolate, but soon to be married, or restored from her present state of widowhood, and in this restoration to be the forerunner of a far more extended Christianity than was ever realized by the Gentile Church. See Rom. xi., where we learn that the diminishing of the Jews was the riches of the Gentiles, but that the fulness of the Jews was to be the harbinger of a far mightier enlargement.... Verse 2 is a notabile; and so are verses 8, 10, 13, and 17.... How like to Israel now is a woman afflicted and grieved in Spirit! The prophecy here, then, has been in part accomplished; but we must look to futurity for its full accomplishment. —O may I be taught of God, and have the peace of one of His children. Thy kingdom come, O Lord!... Altogether a noble chapter.

ISAIAH LV.—This chapter is the next to the fifty-third in the essence of evangelism. What a precious invitation, and comprehensive too, of the whole human race!—My God, let me no longer labour for nought, but seek, and in dependence on Christ's power, for Christ's unsearchable riches. Let me hear, or let me read, the word, and enter into covenant with God, sure of His promised mercies—the mercies of David, or of Him who is the Son of David, and in whom all the promises are yea and amen. Let me believe Him as my witness—as my leader and commander, let me ever obey Him.... The address in verse 5 seems to be from the Father to the Son; and through Him,

in verse 6, to all whom the Gospel is made to reach.—Whilst Thou art in the way, O God, may I seek and find peace with Thee through Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. In turning to Him, give me to turn from all mine iniquities. Surely Thou art not as man. Let me, in spite of all my past ungodliness, believe in Him who justifieth the ungodly. My hope, O Lord, is in Thy word. It shall accomplish all it was sent for. Heaven and earth shall pass away before a jot or tittle of it shall pass away. Give me, then, O Lord, the experience of its promised enlargements; and with Thy righteousness as mine, let me break forth into joy in the glorious prospect of a regenerated world.

ISAIAH LVI.—Here we have the antecedency of doings to the revelation of salvation, or of that righteousness of God on which it rests.—My God, enable me to lay hold of Christ, and to lay hold of the new obedience together, unembarrassed by all the speculations of all the controversialists. And the call is to every one—Gentile as well as Jew—and to those who laboured under ceremonial disqualifications as well as others. Whosoever taketh hold of the covenant will have all its blessed stipulations made good to him. All such shall be preferred to a higher distinction than ever Jews attained to under their Economy.—My God, let me not lose my respect or my observance for the Sabbath in the face of such testimonies on its behalf as we here find mixed up with this obvious prophecy of evangelic times. O God, make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, that we might be joyful in this house of prayer for all people—when the men of all nations shall repair to it along with the present

outcasts of Israel.... The enemies spoken to in verse 9, and after it, may be the oppressors of the Christian Church, whose aim it may be not to extirpate but to tyrannize over it. I can imagine a state of things in which the civil magistrates might carry it with hostility and violence against the true worshipper, while protecting their own hireling Churches; whose ministers, on the other hand, careless of all but their revenues, might give themselves up to utter carelessness.

ISAIAH LVII. 1-12.—This chapter seems a continuation of the last verses of the preceding, or of an address to still rebellious and alienated Israel. He had often taken their righteous and good kings from them, not replaced by successors in their own likeness. They are taken away from the evil to come, and rest in their graves till the resurrection. (See Rev. xiv. 13.)... Verse 1 is a notabile of frequent application when good men die. The prophet then pours forth his denunciations on the idolaters of his own time among his countrymen, whose abominations, as appears from his description of them, were carried to a most revolting height. Mockery of the true religion, vile affections, child-murder, seem all to have entered into the black catalogue of their grievous and unnatural offences. They had both river and mountain gods. On those posts and doors where the memorials of the Divine Being should have been inscribed, did they inscribe the remembrance of their idols, and love the places of their adulterous worship.... The "king" of verse 9 may have been any of their chief idols, or Moloch...."Thou art wearied in the greatness of Thy way," is still very expressive of the state and habits of those who give themselves

up to the toil and disquietudes of an unsatisfying ambition. Yet did they not renounce it; for this one object and that other, were at times obtained, and entangled them all the more.... "Thou hast lied" in renouncing my service on the pretext of my being a hard master; and does not the lengthened period of my forbearance all the time that I have kept silence prove the contrary? "But I will now declare Thy righteousness," which is tantamount to this—I will now set thy sins in order before mine eyes. (Psalm l. 21.)

13-21.—The prophet here tells them of their vain confidence in the companies whether of their numerous gods or their idolatrous allies. God is the alone rightful object of confidence, and He will amply reward it. The leaders in the great movement of their return from dispersion or captivity, will open up a way for those poor outcasts who have been visited with penitence and godly sorrow.... Verse 15 is a precious notabile; and O how precious also is verse 16! God will correct in measure—He will not try His own beyond their powers of sufferance. He wants not their spirits to fail but to revive; and having respect to the work of His hand, He wants not to destroy the souls which Himself has made. Covetousness was a prevalent sin among them, (Jer. vi. 13,) and for this God withdrew Himself for a season, and chastised them. Yet went they on in the counsel of their own hearts; but God was not overcome of their evil, but overcame evil with good. And there were mourners among the people, to whom He was especially tender.... The "fruit of the lips" being here a proclamation of peace, likens it to that Gospel which was published over the world, beginning at Jerusalem; yet not a peace to the

wicked, for if they turn not from their iniquities to Christ, the hostility of God will abide on them, and their own tumultuous and unsanctified passions will be the perpetual tormentors of their hearts.

ISAIAH LVIII.—An earnest expostulation with Israel, and reproof for their hypocrisy. What self-deceit in the delight that we have in ordinances, and yet real unmindfulness of God and His law! They sought their own pleasure, and exacted their full measure of service from their labourers, even in those days which they professed to set apart for God. They fasted because of their calamities, while for these they reproached each other, and quarrelled among themselves.—Then follows a very noble passage—a truly great and illustrious notabile.... What a vitally important lesson, that light is the result of obedience, as well as the security of God's protection all round.... The "putting forth" might signify a threat, or perhaps a false promise.—Make me, O Lord, like a watered garden; and as the fruit of my own personal Christianity, let me act as a restorer and repairer on the minds of others also. And what a testimony here to the importance of Sabbath-sanctification! On that day let my own spirit be kept at abeyance.

ISAIAH LIX. 1-15.—The prophet still insists on God's righteous controversy with Israel. There is no want either of power or willingness to serve on the part of God; but the sins of His people formed the barrier in the way of mercy.—Then follows a succession of charges against them. Their thoughts were the germs and fountains of all iniquity, even as the cockatrice' egg and the spider's

web are the preparatives of venom and mischief. What they weave is not for use but for violence and craft. They will not profit themselves by their works of wickedness to others.... In verses 7 and 8 we recognise the words quoted in Romans iii. Peace and light and safety are all of them alien from sin. The darkness consequent thereupon is the counterpart of that illumination spoken of in ch. lviii. 8. And beside this natural effect of such transgressions there was the awakened displeasure of God, because judgment had disappeared from the land, to the general degradation of the many, and oppression of the helpless and righteous few.

16-21.—But God Himself arose as a God of vengeance, both for His own glory and for the reparation of the wrongs of His people. The Lord Jehovah (Jesus Christ) in the utter inability of all others to perform the work of intercessor, did Himself undertake it; and the deeds of prowess spoken of here tell not only of His conflict with the invisible powers of darkness, but of His successful warfare against the enemies of the Church upon earth. The expressions used in this passage are not adequately met by any past deliverance of the Jews, or any chastisement inflicted yet upon their adversaries. We believe that when to the islands He will repay recompense, it will be a wide-world hostility that He shall then deal with. It looks as if the small remnant of altogether Christians, overborne by infidelity, united perhaps with Popery, will have their first dawnings of a day of redemption in the manifestation of God's favour to the Jews, whether through sensible tokens from Him, or through the symptoms among them of a national return to that faith which rests on the foundation of their own prophets,

as well as of the apostles of Christianity. This may cause a re-action among the powers of this world; but the spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against them, and the result will be a universal triumph for the Church, whereof Zion shall then be the centre or capital. And the Redeemer will then come to this metropolis of the regenerated world, (Zech. xiv.,) but whether in the way of a personal appearance or not I am not able to say.

ISAIAH LX. 1-10.—This seems still an address to the Jews, who will by this time form the nucleus and central attraction of the Christian Church—a Church in broad and discernible contrast with a world lying in darkness and wickedness; nevertheless, all round will many flock towards this peculiar society. The general effect of the chapter is highly in favour of its being the Jews who are here set forth as the centre towards which there is to be a wide-world movement. Even themselves will be solemnized with a spectacle in which they will so obviously discern the hand of God—in turning the hearts of kings to favour them, and bringing wealth and crowds of adherents towards them from all the quarters of the earth. The visit of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem will then prove the type of a far more glorious fulfilment—when the isles of the Gentiles shall give in, and become the willing tributaries of a spiritual monarchy that will rule over the men of all lands.

11-22.—I cannot doubt the identity of this prophetic description with that in Rev. xxi. 22-26; and if so, it greatly confirms the now growing persuasion that the Jews will bear a very prominent and ostensible part in the world's regeneration. The Gentiles are clearly represented

as tributary and subordinate to the Jews, though they shall be willing tributaries and will yield spontaneous obedience to the government of truth and righteousness that will then be set up in the earth. God will then be recognised by all as the Mighty One of Jacob.... Verse 17, last clause, is a notabile. We do not understand how to take the expressions that would indicate a disappearance of the solar and lunar light from that new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.—Hasten that blessed time, O Lord, when the people shall all be righteousness; and, O grant to me and mine that we shall stand with acceptance on that day before the Son of man.... This chapter forms altogether a most regaling prophecy; and serves greatly to establish the future restoration of Israel, as being the common subject both of the Apocalypse and the older prophets.

ISAIAH LXI.—Here the Messiah probably appears in His own person. The day of vengeance might have been applicable to His first advent, when He triumphed over unseen principalities and powers. We believe it also applicable to a second advent, when He shall deliver His own from the principalities and powers of this world.—I pray for light and liberty and the joy of Thy salvation, O God. Cause me to abound in the fruits of righteousness, and may Thy Church, whereof Thine own ancient people will be the pre-eminent members and office-bearers, be sustained by the willing support of a glad and grateful world. They shall be more than compensated for all their afflictions, and in their own land too. And then their service will not as heretofore be that of a mere outward and slavish ceremonial; it will be in the newness of the

spirit; it will be service according to the law of love, even that law which God will put into their hearts according to His covenant with them, and which they will obey with all alacrity and good-will, according to their covenant with Him. And they will be recognised by the world at large as the descendants of that family through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed.—O let me delight myself in the abundance of this peace and of these privileges—in the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness; and let the praise of my own lips, and service of my own life, be offered up continually.

ISAIAH LXII.—A joyful announcement for the children of Israel, but yet to be verified, and in the sight, too, of nations and their kings.—My God, let me participate in these exceeding great and precious promises. Rejoice over me for good, and let me joy in God through Him by whom I have received the atonement....What an emphatic example is here given of the perfect consistency which obtains between God's sure and absolute prophecy and our earnest prayers for the fulfilment of it!—Let us keep not silence, and give the Lord no rest, till He hath poured out the promised blessing. Thus let us prove Him, and we shall have the full experience of His faithfulness. Who can doubt that these accomplishments are yet to come, in the face of God's own oath that He will never more suffer the enemies of His people to have the advantage over them?—Work in us, O God; and in the doing of Thy prescribed work by us we shall have a very great reward.

ISAIAH LXIII.—This looks a future, and perhaps the last

great and decisive contest between Christ and the enemies of His Church.... We know not if Edom and Bozrah be literal or figurative. Will He receive no assistance even from His own people?—Will He alone appear in the battle?—He comes in behalf of His redeemed, and to take vengeance on their adversaries. It is on the house of Israel that this mercy is bestowed.—Put truth, O God, into my inward parts, that I may not belie my profession. ..."The angel of His presence" is the angel of the covenant —the Lord Jesus Christ. Often did He appear in the days of the Old Testament; but they were stiffnecked and forgot His wondrous manifestations. It is interesting to mark these early notices of the Holy Spirit vexed by the people, but given in large measure to Moses. As a beast fleeth for shelter, so did the pursued Israelites under their leader flee into the deeps of the Red Sea, opened up for them, and which proved the place of their deliverance, onward to a place of rest from their persecutors.... "Where are Thy mercies towards me?"—towards praying Israel, or the praying Church. They are obviously Jews who are pleading, though they allege Abraham to be ignorant of them; but penitent Jews, sensible of their past grievous delinquencies, and craving for admission to that Church, now composed of Gentiles, over whom God did not bear the special rule that He did over themselves in days of old.

ISAIAH LXIV.—This is the Church's prayer for deliverance, and by such manifestations, too, as might very probably be given prior to its millennial establishment in the world. There may be a geological catastrophe—a something on the large scale similar to what took place on Sinai

when God appeared to Israel.—Let us wait in faith for the coming of the Son of God. Let us, in the faith of the Gospel, both rejoice and work righteousness—trust in the Lord and be doing good: for though often wroth against us because of our sins, yet will He continue to bless us and be merciful to us, if we forsake our own way and be mindful of His. But O what polluted and frail creatures we are!... Verses 6 and 7 are notabilia.—Let me stir myself up to lay hold of God. He by His very complaint gives us the warrant to appropriate Him as our God.... The pleadings at the close of this chapter are obviously those of Jews in captivity, but typical of a future calamity and enlargement awaiting the Church. The prophecy anterior to both occasions serves both.

ISAIAH LXV. 1-16.—This chapter, though it reaches onward at length to the final restoration of the Jews, begins with the prophecy of their rejection, as exemplified in the twofold overthrow of their nation—first, for the offences of a grosser idolatry; and, secondly, for their treatment of the Messiah. It is in connexion with the latter events that verse 2 is quoted by Paul.... Verse 5 is strongly descriptive of the character of the Pharisees; though in the second destruction of Jerusalem we are taught to see the accumulated vengeance laid on the sins both of that and former generations.... The offensiveness of sin to God is strongly expressed in verse 4; and should suggest by contrast the necessity of our appeal to that sacrifice which arose to God as the incense of a sweet-smelling savour. Yet a remnant of Israel will be saved; and marked will the difference be in God's regards to His own, and to the great bulk of the nations, who will be the

outcasts of a general dispersion—afterwards, however, to be recalled, when all former troubles shall be forgotten, and God shall put their sins at as great distance away from them as the east is from the west.

17-25.—It is delightful to mark how an expression so general as that of "the new heavens and the new earth," and therefore of the great and general renovation, should be blended with the expression of God's special kindness to His ancient people—proving that the Jews are to bear a predominant part in the establishment of the next Economy. We are greatly wanting in the details of the Millennium; and perhaps from the want of Scriptural data for the determination of them. We cannot think of those who have part in the first resurrection, that they will again die; but will none of the righteous die? and if not, what is meant by "the child dying a hundred years old?" and in contrast with him the sinner, who, though he should live a hundred years, will be accursed? We doubt not that there will be two contemporaneous societies at that period—the righteous, and the wicked who are without and will not be permitted to hurt or to destroy in all God's holy mountain. Again will there be a change in the laws of animal nature—that the carnivorous shall cease being so; or are these things only figurative? The earth, with its curse fully removed, will be greatly more productive, and so as that men shall not labour in vain, as now; but will there be also successive generations through men marrying and given in marriage? And does what is here said of the serpent mean the entire subjugation of Satan the Prince of evil?

ISAIAH LXVI. 1-9.—What an enhancement of the Divine

condescension, the greatness of Him who, though high, has respect unto the lowly.—My God, the maker of all things, have respect unto me, who am also the work of Thy hands; and clothe me with humility, O God.... The sacrifices of the haughty and hypocritical availed them not; and they will be dealt with as if guilty of the worst crimes, or affronting God with forbidden offerings. They shall become the victims of their own delusions, and all their fears shall be realized.... There are often two parties addressed in a prophecy, which alternates between them; and hence blessings and curses in the same passage. And so, in verse 5, encouragement is given to them who tremble at God's word, but a voice of denunciation lifted up against their enemies. Terror will be carried into the heart both of the city and temple; while, on the other hand, those elect whom God shall avenge speedily, will experience a sudden enlargement and delivery at His hands. He will not leave this great work unfinished; but having carried it so far, will accomplish the increase and prosperity of Zion.

10-24.—Jerusalem will then be the joy of the whole earth, a dispenser of comfort to all who take pleasure in her stones. And while such will be the manifestation of His benignity towards the Church, there will be indignation towards her enemies. Does not this point to the year of the redeemed as synchronizing with the day of the vengeance of the Lord?—vengeance against those whose ungodliness is here pourtrayed by the worst abominations of the idolaters of that period. It would seem as if there was to be a great dispersion as well as slaughter of the vanquished, who should carry back to the countries of the confederate nations the report of their great overthrow

in that battle, when the cause of God shall be exalted over all its enemies. And does it not further seem as if the effect of the intelligence should be to turn the hearts of men towards the Jews of their respective countries, whom they would help and hasten forward to their own land? Here the office-bearers are spoken of in the terms of their ancient institution; and it does stamp a peculiar and most interesting character on these noble prophecies, now at their close, to find Israel carried forward even to their final termination, and the fortunes of this selected people blended with such enduring generalities as "the new heavens and the new earth." The destruction of enemies is represented by the expressions of our Saviour regarding the place of final condemnation.

JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH I.—Isaiah has too much overshadowed Jeremiah, whose book of prophecy is a copious repertory of precious things, where we find very many of the most weighty and memorable of our Bible sayings. The chronology of this work is precise.... To "know," in verse 5, is to select as a fit instrument for the service which God assigned to Jeremiah, who soon, on the other hand, gives the manifestation of a certain softness and timidity, by which he was obviously characterized.—Save me, O God, from the fear of men, and from all distrustful anxiety as to what I should say to them.... Verse 10, where Jeremiah is spoken to as having been constituted the executor of what he was only the denouncer, lets us into many similar examples in prophecy.... The almond-tree is remarkable for the earliness of its blossoms. Its very name denotes

an eagerness to seize on the first opportunity of putting forth its blossoms; and hence its propriety as the symbol of God's hastening to the performance of His word.... Blayney says of the seething-pot, that its face should have been represented as from the south, a better translation, he says, than to the north—whence came the threatened evil, and so southward or in the same direction with the steam of the boiling vessel.... To "set up a throne" denotes the full possession and power which have been taken over it. To be dismayed at others is the high road to our being confounded before them.—Let me ever hold up a resolute face on the side of what I know to be right. God forewarns Jeremiah of the hostility that he was to encounter in the discharge of his commission, but at the same time encourages him most amply to brave it. It is remarkable of some of our most distinguished prophets that they were the most oppressed with diffidence—as Moses, for example, who remonstrated against his mission even as Jeremiah did.

JEREMIAH II. 1-13.—It is important to remark of verse 2, that the kindness and love there spoken of are those of God to Israel, for there was very little on the part of Israel towards God. Israel was a hallowed thing to Him, His first-fruits from among mankind, and selected with the view to a future blessing on all the families of the earth. He then remonstrates with them on their unworthy return for all His goodness.... What a graphic description is here given of the wilderness! It was their transition thence into the land of Canaan, for which they should have been everlastingly grateful; and the charge against them is that they forgot and trampled on all their

obligations. The great fountain-head of the natural transgression was the corruption of the priesthood. The iniquity of official men is the prolific source of all sorts of degeneracy. There was a departure from God on the part of the ministers of religion, and such a disregard to the law or to its documents and records, that they knew not God. The appeal is made to the habit of idolatrous nations, who swerved not from their gods—although Israel renounced the true God who had so signalized them by His favour.... Chittim being Europe, and Kedar being in Arabia, verse 10 is tantamount to the affirmation, that from west to east there was no such enormity as that into which God's own people had fallen. The complaint against them is very strongly put; and verse 13 is one of Jeremiah's most illustrious notabilia.—My God, how I am myself reproved by it. Keep me by the fountain of living waters. Give me the water of life freely. Recall me from the idle employment of seeking enjoyment from the perishable creature, from the broken cisterns that hold no water.

14-24.—Israel was not constituted a slave, but was adopted by God, as a child of his own family, and home-born—and how then comes he to be the prey of enemies? He is invaded on all sides and plundered—nay, his cities burnt up so as to be left without an inhabitant. More especially did Egypt obtain a signal victory over them when Josiah was defeated and slain; and afterwards did Babylon complete the overthrow of their nation. Well might it be said of Egypt that it broke the crown of their head when Josiah fell in battle. But it was of their own bringing on: it was not chargeable upon God. Him they had forsaken; and as an evidence and example of

hewing out broken cisterns for themselves, they repaired to the rivers of Egypt and Babylon—preferring these to the living waters, or exchanging the worship of the true God for that of the gods of the nations, and who in punishment for their idolatry, obtained the power over them. For wickedness read adversity, and then it makes a clearer sense, that this would bring them to a sense of their backslidings.—Give me, O Lord, to feel how evil and bitter a thing ungodliness is; and put Thy fear within me. O save me from the headlong force of my own propensities! ... By another reading of verse 20, we are told that it was Israel which burst their own bands, not God who had released them from their righteous obligations. And what a degeneracy ensued! as is strikingly expressed in verse 21—a notabile; and so also is verse 22, which speaks to us most powerfully of the inveteracy of our native sinfulness, that no superficial application can wash away, and which withstands all the expedients and glosses of human art. Blayney translates it—a swift dromedary taking to company with her a wild ass, and that cannot be turned from her gratification any more than Israel from the idolatry on which they are bent. But the animal, after its season of appetency is over, returns and is easily found, far more readily indeed than stubborn and rebellious Israel.

25-37.—Israel is here warned against running herself into captivity by her misconduct, to which she would be taken unshod, and in the agonies of sore privation; and whereas she alleges that there is no remedy, it is all chargeable on her own idolatrous affection. Therefore alone it is, that their doom is inevitable, after which perhaps they will send forth a returning cry, even as the

wild dromedary comes back when her waywardness is over. But the true God expostulates and commits them back to the gods of their own choosing, numerous as their cities—so wholly were they given over to idolatry. All the discipline they got was thrown away upon them; and the righteous who had been sent to them they themselves put to death.... Verse 31 I have long regarded as a notabile. —My God, be Thou neither a wilderness nor land of darkness to me, but be Thou peopled to my view with all the interest and variety and loveliness of Thy works, with all that can delight or solemnize in the contemplation of highest goodness. Be Thou the home of my habitual and fondest contemplations, O Lord. Neither let me feel that I am my own, and far less my own master; but be subject to Thee in all things. Be Thou unto me, O God, as ornaments and attire to those who set their hearts upon these things: I would set my heart upon God—I want to know what delight in God is. My God, Thou knowest what I pray against—the doom being pronounced upon me which the unrepented sin of verse 34 is sure to bring down. Save me from the guilt of having offended any of Christ's little ones; and let me henceforth recall every wandering desire, and live according to the strictest methods of purity and self-government. Above all, let the principle of this be in my heart, and let the holiness be established there, without which I cannot see God.

JEREMIAH III. 1-14.—God here gives proof of a condescension and willingness for reconciliation with unfaithful Israel, which shows that His ways are not like man's ways. The abominations and guilt of the people are very strongly depicted. Temporal judgments are represented

as following on the back of their various enormities.... Verse 4, and the first half of verse 5, seem words put into the mouth of Israel—as if inquiring the change that had come over the dealings of Him who formerly was their Guide and Guardian. The last half of verse 5 seems the reply of God, vindicating His own treatment of a people who had both said evil and done it—had persevered with their iniquities in opposition to all His warnings. God then addresses Himself to Jeremiah, and gives a more particular narration of Israel's misdoings towards Him, and of His doings towards them. He had persisted in His entreaties for a reconciliation, but they refused. Nor did Judah take the warning of what she had seen regarding Israel, in that God rejected them because of their impenitency. The idolatry of Judah sank down to the image-worship of wood and stone. It would seem as if Judah had outdone the provocations of Israel, by superadding the guilt of hypocrisy to that of rebellion. Therefore does he direct his words towards the north, where Israel had been taken captive, and entreats their returning—and holding out the proffers of pardon, would they but confess and forsake their sins.—The end of verse 12 seems a reply to the question of verse 5.—They scattered, or had been liberal of their ways to strangers—taking up and complying with the shameful idolatries of all whom they fell in with. And yet, in the face of all this, does God persevere in beseeching their return to Him as their husband, although they had broken the marriage vow.

15-25.—Verse 15 is an eminent notabile. The promise it contains is an exceedingly precious one.—My God, fulfil it upon our own land. We pray for an efficient, evangelical, and upright ministry in the midst of us; and let

theirs withal be an intelligent Christianity. The accomplishment, however, is still in reserve, and is spoken of more in the way of prophecy than of promise. It points to a time when there shall be the throne instead of the ark—the metropolitan power in Jerusalem—and when it shall be resorted to by the nations of a regenerated world. Surely it could not be said in the days of the second temple, although the ark had then ceased, that there was any such universal resort to Judea; or yet that Israel and Judah had become united, as we expect they shall be. But the question is—how can this reconciliation and reinstatement take place? and the answer—by a repentance and return on the part of my people. No doubt their departure was a very grievous one—but they became sensible of this; and God's encouragements and invitations met in counterpart with their godly sorrow; and so they renounced their dependence on all but the living and true God. Their eyes are now opened to the real cause of the great national sufferings which had been laid upon them. They were ashamed, and confessed, and turned unto the Lord. Doubtless all this is yet to come. They have not yet looked to Him whom they have pierced, and mourned for Him as one mourneth for a first-born. But they will at length; and when they shall have returned unto God, God will return unto them.

JEREMIAH IV. 1-9.—God urges His entreaties for the return of Israel, and more now in the way of exhortation for the present than of prophecy for the future. At this time they were still in their own land, prior to the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar; and the promise is, that if they will only return, they shall not be removed. The

"return unto me" signifies a change from the false to the true worship, instead of a change from one illusion to another. Had they but hearkened to the voice of their prophet, not only might they have continued to inherit the land; but the promised blessing in and through them to all the families of the earth, might have been realized without those sad destructions and dispersions which they actually underwent.... To "break up the fallow ground" might signify to uproot the evil habits which grow like weeds on the soil of the heart, now to be circumcised and planted anew with the Lord's planting. But all these admonitions, with their accompanying promises, were thrown away on that ungrateful and stiffnecked generation, and so the fury of the Lord came upon them, because of the evil of their doings. And accordingly Jeremiah was appointed to make declaration of this, which he did in effect, by telling them what they would do in the event of their great coming invasion—that is, flee to their defenced cities, and rally the people towards the capital, and make no delay, but flee behind their fortifications, because of a great and overwhelming inroad that was to set in upon them from the north. The destroyer of nations was upon his way, and would desolate the land. They had done nothing to turn off the fierce anger of the Lord, and so it turned against them. The hearts of all their great men, whether priests or nobles, failed them in this day of awful calamity.—O God, avert such a judgment from our own sinful nation; and as this year closes upon us with appalling famine within, and rumours of war from without, do Thou brighten, if it be Thy blessed will, the year that is now coming in, by the return of our rulers to the purity of our Scriptural faith; and the ways of the people so

pleasing God that all Thy chastisements might be withdrawn, and all our enemies be at peace with us.

January, 1847.

10-19.—Jeremiah has here the boldness to remonstrate with God, in that He promised peace, which will be made good ultimately; but not without great previous sins and chastisements. And therefore a scorching wind, not of salubrious quality, but for the direct infliction of disease and pain, will come upon them. The invader will make speedy entrance into their borders if they repent not, and do not cleanse themselves. The day of grace and entreaty is still lengthened out to them; and the expostulation of verse 14 is a notabile.—My God, save me from the vile and vain thoughts that lodge within my heart.... The "watchers" of verse 16 are besiegers, who keep sentry around the beset places. This is God's justification in reply to His prophet. All this affliction of the people is the fruit of their own way and their own doings: and such being the real state of the matter, Jeremiah is obliged to acquiesce, and vents forth those characteristic lamentations which so abound throughout his writings.

20-31.—And so he dwells in description on the calamities which are coming over the land. The ravages and insignia of war are forcibly depicted. And all this because of the people's sottishness—their defect in godliness being closely allied with the defect of intellect.... There is a counterpart to verse 22 in Rom. xvi. 19—"wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." In describing the chaotic state of the land when desolated, some of the images are taken from the primitive chaos in the Book of Genesis—the earth being then without form

and void, and darkness being on the face of the deep. There is the highly poetical in the hills moving lightly, and the birds of heaven disappearing. Altogether it is a fearful and terrible representation of the Divine vengeance upon Israel—a vengeance from which He would not draw back, yet would not carry it on to a full and final destruction. The movements of those defeated and put to flight are very graphically rendered—going into thickets, climbing up upon rocks. The abandonment of the cities is complete; and then of how little avail will all their former luxuries and allurements prove to them, after the enemies with whom they amalgamated in their idolatries shall have got them in their power?... To "rent their faces" is translated by Blayney to "distend their eyes" —it being the practice then to paint the eye-brows, so as to give the appearance of larger eyes. Instead of being caressed and sought after for her charms, Zion is reduced to the attitude of a helpless supplicant, calling on her murderers, with outstretched hands, to spare her.

JEREMIAH V. 1-9.—There is here a forcible description of the wickedness of Jerusalem, and of its provocations against the Lord. And He makes the same challenge regarding it that he did of Sodom in His conversation with Abraham. If even one righteous person could have been found in the city He would have pardoned it. There was hypocrisy in swearing by the Lord—yet obeying Him not. And so Jeremiah acquiesces in the charge of Him whose delight is truth in the inward parts. They grew harder and worse under all their corrections. At the same time the prophet sought to alleviate the matter, by suggesting the possibility of its being chiefly the poor and ignorant

who had thus transgressed and erred, and that possibly better things might be found among the upper classes. But these too had gone as far astray, and therefore, there was no let in the way of God's vengeance. The lion, the invader, should enter and lay them waste. The harlots' houses are their idolatrous temples. The likeness of the two sins which are here and everywhere else represented as analogous, might well impress upon us the enormity in heaven's sight of those evil indulgences, regarding which many feel so lightly.

10-19.—The prophet is told to proclaim a coming destruction in the form of himself being the agent, and bidden to destroy with his own hand. The battlements of Jerusalem were not the Lord's, in the sense of Jerusalem itself being wholly given over to idolatry. In all these commissions of vengeance, however, there is a proviso inserted that it shall not be the vengeance of a total extermination. He will not make a full end—partly because He had more sufferings in reserve for them. A remnant shall be saved. They who said—It is not He, denied the true God and His prophets, or that they have received the word that thus and thus it should be done unto them. But this word should have awful significancy and effect, consuming the people like fuel by the breath of God's mouth. The prophet having said it, is equivalent to its being done; and so they are told sometimes not to speak the things predicted, but as if themselves were the agents to do them. All this was to take effect by an invasion from the ancient kingdom of Babylon, the death-bearing quivers of whose warriors should soon be brought to bear upon their land—which would soon be wasted into famine, and all because they had forsaken the God of Israel, and

served the gods of other countries, into which therefore they should be carried by a sort of counterpart retribution. They had chosen to serve strange gods in their own land—therefore should they be forced to serve strangers in a land that was not theirs.

20-31.—" The eyes which see not, and ears which hear not," form an expression kept up till the days of the New Testament. What a sanction we have throughout Scripture for contemplating God in His works, or for Natural Theology; and for grounding our charges of ungodliness on the neglect of its considerations. And there was an awful perversion of justice in these days—men entrapped and sworn against and destroyed by means of false witnesses and corrupt judges. Such flagrant breaches of social integrity cause the cry of the oppressed to reach up to the heavens, where it enters the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.—My God, we pray not for vengeance, but for the reformation of those children of iniquity who enrich themselves, even in our day, at the expense of truth and justice.... Verse 31 is an eminent notabile—and how applicable to these times, when a lax doctrine is promulgated, and careless ungodly hearers are quite satisfied therewith—loving to have it so, and not liking to be disturbed by the high demands of a spiritual religion on their hearts and habits.

JEREMIAH VI. 1-9.—There is the warning here of a great coming invasion. There is another sense than "liken" for the Hebrew word in verse 2—to destroy, or decree to destroy; and this seems the most applicable meaning at this place. The shepherds and their flocks are understood to be the captains and their troops of the hostile army. They are represented in verse 4 as called

upon to the enterprise, and so resolved upon it that while they lament the approach of evening, they will go to the execution even though it should be night. Their commission against Jerusalem is particularly described; and the reason for it given, because of its abounding oppression and iniquity—being as prolific of wickedness as a fountain is of water. And yet while the stroke has not fallen upon them, there is the voice of admonition lifted in their hearing by the prophet. There are still space and opportunity given for repentance.... The command in verse 9 is addressed to the invaders, who are called upon thoroughly to glean Israel, and rather than leave any, turn again and take off all that had been missed. (See ch. lii. 28-30.)

10-20.—The prophet complains of the insensibility of the people to all his threatenings, which causes him to redouble them—moving his righteous indignation still more, or rather stimulating him to fresh endeavours, that he might impress and terrify them out of the evil of their ways. He may be said to represent the will and mind of God; and in this view his being "full of the fury of the Lord," and his "weariness with holding in," are remarkable expressions.—Then follows a most illustrious notabile in verse 14.—My God, save me from the ruinous tranquillity of those who say, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Let me not heal my own hurt or the hurt of others slightly. O may I think with good effect of my abominations: and grant, Almighty Father, that I might ever square my creed and my conduct by the rule of Thine own original word—the good old way in all its primitive simplicity, and unvitiated by modern changes or innovations. What another famous notabile is verse 16!—The people, however, remained obstinate and perverse under

all these urgencies. The evil that is to be brought upon them is here stated to be the fruit of their thoughts. Give me to rule the inner man, to rule the heart with all diligence—seeing that out of it are the issues of life. God rejected all the outward offerings of a people so corrupt in principle and feeling as they were.

21-30.—They will, therefore, be dealt with in the way of punishment. They will fall in with enemies before whom old and young and whole bands of companionship shall be laid low. This invasion from the north is often denounced upon them, and with variety of description having in it great power. The cavalry are here especially spoken of. The utter insecurity of a land thus overrun with hostile forces is strikingly delineated.... The tower and the fortress are differently rendered by Blayney. "I have appointed thee to make assay among my people as to the gold thereof"—a meaning that agrees well with the following context. The verse at this rate might be addressed to Jeremiah, whose earnest remonstrances and warnings if they told on a few, might detach these from the great mass of the community, who by standing their ground against the prophet made abundant demonstration of their own worthlessness—so that his word, the savour it might be of life unto the life of some, was the savour of death unto the death of many. To sustain the consistency of this interpretation the more, the "walking with slanders" is understood to mean dealing in a fraudulent currency. And the upshot of their trial is that they are found to be reprobate silver.

JEREMIAH VII. 1-10.—Never was there greater earnestness or importunity of warning than that wherewith Jeremiah

plied the children of Israel. And he took the most conspicuous and frequented places, too, for the promulgation of his message from God—the gate of the temple. His call upon them was for a moral reformation, and that they should not place a false confidence in their temple or in its ritual services:—"Are these," as if pointing to the buildings of the temple within his view.... The "lying words" are those of false prophets, who taught them to place a false reliance upon these. It is a noble and virtuous remonstrance against these words and their consequent enormities which Jeremiah here lifts up in the ears of his countrymen. They frequented the temple even in the midst of their idolatries, and with a sort of predestinarian orthodoxy, tried to blunt the criminality of their doings.... Verse 10 would do admirably as a text against Antinomians and Fatalists.

11-21.—The frequenters of the temple, who stole and murdered and committed adultery, made it a den of robbers. But God bids them look at Shiloh, once privileged as Jerusalem now was, yet that prevented not the defeat of Israel in Samuel's time when the Ark was taken, nor the present desolation of the plain and country around it, nor the captivity of the ten tribes.... Of Jeremiah it might with special propriety be said, that "he rose up early and spake unto the people." Jerusalem, which answered him not, was therefore made to share in the calamities of Shiloh. Judah should fare as Israel had done in being cast out and made captive. There is a point beyond which prayer is vain—a sin unto death; after which the cry of the transgressor himself and the intercessions of others are alike unavailing. It marks the consummation of their fate when Jeremiah is forbidden to pray for

Israel.... The idolatry which is here specified, with its preparations and services, is very appalling—an idolatry most provoking to a holy God, but to themselves most ruinous and confounding. And so God pours upon them His maledictions of vengeance—all of which were executed to the full.... The meaning of verse 21 is, that they might cease their offerings and sacrifices, and eat the victims, for that God had now given them up, and wanted no more oblations at their hands.

22-34.—He appeals to the state of matters in the wilderness, or during the period of Israel's transition from Egypt to Canaan. There was then no regular ritual service; but there was then, as at all times, the moral regimen of obedience, paramount to all other obedience. They acquitted themselves, however, miserably ill under this regimen; and this perverse rebellious spirit of their race was kept up after their settlement in the promised land, and in opposition to all the warnings of all the prophets.... "Rising up early," a frequent expression of Jeremiah, frequently repeated by him, and afterwards quoted by some one of the later prophets. It is remarkable that in the certain foreknowledge of their disobedience, yet God sends messengers to recall them—telling these messengers, too, the ultimate failure of their own errand, or at least that it was but the savour of death unto death. And so he comes forth with his predictive denunciations against them.... To "cut off the hair" was an act of mourning. Tophet was the place where the horrid sacrifices of children were performed; and its name is supposed to be taken from the drums employed in drowning their cries. So far from coming into the heart of the Lord to be thus served, it was to him an utter

abomination; and hence followed a signal vengeance upon the land.

JEREMIAH VIII. 1-11.—The beginning of this chapter flows continuously from the end of the last. When Jerusalem was taken, the sepulchres of the grandees would be ransacked for treasure; and their bones left in a state of exposure. They would, though fallen, have risen again—God would, though turned away, have returned—had it not been for the utter incorrigibleness of the people. Theirs was a perpetual backsliding; and how strongly it expresses the bias to evil—that "every man turned to his course as a horse to the battle." They were more blind to the signs of the times than irrational creatures. The law was vain, not through its imperfection, but by reason of the perversity of its subjects. (Rom. viii. 3.)... How strikingly applicable is verse 9 to our rulers! By casting the word of the Lord away from them, they have cast away all true and solid wisdom; and they are too much countenanced in their irreligious policy by ecclesiastical men.—Then follows a repetition of the illustrious notabile in ch. vi. 14—alike applicable to political and moral ills. What superficial remedies are now proposed for our social disorders!

12-22.—Jeremiah continues to vindicate the threatening which he pours forth on Israel—alleging their utter shamelessness and moral insensibility to the grossest wickedness.... To "fall among them that fall" is to fall one after another. "Why do we sit still," or remain in unfortified places; let us seek to the cities; but even there what can we do but wait in passiveness for what is coming?... The picture here given of an invasion, and

ruthless invaders, is a most vivid and appalling one. They could not by any skill be turned from their purposes of destruction. Poor Jeremiah, with all the severity of his denunciations, had a heart full of pity for the miseries of his people. The author of the Book of Lamentations appears in some of these verses. He speaks of the case as now beyond remedy; and verse 20, expressive of this, is indeed a most striking notabile, closely and practically applicable to the case of men who have lived to knowledge without God and without Christ in the world. But what a blessed counterpart to this is the affirmative reply to the question in the last verse—precious to the heart of every earnest inquirer, when he turns him to the great Physician of souls, and gets the medicine, the balm of Gilead, applied to the hurt of his soul.—My God, let me not incur the doom of those who stand beyond the reach of salvation; but give me now to seek unto Him who is the fountain of spiritual health....Verse 22—an illustrious notabile.

JEREMIAH IX. 1-11.—Here Jeremiah appears in his distinctive character as a man full of patriotic sensibility for his degraded and doomed countrymen. The whole poetry of the Book of Lamentations breaks forth in the two first verses of this chapter. There is a pathos in his aspirations after solitude and rest, away from his people in a lodging-place of the far-off wilderness. But still higher than this is his moral indignancy at their vices.—My God, help mine own infirmity, that I may be valiant for the truth upon the earth.... It is a fell description which he gives, not of their ungodliness alone, but of their utter selfishness and disregard for each other. The service of

sin is indeed a slavery; and the constant need that there is of propping up one iniquity by another makes it altogether a most toilsome policy, with no inward satisfaction to sustain them under it.... "An arrow shot out" is rendered by Blayney "the arrow of a murderer." Observe what a hatred God bears to all deceitfulness.... In verse 10 read—"On the mountains will I bring up weeping and wailing." This makes all the three verses, 9, 10, and 11, to be a continuous and direct utterance from God Himself.

12-26.—Jeremiah put the question, and answers it in effect, that he himself is the person to whom the reason of Israel's calamities has been entrusted, and he declares it accordingly. It was because they had forsaken God's law and gone after other gods, of whom they were taught by their fathers, who it seems delivered to them the lessons of an idolatrous education. And Jeremiah, after denouncing upon them the coming desolations, stands forth in the capacity of a mourner, and pours out all the eloquence of his patriotic sorrows...."Thus saith the Lord," in verse 22, is thought to be an interpolation; and the word for "speak" might also be translated "destroyed," which might be made to govern the "young men" in the latter clause of the preceding verse. Then verse 22 begins with "Even," &c.... Verses 23 and 24 form a most precious notabile—one of the most illustrious in Scripture.—My God, give me this knowledge of Thyself, that I may confide in Thy lovingkindness—that I may hold in sacred and supreme respect Thy judgments and righteousness. ...This judgment was to go round among the uncircumcised, and circumcised who in heart were as bad as their neighbours.

JEREMIAH X. 1-13.—But exhortations—implying that there is still space for repentance, are ever and anon intermingled with these threats and prophecies of evil.... A fine rebuke to the astrologers when told not to be dismayed at the signs of heaven; and the assertions besides of a stability in their constitution which survives all the vain terrors of ignorance. This description of idols reminds one of the like by Isaiah, though short of his in ironical power. But what a pure and high theology is here given forth, when the true God is contrasted with the vanities of the nations!—To Thee, alone, O God, appertain the majesty and the power and government of the whole earth. ...The "King of Nations" is nobly applicable in the present day, when governments would cast off religion as forming any part of their concern, and the civil would lord it over the ecclesiastical power....How finely does the prophet's representation of the true God alternate with the follies and grossnesses of Paganism!—O that I bore about with me a more habitual sense of God as the *living* God; and what a change were this, to supplant the naked and effete formula of a mere orthodox article! His are wisdom and discretion, as well as power; and what a fine example of a power extending backward through the steps of every natural process—the vapours, the rain, the wind, the lightnings.

14-25.—He keeps up the comparison between the true God and idols. He then reiterates his predictions of evil. The people should be so distressed that they will find themselves slung out from their homes into captivity....Verses 19 and 20 form the lamentation of Jerusalem, and at the same time its resignation, or rather its acquiescence, in a helpless necessity. This came upon them because of

the degeneracy and delinquency of their pastors, and is so acknowledged by the Jews who, in the form of a person, speak onward to the end of the chapter. And what a precious notabile in this speech is verse 23. Well do I see that the way of man is not in himself: I cannot direct my own steps. Order my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. O let me be ever asking counsel of God. Let me both pray, and watch as well as pray. And, Heavenly Father, correct me not beyond what I am able to bear—not in anger, but for the purposes of a spiritual husbandman—that I may bring forth more fruit. (John xv. 2.)

JEREMIAH XI. 1-10.—There is now an appeal made to the old covenant entered upon at the commencement of the Israelites' history as a nation, and a reference to their preceding state when they laboured as slaves among the iron furnaces of Egypt.... The prophet in verse 5 assents to the rightfulness of the curse pronounced on those who should disobey this covenant. Upon which God commissions him, as one qualified in respect of his views and principles, to declare the consequences of this disobedience—stating what God had done, and what they had failed to do.... God, or God's prophets, "rising early" —an expression of very frequent occurrence in this Book —signifies that timely and preventive warning was given to the people—space for repentance, as well as the most earnest and affectionate urgencies that they should return from the evil of their ways.—Save me, O God, from the imaginations of an evil heart!... They had often transgressed, and been often punished, notwithstanding which they still conspired or combined to repeat the iniquities

of their fathers over again; leaving no alternative but that the sanctions of the broken covenant must take course and have fulfilment upon them.

11-23.—This is a sad account of Judah's idolatry—gods for every city, and an altar to Baal in every street of Jerusalem. Jeremiah is forbidden to pray for them, as if they had already sinned the sin unto death—that sin of which the apostle John says—"I do not say that he should pray for it."... Verse 15 is much cleared up by turning each clause into an interrogation, and the "many" into "vows," coming from a word of like characters in the Hebrew, and so rendered in the Septuagint. Then it would all run thus—"What hath my beloved to do in my house, while she practiseth wickedness? Shall vows and holy flesh (sacrifices) be allowed to come from thee? When thou art malignant, shalt thou then rejoice?"—Blayney.... Verse 18—"Then Thou shewedst me their doings." Jeremiah is here addressing God. There was a very hostile re-action against the prophet; and the people say of him—"Let us destroy the tree," &c., making him the tree, as if in ironical reiteration of his own threat against them. On this Jeremiah appeals unto God; and we recognise, in verse 20, the same ascription to God that we meet in Rev. ii. 23...."Anathoth" is understood to be the birth-place of Jeremiah. (See ch. i. 1.) His father was one of the priests there. And because of their hostility to Jeremiah, they are threatened with a special visitation and special vengeance.

JEREMIAH XII.—The prophet here complains of the prosperity of the wicked and the hypocritical; and his prayer against them might, from his official character, be

well regarded as a prediction rather than the expression of a wish. They built themselves up in their wickedness under the false security that God would have no after reckoning with them. (verse 4.)... Verses 5 and 6 seem addressed by God to Jeremiah. If so much provoked and discouraged by the opposition of your own townsmen in Anathoth, how much more when the dignitaries of Jerusalem shall stand against thee? But the transition here gives also a likelihood to this being a question put to the people of Israel, whom God says, in verse 7, He was now to forsake—His heritage being to Him a raging enemy whom He must cast down; and this He does by calling on the neighbouring powers to invade and desolate the land. Their carelessness, their not laying it to heart, enhances all the more God's displeasure against them. All their efforts to help themselves will be fruitless. But again, from verse 14, we read of a very commonly described process in Scripture—the re-action in favour of Israel, and against her enemies. The house of Judah shall at length be extricated from its enemies, and experience the returning compassion of the Most High; while those of them who will not obey the call for their deliverance shall be dealt with not in mercy but in judgment; and perhaps the nations among whom these rebellious Jews still abide, may be involved in destruction along with them.

JEREMIAH XIII. 1-11.—Some conceive that this was a real transaction on the part of Jeremiah; but by the greater number it is regarded as a vision, which serves equally well for a representation of the things which are here predicted. The nation of Israel was taken into close

relationship with God, even as a girdle to its wearer, both for service and ornament—to be the glory of their Maker by doing His will, and shewing forth His praise. But the girdle was marred, and fit only for being cast away; and so God's rebellious people, who had become an offence to Him, and dishonoured His holy name, were to be cast out of His protection, and driven forth of their own land. They had forsaken Him, and should therefore cease to cleave unto Him as heretofore. They might have been unto Him for a praise and a glory, instead of which they caused the name of the Lord to be blasphemed among the nations, and so were driven from their place as God's peculiar people.

12-27.—This second parable conveys the lesson—"*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" And yet the threat given forth by it does not prevent the utterances of another earnest entreaty from the God who willeth all men to repent. They did not hear, and Jeremiah, as he here predicts of himself, characteristically gave himself up to all the tenderness of patriotic grief. That this prophecy refers to the captivity of Jehoiachin is probable from the comparison of verse 18 with 2 Kings xx. 18. The flock that was given to Judah is the body of the nation, to be slain or dispersed in the great bulk of it. (verse 21.) They themselves had, by casting off the favour and protection of the true God, opened the way for their enemies to come in and lord it over them.... Verse 22 contains in it a reference to the indignities practised by conquerors upon their captives along the journey to their own land. ...Verse 23—a most illustrious notabile, among the many others in which this Book abounds, and for which it does not get all the credit which belongs to it—eclipsed

as it were by the juxtaposition of the still more celebrated prophet Isaiah.—My God, turn me, and hall be turned. Renew my heart. Regenerate me by the power of the Holy Ghost...."The portion of Thy measures" is Thy measured portion.... Verse 26 adverts to the exposure and disgrace that were inflicted as a punishment on the licentious; and yet the importunities and expostulations of the prophet are kept up to the end of all these threatenings.

JEREMIAH XIV. 1-12.—Blayney considers the words respecting the dearth or drought to be a prediction. Verse 15 warrants this idea. And he thinks that "concerning the dearth" should be detached from verse 1 and attached to "Judah mourneth." A striking description of famine; and O how fearfully realized in our own day! I would pray, as Jeremiah did for Israel, on behalf of our own land. Give us, O Lord, a deeper and more contrite sense of our ungodliness—of the sins of the country and our own sins. The prophet expostulates with God, and asks why it is that He should take as little interest in His own chosen land as a wayfaring man does in the country he travels through? "Or why as a man astonied," rendered by Blayney "a man in deep sleep," in contradiction to what is elsewhere said of Him as the Keeper of Israel—that He neither slumbers nor sleeps. And yet, O Lord, instead of a traveller through, Thou art a dweller in the midst of us. But God doth not accept the prayer. He refuses to spare the people from the threatened vengeance He will now visit them for sins become unpardonable; nay, He not only refuses the prophet's prayer, but forbids him to pray any further in their behalf. They had sinned

unto death; and all their cries and oblations will avail them no longer.

13-22.—Jeremiah now complains of the false prophets, who said—Peace, when there was no peace; upon which God denounces the falsehood of these prophets, and threatens them with the identical visitation which they denied was coming on the land. And as the fate of these lying prophets, so would be that of the people—both should fall into the ditch. God therefore enjoins upon Jeremiah—what indeed was his own spontaneous and characteristic tendency—to take up a lamentation for his country, and act the part of a mourner, because of the calamities that were to befall it. It is interesting to meet in the Book of his prophecy the same elegiac strains of exquisite tenderness and pathos which form the staple of his Lamentations—giving us the same internal evidence for both, that we have for the Gospel and Epistles of John, from the obvious mannerism by which they are alike characterized. And yet, as the infliction had not yet come, he continues to pray for the averting of it.

JEREMIAH XV. 1-9.—But God rejected his prayer.—It is interesting to note the testimony here given to two of the most illustrious of the Hebrew nation—undoubted magnates in Scripture history—Moses and Samuel.—"Let them go forth," go forth of my temple—insult me no longer with their vain oblations.... The "death" in verse 2, to be contradistinguished from the sword and the famine, must be the pestilence; and thus the harmony is kept up with ch. xiv. 12. They who fall by the sword shall be afterwards devoured by dogs in the street, or the fowls of the air, and beasts that run wild if they fall in the country

parts. Very remarkable that the nation should be made to suffer for the sins of Manasseh, who himself repented, and was taken into acceptance. Doubtless the nation sinned along with the king, nor did they collectively repent; and God here charges them with their own sins. It is a striking expression of Himself, that "He is weary with repenting." The long-suffering, even of God, will come to its close. The season of grace and opportunity will in time be ended.—My God, let me no longer abuse Thy forbearance, or treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. He brought Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem, the metropolis, the mother city of the land.... "Seven" means many, (1 Sam. ii. 5,) and the mother in verse 9 seems still to be Jerusalem.

10-21.—Jeremiah here interposes his own personal feeling, and complains of the dangers and hardships attendant on his vocation as a prophet.... Blayney has a different rendering for verse 11—"They have reviled me, all of them; but as for you, Jeremiah, have I not stood by you against the enemy? Shall iron, shall the force and armour of the enemy break the iron of the North?"—where this metal was tempered into steel. Shall the enemy prevail over thee, Jeremiah, whom I have made as an iron pillar? (ch. i. 18.) But a sure destruction will come upon the land, addressed in verses 13 and 14; upon the utterances of which threat Jeremiah prays for the Divine protection, and vengeance on his persecutors. I did eat Thy words—I entertained them. I stood alone for God among the people.... The being "filled with indignation" might signify the being filled with grief for his countrymen because of God's indignation against them. Yet there is indignation too in the prophet's own heart, because of the

treatment he received at their hands.... Those waters might be termed deceitful which cause expectation by their fulness, but are afterwards dried up.... To "separate the precious from the vile" is a notable expression, and might be applied to all true ministers of pure doctrine. God promises defence and security to Jeremiah, if he will keep aloof from the multitude, and not give in to them.

February, 1847.

JEREMIAH XVI. 1-9.—Jeremiah does not just prophesy by performed action, but by action in a sense, for God forbids him to have a family, and that because of the ruin and desolation now threatened, and certainly to come on all the families of the land. He is even forbidden to mourn for them—as if, because the objects of God's wrath, they must not be the objects of his sympathy. The practice of cutting themselves for the dead was heathenish, and forbidden to the Jews, (Lev. xix. 28,) yet as being customary notwithstanding, it is here specified among other indications of grief for the dead, from which on this occasion they were altogether to abstain. And neither, indeed, was he to feast with them any more than to mourn with them—as little to rejoice with them that rejoiced as weep with them that wept; for the days were soon coming when all mirth was to be extinguished, and meanwhile Jeremiah was forbidden from giving any countenance to these thoughtless and secure people.

10-21.—Observe here, too, that the sons are made chargeable with the iniquities of their fathers, (verse 11,) though there was no want of personal deserving on their parts, for they had done worse than their fathers. They substituted gods of their own device, walking after the

imagination of their evil heart, and preferred these idols to the living and true God. They should therefore be cast abroad, over distant lands, where God would show them no favour. Yet a promise, and a glorious one too, comes instantly in the train of this menace. This promise of a return, greater and more illustrious than their return from the land of Egypt, might have been typified by their return from Babylon, but surely has not had its adequate fulfilment in this. His eye was full on their iniquity, and for this they should be amply reckoned with.... Do not "the fishers" signify fishers of men, who should prosecute an extensive missionary work among the Jews? and will they not come to acknowledge their rebellion, and that of their fathers, when they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and then will they come to know the name of the Lord? The veil will be taken from their hearts, and on their national conversion the Gentiles will come unto them, and do them honour.

JEREMIAH XVII. 1-12.—Sin is written, and at length indelibly, on the sinner's heart by long and inveterate use, till at length it is also indelibly written in the book of condemnation. The children of Israel gave way to their associations of wickedness with their places of forbidden indulgence, whenever they thought of them.... Judah is termed God's mountain. Substance should be connected with field—thy substance in the field....Verse 5 is an eminent notabile.—My God, let me have no confidence in the creature—nor let me depart from Thee, as all my trust and all my dependence—else I shall dwell in a dry land, and not share in any real good. My God, be Thou all my hope, and let me fare accordingly, so as

to abound in all the fruits of righteousness. But what a heart mine is, and how strongly but not too strongly represented in verse 9—a most illustrious notabile! I have not sounded the depth of its deceitfulness and desperate wickedness. Thou, O God, knowest it thoroughly; but O anticipate the judgment of condemnation by searching and trying and cleansing me from secret faults, and so putting me on the way of life everlasting. (Psalms xix. 12; cxxxix. 23, 24.)—The ill-gotten wealth of the dishonest will not avail them. Let us not seek to the deceitful objects of this world for our stable prosperity, but seek unto Him who endureth for ever, and whose throne is in the glorious and unchangeable serene above us.

13-27.—God is the hope of Israel, the hope of believers, and called in Romans xv. 13, the "God of hope."... "The fountain of living waters" is an expression peculiar to Jeremiah, who is fertile both in terms and sayings of most important significancy. The Lord was the object of his praise; but he was held in great discredit and disrepute by his countrymen. He pleads the matter with God; he had not hasted beyond the pace of a mere follower; he had not outrun God's message. It was not any desire of mine that these tidings of evil should take effect. Be not Thou therefore a terror to me, as the offended Jews are. Be Thou my refuge from them, and let them be confounded. He utters against them the maledictions of a prophet; but still even they were not conclusively given over. They are bidden to observe the Sabbath, or perhaps were bidden some time before, and with the encouragement of a promise, would they but obey. But they did not, and the promise was made void by themselves, and

thus they brought on their own destruction. What testimonies for the Sabbath, from both Isaiah and Jeremiah—*and that by prophets who spake of the comparative worthlessness of rites!*

JEREMIAH XVIII. 1-11.—Another trial, another effort as it were, on the part of a long-suffering God, not willing that Israel should perish, but rather that it should turn unto Him and repent. My friend, Mr. Erskine, grounded on this passage one of his arguments against unconditional election, on the idea that Paul took his illustration by the potter from the use which Jeremiah had made of it before him. We have no doubt of this doctrine in its most absolute form—yet not in a form that excludes conditions, but rather that enhances their importance and necessity to the uttermost, being alike indispensable with the final upshot in which they terminate. Let us take an example from the prophet, of plying our people with all urgency and earnestness to the last, while we fully agree with the Apostle in thinking that God overrules all, and determines all. God will repent, not of aught that He has decreed, but of aught that He has pronounced in the hearing of the wicked, if they but turn from their wickedness.

12-23.—Their saying that "there is no hope" is tantamount to a rejection of the prophet's advice—our following of it is not to be hoped for, for we shall take our own way. Israel did a horrible thing in thus forsaking God. Shall a man leave the natural supply of good water, and seek for it from afar by artificial methods of his own? or will he forsake the fountain of living waters, the Ancient of days, whom his fathers were taught to revere, and walk in

the way that was not prescribed, or chalked out for them? And for this monstrous perversity did God lay His threats and maledictions upon them. And for this they re-acted against His messenger Jeremiah: they plotted mischief against Him: they had recourse to priests and prophets and counsellors of their own, in whom they had confidence. By help of these, they proposed to smite him with the tongue, to heap upon him their calumnies and reproaches. But like David when beset by his enemies, he betook himself to prayer. Let us hope that both his deprecations, and those of the Psalmist, were the predictions of inspired men, rather than the imprecations of a vengeful spirit. Our Saviour bids us pray not against but for them who despitefully use and persecute us.

JEREMIAH XIX.—The menaces of its coming destruction thicken more and more upon Jerusalem as the prophecy advances—and just as the provocation of neglected warnings is all the more and more heightened.... Tophet may signify pleasure, in which case there will be a sad exchange of names for it; or, it may signify a drum, perhaps a cymbal—instruments often of glad and happy celebration; but said to have been used for drowning the cries of children sacrificed to Moloch. Then the name would be changed from the slaughter of children to that of men. The prophecy is in part by action—its fulfilment being signified by the breaking of a bottle. There should be as great a slaughter in Jerusalem as in Tophet, the valley without; and it should also be a place defiled as Tophet was. These fearful reproaches and denunciations are again repeated within the city, in the place of greatest concourse, the court of the temple. By hardening their necks, they

had treasured up wrath against the day of wrath—were suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.

JEREMIAH XX.—A narrative of Jeremiah's hardship, and his complaint thereupon. "Magor-missabib" signifies "Terror all round." After a very clear prediction of the evils that were coming upon Judah, the prophet turns him to God, and makes his plaint in a style that appears to us irreverent and daring. Blayney to soften this imputation on Jeremiah, for "deceive" in verse 7, substitutes "allure," by which he understands—to persuade. And then instead of "thou art stronger," as if Jeremiah had been forced against his will, he renders it—"Thou didst encourage me." And then when I speak, threatening violence and spoil against the people, the word which I utter becomes a reproach and derision in their mouths. They urged one another to frame calumnies against him, which they engaged to repeat. They "watched for his halting"—a notable and now proverbial expression. He was thus tempted to keep silence, yet could not refrain from the utterance of his inspirations; and with all his murmurings still retained his confidence in God.... Verse 12, the same with ch. xi. 20. He gratefully sings unto God—yet follows this up with an elegiacal lamentation of his own suffering, not unmixed perhaps with the sorrows of afflicted patriotism.

JEREMIAH XXI.—This prophecy is regarded by Blayney as not placed aright in the Book—many subsequent chapters applying to a time prior to that to which this one refers, even to the last revolt of Zedekiah, and which ended in the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar;

and he assigns the following as the right order as to this capture:—Chapters xxi., xxxiv., xxxvii., xxxii., xxxiii., xxxviii., xxxix. And he regards the prophecy in xxxvii. as distinct from the one before us, which was given in reply to the information and inquiry of Zedekiah, telling him of the commencement of these hostilities. Nothing can be more clear and peremptory than the prophet's forewarning of evil to the monarch and the monarchy. But to the people there is an alternative presented, and the terms of it, "the way of life and the way of death," are notable, and might be used with effect and propriety by a minister from the pulpit. And yet there seems to have been hope for those of the king's house, who should turn from the evil of their way. Blayney also, in verse 13, calls the valley the levelled hollow of the rock, and understands by it Mount Zion, where the palaces were built of timber from Lebanon.

JEREMIAH XXII. 1-9.—We now go back to prophecies delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim. See how the prophets shot a-head as it were of the ritualisms of the Jewish economy, and urged home with ever augmenting clearness and earnestness the lesson that mercy is better than sacrifice. At the same time the sanctions even for their more spiritual law were still of a temporal character—the reward for righteousness being the continuance and wealth of the Jewish monarchy and state. Thou art at present wealthy as Gilead and high as Lebanon, but if thou wilt not obey, invasion and overthrow and ruinous desolation will come upon thee. And the cause of the destruction will be made quite palpable, insomuch that every inquiry regarding it will be met by the answer—

that for their idolatries and their abandonment of the true God have they thus been brought low. It is thus that even the rebellions and reverses of Israel tended to keep up a sense of the true God among many neighbouring nations.

10-19.—Shallum is understood to have been by a change of name Jehoahaz—who was taken to Egypt and died there. (2 Kings xxiii. 34.) And we are here bidden not to weep for the dead, but for those in hopeless captivity. The prophet then turns to his successor, who it seems kept building at a magnificent palace, but paid not the workmen their wages. What a rebuke to those of the present day who affect an establishment and a style either beyond their power, or beyond their willingness to remunerate those whom they employ, or from whom they purchase! He is reproached with the example of his father; and one is glad to find such earnest and decisive testimonies by the prophets on the side of those perpetual moralities which should take the precedence of all that is merely ritual and positive. And Jehoiakim seems to have extorted from his subjects, as well as to have kept back their dues from his labourers and servants—making, it is to be presumed, unrighteous levies, and amassing as much for hoarding and from covetousness, as for the purposes of a lavish expenditure. And so he acted the part of a bloody oppressor, and is here threatened with his deserts, in an ignominious and unlamented death.

20-30.—Lebanon may be here the house of Solomon, the house of Judah, the Jewish state, addressed in verse 23 as the inhabitant of Lebanon; and she is here told that there is no escape for her, whether she go to the tops of the mountains or to the frontiers of the land. Thy

pastors, rather than pastures, and all the fondest objects of thy regard will be destroyed or forced into captivity; and thou who wouldst not hear in prosperity wilt be made gracious, or humbled and softened, when the agonies of thy sad visitation come upon thee. Coniah is Jeconiah or Jehoiachin. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 8-16; and 1 Chron. iii. 16.) The fulfilment of verse 26 is recorded in 2 Kings xxiv. 15. He was written childless, not because he was without descendants, (1 Chron. iii. 17, 18; Matthew i. 12,) but because none of them ever succeeded him in the independent monarchy of Judea.... "A vessel wherein there is no pleasure" is a notable expression, and significant of what men are in relation to God—vessels of mercy unto honour, or of wrath unto everlasting contempt.—O let me walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing. The prediction against the posterity of Jeconiah is ushered in with a solemn invocation. Let the inhabitants of the earth make a study, and consider well the judgments of the Lord, that they may learn righteousness.

JEREMIAH XXIII. 1-8.—There is much in Jeremiah against unfaithful pastors, much whereon to found a "concio ad clerum." The vengeance of God is especially directed against them, and His compassion to their injured and misled flocks. There is not a richer gift to any people than that of sending them pastors according to God's own heart. Do this, O Lord, for our Church and our country. But what glorious and blessed verses are the 5th and 6th—the latter a most illustrious notabile. In these we have the promise from God of His unspeakable gift Christ Jesus, termed here "Jehovah our Righteousness"—a most

decisive argument for the Divinity of our Lord. And what a noble prophecy we have in the two following verses—a prophecy not yet conclusively fulfilled, for the return from Babylon, though it may be a typical is quite an inadequate fulfilment: and we therefore look forward to a far more general and permanent restoration.

9-18.—Jeremiah with all the severity of his denunciation on the objects of his wrath cannot help mourning for them. Even the prophets, those more special and enormous offenders with whom he so frequently reckons, share in his compassion, when he bethinks him of their unhappy fate. Their might was not right. Their power was directed to the purposes of oppression and iniquity. And he joins the priests with the prophets who committed wickedness even in God's sacred house. A special vengeance was in reserve for both. The idolatrous prophets of Samaria had long been in a state of palpable and declared revolt from the true God; but the prophets of Jerusalem were their rivals in all sorts of licentious and unprincipled wickedness. Their example spread a most pernicious influence over the land. And what a description for being carried home to those of the present day, who also speak visions of their own heart, fanciful spiritualizations of Scripture, the products of their own vanity, instead of being the obedient disciples and faithful stewards and expounders of the Divine Word. And they deceived the people into a treacherous complacency—saying, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." These prophets had no warrant from God, verse 18: they stood not in his counsel: they heard not His word, nor took their commission from His mouth.

19-29.—The prophet continues these denunciations.

In the latter days ye shall consider it—ye shall clearly recognise this prophecy in its fulfilment. Neither the word of the Lord nor the anger of the Lord will return unto Him void. There is a special force of indignation directed against those who assumed to be prophets without a commission, and spoke falsely.—O may I ever stand in Thy counsel, O Lord. I am a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not afar off. There is nothing hidden from the omniscient eye of Him who fills earth and heaven with His presence. I see in particular the deceitfulness of those who utter prophecies of their own devising. These prophets withdraw the people as effectually from God as Baal withdrew them from Him in the days of their fathers. Those are true prophets who have dreams and rightly propound them, and who receive my word and faithfully deliver it. But why give the same homage to false prophets as to them? Why value chaff as you would wheat? The real Word of God is weighty and powerful.—May I experience its efficacy. May it burn within me. May it have the mastery over me. May it subdue all my lofty imaginations—and break down whatever there opposeth itself to God. May it more especially make my heart contrite and tender, and malleable to every right influence.—Verse 29 is quite a notabile.

30-40.—Those prophets may be said to steal the word of God who keep back from the people that true and real word which is rightfully theirs, and give them their own counterfeit in its place. It is like giving them base for sterling money—the sayings of their own tongues instead of God's sayings. It would look as if "the burden of the Lord" had been a term of obloquy attached to His prophecies—because they were so laden with the denun-

ciations of evil. Now it comes, and without any reproachful meaning, to signify the subject of any composition or discourse; but then it seems to have been a stigma, and is so resented in these verses. Had they but done aright by God's word, they would have found it no burden. Their only burden has come upon them because they have perverted the true words of God, and hearkened to the words of false prophets. This is the whole secret and explanation of their burden, and for scornfully casting such a byword on God's message, His displeasure is laid upon them.

JEREMIAH XXIV.—This prophecy would seem to have been delivered posterior to the date of the succeeding one, and therefore is not here in its right chronological place —for it was uttered after the captivity of Jeconiah, and probably at the commencement of Zedekiah's reign. It is prophecy through the medium of an allegorical representation. There are some memorable and very savoury expressions in this chapter.—Set Thine eyes upon me, O God, for good—for special good this day at the opening of the West Port Church. And O give the people there a heart to know Thee. May they turn unto Thee with their whole heart. May they be unto Thee Thy people, and be Thou unto them their God. May they know that Thou art Jehovah, and learn to glorify God as God .... What precious phraseology for prayer is to be found, and that with all richness, in Scripture. And, O do Thou avert from our land the judgments which are at Thy bidding, and wherewith Thou art now visiting and exercising so many of our countrymen. Famine is busy with its ravages; and pestilence may follow in its train. Help us, O God.

JEREMIAH XXV. 1-14.—The fourth year of Jehoiakim is the three and twentieth year from the thirteenth of Josiah, at which time Jeremiah began his office as a prophet. (ch. i. 2.) It was the three and twentieth year of his high vocation—so that living as he did till after the destruction of Jerusalem, he must have held the office for a long period.... "Rising early"—giving timely notice, and in the assiduous discharge of his commission from the Lord who sent the warning in good season, and gave them long enough space and large enough opportunity for repentance. The invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, and the utter ruin both of the Jewish and neighbouring nations, are very clearly predicted; but after this also the length of the captivity, the seventy years of which Daniel makes mention, and then the destruction that would come in turn on their proud invaders.... The "sound of the millstones" was that which first met the ears of the people, the grinding being their earliest morning work. The "lighting of the candles" was that which first ushered in the evening. The cessation of these marked a land that had been desolated of its families. For one nation to serve itself of another is to exact and make use of the service of that other. The subduers became in turn the subdued.... It is interesting to note how early the prophecies of Jeremiah were committed to writing. A book had been already formed of them, or was in process of forming.

15-26.—Jeremiah now represents himself as commissioned to carry the cup of vengeance, the phials of God's wrath, round among the nations; and he recalls himself from Babylon against which he had just been prophesying, and recommences with Jerusalem. It is very likely from the clause in verse 18, "as at this day"—that there was

a compilation of the prophecies made after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the compiler, Baruch it might be, interposed this note of the prophecy having now reached its fulfilment.... Verse 20, "the mingled people" were probably the foreign settlers in Egypt—such perhaps as the mixed multitude of Exod. xii. 38, akin to those of Judah in Neh. xiii. 3; see Ezek. xxx. 5.... An island, according to Scripture, may be a country having the sea on one side. The isles of verse 22 may be not the Archipelago only, but the coasts of continental Europe. Sheshach is Babylon. (ch. li. 41.) Babylon after being the instrument of all the previous destructions here recorded was itself to be destroyed.

27-38.—There was no escape from these denounced calamities which were surely to overtake the nations—"The Lord hath said it, and shall He not do it?"... It is a notable expression in verse 31, the "controversy that the Lord hath with the nations"—a term which we can transfer to the question between God and the species at large.—Give me no rest, O Lord, till this controversy be made up by Him who mediates between God and man.... The calamity was to be progressive—passing from nation to nation along the track of the invader's footsteps. The slain shall cover all the land—that is, from one end of every subdued country to the other of it.... There is a special address to the pastors with whom Jeremiah holds such frequent reckoning throughout his prophecy; and also with the principal of the flock, with the rulers and chief men of Judea.... The "fall like a pleasant vessel" denotes the fracture which will take place, as when a beauteous yet brittle vessel falls upon the ground. The Lord will spoil their pasture—the whole of that land

whence they drew their tithes and offerings and revenues. —O God, withdraw the judgment wherewith Thou art now desolating our land.

JEREMIAH XXVI. 1-15.—The prophecy which Jeremiah is here directed to give in the court of the temple has for its special object the destruction of that sacred place, with the assurance that its sacredness would prove no exemption for it; but that, just as Shiloh—at one time the abode of the Ark, was now desolate—and probably by invading armies, so the same doom awaited Jerusalem. Still it was a conditional prophecy, and delivered for the express object of warning, and, it may be, of recalling the people from their wickedness. And here the wonted reference is made to God rising up early—giving timely notice by His messengers of what was coming. The people, however, remained stout and resolute in their opposition—so that all which was called forth by this remonstrance was a re-action of personal hostility against the prophet himself—a conspiracy in which the people joined, both the priests and the prophets of Israel. But there was still another party whose consent had to be gained before he should be put to death. Beside the ecclesiastical men, who it seems had influenced the people against him, there behoved to be an appeal to the civil rulers—the princes. The "odium ecclesiasticum" is often more rancorous and intent than the "odium civile," as has been abundantly proved by many historical instances of the same.

16-24.—And accordingly these princes did interpose in favour of Jeremiah, whose protestations of his Divine commission—delivered we doubt not with all earnestness and sincerity, seem to have impressed them. It is remarkable

that whereas all the people, in verse 8, sided with the priests, they, in verse 16, are said to side with the princes, and against the priests and prophets. They had been gained over, while the ecclesiastics seem resolved to die hard, though now alone.... The allusion to Micah is bibliographically in my estimation of the greatest value. (See Micah iii. 12.) But there were other prophets who have left no writings behind them, as Urijah, who did not fare so well as Micah. And mark the different consequences: Hezekiah had a long and prosperous reign; Jehoiakim's was a most ruinous one. One might wonder that the transaction here recorded being under him, he did not cut off Jeremiah also. This seems to be accounted for in the last verse, by the friendly and favourable influence of a grandee—Ahikam the son of Shaphan.

JEREMIAH XXVII. 1-11.—By some Jehoiakim in verse 1 is considered a mistake for Zedekiah. (See verses 3 and 12.)... The prophecy to which Jeremiah is directed is one by symbol. What a fine example of the manner in which a pure theism was spread abroad from Judea among the countries around it—that is, by messages from a true prophet through the ambassadors of these countries to their respective monarchs. The creative power and supremacy which are ascribed by natural theology to the one God, form the argument of his message to parties who stood in need of the most elementary lessons on the subject. They were ignorant of the first principles of the true religion. This pre-intimation would not be without its efficacy when it came to be fulfilled. Both their own subjugation to Nebuchadnezzar and his subjugation to the kings who should serve themselves of him, are here

clearly foretold; and the manifest accomplishment would either convince or condemn those before whose eyes it was placed. It would seem that these neighbouring countries had also their enchanters and diviners, who prophesied falsely.... The punishment of famine comes home to our own land at the present time.—My God, lighten and avert it.

12-22.—After having made the round of the adjacent kings, the message was given to Zedekiah also. The intrepid old prophet here uses great plainness of speech in the ears of his sovereign—repeating to him the solemn warnings which he had already given to the priests and to the people. He delivers his usual protestation against the false prophets, who, probably in the interest and with the countenance of Zedekiah, persuaded the people to hold out against the Babylonish invasion. The certainty of the fact that they would disobey, does not restrain, but rather stimulates all the more the urgencies of the prophet—a mystery this, which attaches to all preaching, but which will be afterwards cleared up.... It is remarkable, though by no means singular, that Jeremiah should propose as a test of comparison between him and the false prophets, a particular event that was to fall out, not before the great and fatal consummation, but was to form a constituent of it. Our Saviour Himself proposes signs of this kind; and they are not without their use, as demonstrations of the hand of God that might impress observers—whether to the strengthening of their faith if it had a previous being within them, or to convince those who till then were incredulous. The taking away of the vessels of the temple may have had the effect at that time which some of our Saviour's predictions had on His disciples—when

He told these things before they came to pass, that when they did come to pass they might believe.

March, 1847.

JEREMIAH XXVIII.—We have here a direct collision between Jeremiah and the false prophet Hananiah. Jeremiah does not flinch from his commission, and quotes the old prophets, in that like them he predicted great national calamities. If in opposition to these a prophet had foretold of peace, and it so came to pass, then should it have been known that he and not they was the genuine messenger of God. Notwithstanding this challenge, Hananiah persisted in affirming, that within two years Nebuchadnezzar's dominion over the nations should cease. But a message from God reassured His own true prophet—telling Jeremiah that the yokes which Hananiah had pronounced upon as if they were to be broken easily like wood, God Himself would strengthen into yokes of iron. The dominion of Nebuchadnezzar is confirmed; and it is added as before, that it should extend to the beasts of the field also. And the death also was denounced on Hananiah, which came to pass.

JEREMIAH XXIX. 1-10.—Jeremiah was directed to hold converse not with the people of Judea alone, but with those who had been carried away captive to Babylon in the preceding reign. The letter he sent to them was carried by the ambassador whom Zedekiah sent to Nebuchadnezzar. His message to them harmonized with all that he had been telling to the people of the land as to the length of the captivity. That is a fine direction which he gives to the people who had been carried away,

even that they should seek the peace of the city in which they dwelt, and pray to the Lord for it; for that their peace was bound up with its peace. How strongly does this inculcate the duty of loyalty and subjection, and all the public virtues of good citizens and good subjects. What a distinct warning against false prophets! and what a precise, unambiguous declaration of God's purposes in regard to their coming futurity! The period of their stay in Babylon was numerically stated and made known to be of such duration as might well resolve them to live in it as their place of settlement.

11-20.—God unfolds His designs of mercy and restoration. His thoughts were of peace and not of evil, so as to make their latter end an object of hope.—My God, give me to search for Thee with all my heart, that I may find Thee. Many seek, but will not succeed. Let me, therefore, strive with all earnestness. Be Thou found of me, O God, even as Thou wert of Israel when Thou didst recall them from captivity. Recall me, O God, from the captivity of sin and death.... But many of these captives were deluded into a false confidence in pretended prophets and diviners among themselves: and those of that class would say that we shall listen to them, and not to him who sends us messages from a distance. In opposition therefore to these, he lets them understand that whereas they had been deluded into the hope of a speedy return to their own countrymen in Judea, so far from this being accomplished, these countrymen should themselves be dispersed and carried into captivity, and become the contempt and astonishment of many nations—and this because they had not hearkened to God's true prophets, but had given all their confidence to impostors and deceivers—a good preparation

in the way of warning, for securing the attention of the captives, with whom he was now corresponding, to the subject-matter wherewith he had been charged. And so he calls upon them to give their attention, and hear the words of the Lord.

21-32.—He names the prophets who were deceiving the captives in Babylon, and a terrible doom it is which he pronounces on them. We can imagine how they should be taken up as political offenders, and have the cruel infliction of their very terrible death laid upon them. It seems that beside being impostors they were men of very immoral lives. And then he names another delinquent, who took upon him to write to Jerusalem, and to remonstrate with the people there, for letting Jeremiah, whom he denounced as a false prophet, alone. In the mutual correspondence which took place by letters between the two cities, Shemaiah let those in Jerusalem know what Jeremiah had written to Babylon. Zephaniah was second priest when Jerusalem was taken, (ch. lii. 24,) and may have succeeded to Jehoiada, perhaps deposed from his office, so as to intimate that Shemaiah might incur the same by his negligence. In return for this, Jeremiah delivers a prophetic malediction on the writer—even that he himself should be cut off, and if not childless at the time, that his children also should be cut off, so as not to see the good which God had in reserve for His people.

JEREMIAH XXX. 1-11.—Now comes a most remarkable prophecy, not adequately fulfilled by the restoration of Judah from Babylon, and pointing therefore to a future and more general restoration, comprehensive both of Judah and Israel—a prophecy therefore which it is well to have

been recorded in a book, that we on whom the latter ends of the world have come, may be taught what the things are to which we should look forward. The day of trouble that is associated with this great consummation, seems to be the period when there shall be a shaking among the nations, prefigured by the overthrow of Nebuchadnezzar's image, at the time when the ten kingdoms shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour. The Jews will somehow be implicated in the universal commotion, as if to be assailed by the potentates of this world—an event not obscurely intimated in other places of Scripture. But they shall be saved out of it; and the happiness of the millennium shall at length be ushered in, as if the fruit of a laborious and sore travail. Their return to the secure possession of their own land, and under David their king, as well as the full end of all the nations, among whom they had been scattered, are events that still lie in the womb of futurity.

12-24.—The bruise of Israel was incurable by man, but all things are possible to God. They had been delivered up by Him to the power of their enemies, and from whom none but Himself could rescue them. And He will at length interpose and vindicate before the whole earth, His own special relationship with the people whom He had chosen. They should be healed of their wounds, and recalled from the outcast places among which they had been scattered. The goodly temple should be reared on its old foundations, which was typically fulfilled in the first restoration, and will be substantially fulfilled in the second, when the true religion is set up in Jerusalem as the ecclesiastical capital of the world. Among other blessings which are promised, it is said that their nobles shall be of

themselves, or they shall have rulers from among their own people. May not the governor be Jesus Christ, a Jew according to the flesh, but who engaged His heart to approach for the people whom He redeemed as their surety and intercessor before God? It is through Him that we become God's people, and that he becomes our God. But this blessed consummation is not unaccompanied with mighty calamities and commotions on the earth; and well, may we repeat, is all this written in a book, that we of the latter days might consider it.

JEREMIAH XXXI. 1-11.—The prophecy of the last chapter continues, and with a heightening evidence. It is the time of the final restoration which I believe is here referred to. The grace which Israel is to find in the wilderness, is that by which they are recalled from the places of their dispersion, and conducted to their ultimate settlement in their own land. Israel may here be saying through the prophet, that the love of God to her in old times was again to be manifested. Their prosperity after their restoration is illustrated by a variety of images, and among others that they should eat of the produce of their own industry, with perfect security and freedom, and under no such restraint as was laid upon them by the distinction between the common and the clean. The return in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, forms no adequate counterpart to the foretellings of this magnificent chapter. They shall yet come from a more wide-spread and general captivity, and come with weeping too—because they will then look unto Him whom they have pierced, and weep in bitterness as for a first-born.

12-20.—A number of very precious notabilia in this

passage.—Make my soul, O God, as a well-watered garden O when shall this general conflux to Jerusalem take place! I like the conception of men flowing together to the goodness of God. O satisfy me with Thy goodness. Give unction and all the richness of gospel wisdom and comfort to the priests, that these may flow over from them to the people. The saying by Jeremiah of the voice heard in Ramah, is quoted in the Gospels; but such mourning and persecution as are there spoken of, will be exchanged in better times for the security and the comfort of bright and quiet dwelling-places. Who can doubt that the children of Israel will come again to their own border?... The expression of a "bullock unaccustomed to the yoke" is quite a notabile; and so is the prayer in which I fervently join —of "turn me and I shall be turned." Let me turn, without waiting for a certain specific degree of sensibility and sorrow for sin—for these are the fruits of repentance, and not necessarily its first impulses.—My God, take me into the same endearing relation with Thyself as Thou didst Ephraim. O have mercy on me and sanctify me wholly.

21-30.—The "way-marks," necessary for travellers.... Blayney makes the woman of verse 22 to signify a weak person or party, who shall prevail over the stronger party. I scarcely think that such an interpretation comports with the new or strange thing which God was to create on the earth. It would seem as if the Israelites were slow to return from Babylon, and many were so, and it is this which calls forth the remonstrance that is here addressed to them. Perhaps there may be the same reluctance and the same suasion brought to bear upon it in our latter days. And what a delightful perspective is here opened up to us....Verse 26 conveys the idea of the

prophet having been in vision. But what is said to him awake, is predictive of a more general restoration than that from Babylon. Israel and Judah have yet to be incited to such a restoration. They will at length be established in peace and plenty in their own land. And as they had long suffered for the sins of their ancestors—this should henceforward cease, and every man suffer only for his own sins.

31-40.—Surely the days are yet to come when this covenant shall be entered upon. It is not yet that all men know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. Hasten this universal shower of grace, O Thou most High. ...What a notable passage is this, and how mightily to be prayed over. Put Thy law, O God, into my inward parts —write it in my heart; and may I at once be one of Thy regenerated and reconciled children. And what an assurance we here have, for the restoration and perpetuity of Israel as a nation. Here we have one of those fine instances, in which the constancy of nature is appealed to, as a guarantee for the faithfulness of God's word. The nation of Israel, and as a nation, will last as long as the present economy. And it is as impossible for God to cast them off, as for man to explore all the amplitudes and profundities of the universe. These noble declarations in regard to the antitypical are followed by a prophecy respecting the typical, and which had its literal fulfilment. —An illustrious chapter.

JEREMIAH XXXII. 1-15.—This prophecy is among the later ones of Jeremiah, and delivered far onward in the reign of Zedekiah, at the time when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Jeremiah suffered imprisonment a'

the hands of Zedekiah, because of his faithfulness as a messenger from God. What Jeremiah says in the sixth verse and forward, is not in answer to Zedekiah's question, but a narrative by Jeremiah of a forewarning he had received from God, as to the visit that was to be paid to him by Hanameel, and then of the actual visit. The transaction here described was itself intended as a prophecy. It took place in prison—that is the purchase of the land before witnesses in the court of the prison. The small price might well be accounted for, even though there was a good extent of land, by the distance of the possession—it being now in possession of the besiegers, and not to be entered on till seventy years, the period of the captivity. If the deed of purchase was put up in a roll—then before it was fully rolled up, it may have been sealed, so as to leave the upper part shut up till litigation or some other cause might render it necessary to examine its contents. The lower part may have been left open.

16-25.—In this prayer of Jeremiah is finely blended he natural with what may be called the national religion; or in other words, where God is described in His attributes, and with relation to His works; and also with relation to His own peculiar people; and where He is spoken of both in reference to the things which He has made, and to that special family whom He peculiarly governed. The infinite power, the benevolence, the judicial equity, the greatness, the wisdom, the omniscience of God, are all made mention of before that we are told of Him as the God of Israel, and of His miraculous as well as merciful dealings with this selected portion of mankind—though these were not restricted to the Hebrews alone, but His manifestations were also amongst other men. But notwithstanding

His great goodness to the children of Israel, they had not obeyed Him—of which confession is made in this prayer, and also recognition of the evil that had come upon them as due to this cause. The force of arms, along with the famine and pestilence, made them an easy prey to the Chaldeans. This prayer was uttered at the time of their close investment—for he could speak of the mounts which had come unto the city to take it.

26-35.—In reply to this prayer God lays claim to omnipotence—"Is there anything too hard for me?"... Nebuchadrezzar, *so* often called in this Book, from the similarity, I should think, of the Hebrew letters *r* and *n*, is properly Nebuchadnezzar.... There is here a very explicit indication of God's judgment in the destruction of Jerusalem. The "rising up early," which God ascribes to the prophets, He also ascribes to Himself: it may signify His sending them prophets in good time—His giving them timeous warning of the evil and danger of their doings—just as the master of a house rises early, and assigns their respective employments to the various officers of his household. It is a frequent and characteristic expression with Jeremiah, and gives edge to the remonstrances which he lifted up in the hearing of the people. The worship of Baal is spoken of as their chief abomination—a great step in advance beyond the sin of Jeroboam wherewith he caused Israel to sin. And yet after all, in the prospect of a restoration, Jeremiah was told to buy a field for money, and to take witnesses.

36-44.—Yet in judgment does the Lord remember mercy. He looks beyond the temporary evil which He is to inflict, to the stable and everlasting good which is in reserve for His people. Their light and temporary

affliction will work out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Yet who can doubt that the first restoration, as pre-signified by Jeremiah's purchase of land, was but a typical one? The great blessings here foretold are, in their full and adequate accomplishment, yet to come. And what precious notabilia we have in the setting of them forth.—My God, put Thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from Thee; and rejoice over me to do me good. Give me a part and an interest in Thine everlasting covenant, so that when the Son of man cometh, I may be counted worthy to stand before Him.... The whole of Israel are promised to have one heart, and one way, notwithstanding their long separation into two great branches, and the strong antipathy of these against each other. But this heart needs to be given, and has certainly not yet been given, to the effect of their fearing God for ever, and of God never turning away from them; nor to the effect of the Jews never departing from God—for they have made a grievous and general departure, from which they are yet to be recalled. I pray for that one heart and spirit which will lead me to have fellowship with all the brethren.

JEREMIAH XXXIII. 1-11.—The "maker" of it in verse 2, if translated the doer of it, makes the thing done more intelligible. God is the fulfiller of the prophecy here given—He who framed it, and will bring it to pass. It is an ulterior prophecy of far distant accomplishment—the prophecy of a great and enduring good to Israel, after the present calamities have passed away, when the kings of Judah were obstinately holding out and fighting against the Chaldeans, and bringing death and destruction upon

their own subjects in consequence. What exceeding great and precious promises are these; but on the Jewish nation they are obviously not yet realized. Reveal to me, O God, the abundance of peace and truth.—What a blessed union of two elements, which but for Christ our peace-offering, would have been irreconcileably and for ever at war! "Acquaint thyself with Thy Maker, and be at peace." Verse 6—a notabile.—Cleanse me and pardon me, O God. Do Thou, the very God of peace, sanctify me wholly. They are the nations who will tremble when God causes to return the captivity of the land.... Mark the close accordance between verse 11 and Ezra iii. 11. There can be no doubt of a close accordancy between the prophet and the historian here—yet while we admit that Jeremiah had the literal fulfilment now past in his eye, this does not preclude the antitypical, the real and only adequate fulfilment, which is yet to come.

12-26.—For who can say that the great things spoken of in this passage have yet obtained their verification? Does David yet execute righteousness and judgment in the land? or has his house been there established in unchangeable or everlasting dynasty? or can Jerusalem yet, or ever since the first captivity, be rightly denominated—"The Lord our Righteousness?"—What a precious notabile is verse 16.... Though in verse 18 the images are taken from the ritual of Moses, yet may they signify the due observance of a more spiritual worship. And an appeal is again made to the constancy of nature, not more infrangible than are the promises of God. What a blessed counteractive to the usual philosophical habit, did we make the invariableness of those sequences which obtain in the world of experience to aliment and sustain our faith in

the sureness of every declaration which occurs in the Word of the living God. It seems the more obvious sense of verse 24 that the two families of Israel and Judah are here spoken of. Blayney thinks, from verse 26, that they are the two families of Jacob and David—though some understand it of the royal and sacerdotal families.—Let me cherish the assured hope of great things yet to be done for these families—as assured as my confidence in the successions of day and night, or the regularity of those movements which take place in the firmament of heaven.

JEREMIAH XXXIV. 1-11.—It is supposed that the prophecy of verses 2-5 were delivered at the time that Nebuchadnezzar's army was engaged with the sieges of Jerusalem and the other cities of Judea, previous to the diversion which took place at the approach of the army from Egypt, when Nebuchadnezzar had to quit Jerusalem for a season. He tells Zedekiah what the final issue of the invasion should be—his own peaceful end, but as a captive in Babylon, whose king his own eyes should behold; but it is not said here that by the order of Nebuchadnezzar his eyes were to be taken out—a most barbarous infliction, and still practised in the East. At this time there was a reformation agreed to, and actually entered upon, that all should grant liberty to their Hebrew servants whom they had held as slaves—from which, however, they turned back, it is supposed in consequence of the respite they obtained by the temporary retreat of the invaders when their alarm had subsided.

12-22.—But God, who is the friend of the oppressed, interposed with another message to Jeremiah, expressive of the sense that He had of this unfaithfulness to the

covenant on which they had entered. And the vengeance He denounces upon them is—that as they had made free with their brethren in again laying upon them the yoke of slavery, so He would give a commission to the ministers of His wrath—to the sword, and the pestilence, and the famine, that they should make free with these treacherous and tyrannical men, and wreak in full measure their severities upon them.... To "pass between the parts of a divided calf" was one method of ratifying a covenant, and signified a sort of imprecation upon themselves, to be cut in two in like manner, should they violate the agreement which they had made. God would no longer bear with men who had been guilty both of perfidy and of cruel oppression. Their dead bodies should be dissevered into morsels for the beasts and the fowls—and this upon the return of those armies whose temporary retreat had emboldened them to so gross a delinquency.

JEREMIAH XXXV.—The Rechabites were a family of the Kenites, (1 Chron. ii. 55,) who were the descendants of Jethro or Hobab. (Num. x. 29; see Judges i. 16.) They formed a Temperance Society, and such societies at present take their name. But they were members by descent, not by their own individual choice—the observances being laid upon them by a distant ancestor—Jonadab, said to be the son of Rechab. This is the Jonadab of whom it is written in 2 Kings x. 15-28, that Jehu took him up into his chariot, and carried him along to the slaughter of the priests of Baal. They had no settled habitation in houses, but dwelt in tents, leading a nomadic life. They were forced, however, to take refuge in Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonish invasion; and it

was then that Jeremiah made the experiment, the issue of which was so much to their honour. The contrast between their fidelity to the injunctions of their earthly father, with the disobedience of the Jews to their heavenly Father, carried in it a lesson of rebuke which Jeremiah urges in this chapter upon his countrymen. The promise made to the Rechabites may signify not only that the family of Jonadab should never be extinct, but that in every generation there should be among them some worshippers of the true God.—Let me record my sense of the value of temperance, and my friendliness to temperance societies.

JEREMIAH XXXVI. 1-10.—This book as being a record of all the prophecies which Jeremiah had uttered since the days of Josiah, may have been the embryo or first draft of the book now before us, and forming an integral part of our Scriptures. It is very interesting to note the origin and first formation of our canonical Scriptures, and the transitions made from spoken to written revelations. It would seem as if this commission were given to Baruch when Jeremiah was in confinement. It was certainly a very impressive method of dealing with the people—giving them another chance, if we may so speak, of repenting and being forgiven, while the "may be" of verse 7 shows that the event was spoken of as an uncertainty by the prophet—though it could be no uncertainty to Him who knoweth all things from the beginning. Yet even He multiplies His warnings, to reclaim or condemn the more those whom He addresses.

11-20.—Jeremiah seems not to have compiled the book that Baruch wrote, from previous writings, but to have dictated the words anew, which Baruch received at his

mouth, and wrote down after him. This, we should believe, was done not by natural memory alone, but with the aid of that Spirit who brings all things to remembrance—or by inspiration in one of its particular forms. (See John xiv. 26.) Blayney looks upon the "ink" of verse 18 as a mistranslation, and that it should be rendered "after him," implying the exact conformity between Baruch's writing and Jeremiah's words. The reading told upon the fears and consciences of the nobles, and they were thrown into consternation by it. They were friendly, it would appear, to the prophet—but afraid of the king; and, anxious for the life both of Jeremiah and his amanuensis, bade them go hide themselves. The word did not return void, and we have many instances both in Scriptural and succeeding history of grandees and officers of the royal household having given in to the truth, when the pride and policy of their superiors were all against them.

21-32.—But there were other grandees, and more especially the king himself, who had no such scruples, and more of hardihood. Jehudi does not seem to have read the whole of this roll, but only three or four leaves, or rather sections of it; and when he did burn it, it must have been by an order from the king, whose doing, as in verses 24-29, it properly was. It was truly a daring act, and called forth the intercessions of so many of his officers to prevent it; but it was followed by a commensurate penalty—for while God protected His own servants, hiding them from the king who sought to destroy them, He sent forth on the king himself a fresh denunciation—not only reiterating what had often been told of the entire overthrow of the state by the king of Babylon, but personally signalizing Jehoiakim himself as the object of

His special vengeance. His son Jehoiachin was dethroned when a child; and Zedekiah, though called his brother, was but his uncle, and therefore not the son of Jehoiakim —so that speedily he had no descendants to sit upon his throne. Besides this his body was exposed to indignities, in contradistinction to Zedekiah, who was buried with royal honours. The roll that had been burnt was not only replaced, but expanded by Jeremiah, probably not very much unlike the present book, and there are few pieces in Scripture which afford such an insight into their literary origin.

JEREMIAH XXXVII. 1-10.—Coniah is the same with Jehoiachin. Zedekiah with all his wickedness had a respect for the prophet—a phenomenon not at all unusual, and a certain sense of his authority and truth as a minister of God. His reply to Zedekiah's message was fitted to dissipate the false security into which he may have been led by the retreat of the Babylonish army for a time from Jerusalem. It is an earnest warning to the Jewish monarch against the deceitful expectation of his safety—for that Nebuchadnezzar would again return—nothing baffled by the army from Egypt whom he would soon be rid of, and come back upon Jerusalem, and burn it with fire. So fixed was this purpose and predetermination on the part of God, that no human contingency would overthrow it—for even though the Chaldeans should be defeated with great slaughter, would they again rise in strength given them from on high to execute His pleasure.

11-21.—When the Chaldeans retreated for a time Jeremiah made the attempt to escape from Jerusalem—not foreseeing, though a prophet, what the consequences would

be. Prophets had only special revelations for special objects; and though God had His designs in the imprisonment of Jeremiah, yet was the fact of his imprisonment not made known to him beforehand. The princes had probably suspected his design to fall off to the Chaldeans, aware that he always prophesied in their favour. It was not till after many days, probably after the return of the Chaldeans from their engagement with the Egyptians, that Zedekiah sent for him, when he delivered his commission without fear, and remonstrated on the treatment that he had gotten from his nobles. And from the question of verse 19, it would appear that the Chaldeans were again upon them. The dungeon must have been in the house of Jonathan the scribe—perhaps its sunk story—whereas the court of the prison was in the king's house. (ch. xxxii. 2.) Zedekiah's disposition to befriend Jeremiah is manifest on this and other occasions.

JEREMIAH XXXVIII. 1-13.—We can easily enter into the feelings and apprehensions of those who feared lest this prophecy of Jeremiah should lead to a general desertion of Jerusalem, by its inhabitants and defenders. In their state of infatuation and incredulity such a dread of the consequences was quite natural. And Zedekiah, notwithstanding his own personal disposition in favour of Jeremiah, felt himself to be a limited monarch, and was obliged to yield. The dungeon in which he was now placed differed from that of ch. xxxvii. 20; but both probably resembled each other in this respect:—The houses of the great, as of Jonathan and Malchiah, were quadrangles surrounding an open space, in which dungeons might have been sunk in the form of wells with side-chambers at the bottom, for

the separate prisoners. Hence the mire, if left open at top for light and air. But God raised up friends for Jeremiah even in this his great extremity. There were human hearts which felt for him; and one rejoices in the sympathy of this stranger, this Ethiopian, Ebed-melech. And he stirred up the same feeling in the bosom of the monarch, who could no longer resist the compassionate impulse, though he braved the displeasure of his princes by giving way to it. He was accordingly brought out of the dungeon, and replaced where he was formerly, in the court of the prison, where he would have some sort of out-house covering for his accommodation.

14-28.—Zedekiah, under strong apprehensions of Jeremiah being the person who could tell him the truth, sent for him; and the prophet proposed to him an alternative, which like David's consultation respecting Keilah, affords another example of what the schoolmen term the "Scientia Media." It was a prediction that hinged upon conditions—a conditional prophecy. He tells the king that in place of the mockery which he was groundlessly afraid of should he go over to the Chaldeans, if he did not go there awaited him the upbraidings of those in his own household. Zedekiah obeyed not the warning, yet was true to his own promise that he would save Jeremiah's life. It proves his subjection to the grandees around him, that he laid on Jeremiah the concealment from them of the interview he had had with himself, and concealment, too, at the expense of a falsehood to which the prophet gave in. It seems obvious that Zedekiah was a weak and vacillating prince; but alike obvious that the prophet's morality was not so perfect or pure as it might have been in a more advanced stage of the Divine Economy.

JEREMIAH XXXIX.—In this narration of the destruction of Jerusalem, we have additions to the two former in Kings and Chronicles. These barbarous names impress more forcibly the horrors of such an occasion. What cruelty in war!—The slaying of Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, previous to the putting out of his own eyes, was a sad piece of barbarity. But mixed with all this ferocity in the conqueror, was there a kindly, perhaps a grateful, or even a religious feeling in his heart towards Jeremiah, of whom he might have heard from the report of those Jews who fell off to the Chaldeans. The home to which he should be carried was perhaps Anathoth. Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument of God's providential care for His own prophet. God overruled all for the good of His own. In virtue of that perfect command which He has over the wills and the ways of all men, did He avert the hostility of the foe from Ebed-melech, as from Jeremiah, extending His protection to them both.

April, 1847.

JEREMIAH XL.—The history is carried on in a few historical chapters, inserted in this book of the prophecy of Jeremiah. Jeremiah after being rescued from prison, must have mingled with the people, and been bound in chains along with them, after which Nebuzar-adan got hold of him, and released him a second time. The captain of the guard discovers his knowledge of the relation in which the Jews stood to their God; and there is no saying how great the influence may have been of the state and history of the chosen people on the theology of their neighbours. Jeremiah had his choice of going and settling where he liked, and when his preference was made for his own land

rather than Babylon, he was recommended to put himself under the protection of the governor. Upon this arrangement being made, the straggling military of the provinces put themselves under his protection also. It was felt an eligible thing even by Jews at a distance.... Gedaliah was a Jew who had the confidence of the Chaldeans, and was in their interest—perhaps one of those who had come over to them from Jerusalem before it was taken. We have a trait of his father in ch. xxvi. 24. But there was a hostile feeling against this Jewish remnant in the mind of the king of the Ammonites, that afterwards led to disastrous consequences.

JEREMIAH XLI.—Poor Gedaliah suffered for his confidence in Ishmael, the emissary of the king of the Ammonites, and so fell by the hands of this assassin. He was a deceitful as well as a bloody man; and after having slain Gedaliah and his companions, it would seem as if his appetite for human life had been whetted by indulgence. Such references as the one we have here, made to what had been done by king Asa, serve to bind these Scriptural narratives into a continuous history.... The king's daughters it would seem had been spared from the general captivity of the people to Babylon, but were now in danger of a worse captivity than it. But Johanan who had so faithfully warned Gedaliah of his danger, went in pursuit of him; and though Ishmael effected his escape, yet did Johanan rescue all whom he had taken. They felt afraid however of the Chaldeans, who might so far misunderstand the part which they had in these proceedings, that they might deal with them as rebels and enemies.

JEREMIAH XLII. 1-7.—But Johanan—though he acted a righteous part in the matter of Gedaliah, yet was his heart not right or steadfast with God. There was something like the double-mindedness of Balaam in his character. He would have had a divine sanction for the step to which his heart was secretly inclined. To Egypt he and the people had a desire to go, from the fears they had of Babylon; and for aught that appears, from a preference for Egypt as their future residence, because of attractions not here explained. It is not a little remarkable that with the consciousness they had of their own wishes, if not indeed resolutions, they should have pledged themselves so strongly to Jeremiah, that they would follow the counsel which he should ask and the Lord should give, regarding their future movements. Perhaps they indulged the hope of conciliating the prophet to their own views, or perhaps were unaware of the strength of their own inclinations.

8-22.—Jeremiah's deliverance was a very distinct one, and ought to have been authoritative on men who had so pledged themselves to obey. The expression of God repenting, though much commented on with the view of explaining it away, is nevertheless of frequent occurrence in the Bible. There was a great want of faith, in their giving way as they did to their groundless fear of the king of Babylon. Blayney instead of making Jeremiah say in verse 12, "God will cause you to return," renders it "God will settle you in your own land"—which is more in harmony with their actual situation, as being now in Judea. It would seem from verse 14, that Egypt had positive recommendation of its own, besides its being a place of escape from the Chaldeans. There is here,

however, a very peremptory announcement of the evil consequences that would ensue upon their taking the step of going down to Egypt; and along with this an exposure by Jeremiah of their hypocrisy, in having consulted him upon the subject, and professing that they would act on the response which he would give them from the Lord. It is marvellous that they should have persisted in their infatuation in the face of that evidence which Jeremiah gave of his supernatural discernment, when he told them of the things which were in their heart—but not more marvellous than many similar exhibitions of the same perversity in the midst of miracles.

JEREMIAH XLIII.—The warnings of Jeremiah proved ineffectual. The people to whom they were addressed belied their promises and professions. They charged the prophet with falsely pretending a message from God, when he was acting only upon the instigation of Baruch. And so they walked in the counsel of their hearts, and would none of the reproof or instruction of this true prophet, whom yet themselves had consulted. The king's poor daughters are specified among those whom they dragged along with them to Egypt; and they also forced both Jeremiah and Baruch to be of their company. This flagrant act of disobedience called forth another interposition from above. Jeremiah was commissioned to prophesy anew unto these rebels. That Nebuchadnezzar from whom they fled would have let them alone, had they remained in Judea; but their flight led him to pursue, and he overtook them in the place to which they had repaired for security.—The evil which they tried to shun they brought upon themselves.

JEREMIAH XLIV. 1-10.—But the denunciations of the last chapter were lost upon these perverse and stiffnecked people, the genuine descendants of their alike rebellious fathers before them. It is strange that the recent destruction of Jerusalem—so manifestly a judgment from the God of Heaven, did not tell upon them. In defiance of all their own experience of its evils, and the solemn voice of the prophet, did they lapse into the idolatries of the land, whither they had come. The example of all former chastisements seems to have been quite lost upon them.—My God, let not Thine earnest dissuasive from the abominable thing which Thou hatest be lost upon me. Save me from the fascinations of a most seductive idolatry to which I have so often given way. Send Thy Holy Spirit to strengthen me with strength in my soul. Enable me to turn my sight and eyes from viewing vanity. Thou knowest my infirmities and besetting sins. Help me, help me, O God.... Blayney makes the wickedness of *their wives* in verse 9, to be that of Judah's princes.

11-19.—They were those Jews who had set their faces to go to Egypt (verse 12) who were to fall in that land—for it is obvious from verse 28, that some were to escape the coming destruction which was to take place there, such perhaps as had been previously settled there, or such as had been dragged to it, like Jeremiah and Baruch, against their will. The famine might well have been the effect of a wasteful invasion; and the conjunction again of pestilence with famine is the effect of a general law of which now we have sad experience in Ireland, and it is to be feared in our own Highlands. None, however desirous, were to return to Judea, but a very few, and these few such as had not rebelliously—and against the warning of

the prophet, set their faces to come down to Egypt. In the face, however, of all these fell denunciations, these stout-hearted people were bent upon dying hard—both the men who were conscious of their wives' idolatry, and the wives themselves, daring the prophet's menaces, and expressing their determination to act in their own way.... What is here rendered the queen of heaven, the Septuagint in ch. vii. 18, renders the army or host of heaven. The consent, whether tacit or expressed, of the husband, was necessary ere the vows of their wives could be of force and obligation, (Num. xxx.,) and it would seem as if for this reason the women in verse 19—here giving an account of themselves, alleged the presence and privacy of their husbands to the matters of which they were accused.

20-30.—It is strange that they should have argued their prosperity in Jerusalem when they worshipped there the queen of heaven. But Jeremiah meets this with the opposite refutation—that because of this and such like idolatrous worship, Jerusalem was destroyed. And the same unchangeable God they would find to be as intolerant of their idolatry in Judea as He had been in Egypt. And he accordingly denounces on all men and women alike, the evil that would certainly befall them. The men and their wives were held to be equal participators in the guilt—for (verse 19) the men consented to the transgression, which by the hands of their wives had been perpetrated. Among other evils, the last remainders of the true religion should be extinguished among those who remained in the land; nor would any remain long there, for a process of consumption should go on till a full end was made of them. Some would make good their escape to the land of Judea, though none of those (verse 14) who

had willingly gone with Johanan to Egypt, for the purpose of dwelling there. They who did remain would obtain full proof of the truth of the prophecy, in the judgment which it threatened coming to pass.

JEREMIAH XLV.—There is an obvious anachronism here in the order of the chapters, as there is in a good many other instances in this Book. This chapter should have been placed after ch. xxxvi. The fright into which Baruch was thrown may have been after his first writing of the roll of curses against Jerusalem, in ch. xxxvi. 4, or after his second writing in ch. xxxvi. 32. The object of Jeremiah's message to him from the Lord, is first to assure him of the certain fulfilment of the predictions which had just been written; and, secondly, to assure him of his own personal safety—an assurance made good, as we find that he survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and accompanied Jeremiah to Egypt. He was made an exception to the general ruin when evil was brought upon all flesh.—O let me here take the lesson of seeking not great things for myself. Is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Let me have Thy favour, O God, which is better than life, and then why do I care for the rest?... Verse 5 is a notabile.

JEREMIAH XLVI. 1-12.—Now follows a collection of prophecies, of which the first verse of this chapter might be regarded as the general title—prophecies against the Gentiles, and whereof the first is directed against Egypt. We cannot expect such an interpolation to join on, in respect of chronology, with the prophecies before and after, which relate to the Jews; and so this prophecy

regarding Egypt dates as far back as the reign of Jehoiakim. Pharaoh with his army progressed as far as the Euphrates, where he was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. The prophet here indulges in a spirited military description. There is something highly poetical in the personifications of Scripture—as here of Egypt. It is described by its floods and rivers, and so characteristically. The chronology of this prophecy accords well with that in the direct history. (2 Chron. xxxv. 20, &c.) Pharaoh-Necho must have been on his way to Euphrates when Josiah encountered him and was slain. The same Pharaoh was at Jerusalem a few months after when he made Jehoiakim king, in the fourth year of whose reign we find him at Euphrates, where he was defeated by the king of Babylon, who afterwards came to Jerusalem and took Jehoiakim captive.

13-28.—This is a second prophecy regarding Egypt, distinct from, and of considerably posterior fulfilment to, the former. In the one we have the defeat of the Egyptian invasion upon Babylon at the river Euphrates ; in the other the triumph of the Babylonish captivity upon Egypt —this latter being also the subject of Ezekiel's prophecy in ch. xxix.-xxxii. It would seem as if the prophecy was delivered by Jeremiah when in Egypt, verse 14.... Verse 16 is the cry of Egypt's allies on the eve of taking flight to their respective countries. They complain of Pharaoh as not having been punctual to his appointment. Egypt, thus deserted by her auxiliaries, is at the mercy of a power as preponderating, as Carmel and Tabor are conspicuous among the hills. And so Egypt herself is told to prepare for captivity. Her towns, though innumerable as the trees of a forest, shall be laid low, because the

host of invaders will be alike numerous. They who trust in Pharaoh and are threatened in verse 25, include among them more especially those disobedient Israelites who persisted in settling themselves there. The repeopling of Egypt is also foretold in Ezek. xxix. 13.... See a counterpart to verses 27 and 28 in ch. xxx. 10, 11. God did not make a full end of Israel then, nor will he yet make a full end of them. He corrects in measure, for their discipline and not for their destruction. Rest and prosperity yet await them.

JEREMIAH XLVII.—From Ezek. xxix. 17-21, we gather that the invasion of Egypt took place after the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar. The sea-coast seems to have been the way by which his armies went from the one place to the other; and there in all probability it was that they achieved the destruction of the Philistines. Opinions vary, however, in regard to this. Certain it is that the hostile force which smote the Philistines and overwhelmed Egypt came from the same quarter, the North; and from verse 4 it is very likely that Nebuchadnezzar addressed himself to the pillage and overthrow of the Philistines; they had been the allies of Tyre, and so took the part against him of his enemies. The invaders were met by the Philistines with the feebleness of despair, verse 3, and so they are represented as cutting themselves and inflicting baldness upon their heads, which were then acts of mourning.... The closing apostrophe to the sword is highly poetical—as doing the Lord's work at the Lord's bidding.

JEREMIAH XLVIII. 1-13.—Now follows a lengthened prophecy of Moab, whose towns are spoken of here in such

numbers as to make the geographical study of this chapter very interesting. Misgab, however, is understood not to be the name of a city, but an appellative, signifying a high fortress, and descriptive of Kiriathaim. There is something very impressive in the personification of a country, as if it were a living, and in this instance a suffering individual. It must have been a kingdom of great wealth. (verse 7.)... The work of slaughter and destruction is set forth in a variety of illustrative expressions. The invaders are spoken of, in verse 10, as commissioned to do the work of the Lord in the execution of their bloody charge, and warned against doing it deceitfully. They must go through with it, and not relentingly keep back their sword from blood.... Wine settled on its lees preserves its strength and flavour; and by this image, Moab is represented as having been all along at ease, and so its pride and prosperity are accounted for. Verse 11, because of this expression, is a notabile. To be settled on this world's lees is to make the world our sufficiency and rest; and it might be well to be shaken out of such a carnal habitude, though by the discipline of violent and adverse vicissitudes.

14-27.—In verse 15, which reads confusedly as it stands, so as not to distinguish the genders aright, the rendering should be—"A spoiler of Moab and of her cities is gone up, and his chosen young men are gone down to slay." Yet, from verse 16, it appears that either gender is applied to Moab. Several of the towns here named are extant to this day, and with nearly the same names. We must not be surprised at the number of them in so small a country; for on the east of Jordan there are ruins which fully accredit the informations of Scripture regarding this.

We must here advert to Robinson's "Biblical Researches" as being peculiarly rich and interesting in its authentications of the geography of this region. Bozrah is a town of special eminence; and the enumeration of names serves to enhance the impression of a wide-spread desolation.... To be made drunken, as applied here to Moab, is to be made drunken with the cup of vengeance; and she becomes the object of derision when sickened and laid prostrate under the weight of her calamities;—a just retribution, it is here said, for her exultation in the distresses of Israel that had made no encroachment upon her territory, and did not join the depredators against her. Must not this invasion, then, have taken place after the destruction of Jerusalem?

28-37.—The "dove making her nests by the sides of the pit's mouth," seeks for solitude and secrecy, or perhaps in places where it were dangerous to approach her. ...Moab must have been elated by the greatness and the long course of his prosperity; but he is not so effective as he is aspiring. He has not the strength to realize what his pride and anger would fain prompt him to. Jeremiah's *forte* is the pathetic, in which he indulges—even when contemplating the miseries and misfortunes of the enemies of Israel.... There is a remarkable coincidence between this passage and that in Isaiah xvi. For Kir-heres, see 2 Kings iii. 25; and for Jazer, Num. xxxii, 3. The famous vines of Jazer had spread themselves onward to the Dead Sea; but this famous country of vineyards and vintages was laid desolate. The image of a heifer three years old likens the grief of Moab for her children to the plaintive lowing of a cow deprived of its calf. Their idolatry also is adverted to as an object of

vengeance, and yet the vengeance when inflicted calls forth the compassion of the prophet.

38-47.—"A vessel wherein is no pleasure," is a significant expression. We read of vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy; but here we are rather led to regard them in their own characteristics, as vessels of deformity, or elegance and beauty. God loves what in itself is lovely—as, for example, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in His sight is of great price. He rejoiced over the fair creations of matter; and how much more has He pleasure in those who are graced by the moralities of His Spirit's own workmanship!... At verse 40 look to Deut. xxviii. 49, and Jer. xlix. 22. The "eagle" here is the invader of Moab.... At verses 43 and 44 look to Isaiah xxiv. 17, 18. Heshbon, that wont to be a protection to them, when taken and garrisoned by their enemies, will be the emanating centre of all that is hostile and destructive.... At verses 45 and 46, see Num. xxi. 28, 29, and xxiv. 17. It is interesting to mark the parallel passages between older and later prophecies. On being referred back to Balaam, it seems to us that there are few utterances of greater sublimity and power than those which proceeded from the mouth of this prophet, corrupt and treacherous though he was....What precious confirmations of Scripture may we look for when God finally brings back the captivity of Jacob, and the prophecies regarding the neighbouring countries shall have their palpable fulfilment!

JEREMIAH XLIX. 1-6.—Now follows the judgment of the Ammonites, who bordered on the Israelites east of Jordan, but whose king with his people now had possession of the territory of Gad. Rabbah is decidedly Ammonite, and

Heshbon on the east side of Jordan; but I can find no Ai on that side. At all events the Ammonites now inherited part of Israel; but Israel was at length to disinherit them again—to be the heirs of their heirs. How fell the atrocities of war! daughters to be burned with fire! Their rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, were to go into captivity—the priests of their idolatrous worship, as well as the princes who bore sway over them. The daughters, however, might be the lesser towns of the country—the daughters of Rabbah the metropolis.... The "flowing valley" is the fruitful valley—a characteristic, we have no doubt, of that land. They had much agricultural wealth, which is the parent of all wealth; and we wonder not, therefore, at the treasures in which the Ammonites trusted. But they trusted in what would not save them. There was to be a sad desolation and dispersion—and this, it would seem, at the hand of invaders all round. They who had taken to flight should not be rallied and brought together again. Yet, as of Moab, so of Ammon—they would, or will at length, be brought again from the captivity by the Lord God of Hosts.

7-22.—Teman is either a town or district of Edom, or perhaps another name for the whole country. Duke Teman was the son of Eliphaz the son of Esau. (Genesis xxxvi. 15.) Eliphaz in Job was a Temanite. In the account of Esau's descendants we read of the land of Temani. (Gen. xxxvi. 34.) Teman and Edom were proverbial for wisdom. (Obad. 8.)... To "dwell deep" is to remove and hide oneself. Yet Esau will hide himself in vain: he shall be made utterly desolate; and none left to take charge of the widows or children. Or perhaps verse 11 is an interrogation; or it may be as it stands—none shall be left but

widows and children, whose sole dependence will be on God, for none other will be left to help them. It is remarkable that no such restoration is promised to Edom here as to other countries. Verse 11, though it may be but an accommodation, is a precious notabile. They who were less deserving of punishment (the Jews) have been made to suffer, and shalt thou escape? Bozrah still subsists. (Robinson, ii. 570, 571.) ... What a striking confirmation of verse 16 in the present ruins of Petra! ... Verse 19 is obscure, from the confusion of genders, and from the first of its interrogations being properly an affirmative clause. Him that I have chosen I will commission against her; and no shepherd can stand before me any more than the flock of a sheepfold against a lion from Jordan. And verse 20 is cleared up by reading, that they shall be dragged out from the least of the flock—the Edomites shall be dragged out for slaughter from their wives and children .... In verse 22 the invader, compared formerly to a lion, is now compared to an eagle .... Verse 21—poetical.—The Red Sea conterminous to Edom.

23-39.—For Hamath, see Robinson's Appendix, p. 176. They are plunged in a sea of sorrow, or become like the troubled sea which cannot rest .... Verses 25 and 27, poetical. The Damascus of the present day is exceedingly beautiful and picturesque. Kedar and Hazor though mentioned together are described separately. Nebuchadnezzar is the common invader of all these countries.—"Fear on every side" is a proverbial expression.—There was a Hazor, a town in Judah, distinct from the country here spoken of. It was a remote nation dwelling alone and at ease. Elam is generally regarded as synonymous with Persia; but there is ground for believing that Elam was

a separate kingdom at first, though afterwards incorporated with Persia. Its captivity too is to be brought back in later, I think in future days.

JEREMIAH L. 1-10.—Now comes the judgment of the mighty Babylon—the great spoiler herself in turn made a prey. Bel and Merodach are her idols. Media lies north of Babylon. This nearly affected the children of Israel, who are here brought upon the stage in a most interesting guise—seeking for their return, and expressing their purpose and wish in verse 5, one of the most precious notabilia in Scripture.—My God, in that perpetual covenant would I so join myself. God turns Him in compassion upon His own people. He lays the blame of their defection on their shepherds. He takes part against their adversaries, who it seems perceived the cause of their miseries, and cast it reproachfully upon them. Even their misfortunes might thus have redounded to the keeping up a notion among men of the true God. He bids them come out of Babylon; and many of them may have left the city and escaped from the slaughter of its destruction, even as the first Christians removed from the doomed city of Jerusalem.

11-20.—God is offended and takes vengeance on those who triumphed in the calamities of His own people, even though these were inflicted by His own hand, and for the purposes of discipline.... In verse 12, behold her, your mother Babylon—to become the last of the nations and a wilderness! Mark the resemblance in point of general effect between the denunciation here, and those of Rev. xviii. 15. "She hath given her hand"—she hath made surrender of herself—given her hand to be bound by

manacles. The destruction of Jerusalem is repaid and retaliated on Babylon. The desolation shall extend to country as well as town. Agriculture will languish for want of labourers, and all foreign auxiliaries will make escape to their own land. Both the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities are here brought to mind; and the remaining heaps of Nineveh and Babylon are striking monumental evidence of the vengeance that followed upon both. In contrast with this, what images of peace and beauty are associated with the restoration and re-establishment of Israel! With what a cadence of sweetest music do the names of Carmel and Bashan fall upon our ears!—My God, let my sins be in like manner obliterated, and no more made mention of there. Let them be washed out in the blood of the Lamb, so that though sought after they may not be found, and leave as little trace of their existence as if they never were. Thou hast long reserved me, O God, so that I am still in the land of the living. Let me be encouraged and take confident hold of Thine offered forgiveness.

21-32.—According to Blayney, Merathaim and Pekod are not proper names, but appellatives, and he renders it into the land of bitterness, and "after them" into their posterity. Babylon as the instrument of destruction to many nations, is called "the hammer of the whole earth." It was taken by surprise, and when not aware. How literally she has been cast up as heaps may be seen in the mounds of the present day: from the excavation of which, as well as of Nineveh, we look for most interesting relics. Blayney turns the "bullocks" of verse 27 into fattening stalls—understanding by these, cities whose inhabitants lived at ease and in sleek prosperity. They who

were of the captivity fled, and on their return to Zion would declare and celebrate there God's vengeance for His ruined temple. Over against verse 29, see Rev. xviii. 6. Babylon was not only proud, but proud against the Lord, —carried it with defiance against the God of Israel. God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. He regarded the prayer of the destitute, and did not despise their prayer. (Psalm cii. 16, 17.)

33-46.—It would seem as if the Assyrian and Babylonish captives, as fellow-sufferers, petitioned to be let go; but their oppressors held them fast. The Lord Himself interposed for them.... The "liars" are probably the false prophets and priests of the Babylonish idolatry. The auxiliaries and foreigners in Babylon were sufficiently numerous to constitute a mingled people. The "drought upon her waters" was remarkably fulfilled by the stratagem of Cyrus, who in turning the Euphrates from its channel, dried it up. This destruction is followed up by a perpetual desolation, all the more picturesque from the doleful creatures which dwelt there. The ruin should be as complete as was that of Sodom and Gomorrah—though this latter came direct from God in heaven; whereas the other was brought upon them by the arms of an invader. Mark the identity of verses 44-46, with ch. xlix. 19-21.... The noise that was heard at the destruction of Edom was heard at that of Babylon among the nations. The wasters were wasted themselves.

JEREMIAH LI. 1-10.—This denunciation of Babylon is prolonged through nearly the whole of this long chapter. Its fall bulks very great in history, and so it occupies a like large place in prophecy. Besides, it is the type of

another great fall that is to take place, and to usher in another great deliverance of the Church of God.... The "brigandine" is a coat of mail. There was relentless slaughter in the streets of Babylon. And it was the cause of Israel and Judah which was now in dependence. It was for them that this vengeance descended upon their enemies —even though they had provoked the Lord by the abundance of their transgressions. How strikingly does verse 6 quadrate with Rev. xviii. 4—the future antitype to the great destruction that we read of in this place.... For verse 7, see ch. xxv. 15. Babylon was the wine-cup of God's fury, which maddened and intoxicated all the nations—causing them to stagger and reel to and fro like drunken men. The suddenness of Babylon's fall, in verse 8, harmonizes with Rev. xviii. 17, where we read that in one hour the riches of the mystical Babylon will come to nought. In this verse the auxiliaries of Babylon are asked to heal her if they can. Their reply is that they would if they could, but that it was in vain to strive against the decree of heaven; and therefore, they had nothing for it, but each to withdraw into their own land. Among others the Jews in verse 10 make special acknowledgment that God had vindicated their cause against their oppressors, and that in Zion they would testify His great deliverance.

11-19.—The mention of the Medes impresses the coincidence between sacred and profane authorship—bringing the prophecies of the one into the day-light of history as recorded by the other. There was much of devising on the part of Cyrus against Babylon, and much done by him—yet all devised and done by Him whose servant and whose instrument he was. How descriptively is the situation of the city given here as dwelling upon many

waters! The comparison of the men to caterpillars is highly poetical. What a fine sentence of natural theology is interposed in verse 15, and in verse 16 we have set forth His control over the secondary causes—working as He does, not without means but by means. What a rebuke does this lay upon idolatry! and so the vindication of Israel's God above the gods of the heathen. God is the portion of His people, and they are the rod of His inheritance, marked out for His own as if by a measuring rod. Mark the identity of verses 15-19, with ch. x. 12-16.

20-30.—The address which follows and is kept through some verses, is, we should think, to Cyrus, as the head of the invaders and destroyers of Babylon—he properly being the battle-axe and weapons of war. The destruction extending to the husbandman and his oxen marks a desolation of the country as well as of the metropolis.... "In your sight"—in sight of the Medes and Persians who were the perpetrators of this evil, or in sight of the Jews? Babylon is the destroying mountain, whence the torrents of a volcanic destruction flowed down upon the nations; but the burner should itself be burnt, and not a stone be taken of it for any edifice. The whole of its political structure shall be composed of foreign materials. It shall be under the yoke of foreigners. The countries of verse 27 are variously conjectured on. There is poetry in the "rough caterpillars." The kings of the Medes in the Septuagint is read singularly king of Media...." They have burned their dwelling-places" might be rendered "their dwelling-places are burned."

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31-44.—The details given here are strikingly in accordance with the historical particulars, as handed down to

us both by Herodotus and Xenophon. The "harvest" of verse 33 is more properly the cutting of the straw, which took place after the threshing, as the harvest did before it. (See Blayney.) Then Zion takes up her song of triumph over Babylon, on whom vengeance is now being taken for all her oppressions and cruelties to the children of Israel. The blood of Jerusalem was upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, now reckoned with for all her violence done to that city. The sea of Babylon is the waters of Euphrates—the bed of which was literally made dry by the decree of Cyrus, and reduced to the heaps which subsist to this day, and from the excavation of which I would sanguinely look forward to such relics and memorials as might greatly augment our monumental evidence for the truth of revelation. There was all the festivity on the occasion of its capture which is here foretold, and the uproar of conflict and terrible slaughter....The sea coming up upon Babylon (verse 42) might be understood of the mighty host of invaders. Babylon is meant by Sheshach in verse 41, which gives forth a brief but impressive lamentation. Soon did it become a land void of inhabitants. The god of Babylon may be said to have been punished in its overthrow and ruin, and it regorged the treasures, and more particularly the sacred vessels of which the temple in Jerusalem had been rifled. (See Isaiah xiv. 23; and "Prideaux's Connection," Book ii., Part i.)

45-58.—Over against verse 45 see Rev. xviii. 4. The one injunction is more to avoid participation in its dangers—the other in its sins. In verse 46 it seems to me that the prophet is enforcing the injunction to go out of Babylon, and not to give way to the fear of rumoured violence in the country around it—for that God would

certainly wreak His vengeance on the city, and they, the Jews, would be much safer out of it. The direction of verse 50, we have no doubt, is addressed to the Jews, who are here told that all this vengeance is inflicted for the sake of Jerusalem afar off—but whose God should now be called to remembrance. The Jews in verse 51 make reply, and profess how much they were scandalized by the outrage done to their sanctuaries. But for this God will bring the invaders to judgment. All the pride and strength of Babylon will not avail her. The uproar of her last tumults will be put an end to, and a great silence will ensue. Her princes should drink the wine of God's fury, and sleep the sleep of death; and the destroyers shall work to very weariness and exhaustion in the work of her entire demolition.

59-64.—Not when Seraiah went *with*, but Blayney renders it *on behalf* of Zedekiah, as the bearer of tribute. These written predictions of Jeremiah may have been given to Seraiah in a packet, and not read by him till he had gone to Babylon, and so read for his own private information, and not in the hearing of others. This Seraiah, this quiet prince,* seems to have been a man of piety and of accordant feelings and views with Jeremiah himself, from the commission given to him by the prophet; and more especially from the words of address to God which he put into his mouth. The clause—"and they shall be weary" does not occur in the Septuagint. If retained, it might be made to signify the exhaustion, and so the extinction of Babylon. It is obvious that a chronological arrangement would have assigned a different place to this chapter. The order in many parts of the Book seems to have been quite

* But, for "a quiet prince," it is also translated "carried a present."

arbitrary. At all events we have no more of Jeremiah in this Book, who, though of lower rank and estimation, is nevertheless a most illustrious Scriptural writer.

JEREMIAH LII. 1-11.—This chapter is regarded as the addition of some later hand—of Ezra perhaps—or whoever in after-times revised and collected the sacred writings. It is nearly identical with the passage from 2 Kings xxiv. 18, to the end of ch. xxv. There are certain variations however. In verse 2 "Jehoiakim" for "Jehoiachin" in 2 Kings xxiv. 9, may have readily occurred as a mere error of transcription in one or other of the places. It is likelier however to be correct here, as the reign of Jehoiachin was only of three months' duration, and that when he was a very young man—whereas that of Jehoiakim reached to eleven years, and formed a busy and important history. The succession of Zedekiah is spoken of as a judicial infliction on Judah. (See Hos. xiii. 11.) By comparing verse 4 with 2 Kings xxv. 1, it becomes obvious that Nebuchadrezzăr, which occurs so frequently in Jeremiah, is identical with Nebuchadnezzar—a variation proceeding from the resemblance of the two Hebrew letters. In 2 Kings xxv. 4, it is the king who is made to go the way of the plain; in verse 7 here it is the king and his followers. The "city being broken up," is a strong and significant expression for what took place after that it was broken into. We repeat that it was a barbarous proceeding to kill the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, previous to the putting of them out. It is here, and not in Second Kings, that we read of the further slaughter of all the princes of Judah in Riblah. It is only here, too, that we learn of Zedekiah having been made a prisoner in Babylon for life.

12-23.—The latter part of the above narrative we also have substantially in ch. xxxix. What follows continues to harmonize with 2 Kings xxv. In verse 12 what is called the "tenth" is made the "seventh" in Second Kings—one of those frequent numerical variations which occur in transcription. The clause in verse 15, relative to the poor of the people, does not occur in ch. xxxix. 9; nor in 2 Kings xxv. The "residue of the people" marks the greatness of the slaughter, as if the bulk and body of them had been destroyed. The very poorest are often the safest on these sad occasions. They are not formidable, while at the same time they may be serviceable. There is a fuller and more particular enumeration here than in Second Kings, of the temple furniture that was taken away—not perhaps of great pecuniary value, but—as consecrated vessels, and used in their ritual—of mighty estimation in the eyes of the Jews. It is in the same spirit that these vessels are spoken of and enumerated by Ezra, when they were given up by Cyrus, and brought back to Jerusalem

24-34.—The keepers of the door must have been such persons of distinction as we read of in 2 Kings xii. 9; xxiii. 4; the persons appointed, it is likely, to collect the offerings of the people, and not the ordinary door-keepers. What a barbarous thing war is, that these and so many others should be taken for the deliberate purpose of being put to death, and travelled to a great distance from one place to another upon this errand. The number taken to Babylon seems very small, inferring a proportionally large destruction of human life in the subjugation of the country. The Book closes with that pleasing statement which we have at the end of the Second Book of Kings—regarding the compassionate treatment of the captive and imprisoned

king Jehoiachin, from a movement of piteous consideration—the very movement of which serves to alleviate these horrors and ferocities. We are not yet done with Jeremiah, of whom we have long thought that he does not rank in general estimation sufficiently high among the most illustrious writers of the Old Testament.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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