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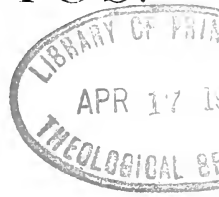








# PSALM - MOSAICS.



A Biographical and Historical Commentary  
on the Psalms.

BY THE

REV. A. SAUNDERS DYER, M.A., F.S.A.,

*Chaplain H.M. Indian Service.*

NEW YORK:  
THOMAS WHITTAKER,  
2 & 3, BIBLE HOUSE.  
1895.





Ξ dedicate

THIS VOLUME TO MY WIFE

*Ἡ δὲ ἐλεημοσύνη αὐτῆς ἀνέστησε τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπλούτησαν,  
καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς ᾔνεσεν αὐτήν.*

‘What a record that would be, if one could write down all the spiritual experiences, the disclosures of the heart, the comforts and conflicts, which men in the course of ages have connected with the words of the Psalms ! What a history, if we could discover the place this book has occupied in the inner life of the heroes of the kingdom of GOD !’—*Tholuck*.

‘He that would be holy, let him read the Psalms. Every line in this book breathes peculiar sanctity.’—*Plain Discourse upon Uprightness*, RICHARD STEELE, 1670.

## PREFACE.

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BUT few words of introduction are needed to such a Collection of Notes as the present ; it speaks for itself.

It was in 1872, when at Lichfield Theological College, that the words of the then Principal, Canon Curteis, first suggested to the writer the idea of collecting, during his readings, such biographical and historical illustrations of the Psalms as are contained in this volume.

The chief object in publishing them is the hope that they may be of help to the reader, in the religious life ; for most of them testify to the fact that the words of a Psalm, in the days that are gone, have comforted in time of bereavement, and succoured in time of danger—they are still potent to comfort and succour those in similar circumstances to-day.

Dean Stanley has truly said : ‘The Psalter, by its manifold application and uses in after-times, is a vast palimpsest, written over and over again, illuminated, illustrated by every conceivable incident and emotion of men and nations ; battles, wanderings, dangers, escapes, death-beds, obsequies of many ages and countries, rise, or may rise, to our view as we read it.’\*

*Psalm-Mosaics* is an attempt to record such incidents and emotions, ‘the spiritual experiences, the disclosures of the

\* *Eastern Church*, Introduction, lxxv.

heart, the comforts and conflicts, which men in the course of ages have connected with the words of the Psalms '\*—is, in fact, an Historical and Biographical Commentary on the Psalms.

As, however, this Collection made progress, other notes of a literary and antiquarian character were added, in the endeavour to make the volume as complete a Common-Place Book of the Psalter as possible. It is hoped that the addition of such notes will not tend to distract those who seek from its pages aid of a more distinctly devotional kind.

The plan has been to quote the exact words of each speaker or writer, giving a definite reference; this has been thought preferable to working up in one's own words the various incidents and spiritual experiences.

The only other book on similar lines is one of singular beauty of expression by the late Rev. John Ker, D.D., and called *The Psalms in History and Biography*; but this work in no way trenches on *Psalm-Mosaics*, although a few quotations have been made from its pages.

Dr. Ker's book treats chiefly of the Psalms as illustrated in Scotch and Protestant Christianity, and the dangers and distresses experienced by the Covenanters. *Psalm-Mosaics* are gleanings from a wider and more Catholic field, a field, too, with a wealth of illustrations still ungathered. The collector of these Notes would be grateful to any of his readers for additional illustrations and quotations, so that, in case a second edition is called for, this Collection may be as complete and wide as possible.

\* Tholuck.

## INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY TO THE VALUE OF THE PSALTER.

*St. Athanasius*, Bishop of Alexandria (296 to 373).—‘To me, indeed, it seems that the Psalms are to him who sings them as a mirror, wherein he may see himself and the motions of his soul, and with like feelings utter them. So also one who hears a Psalm read, takes it as if it were spoken concerning himself, and either, convicted by his own conscience, will be pricked at heart and repent, or else, hearing of that hope which is to GOD-wards, and the succour which is vouchsafed to them that believe, leaps for joy, as though such grace were specially made over to him, and begins to utter his thanksgivings to GOD.’\*

*St. Ambrose*, Bishop of Milan (340-397).—‘Although all Divine Scripture breathes the grace of GOD, yet sweet beyond all others is the Book of Psalms. . . . History instructs, the Law teaches, Prophecy announces, Rebuke chastens, Morality persuades ; in the Book of Psalms we have the fruit of all these, and a kind of medicine for the salvation of man. . . . What is more delightful than a Psalm? It is the benediction of the people, the praise of GOD, the thanksgiving of the multitude, the voice of the Church, the harmonious confession of our faith.’†

*St. Basil*, Bishop of Cæsarea (326-379).—‘Psalmody is the calm of the soul, the repose of the spirit, the arbiter of peace.

\* *Epistle to Marcellinus.*

† *In Psalmum I. Enar.*

It silences the wave, and conciliates the whirlwind of our passions, soothing the impetuous, tempering the unchaste. It is an engenderer of friendship, a healer of dissension, a reconciler of enemies. For who can "longer count him his enemy, with whom to the throne of GOD he hath raised the strain"? Psalmody repels the demons, and lures the angels. It is a weapon of defence in nightly terrors, and a respite from daily toil. To the infant it is a presiding genius; to manhood a crown of glory; a palm of comfort to the aged; a congenial ornament to women.'

*St. Gregory Nazianzen*, Bishop of Constantinople (326-389).—'O David, how hast thou sung all too little for pious souls!'

*St. Chrysostom* (347-407).—'If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last, and midst. If early in the morning we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, and midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the departed, if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last, and midst.\*

'O marvellous wonder! Many who have made but little progress in literature, nay, who have scarcely mastered its first principles, have the Psalter by heart. Nor is it in cities and churches alone, that at all times, through every age, David is illustrious; in the midst of the forum, in the wilderness, and uninhabitable land, he excites the praises of GOD. In monasteries, amongst those holy choirs of angelic armies, David is first, midst, and last. In the convents of virgins, where are the bands of them that imitate Mary; in the deserts, where are men crucified to this world, and having their conversation with GOD, first, midst and last is he. All other men are at night overpowered by natural sleep: David alone is active, and, congregating the servants of GOD into seraphic bands, turns earth into heaven, and converts men into angels.'

\* S. Chrysostom is referring to that stanza of Theognis :

‘ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ πρῶτον τε καὶ ὕστατον, ἐν τε μέσοισιν  
ἀείσω σὺν ἔέ μεν κλυθι, καὶ ἰσθλὰ ἴδου.’

*St. Augustine*, Bishop of Hippo (353-429).—‘Oh, in what accents spake I unto Thee, my GOD, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs, and sounds of Devotion, which allow of no swelling spirit, I, as yet a Catechumen, and as a novice in Thy real love, while I rested in that villa, with Alypius, equally a Catechumen, my mother cleaving to us, in female garb but with a masculine faith, with the tranquillity of age, motherly love, Christian piety. Oh, what accents did I utter unto Thee in those Psalms, and how was I by them kindled towards Thee, and on fire to rehearse them, if possible through the world, against the pride of mankind. And yet they are sung through the whole world, nor can “any hide himself from the heat.” ’\*

The confessions of *St. Augustine* begin with quotations from the Psalms (Ps. cxlv. 3, cxlvii. 5), and end with a quotation (Ps. xxii. 26).

*St. Bernard* (1091-1157).—‘Never shalt thou comprehend David till in thine own experience thou hast attained the feelings of the Psalms.’

*Luther* (1483-1546).—‘Nowhere will you find more happily or more significantly expressed the feelings of a soul full of joy and exultation, than in the Psalms of thanksgiving, or Psalms of praises. For there you may look into the hearts of the Saints, as you would into Paradise or into the open heaven, and note with what wonderful variety there spring up here and there the beautiful blossoms, and the most brilliant stars of the sweetest affections towards GOD and His benefits. On the other hand, nowhere will you find described in more expressive words mental distress, pain and grief of soul, than in the Psalms of temptations or lamentations, as in the Sixth Psalm, and others like it. There death itself, hell itself, you see painted in their proper colours; there you see all black, all gloomy, in view of the Divine anger and despair. So likewise, when the Psalms speak of hope, or of fear, they so describe these feelings

\* *Confessions*, Book ix., § iv.

in their own native words, that no Demosthenes, no Cicero, could express them more to the life, or more happily.\*

He also called the Psalms 'Parva Biblia.'

*Cardinal Bellarmine* (1542-1621) said of the Psalter, 'The Book of the Psalms which all Ecclesiastics daily read, but very few indeed understand.'

*John Calvin* (1509-1564).—'If the reading of my Commentary on this book brings as much blessing to the Church of GOD as I have got in the composition of it, I shall not repent of the work. Not without reason have I been accustomed to call this book the anatomy of all the parts of the mind, since there is no emotion of which anyone can be conscious, that is not imaged here as in a glass. All the sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbreaks, by which the hearts of men are tossed, have been here depicted by the HOLY SPIRIT to the very life.†

*John Donne* (1573-1631).—'The Psalms are the manna of the Church; as manna tasted to every man like that he liked best, so do the Psalms minister instruction and satisfaction to every man, in every emergency and occasion. David was not only a clear prophet of CHRIST Himself, but of every particular Christian; he foretells what I, what any shall do, and suffer, and say.‡

*Richard Hooker* (1554-1600).—'They are not ignorant what difference there is between other parts of Scripture and Psalms. The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books, the Psalms do both more briefly contain and more movingly also express, by reason of that poetical form wherewith they are written. . . . What is there necessary for man to know, which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others.

\* *Preface to the Psalter* (1549).

† Holland, *Psalmists of Britain*, p. 4.

‡ Donne, *Sermon lxvi.*; *Works*, vol. iii., p. 156.



Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of GOD, the sufferings of CHRIST, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found. Hereof it is that we covet to make the Psalms especially familiar unto all. This is the very cause why we iterate the Psalms oftener than any other part of Scripture besides; the cause wherefore we inure the people together with their minister, and not the minister alone, to read them as other parts of Scripture he doth.\*

*Paul Gerhard* (1606-1676).—‘The Psalms is a theatre, where GOD allows us to behold both Himself and His works; a most pleasant green field; a vast garden, where we see all manner of flowers; a paradise where we see the most delicious flowers and fruits; a great sea, in which are hid costly pearls; a heavenly school, in which we have GOD for our Teacher; a compend of all Scripture; a mirror of Divine Grace, reflecting the lovely face of our Heavenly Father, and the anatomy of our souls.’

*Milton* (1608-1674).—‘But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets, not in their Divine argument alone, but in the very art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the other kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. They are the inspired gift of GOD to celebrate, in glorious and lofty hymns, the throne and equipage of His almightiness, and what He works, and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in His Church, to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious

\* Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, Book v., ch. xxxvii., § 2.

nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of CHRIST.'

*Archbishop Leighton* (1611-1684), in his Charge of 1666, said to his clergy: 'Of the Old Testament, take particularly large portions of the Psalms, being both so excellently instructive, and withal so Divine forms of Prayer and Praise; and so much used by the Church in all ages, and always so great a part of their services.' The Archbishop's practice agreed with his recommendation. He was particularly conversant with the Book of Psalms, and sometimes spoke of it as a 'bundle' of myrrh that ought to be day and night 'in the bosom.' A letter of his nephew's has been preserved, in which he records of his saintly uncle: 'Scarce a line in that sacred Psalter that hath passed without the stroke of his pen.'\*

*Bishop Sanderson* of Lincoln (1663).—'The Psalms of David are the treasury of Christian comfort, fitted for all persons and necessities; able to raise the soul from dejection by the frequent mention of GOD's mercies to repentant sinners, to stir up holy desires, to increase joy, to moderate sorrow, to nourish hope and teach us patience, by waiting GOD's leisure, to beget a trust in the mercy, power, and providence of our Creator, and to cause a resignation of ourselves to His will, and then, and not till then, to believe ourselves happy.'†

*Bishop Horne* (1730-1792).—'Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. . . . He who hath once tasted their excellencies will desire to taste them again, and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best. And now, could the author flatter himself that anyone would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition which he hath taken in writing it,

\* *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, pp. 242, 243.

† *Life of Dr. Sanderson*, by Izaak Walton, p. 381.

he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose, fresh as the morning, to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it, and he can truly say that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last, for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent in these meditations on the songs of Zion, he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along, for when thus engaged he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish of a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.\*

*J. G. Von Herder* (1744-1803). — ‘Not merely as regards the contents, but also as regards the form, has this use of the Psalter been a benefit to the spirit and heart of men. As in no lyric poet of Greece or Rome do we find so much teaching, consolation, and instruction together, so has there scarcely ever been anywhere so rich a variation of tone in every kind of song as here. For two thousand years have these old Psalms been again and again translated and imitated in a variety of ways, and still so rich, so comprehensive is their manner, that they are capable of many a new application. They are flowers which vary according to each season and each soil, and ever abide in the freshness of youth. Precisely because this Book contains the simplest lyric tones for the expression of the most manifold feelings, is it a hymn-book for all times.†

*William Wilberforce* (1759-1788). — ‘I am reading the Psalms just now,’ writes Mr. Wilberforce in his *Journal* (1803). ‘What wonderful compositions! what a proof of the Divine

\* Bishop Horne’s Preface to his *Commentary*.

† *Abhandlungen und Briefen zur schönen Literatur*. Sämmtliche Werke, th. xvi., p. 17.

origin of the religion to which they belong ! There is in the world nothing else like them.'

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1772-1834).—Those were memorable words which Mr. Coleridge wrote upon the margin of his Prayer-Book : 'As a transparency on some night of public rejoicing, seen by common day, with the lamps from within removed, even such would the Psalms be to me, uninterpreted by the Gospel.'\*

*La martine* (1790).—'David is the first of the poets of feeling—the king of lyrists. Never has the thought of poet risen so high and pure. Never has the soul opened before man and GOD in language so tender, so sympathetic and moving. All the secret cries of the human heart have found a voice through his lips. If we think of the lyric poets of the most cultivated nations of antiquity, singing of wine, love, blood, the victories of mules and horses in the fields of Elis, we are seized with profound astonishment at the mysterious utterances of the shepherd-prophet, who speaks with GOD as a friend, who praises His wonders, admires His justice, entreats His mercy, and seems to be an anticipating echo of the poetry of the Gospel, repeating the loving words of CHRIST before He had heard them. Read Greek or Latin lyrics after a Psalm, they turn pale.'

*Edward Irving* (1792-1834).—'The songs of Zion are comprehensive as the human soul and varied as human life. Where no possible state of natural feeling shall not find itself tenderly expressed and divinely treated with appropriate remedies, where no condition of human life shall not find its rebuke and consolation, because they treat not life after the fashion of an age or people, but life in its rudiments—the life of the soul—with the joys and sorrows to which it is amenable, from con-course with the outward necessity of the fallen world. Which breadth of application they compass not by the sacrifice of lyrical propriety or poetical method ; for if there be poems strictly lyrical, that is, whose spirit and sentiment move con-

\* *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 67.

genial with the movements of music, and which, by their very nature, call for the accompaniment of music, these odes of a people despised as illiterate are such. For pure pathos and tenderness of heart ; for sublime imagination ; for touching pictures of natural scenery and genial sympathy with nature's various moods ; for patriotism, whether in national weal or national woe ; for beautiful imagery, whether derived from the relationship of human life, or the forms of the created universe, and for the illustration, by their help, of spiritual conditions ; moreover, for those rapid transitions in which the lyrical muse delighteth, her lightsome graces at one time, her deep and full inspiration at another, her exuberance of joy, and her lowest falls of grief, and for every other form of the natural soul which is wont to be shadowed forth by this kind of composition, we challenge anything to be produced from the literature of all ages and countries worthy to be compared with what we find even in the English Version of the Book of Psalms.\*

*Thomas Carlyle* (1795-1881).—‘On the whole, we make too much of faults ; the details of the business hide the real centre of it. Faults? The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none. Readers of the Bible above all, one would think, might know better. Who is called there “the man according to GOD’s own heart”? David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough—blackest crimes ; there was no want of sins. And thereupon the unbelievers sneer, and ask, Is this your man according to GOD’s heart? The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, true, often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it, be forgotten? “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Of all acts, is not, for a man, *repentance* the most Divine? The deadliest sin, I say, were that same supercilious consciousness of no sin—that is death ; the heart so conscious is divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact ; is

\* *Collected Works*, vol. i., pp. 386, 387.

dead : it is "pure" as dead dry sand is pure. David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck, yet a struggle never ended ; ever, with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew. Poor human nature ! Isn't a man's walking, in truth, always that : "a succession of falls" ? Man can do no other. In this wild element of a Life, he has to struggle onward, now fallen, deep abased, and ever, with tears, repentance, with bleeding heart, he has to rise again, struggle again still upwards. That his struggle *be* a faithful unconquerable one, that is the question of questions. We will put up with many sad details if the soul of it were true. Details by themselves will never teach us what it is.\*

*John Mueller* (Historian).—'David yields to me every day the most delightful hour. There is nothing Greek, nothing Roman, nothing in the West, nor in the land towards midnight, to equal David, whom the GOD of Israel chose to praise Him higher than the gods of the nations. The utterance of his mind sinks deep into the heart, and never in my life, never have I thus seen GOD.'

*John Jacob Moser* (1785).—

Dr. Tholuck says : 'As belonging to modern times, the words of the celebrated politician, John Jacob Moser, equally renowned as a statesman and experienced as a Christian, are worthy of special notice. He had been engaged in severe struggles for the rights of his country, and had been on that account unlawfully imprisoned by his sovereign for a period of five years, during which the Bible and hymn-book were his sole companions. The Psalms made him understand his position. In harmony with the voices of every century, he says :

'Oh, how precious and dear was the possession of the Psalms ; how much comfort, light, and strength have they im-

\* *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Lect. ii., p. 43.

parted to my fainting soul! I often not only missed the way, but lost the very trace of it. I sat me down as if I had become petrified. One word from the Psalms was a sunbeam to me. Like a lark I settled on the pinions of that eagle; carried by her, I scaled the rock, and beheld from that eminence the world, with *its* cares and *mine*, stretched out *beneath me*. I acquired to think, infer, mourn, pray, wait, hope, and speak in the spirit of David: "I thank Thee, O LORD, that Thou hast humbled me." I acquired to know and understand the rights of GOD — His purposes of love and faithfulness to every man, but especially to myself — His mighty wisdom towards us His creatures in our present state of probation, as well as the blessedness, benefit, and necessity of sufferings for our cleansing, purification, and perfection. I learned to esteem myself happy in being *permitted* to endure suffering. I attained to a better knowledge of the wisdom and love of GOD. . . . I learned to trust GOD in all my ways, and to renounce the claims of fame, honour, and comfort. . . . I learned to become more contented in my desires, more moderate in my enjoyments. I was enabled with tears to express my gratitude for mercies which formerly I counted not as blessings, but as my right and due.

'If my soul would keep *holy day*, the Psalms became my temple and my altar. Next to the writings of the New Testament, they are now to me my dearest and most precious book — the golden mirror, the cyclopædia of the most blessed and fruitful knowledge and experience of my life: to thoroughly understand them will be the occupation of eternity, and our second life will form their commentary.'

*Dean Milman* (1791-1868).—'The Psalms may be called a prophetic manual of Christian prayer.'

*F. W. Robertson* (1816-1853).—'The value of the public reading of the Psalms is, that they express for us, indirectly, those deeper feelings which there would be a sense of indelicacy in expressing directly. . . . There are feelings of which we do

not speak to each other ; they are too sacred and too delicate. Such are most of our feelings to GOD. If we do speak of them, they lose their fragrance, become coarse ; nay, there is even a sense of indelicacy and exposure. Now, the Psalms afford precisely the right relief for this feeling ; wrapped up in the forms of poetry (metaphor, etc.), that which might seem exaggerated is excused by those who do not feel it, while they who do, can read them, applying them without suspicion of uttering *their own* feelings. Hence their soothing power, and hence, while other portions of Scripture may become obsolete, they remain the most precious parts of the Old Testament. For the heart of man is the same in all ages.’

‘ It is this truth of human feeling which makes the Psalms more than any other portion of the Old Testament the link of union between distant ages. The historical books need a rich store of knowledge before they can be a modern book of life ; but the Psalms are the records of individual experience. Personal religion is the same in all ages. The deeps of our humanity remain unruffled by the storms of ages which change the surface. This Psalm (the Fifty-first), written three thousand years ago, might have been written yesterday, describes the vicissitudes of spiritual life in an Englishman as truly as in a Jew, “Not of an age, but for all time.”’\*

*Archbishop Gerbet* of Perpignan.—‘ He only who knows the number of the waves of the ocean and the abundance of tears in the human eye, He who sees the sighs of the heart before they are uttered, and who hears them still when they are hushed into silence—He alone can tell how many holy emotions, how many heavenly vibrations, have been produced, and will ever be produced, in the souls of men by the reverberation of these marvellous strains, of these predestinated hymns, read, meditated, sung in every hour of day and night, in every winding of the vale of tears. The Psalter of David is like a mystic harp, hung on the walls of the true Zion. Under the breath of the SPIRIT OF GOD, it sends forth its infinite varieties of devotion,

\* *Sermons IX. and VII. (Second Series), pp. 119, 96.*



which, rolling on from echo to echo, from soul to soul, awakes in each a separate note, mingling in that one prolonged voice of thankfulness and penitence, praise and prayer.\*

*A. Monod.*—‘We must read the Psalms in order to understand the sufferings of David. The Psalms discover to us the inner man of David, and in the inner man of David they discover to us in some sort the inner man of all the prophets of God. Well, the Psalms are full of expressions of an unheard-of suffering. David speaks in them constantly of his evils, his sicknesses, his enemies without number : we can scarcely understand, in reading them, what he means by the enemies of which he speaks so constantly ; but they discover to us at least an inner depth of affliction, of which, with the mere history of David in our hands, we should scarcely have formed an idea. It is one of the great advantages of the Psalms.’

‘The capital object of the mission which David received of God for all generations in the Church was the composition of Psalms. Well, he composes his Psalms, or a great part of them, in the midst of the most cruel sufferings. Imagine, then, bowed down by suffering, physical, moral and spiritual, you were called upon to compose a Psalm, and that from the bosom of all these sufferings, and at the very moment when they were such as those which he describes in Ps. xxxviii., should issue hymns to the glory of God, and for the instruction of the Church.

‘What a triumph David gains over himself, and what a humiliation it is for us, who in our weakness are mostly obliged to wait till our sufferings are passed, in order to reap the fruit of them ourselves, or to impart the benefit to others ! But David, in the midst of his sufferings, writes his Psalms. He writes his thirty-eighth Psalm whilst he undergoes those persecutions, those inward torments, that bitterness of sin. I know it may be said that David wrote that thirty-eighth Psalm coldly, transporting himself into sufferings which he did not feel at the time, as the poet transports himself into sufferings which he has

\* *Dogme de la Pénitence*, 243 ; by Gerbet, the late Archbishop of Perpignan.

never experienced ; but no, such a supposition offends you as much as it does me: it is in the furnace, it is from the bosom of the furnace, that he writes these lines, which are intended to be the encouragement of the Church in all ages. O power of the love of CHRIST ! O renunciation of self-will ! O grace of the true servant of GOD ! O virtue of the Apostle, and virtue of the Prophet, virtue of CHRIST in them, and of the HOLY GHOST ! For never man (of himself) would be capable of such a power of will, of such a triumph over the flesh.\*

*Hengstenberg* (1848).—‘The Book of Psalms is full of the noblest testimonies to the being of GOD and His perfections. It has contributed in this respect vast materials for developing the religious consciousness of GOD, and the Christian Church rests far more upon them for its apprehensions of GOD than might at first sight be supposed. To perceive to what an extent this is the case, we have only to search out the traces of the Psalms in our liturgies and Church-songs. Even the French Deists, the theo-philanthropists, sworn enemies of the Bible, could only make out their liturgy by the help of the Psalms. This is one chief reason why the Psalter is so precious to the afflicted. It presents GOD so clearly and vividly before their eyes that they see Him in a manner with their bodily sight, and find thereby the sting taken from their pains. In this, too, lies one great element of the importance of the Psalter for the present times. What men now most of all need is, that the blanched image of GOD should again be freshened up in them. The more closely we connect ourselves with the Psalms, the more will GOD cease to be to us a shadowy form, which can neither hear, nor help, nor judge us, and to which we can present no supplication.’

*Thomas Erskine*, of Linlathen.†—He was in the habit of

\* *Adieux à ses Amis*, etc., pp. 101-106, 7th edit., Paris, 1859.

† Of *Thomas Erskine*, of Linlathen, Dean Stanley has said : ‘ Presbyterian by his paternal connection with the author of the *Institutes* and the minister of Greyfriars, Episcopalian by his maternal descent and by his early education, it came to pass that in later life, whilst still delighting in the occasional services and ministrations of the Episcopal Church, and

reading in the family devotions the Psalms and Lessons as they occur in the calendar of the Church of England. He used to say: 'I greatly value the fixed order in which this calendar induces me to go through the various parts of the Bible, irrespectively of my own predilection or fancies;' and then he would add, with a twinkle of his peculiar humour, 'And this, I think, is the one single spiritual benefit which I have derived from the Church of England. . . .'

'How natural and free are the expressions of the Psalms! They begin with that great universal benediction on the upright, honest man, "the noblest work of GOD," and they end with the generous universal invocation of all nature, "Let everything that hath breath"—every creature, without limit or exception—"praise the Lord."

'How admirable are the 90th, 91st, and 103rd Psalms! Never, surely, were any writings like those of David! Do tell me, you who know history, has any other king written anything of the kind? Listen to the 23rd Psalm! Listen to the 1st Psalm!' And he then repeated both these from memory in Hebrew.

His biographer, Dr. William Hanna, says that in his last hours 'the Psalms were much upon his lips. For more than fifty years they had been his daily study and delight, the cadence of many of their well-known verses the softest, sublimest music to his ear. And now they refreshed his soul in death. The 20th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 31st, 32nd, 62nd, 73rd, 86th, 103rd, 116th, 130th, and 139th were special favourites; recited by himself with deep solemnity of tone, or, when voice failed, listened to and re-echoed as repeated to him by others.'

*John Eadie* (1868).—Dr. John Eadie, in his English Bible,

enjoying to the last the tender care of an Episcopalian curate, he yet frequented the worship and teaching of the National Church, both in country and in town—a living proof of the effacement of those boundary lines which, before the exasperations of our latter days, were to many of the best Episcopalian and Presbyterians almost as if they did not exist.' His *Letters* have been edited by Dr. William Hanna.

\* *Letters of Thomas Erskine*, pp. 455, 456, 503, 504.

after relating how the Gospels were rendered in early ages into our mother-tongue, goes on to say : ‘ But the favourite portion of Scripture for translation in these times, as in all times, was the Psalms : and one can scarcely wonder at the preference. The melody of the Psalmist has many moods, but song is ever the genuine outburst of his heart, and the reader is lured into living sympathy with it ; nay, as it throbs underneath the page, he is brought into immediate fellowship with the singer, and not with his shadow. For the singer himself, in his various changes, is embodied in his Psalms, whether he sinks in deep contrition, or soars away in spiritual rapture ; whether he extols mercy, or sinks into awe before judgment ; or whether he lays his sword and sceptre at the foot of the throne in offer of suit and service, or in acknowledgment that the kingdom and the victory are alike from GOD. The Psalter is the poetry of spiritual life ; its beauty, power and freshness never fail, for it does not consist of abstract impersonal effusions, or of subjective theological dogmas. Difference of age and country at once fades away. Therefore the Psalms have always been cherished companions, not simply because they are a body of Divine truth bearing on man’s highest interests, but because they come home to human experiences, and tenderly touch them on so many points ; because they are not only the true elements of public worship, but may also be murmured in earnest soliloquy as the spirit of confidence and joyousness lifts itself to GOD.’

*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*—The love which the Church in her public devotions has universally displayed for the Psalter has been only equalled by the love with which her children have in general individually regarded it. It has become familiar to them in childhood, it has followed them to the grave ; continually sounding in their ears, and nursing their truest hopes with the sweetness of its strains ; soothing the din of earthly noise, and attuning their hearts to heavenly melody ; suggesting to them a spirit of praise, or of prayer ; often enabling them consciously to pray when otherwise they would have been at a loss how to pray ; often imparting a definiteness to heaven-

ward thoughts of which otherwise they would scarcely have been conscious at all. Not a scene in their life has passed but what they have found in it one or other passage echoing the aspirations of their hearts; whether it were that they praised GOD 'in the congregation of saints,' or in the privacy of their chambers 'poured out their souls in them'; whether they 'shouted for joy,' or 'mourned in their complaint'; whether they 'went forth to their work and to their labour,' or 'laid them down and slept'; whether they 'returned unto their rest,' or 'were feeble and sore broken'; whether they yet 'walked before the LORD in the land of the living,' or in the agony of death 'into His hands committed their spirits.' Yet, however precious the music of the Psalter to their souls, it is in general to the early teaching of their mother the Church that they are mainly indebted for the knowledge of it: it is the regular repetition of it in her daily services which has brought its language home to every lip and every heart.\*

*A. H. Franke.*—The man who has not the Spirit of CHRIST, nor denies himself, nor daily takes up his cross and follows CHRIST, has no relish for the Psalms. They gladden not his heart, but appear to him like withered straw—altogether stale. But let him be brought into similar courses of affliction and suffering, and experience the sneers and mockery of the world for righteousness and CHRIST'S sake—let him find out the difficulty of the task to surmount every obstacle from within and from without, and yet serve the LORD GOD in spirit and in truth—and he will learn that David's heart underwent other struggles besides those which sprung from his external relations. He will mark in his daily warfare the same enmity which GOD has appointed to take place between CHRIST and Belial, and between the followers of CHRIST and the followers of Satan, and find that struggle expressed in the Psalms—as the very first, in fact, states it: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the

\* *Introduction to the Psalms*, p. 3.

law of the LORD ; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.' He, then, who is resolved to deny himself, to part with the world, her pomp and riches, and the favour of man, to take the Word of GOD for his sole guide, and carry a peaceful conscience to his dying bed, will experience the intensity of the struggle which is required, and learn rightly to understand the Psalms.\*

*Franz Delitzsch* (1871).—'This book has no equal in the expanse of time which it reflects, beginning with the wanderings in the wilderness, 1,450 years before CHRIST, and reaching down to the building of the second temple, 800 years later. It is without equal in the richness of the form and feeling of its poetry, for freshness of spirit and outpouring of the deepest emotion, from still, soft prayer to the triumphant hymn of victory. To this we may add that it is without equal for the richness of its contents. It embraces nature and history, heaven and earth, the world around and the world within us, the experience of each and all from the darkest abyss of trial to the summit of celestial joy. It is unequalled in the depth of its secret soul-experience, and the power of expressing it—not the palpable and superficial, but the root-secrets of the inmost life, ideal and real, abstract and concrete, universal and individual—and so it possesses for the understanding of each reader, and for the inquiry of the commentator, a growing attraction towards something ever fresh and new. If it is the peculiarity of the classic that the oftener it is read the more beautiful and full of meaning it becomes, then are the Psalms classic in the highest degree.'

*W. E. Gladstone*.—But most of all does the Book of Psalms refuse the challenge of philosophical or poetical compositions. In that book for well-nigh 3,000 years the piety of Saints has found its most refined and choicest food—to such a degree, indeed, that the rank and quality of the religious frame may, in general, be tested at least negatively by the height of its relish

\* *Devotional Exposition of the Psalms.*

for them. There is the whole music of the human heart, when touched by the hand of the Maker, in all its tones that whisper or that swell, for every hope and fear, for every joy and pang, for every form of strength and languor, of disquietude and rest. Then are developed all the innermost relations of the human soul to GOD, built upon the platform of a covenant of love and sonship that had its foundation in the Messiah, while in this particular and privileged book it was permitted to anticipate His coming.\*

*Bishop Perowne.*—Deep as is the interest attaching to the Psalter as the great storehouse of Sacred Poetry, and vast as is its importance considered as a record of spiritual life under the Old Dispensation, scarcely less interest and importance attach to it with reference to the position it has ever occupied both in the public worship of the Church and in the private life of Christians. No single book of Scripture, not even of the New Testament, has perhaps ever taken such hold on the *heart* of Christendom. None, if we may dare judge, unless it be the Gospels, has had so large an influence in moulding the affections, sustaining the hopes, purifying the faith of believers. With its words, rather than with their own, they have come before GOD. In these they have uttered their desires, their fears, their confessions, their aspirations, their sorrows, their joys, their thanksgivings. By these their devotion has been kindled and their hearts comforted. The Psalter has been, in the truest sense, the Prayer-Book both of Jews and Christians.

The nature of the volume accounts for this, for it is in itself, to a very great extent, the converse of the soul with GOD. Hence it does not teach us so much what we are to do, or what we are to be, as how we are to pray, or, rather, it teaches us what we are to do and to be through prayer. 'This,' says Luther, 'is the great excellence of the Psalter; that other books, indeed, make a great noise about the *works* of the saints, but say very little about their *words*. But herein is the

\* *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, 1858, vol. ii. p. 526.

pre-eminence of the Psalter, and hence the sweet fragrance which it sheds, that it not only tells of the works of the saints, but also of the words with which they spake to GOD and prayed, and still speak and pray.'

'The history of the Psalms is the history of the Church, and the history of every heart in which has burned the love of GOD. It is a history not fully revealed in this world, but one which is written in heaven. It is a history which, could we know it, might teach us to hush many an angry thought, to recall many a bitter, hasty, uncharitable speech. The pages of that Book have often been blotted with the tears of those whom others deemed hard and cold, and whom they treated with suspicion or contempt. Those words have gone up to GOD, mingled with the sighs or scarcely uttered in the heart-broken anguish of those whom Pharisees called sinners, of those whom Christians denounced as heretics or infidels, but who loved GOD and truth above everything else. Surely it is holy ground. We cannot pray the Psalms without realizing in a very special manner the communion of saints, the oneness of the Church militant, and the Church triumphant. We cannot pray the Psalms without having our hearts opened, our affections enlarged, our thoughts drawn heavenwards. He who can pray them best is nearest to GOD, knows most of the Spirit of CHRIST, is ripest for heaven.'\*

*Bishop Alexander* of Derry.—In David's Psalms the whole range of Christian life, along the whole extent of its most varied phases, is provided for. Christians walking in something of the freshness of Baptismal grace, Christians fallen into sin and waking from the brief transport to the agony and self-degradation, accepted penitents calmed and soothed—all find their appropriate music in 'this lyre of sweetest change,' struck, not indeed by all 'passion,' but by an experience which comprises the rudimentary forms and outlines of all possible experience.

Those strains of prayer or praise spring freely from the stock

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., chap. ii., pp. 38, 39.



of David's life, and are coloured in some degree by the soil in which their roots are plunged. Yet they are not exclusively the record of one life or of one spirit. We know the names of the shapes that move across the stage of that fevered life—Saul, Doeg, Ahitophel, Shimei, Joab, and the rest. Yet they are not mentioned. 'Something sealed his lips.' Some restraining influence was at work as effectually as if a voice had said, 'These Psalms are to be sung in centuries inconceivably distant. They are to be used at funerals grander than Abner's, in temples vaster than your imagination has dreamed of. They are to be set to music such as you have never heard, under skies upon which you have never looked. They are to be the heritage of man wherever there is sin or sorrow; wherever there is a sigh of penitence, or a voice of yearning, offered up to God. Keep them free, therefore, from that which is merely local and personal.'

The Psalms are fitted for the inner life of saints, first in a Jewish, then in a universal Church. Believers under the Old Dispensation used them as Jonah did, not merely repeating them, but naturally interweaving phrase after phrase into the web of their own thought and language. To the Virgin-Mother the *Magnificat* proves that the Psalter was Bible, Prayer-Book, Hymn-Book all in one. And when we pass to the Catholic Church, the different moods of David and the other Psalmists answer to the hearts of the Saints.

The soul, conscious of sin and yearning after pardon; the soul, lifted from the dust and 'liquefying into God'; finds its history in the Psalter. The end of all the Psalms is 'ut anima conjungatur Deo'; the Psalmists run with a rapid hand over the whole scale of the affections of the human spirit seeking after God. We may pass the hardest judgment upon David; yet the tenderest, purest, saintliest, most virgin souls—Augustine, St. Louis, Ken, Keble, Leighton—have found nothing more suitable in life or death than words of his. Nay, it was chiefly with them that our All-Holy Lord broke the silence of Calvary.

‘The rank and quality of the religious frame,’ it has been said by a distinguished statesman, ‘may in general be tested, at least negatively, by the height of its relish for the Psalms.’ They may, indeed, be made to form a delicate spiritual thermometer, exquisitely sensitive to the atmosphere of our religious life. We have the Psalms, and repeat them, in the College Chapel, in the Parish Church, sometimes with the elevating accessories of Cathedral worship, sometimes

‘Where no organ’s peal  
Invests the stern and naked prayer.’

If we have no sympathy with their tenderness or severity, their penitence or joy, their words of prediction or invitations to prayer—if all their sighs for Passiontide and their songs for Easter touch no responsive chords in our souls—if the Divine Hero of the Messianic Psalms speaks to us from the Cross and from the Throne, and we are deaf alike to His pathos and His majesty—then we may doubt whether our character is moulded after the type of saints, whether all is well with us.

More than fifty generations of Christian believers bear witness that, when we sing the Psalms with fair weather in the soul, we still hear sweet voices from distant hills, and the soft sighing of an eternal sea that flows towards the spot on which we stand.

The great scholar, Salmasius, in sight of death exclaimed, ‘Ah, I have lost an immensity of that most precious thing, time. If I had but one year more, it should be spent in studying the Psalms, and St. Paul’s Epistles.’ To him who now addresses you, such an opportunity has been given, as the evening of his days draws on. Writing as he has done, in the broken hours of a busy life; possessed of knowledge which, to students who have given long years to their work, must appear poor indeed; he cannot regret the impulse which led him to undertake the task. The many who know much of the Psalter will pardon his deficiencies for the sake of his reverential admiration of it. For those who are younger, their interest in the Psalms has been the preacher’s

greatest encouragement and best reward. The sight of that gallery (the undergraduates' gallery at St. Mary's, Oxford) is one which he can never forget. My sons! love and study the Psalter. You will discover that it will indeed

‘Requite  
Studious regard with opportune delight.’

In it you will find Him Whom it is best to know—JESUS, your LORD and your GOD. And as time goes on—when you bow down in penitence; when you seek for pardon; when your head is bent in sorrow; when you lie on a bed of sickness; when your lips turn white and quiver as you kneel before your dead; as the solemn hour comes, when your spirit must pass into GOD'S Presence, it has treasures which will never fail you.

The Psalter is not like a picture on canvas, upon whose surface only the light falls. It may rather be said to resemble a picture on glass, where the radiance of each day's sunshine is deeply interfused with the artist's work, where the design may be of remote antiquity, but the light and glow are of the living Present.\*

*The Rev. H. N. Oxenham.*—What is it, again, that gives to the rolling music of the Psalter, which has echoed for above 3,000 years along the corridors of the Jewish or the Christian Church, its peculiar force and charm; a sweetness that never wearies, a power that never fails, and has fitted it to record the most various experiences of individuals, and of nations, to syllable the deepest thoughts, whether of joy or sorrow, which have stirred the hearts and shaped the destinies of a hundred generations of the chosen people of GOD? It is not *only* that marvellous fulness and diversity of human utterance, that profound spirituality, that exquisite refinement and tenderness of pathos, which strike a responsive chord in our inmost being, that have made the Psalter our most cherished manual of secret

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, pp. 122, 123, 84, 85, 128, 129, 288, 289.

devotion, the most familiar and universal organ of our public praise. It is this, but it is more than this ; their inspired sympathy with every phase of the Redeemer's lifelong Passion, with every sentiment of the Heart, which gathered up and recapitulated in Itself the collective heart of Humanity, has made the songs of Israel the rightful heirloom and common ritual of Christendom.\*

*J. Baldwin Brown.*—The Jewish Psalms, in which is expressed the very spirit of the national life, have furnished the bridal hymns, the battle songs, the pilgrim marches, the penitential prayers, and the public praises of every nation in Christendom since Christendom was born. These Psalms have rolled through the din of every great European battle-field, they have pealed through the scream of the storm in every ocean-highway of the earth. Drake's sailors sang them when they clove the virgin waves of the Pacific, Frobisher's when they dashed against the barriers of the Arctic ice and night. They floated over the waters on that day of glad days when England held her Protestant freedom against Pope and Spaniard and won the naval supremacy of the world. They crossed the ocean with the *May Flower* pilgrims ; they were sung round Cromwell's camp-fires, and his Ironsides charged to their music ; while they have filled the peaceful homes of our land and of Christendom with the voice of supplication and the breath of praise. In palace halls, by happy hearths, in squalid rooms, in pauper wards, in prison cells, in crowded sanctuaries, in lonely wildernesses, everywhere these Jews have uttered our moan of contrition and our song of triumph, our tearful complaint, and our wrestling, conquering prayer.

\* *The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, pp. 295, 296.

## BOOK I.

### PSALMS I.—XLI.

IN the Hebrew text the Book of Psalms is divided into five books, each of which has a separate heading, not translated in our English Bible. But another sign of the five-fold division of the Psalms can be followed in the English, for each of the books ends with a doxology.

‘The Psalter is the congregation’s five-fold word to the LORD, even as the *Thora* (the Law) is the LORD’s five-fold word to the congregation.’—*Delitzsch*.

· What the heart is in man, that the Psalter is in the Bible.'—*Joh. Arndt.*

## PSALM I.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The radically distinct lot of the pious and the ungodly.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Preface Psalm.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A summary of the instructions concerning the various *Christian* graces, which *is contained in* the canon of the nine Beatitudes in Matthew.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Perhaps Solomon, for following reasons.

(1) It is earlier than the time of Jeremiah, for it is his habit to quote from, or allude to, earlier times.

(2) The word rendered ‘mockers,’ ‘scorners,’ in verse 1, occurs nowhere else in the whole Psalter, but is frequently applied, in the earlier chapters of the Proverbs, to those who set themselves to despise and scoff at religion. This, and the somewhat proverbial form of the Psalm, might lead us to ascribe it even to Solomon himself.

(3) The general doctrine of the poem, moreover, falls in with his reign, and with what may be gathered from the Proverbs as to the religious condition of the nation.

(4) The imagery of the Psalm is such as Solomon might naturally have employed.

(5) If, as appears probable, Solomon made a collection of his father’s poetry for the services of the Temple, he might have prefixed this Psalm by way of preface, and this circumstance would account for the absence of any inscription.

*The Whole Psalm.*—The absence of any inscription, which

is rare in the first book, seems to indicate that this Psalm was from the first regarded in the light merely of an introduction. . . . In some MSS. it is not numbered at all, being treated simply as a prologue or preface. This must have been a very early arrangement, as our present second Psalm is quoted as the first (according to the best readings) in Acts xiii. 33, where the words 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' are cited as ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Ψαλμῷ. In other MSS., again, the two Psalms appear as one. And, accordingly, Albertus Magnus says: 'Psalmus primus incipit a beatitudine et terminatur in beatitudine,' alluding to the 'Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly' (i. 1), and 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him' (ii. 12).\*

*The Principle of Antiphons.*—Some observation may be made on the manifold significance of the Psalms, and on the mode adopted by the ancient Church for displaying that significance to the minds of the faithful.

This may be exemplified by the treatment which the first Psalm has received in some Western liturgies. In them the first Psalm is appointed to be used on various occasions—*e.g.*, in the ordinary Sunday services, at the Commemoration of Martyrs, on Passion Sunday, the Commemoration of Confessors, on Easter Day and on Whitsun Day.

As to the first, the daily duty of the Christian, as set forth in this Psalm, was commended to their religious meditation by the Antiphon 'Serve the LORD in fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence.' As to the second, this same Psalm was made to declare the true character of the Christian martyr by means of the Antiphon 'His delight was in the law of the LORD day and night.'

On Passion Sunday this Psalm was made to speak of CHRIST, as He who walked not in the way of the ungodly, and who when hanging on the cross was like the tree who brings forth his fruit in due season, and whose leaf will not wither. At Easter the Antiphon is, 'I am That I am; and My counsel is

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 105.



not with the wicked, but in the law of the LORD is My delight. Alleluia.'

The Common of Confessor and Bishop directs us to another verse: 'Blessed is the man who doth exercise himself in the law of the LORD. His will remaineth day and night, and all things whatsoever he doeth shall prosper,' thus referring the Psalm to the study and doctrine of the saint whom the Church commemorates.

On Whitsun Day, in ordinary Breviaries, the Antiphon is: 'Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind: Alleluia! Alleluia!'

This is a general observation which the reader may apply to other Psalms, and he will find his pains amply rewarded by the study of the ancient Liturgies, as illustrating the Christian significance of the Psalms, by means of the Antiphons annexed to them in the religious services of great festivals of the Christian year.

The same Psalm was said at Christmas, said at Easter, said in Lent, said at Whitsuntide, said on the Festival of Martyrs, said in the Office for the Dead; it could not, at all these seasons, be recited with the same feelings, in the same frame of mind. Its different emphasis required to be brought out; the same sun-ray from the HOLY GHOST rested indeed, at all times, on the same words; but the prism of the Church separated that colourless light into its component rays; into the violet of penitence, the crimson of martyrdom, the gold of the highest seasons of Christian gladness.

Hence arose the wonderful system of Antiphons, which out of twenty different significations, definitely for the time being, fixed one, which struck the right key-note, and enabled the worshipper to sing with the Spirit, and to sing with the understanding also. Ancient as is the alternate chanting of Psalms in the churches it may be doubted whether that of Antiphons is not of even more venerable antiquity; and the relation of Socrates about the vision of St. Ignatius, and his introduction, into the service of the Church on earth, of that which he had heard in the

Church in heaven, more probably refers to this system, than to that of responsory chanting.

An Antiphon, then, in the original sense of the word, was the intercalation of some fragment or verse between the verses of the Psalm which was then being sung; one choir taking the Psalm, the other the intercalated portion. The original practice became obsolete in the tenth century. The first change was undoubtedly the repetition of the Antiphon, before and after each Psalm only. A still further abbreviation shortly took place. It was now, on ordinary occasions, said only so far as the mediation at the commencement; and repeated entire at the end of the Psalm. Festivals were distinguished by doubling the Antiphon, *i.e.*, saying the whole before as well as after. And then came the last step, the binding several Psalms under one Antiphon.

These Antiphons are grounded on ancient expositions of the Psalms—Origen, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom—and from the extant expositions of the Latin Fathers, especially St. Hilary, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.\*

*Metrical Version of the Psalm.*—Here is a very curious metrical version of this psalm. The scarce old book (a small octavo of sixteen leaves) from which these very odd ‘cuttit and clippit’ verses are given by Brydges as a specimen, is entitled: ‘The Mindes Melodie, contayning certayne Psalmes of the kinglie prophete David, applyed to a new pleasant tune verie comfortable to everie one that is rightlie acquainted therewith. Edinburgh. Printed by Robert Charteris, printer to the king’s most excellent Majestie, 1605. Cum privilegio regali.’

What kind of ‘a new pleasant tune’ such lines were ‘applyed to’ does not appear; but it must have been quite as whimsical as the measure is original:

‘Blest is the man,  
Yea, happie than,  
By grace that can

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\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 2; Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., pp. 34 and 46.

Eschew ill counsell and the godles gates ;  
 And walks not in  
 The way of sin,  
 Nor doth begin  
 To sit with mockers in the scornfull sates ;  
 But in JEHOVAH'S law  
 Delites aright,  
 And studies it to know,  
 Both day and night  
 That man shall bee  
 Like to the tree  
 Fast planted by the running river growes,  
 That fruite doth beare  
 In tyme of yeare  
 Whose leafe shall never fade, nor rute unloose.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—The prophet Jeremiah in chapter xvii., and verses 7 and 8, has quoted or imitated this Psalm ; he says, ‘Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

‘For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh ; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.’

*Verse 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the water-side.*  
 —Guy Carleton was a sturdy Cavalier and Bishop of Chichester from 1678 to 1685. The only record of his episcopate is a long letter to Sancroft, the Primate, describing with much indignation a reception given at Chichester to the Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II., at a time when he was endeavouring to put himself at the head of a party disaffected to the king and the Duke of York. ‘The great men of our Cathedrall,’ says the loyal old bishop, ‘welcomed him with belles and bonfires, made by wood had from their houses to flare before his lodgings. . . . The next day Dr. Edes, one of the Canons who had officiated the night before as Chaplain, went to his lodging, caused the way to be swept, although the weather was dry enough, and conducted him to the church. He was ushered into the dean’s seat with a voluntary upon the

\* *Notes and Queries*, p. 43.

organ. Before the sermon a part of the first Psalm was ordered to be sung : “ *He shall be like the tree that growes fast by river syde.*”

“The anthem at evening prayer was, “The Slaughter of King Saul and his People upon the Mountains of Gilboa,” but not a word, I warrant you, of the “kinge’s enemies to perish,” or that upon his head his crown might long flourish ;’ and the indignant prelate goes on to say how, after dark, the rabble came to his house and demanded wood for bonfires, and when it was refused, shouted that the bishop was an old Popish rogue, shot three times into the house, and followed up their shots with a volley of stones.\*

*Verses 3 and 4.*—Dean Stanley says there is one tree, only to be found in the valley of the Jordan, but too beautiful to be entirely passed over, the oleander, with its bright blossoms and dark green leaves, giving the aspect of a rich garden to any spot where it grows. It is rarely, if ever, alluded to in the Scriptures. But it may be the ‘*tree planted by the “streams” of water which bringeth forth his fruit in due season,*’ and ‘*whose leaf shall not wither.*’†

*Verse 7. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.*

‘Thou knowest, LORD, the weariness and sorrow  
Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest.  
Cares of to-day, and burdens for to-morrow,  
Blessings implored, and sins to be confest,—  
I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,  
And lay them at Thy feet—Thou knowest, LORD.

‘Thou knowest all the past—how long and blindly  
On the dark mountain the lost wanderer strayed,  
How the good Shepherd followed, and how kindly  
He bore it home, upon His shoulders laid,  
And healed the bleeding wounds, and soothed the pain,  
And brought back life, and hope, and strength again.

‘Thou knowest all the present—each temptation,  
Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear ;  
All to myself assigned of tribulation,  
Or to beloved ones, than self more dear !

\* *Diocesan History of Chichester*, p. 236.

† *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 146.

All pensive memories, as I journey on,  
Longings for vanished smiles, and voices gone !

‘Thou knowest all the future—gleams of gladness,  
By stormy clouds too quickly overcast,—  
Hours of sweet fellowship, and parting sadness—  
And the dark river to be crossed at last :—  
Oh, what could confidence and hope afford  
To tread that path, but this—*Thou knowest, Lord !*’\*

*The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.*—In the following passage Shakespeare seems to use the word in the same sense, viz., to acknowledge, approve, bless : ‘I know you are my eldest brother, and, in the gentle condition of blood, you should so *know* me’ (*As You Like It*, Act I., Sc. i.).†

## PSALM II.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The kingdom of GOD and of His CHRIST, to which everything must bow.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Psalm of Messiah the Prince.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning the call of the Gentiles, and prophetic allusion to the Passion of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It would be better to connect the psalm with the events mentioned in 2 Sam. x. There we find a confederacy of Syrians, Ammonites, and others who had formerly been subdued (2 Sam. vii. 3, 12), and who were now making a last effort for their independence.

Just before this, too (chap. vii. 14), we have the promise to which allusion seems to be made in verse 7 of the Psalm.

*The Whole Psalm.*—‘The Psalms of the Passion’ are ii., xxii., lix., lxi., and lxxxviii., and they are among the prayers and sermons in ‘The Prymer set forth by the King’s Majesty (Henry VIII.) and his Clergy (1545).’‡

\* Author of *Hymns from the Land of Luther*.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 86.

‡ Proctor on *The Prayer-Book*, p. 263.

*The six royal Psalms*—this Psalm is the first of these Psalms ; the others are xx., xxi., xlv., lxxii., and cx.

*These two Psalms (the first and second) are continuous* in some arrangements ; the separation, however, is at least seven hundred years old, and the subjects are different.\*

*Of the Proper Psalms for Easter Day*, this is the first, and the second verse, ‘The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together : against the LORD and against His Anointed,’ St. Peter declares (in Acts iv. 25, 26), was partly accomplished by CHRIST’S death. To this agree St. Clement, St. Irenæus, St. Hippolytus, St. Hilary, and all the Catholic Fathers, and, therefore, the Church has connected this Psalm with the Paschal season by appointing it as a Proper Psalm for the great Festival of the Resurrection, and it is connected with our LORD’S triumph and its glorious consequences to the world by the antiphon in the Western liturgies :

‘ Pistulari Patrem, Alleluia !  
Dedit mihi gentes, Alleluia !  
Hæreditatem, Alleluia ! †

*Verse 9. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron ; and break them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.*—In Abdiel’s speech to Satan there is a beautiful allusion to this passage of the Psalmist, of which it is an excellent illustration :

‘ Henceforth  
No more be troubled how to quit the yoke  
Of God’s Messiah ; those indulgent laws  
Will not be now vouchsafed ; other decrees  
Against thee are gone forth without recall.  
That golden sceptre which thou didst reject  
Is now an iron rod to bruise and break  
Thy disobedience.’

*Paradise Lost, v. ‡*

*Verse 10. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.*—After King Charles’s murder Cromwell had caused a medal to be struck bearing the in-

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 263.

† Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 2.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 6.

scription: 'Et nunc Reges intelligite,' and now Bossuet (the saintly 'Eagle of Meaux') took the same words, 'Et nunc Reges intelligite: erudimini qui judicatis terram. Servite DOMINO in timore: et exultate ei cum tremore,' as the text of his oration (over Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I.), drawing out in his opening passages how it is GOD Himself that is the Teacher of kings, and how, through 'every extremity of human events,' He had taught the royal lady for whom they mourned.\*

*Verse 11. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence.*

'Oh, how I fear Thee, living GOD!  
With deepest, tenderest fears,  
And worship Thee with trembling hope  
And penitential tears.

'Yet I may love Thee too, O LORD!  
Almighty as Thou art,  
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me  
The love of my poor heart.

'Oh, then, this worse than worthless heart  
In pity deign to take,  
And make it love Thee, for Thysell,  
And for Thy glory's sake.'†

*Verse 12. Kiss the Son lest He be angry.*—At Agrigentum in Sicily was a brazen image of the Tyrian Hercules, whose mouth and chin, as described by Cicero, 'were worn by the kisses of his worshippers.' The kiss of adoration is still practised by the Siamese pagans, and something of the same kind appears also to be yet in use with the Greek Church in Russia.‡

### PSALM III.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Morning hymn of one in distress, but confident in God.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Morning Hymn.

\* *Life of Bossuet*, p. 146.

† Frederick W. Faber.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 7.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by David concerning good things to come.

*Origin* (Perowne).—From the inscription of this Psalm learn that it was written by David when he fled from his son Absalom. Both Psalms (this and the next) it has been conjectured were composed on the same day, the one in the morning, the other in the evening of the day following that on which the king quitted Jerusalem. In verse 5 we gather that the Psalm is a morning hymn.

*The Whole Psalm*.—If the inscriptions be correct, this psalm is a proof that the Psalms are not placed in any chronological order.\*

*In Church*. — Psalms iii., xxxviii., lxiii., lxxxviii., ciii., cxliii. form the Hexapsalmus of the Greek Morning Office. After Psalm lxiii., and before Psalm lxxxviii., was repeated 'Gloria Patri' and 'Alleluia.' The Priest said the Morning Prayers collects in a low tone before the Bema, whilst the choir proceeded with the three latter Psalms. At the end of Psalm cxliii. followed again 'Gloria Patri' and 'Alleluia.' At the end of Psalm iii. verse 5 was repeated.

It is in the Benedictine rule a Psalm of Nocturn daily; in the Sarum and Roman uses it occurs in the twelve Psalms of the first Nocturn on Sunday.†

*Verse 6. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about.*—This Psalm is fitly used by the Church in commemoration of the martyrs, in whom this verse was fulfilled again and again to the letter, even by maidens and children, as they stood in the amphitheatre alone, unpitied, the mark for the cruel stare of myriads of spectators, crying: 'Christianos ad leones!'

'Thus in the arena he stood by himself, one minute, not longer :  
Here on this side a child ; on the other ten myriads pagans.

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\* Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, p. 1935.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 225.



Then did the Christians in place send up one deep supplication,  
 God would again show His praise in the mouth of babes and sucklings :  
 Trembling, nor fear none now ; but Philemon came forward a little  
 Nearer the mouth of the den, where the creaking winch told was the lion.  
 Back flew the gate ; black-maned, the beast with the roar of his fury  
 Sprang in one bound on the child,—and the child was in Abraham’s  
 bosom.’\*

*Verse 7. Up, Lord, and help me.*—Dr. Bonar, in his ‘Christ and His Church,’ says : ‘The English Prayer-Book translation is, “Up, LORD, and help me !” reminding us of the sudden, unexpected rise of the Guards at Waterloo after long and patient waiting for the seasonable moment.’

#### PSALM IV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Evening hymn of one who is unmoved before backbiters and men of little faith.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Evening Hymn.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David concerning those things that he suffered.

*Origin* (Perowne).—David had said in the previous Psalm : ‘I laid me down and slept’ ; he says in this : ‘I will lay me down in peace and sleep.’ These words evidently connect the Psalms together. That was a morning, this is an evening hymn. . . . The interval between the two Psalms may only have been the interval between the morning and evening of the same day.

*In Church.*—This is an Easter Even Psalm, according to the Sarum Use (see verse 9) ; it is also the first Psalm in the Greek late Evensong, and one of the first Psalms at Compline.

*The Whole Psalm* (St. Augustine of Hippo).—‘With what vehement and bitter sorrow was I angered at the Manichees !† and again I pitied them, for that they knew not those Sacra-

\* Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 107.

† Because, as rejecting the Old Testament, they robbed themselves of the Psalms.

ments, those medicines, and were mad against the antidote which might have recovered them of their madness. How I would they had then been somewhere near me, and without my knowing that they were there, could have beheld my countenance, and heard my words when I read the fourth Psalm in that time of my rest' (after his conversion), 'and how that Psalm wrought upon me: "When I called, the GOD of my righteousness heard me; in tribulation Thou enlargedst me. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, and hear my prayer." Would that what I uttered on these words they could hear without my knowing whether they heard, lest they should think I spake it for their sakes! Because, in truth, neither should I speak the same things, nor in the same way, if I perceived that they heard and saw me; nor if I spake them would they so receive them, as when I spake by and for myself before Thee out of the natural feelings of my soul.

'I trembled for fear, and again kindled with hope and with rejoicing in Thy mercy, O FATHER; and all issued forth both by mine eyes and voice, when Thy good SPIRIT turning unto us said: "O ye sons of men, how long slow of heart? Why do ye love vanity and seek after a lie?" For I had "loved vanity, and sought after a lie." "And Thou, O LORD," hast already "magnified Thy Holy One, raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at Thy right hand," whence "from on high" He should "send" His "promise," the "Comforter, the SPIRIT of truth." And He had already sent Him, but I knew it not; He had sent Him, because He was now magnified, rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven. For then "the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." And the prophet cries, "How long, slow of heart? Why do ye love vanity and seek after leasing? Know this, that the LORD hath magnified His Holy One." He cries out: "How long?" He cries out: "Know this;" and I so long, not knowing, "loved vanity and sought after leasing"; and, therefore, I heard and trembled, because it was spoken unto such as I remembered myself to have been. For in those phantoms

which I had held for truths was there “vanity and lying”; and I spake aloud many things earnestly and forcibly in the bitterness of my remembrance. Which, would they had heard, who yet “love vanity and seek after lying”! They would, perchance, have been troubled, and have vomited it up; and “Thou wouldst hear them when they cried unto Thee,” for by a true death in the flesh did He die for us, who now “intercedeth unto Thee for us.”\*

*Verse 2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme Mine honour, and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?*—Chrysostom said once, ‘that if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have a prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpets of the archangel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach on no other texts than in the Psalms, “O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?”’†

‘In his praise  
Have almost stamped the *leasing*’ (i.e., made the lie current).‡  
*Coriolanus*, Act V., sc. ii.

*Verse 4. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.*—Thomas à Kempis, in his ‘Imitation of Christ,’ says: ‘If thou desirest true contrition of heart, enter into thy secret chamber, and shut out the tumults of the world, as it is written: “Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.” In thy chamber thou shalt find what abroad thou shalt too often lose. The more thou visitest thy chamber, the more thou wilt enjoy it; the less thou comest thereunto, the more thou wilt loathe it. If in the beginning of thy conversion thou art content to

\* *Confessions of St. Augustine*, p. 266.

† Thomas Brooks, 1608—1680.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 37.

remain in it, and keep to it well, it will afterwards be to thee a dear friend, and a most pleasant comfort.\*

*Verse 7. Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.*

‘Unveil, O LORD, and on us shine  
In glory and in grace;  
This gaudy world grows pale before  
The beauty of Thy face.

‘Till Thou art seen, it seems to be  
A sort of fairy ground,  
Where suns unsetting light the sky,  
And flowers and fruits abound.

‘But when Thy keener, purer beam  
Is pour’d upon our sight,  
It loses all its power to charm,  
And what was day is night.’†

*Verse 9. I will lay me down in peace and take my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me dwell in safety.*—These words were spoken by Richard Poor (*Ricardus dictus Pauper*), thirty-seventh Bishop of Durham (A.D. 1228). He was a pious and learned man, and had risen to be Bishop, first of Chichester, and then of Salisbury. While Bishop of Salisbury he removed the see from Old Sarum, and began a new cathedral, the same stately church which now exists. The account left us of his last moments is interesting: ‘When his death drew near, seeing that the hour was come that he should depart out of the world, he called the people together, and in a solemn discourse told them that his decease was at hand. The next day, though his disease had increased, he preached another sermon to the congregation, bidding all farewell, and asking pardon if he had offended any. The third day he gathered his family together with all his chief acquaintance, and divided among them what he thought was reasonable. . . . Having bidden all his friends farewell, he said Compline, and when he came to the words: “*I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest,*” he slept in the LORD, April 15, 1237.’‡

\* *Of the Imitation of Christ*, Book I., chap. xx.: ‘Of the Love of Solitude and Silence.’

† John Henry Newman.

‡ *Diocesan History of Durham*, p. 157.

*In peace.*—The Ethiopic version reads: ‘*In peace in Him I will lay me down*’:

‘Pillow where, lying,  
Love rests its head,  
Peace of the dying,  
Life of the dead:  
Path of the lowly,  
Prize at the end,  
Breath of the holy,  
SAVIOUR and Friend.’\*

## PSALM V.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Morning prayer before going to the house of GOD.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—a prayer in the name of the Church when he went early into the house of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Like Psalm iii., this is a morning prayer, but the circumstances of the singer are different. He is not now fleeing from open enemies, but he is in peril from the machinations of those who are secretly lying in wait for him (verses 9, 10). He is not now an exile, but can still enter the house of the Lord and bow himself towards His holy dwelling-place (verse 7). David, no doubt, is the author.

*In Church.*—Psalm v. was the first of the three used in the Eastern Office of the first hour. It was, after the 51st, the first Psalm of Monday Lauds. †

*This Psalm is appointed in the Latin Church* for use on Easter Even, when she is waiting in hope for its fulfilment in our LORD’S resurrection from the dead. The prophetic declaration of the Psalmist here, that GOD will *bless the righteous* in all his sufferings, has received its full accomplishment in ‘JESUS CHRIST, *the righteous.*’ ‡

\* Dr. Monsell.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 225.

‡ Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 8.

Let every member of the *English Church* notice how the double feeling expressed in the Jewish daily sacrifice, and implied in Psalm v., is developed in our own Communion Office; the sense of personal unworthiness in the prayer preceding that of consecration, the renewed self-dedication to God in the first prayer in the post-communion.\*

*Verse 1. . . . Consider my meditation.*—Bishop Horne translates the word ‘meditation’ by ‘dove-like mourning,’ and it very beautifully and appropriately recalls to one’s recollection the poetical imagery of the prophet where the captive maidens of Huzzab are described ‘as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts,’ repeating their plaintive note as well as the mournful movements of their head and neck.†

*Verses 1-6.*—There is a sweet passage of the holy Bernard as to the efficacy of prayer, which he represents as a messenger despatched from the beleaguered holy city, and hastening on her errand to the gates of heaven, borne on the wings of faith and zeal. JESUS hears her knock, opens the gates of mercy, attends her suit, and promises comfort and redress. Back returns prayer laden with the news of consolation; she bears with her a promise, and delivers it into the hands of faith, that were her enemies more innumerable than the locusts of Egypt, and more strong than the giant sons of Anak, yet power and mercy should fight for us, and we should be delivered.‡

*Verse 7. But as for me, I will come into Thine house, even upon the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple.*—Repeated by the Jews of Italy on entering the synagogue.

*Verse 8. Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make Thy way plain before my face.*

\* *Introduction to the Study of the Psalms*, by J. F. Thrupp, vol. v., p. 69.

† *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by Barton Bourchier, vol. i., p. 21.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 23.

‘ Thy way, not mine, O LORD,  
 However dark it be ;  
 Lead me by Thine own Hand,  
 Choose out the path for me.

‘ Smooth let it be, or rough,  
 It will be still the best ;  
 Winding, or straight, it leads  
 Right onward to Thy rest.

‘ The kingdom that I seek  
 Is Thine, so let the way  
 That leads to it be Thine,  
 Else I must surely stray.’\*

*Verse 8. . . . Make Thy way plain.*—There is an especial pathos in selecting this verse as the Antiphon for that Office of the Dead which takes its name *Dirge* from the Vulgate *Dirige*. It is the cry of the parting soul, about to begin its mystic journey to another world by a road beset with ghostly enemies, and calling on GOD for help against them and for light and guidance by the way.

‘ Through death’s valley, dim and dark,  
 JESUS guide thee in the gloom,  
 Show thee where His footprints mark  
 Tracks of glory through the tomb.  
 Grant him, LORD, eternal rest,  
 With the spirits of the blest.’†

*Verse 13. . . . With Thy favourable kindness wilt Thou defend him as with a shield.*—Luther, when making his way into the presence of Cardinal Cajetan, who had summoned him to answer for his heretical opinions at Augsburg, was asked by one of the Cardinal’s servants where he should find a shelter if his patron, the Elector of Saxony, should desert him? ‘Under the shield of heaven!’ was the reply.

\* Horatius Bonar.

† Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 121.

## PSALM VI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A cry for mercy under judgment.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The first of the Penitential Psalms.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—doctrine and instruction ; also concerning mercy.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is said to be a Psalm of David, and there is no reason to question this, although at the same time there is nothing in it to guide us to any peculiar circumstance of his life.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This is the first of the seven Penitential Psalms ; the seven weapons wherewith to oppose the seven deadly sins ; the seven prayers, inspired by the sevenfold Spirit to the repenting sinner ; the seven guardians, for seven days of the week ; the seven companions, for the seven Canonical Hours of the day.\*

Few realize all that is conveyed by the words of the first of the Penitential Psalms used on Ash Wednesday. It is the picture of a wan face, thin and prematurely old, of a form like some flower, pale and withered in the fierce sunshine of the wrath of God.†

Repeated daily by the Jews mornings and afternoons, except on the Sabbath and Festivals.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is the second Psalm in the Greek Late Evensong. It is also one of the Psalms appointed in the Roman Office for the Visitation of the Sick. It is also a Proper Psalm for Ash Wednesday.‡ The first two verses are used as a Prokeimenon (or Prelude) at Unction of the Sick in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

*Verse 1.* *O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation.*—This

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 125.

† *Witness of the Psalms to Christianity*, p. 126.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 227.



was the favourite Psalm of the Queen of Francis I. of France, and which she sang at Court (Clement Marot's metrical version) to a fashionable jig, *i.e.*, a tune, not a dance.

' Ne venilles pas, O Sire,  
Me reprendre en ton ire.'\*

*Verse 2. Miserere mei, Domine.*—These words, and *Miserere*, come over and over again in the *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*; here is one such touching entry in his Diary :

'July 14th, 1863.—Survey *my Life*. What wonderful advantages—my father's son, his favourite and so companion! My good mother, such surroundings. My love for my blessed one (his wife) compassing me with an atmosphere of holiness—my ordination—my married life—my ministerial. Checkendon, its blessings, and its work opening my heart. Brightstone, Alverstoke, the Archdeaconry, the Deanery, Bishopric, friends. My stripping bare in 1841. My children. Herbert's death-bed. How has God dealt, and what have I *really* done for Him? *Miserere Domine* is all my cry.†

*Verses 2, 3.—Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak . . . how long wilt Thou punish me?*—'Oh dear! I wish this Grange business were well over. It occupies me (the mere preparation for it) to the exclusion of all quiet thought and placid occupation. To have to care for my dress, this time of day, more than I ever did when young and pretty and happy (GOD bless me, to think I was once all that!), on penalty of being regarded as a blot on the Grange gold and azure, is really too bad. *Ach Gott!* if we had been left in the sphere of life we belong to, how much better it would have been for us in many ways! Ah! the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak as water. To-day I walked with effort one little mile, and thought it a great feat. Sleep has come to look to me the highest virtue and the greatest happiness; that is, good sleep, untroubled, beautiful, like a child's. Ah me! "*Have mercy*

\* *Curiosities of Literature* (Psalm-singing), vol. ii., p. 477.

† *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. iii., p. 408.

*upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but Thou, O Lord, how long?"*\*

*Miserere mei, Domine.*—These words are inscribed in Roman characters on an old house in Edinburgh. ‘We do not remember,’ says Paxton Hood, ‘ever to have seen a more pathetic inscription than that which tells us a sad story, although a story altogether unknown, at the head of Rae’s Close, in the Canongate: “Misere mei, Domine; a peccato, probo, debito, et morte subita, melibera, 1618.”’ †

*Verse 3. Lord, how long wilt Thou punish me?*—This—*Domine, quousque?* was Calvin’s motto. The most intense pain under trouble could never extort from him another word. ‡

*Verse 7. My beauty is gone for very trouble.*

‘Sunk was that eye  
Of sov’reignty; and in th’emaciate cheek  
Had penitence and anguish deeply drawn  
Their furrows premature, forestalling time,  
And shedding upon thirty’s brow more sorrows  
Than threescore winters, in their natural course,  
Would else have sprinkled there.’ §

## PSALM VII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Appeal to the Judge of the whole earth against slander, and requiring good with evil.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Song of the Slandered Saint.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—the conversion of the Gentiles to the Faith, and a confession of the Trinity.

*Origin* (Perowne).—We must look to circumstances like those recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-sixth chapters

\* Mrs. Carlyle’s *Journal*, 1855.

† *Scottish Characteristics*, Paxton Hood, p. 217.

‡ Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 19.

§ Southey.

of the First Book of Samuel, and to the reproaches of a Benjamite named Cush, a leading and unscrupulous partisan of Saul's, as having given occasion to the Psalm.

*Verse 1. O Lord my God, in Thee have I put my trust.*—John Barneveldt, Advocate and Keeper of the Seals in the newly founded State of Holland; Pensionary Rambolt, Horgenboets, and Hugo Von Grost, or, as he called himself, Hugo Grotius (one of the greatest scholars in the Arminian and Calvinist controversy), were arrested by command of Maurice of Nassau, the Stadtholder. The three prisoners fasted and prayed in their separate chambers, and each, unknown to the other, *sang the seventh Psalm*, 'Preserve me, O LORD, for in Thee have I put my trust.'

Barneveldt was executed by the sword, and on the scaffold spoke to the people: 'Men, do not believe that I am a traitor to my country. I have ever acted uprightly and loyally as a good patriot, and as such I die;' and we are told there was not a sound in answer. He then took a silk cap from his servant, and drew it over his eyes, saying: 'CHRIST shall be my guide. O LORD my Heavenly FATHER, receive my spirit.'\*

*Verse 2. Lest he devour my soul like a lion, and tear it in pieces, while there is none to help.*—This verse is the Antiphon for the Office for the Dead, wherein the Church prays for help against the assaults of him who 'walketh about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,' thinking vainly that there is *none to help*, for

'The lamb is in the fold,  
In perfect safety penned;  
The lion once had hold,  
And thought to make an end:  
But One came by with wounded side,  
And for the sheep the Shepherd died.†

*Verse 13. If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword, He hath bent His bow and made it ready.*—Milton has furnished the 'Filial Godhead' with the same weapon of vengeance:

\* Cameos from *English History*, cci.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 132.

'Go then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father's might ;  
Ascend my chariot, guide the rapid wheels,  
That shake heaven's basis ; bring forth all my war,  
My bow and thunder ; my almighty arms  
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh.'

*Paradise Lost*, vi.\*

*Verse 17. His travail shall come upon his own head, and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate.*—Pate = head, once in Bible, frequent in Shakespeare.

'Enter, skirmishing, the Retainers of Gloster and Winchester with bloody pates.'—*King Henry VI.*, 1st Part, Act III., Sc. i.

*Cf.* also *King Henry VI.*, 2nd Part, Act II., Sc. i. :

'*King Henry.* O God, what mischief work the wicked ones,  
Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby !'

Also *cf.* the words of Suffolk to the other Lords assembled in the council chamber, with a view to the overthrow of Cranmer :

'I told ye all  
When we first put this dangerous stone a-rolling,  
'Twould fall upon ourselves.'

*King Henry VIII.*, Act V., Sc. ii.†

## PSALM VIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The praise of the CREATOR'S glory, sung by the starry heavens to puny man.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Song of the Astronomer.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—a prophecy that sucklings, children and youth should sing with Hosannas to the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowue).—This Eighth Psalm describes the impression produced on the heart of David as he gazed upon the heavens by night. . . . Nearly all critics are unanimous in regarding this as one of David's Psalms ; there is more differ-

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 17.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, pp. 41, 157.

ence of opinion as to the time when it was composed. . . . David, it may almost certainly be said, is still young. . . . One thing seems clear, that even if the Psalm was not written during David's shepherd life, it must, at least, have been written while the memory of that time was fresh in his heart, and before the bitter expression of his later years had bowed and saddened his spirit. Beyond this we cannot speak with anything like certainty.

*In Church.*—A Psalm in the Roman office for Baptism of Adults; also a Proper Psalm for Ascension Day. Bishop Wordsworth says that the Church in using this Psalm on the festival of the Ascension of her LORD into heaven, teaches us its meaning.

*The Whole Psalm.*—Martin Luther, labouring under a strange delusion, fancied a dog had taken possession of his bed. Regarding this apparition as a work of Satan, the terrified Luther sunk on his knees, and recited the eighth Psalm. His fears were soon dispelled, for on arising he found himself the only occupant of his chamber.

*Verse 1. How excellent is Thy Name in all the world.*

'JESU'S Name all good doth claim,  
Sweetest sound the tongue can frame,  
Meriteth imperial fame.  
When heard, it giveth joy :  
In it a father's glory beams,  
In it a mother's beauty seems,  
In it a brother's honour gleams,  
It lifteth brethren high '\*

*Verse 2. Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.*—This verse forms the *prokeimon*, or prefatory verse before the Epistle (Eph. i. 16-20 ; iii. 18-21) in the little Service provided by the Greek Church for the purpose of asking the blessing of GOD on the duties (school) now resumed. 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast

\* Miss. Sarisb. The Sequence, *Jesus dulcis Nazarenus* (Dr. Nerle's Commentary, vol. i., p. 142).

Thou ordained praise.' 'My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation.'\*

*Edward Irving.*—The following is an extract from a letter of Edward Irving's written to his sister-in-law, Elizabeth, who was then at Kirkcaldy, in the paternal home; the date of the letter is October 13, 1830:

'What do you think of this little song:

"Come, My little lambs,  
And feed by My side,  
And I will give you to eat of My Body,  
And to drink of the Blood of My FLESH,  
And ye shall be filled with the HOLY GHOST,  
And whosoever believeth not on Me  
Shall be cast out;  
But he that believeth on Me  
Shall feed with Me  
Beside My FATHER."

'... I called the child, and said: "Maggie, my dear, who taught you that song?" She said: "Nobody; I made it one day after bath;" and so I thought upon the words, "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings I have ordained praise.*" and I was comforted. Read it to your father and mother, and tell my dear sister Margaret to set it to a tune, and sing it of an evening at her house when she goes home, and think of the sweet and of the sad hours she, as well as you, dear Elizabeth, have passed with us.†

*George Whitfield.*—In a postscript to one of his letters, in which he details his persecution when first preaching at Moorfields, Whitfield says: 'I cannot help adding that several little boys and girls, who were fond of sitting round me on the pulpit where I preached, and handed to me people's notes—though they were often pelted with eggs, dirt, etc., thrown at me—never once gave way, but, on the contrary, every time I was struck turned up their little weeping eyes and seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me. God make them in their

\* *Sketches of the Græco-Russian Church*, p. 162.

† *Life of Edward Irving*, p. 301.

growing years great and living martyrs for Him who “*out of the mouth of babes and sucklings perfects praise.*”\*

*Felicitas*, with her seven sons, was left a widow in the voluptuous court of Antoninus, when she devoted her whole life to the Christian education of her children, or to deeds of charity and mercy to the poor of Rome. It was the strict life of the mother and her seven boys which drove the authorities to urge on the attention of the Emperor the importance of ridding Rome of them, as their refusal to sacrifice induced others to hesitate about the same practice. The Emperor yielded, and when they stood before the judge many were there to see them. They were Roman boys, with flashing eye and dark Italian hair. Januarius, the eldest, stood first by the mother's side—her first-born. Few Roman boys could claim so dignified a manner and so calm a front. On the other side of the lady stood little Martial, the idol of all at home, with blue eyes and fair hair. On either side were Felix, Sylvanus, Alexander, Philip and Vitalis. Such was the group of young martyrs, eagerly gazing at the magistrate and then at their mother. There was a deep silence. All admired, some pitied. The executioners were present with their instruments of torture.

‘Woman,’ said the magistrate, ‘*sacrifice.* You *never* will consign to an ignominious and cruel death such boys as those!’ ‘Sir,’ said *Felicitas*, ‘*we* do not count the martyr's death ignominious; and as to the cruelty or pain, do you imagine that Roman Christians will not bear that for the King of Martyrs which they will for the Emperor?’ ‘Woman,’ said the angry magistrate, ‘you dare not as a mother let these children die simply because *you* refuse to sacrifice!’ ‘Let *me* speak,’ said little Martial, looking up into his mother's face, while he covered her hand with kisses. Januarius had stepped forward, but the movement of Martial made him pause. The mother consented. ‘Speak, my child,’ said she; ‘*out of the mouth of*

\* *Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 90.

*babes and sucklings He perfecteth praise.*' Fearless and calm, the young boy stepped forward. 'Sir,' said he, as he sunk with one knee on the step, 'my mother bids me speak. I am the youngest here, and I know that my six brothers all hold to what I say. We are all Christians, servants of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who has promised to those who love Him to the death a glorious home above. We will *not sacrifice*, and if He will help us, we will go to any death you may choose. But we will never give up JESUS.' He remained kneeling; he yet had a prayer to offer. 'Sir, may I ask one favour? Let *me* die first, and that may *help* my brothers.' The magistrate's fury now took the place of persuasion. Each in turn was taken out and scourged, and then, bleeding, lacerated and weak, they were led to separate dungeons. They spent the night in earnest prayer and songs of praise, and often little Martial's voice rang clear above all. The morning broke at last, and they were again brought out before the magistrate, who looked more wrathful than ever. 'Let the child come first; he asked for it, and he shall have it.' 'Go, my beloved child,' said the mother—'go and lead the way for us. Be *first* to see the LORD, and *first* to wear His crown.' The child knelt, and as the name of JESUS crossed his lips, the sword of the executioner struck his head from his body. Januarius was hurried away and beaten to death with lashes laden with lead. Felix and Philip were more quickly despatched with clubs. Sylvanus was hurled over a precipice. Vitalis and Alexander were, like Martial, beheaded.

Felicitas had seen the last of her boys. She had hoped that she was to follow, but the refined cruelty of her tormentor ordered her back to her dungeon, where she remained four weary months, at the end of which time she was condemned to die by beheading.\*

*Verse 2. That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*—The Italic version has, 'that Thou mightest still the enemy and the *defender*.' This verse, happening to occur in the Psalms, was

\* Rev. E. Monro: *Monthly Packet*, vol. ii., p. 420.



taken as a direct sign from heaven of approval of the consecration of St. Martin to the Episcopate, his chief opponent being a prelate named *Defensor*.

*Verse 4. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ; and the son of man, that Thou visitest him ?*

‘ Lord, what is man that Thou  
So mindful art of him ? Or what’s the son  
Of man, that Thou the highest heaven didst bow,  
And to his aide didst runne ?

‘ Man’s but a piece of clay  
That’s animated by Thy heavenly breath,  
And when that breath Thou tak’st away,  
Hee’s clay again by death.  
He is not worthy of the least  
Of all Thy mercies at the best.

‘ Baser than clay is he,  
For sin hath made him like the beasts that perish,  
Though next the angels he was in degree ;  
Yet this beast Thou dost cherish.  
He is not worthy of the least  
Of all Thy mercies ; hee’s a beast.

‘ Worse than a beast is man,  
Who, after Thine own image made at first,  
Became the divel’s sonne by sin. And can  
A thing be more accurst ?  
Yet Thou Thy greatest mercy hast  
On this accursed creature cast.

‘ Thou didst Thyself abase,  
And put off all Thy robes of majesty,  
Taking his nature to give him Thy grace,  
To save his life didst dye.  
He is not worthy of the least  
Of all Thy mercies ; one’s a feast.

‘ Lo ! man is made now even  
With the blest angels, yea, superiour farre,  
Since Christ sat down at God’s right hand in heaven,  
And God and man are one.  
Thus all Thy mercies man inherits,  
Though not the least of them he merits.’\*

*Verse 5. To crown him with glory and worship.*—From the earliest Christian epochs we find the crown looked upon as an emblem of everlasting glory, remembering the verses in the Psalms : ‘ *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour ;*

\* Thomas Washbourne, D.D., 1654.

‘Thou hast set a crown of pure gold on his head ;’ as well as the words of St. Paul, ‘Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.’

De Rossi has discovered, after much hard work, a painting of St. Cecilia on the walls of one of the cemeteries, which leads him to suppose that the burial-place of this, one of the four great virgins of the Latin Church could not be far distant. St. Cecilia has a glory round her head, with a crown in the front of her robe, calling to mind the reward foreshadowed in Solomon’s time to the godly : ‘ But the righteous live for evermore ; their reward also is with the LORD, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the LORD’S hand : for with His right hand shall He crown them, and with His arms shall He protect them ’ (Wisdom v. 15, 16). St. Eucharius, writing in the fourth century, speaks of the crown, as then looked upon, as an emblem of everlasting glory, ‘*Corona æternæ gloriæ.*’ Indeed, in the days of the Early Church, crown and martyr were synonymous ; and in the Acts of Polycarp we read ‘ that he was crowned with an incorruptible crown.’\*

### PSALM IX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hymn to the Righteous Judge after a defeat of hostile peoples.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Psalm concerning the death of the Son.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David. The Session of the Messiah, and *His* reception of the kingdom, and frustration of the enemy.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Throughout, with the exception of verse 13, the Psalm is one continued strain of triumph.

\* *Monthly Packet*, vol. xxii., p. 216.

Hence, by many it has been regarded as a song of victory, composed perhaps by David at the conclusion of the Syro-Ammonite war, or after one of his victories over the Philistines.

*The Whole Psalm.*—This is the first of the Alphabetical Psalms, which are Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 111, 112, 119, 145. . . . This mode of writing acrostically has been adopted by the Christian Church. We may refer for specimens of it to the anti-Donatistic ‘Hymnus Abecedarius’ of St. Augustine (tom. ix.), and to the poems of Gregory Nazianzen, and to the hymns, ‘A Solis Ortûs Cardine’ of Sedulius. . . . Here each of the lines of verses 1 and 2 begin with *aleph*, those of verses 3 and 4 with *beth* (*daleth* is omitted), and so till, with some variations as to the length of the stanzas, we come to verse 17, which begins with *yod*; and verse 12 of Psalm 10 begins with *caph*, verse 14 with *resh*, verse 15 with *shin*, verse 17 with *than*. Thus this ninth is coupled with the following, and they form a pair. Indeed, in the Vulg., and some other versions, they make one Psalm.\*

*Verse 11. O praise the Lord which dwelleth in Sion: show the people of His doings.*—These words suggested to Père de Bérulle the idea of founding in France the Congregation of the Oratory. De Bérulle was afterwards made a cardinal greatly against his will, and not before he successively refused the Bishoprics of Laon, Nantes and Luçon, and the Archbishopric of Lyons. It is always hard for great people to understand a man’s indifference to position and wealth, and Henry IV. was not a little perplexed at de Bérulle’s steady refusal of all his offers. ‘You will not receive what I offer?’ the King said petulantly one day, ‘then I shall get some one else to order you to do so!’ meaning, of course, the Pope. ‘Sire,’ de Bérulle answered, ‘if your Majesty presses me thus, I shall be constrained to quit the kingdom.’

The king turned to Bellegarde, saying: ‘I have done every-

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 12.

thing in my power to tempt him, and have failed ; I don't believe there is another man in the world who would resist so firmly ! As to that man,' he used henceforth to say, 'he is a very saint, he has never lost his baptismal innocence.'

De Bérulle's influence among the Huguenots was great, and he made many conversions ; so that Cardinal du Perron made one of his telling remarks, so often quoted, 'If you want to *convince* a heretic, bring him to me ; if you want to *convert* him, take him to M. de Genève (Francis de Sales) ; but if you want both to convince and convert him at once, take him to M. de Bérulle !'

Two years after his ordination, de Bérulle was saying his office, when one of those peculiar and unaccountable impressions, which most of us have experienced some time or other, was made upon him as he repeated the words 'Annuntiate inter gentes studia ejus,' '*O praise the Lord which dwelleth in Sion ; show the people of His doings*' (Ps. ix. 11). A strong desire was kindled in his mind to see a company of priests arise, whose mission should be to preach and teach the Love of God among all people.\*

*Verse 12. For when He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them, and forgetteth not the complaint of the poor.*—'I fear more for the rich than for the most degraded poor, more for Belgravia than for St. Giles' ; for the more light there is, the more responsibility.' Words of mournful foreboding from one to whom East London had been a subject of deep anxiety for half a century, Dr. Pusey.

Knowing the horrors of those dark places and cruel habitations of our land, he yet feared more for those who dwell at ease, surrounded by outward refinement, beauty and culture. '*For when He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them, and forgetteth not the complaint of the poor.*'

It was of this Mission that Bishop Wilberforce said : 'I long to go and cast myself into that Mission. There is a field in

\* *Priestly Life in France*, p. 44.

East London for as noble and knightly adventure, as ever was achieved by England's chivalry.\*

*Verse 14. That I may shew all thy praises within the PORTS of the daughter of Sion.*—In the Bible 'gates.' The word does not occur, I believe, at all in the Bible, either in this sense (though 'porter' does several times), or in its more modern use for *harbour*; Latin, portus. Shakspeare uses it in both senses, even in the same play :

'Hark, the Duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes :—  
All *ports* I'll bar.'

*King Lear*, Act II., Sc. i.

'No *port* is free, no place  
Doesn't attend my taking,  
*Ibid.*, Sc. iii.

'Then is all safe! the anchor's in the *port*.'  
*Titus Andron.*, Act IV., Sc. iv.†

*Verse 15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the same net which they hid privily, is their foot taken.*—Perhaps the most striking instance on record (of the wicked snared in his own trap), next to Haman on his own gallows, is one connected with the horrors of the French Revolution, in which we are told that, within nine months of the death of the Queen Marie Antoinette by the guillotine, every one implicated in her untimely end, her accusers, the judges, the jury, the prosecutors, the witnesses, all, every one at least whose fate is known, perished by the same instrument as their innocent victim. 'In the net which they laid for her was their own foot taken; into the pit which they digged for her did they themselves fall.‡

*Verse 16. The Lord is known to execute judgment: the ungodly is trapped in the work of His own hands.*—So the Egyptians that had cast the Israelite children into the river, found the waters of that river changed into blood; so Haman, that had

\* *Charles Lowder*, by the Author of *The Life of S. Teresa*, Preface, p. xiii.

† *Shakspeare and the Bible*, p. 39.

‡ *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by Barton Bouchier, vol. i., p. 50.

raised the gallows fifty cubits high, was hanged on those very gallows ; so Holofernes, that sought the ruin of Judith, by the hand of Judith was cut off in the midst of his sin ; so the Egyptian, the goodly man that thought to have slain Benaiah with his spear, was by that very spear himself destroyed ; so they that had laid the false accusation against Daniel, were themselves cast into the den of lions, ‘and the lions had the mastery over them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den ;’ so in later times, Galerius and Maximian, inventors of unheard-of and fearful tortures, perished by diseases unknown to physicians, and horrible beyond the power of words to describe ; so Ægeas, that sentenced St. Andrew to the Cross ; so Quintian, that inflicted on St. Agatha such extremity of torture, were themselves, almost in the very act of unrighteous judgment, summoned to appear before the righteous bar of GOD.\*

#### PSALM X.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Plaintive and supplicatory prayer under the pressure of heathenish foes at home and abroad.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Cry of the Oppressed.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Concerning the exaltation of Satan over Adam and his race ; and how the Messiah defeated his boasting.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It is impossible to say to what period of Jewish history the Psalm is to be referred. The state of Society which it supposes is peculiar. The violent oppressions belonged apparently to heathen nations, who had not yet been finally driven out of the land, but whose speedy destruction the poet contemplates (verse 16).

*Verse 9.* *For he lieth waiting secretly, even as a lion lurketh he in his den, that he may ravish the poor.*—Francis Quarles

\* *Dr. Neale on Psalms*, vol. i., p. 159.

(1592-1644) quaintly illustrates the dangers pictured in this and preceding verses.

‘The close pursuers’ busy hands do plant  
 Snares in thy substance ; snares attend thy want ;  
 Snares in thy credit ; snares in thy disgrace ;  
 Snares in thy high estate ; snares in thy base ;  
 Snares tuck thy bed, and snares surround thy board ;  
 Snares watch thy thoughts, and snares attack thy word

‘Snares in thy quiet ; snares in thy commotion ;  
 Snares in thy diet ; snares in thy devotion ;  
 Snares lurk in thy resolves ; snares in thy doubt ;  
 Snares lie within thy heart, and snares without ;  
 Snares are above thy head, and snares beneath ;  
 Snares in thy sickness ; snares are in thy death.’

*Verse 19. Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the poor : Thou preparest their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto.*—St. Vincent de Paul was never weary of asking all good Christians—men and women, religious and secular—to pray for the Clergy, especially all those about to be ordained in the Ember weeks. A humble man, going about his usual work, yet from time to time lifting up his heart in prayer, may do much to forward the Church’s life, he said.

Speaking of this one day in a Conference, St. Vincent began to quote the Psalm, ‘*Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus.*’ and not being able to continue the quotation, he turned in his simple way to his listeners, saying : ‘Who will help me?’ Whereupon someone immediately finished the verse, ‘*preparationem cordis eorum audivit auris tua.*’ ‘God bless you, sir!’ Vincent replied (it was his usual way of expressing thanks) ; and he went on with his subject.\*

## PSALM XI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Refusal to flee when in a perilous situation.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Song of the Steadfast.

\* *Priestly Life in France*, p. 239.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—When the people grieved, because he and his sons were driven into captivity; and signifying now to us Victory over the adversary.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The Psalm is so short, and so general in its character, that it is not easy to say to what circumstances in David's life it should be referred. The choice seems, however, to lie between his persecution by Saul, and the rebellion of his son Absalom.

*Verse 4. The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's seat is in Heaven.*—Milton, in his sublime description of the return of the Son from the conquest of the rebel angels, uses the same phrase :

‘ . . . He, celebrated, rode  
Triumphant through mid heaven, into the courts  
And temple of His Mighty Father, thron'd  
On high : who into glory Him receiv'd,  
Where now He sits at the right hand of bliss.

*Paradise Lost, vi.\**

*Verse 7.—Upon the ungodly He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest ; this shall be their portion to drink.*—This prophecy received its accomplishment in the reception of Christ into glory ; and through Him it will be fulfilled in all the faithful. Accordingly, this Psalm is appointed in the Latin Church for use on the Festival of the Ascension.†

*Dionysius of Carthage*, in his Rhythm, *Homo Dei creatura*, illustrates the thought of this verse :

‘ The fiery storm ; the frozen blast ;  
The darkness thickly spread ;  
The shrieks of anguish rolling past ;  
The stench, as of the dead ;  
The pressure close ; the stifling breath ;  
The sense of everlasting death ;  
The hellish crew ; the spectres dim ;  
The fear, the thirst unquenchable ;  
All these with bitter torments fill  
Their chalice to the brim.’‡

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 31.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 15.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, p. 174.



## PSALM XII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Lament and consolation in the midst of prevailing falsehood.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Good Thoughts in Bad Times.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—The contention of the wicked, and a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This, according to title, is one of David's Psalms ; but there is nothing in the circumstances, so far as we know them, of his history, which can lead us to associate the Psalm with any particular period. But it is not one or two prominent individuals, whose conduct forms the burden of the Psalmist's complaint. He is evidently smarting from the falseness and hypocrisy of the time. The defection which he deploras is a general defection.

*Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm was used by the Jews at a circumcision, when infants were brought into covenant with the Lord, whose protection is here assured to His faithful servants, in a faithless age.\*

*Luther* composed his hymn, ' Lord, look down from heaven ' (' Ach Gott vom Himmel sich darein ') after this Psalm.

*Verse 1. For the faithful are minished*.—Luther glosses, *Amens-Leute*, Amen-folk, *i.e.*, those whose heart towards God and their neighbours is true and earnest, like the Amen of a prayer.†

*Verse 2. They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour*.—It is a sad thing when it is the fashion to talk vanity. ' Ca' me, and I'll ca' thee,' is the old Scotch proverb ; give me a high-sounding character, and I will give you one. Compliments and fawning congratulations are hateful to honest men ; they

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 16.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 172.

know that if they take, they must give them, and they scorn to do either.\*

*Verses 3 to 8. The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips; and the tongue that speaketh proud things.*—It is the remark of some old Puritan writer (Thomas Adams, 1630), that the Lord has given us all our other members two-fold—two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet; but only one tongue, as we were not fitted to be intrusted with more; and when one thinks of all the unnumbered words of sin, which must enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth from every tongue, in every clime, one may *talk* of the long suffering of GOD, but it can never have entered into the heart of any to conceive of that forbearance which is provoked every day.†

### PSALM XIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Suppliant cry of one who is utterly undone.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We have been wont to call this the ‘How Long Psalm.’

*Contents* (Syriac).—The power of the adversary, and the expectation of the Lord, and of the help that cometh from Him.

*Origin* (Perowne).—In this Psalm we see a servant of GOD long and sorely tried by the persecutions of unrelenting enemies, and, as it seems to himself, forgotten and forsaken of God, pouring out the agony of his soul in prayer . . . at last Faith asserts her perfect victory (verse 5).

*In Church.*—This Psalm is the third Psalm at the Greek late Evensong.

*Verse 3. Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.*—

\* *The Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 159.

† *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by Barton Bouchier, vol. i., p. 68.

Bishop Burgess was Bishop of Maine ; he died on the 23rd of April, 1866, on his return voyage from Hayti—where he had been ordaining—and within the waters of the island, off the coast of Miragoane. At sunrise on the 22nd he embarked ; and on the morning of the 23rd, while resting on deck, with no warning which he could recognise, and with but a few minutes' warning to the single watcher (his wife) by his side, he was called to his heavenly home. It was less like death, than like a translation. 'He walked with GOD, and he was not ; for GOD took him.' On the last morning of his life, he read as usual the two chapters. They were Psalm xiii., containing the words, '*Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,*' and the twenty-second chapter of St. Luke, in which is our Saviour's promise to the penitent thief : 'This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

The last selection from the Psalter which he read on the preceding day, for the 22nd of the month, was no less striking, if we consider the words only, and forget that they were intended as a denunciation : 'Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow, and his bishopric let another take.\*'

When the little *Princess Anne Stuart*, daughter of King Charles I., lay dying at four years of age, she said she could not say her 'long prayer' (Our Father), but added, 'I can say my short prayer, "*Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.*"' Having said which she fell asleep, and entered into eternal life.

*Verses 3 and 4. Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death. Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him ; for if I be cast down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it.*—Archdeacon Freeman traces several resemblances to the Eastern Office of Compline in our Evening Service. He notices especially the repetition of the Creed (Nicene) and the LORD'S Prayer, followed by a prayer-like hymn for illumination and protection. This hymn was founded on the Psalms used in the office. It is as

\* *Memoir of Bishop Burgess of Maine.*

follows, ‘*Lighten mine eyes, O Christ my God, that I sleep not in death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him*’ (Psalm xiii. 3, 4). ‘Be Thou the helper of my soul, O GOD, for I walk through the midst of snares; deliver me from them, and save me, Thou that art good, as being the lover of men’ (Ps. xxxi. 1, 3, 5; cf. Ps. xci. 2, 3). In this hymn Mr. Freeman finds the original of our third Collect.\*

The Prayer-like hymn mentioned by Archdeacon Freeman is no doubt the Evening Hymn of St. Anatolius, who was raised to the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople in 449 A.D. This hymn is number 21 in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, but some of the most beautiful verses are omitted, including the one on these verses of this Psalm.

‘Lighten mine eyes, O Saviour,  
Or sleep in death shall I;  
And he, my wakeful tempter,  
Triumphantly shall cry:  
“He could not make their darkness light,  
Nor guard them through the hour of night!”’

Dr. Neale, however, in his *Hymns of the Eastern Church*, says that he believes that this hymn is not used in the public service of the Greek Church. ‘It is to the scattered hamlets of Chios and Mitylene what Bishop Ken’s Evening Hymn is to the villages of our own land; and its melody is singularly plaintive and soothing.’

*Verse 3. Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; ligh'en mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.*—The chronicles of Gidding end with the outbreak of the Civil War. We have only scattered notices, a brief note on the margin of a manuscript, an occasional sentence in a letter, to show how the Ferrars and Colletts lived through these years of distress and disaster. During the brief breathing space,—in 1647, during the negotiations between Charles and the Parliament, Mr. John Ferrar brought his family back to Gidding.

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 71.

On July 27 Dr. Busby communicates the news to their mutual friend, Dr. Basire (an exile at Rouen for conscience' sake). 'A dead nummes hath these many years fall'n on my spirits, as upon the nation; join with me in versicle, "*O Lord my God, lighten my eyes, that I sleep not in death.*" All things at this time are in so dubious a calme, that the fear is greatest when the danger is less. . . . Mr. Thuscrosse is again settled in Yorkshire, Mr. Ferrar with his family at Gidding long since, Mr. Mapletoft hath a good living. All remember you, the Joseph in affliction.'\*

*Verse 5. My heart is joyful in Thy salvation.—My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation.* These words are painted over the Chapel erected by the people at St. Petersburg to commemorate the failure of the attempt to assassinate the Emperor Alexander II. (in 1866). In the short space of one year a beautiful little edifice was completed, in which serdobolsk granite, Carrara marble, and lapis lazuli, all highly polished, are mingled with exquisite taste. . . . On each of the four sides on the shields are colossal heads, painted by Professor Sarokine, representing, on a golden ground, the Saviour, the Holy Virgin, St. Joseph the Psalm-Writer, and SS. George and Zosius, the memory of whom is celebrated by the Church on the 4th of April, as well as that of St. Joseph. Above each arch are appropriate texts in brilliantly gilt and glistening letters; that facing the Neva, and consequently just over the place where Providence preserved the life of the Emperor, is 'Touch not mine anointed,' Psalm cv. 15. On the two other sides, 'The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,' Luke i. 35; '*My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation,*' Psalm xiii. 5. The cost of this chapel was 67,000 silver roubles.†

## PSALM XIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The prevailing corruption and the redemption desired.

\* *Nicholas Ferrar*, edited by Canon Carter, p. 313.

† *Sketches of the Græco-Russian Church*, by H. C. Romanoff, p. 295.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Concerning Practical Atheism.

*Contents* (Syriac).—The expectation of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There is nothing in the Psalm which can lead us to fix its date or authorship precisely. The feeling is common enough at all times in men of earnest mind . . . verse 7 looks certainly very much like a later liturgical addition. . . . It is better to adopt this explanation than to throw the whole Psalm as late as the Exile.

*The Whole Psalm*.—It will be seen on comparing the Prayer Book version of this Psalm with that of the Bible, that the former contains three verses (5-7) which the latter does not. These verses have no place in the Hebrew, and were no doubt introduced into the Latin version from St. Paul's quotation (Rom. iii. 13-18), which is a general cento from various parts of Scripture.\*

*Queen Elizabeth's Version*.—It is an interesting fact that not only is Henry VIII. believed to have composed certain anthems still extant, but Queen Elizabeth occasionally employed herself in the same manner; 'two little Anthems, or things in metre,' having been licensed by her printer in 1578; and in 1548, her Metrical Version of the 13th Psalm was published in a work by Bale. It appears, however, that Mr. Malone had a copy of the 14th Psalm in verse by Elizabeth. This literary rarity occurs at the end of a book, evidently printed abroad, and of which but a single copy is known, entitled, 'A godly medytacyon of the Christen sowle,' etc., compyled in frenche, by Ladye Margarete, Quene of Naverre. The following is printed in Parker's edition of the *Royal and Noble Authors of Great Britain*.

'Foolles that true fayth yet never had  
Sayth in their hartes, there is no God!  
Fylthy they are in their practy'se,  
Of them not one is godly wyse.

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\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 23.

From heaven th' LORDE on man did loke,  
 To know what ways he undertoke :  
 All they were vagne, and went astraye,  
 Not one he founde in the ryght waye ;  
 In harte and tunge have they deceyted,  
 The lypes throwe fourth a poysened byte ;  
 Their myndes are mad, their mouthes are wode,  
 And swift they be in shedynge blode :  
 So blynde they are, no truth they knowe,  
 No fear of GOD in them wyll growe.  
 How can that cruell sort be good ?  
 Of God's dere folcke whych sucke the blood !  
 On hym ryghtly shall they not call :  
 Dys payre wyll so their hartes appall.  
 At all tymes, God is with the just,  
 Bycause they put in hym their trust,  
 Who shall therefor from Syon geue  
 That helthe whych hangeth on our bleve ?  
 When GOD shall take from hys the smart  
 Than wyll Jacob rejoyce in hart,  
 Prayse to GOD.\*

*Verse 1. The fool hath said in his heart : There is no God.*—Plato, Archbishop and afterwards Metropolitan of Moscow, was the man of whom the Austrian Emperor Joseph II., on his return from Petersburg to Vienna, said, in answer to the question, 'What is the thing the best worth seeing in Russia?' 'The Metropolitan Plato.' He is best known to Englishmen through his interviews with Dr. Clarke, and with Reginald Heber. On one occasion the Empress Catherine sent Diderot to converse with him, and he began his argument with 'Non est Deus.' Plato was ready with the instant retort : 'Dixit stultus in corde suo, "Non est Deus."†

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge* illustrates this verse :

'The owlet, *Atheism*,  
 Sailing on obscene wings across the noon,  
 Drops his blue-fringed lids, and shuts them close,  
 And, hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,  
 Cries out, "Where is it?"'

*Verse 3. The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the children of men.*—Milton has copied the figure in the following passage :

\* *Psalms of Britain*, Holland, p. 145.

† Stanley's *Eastern Church*, p. 410.

‘Now had the Almighty FATHER from above,  
From the pure empyrean, where He sits  
High throned above all height, bent down His eye,  
His own works, and their works at once to view.’

*Paradise Lost*, iii.\*

*Verse 4.* *There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*—The rest of the quotations which follow the above in the Epistle to the Romans are brought together by the Apostle from different parts of the Old Testament. But in some MSS. of the LXX., in the Vulgate, and both Arabic, Syro-Arabic, and Copto-Arabic, and strangest of all in the Syro-Hexapla, they are found in the Psalm, having evidently been transferred hither from the Epistle. So also in our Prayer-Book version, which it should be remembered is in fact Coverdale’s (1535), and was made, not from the original, but from the Latin and German.†

*Verses 4 to 8.* *They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable; there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

‘All is oblique;  
There’s nothing level in our cursed natures,  
But direct villainy.’

*Timon of Athens*, Act II., Sc. i.‡

A statement painfully strong, and yet not stronger, nor so strong, coming from a heathen, as that of St. Paul, in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, or of the Psalmist whom he there quotes.

*Verses 5, 6, 7.* The places from which St. Jerome and the Ven. Bede say St. Paul borrowed these verses are the following:

Rom. iii. 13. ‘Their mouth is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit.’ Borrowed from Ps. v. 10. ‘The poison of asps is under their lips.’ From Ps. cxl. 3.

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 37.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 180.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 139.



*Verse 14.* 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.' From Ps. x. 7.

*Verse 15.* 'Their feet are swift to shed blood.' From Prov. i. 16 or Isa. lix. 7.

*Verses 16, 17, 18.* 'Destruction and misery are in their ways, the way of peace they have not known, and there is no fear of GOD before their eyes.' From Isa. lix. 7, 8.\*

*Verse 11.* *When the Lord turneth the captivity of His people ; then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*—Giles Fletcher was Vicar of Alderton in Suffolk (he died in 1623), and the author of a fine poem, 'Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth, over and after Death,' and in it he has the following beautiful description of the result of the conclusion of the captivity of sin and death :

'No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow ;  
 No bloodless malady impales their face ;  
 No age drops on their hairs his silver snow ;  
 No nakedness their bodies doth embase ;  
 No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace ;  
 No fear of death the joy of life devours ;  
 No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers ;  
 No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their winged hours.'

## PSALM XV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The conditions of access to GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We will call the Psalm, the Question and Answer (the first verse asks the question ; the rest of the verses answer it).

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Perfect repentance towards GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is commonly supposed to have been written on the occasion of the removal of the Ark to Zion, and the consecration of the Tabernacle there, 2 Sam.

\* Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 1966.

vi. 12 to 14 (cf. 1 Chron. xv. 16). The subject of this Psalm, and the occurrence of a similar question and answer in Psalm xxiv., which was certainly composed for that occasion, might indeed dispose us to adopt this view.

*In Church.*—Proper Psalm for Ascension Day.

*The Whole Psalm.*—In the Court of the Archdeacon of Middlesex there is a curious instance of usury, both from the fact of the criminal being a ‘clerk and rector,’ and on account of the extraordinary nature of his defence. It may be quoted at length as an example of the style of entries. The date is 1578 :

‘Mark Simpson, clerk and rector of Pitsey. *Dominus obicit quod detectum est officio* that he is a usurer. *Dictus Simpson fassus est* that he lent owte a little money, and had iis. of the pound, after the rate of tenne in the hundred ; but he did not urge the same, but onely the parties themselves whome he lent his money to did of their owne good will give him after the said rate, but not by compulcion he did urge the same.’

This excuse, however, was not accepted. He was ordered to acknowledge his fault publicly in Church, and at the same time to read the 15th Psalm, for the sake of the condemnation of usury which it contains.\*

*Verse 3. He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour.*—St. Augustine, as Posidonius tells us, had written over the table at which he entertained his friends these two verses :

‘Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,  
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.’

‘He that is wont to slander absent men,  
May never at this table sit again.’†

*Verse 4. He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and dis-*

\* *Guardian*, June 16, 1886.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 199.

*appointeth him not: though it were to his own hindrance.*—  
Shakespeare says :

‘ His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles :  
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate ;  
His tears pure messengers, sent from his heart ;  
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.’

## PSALM XVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Refuge in GOD, the Highest Good, in the presence of distress and of Death.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Psalm of the Precious Secret.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—The election of the Church and the resurrection of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It is possible, however (Mr. Perowne says after giving two special occasions on which this Psalm might have been written), that the contrast here brought out so strongly between the happiness to be found in the love of GOD, and the infatuation and misery of those who had taken some other to be the object of their worship, may have been suggested by the very position in which an Israelite *dwelling in the land* would be placed with reference to surrounding nations.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is one of those appointed in the Roman office for the Visitation of the Sick.

On account of verses 10 and 11, ‘Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell: neither shalt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.’ This Psalm and the foregoing, to which it is a sequel, are appointed in the Roman Church for use on *Sabbatum Sanctum*, or Easter Even, when she meditates on the Rest of Christ, Who is the true Sabbath, in the Grave, and of the Rest which is in store for all who fall asleep in Him: ‘Blessed are the

dead which die in the LORD ; for they rest from their labours' (Rev. xiv. 13).\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—It seems at first sight strange that this is not one of the proper Psalms for Easter Day. The reason, however, is this : In the first English Prayer-Book it was reserved as the most *appropriate Psalm of all*, to be used as the Introit before the Communion Service, while the other proper Psalms were arranged as at present. At the next revision of the Prayer-Book, in 1552, all mention of the Introit was omitted, but no change was made in the proper Psalms. Hence the use of Psalm xvi. most unfortunately dropped out altogether. In the same way we have lost the use of Psalms viii., xcvi., on Christmas Day, and of xxxiii. on Whitsun Day.†

*Clement Marot's Version of this Psalm.*—There was a great meeting-house, called the Patriarchate, close to the Church of St. Medard. Here, on St. John's Day, 1561, 1,200 people were assembled to hear a sermon, when they were interrupted by the Church bells ringing for vespers, and some persons among the congregation went out and requested that they might be stopped. This was, of course, resented as a great act of insolence, and the man was beaten, pelted, and killed. The alarm was given, and the guard of sixty archers, who had a sort of authority to protect the Huguenots, rushed upon the Church, followed by the men of the congregation who sat on benches outside those for the women. These Beza (Theodore de Bèze, Professor of Theology, rector of the College and pastor at Geneva) kept quiet by setting them to sing *Clement Marot's version of the 16th Psalm* ; but in the meantime there was a great uproar in the Church, where the priests were driven to take refuge in the tower, while the rabble joined the Huguenots, beat and wounded the Catholics, and plundered and outraged all that was sacred in the Church. The archers ended by dragging off fifty-six Catholics to prison,

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 20.

† *Monthly Packet*, July, 1883.

among whom were ten priests, after which the men came back to Church, and the sermon was quietly finished.\*

*Verse 6. The Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; Thou shalt maintain my lot.*—There are curious inscriptions in many houses in Edinburgh. A building in the High Street, of the period of James VI., has an inscription with a hand pointing, as if giving emphasis to it: ‘*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and my cup; Thou maintainest my lot*’ (Psalm xvi., verse 5)—this printed in Roman letters. Sometimes these inscriptions are placed on ceilings, sometimes over fireplaces, and an interesting volume might be written on them.†

*M. de Bois*y, the father of S. Francis de Sales, who was full of plans and great designs for his son, took him to visit Signeur de Vegy, whose only daughter and heiress he wished to become Francis’ wife. Courteous and graceful de Villeroget was as ever, but when his father complained that he was cold and restrained with the lady, he could not refrain from declaring that ‘*the Lord Himself is the portion of mine inheritance,*’ and that he could not involve himself in secular ties.‡

*Verse 7. ‘Lætus sorte mea’* is the motto of that most beautiful and touching ‘*Story of a Short Life,*’ by Mrs. Ewing.

*Verse 9. I have set God always before me.*—This verse is wonderfully illustrated in the life of one Nicholas Herman, of Lorraine, a mean and unlearned man, who, after having been a soldier and a footman, was admitted a Lay Brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris, in 1666. He is known to all those who love the interior life as Brother Laurence, and we learn of him in a little book called ‘*The Practice of the Presence of God, the Best Rule of a Holy Life.*’ At all times he lived in the habitual sense of GOD’S Presence, so that whether at menial work or at his turn in prayer, he con-

\* *Cameos from English History.*

† *Scottish Characteristics*, by Paxton Hood, p. 220.

‡ *S. Francis de Sales*, p. 31.

sciously enjoyed that Presence. 'It is not necessary for being with GOD to be always in Church; we may make an oratory of our heart, wherein to retire from time to time, to converse with Him in meekness, humility and love.' And in another place: 'We cannot escape the dangers which abound in life, without the actual and *continual* help of GOD; let us then pray to Him for it *continually*. How can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him but in thinking of Him often? And how can we often think of Him, but by a holy habit which we should form of it? You will tell me that I am always saying the same thing; it is true, for this is the best and easiest method I know; and as I use no other, I advise all the world to it. We must *know* before we can *love*. In order to *know* GOD, we must often *think* of Him; and when we come to *love* Him, we shall then *also think* of Him often, *for our heart will be with our treasure*. This is an argument which well deserves your consideration.'

*Verses 9-12. I have set God always before me; for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.*

*Wherefore my heart was glad, and my glory rejoiced; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

*For why? Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.*

*Thou shalt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right Hand there is pleasure for evermore.*

This passage is quoted by St. Peter, in his Pentecostal Sermon, as directly, or in its highest sense, applicable to the Messiah. It contains one of the very clearest and strongest declarations of belief in a blessed futurity which can be aduced from the Old Testament.\*

*Verse 11. Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell; neither shalt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.*—Milton has thus imitated this beautiful passage, in a speech of the SON OF GOD:

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\* *The Speaker's Commentary*, p. 201.

‘Though now to death I yield, and am his due  
 All that of me can die; yet, that debt paid,  
 Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave  
 His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul  
 For ever with corruption there to dwell;  
 But I shall rise victorious.’

*Paradise Lost*, iii.\*

## PSALM XVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Flight of an innocent and persecuted man for refuge in the LORD, who knoweth them that are His.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We have in the present plaintive song, AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN from the persecutions of the earth.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by David—A Prayer.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm may be, as the inscription states, a Psalm of David; and if so, we may probably attribute its composition to the time of Saul’s persecution.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is the first of the Eastern Office of the 3rd hour.

*Verse 1. Hear the right, O Lord, consider my complaint.*—I have read somewhere of an incident of Charles Wesley, that when he was most unjustly charged with some offence, and a heavy fine imposed upon him, he meekly submitted to the wrong; and after his death the warrant was found among his papers with the simple endorsement, ‘To be re-judged at the last day.’†

*Pseudo-Dionysius* has a very beautiful idea regarding the efficacy of prayer,—the case is as if we, standing on board a vessel, and holding in our hands a rope fastened to the shore, were to pull lustily at it. While endeavouring, as it were, to bring the shore to ourselves, we should indeed be bringing ourselves to it. And thus in prayer, while we seek in appearance

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 42.

† *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by Barton Bouchier, vol. i., p. 94.

to bend GOD'S will to us, we are indeed bringing our will to His. Here CHRIST prays, not for Himself alone, but for the instruction of all : and the *right* which is to be heard is that righteousness which He offers for us, that full and complete sacrifice which He presents for our sins.\*

*Verse 4. I have kept me from the ways of the destroyer.—I have kept hard ways.* This is the Antiphon which the Church takes as the ordinary interpretation of the Psalm. And well it may be ; for what is the whole of the Christian course but a succession of hard paths—the straight gate and the narrow way which the martyrs and the confessors trod, and which they trod for the same reason, namely, love? Lorinus beautifully applies those words of the heathen poet (Plautus, *Casina* ii. 3, 5).

‘Nam ubi amor condimentum inerit, cuius placitum credo,  
Neque salsum neque suave esse potest quicquam, ubi amor non admis-  
cetur.  
Fel quod amarum est, id mel faciet : hominem ex tristi lepidum et  
lenem.’

‘Where Love as seasoning is found, all will, I trow, fain share,  
Nought can be salt or pleasant food if Love be mixed not there,  
Honey it makes of bitter gall, the sullen man bonair.’†

*Verse 8. Keep me as the apple of an eye.*—Anastasius IV. found so great consolation in this expression that *Custodi me ut pupillum oculi* was his motto.‡

*As the apple of an eye.* This figure would seem to be borrowed from, or at least suggested by, Deut. xxxii. 10 : ‘He kept him as the apple of His eye’ (see also Zech. ii. 8). The word translated ‘apple’ signifies in the Hebrew ‘a little man’; and in the LXX. ‘a little girl,’ or ‘daughter,’ because a small image is seen in the pupil of the eye. Both words are expressive of tenderness and endearment. ‘Pupil,’ as derived from *pupilla*, ‘a little girl,’ is the correct English analogue of the Hebrew and Greek words, and should have been adopted

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 216.

† *Ibid.*, p. 218.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 220.



instead of 'apple.' The sentiment of tenderness which clings to the original would then have been preserved.\*

*Verse 12. Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey.*—In 'Paradise Lost' we have a fine poetical conception of the arch-enemy prowling around our first parents when he first beheld their happiness, and resolved to ruin them :

' About them round  
A lion now, he stalks with fiery glare ;  
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied  
In some purlieu, two gentle fawns at play,  
Straight couches close, then rising, changes oft  
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,  
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,  
Grip'd in each paw.'†

*Verse 14. From the men of Thy hand, O Lord, from the men, I say, and from the evil world.*—S. Albert Magnus explains these words of evil Bishops, who are set apart by rank and wealth from the lowly and obscure, who heap up riches and are guilty of nepotism.‡

*Verse 15. They have children at their desire.*—The Italic version reads here very singularly, *They are filled with swine's flesh*, given up as they are to every uncleanness and error forbidden by the Law, and leaving all their evil ways as a legacy to their posterity. This curious version arises from a variant in Origen's 'Hexapla,' now the common reading of the LXX., though doubtless the error of a transcriber, *βείων* instead of *βίων*.§

*Verse 16. But as for me, I will behold Thy Presence in righteousness ; and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.*—The windows in Lambeth Palace had been filled with stained glass by Cardinal Morton, but had been broken during the troubled times of the Reformation, so that Archbishop Laud found them, to use his own words : 'Shameful to look upon, all diversely patch, like a poor

\* *A Companion to the Psalter*, p. 36.

† *The Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 254.

‡ Neale's *Commentary*, p. 223.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

beggar's coat.' He carefully restored them, but the storm of popular violence rose again until no trace of their beauty was left. For two centuries they remained, restored indeed to decency, but with all their loveliness destroyed. In the work of restoration, therefore, the replacing of the stained glass was one of the first objects in view, and happily the means of doing this were accessible. It was known that the broken windows had been copied from pictures in the 'Biblia Pauperum,' and to these accordingly Messrs. Clayton and Bell addressed themselves. In each case the two side-lights contain representations of types, of which the Antitype is the centre. One of these windows was restored in memory of Craufurd Tait, and underneath the window was placed this inscription :

‘In Memory of the  
REV. CRAUFURD TAIT, M.A.,  
only son of  
Archibald Campbell, Archbishop of Canterbury,  
and of Catherine Tait.

Simple, pure, manly, energetic, kindly, because in all things truly Christian, he won the hearts of young and old, rich and poor. He was loved and respected at Eton and at Christ Church, and in his Curacy at Saltwood, in his visit to the East and to the United States of America, and here, as his father's Chaplain.

‘Faithful during his brief earthly ministry, he was gently summoned from his home below, with all its duties, enjoyments, and hopes, to his real home in the immediate presence of CHRIST. Many friends of all degrees and ranks have united in dedicating this window as a memorial of love.

‘Born at Rugby, spared in the fever which desolated his father's home at Carlisle in his childhood, he died at Stone House, Thanet, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, on the eve of the LORD'S Ascension, May 29th, 1878.

‘“*As for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness, and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.*”  
—Psalm xvii. 16.’\*

\* *Catherine and Craufurd Tait*, p. 606.

*Julius Hare* had a great affection for the 17th Psalm, and it was read to him on his death-bed. Just before he died he thanked those who had thus chosen the words of Scripture which he so especially delighted in. With these sounds of glory ringing in his ears,

*'I will behold Thy presence in righteousness,  
And when I awake up after Thy likeness,  
I shall be satisfied with it.'*

he fell into that sleep from which he was to awake in the likeness of CHRIST.\*

*Henri Perreyve* had this verse on his lips during his last moments. His father, mother, and sister knelt by his bedside, and he blessed them in the name of JESUS CHRIST, Whose priest he was. A little later he thanked the sister who had nursed him so tenderly: 'A thousand thanks to you, ma Sœur; let me have your Crucifix, not mine—yours, which has been pressed to so many dying lips;' and he kissed it lovingly, saying, 'Amen.'

He asked to see the servants; thanked them for all they had done for him; commended himself to their prayers, and gave them his blessing. Dr. Gourand came, and Henri thanked him gratefully for his devoted friendship, and his attempts during these last days, to prolong his life, adding, quietly and kindly, that it was useless to give him any further trouble. His mother was beside him, and he observed to her, 'If I die to-morrow, it will be the anniversary of my first Communion.' 'Dear child,' she answered, weeping, 'how happy was I on that day, and you too!' 'Well,' Henri replied, 'we must be happy to-morrow too.'

He made his sister stay by him while he detailed certain alterations he wished to be made in the family tomb, and with a clear firm voice told her what was to be his epitaph: 'Satiabor cum apparuerit Gloria Tua'—'*When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.*'†

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 278.

† *Henri Perreyve*, p. 231.

*I shall be satisfied with it.*—I have read of a devout person who but dreaming of heaven, the signatures and impressions it made upon his fancy were so strong as that when he awaked he knew not his cell, could not distinguish the night from the day, nor difference by his taste, oil from wine; still he was calling for his vision and saying, *Redde mihi campos, floridos, columnan auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos*: Give me my fresh and fragrant fields again, my golden pillar of light, Jerome my companion, angels my assistants. If heaven in a dream produce such ecstasies as drown and overwhelm the exercises of the senses to inferior objects, what trances and complacencies must the fruition of it work in those who have their whole rational appetite filled, and their body beautified with its endless glory!\*

*When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.*—‘But when,’ says St. Bonaventura, ‘O LORD JESU, when shall that *when* be?’

‘JESUS only! In the shadow  
Of the cloud so dull and dim  
We are clinging, loving, trusting,  
He with us and we with Him;  
All unseen, though ever nigh,  
JESUS only! all our cry.

‘JESUS only! In the glory,  
When the shadows all are flown,  
Seeing Him in all His beauty,  
Satisfied with Him alone;  
May we join His ransomed throng,  
JESUS only! all our song.’

F. R. HAVERGAL.

The illustrations on this verse cannot be better ended than by the beautiful verses of St. Bernard of Cluny:

‘O bona patria, num tua gaudia teque videbo?  
O bona patria, num tua præmia plena tenebo?  
Dic mihi, flagito, verbaque reddito, dicque, Videbis.  
Spem solidam gero: remne tegens ero? Dic, Retinebis.  
O sacer, O pius, O ter et amplius ille beatus,  
Cui sua pars Deus: O miser, O reus, hac viduatus!’

---

\* William Spurstow, 1656, quoted in *The Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 260.

‘O sweet and blessed country,  
 Shall I ever see thy face?  
 O sweet and blessed country,  
 Shall I ever win thy grace?  
 I have the hope within me,  
 To comfort and to bless,  
 Shall I ever win the prize itself?  
 O tell me, tell me, Yes.  
 O holy one, O godly,  
 Thrice blessed is his lot,  
 Who hath his God for portion,  
 O wretched, who hath not !\*’

## PSALM XVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—David’s Hymnic Retrospect of a life crowned with many mercies.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Grateful Retrospect.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—A thanksgiving ; also concerning the ascension of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The inscription, which informs us that this hymn was composed towards the close of David’s life, is confirmed by the fact that we have the same account given of its composition in 2 Samuel xxii., where this hymn is also found, though with a number of variations. The internal evidence, too, points in the same direction ; for we learn from verse 34 (35) and 43 (44) that the Poet is both warrior and king ; and every part of the description suits the events and circumstances of David’s life better than those of any other monarch.

*Verse 1.* *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength ; the Lord is my stony rock, and my defence.*—In the Orthodox Eastern Church, in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, just before the Nicene Creed, the Priest says secretly (Psalm xviii. 1), ‘*I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength ; the Lord is my stony rock, and my defence.*’†

\* Quoted in Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 225.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

*Verse 9. He bowed the heavens also, and came down.*—The male figure raising a veil above his head, who is often placed beneath the LORD'S feet on the sarcophagi, is taken to represent Uranus or the Firmament. The idea seems to be that of (Psalms xviii. 9 and civ. 2) darkness under His feet, and the Heavens as a curtain.\*

*Verse 10. He rode upon the cherubims, and did fly; He came flying upon the wings of the wind* (cf. also Psalms lxviii. 4; civ. 3).—The expressions in these verses find their likenesses in Shakespeare, yet so softened and disguised that no comparison which might suggest thoughts of irreverence is provoked by the imitation.

It is Romeo who thus, from Capulet's garden, addresses Juliet at her window :

'O ! speak again, bright angel, for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,  
As is a winged messenger of Heaven  
Unto the white upturned wondering eyes  
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,  
When he *bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,*  
And *sails upon the bosom of the air.*'

Act II., Sc. ii.†

Milton felt the grandeur of this imagery, and imitated it :

'He on the wings of cherub rode sublime  
On the crystalline sky.'

*Paradise Lost*, vi.

And again :

'on the wings of cherubim  
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode  
Far into chaos.'

*Paradise Lost*, vii.‡

Sternhold and Hopkins have succeeded in their version of this place, not only beyond what *they* ever did, but beyond every ancient and modern poet on a similar subject :

\* *The Basilica*, by Rev. R. S. John Tyrwhitt. *Monthly Packet*, July, 1880.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 325.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 51.

‘ On cherub and on cherubim  
 Full royally He rode,  
 And on the wings of mighty wind  
 Came flying all abroad.’\*

*Verse 11. He made darkness His secret place, His pavilion round about Him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover Him.*—The discharge of the celestial artillery upon the adverse powers, in this and the two following verses, is magnificently described. Milton has made a noble use of the same imagery, in the following passage :

‘ How oft amidst  
 Thick clouds and dark doth heaven’s all-ruling Sire  
 Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,  
 And with the majesty of darkness round  
 Covers His throne ; from whence deep thunders roar,  
 Mustering their rage, and heaven resembles hell?’

*Paradise Lost, ii.†*

*Verse 36. My footsteps shall not slide.*

Longfellow :

‘ Footprints which perhaps some other,  
 Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,  
 Some forlorn and shipwrecked brother  
 Seeing, may take heart again.’

*Verses 37, 38. I will follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them ; neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them. I will smite them, that they shall not be able to stand, but fall under my feet.*

William Cowper (1731-1800) :

‘ Oh, I have seen the day,  
 When with a single word,  
 GOD helping me to say,  
 “ My trust is in the LORD ;”  
 My soul has quelled a thousand foes,  
 Fearless of all that could oppose.’

*Verses 40, 41.—Thou hast made mine enemies also to turn their backs upon me ; and I will destroy them that hate me. They shall cry, but there shall be more to help them ; yea, even*

\* Adam Clarke’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 1984.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 53.

*unto the Lord shall they cry, but He shall not hear them.*—Clovis, when about to lead his army against Alaric II., the Arian king of the Visigoths, sent messengers to the Church of St. Martin, at Tours, where the Psalms were sung day and night, to know what verses would be chanted as they entered, as he had asked GOD to give him a sign. As they passed the threshold the Precentor sang Psalm xviii. 39, 40, as an Antiphon, and accepting this as the token, they offered the gifts they bore, made their thanksgiving, and returned to Clovis, who afterwards defeated and slew Alaric in the battle of Vouglé.\*

*Verse 41.*—*Gerhohus*, like an earnest reformer that he was, in an age of the Church which abounded with horrible corruptions, and when, as it has been said, the LORD seemed again asleep in the bark of Peter, twists this text by main force, to bear witness against the simony of the age; when, as he says, princes and other potentates chose Barabbas, and rejected JESUS for the Episcopate; and then, when they had elected the former, and were in need of some spiritual assistance, *cried, and there was none to help them.* One can hardly call this a commentary; but yet one honours the zeal of the writer, who, in whatever part of the Scripture he was expounding, saw the abuses of the Church in his own time, and so treated it.†

*Verse 18.* *They prevented me in the day of my trouble; but the Lord was my upholder.*—Here is an instance of the impudence of Protestant prejudice—the words are the words of one Charles Bradbury: ‘When Henry VIII. had spoken and written bitterly against Luther; saith Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are the children of the kingdom, worshipping of the true GOD, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified. And of the same spirit were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 251.

† *Ibid.*, p. 252, note.



so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathens seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians.\*

## PSALM XIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer to GOD, whose revelation of Himself is twofold.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Deliverance of the people from Egypt.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It may have been written, perhaps, in the first flush of an Eastern sunrise, when the sun was seen ‘going forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and rejoicing as a mighty man to run his course.’ The song breathes all the life and freshness, all the gladness and glory of the morning. . . . The difference of style observable between the two parts of the Psalm, and the abruptness of the transition from one part to the other, have led some critics to the conclusion, that these did not originally constitute one Poem. Thus Ewald speaks of the former half as a beautiful torso—splendid but unfinished fragment of the time of David, to which some later bard subjoined the praise of the Law. But it is not absolutely necessary to adopt such a supposition. No doubt there is a very considerable difference between the sustained lyric movement of verses 1 to 6, and the regular didactic rhythm of the latter half of the Psalm. But it may fairly be argued that the nature of the subject influenced the change of style. The apparent suddenness of transition too, though it cannot be denied, may not only be accounted for by the nature of lyric poetry, but was probably the result of design in order to give more force to the contrast. That such *is* the effect it is impossible not to feel.

*In Church*.—This is one of the Psalms appointed by the Church, to be read in her service on the Festival of the

\* *Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 290.

Nativity. In the Latin Church this Psalm is appointed for use also on the festivals of the Ascension, and of Trinity Sunday; so likewise it was in the Sarum Use; and in the Gregorian Use it is appointed for the Annunciation.\*

This is the first Psalm at Matins on Christmas Day, and is wonderfully appropriate to this Festival. GOD to a certain extent revealed Himself by the creation of the heavens, which tell His glory, and more especially of the sun, which gives light to all the earth, and from whose heat nothing is hid; and in a still loftier degree did reveal Himself in the written word which giveth light and wisdom 'converting the soul'; but the full revelation of Himself was not complete until He sent His only Begotten, the Living Word to take our nature upon Him. 'That was the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' This Psalm bears an important part in the teaching of the Day. †

The Gospel and Epistle for the Day give the true explanation of the choice of this Psalm.

*Parallelism.*—The present Psalm affords an excellent illustration of that parallelism between the two halves of a verse, which forms so marked a characteristic of Hebrew poetry. There is scarcely a verse in this Psalm in which it may not be traced. In the first verse there is a double parallelism. 'Heavens' and 'glory,' in the first member, correspond to 'firmament' and 'handiwork' in the second. ‡

*Addison's Metrical Version of this Psalm:*

'The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim.  
The unwearied sun, from day to day,  
Does his Creator's power display;  
And publishes, to every land,  
The work of an Almighty hand.

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 33.

‡ *Companion to the Psalter*, p. 44.

‘ Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
 And nightly to the listening earth  
 Repeats the story of her birth :  
 While all the stars that round her burn,  
 And all the planets in their turn,  
 Confirm the tidings, as they roll,  
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

‘ What though in solemn silence all  
 Move round this dark terrestrial ball ?  
 What though no real voice or sound,  
 Amidst their radiant orbs be found ?  
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
 And utter forth a glorious voice ;  
 For ever singing as they shine,  
 “ The hand that made us is divine.” ’

*Verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament showeth His handy-work.*—How beautifully has our great poet imitated this passage, combined with the opening of the viiith Psalm !

‘ These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
 Almighty ! Thine the universal frame,  
 Thus wondrous fair ; Thyself how wondrous, then !  
 Unspeakable ! who sitt'st above these heavens  
 To us invisible, or dimly seen  
 In these Thy lowest works ; yet these declare  
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and Power divine.’  
*Paradise Lost, v.\**

‘ There's not the smallest orb that thou beholdest  
 But in his motion like an angel sings.†

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) :

‘ How beautiful this dome of sky,  
 And the vast hills in fluctuation fixed  
 At Thy command, how awful ! Shall the soul,  
 Human and rational, report of Thee  
 Even less than these ? Be mute who will, who can ;  
 Yet I will praise Thee with impassioned voice.  
 My lips, that may forget Thee in the crowd,  
 Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built  
 For Thine own glory, in the wilderness !’

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 59.

† *Merchant of Venice*.

James Thomson :

‘The glitt’ring stars  
By their deep ear of meditation heard,  
Still in the midnight watches sing of Him.  
He nods a calm. The tempest blows His wrath ;  
The thunder is His voice ; and the red flash  
His speedy sword of justice. At His touch  
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,  
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone—  
In ev’ry common instance GOD is seen.’

*Verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work.*—During the French revolution, Jean Bon St. André, the Vendean revolutionist, said to a peasant : ‘ I will have all your steeples pulled down, that you may no longer have any object by which you may be reminded of old superstitions.’ ‘ But,’ replied the peasant, ‘ you cannot help leaving us the stars.’\*

*Verse 2. One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another.*—Dr. Neale, in his *Commentary*, says that this verse ‘ cannot be more beautifully taken than of the seasons of the Church’s year: Festival speaking to Festival, Fast to Fast ; the faithful soul by Advent prepared for Christmas ; by Lent for Easter ; by the Great Forty Days of Joy for the Descent of the HOLY GHOST ; and by all these days of transitory holiness, made ready for that Eternal day, the festival which shall never be concluded.’

‘ The Church on earth, with answering love,  
Echoes her mother’s joys above ;  
Those yearly feast-days she may keep,  
And yet for endless festals weep.’

The Sequence ‘*Supreme matris gaudia.*’

That succession of doctrine and comfort, day speaking to day ; what a wonderful type it finds in the midnight of a Scandinavian summer ! The north-western and north-eastern sky aglow respectively with evening and morning twilight, and the space between them filled with the lines of purple or crimson, the links which unite the departing to the coming day !†

\* John Bate : *Cyclopædia of Moral and Religious Truths*, 1866, quoted in *Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 315.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 262.

*Verse 4. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world.*—St. John Chrysostom's missionary efforts extended northwards to the Danube, and southwards to Phœnicia, Syria, and Palestine. He sought out men of apostolic zeal to evangelize some Scythian tribes on the banks of the Danube, and appointed a Gothic Bishop, Unilas, who accomplished great things, but died in A.D. 404, when Chrysostom was in exile and unable to appoint a successor.

A novel spectacle was witnessed one day in the Church of St. Paul. A large number of Goths being present, Chrysostom ordered some portions of the Bible to be read in Gothic, and caused a Gothic presbyter to address his countrymen in their native tongue. The Archbishop, who preached afterwards, rejoiced in the occurrence as a visible illustration of the diffusion of the Gospel among all nations and languages, a triumph before their very eyes over Jews and Pagans, and a fulfilment of such prophecy as '*Their sound is gone out into all lands.*' 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.' 'Where is the philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras? Extinguished. Where is the teaching of the tent-makers and the fishermen? Not only in Judæa, but also among the barbarians, as ye have this day perceived, it shines more brilliantly than the sun itself. Scythians and Thracians, Samaritans, Moors and Indians, and those who inhabit the extremities of the world, possess this teaching translated into their own language; they possess such philosophy as was never dreamed of by those who wear a beard and thrust passengers aside with their staff in the Forum, and shake their wise locks, looking more like lions than men.' 'Nay! our world has not sufficed for these evangelists; they have betaken themselves even to the ocean, and enclosed barbarian regions and the British Isles in their net.'\*

*Verses 5, 6. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and re-*

\* *Life of S. John Chrysostom*, by W. R. W. Stephens, p. 237.

*joiceth as a giant to run his course. It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*—In these verses the Church has from the beginning seen a marvellous type of the Incarnation. So St. Ambrose, in one of his most noble hymns (*Veni Redemptor Gentium*):

‘Forth from His Chamber goeth He,  
The Royal Hall of Chastity;  
In nature two, in Person One,  
His glad course, giant-like, to run.

‘From GOD the FATHER He proceeds;  
To GOD the FATHER back He speeds:  
Proceeds—as far as very hell,  
Speeds back—to light ineffable.’\*

*Verse 7. The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.*—‘A certain simple-minded and honest man,’ says St. Peter Damiani, ‘one that feared GOD, had been hearing Matins, and was returning from Church. His disciples asked him, “What did you hear at Church, father?” He answered, “I heard four things and observed six.” A very subtle reply, and one which showed his faith. He had heard four verses of the 19th Psalm, *The law of the Lord is an undefiled law*, etc., and the three following verses, in which six things are noted, which are *law, testimony, righteousness, commandments, fear, judgments*.’†

*Verse 12. O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.*—There is a singular poem by Hood, called ‘The Dream of Eugene Aram,’ a most remarkable piece it is indeed, illustrating the point on which we are now dwelling. Aram had murdered a man, and cast his body into the river—‘a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme.’ The next morning he visited the scene of his guilt:

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 263.

† *Ibid.*, p. 265.

‘ And sought the black accursed pool,  
 With a wild misgiving eye ;  
 And he saw the dead in the river bed,  
 For the faithless stream was dry.’

Next he covered the corpse with heaps of leaves, but a mighty wind swept through the wood and left the secret bare before the sun :

‘ Then down I cast me on my face,  
 And first began to weep,  
 For I knew my secret then was one  
 That earth refused to keep ;  
 On land or sea though it should be  
 Ten thousand fathoms deep.’

In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a grave, and trod him down with stones ; but when years had run their weary round, the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death.

Guilt is a ‘grim chamberlain,’ even when his fingers are not bloody-red. Secret sins bring fevered eyes and sleepless nights, until men burn out their consciences, and become in very deed ripe for the pit.\*

*Dr. George Bull* was Bishop of St. David’s. Mr. Robert Nelson gives an account of his last illness and departure. A few days before his death, while in the presence of several persons, he made a solemn confession and declaration of the conduct of his whole life, and so took his leave of the world in a manner the most edifying that could be.

First the Bishop made a public confession of his faith, in the words of the Apostles’ Creed ; he then gave a short account of his life, reviewing his sorrow and repentance for all his sins. In the last place, he professed that as he had always lived, so he was now resolved to die, in the communion of the Church of England, and declared that he believed it was the best constituted Church this day in the world : for that its doctrine, government, and way of worship were, in the main, the same with those of the primitive Church. He then put up

\* Spurgeon’s Sermon (No. 116) on *Secret Sins*.

some prayers for its peace and prosperity, and declaring again that he resolved to die in its communion, he desired absolution, and received it. He concluded this his open confession in the very words of the Psalmist David, ‘*Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults!*’

The good Bishop died in 1710, and the last word he spoke was ‘Amen’ to the commendatory prayer, which he repeated twice distinctly and audibly after his usual manner, a very little while before he died.\*

## PSALM XX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for the king in time of war.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A National Anthem.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—when he prayed to be delivered from the battle of the Ammonites; and teaching us now that it is prayer that helpeth us.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm was intended originally; it would seem, to be sung on behalf of a king who was about to go forth to war against his enemies. . . . For what special occasion the Psalm was first composed, it is of course now quite impossible to say. Some, following the Syriac translator, would refer it to the time of David’s war with the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. x.); but obviously it would apply to other circumstances as well. This is evidently a liturgical Psalm.

*In Church*.—This is one of the Psalms used at the commencement of the daily Greek Morning Office, and it is also appointed for use in the Roman Office for the Visitation of the Sick.† It is also the first Psalm for the Queen’s Accession.

*The Whole Psalm*.—During his last illness Bossuet from time to time dictated some meditations on this Psalm.‡

\* *The Last Hours of Christian Men*, p. 250.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 235.

‡ *Bossuet* (Rivingtons), p. 557.



*Spurgeon* says : ‘This Psalm has been much used for coronation, thanksgiving, and fast sermons, and no end of nonsense and sickening flattery has been tacked thereto by the trencher-chaplains of the world’s Church. If kings had been devils, some of these gentry would have praised their horns and hoofs ; for although some of their royal highnesses have been very obedient servants of the prince of darkness, these false prophets have dubbed them “most gracious sovereigns,” and have been as much dazzled in their presence as if they had beheld the beatific vision.’\*

*Nicholas Bownd*, ‘Doctor of Divinitie’ in 1604, preached twenty-two Sermons on verses 1-6 of this Psalm. Here is the title of his work, ‘*Medicines for the Plague ; that is, Godly and Fruitful Sermons upon part of the Twentieth Psalm, full of instructions and comfort ; very fit generally for all times of affliction, but more particularly applied to the late visitation of the Plague. Preached at the same time at Norton in Suffolke, by Nicholas Bownd, Doctor of Divinitie, 1604.*’†

*Verse 3. Remember all thy offerings ; and accept thy burnt sacrifice.*—‘The LORD be with you. These are the Sacramental words of the deacon, the only words that I have any right to say to you, dear friend and brother, as you go up to the holy Altar. But I say them out of the very fulness of my heart, and with all the deepest meaning such solemn words convey. Yes, indeed, may the LORD be with you, dear brother ! May He be with you this morning at the Altar of your first mass, to accept your virgin troth, and to receive your eternal vows with that reciprocal love which exceeds all other love.

‘May He be with you all through this great day, to preserve within your soul that perfume of heavenly incense, that sweet scent of the sacrifice you have begun, but which, thank God, knows no end. May He be with you to-morrow, to teach you that His joy possesses a somewhat eternal power, which, unlike

\* *The Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 350.

† *Ibid.*

earth's joys, can never be exhausted. May He be with you when, the first sacred intoxicating delight over, you realize that it is yours to minister to men, and that you must leave Mount Tabor, and seek the suffering, the ignorant, those who hunger and thirst for the true light and life. May He be with you in your grief to comfort you; in your joy to sanctify you; in all your longings, that they may bring forth fruit. *Memor sit omnis sacrificii tui et holocaustum tuum pingue fiat.\**

*Verse 7. Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.*—William Arnot (1858) says: 'It is easy to persuade papists to lean on priests and saints, on old rags and painted pictures—on any idol; but it is hard to get a Protestant to trust in the living God.'

*Verse 8. We are risen and stand upright.*—At Port Glasgow there dwelt a family (two brothers and a sick sister) distinguished, like the two Campbells, for a profound and saintly piety, which had marked them out from their neighbours, and attracted to them many friends out of their own condition.

James Macdonald had returned from the building-yard, where he pursued his daily business, to his mid-day dinner, after the calm usage of a labouring man. He found the invalid of the household in the agonies of this new inspiration. The awed and wondering family concluded with reverential gravity that she was dying, and thus accounted to themselves for the singular exhibition they saw. 'At dinner-time, James and George came home as usual,' says the simple family narrative, 'whom she then addressed at great length, concluding with a solemn prayer for James, that he might *at that time* be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost. Almost instantly James said: "I have got it." He walked to the window, and stood silent for a minute or two. I looked at him, and almost trembled, there was such a change upon his whole countenance. He then, with a step and manner of the most indescribable majesty, walked up to ——'s bedside,

\* *Henri Perreyve*, p. 42.

and addressed her in these words of the twentieth Psalm, "*Arise and stand upright.*" He repeated the words, took her by the hand, and she arose. After this wonderful event, with inconceivable human composure,' the homely record continues, 'we all quietly sat down and took our dinner;' an anti-climax to the extraordinary agitation and excitement of the scene just described, which no fiction dared attempt. The young woman was not merely raised from her sick-bed for the moment, but *cured*, and the next step taken by the brother, so suddenly and miraculously endued, was to write to Mary Campbell, then apparently approaching death, conveying to her the same command which had been so effectual in the case of her sister. The sick estatic received this letter in the depths of languor and declining weakness, and without even the hands of the newly inspired to help her, rose up and declared herself healed.\*

*Verse 9. Save, Lord, and hear us, O King of heaven, when we call upon Thee.*—'O Jehovah, save the King! May He answer us when we cry (unto Him).' Such is the rendering of the LXX., which is also followed by the Vulgate. *Domine saluum fac regem*, whence our 'GOD save the King.'†

## PSALM XXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving for the King in time of war.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Royal Triumphal Ode.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Supplication for those things that are profitable to a righteous man.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The last Psalm was a litany before the king went forth to battle. This is apparently a *Te Deum* on his return. . . . The Psalm was evidently sung in the Temple, either by the whole congregation or by the choir of Levites.

\* *Life of Edward Irving*, p. 289.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 226.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is the first at Matins on Ascension Day, and the second on the Queen's Accession. In the Eastern Church, verses 3, 4 and 6 are sung in the plural in the Office for Holy Matrimony—Prokeimenon of the Epistle.

That the primary reference in this Psalm is to David himself, there need be no doubt; at the same time, the blessings promised—the endless life, the glory and great worship, the everlasting felicity—are of such a transcendent character as to demand a higher range of fulfilment, another King in Whose Person and Kingdom all these bright visions should be realized. Such a fulfilment we, as Christians, recognise, when, having conquered Satan and burst the gates of death, JESUS ascended into Heaven, and resumed His throne of glory at the FATHER'S right hand. And for this reason the present Psalm is very appropriately chosen as one of the Proper Psalms for Ascension Day.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm undoubtedly refers to Our Blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST, and even Jewish expositors have so regarded it. Rashi, one of the most esteemed of them, says, 'This Psalm was interpreted of the King-Messiah by our ancient teachers; but, in order to meet schismatics (*i.e.*, the Christians), it is better to understand it of David himself.'†

*Verse 3. For Thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness.*—To prevent, from *prævenio*, literally signifies to go before. Hence that prayer in the Communion Service of our public Liturgy, 'Prevent us, O LORD, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour!' That is, 'Go before us in Thy mercy, make our way plain, and enable us to perform what is right in Thy sight!'

Our ancestors used 'GOD before' in this sense. So in Henry V.'s speech to the French herald previously to the battle of Agincourt:

\* *Companion to the Psalter*, p. 49.

† *Ibid.*

'Go therefore ; tell thy master, here I am.  
 My ransom is this frail and worthless trunk ;  
 My army, but a weak and sickly guard :  
 Yet, GOD *before*, tell him we will come on,  
 Though France himself, and such another neighbour,  
 Stand in our way.'<sup>\*†</sup>

*And shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head.*—It seems not unlikely there is a reference here to the siege of Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 29, 30), when, after the city was taken, the king's crown, 'weighing a talent of gold, with precious stones, was set on David's head.'†

The Vulgate has *of precious stones*. Innocent III. will have it to consist of seven precious stones (the crown of righteousness) ; four corporeal gifts of the transfigured—agility, subtilty, impassibility, immortality ; and three of the glorified spirit—love, knowledge, happiness.‡

*Verse 4. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life : even for ever and ever.*

'We ask for life, and mean thereby  
 A few uncertain years,  
 The sunshine of a changeful sky  
 Over a vale of tears ;  
 But Thou art better than our prayers,  
 And'givest, in Thy love,  
 A shorter path through earthly cares,  
 A longer rest above.  
 From sin and strife, with sorrow rife,  
 Thine earthly call doth sever ;  
 Thou givest us a longer life,  
 For ever and for ever !'§

*Verse 13. Be Thou exalted, Lord, in Thine own strength ; so will we sing, and praise Thy power.*—Dionysius the Carthusian bids us note the fulfilment of this prophecy, in the fact that Christian hymnody and Psalms began immediately after the Ascension of CHRIST and the descent of the Paraclete, never ceasing since throughout the ages.||

\* Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 1998.

† *Companion to the Psalter*, p. 49.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 279.

§ Dr. Monsell.

|| Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, p. 286.

## PSALM XXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Eli Eli Lama Asabtani.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This is beyond all others The Psalm of the Cross.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—when his persecutors mocked him—Concerning also the sufferings of the MESSIAH, and the calling of the Gentiles.

*Origin* (Perowne).—According to the Inscription, this is one of David's Psalms. We know, however, of no circumstances in his life to which it can possibly be referred. In none of his persecutions by Saul was he ever reduced to such straits as those here described. . . . The older Jewish interpreters felt the difficulty, and thought that the sorrows of Israel in exile were the subject of the singer's complaint. Without adopting this view to the full extent, it is so far worthy of consideration that it points to what is probably the correct view, viz., that the Psalm was composed by one of the exiles during the Babylonish captivity. And though the feelings and expressions are clearly individual, not national, yet they are the feelings and expressions of one who suffers not merely as an individual, but, so to speak, in a representative character.

*Title: Aijeleth Shahar.*—Christmas Evans, an eloquent though eccentric Welsh preacher, shows how the title of this Psalm is one which may be applied to the whole life of CHRIST: The title of the twenty-second Psalm is Aijeleth Shahar—*the morning hind*. The whole Psalm refers to CHRIST, containing much that cannot be applied to another; parting His garments, casting lots for His vesture, etc.

He is described as a kindly, meek, and beautiful hart, started by the huntsmen at the dawn of day. Herod began hunting Him down as soon as He appeared. Poverty, the hatred of men, and the temptation of Satan, joined in the pursuit. There

always was some 'dog' or 'bull' or 'unicorn' ready to attack Him. After His first sermon, the huntsmen gathered about Him ; but He was too fleet of foot, and escaped. The Church had long seen the MESSIAH 'like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains ;' had heard the voice of her Beloved, and had cried out, 'Behold ! he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills ;' sometimes He was even seen, with the dawn of day, in the neighbourhood of the temple, and beside the enclosures of the vineyards. The Church requested to see Him 'on the mountains of Bether,' and upon 'the mountains of spices.' The former probably signifying the place of His sufferings, and the latter the sublime acclivities of light, glory, and honour, where the 'hart' shall be hunted no more. But in the afternoon, the huntsmen who had been following the 'young roe' from early day-break, had succeeded in driving Him to the mountains of Bether. CHRIST found Calvary a craggy, jagged, and fearful hill--'a mountain of division.' Here He was driven by the huntsmen to the edges of the awful precipices yawning destruction from below, while He was surrounded and held at bay by all the beasts of prey and monsters of the infernal quest.

The 'unicorn' and the 'bulls of Bashan' gored Him with their horns ; the great 'lion' roared at Him, and the 'dog' fastened himself upon Him. But He foiled them all. In His own time He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. He was buried in a new grave, and His assailants reckoned upon complete victory. They had not considered that He was a 'morning hart.' Surely enough, at the appointed time, did He escape from the hunter's net, and stand forth on the mountains of Israel ALIVE, and *never*, NEVER to die again.

Now He is with Mary in the garden, giving evidence of His own resurrection ; in a moment He is at Emmaus, encouraging the too timid and bewildered disciples. Nor does it cost Him any trouble to go thence to Galilee to His friends, and again to the Mount of Olives, 'on the mountains of spices,' *carrying with Him the day-dawn*, robed in life and beauty for evermore.

*In Church.*—Appointed by the Church of England as one of the special Psalms for Good Friday.

*The Whole Psalm.*—It is worthy of note that Theodore of Mopsuestia was condemned in the fifth Œcumenical Council, and in the Provincial Synod of Rome under Vigilius, for asserting that this Psalm was to be understood of David only, and had no direct reference to our LORD; one of the few instances in which the Church has condemned or asserted a particular explanation of a particular text of Scripture. The most ancient explanations of the Jews themselves refer it to CHRIST; and Rabbi Solomon says that the Messiah in the midst of His sufferings would sing this Psalm aloud \*

The twenty-second Psalm, *St. Augustine* says, was sung in the North African congregation at the Easter celebration of the Lord's Supper. More than fourteen centuries have passed since the Vandals drowned those songs in blood, but a stranger who happens to look in upon a Scottish congregation on a Communion Sabbath will be likely enough to find the Psalm turned to the same holy and solemn use.†

*Mr. Coleridge* once said: I am much delighted and instructed by the hypothesis, which I think probable, that our LORD in repeating 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani' really recited the whole or a large part of the 22nd Psalm. It is impossible to read that Psalm without the liveliest feelings of love, gratitude, and sympathy. It is, indeed, a wonderful prophecy, whatever might or might not have been David's notion when he composed it. Whether CHRIST did audibly repeat the whole or not, it is certain, I think, that He did it mentally, and said aloud what was sufficient to enable His followers to do the same. Even at this day, to repeat in the same manner but the first line of a common hymn would be understood as a reference to the whole. Above all, I am thankful for the thought which suggested itself to my mind, whilst I was read-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 288.

† *The Psalms: their History, etc.*, by Dr. Binnie, pp. 172, 173.



ing this beautiful Psalm, viz., that we should not exclusively think of CHRIST as the Logos united to human nature, but likewise as a perfect man united to the Logos. This distinction is most important in order to conceive, much more appropriately to feel, the conduct and exertion of JESUS.\*

*All the benefits of the Agony*, which is chronicled in the 22nd Psalm, are exhibited in, and conferred by, a mysterious rite, which is imaged by a Feast, and connected with worship :

‘The poor shall eat, and be satisfied.  
Your heart shall live for ever.  
Have eaten and bowed down all the lusty ones of the earth.  
Before Him shall bend all those who descend to the dust.’

Our LORD’S words, in the sixth of St. John, answer to this : ‘I am the Living Bread, which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever.’ ‘How natural,’ cries Delitzsch, ‘is the thought of the Sacramental Eucharist, in which the Second David, like the first, having attained to the Throne through the Suffering of Death, makes us partakers of the fruit of that suffering !’†

*Bossuet*, some time before his death, ‘used to speak as though he were looking to the fatal termination of his malady, and he told those around him that he never had the 22nd Psalm, “My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me ?” out of his mind ; that he went to sleep and woke up repeating it, calling it “the Psalm of death” as consecrated to the Saviour in His own Agony ; adding that it was “full of confidence, and there is nothing like confidence as a preparation for death.”’‡

*Reference in New Testament.*—The references in the New Testament, as fulfilled in CHRIST, are many. The first words of it were uttered by JESUS on the Cross (St. Matt. xxvii. 46). The scorn of the passers-by and the shaking of the head in verse 7 have their counterpart in the story of the Crucifixion (St. Matt.

\* Coleridge, *Table-Talk*, p. 86.

† *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*.

‡ *Life of Bossuet* (Rivingtons), p. 557.

xxvii. 39). The words of verse 8 are found in St. Matt. xxvii. 43; the intense thirst, 'my tongue cleaveth to my gums,' of verse 15, in St. John xix. 28; the parting of the garments, of verse 18, in St. John xix. 23; the piercing (if that is the correct reading) of the hands and feet, in verse 17, in the nailing of the cross. Similarly we are justified in interpreting the latter part of the Psalm of the fruit of CHRIST'S Passion and Resurrection, by the way in which verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews ii. 11, etc.\*

*There is a tradition* that our LORD, hanging on the Cross, began—as we know from the Gospel—this Psalm, and repeating it and those that follow, gave up His most blessed Spirit when He came to the sixth verse of the 31st Psalm. However that may be, by taking these first words on His lips, He stamped the Psalm as belonging to Himself.†

*The Evangelical Demonstration* (by Eusebius of Cæsarea, consisting of 20 books, of which five have perished) is a lengthened argument from the Hebrew Scriptures themselves that CHRIST was the MESSIAH, and that none other is to be expected. The 15th Book ends with an interpretation of the 22nd Psalm.‡

*Verse 9. Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb.*—Dr. Robert Sanderson, some time Bishop of Lincoln, the day before he took his bed—which was three days before his death—that he might receive a new assurance for the pardon of his sins past, and be strengthened in his way to the New Jerusalem, took the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of his and our blessed JESUS, from the hands of his chaplain, Mr. Pullen, accompanied with his wife, children, and a friend, in as awful, humble, and ardent a manner as outward reverence could express.

After the praise and thanksgiving for it was ended, he spake

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 232.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 288.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Holy Eastern Church (Patriarchate of Antioch)*, p. 80.

to this purpose: '*Thou, O God, tookest me out of my mother's womb, and hast been the powerful protector of me to this present moment of my life. Thou hast neither forsaken me now I am become grey-headed, nor suffered me to forsake Thee in the late days of temptation, and sacrifice my conscience for the preservation of my liberty or estate. It was by grace that I have stood, when others have fallen under my trials; and these mercies I now remember with joy and thankfulness; and my hope and desire is that I may die praising Thee.*'\*

*Verse 12. Many oxen are come about me; fat bulls of Basan close me in on every side.*—Bishop Wordsworth says: 'Much misconception respecting Shakespeare's treatment of Holy Scripture has prevailed among his critics, even of the highest rank. Let me produce one notable example, derived from the play of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act III., Sc. ii.

After the ignominious flight, in which Antony had followed Cleopatra from the coast of Actium back to Alexandria, Octavius Cæsar, the conqueror, sends a messenger to endeavour to detach the queen from her paramour. This messenger is received favourably by Cleopatra in a private interview, and just as he is kissing her hand, previous to his departure, Antony comes in, and in the highest strain of indignation, embittered by the consciousness of his downfall and disgrace, upbraids her as follows:

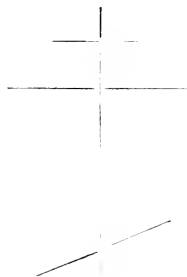
ANTONY. To let a fellow that will take rewards,  
And say, GOD *quit you!* be familiar with  
My playfellow, your hand; this kingly seal,  
And plighter of high hearts! O that I were  
*Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar*  
*The horned herd*, for I have savage cause;  
And to proclaim it civilly were like  
A halter'd neck, which does the hangman thank  
For being yare (adroit) about him.'

This passage gives striking evidence of our poet's familiarity with the Old Testament; see *Psa. xxii. 12; lxxviii. 15; Ezek. xxxix. 18; Amos iv. 1.* But is there anything to give offence even to the most pious mind, in the way in which he

\* Izaak Walton's *Lives*, p. 400.

has applied his knowledge of these several texts? And yet not only has Mr. Bowdler omitted the reference to the 'hill of Basan' as indecorous, but critics, including Johnson himself, have concurred in condemning it as matter for regret, nay, even for 'pity and indignation.'\*

*Verse 14. All my bones are out of joint.*—In the literal meaning, these words have given rise to some of those long and patient disquisitions which have inquired into the component parts of the cross, and the nature of our LORD'S sufferings there. The Eastern Church, as well as some particular Doctors of the West, has always held that, besides the cross and the nails, our LORD was supported by a smaller transverse bar beneath His Feet; and that, in the convulsion of death, this became slightly displaced, so as to present the form which surmounts all Oriental Churches.†



*Verse 20. My darling, or my only one.* From the parallelism=my soul, my life. In similar connection xxxv. 17. The LXX. in both places τὴν μονογενῆ μου; Vulg., unicum meum. It occurs besides, Judges xi. 34, of Jephthah's daughter (see Genesis xxii. 2).‡

*Verse 21. Save me from the lion's mouth.*—Not long after this (*i.e.*, the execution of Lord Russell, in 1683), Dr. Burnet was discharged from preaching the Thursday lecture at St. Clement's, for a sermon on the words '*Save me from the lion's mouth; Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*' This was thought of dangerous construction, because the lion and unicorn supported the king's escutcheon; so timid a thing is tyranny. On the accession of James II., Dr. Burnet left England, and during his reign resided in Holland, enjoying

\* *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*, by Bishop Charles Wordsworth, p. 50.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 298.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 237.

the friendship and confidence of the Prince and Princess of Orange, who afterwards came to the English throne. Dr. Burnet was on the scaffold with Lord Russell.\*

## PSALM XXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Praise of the Good Shepherd.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—David's Heavenly Pastoral.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David concerning his royal table ; and, as respects ourselves, spiritually applied to Christian nations in a new way.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It is unnecessary to refer this Psalm to any particular period of David's history. As the outpouring of a heart which has found perfect rest in GOD, it was probably written in advanced years, after a long experience of God's goodness. Its language is coloured by the reminiscences of his past life. His own shepherd experience no doubt suggested the image of the former part ; and in the latter we may perhaps trace a recollection, more or less distinct, of the circumstances mentioned in 2 Samuel xvii. 27-29, when, on David's coming to Mahanaim during Abraham's rebellion, he and his party were succoured and refreshed in their faintness and weariness, through the kindness of Barzillai and other friends who supplied their wants.

*In Church*.—In the Holy Eastern Church at the Burial of Priests the Psalm is used with Alleluia, Alleluia, after each verse.

This Psalm, together with Psalms lxxxiv. and cxlv., is chanted by the Choir in the Græco-Russian Church, at the consecration of a Church while the Altar-Throne is being prepared. Here is the account of a rather elaborate ceremony. 'Now they' (the priests) 'begin to wash the Throne ; sprinkling it plentifully

\* *Biography of Lady Russell*, by Mr. Child, p. 68.

with holy water, and rubbing it with soap and sponges. Not a fibre of the wood is left unwashed ; within, without, underneath and round about, they rub, splash, and wipe dry. After this, four large nails are driven into the corners with stones, thus fastening the thick top of the table to its legs ; and the holes made for the heads of the nails are filled up with Voskomastica, a mixture of wax, mastic, incense, and powdered marble, melted together. This is in remembrance of the 'spices and ointments' that the holy women prepared for the Body of JESUS. The superfluous Voskomastica is scraped away with knives prepared for the purpose. Perfumes are then poured on the table, mingled with holy water, and wiped away ; also red wine, in the form of a cross, after which the wood is rubbed as perfectly dry as possible.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—In the well-known paraphrase of this Psalm by Joseph Addison—who found in it throughout life the best expression of his own devotions—we seem to trace the poet's allusion to his own personal dangers and escapes in his Alpine and Italian journeys, so the imagery in which the Psalmist describes his dependence on the shepherd-like Providence of GOD must be derived from the remembrance of his own crook and staff. Macaulay, in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Addison, says : 'Of the Psalms, his favourite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing name of a shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe, through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life, he relied in the hour of death with the love which casteth out fear.'

*For a beautiful metrical paraphrase of this Psalm see the Hymn by the Rev. Sir Henry W. Baker, Bart., in Hymns Ancient and Modern (No. 197), 'The King of Love my Shepherd is.'* In Alford's 'Year of Praise,' this hymn is given as in the original, with the omission of one verse. In other

\* *The Græco-Russian Church*, pp. 90, 91.

collections it is much altered. The original is Herbert's rendering of Psalm xxiii., and is given in *The Temple* under that title.\*

*Isaac Taylor's Testimony.*—This is an ode which for beauty of sentiment is not to be matched in the circuit of all literature. In its way down three thousand years or more, this Psalm has penetrated to the depths of millions of hearts ; it has gladdened homes of destitution and discomfort ; it has whispered hope and joy amid tears to the utterly solitary and forsaken, whose only refuge was in Heaven. Beyond all range of probable calculations have these dozen lines imparted a power of endurance under suffering, and strength in feebleness, and have kept alive the flickering flame of religious feeling in hearts that were nigh to despair. The Divine element herein embodied has given proof, millions of times repeated, of its reality and of its efficacy, as a formula of tranquil trust in GOD, and of grateful sense of His goodness, which all, who do trust in Him, may use for themselves, and use it until it has become assimilated to their own habitual feelings.†

*The Twenty-third Psalm* is literally the Christian worshipper's Communion Hymn. Its words 'I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. . . . Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me . . . my cup shall be full,' set themselves to 'the full sweet peal and melody that he hears' in the Communion Office, and from an Antiphon which fills other Psalms with Eucharistic references.‡

'*This is the Pearl of Psalms* whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye ; a pearl of which Helicon need not be ashamed, though Jordan claims it. Of this delightful song, it may be affirmed that its piety and its poetry are equal, its sweetness and its spirituality are unsurpassed. . . . It has been said that what the nightingale is among birds, that is this divine ode among the Psalms, for it has sung sweetly in the

\* *Singers of the Church*, by Miller, p. 61.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 29.

‡ *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 249.

ear of many a mourner in his night of weeping, and has bidden him hope for a morning of joy. I will venture to compare it also to the lark, which sings as it mounts, and mounts as it sings, until it is out of sight, and even then is not out of hearing.\*

*Edward Irving*, the saintly founder of the 'Catholic Apostolic Church,' had the words of this Psalm on his dying lips. He had a firm belief that he should live until the coming of the LORD, and that the Master had a great work for him to do in founding and building up this Church of a new revelation, hence the mental struggle in his last hour. 'He grew delirious in those solemn evenings and "wandered" in his mind. Such wandering! So long as his articulation continued so distinct that we could make anything of his words it was of spiritual things he spoke, praying for himself, his Church, and his relations. . . . Once in this wonderful monologue he was heard murmuring to himself sonorous syllables of some unknown tongue. Listening to these mysterious sounds, Dr. Martin' (his father-in-law) 'found them to be Hebrew measures of the twenty-third Psalm: "*The Lord is my Shepherd,*" into the latter verses of which the dying voice swelled as the watcher took up and echoed the wonderful strain: "*Though I walk through the shadow of death I will fear no evil.*" As the current of life grew feebler and feebler, a last debate seemed to rise in that soul which was now hidden with GOD. They heard him murmuring to himself in inarticulate argument, confusedly struggling in his weakness to account for this visible death, which at length his human faculties could no longer refuse to believe—perhaps touched with ineffable trouble, that His Master had seemed to fail of His word and promise. At length that self-argument came to a sublime conclusion in a trust more strong than life or death. As the gloomy December Sunday sank into the night shadows, his latest audible words on earth fell from his pale lips. The last

\* *The Treasury of David*, vol. i., p. 398.



thing like a sentence we could make out was, "If I die, I die unto the LORD. Amen." And so, at the last wintry midnight hour which ended that final Sabbath on earth, the last bonds of mortal anguish dropped asunder, and the saint and martyr entered into the rest of his LORD.\*

When the Huguenots assembled on Saturday night for family prayer, the head of the listening household used to read this Psalm in cheerful tones, and in the *Memorial of Joseph Sortain* we are told that he adopted the same devout practice. When asked by guests, who happened to be present, why he always read this Psalm on Saturday night, he would reply, 'It was a custom of Huguenot families, and I wish to gain inspiration for my Sunday's duties by the associations it thus calls up.†

*The Psalms: frae Hebrew intil Scottis*, by P. Hately Waddell, LL.D., one of the most curious illustrations of the Scottish language recently published, is a volume little known. Whosoever is able to read this will find all the rich human, and perhaps even, in such a connection, we may be permitted to say, the humorsome characteristics of the language. Take two or three instances. Thus, 'Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke,' is literally rendered, 'Tang but the heights, an' they'll ruk!' and 'He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man,' is rendered, 'He cares nane for the strenth o' the aiver; likes as little the shanks o' the carl.' But our readers will perhaps like to see a more extended illustration; and here, then, is the twenty-third Psalm, and we think it will be scarcely possible to read it without feeling its frequent beauty, and literalness of expression:

The LORD *is* my herd; nae want sal fa' me.

He louts me till lie amang green howes: He airts me atowye by the lown waters.

\* *Life of Edward Irving*, by Mrs. Oliphant, p. 427.

† *A Song of Life or Death. Meditations on Psalm XXIII.*, by G. W. McCree, p. 5.

He waukens my wa-ga'en saul ; He weises me roun, for  
His ain name's sake, intil right roddins.

Na ! tho' I gang thro' the dead-mirk dail ; *e'en thar* sal I  
dread nae skaithin ; for yersel *are* nar-by me ; yer stock an'  
yer stay haud me baith fu' cheerie.

My buird ye hae hansell'd in face o' my faes ; ye hae drookit  
my head wi' oyle ; my bicker is fu' an' skailin.

E'en sae sal gude guidin an gude gree gang wi' me, ilk day  
o' my livin ; an evir mair syne, i' the LORD'S ain howf, *at lang  
last*, sal I mak bydin.

The study of the Scottish dialect, however it may seem to  
be fading from use, would well repay the student, who would  
find his language enriched by some fine monosyllabic words,  
and graced by expressive compound epithets.\*

*Dr. Duff*, the great Indian Missionary, found comfort in this  
Psalm as he lay dying (in February, 1878). His daughter  
repeated it to him, and he responded at the end of each verse.

*Poor desolate and afflicted Heinrich Heine*, who had been a  
pantheist and scoffer, alternately or combined, was laid for  
years on what he called his *mattress sepulchre*, and took to  
reading the Bible, especially the Psalms. One of the very  
last of his poems, addressed to his wife, to whom he was  
devotedly attached, bears traces of the shepherd-song of GOD'S  
flock, and if it wants the sparkle and point of his early genius,  
it is redeemed by its softened tenderness. It begins thus :

' My arm grows weak ; Death comes apace,  
Death pale and grim ; and I no more  
Can guard my lamb as heretofore.  
O GOD ! into Thy hands I render  
My crook ; keep Thou my lambkin tender.  
When I in peace have laid me down,  
Keep Thou my lamb, and do not let  
A single thorn her bosom fret,  
And guide where pastures green and sweet  
Refresh the wanderer's weary feet. †

*Verse 1. The Lord is my Shepherd.*—Charles Pettit McIlvaine,

\* *Scottish Characteristics*, by Paxton Hood, p. 163.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 46.

Bishop of Ohio—a man whose life was full of the one aim to bring souls to Christ, and of whom the late Archbishop of Canterbury (Tait) said, ‘Few men living have done so much to draw England and the United States together’—was a man who lived as in the presence of GOD, and as a result his end was full of peace and joy. ‘He seemed indeed to be always in the immediate presence of his SAVIOUR, and never once did a doubt of his acceptance overshadow his mind. “Blessed LORD!” he said, “I have prayed so often that He would be with me at this time, and He will be; I am sure of it.” He then alluded to the ministry of angels, a very favourite subject with him, observing, “When the soul is out of its tabernacle the angels will convey it to JESUS.” Soon after he begged his love to be sent to Bishop Bedell (Assistant Bishop of Ohio) and Bishop Lee (of Delaware). After an interval, during which he seemed to be meditating, he remarked: “I don’t see any cause for care or apprehension; I know I am dying, but I have no care—*The Lord is my Shepherd*; He lifts up the Light of His countenance upon me—I wish to be in His hands, and He will do with me what He pleases—I have no will but His—Oh, what a gracious tender SAVIOUR He is!”’ The good Bishop died soon after, ‘but so quiet and gentle was the end, that we could not precisely say when the blessed spirit departed. It was indeed a literal falling asleep in JESUS.’\*

*Verse 3. And lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.*—At the summit of the Pulney Hills, in Southern India, may be seen the grave of one who lost his life in the midst of an overwhelming flood on the plain below. The memorial stone by that quiet grave bears this inscription: ‘David Coit Scudder. *He leadeth me beside the still waters.*’†

*Verse 4. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.*—St. Francis of Assisi joined the Christians

\* *Memorials of Bishop McIlwaine*, by Rev. Canon Carus, p. 352.

† *The Biblical Museum*, vol. vi., p. 56.

under the walls of Damietta. The Sultan had offered a reward of gold to whoever should bring him the head of one of the invaders, and seized with the enthusiasm of the age, St. Francis, at the peril of his life, took the first step in his Mission, by marching to the enemy's camp, singing the fourth verse of this Psalm. 'He undertook the adventure,' says Bonaventura, 'not terrified by the fear, but rather excited by the desire of death.' He set out with Brother Illuminato, after prayer to GOD, singing that tenderest of all consolatory Psalms which recalls the green pastures and still waters, rather than the deadly presence of peril. '*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil,*' they sang, as they set out to cross the dangerous passage; their hearts inspired—'drunken,' as says the history—with the SPIRIT OF GOD and the hope of martyrdom. The Sultan was so touched by the Missionary's fearlessness in thus venturing into the enemy's camp, that he sent him back unharmed, and with these words on his lips: 'Pray for me,' he said, 'that GOD may reveal to me that law and faith which are according to His own heart.'\*

This verse occurs in the Journals of *Henry Martyn*, the great Indian Missionary, of whom even the Persian Mollahs used to say: 'Henry Martyn was never beaten in an argument; he was a good man, a man of GOD.' On this verse Martyn makes the following comment: 'When do the sheep find the happiness of having a shepherd so much as when they are walking through a dark shadow? While JESUS lets me see His rod and staff, I am comforted.†'

We have already noted that this Psalm is used in the Eastern Church at the Burial of Priests, and this verse tells us the reason, 'and see how beautifully the whole corresponds to it! The grave, the fold, in which the LORD'S sheep are penned safely till the morning of the Resurrection. And the Shepherd Himself had tasted of the same trials which He permits His

\* *Life of St. Francis of Assisi*, by Mrs. Oliphant, p. 167.

† *Lamps of the Church*, by the Rev. H. Clissold, p. 83.

sheep to know. The green pasture will be, as ancient Liturgies so often make it, the state of blessed souls that have departed out of this world, but have not yet been admitted to the Beatific Vision. 'They have departed,' says James of Edessa, in his Liturgy, with true 'hope and the confidence of the faith which is in Thee, from this world of straits, from this life of misery, to Thee. Remember them and receive them, and cause them to rest in the bosom of Abraham, in tabernacles of light and rest, in shining dwelling-places, in a world of pleasures, in the city of Jerusalem, where there is no place for sorrow or for war.' Then the 'convert my soul' must be taken of that final conversion when sin shall be destroyed for ever, as it is written, 'He that is dead is freed from sin.' 'The paths of righteousness,' what are they but those streets of gold, of which it is written, 'The nations of them which are saved shall walk in it'? 'The table will be at the eternal wedding feast: and then how does the "all the days of my life," and "I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever," rivet the Psalm, as it were, to this, as its natural meaning!\*

*The valley of the shadow of death.*—Those who have walked through the Pass of Glencoe, or looked down into the Black Valley (near the Gap of Dunloe), on a gloomy day, will readily understand the appropriateness of this figure. In 'Ispahan, we are told, is a valley inconceivably dreary, desolate, waterless, called the Valley of the Angel of Death.†

Some of the words uttered by *Archbishop Laud*, on the scaffold, illustrate 'the valley of the shadow of death.' 'LORD, I am coming as fast as I can. I know I must pass through the shadow of death before I can come to see Thee. But it is but *umbra mortis*, a shadow of death, a little darkness upon nature: but Thou, LORD, by Thy goodness, hast broken the jaws and the power of death.'

*Verses 4, 5. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the*

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., pp. 319, 320.

† *Companion to the Psalter*, p. 59.

*shadow of death, I will fear no evil. . . . Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me :*

‘ If Thou willest, feed me,  
Strengthen ere I go ;  
In that unknown pathway  
Lighten every woe ;  
JESU, as Thou knowest  
Grant me so to know.

‘ That an hour of weakness—  
That a time of fear—  
Come, Thou Bread of Heaven,  
Sacrament so dear ;  
All I loved may vanish  
If but Thou be near.’

FREDERICK GEORGE LEE.

*Verse 6. But Thy lovingkindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*—The following is an illustration of what the feelings of a good man should be in the hour of bitterness. Richard Cameron was executed for his religious opinions on July 20th, 1680. His father was in prison for conscience’ sake. The bleeding head of the martyr son was brought to the father by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. ‘ I know it, I know it,’ said the father as he kissed the mangled forehead of his fair-haired son ; ‘ it is my son’s, my dear son’s ! It is the LORD ! Good is the will of the LORD, who cannot wrong me or mine, but who hath made *goodness and mercy to follow us all our days.*’\*

*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*—It is fitting to close our remarks on this Psalm by quoting a verse of the sequence *Supernæ matris gaudia*, also noting the beautiful words of Dr. Neale at this place. ‘ Here,’ he says, ‘ we have the heavenly home-sickness ; St. Paul’s desire to depart and to be with CHRIST, which is far better ; the change of the light of grace, here often clouded and obscure, for the light of glory that can never be darkened, that can never fade away, that grows brighter and more perfect to ages of ages.’

\* *The Night of Weeping*, by Horatius Bonar.

'Unto the glory of the Saints,  
And through the prayers for us they pray  
After earth's sorrows and complaints,  
CHRIST bring us of His grace for aye !'

## PSALM XXIV.

*Healing* (Delitzsch).—Preparation for the reception of the LORD who is about to come.

*Title* (Spurgeon). The song of the Ascension.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Concerning the first day, when GOD began the work of Creation.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This grand choral hymn was in all probability composed and sung on the occasion of the removal of the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David, on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi.). . . . It seems quite evident that the Psalm was intended to be sung in antiphonal measure, voice answering voice, and chorus to chorus. Seven choirs of singers and musicians, so Josephus tells us, preceded the Book on this occasion, as the king commanded, he himself playing upon the harp, and dancing before Jehovah in his might.

*In Church*.—In the Jewish Church this Psalm is recited in the Synagogue, at the carrying back of the volume of the Law, the written Word of God, into its shrine; it is also a constant Psalm on the first day of the week in the Temple Service throughout the year.

According to the Roman use, it is appointed as a Psalm in the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, and in the Burial of Children.

In the Holy Eastern Church it is used at the Burial of Priests, and also at the burial of the Laity, when earth is cast on the coffin. It is also used in the Græco-Russian Church, at the Consecration of a Church. At a certain part of the service all march round the Church in procession. When they get round to the West door they stop in the entrance, with

their faces towards the door, which is shut. Half of the choir have remained inside, and are stationed near the door.

*High Priest.*—‘Blessed be CHRIST our GOD, always, now, henceforth, and for ever!’

*Choir* (inside the Church).—‘Amen!’

*High Priest.*—‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of glory shall come in.’

*Choir* (in the Church).—‘Who is the King of Glory?’

(These quotations from the 24th Psalm are repeated twice.)

*Deacon.*—‘Let us pray to the LORD!’

*All the Choristers.*—‘LORD, have mercy upon us!’

Then the High Priest reads, still in the entrance, a long and beautiful prayer, which is succeeded by a shorter one, called the Entrance Prayer.

*High Priest.*—‘The LORD of Hosts, He is the King of glory!’

*Choir* (in the Church).—‘The LORD of Hosts, He is the King of glory!’ (also repeated three times).

The door is then opened, and the procession enters and proceeds to the altar through the royal gates.\*

By the Church of England it is appointed the fourth of the Proper Psalms for the Festival of the Ascension.

This Psalm is inscribed in the Septuagint and the Vulgate as a Psalm for the *first day of the week*, and was so used in the Hebrew Ritual, and it is very suitable for the *first day*, the day on which the light of Creation, of Redemption, and of Sanctification dawned on the world. Accordingly it is appointed in the Sarum and Roman use for Trinity Sunday.†

*Verse 1. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.*—Pride of ownership, of course, accounts for most of the numerous initials and heraldic carving. Real piety probably was the cause of the profuse use of biblical texts, as when

\* *Græco-Russian Church*, pp. 92, 93.

† Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 33.



Sir Thomas Gresham inscribed upon his Exchange, '*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.*'\*

*St. Chrysostom* comforted himself in his exile with the words of the Psalms, writing thus: 'When driven from the city, I cared nothing for it. But I said to myself, "If the Empress wishes to banish me, let her banish me; '*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof!*"' And again, "David clothes me with armour, saying: 'I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.'"†

*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and all that dwell therein.*—Deir Sambir is about one and a half hours east of Dell Louzeh, and contains a Church of which three west doors remain. Here we observed a handsome tomb well preserved, with the following inscription running round a semi-circular arch: '*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and all that dwell therein* + 643.' . . . Another remark of some interest occurs in connection with this epitaph; this opening verse of the 24th Psalm is the Stichos peculiar to the Burial Service of a priest in the Greek Church, introduced near the beginning of the office.‡

*Verse 2.* '*For He hath founded it upon the seas.*'—It may be mentioned as a curiosity of Romish interpretation, that the Vulgate '*super maria,*' '*upon the seas,*' was converted into '*super Maria,*' '*upon (the Virgin) Mary.*'§

*Verse 6.* *This is the generation of them that seek Him: even of them that seek Thy face, O Jacob:*

'The seekers of Thy glorious face,  
Thy chosen Israel.'||

*Verse 9.* *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.*—

\* *Quiver*, June, 1883, p. 491.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 38.

‡ Neale's *Holy Eastern Church: Patriarchate of Antioch*, Introduction, xxxix.

§ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 248.

|| Keble.

I must not refrain from noticing the use made of this verse by our own poet, in his description of the SON OF GOD, first going forth to Creation, and again returning from the completion of his work :

‘ Heaven opened wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,  
On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
The King of Glory, in His powerful word  
And SPIRIT, coming to create new worlds.’

And on His return :

‘ Up He rode  
Followed with acclamation, and the sound,  
Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned  
Angelic harmonies.  
Open, ye everlasting gates ! they sing,  
Open, ye Heavens ! your living doors ; let in  
The great Creator from His work returned  
Magnificent ; His six days’ work, a world.’

‘ To sing  
The glorious train ascending. He through Heaven  
That opened wide her blazing portals, led  
To GOD’S eternal house direct the way.’

*Paradise Lost*, vii.\*

## PSALM XXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for gracious protection and guidance.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Instruction in the duty of thanksgiving.

*Origin* (Perowne).—‘ This is an acrostic or alphabetical Psalm, the first verse beginning with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the other letters following in order at the beginning of each successive verse. The order indeed is not perfectly observed. . . . We have no means of fixing what the time was’ (at which the Psalm was written); ‘but they’ (*i.e.*, this and the thirty-fourth Psalm, between which there are peculiarities of alphabetical arrangement) ‘probably belong to

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 80.

the later period of the history—perhaps to the time of the exile.’

*In Church.*—In the Holy Eastern Church the Psalm is used at the Burial of the Laity. Prokeimenon of the Epistle, Psalm xxv. 1; it is also the fourth Psalm in the Greek late Even-song. In the Lutheran Service it is used in the Service for the Sick and Dying.

*The Whole Psalm.*—Some of the most precious spiritual treasures have been drawn from this Alphabetical Psalm. Thus, verse 6 (*reminiscere miserationem eum tuarum*) gave name to ‘Reminiscere Sunday,’ the 2nd Sunday in Lent; verse 12 (*oculi mei semper ad Dominum*) to ‘Oculi Sunday,’ third Sunday in Lent; Luther put this Psalm into his office for the Dying, to be used after the receiving of the Holy Communion; and Selnecker’s beautiful hymn for the Dying, ‘Allein nach dir, Herr JESU CHRIST,’ grew out of verse 1.\*

*Lord Strafford* on the scaffold, after speaking to the people, turned to those on the scaffold, and said: ‘Gentlemen, I would say my prayers, and I entreat you all to pray with me and for me.’ Then his chaplain, Dr. Carr, laid the Book of Common Prayer upon the chair before him as he kneeled down, on which he prayed almost a quarter of an hour, and repeated *the twenty-fifth Psalm*; then he prayed as long or longer without a book, and ended with the LORD’S Prayer. Then, standing up, he spied his brother, Sir George Wentworth, and called to him, and after giving his last request said: ‘I have done; one stroke will make my wife husbandless, my dear children fatherless, and my poor servant masterless, and separate me from my dear brother and all my friends; but let GOD be to you and them all in all.’†

*The first of the Alphabetical Psalms*; that is, of those in which each verse, or each clause, commences consecutively with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. The others are the 34th, the

\* Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 81.

† Mozley’s *Essays*, vol. i., p. 102: *Lord Strafford*.

37th, the 111th, the 112th, the 119th, and the 145th. Besides these, the Lamentations of Jeremiah are written on the same system, and the 31st chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Some of the Psalms, of which this is one, are not absolutely perfect in the acrostic arrangement. It is a more ingenious than likely suggestion of Cassiodorus, that those in which the acrostic is maintained without a flaw are intended to describe the state of the perfect; the Psalms in which it is not unbroken, of those who are only striving after perfection. Probably from these Psalms arose the A B C-darian hymns of the Latin, and Canons of the Eastern Church.\*

*Verse 1. Unto Thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul; my God, I have put my trust in Thee.*—St. Louis at his coronation uttered these words.

*My God, I have put my trust in Thee.*—It is a curious example of the way in which Gerhohus presses the verse, on which he is commenting, to apply to the religious state of the time, when we find him thus writing on this first verse: ‘*My God, I have put my trust in Thee: I trust not in the traditions of the Pharisee; I trust not in idols; I trust not in the sects of heresies; I trust not in the interdicted masses of Simoniacs.*†

*My God, I have put my trust in Thee; O let me not be confounded.*—Charles Kingsley wrote in 1857, to Mr. Maurice: ‘I can think of nothing but these Indian massacres. The moral problems they involve make me half wild. . . . What does it all mean? Christ is King, nevertheless! I tell my people so. I should do—I dare not think what—if I did not believe so. But I want sorely someone to tell me that he believes it too. Do write to me and give me a clue out of this valley of the shadow of death. . . .’

‘My experience is, that when they come’ (doubts concerning GOD’S rule, etc.), ‘one must face them, do battle with them deliberately, be patient if they worst one for awhile. For, by

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 339.

† *Ibid.*

all such things men live, in these is the life of the spirit. Only by going down into hell can one rise again the third day. . . . I never have looked hell so close in the face as I have been doing of late. Wherefore, I hope thereby to get fresh power to rise, and to lift others heavenward. But the power has not come yet. . . . And I can only cry, "*O Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.*" Wherefore should the wicked say, where is now his GOD?" But while I write now, and while I fret most, there comes to me an inner voice, saying: "What matter if *thou* art confounded, *God is not.*" Only believe firmly that GOD is at least as good as thou, with thy 'finite reason,' canst conceive; and He will make thee at last able to conceive how good He is, and thou shalt have the one perfect blessing of seeing GOD." You will say I am inconsistent. So I am; and so, if read honestly, are David's Psalms. Yet that very inconsistency is what brings them home to every human heart for ever. The words of a man in real doubt and real darkness, crying for light, and not crying in vain. As I trust I shall not. GOD bless you.\*

*Verse 4. Lead me forth in Thy truth, and LEARN me.—*  
Learn = to *teach.*

'You must not *learn* me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.'—*As You Like It*, Act I., Sc. ii.†

*Verse 9. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.—*  
When thought to be dying, during his Provostship at Annecy, St. Francis of Sales said, as he resigned himself to death, '*All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.*'

*Verse 10. For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.—*Charles de Condren, the successor to Cardinal de Bérulle, as General of the Oratorians—and of whom de Bérulle used to remark that, 'while the Congregation obeyed its General, that General obeyed Père de Condren'

\* *Charles Kingsley's Life*, vol. ii., p. 61.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 36.

—lay dying. ‘Pray that GOD will this day convert the greatest of sinners!’ he said of himself to the Father who was ministering to him. After receiving Extreme Unction, he gave his last blessing to the assembled community: ‘Veni Domine JESU, et vive in his famulis Tuis in plenitudine virtutis Tuæ et dominare adversæ potestati, qui vivis et regnas in seculi seculorum.’

He was constantly making acts of contrition and hope, through the pains of death, which were severe. ‘Manus DOMINI tetigit me!’ (The Hand of GOD hath touched me,’ Job xix. 21) he exclaimed shortly before the last. Just at the end, when sorely overwhelmed with a bitterness which those around likened to our LORD’S last Agony on the Cross, he cried out: ‘*Domine propitiaberis peccato meo, multum est enim!*’ (Psalm xxv. 10, ‘For Thy Name’s sake, LORD, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great’). Père de Saint Pé, who stood by, said: ‘Father, give yourself up to GOD.’ Whereupon with a clear strong voice the dying man replied: ‘My GOD, I commit my soul into Thy Hands!’ and so saying he expired, January 7, 1641.\*

*Verse 15. Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me: for I am desolate and in misery.*

‘The priest beheld, and passed  
The way he had to go;  
A careless eye the Levite cast,  
And left me to my woe;  
But Thou, O good, O loving One, draw nigh;  
Have pity on me! say, “Thou shalt not die!” †

## PSALM XXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Longing of one who is persecuted innocently, to give thanks to GOD in His house.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—When his friends

\* *Priestly Life in France*, p. 281.

† *Triodion, the Great Penitential Canon*.

turned away from him in his flight. As regards ourselves, the supplication of the man that progresseth in virtue before God.

*Origin (Perowne).*—The Psalm furnishes no direct evidence as to its date, but it may have been composed during Absalom's rebellion. His partisans may especially be hinted at in the 'vain men' and 'dissemblers' of verse 4, who had only recently been unmasked; for Absalom, it is said, 'had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel.'

*In Church.*—In the Roman Catholic, at the Eucharist, Lavabo, verse 6-12.

*The Whole Psalm.*—When Pius VII. received Napoleon's notice of his deposition, he knelt down and recited the Psalm 'Judica me, Domine.'

*Verse 5. I have hated the congregation of the wicked, and will not sit among the ungodly.*—At the Council of Carthage, A.D. 411, the Catholic Bishops, to the number of 286, met the Donatists—their Bishops amounting to 278—to arrange matters, and, if possible, to heal the schism which was then dividing the Church. The Donatists evidently entered into the Conference with the greatest reluctance, and when Marcellinus, the imperial Commissary, desired them to sit down, Retilian, Bishop of Cirta, their leader, produced scriptural authority for refusing, viz., the words of the Psalmist. St. Augustine replied that to be consistent they should not have come at all, since the same verse also said, '*I have hated the congregation of evil doers.*'

*Verse 6. I will wash my hands in innocency.*—One morning, as Gotthold was pouring water into a basin, he recollected the words of Scripture, '*I will wash my hands in innocency,*' a text which shows how diligently the royal prophet had endeavoured to lead a blameless life, and walk habitually in the fear of GOD. Upon this he mused, and said, 'Henceforth, my GOD, every time I pour out water to wash with, I will call

to mind that it is my duty to cleanse my hands from wicked actions, my mouth from wicked words, and my heart from wicked lusts and desires, that so I may be enabled to lift holy hands unto Thee, and with unspotted lips and heart worship Thee, to the best of my ability.\*

*I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord; and so will I go to Thine altar.*—‘Be it not supposed,’ says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the 5th Book of his teaching, ‘that this’ (the lavabo at the Holy Eucharist) ‘is done to cleanse the body from outward impurities, for we never enter a Church in a dirty state of body. It signifies that our souls must be purified from all sins and wickedness. For as their hands are the instruments of action, the washing of them shows the purity and undefiledness of our desires. Hast thou never heard the words of David, who says, ‘*I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I go to Thy altar, O Lord*’ †

*Verse 8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.*—St. Paula, when dying, exclaimed, ‘*Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth. O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts!*’

*Catherine Tai’s* last hours are full of pathos and rest; she was ever a lover of God’s House. Can we do better than describe her last moments in the words of the Archbishop? ‘We were now in great alarm of some sudden termination, or of unconsciousness coming on, and it would have left a sad memory if she had departed without that solemn rite, through which her soul had always rejoiced to hold communion with her Saviour. But still, for several hours, she was entirely herself. I administered the Holy Communion to her, to her daughter, and to the physician.

‘She joined in all, so far as her impeded speech would allow. I said to her the *Nunc Dimittis*, and she repeated it with me.

\* *Christian Scriver* (1629-1693) in *Gotthold’s Emblems*.

† *Græco-Russian Church*, p. 401.



I said to her, "O Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine house," and she added, "And the place where Thine honour dwelleth." I tried to go through the hymn, "JESUS, Lover of my soul," and when I faltered she supplied the missing words. Then, after a time of rest, as of old, on all Sundays—in the Deanery, at Fulham and London House, at Lambeth and at Addington—her daughter sang to her some favourite hymns: "Lo! He comes with clouds descending" and "Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom." When they had finished, I repeated to her again the last lines, inscribed by her desire on the frame of Grispini's picture of the children who left her at Carlisle:

"And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

"Yes, yes," she repeated; and either then or a few minutes before she spoke of those of us who had gone before, stretching out their hands to welcome her. The physician wished her again to rest. Soon she became unconscious, and about ten o'clock, after I offered up the Commendatory Prayer, her breathing ceased with a gentle sigh, and she was gone.\*

*Verse 11.* *But as for me, I will walk innocently.*—'In inno-tentiâ meâ ingressus sum' was the motto of Pope Innocent VIII.

## PSALM XXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Taking heart in GOD, the All-Recompensing One.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—On account of the infirmity that fell upon him.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, like the last and the one which follows, may very probably be referred to the time of Absalom's rebellion.

\* *Catherine and Crauford Tait*, p. 194.

*In Church.*—The Orthodox Church of the East. The anointing with Chrism after Baptism. The Priest begins with prayer, and then makes the sign of the cross with the feathers dipped in a tiny bottle of holy oil, on the brow, eyes, nostrils, ears, lips, breast, hands and feet, each time with the words, ‘The Seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ The Priest, followed by the sponsors, still holding the child, now walks round the font, chanting with the Deacon and Reader, ‘As many of us as have been baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST (Gal. iii. 27)—Hallelujah!’ The god-mother or god-father having taken the child, they again walk round the font with the same words; the third time, if there be two pairs of sponsors, one of the other pair takes it.

*Reader:* ‘*The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid?*’ Then follows the Epistle, read by the Reader (Rom. vi. 3-11), ‘So many of us . . . alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD,’ and after a few sentences and doxologies the Gospel (St. Matt. xxviii. 16 to end).\*

This Psalm is also appointed in the Greek Office for the Visitation of the Sick.† The Latin Church has appointed it for Good Friday and Easter Even, and so the Sarum Use.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—India was still heaving with the groundswell of the terrible mutiny of 1857, when the wife of Sir John Lawrence was called home to her children in England, and had to leave her husband, who could not quit his post, surrounded by the smouldering embers which might at any moment rekindle into flame, and worn to exhaustion with the anxiety and labour which did so much for the preservation of the Indian Empire. She thus writes: ‘When the last morning of separation (Jan. 6, 1858) arrived, we had our usual Bible reading, and I can never think of the 27th Psalm, which was

\* *Græco-Russian Church*, pp. 74, 75.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 239.

‡ *Wordsworth's Commentary*, p. 38.

the portion we then read together, without recalling that sad time.' In perusing the Psalm, we can see what springs of comfort must have opened in every verse, from the beginning to the close: 'The LORD is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? . . . For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. . . . I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, in the LORD.'\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—Dr. Kögel read this Psalm to the dying Emperor William. 'Papa, do you understand?' asked the Grand Duchess of Baden. 'It was beautiful!' and these were his last words (March 9, 1888).

*Verse 1. Dominus illuminatio mea.*—No device of whatever kind appears on any of the known Oxford books executed during the 15th century. We are not aware of any one earlier than that which is here exhibited in a woodcut as our first specimen; which is found in a work by Walter Burley, of the date of 1517. It is an engraving on wood, representing the University arms in a shield supported by two angels; but instead of our present motto, 'DOMINUS illuminatio mea,' which was introduced after the Restoration of Charles II., we here read 'Veritas liberabit Bonitas regnabit.' Our second specimen, taken from books of the 17th century, presents a device somewhat different, in which the two angels appear above, and two fiends below, with the appropriate motto on the open book of seven seals 'Sapientiae et Felicitatis,' a motto which appears in books printed by Joseph Barnes, 1586-1617, and which was used till about the time of the Restoration. It seems that the three mottoes of the University appear in

\* *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 51.

combination in an escutcheon representing the arms of the University in the east window of the Bodleian.\*

*Verse 3. Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid.*—St. Antony, the first great preacher of the hermit life, was an instance of self-denial and forgetfulness. He was an Egyptian, Christianly brought up. One day in Church the Gospel was, ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; and come, follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:’ he therefore sold all that he had, committed his sister to known and faithful virgins, and adopted a life of self-denial.

Antony, having thus as it were bound himself, went to the tombs, which happened to be some way from the village; and having bidden one of his acquaintance to bring him bread at intervals of many days, he entered one of the tombs, and, shutting the door upon himself, remained there alone. But the enemy not enduring that, but rather terrified, lest in a little while he should fill the desert with his training, coming one night with a multitude of demons, beat him so much with stripes that he lay speechless for the torture. For he asserted that the pain was so great, that no blows given by men could cause such agony. But by the providence of GOD (for the LORD does not overlook those who trust in Him), the next day his acquaintance came, bringing him the loaves. And having opened the door, and seeing him lying on the ground for dead, he carried him to the LORD’S house in the village, and laid him on the ground, and many of his kinsfolk and the villagers sat round him, as round a corpse. But about midnight Antony, coming to himself, and waking up, saw them all sleeping and only his acquaintance awake, and nodding to him to approach, begged him to carry him back to the tomb, without waking anyone. When that was done, the doors were shut, and he remained as before, alone inside. And because he could not stand on account of the demons’ blows, he prayed prostrate.

\* Ingram’s *Memorials of Oxford*, vol. iii., p. 15.

And after his prayer he said with a shout, 'Here am I, Antony; I do not fly from your stripes; yea, if you do yet more, nothing shall separate me from the love of CHRIST.' And then he sang: '*If an host be laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid?*'\*

*Verse 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*—Peter Balsam, a native of the territory of Eleutheropolis, in Palestine, was apprehended at Aulane, in the persecution of Maximinus. Being brought before Severus, governor of the province, he was subjected to a severe cross-examination. He was afterwards put to the rack, and whilst he was suspended in the air, the governor said to him, scoffing: 'What say you now, Peter; do you begin to know what the rack is? Are you yet willing to sacrifice?' Peter answered, 'Tear me with iron hooks. I have already told, sacrificing, I will sacrifice to that GOD alone for whom I suffer.' Hereupon the governor commanded his tortures to be redoubled. The martyr, far from fetching the least sigh, sung with alacrity those verses of the royal prophet: *One thing I have asked of the Lord; this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. I will take the chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord.*

After enduring other tortures he was nailed to a cross. Thus it was that this glorious martyr finished his triumph, at Aulane on the third of January, 311.†

*St. Maglorre* was a fellow-disciple of St. Sampson under St. Illutus in Wales, his cousin, and his zealous companion in his apostolical labours in Brittany, and he succeeded him in the abbey of Dole, and in the episcopal character. His labours were attended with a great harvest of souls. After three years he resigned his bishopric, being seventy years old, and retired into a desert on the continent, and some time after into the

\* *The Hermits*, by C. Kingsley, pp. 40, 41.

† *Butler's Lives of the Saints*.

isle of Jersey, where he founded and governed a monastery of sixty monks. He lived on barley bread and pulse, ate only after sunset, and on Wednesdays and Fridays took no nourishment at all; on Sundays and festivals, he added to his bread a little fish. For six months before he died he never stirred out of the church but when he was obliged by some necessity, and he frequently repeated with sighs: *One thing I have asked of the Lord; this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* He died about the year 575.\*

*Verse 5. In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His tabernacle.*

‘In Thy safe pavilion, LORD,  
 ‘Neath the shadow of Thy wing,  
 Let me nestle down my head,  
 All my sorrows to Thee bring.

‘In Thy safe pavilion, LORD,  
 ‘Neath the shadow of Thy wing,  
 From this lower world of strife,  
 Hide me from its hollow ring.

‘In Thy safe pavilion, LORD,  
 ‘Neath the shadow of Thy wing,  
 Lay me like a little child,  
 To my Father I would cling.

‘Let me hear the distant waves,  
 Silv’ry chimes upon that shore,  
 Softly murmuring to the blest,  
 Rest, sweet rest for evermore.

‘On Thy bosom calmly sleeping,  
 Weary with this earthly strife,  
 Speak to me of love unchanging,  
 Everlasting love and life!’†

*Verse 9. My heart hath talked of Thee, Seek ye my face; Thy face, Lord, will I seek:*

‘Help me to seek Thee, SAVIOUR, lest I stray  
 In paths that never bear Thy blessed feet;  
 I would not wander from my LORD’s highway,  
 Yet I am weak, and earth’s frail joys are sweet.’

\* Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*.

† Poems by Sophia Eckly, p. 90.

- ‘But all my soul is set to seek Thy face,  
 And all Thy love hath moved me to be Thine ;  
 My spirit yearneth for Thy dwelling-place,  
 My heart desireth that fair home of mine.
- ‘Still keep me true to Thee in bliss or pain,  
 Incline mine ear to hear what Thou shalt speak ;  
 Call me to Thee again, and yet again,  
 And I will say, “Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”’\*

*Verse 12. When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up.*

- ‘Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
 Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
 Fall into shadow, soonest lost ;  
 Those we love first are taken first.
- ‘GOD gives us love. Something to love  
 He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
 To ripeness, that on which it throve  
 Falls off, and love is left alone.’

ALFRED TENNYSON.

*Verse 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.*

- ‘Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—  
 Hell trembles at a heaven-directed eye ;  
 Choose rather to defend than to assail—  
 Self-confidence will in the conflict fail ;  
 When you are challenged you may dangers meet—  
 True courage is a fixed, not sudden heat ;  
 Is always humble, lives in self-distrust,  
 And will itself into no danger thrust.  
 Devote yourself to GOD, and you will find  
 GOD fights the battles of a will resigned.  
 Love JESUS ! love will no base fear endure—  
 Love JESUS ! and of conquest rest secure.’

BISHOP KEN (1637-1711).

*Verse 15. I should utterly have fainted ; but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

- ‘One adequate support  
 For the calamities of mortal life  
 Exists, one only—an assured belief  
 That the procession of our fate, howe’er  
 Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
 Of infinite benevolence and power ;  
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
 All accidents, converting them to good.’

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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\* *Sunday at Home*, 1877, p. 505.

*Verse 16. O tarry thou the Lord's leisure ; be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart ; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.*— For an excellent and affecting exposition of this text, in reference to the duties of the faithful in times of trouble, the reader may refer to Bishop Sanderson's Sermon upon it (i. 353), preached before King Charles I., at Woburn, in the time of his distress, August 8, 1647.

*At the Deanery, Carlisle*, in 1855, the greatest sorrow that can befall loving natures happened to Archbishop Tait and his wife. Five of their children died, one after the other, in scarlet fever.

'A very few days after her first great sorrow had fallen upon her, she committed to writing her recollections of it for the perusal of her family and her friends.

On December 20th she wrote unknown to anyone a memorandum, addressed to her son, which was only found in one of her drawers after her death. From that paper the following words are extracted :

'I wish to say to dear Craufurd (her son) and our children, that after your father and myself have left you, and have, through the merits of CHRIST, joined your dear sisters in our FATHER'S house, it may be well for you to publish the little book which contains the account I wrote soon after they left us, of that time of trial. As the suffering is one which must recur over and over again while the world lasts, it may speak a word of help and comfort to those upon whom a similar burden is laid, and who are feeling that it is too heavy for them to bear. To them I would say, "*O tarry thou the Lord's leisure ; be strong, and He shall comfort your hearts ; and put you your trust in the Lord.*" In the darkest part of our sorrow these words were never absent from me, and I have found how truly they spoke.'

Her life, her death, was one long act of trust in GOD, and she was enabled to say, in strong hope (they are her own words), 'They are in the safe keeping of GOD and His good angels, and now know the joy of His people, in the kingdom



of His glory; and as for us, we know to Whom we have committed them, and are sure that He is able to keep them for us.'

## PSALM XXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cry for help and thanksgiving, in a time of rebellion.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Another of those 'songs in the night' of which the pen of David was so prolific.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Prayer and supplication; and that we should implore aid.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There is no valid reason why we should reject the traditional title which gives the Psalm to David. Like the two preceding Psalms, it might very well have been composed at the time of Absalom's rebellion.

*In Church*.—In the Orthodox Eastern Church, in Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, Holy Eucharist. After the people have received, the Priest blesses them, repeating Psalm xxviii. 10: 'O GOD, save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage.'\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—The principle of building East and West, and placing the altar eastwards, so as to turn the faces of the worshippers in that direction, must be derived from Eastern, if not from Hebrew, habit, as the idea of a fixed Kebleh, or direction, is certainly Oriental. 'We have probably the earliest trace of it,' says Mr. Plumptre, 'in Psalm xxviii., ascribed to David. It is recognised in the dedication prayer of Solomon (1 Kings vii. 29), and by Daniel (vi. 10), as a fixed rule. Christian orientation probably followed the structure of the synagogue . . . and the Table of the LORD, bearing witness of the Blood of the New Covenant, took the place of the ark, which contained the Law that was the groundwork of the old.'†

\* Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

† *The Basilica*, by Rev. R. St. John Tyrwhitt, part ii.

*Verse 1. Be not silent to me.*—Gerhohus, interpreting the Vulgate, *Ne silcas a me*, does not fail to enter at length into the mediæval belief that the lion's whelps are born dead, and that the parent lion, by roaring over them, raises them to life on the third day. *Keep not silence over me*, to the end that I may not remain in death.\*

*Verse 6.—For they regard not in their mind the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands ; therefore shall He break them down, and not build them up.*—The Christian of the time of Julian the Apostate saw a marvellous fulfilment of this verse when the plan of this heathen Emperor for rebuilding the Temple was miraculously frustrated. He, indeed, regarded not in his mind those prophecies that foretold that of the Temple there should not be left one stone upon another ; and therefore GOD did *break down*, and *not build up*, his abortive attempt, causing the very heathen to confess that there was somewhat miraculous in his failure.†

*Verse 10. O save Thy people, and give Thy blessing unto Thine inheritance ; feed them, and set them up for ever.*—Here we have one of the clauses in that wonderful hymn (the Te Deum) the author of which, like most of the other everlasting possessions of the Church, will never be known till the end of all things ; for none can doubt that it is far older than its usually alleged parentage, which would attribute it to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.‡

*At the martyrdom of Savonarola*, both he and Fra Domenico, one of his most devoted followers, and who suffered martyrdom with him, endeavoured in vain to appease the tumult, and entreated the brethren to lay aside their armour. When words could avail nothing, Savonarola, attiring himself in a cope, and taking a crucifix in his hand, proposed to go forth and offer himself a sacrifice to the mob, as it was on his account that

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 390.

† *Ibid.*, p. 394.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

the storm had arisen. Held back by the lamentations of his friends, he then took the Sacrament in his hands, and calling upon his brethren to follow him, he went in procession around the cloisters, and afterwards proceeding to the choir, told them that prayer was their only weapon. Nearly the whole of the community joined him in prayer, singing before the Blessed Sacrament: '*Salvum fac populum Tuum Domine.*' The assault on the convent waxed fiercer, and fire was now applied to burn down the doors. The friars met their assailants with determined courage, striking with whatever weapon they could lay hold of. The grotesque and the pathetic were curiously mingled in this strange conflict. One historian tells us of a certain German brother, named Herred, who, in defending the choir, got up into the pulpit with an arquebuse and shot a good many of the enemy in the Church, exclaiming as he fired: '*Salvum fac populum Tuum Domine et benedic hereditate Tuz,* taking up the refrain of the Psalm which Savonarola had made them sing before the Sacrament.\*

## PSALM XXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Psalm of the seven Thunders.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Concerning the oblation.

*Origin* (Perowne).—According to the tradition in the inscription of the LXX., ἐξ ὁδοῦ (αἱ ἐξ ὁδοῦ) σκηνηῆς, it would seem that in the Second Temple this Psalm was sung in the Shemini Ayereth, the last day (ἐξ ὁδοῦ, Lev. xxiii. 36) of the Feast of the Tabernacles. In the modern synagogue, however, this Psalm stands in the Jewish liturgy, to be used on the first day of Pentecost.

*In Church*.—This Psalm was sung in the Temple Service on the evening of New Year's Day.† Used in the Synagogue

\* *Savonarola*, by Prebendary Clark, p. 359.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 241.

Service at Pentecost, the anniversary of the Giving of the Law on Sinai.\*

In the Roman Church it begins the Form of Baptism for Adults (the other Psalms are viii. and xlii.).† In the Latin and Sarum Use it is appointed for the Festival of the Epiphany—the Manifestation of GOD'S glory in CHRIST.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—In some of the old versions of the Psalter, in the seventeenth century, there is an arrangement of a number of the Psalms according to the months of the year, forming what may be called a Calendar of nature, yielding its fruit of praise every month. The 29th is taken for July, the season of thunderstorms, for, in the Psalm, seven thunders utter their voices. April has the latter part of the 65th; and the showers and springing verdure of May have the 104th, verses 13, 14. Psalm 90th, in December, suggests the flight of time; and the 147th, verses 16, 17, is chosen for the snow and ice of January.§

*Delitzsch* says this Psalm begins with a *Gloria in excelsis*, and ends with a *Pax in terris*.

*In contemplating Nature*, no Psalm can be more eloquent of the spirit of the Psalmist than the 29th Psalm.

Let me quote the noble commentary of Reuss :

‘There are in this Psalm, properly speaking, two scenes, each of which is pendant of the other. One passes upon earth, where we see the hurricane raging in a way unknown to our climate. The colossal cedars of Lebanon are split in pieces; their gigantic trunks are torn from the ground, and leap as lightly as the ox in the meadow. The mountain itself groans and trembles, scourged by the tempest.

‘The lightnings furrow a sky darker than the deepest night. Vast deserts, such as that of Kadesh, in the south of Canaan, where nothing stops the element, are swept by the hurricane.

\* Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 90.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 268.

‡ Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 39.

§ *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 52.

Their sand becomes a moving sea, the atmosphere an ocean chasing over its tossed bed, and sweeping with it all which it meets in its passage. The trees which can resist are peeled and stripped bare. Beasts are seized with terror, and their convulsive shudderings make them anticipate the hour of nature. Man is nowhere in this description. He is mute, and retires before the terrible majesty of the spectacle. But we feel, in contemplating it with the poet, that an involuntary anguish is mixed with that other impression, of which man alone is capable. Above the terrible turmoil the LORD is seated majestically upon His throne.

‘The flood which is about to sweep over the earth is the footstool of that throne. He contemplates it with a serene eye, and with His royal hand He will stay the elements when He pleases. Round Him the powers, which are His Messengers, almost the Priests of His Heavenly sanctuary, clad in their sacred robes, press on to glorify Him. What a magnificent antithesis in a few lines !’

This seems to me a truer view than that which speaks of the ‘wild exhilaration’ of the Psalmist in the darker side of creation. ‘Like the Scottish poet,’ says a delightful writer on the 29th Psalm, ‘who looked up from the heather, and at each flash of lightning clapped his hands, and cried “Bonnie ! bonnie !” they clap their hands in innocent pleasure.’ But the beautiful comparison is inapplicable. The Psalmist is not wild. He is not exhilarated. He does not clap his hands. He says with solemn and awe-struck tones :

‘The voice of the LORD is cleaving (as one who cleaves wood or stone) the flames of fire.

The voice of the LORD will cause the wilderness to tremble,

The wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the LORD will cause the hinds to tremble to the birth,

And strip the forest bare,

And in His palace, all of it saith “Glory.”\*\*

*Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln* was very ill in the August of 1884, and on the 9th of that month, the day of the Dean’s

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity.*

(Blakesley) and Archdeacon's (Kaye) visit, he had almost given himself up. 'His exhaustion was very great, and the heat overpowering. In the evening came a refreshing thunderstorm, and as verses of the beautiful 29th Psalm were repeated in his room, and the longed-for drops began to fall outside the window, it seemed as if he rallied a little, and during the next few days he gradually gained ground, and for a few days there was something like an attempt at the resumption of old habits.\*' The Bishop did not die until March of the following year.

### PSALM XXX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Song of Thanksgiving after Recovery from dangerous sickness.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Prophecy and Thanksgiving.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm was composed after recovery from a sickness which had very nearly proved fatal. According to the inscription, the Psalm was composed 'at the dedication of the house' . . . perhaps, if the inscription is trustworthy, it refers to the house which David built in his new city of Zion, and the building of which he seems to have regarded as a pledge of the security and prosperity of his kingdom (2 Sam. v. 11, 12). We must, however, still suppose that he had suffered just before from a sickness about which the history is silent.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed in the Jewish Ritual for the Encæmia, or Feast of Dedication (*cf.* John x. 22). In the Latin Church it is appointed to be used on the Festival of the Ascension.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—This is one of the musical Psalms, the others being 48, 67, 68, 75, 92.

\* *Bishop Wordsworth's Life*, by J. H. Overton and E. Wordsworth, p. 472.

† *Bishop Wordsworth's Commentary*, p. 41.

*Verse 5. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*—In explaining how the worship of the sun and moon began, the author of *The Childhood of the World* says: ‘Welcome as was the light given by moon and far-off stars, it was less sure than the sun’s, and, although it relieved the gloom and darkness, could not chase night away. Therefore the natural feeling of man was to bow before this Lord of Light, and, in the earliest known form of adoration, kiss his hand to it, paying it the offering of sacrifice. There is an old story from some Jewish writings, known as the Talmud, which describes very powerfully man’s feeling concerning the darkness and the light. It relates that “when Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden of Eden, they wandered over the face of the earth. And the sun began to set, and they looked with fear at the lessening of the light, and felt a horror like death steal over their hearts. And the light of heaven grew paler, and the wretched ones clasped each other in an agony of despair. Then all grew dark, and the luckless ones fell on the earth, silent, and thought that GOD had withdrawn from them the light for ever; and they spent the night in tears. But a beam of light began to rise over the eastern hills after many hours of darkness, and the golden sun came back and dried the tears of Adam and Eve, and then they cried out with joy and said, ‘Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; this is a law that GOD hath laid upon nature.’”’\*

*Joy cometh in the morning.*

‘Let the new morn, morn of gladness,  
Dry the evening’s tear of sadness;  
Life hath conquered death in fray,  
Let us all keep holyday!’†

### PSALM XXXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Surrender of one sorely persecuted into the Hand of GOD.

\* *The Childhood of the World*, chap. xxix.

† *Adam of St. Victor*.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Confession and continual supplication to GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—On the whole, this Psalm reminds us more of some parts of Jeremiah than of any other of the Old Testament writings. In its tender and plaintive character it resembles Lamentations iii. Hence Ewald and Hetzig have concluded that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah. On other grounds there is no reason why the Psalm should not have been David's. It breathes throughout his rare tenderness of spirit, as well as his faith and courage.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm begins with the same language of confiding trust and prayer with which that noble anthem in our Liturgy, the Te Deum, concludes: 'In Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded;' 'In Thee do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed.' And to show how Scriptural is the language, as well as the spirit of our service, it is from the same Psalm the compilers of our Prayer-Book have adopted another petition in those versicles, both in our Morning and Evening Service: 'O GOD, make speed to save us! O LORD, make haste to help us!' And so here it is: 'Bow down Thine ear to me, deliver me speedily.'\*

*St. Athanasius* recommends this Psalm to Marcellinus as most appropriate to the Christian who, for the name of his Master, is enduring the attacks of enemies or suffering from the coldness of friends.†

*In Church*.—This Psalm is the 5th of the Greek late Even-song; verses 1-6 form the second Psalm at Compline.‡

*Verse 1. In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.* Henri Perreyve, whose short though beautiful life has been given us by Père Gratry, was very near to death more than once.

\* *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol. i., p. 204.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. i., p. 472.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 241.



He said the *Te Deum*, that hymn of thanksgiving for his life, before partaking of the Bread of Life Everlasting.

All GOD'S many blessings were lovingly remembered then, I am certain, by our friend; his Christian education, his parents' love, the intense devotion of his sister, who had been as a guardian angel to him; the friends of his childhood and youth, to whom he had given, and from whom he had received, the stay which hearts united in the love of JESUS know how to find; the precious friendship of Père Lacordaire, the many loving hearts which had brightened his life, the growing success which had given promise that one day he was to be a powerful and useful servant of souls, of his country, of the Church. Yes, all God's graces and gifts were thankfully acknowledged, and the tone of loving faith with which he uttered the last words before receiving the Blessed Sacrament, '*In te Domine, speravi, non confundur in æternum,*' will never be forgotten by those who heard it.

When he had received the LORD'S Body, his face kindled with heavenly brightness; and, after he had made his thanksgiving, he said to me, 'You cannot think what inward happiness has filled me, ever since you told me that I am about to die.'

From this time Henri was really in his last agony; it was quiet and peaceful, but it was an agony—the last struggle of life resisting death. His hands grew icy cold, his pulse scarcely perceptible; the heavy oppression increased; the body was fast perishing, but the soul retained all its faculties to the uttermost, and was steadfastly cleaving to GOD; from time to time he put the crucifix, which he still held, to his lips, murmuring, 'LORD have mercy upon me;' 'JESUS, take me soon;' 'JESUS, come quickly;' and when his heaving breast could no longer yield breath for even such brief prayers, he still from time to time whispered gently the one word, 'JESUS.' Towards seven o'clock, dear Henri made a sudden effort to raise himself in his bed. His face was haggard and bathed in death-sweat, his lips blanched; but his kindling eyes sparkled as he

fixed them with the keenest expression of terror on some invisible but present enemy, and twice he cried out loudly, 'I am afraid! I am afraid!' I hastened to his side, saying, 'No, no, you must not fear GOD; you must give yourself up wholly to His mercy, and say, "*In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; let me never be confounded.*" He looked up into my face, and said, 'It is not of GOD I am afraid! I am afraid lest I should be hindered dying!' I made him kiss his crucifix, and he grew calm. Kneeling close beside him, and holding Père Lacordaire's cross, which he had had beside him all the day, I said slowly and distinctly, 'My GOD, I love Thee with all my heart for time and eternity.' 'Oh yes! with all my heart!' he answered, and his dying lips clung to the likeness of our dear LORD and Master JESUS CHRIST.

Those were his last words, his last act of faith and love. The cold shadow of death fell upon that beautiful brow, his hitherto clear, bright consciousness was veiled, and for a few minutes only the heaving breast told us that the soul had not yet fled. The two Fathers, Charles and Adolphe Perraud, said the last prayers for the dying, 'Proficiscere anima Christiana'—'Go forth, O Christian soul.'

It was nearly eight in the evening, a last struggle set in, and I repeated over the soul which was yet held by its earthly chains the sacramental words, 'Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis;' and then my voice rose amid the tears and sobs of loving friends and dear relations, crying out to the Throne of GOD, 'De profundis clamor ad Te, DOMINE, quia apud DOMINUM misericordia et copioso apud cum Redemptio!'\*

*Verse 6. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*—This Psalm is connected with the 22nd Psalm. Both of these Psalms were used by CHRIST on the cross. From the 22nd Psalm He derived those bitter words of anguish, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' From the present Psalm He derived those last words of love and trust which He uttered just before His

\* *Henri Perreye*, pp. 217, 232.

death. The Psalter was the hymn-book and prayer-book of CHRIST.\*

*How many saints* have with their last breath uttered these words, since the Head of the Church and His first martyrs ! History records them as the last words of St. Nicolas, St. Basil the Great, St. Polycarp, Epiphanius of Pavia, St. Bernard, Columbus, Melancthon ; of St. Louis of France, who breathed his last as the Christian fleet were sailing into Tunis ; of Charlemagne and Conradine ; of Hoorne and Egmont, at their execution ; of Charles V. in his monastery ; and of Lady Jane Grey on the scaffold. Jerome of Prague also, and our own holy singer, George Herbert.

*These were the last words of St. Richard, Bishop of Chichester.* He is remembered in our Calendar on April 3rd. He was born at Droitwich, near Worcester, and elected Bishop of Chichester in 1245, in opposition to an unfit nominee of King Henry III., who was so incensed at the election that he seized on the revenues of the See. St. Richard was thus reduced to the greatest straits, and obliged to be dependent on others for the necessaries of life ; he, however, firmly, though meekly, maintained his position, and went about his diocese discharging his episcopal duties, until a threat of excommunication from Pope Innocent III. obliged the king to restore the revenues of the See after two years' deprivation. He was five years Bishop of Chichester, and was canonised at Viterbo on St. Vincent's Day, January 22nd, 1262. In 1253 he undertook, at the request of the Pope, to preach on behalf of a Crusade. The flame of enthusiasm for the recovery of the Holy Land was dying out in Europe. St. Louis of France, after long waiting in vain for promised aid from Henry of England, had been compelled to leave the Kingdom of Jerusalem tottering to its fall. Bishop Richard preached the Crusade with fervour in place after place along the south coast ; but as he drew near Dover, where he was to consecrate a Church to be dedicated to its former

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*.

patron, the now canonised primate, St. Edmund, he was seized by illness. He lodged in the Maison Dieu that night, and at early Mass in the chapel next morning he fell; the clergy carried him out and laid him on a bed, from which he did not rise again. He grew rapidly worse, received the Viaticum, repeatedly kissed the sacred wounds on the Crucifix, and often ejaculating '*Saviour, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Mary, Mother of Grace, receive my soul!*' he tranquilly breathed his last. When the body was stripped, the clergy gazed with admiration and awe on the horse-hair shirt which enveloped it, clasped with iron bands to increase the friction and make it gall. His remains were conveyed to Chichester, and there interred according to the directions in his will: 'I commend my soul to the Most High Trinity and the Blessed Mary, and my body to be buried in the great Church at Chichester, in the nave of the said Church, near the altar of the blessed Edmund the Confessor, hard by the column.'\*

*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*—On the morning of February 17th, at Eisleben (where Luther had gone to mediate between the Counts of Mansfield who had long been quarrelling among themselves about certain rights and revenues, especially in connection with Church patronage), they (the Counts) found themselves compelled by Luther's state of health to entreat him not to exert himself any longer with their affairs, and so he only added his signature when required. To Justus Jonas and the Count's court preacher, Cölius, who were staying with him, he said he thought he should remain at Eisleben, where he was born. Before supper he complained of oppression of the chest, and had himself rubbed with warm cloths. This relieved him, and he left his little room, going down the staircase into the public room to join the party at supper. 'There is no pleasure,' he said, 'in being alone.' At supper he was merry with the rest, and talked with his usual energy on various subjects—now jocular or serious, now intellectual and pious. But no sooner

\* *Diocesan History of Chichester*, p. 68.

had he returned to his chamber and finished his usual evening prayer than he again became anxious and troubled. After being rubbed again with warm cloths, and having taken a medicine which Count Albert himself had brought him, he laid himself down about nine o'clock on a leathern sofa, and slept gently for an hour and a half. On awaking he arose, and with the words (spoken in Latin), '*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, Thou God of truth,*' went to his bed in the adjoining room, where he again slept, breathing quietly, till one o'clock. He then awoke, called his servant, and begged him to heat the room, though it was quite warm already, and then exclaimed to Jonas : 'O LORD GOD, how ill I am ! Ah ! I feel I shall remain here at Eisleben where I was born and baptized !' In this state of pain he arose, walked without assistance into the room which he had left a few hours before, again commending his soul to GOD ; and then, after pacing up and down the room, lay down once more on the sofa, complaining again of the oppression on his chest. His two sons, Martin and Paul, remained with him all night, and he was in great pain the whole time, although at intervals he praised GOD, three times uttering the text of St. John iii., 'God so loved the world,' and three times rapidly repeating in Latin : '*Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*' Later on Cölius said aloud in his ear : 'Reverend Father (Reverende pater), wilt thou stand by CHRIST and the doctrine thou hast preached ? He uttered an audible 'Yes.' He then turned upon his right side, and fell asleep. He lay thus for nearly a quarter of an hour, and between two and three in the morning he fetched one deep, even breath, and was gone (1546).\*

The words of Luther, exemplified in his own death : 'Blessed are they who die not only *for* the LORD, as martyrs ; not only *in* the LORD, as all believers ; but likewise *with* the LORD, as breathing forth their lives in these words : "*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*" †

\* *Life of Luther*, by Julius Köstlin, p. 576.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 273.

In 1415 *John Huss* was burned alive by order of the Council of Constance. On arriving at the place of execution, he fell on his knees reciting the 30th and 50th Psalms, and often repeated these words: '*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth!*'

*Bishop Ridley*, after being bound to the stake, exclaimed, when he saw the flames approaching: '*Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!*'

*Lord Essex* was only thirty-three when he died, but he had gone through a strange career of court and camp, sea and land, and had high powers and aims within him, which had made him unfit for the favouritism which had spoiled his life. Latterly his religious opinions had greatly deepened, and they enabled him to bear himself with noble resignation. 'You shall see a strong GOD in a weak man,' he said to the yeomen of the Tower, whom he entreated to pray for him. Eight nobles had seats on the scaffold, and these beheld the Earl come forth, in all his manly beauty and valour, appalled in a gown of wrought velvet, a satin suit, and felt hat, all black, with a small ruff, and attended by three clergymen.

All the way he prayed aloud, 'O GOD, grant me a true and earnest repentance; grant me patience and a true humility.' And he besought the prayers of those about him. On the scaffold he made a deeply penitent speech in Scriptural terms, bewailing the sins of his lifetime, and only averring that he had never any intention of harming the Queen. He ended by beseeching all to join with him in prayer that his soul might be lifted up above all earthly things.

After removing his cuff and collar he knelt down, and the clergy encouraged him against the fear of death.

His answer was a very brave and simple one: 'That having been divers times in places of danger, where death was neither so present nor so certain, he had felt the weakness of the flesh, and therefore, in this great conflict, desired GOD to assist and strengthen him.' He laid his neck on the block, saying, '*Lord*

*Jesus, into Thy hands I commit my spirit!*' and in a few seconds more his head was severed from his body.

His remains were laid in the grave between those of the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Arundel, and great was the lamentation for him, for unlike his step-father, Leicester, and, indeed, most other royal favourites, he had been greatly beloved of the people. Two ballads, whose quaintness attest that they were the work of the people, still exist, one beginning thus :

' Sweet England's prize is gone,  
Welladay, welladay,  
Which makes her sigh and groan,  
Evermore still.  
He did her fame advance  
In Ireland, Spain, and France,  
And by a sad mischance  
Is from us ta'en.'\*

*Fra Salvestro*, the friend of Savonarola, uttered these words on his way to execution. He of the three was first to die, and mounting the place with a firm step in silence, but 'with some tears in his eyes,' and murmuring, '*Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,*' he gave his neck to the executioner.†

*The Earl of Northumberland's* request for a divine of the Queen's was perhaps an attempt to melt her heart; but he seems at heart to have been more inclined to the Catholic faith than to the Calvinism he so boldly avouched, for he had been known to say to Sir Antony Browne that 'he certainly thought best of the old religion, but seeing a new one begun, run dog, run devil, he would go forward.' Northumberland made a long speech on the scaffold, in which he upheld the Catholic religion, and expressed much contrition, and then repeating the Miserere, De Profundis and Paternoster, laid his head on the block with the words '*Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,*' and adding that he deserved a thousand deaths.‡

This verse was the last spoken on earth by *Silvio Pellico*. One day in January, 1854, he dictated the broken words: 'Adieu, sister! Adieu, brother! Adieu, dear benefactors!

\* *Cameos from English History*. Cameo cxcii.

† *Life of Savonarola*, by Prebendary Clark, p. 387.

‡ *Cameos from English History*, 4th series, p. 189.

Yes, adieu! We all go to God. "*In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum.*"'

To this I may add another, the gentle and holy *Eleonore de Roye, Princesse de Condé*. On July 23, 1564, 'la Princesse appela une de ses femmes, et lui dict qu'elle lui estendit les jambres, et soudain elle prononça ces derniers mots, "Entre tes mains, Seigneur, je recommande mon âme."—" *Épître d'une damoiselle françoise à une sienne aime dame étrangère, sur la morte d'excellente, et vertueuse dame Leonor de Roye, Princesse de Condé, 1564.*"\*

*Extract from the will of Bishop Dupanloup, of Orleans.*—'In the name of the FATHER who created me . . . the SON who redeemed me, and the HOLY GHOST who sanctified me. . . . The hour is come for me to think of death more vividly than I have hitherto done. Age and fatigue make me foresee a speedy end. The sadness of the present times, the need to rest with GOD, and especially the firm hope I have in the energy and goodness of our LORD, make me look forward to the close of life with confidence; with fear and trembling also, on account of my sins, but also with confidence through the infinite merits of the Blood of Him who died for me. If it should please GOD to receive me in His bosom, in spite of the innumerable miseries of my life, I bless Him beforehand, and I make willingly and with all my soul the sacrifice of my life, on the day and hour willed by Him, in expiation for the evil I have done. It is not only just, but sweet, to say with our LORD on the Cross: "*Pater! in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.*"'†

*Edward Perronet* was Vicar of Shoreham, Kent, for more than fifty years; he was for some time associated with the Wesleys, but, disliking their Arminian tendencies, he joined Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and he so displeased her by his hostility to the Church of England that he left her and preached to a congregation of Dissenters till his death, which

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 112.

† *Life of Bishop Dupanloup*, vol. ii., p. 517.



occurred at Canterbury, in January, 1792. He was the author of the hymn 'All hail the power of JESUS' NAME.' His dying words were, 'Glory to GOD in the height of His divinity; glory to GOD in the depth of His humanity; glory to GOD in His all-sufficiency! *Into His hands I commend my spirit.*'\*

*Verse 7. I have hated them that hold of superstitious vanities.*  
—During the interregnum in the see of Durham, between the translation of Bishop Mouteigne to York, in 1627, and the translation of John Howson from Oxford to Durham, a great ritualistic disturbance took place at Durham. Before Bishop Neile's time puritanism had reigned triumphant in the Cathedral, and the internal arrangements, and the mode in which divine service was celebrated, were very deficient in reverence, or even decorum. All over England the puritan party had become very powerful, and their zeal very bitter; everyone who did not go all lengths with them in doctrine was stigmatized as an Arminian, while every approach to order or decency in worship was assailed as popery. But the time had now come when energetic efforts were to be made to restore the beauty of holiness in the worship of GOD. There was one prebendary, Peter Smart by name, who thought it to be his duty to lift up his voice against the changes which had taken place. On July 27th, 1628, he preached in the Cathedral from the text, '*I have hated them that hold of superstitious vanities.*' In this sermon he inveighed against the 'innovations' in very coarse terms, accusing his brethren of a design to introduce popery, and indulging in many personal remarks, some of them very scurrilous. . . . In one respect the sermon is very valuable, as it gives an idea of what the state of the Cathedral had been, and of the changes which had been made. All chanting had been discouraged; the congregation did not stand at the Nicene Creed, which was not sung, but read; metrical Psalms from Sternhold and Hopkins, including Dean Whittingham's ditties, were sung before and after the sermon;

\* 'Hymns and Hymn-writers,' *Sunday at Home*, 1861, p. 203.

the holy table stood in the middle of the choir, and, it may be safely concluded, without any fence to protect it from profane or irreverent use. The font stood within the choir. What is almost incredible, the vestments appear to have been taken out of the Church and used by the young people of the town in their sports. Everything was ruinous, filthy, and slovenly. Here is a quotation from this sermon: 'Duck no more to our Altar, when you come in and goe out; I assure you it is an idol, a damnable idol as it is used. . . . Believe not these Balaams which lay stumbling-blocks in your way to make you fall into spirituall fornications, telling you when you bow to the Altar you worship God, not the Altar, for so answer all popish and heathenish idolaters.'\*

*Verse 8. I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy, for Thou hast considered my trouble.*—It is to this verse that the Blessed Virgin seems to refer when she says: 'For He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden,' words almost the same with the LXX. rendering of *Thou hast considered my trouble.*†

*Verse 8. Thou hast known my soul in adversity.*

'Thou know'st our bitterness—our joys are Thine—  
No stranger Thou to all our wanderings wild;  
Nor could we bear to think how every line  
Of us, Thy darkened likeness and defiled,  
Stands in full sunshine of Thy piercing eye,  
But that Thou call'st us brethren.'‡

*Verse 9. Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: but hast set my feet in a large room.*

'Our homes are here too narrow,  
Our friends are far apart,  
We scarce share joy or sorrow  
With the desert of our heart;  
There will be room above  
In our great Father's hall,  
To live with those we love  
Through the best time of all.'§

\* *Diocesan History of Durham*, p. 251.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. i., p. 478.

‡ John Keble.

§ *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. i., p. 479.

*Verse 11. For my life is waxen old with heaviness.*—Instead of ‘heaviness,’ the Vulgate translates, ‘My strength has become weak in poverty or beggary,’ as the LXX. has it.

Ayguan complains bitterly how true that was in his time; how the Church was weakened, not by means of poverty, but in poverty by means of riches. It is the old story of ‘golden chalices and wooden priests.’ Singularly enough, Parez understands it in exactly the opposite sense. This commentator, living in a most worldly age, and at a time when the Church had attained a degree of wealth which it never knew before or since, applies this text to her sufferings on account of her poverty. Truly the complaint is worthy of one who dedicated his commentary to Cardinal Roderick de Borgia, afterwards Alexander VI.\*

*Verse 14. I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind.*

‘Forgot as those who in the grave abide,  
And as a broken vessel past repair,  
Slandered by many, fear on every side,  
Who counsel take and would my life ensnare.

‘But, LORD, my hopes on Thee are fixed; I said:  
“Thou art my GOD, my days are in Thy hand;  
Against my furious foes oppose Thy aid,  
And those who persecute my soul withstand.”’ †

*Verses 15, 16.—I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude, and fear is on every side, while they conspire together against me, and take their counsel to take away my life. But my hope hath been in Thee, O Lord.*—Archbishop Laud, on hearing the tenth article of his impeachment, which accused him of having tried to reconcile the Church of England to the See of Rome, and of having held intelligence with the Jesuits and the Pope, exclaimed: ‘I am in the prophet David’s case, for *I (also) have heard the multitude, and fear is on every side; while they conspire against me, and take counsel to take away my life. But my hope hath been (and is) in Thee, O Lord.*’

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 480.

† George Sandys.

*Verse 17. My time is in Thy hand.*—A Portuguese Jew physician, named Lopez, in the service of Queen Elizabeth, was engaged by Philip of Spain to destroy Elizabeth at once, and so procure for his employer ‘a merry Easter.’ Dr. Lopez undertook the work for 50,000 crowns, and he further demanded large marriage portions for his daughters. The deed was delayed because Lopez wanted his fee paid down, and Philip would give nothing before the work was done. It was through Antony Bacon, Secretary to Essex, that the conspiracy was discovered, and Essex told the Queen. The Queen was much overcome at finding how great her danger had been, and exclaimed: ‘*My times are in Thy hand.*’

Lopez was executed, confessing the correspondence, but denying all murderous purpose towards the Queen.\*

*My times are in Thy hand—the hand of my Saviour.*

‘I report as a man may of GOD’S work—all’s love, but all’s law.  
In the Godhead I seek and I find it, and so it shall be  
A face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me  
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever, a hand like this hand  
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee: *See the Christ stand!* †

*Good King Henry V.* recognised the blessedness of being able to place his confidence where alone it ought to be placed, when, with reference to the overwhelming numbers of the French, before the battle of Agincourt, he said to the Duke of Gloucester:

‘We are in GOD’S hands, brother, not in theirs.’  
*King Henry V.*, Act III., Sc. v. ‡

*My times are in Thy hand*, i.e., the crises, the ‘changes and chances’ of my life. Browning glorifies this passage by intertwining with it the idea of development (‘Rabi Ben Ezra, st. 1). The Psalmist merely thinks of life as a series of hair-breadth escapes.§

*At the death of St. Francis de Sales* someone present lamented

\* *Cameos from English History*, cameo clxxxvii.

† Robert Browning.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 169.

§ Dr. Cheyne’s *Commentary*, p. 86.

that he should die thus in the flower of his age. 'Our dear LORD was younger than I,' Francis answered; '*our time is in His Hand.*'\*

*Verse 27. Be strong, and He shall establish your heart, all ye that put your trust in the Lord.*

'Simple rule, and safest guiding,  
Inward peace, and inward light!  
Star upon our path abiding,  
Trust in GOD, and do the right!'

†

## PSALM XXXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The way to the forgiveness of sins.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Concerning the offence of Adam, who presumptuously sinned; and a prophecy of the MESSIAH, through whom *we* are delivered from Gehenna.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There can be little doubt, I think, that this Psalm was composed after Nathan came to David. Psalm li. was the confession of his great sin, and the prayer for forgiveness. This Psalm is the record of the confession made and the forgiveness obtained, and the conscious blessedness of his position as a son restored to his FATHER'S house.

*In Church*.—In the *Orthodox Church of the East*, at Holy Baptism and Confirmation. After the trine immersion this Psalm, *Beati quorum*, is sung thrice. In the *Græco-Russian Church* (page 72) it is thus described: After the child has been dipped (at Holy Baptism), 'while the lady-nurse and god-mother are covering up and arranging it comfortably, the Priest washes his hands by having the glass of water poured over them, and wiping them on the towel prepared, singing all the time the 32nd Psalm: "Blessed is he whose sins are covered"' (see on Psalm cxix. for others on Holy Baptism in the Græco-Russian Church).

\* St. Francis de Sales.

† Norman McLeod.

In the *Roman Catholic Church* this Psalm may be used (with others) in the Visitation of the Sick.\*

In the *Anglican Church* it is the second Psalm of Matins.

*The Whole Psalm.*—The Confessions of St. Augustine end with this Psalm.

One of the Pauline Psalms according to Luther.

Some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation.†

*The Witness of the Psalms to Justification.*—It will be remembered how St. Paul refers us to the 32nd Psalm. When David goes to the root of his acceptance with GOD, he can place no confidence in his sin-stained works. ‘To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin’ (Rom. iv. 4-8). Again and again is our forgiveness brought up to the same source :

‘There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared’ (cxxx. 4).

‘Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,  
For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified’ (cxliii. 2).‡

*Verse 2. Blessed is the man in whose spirit is no guile.*—Mr. Izaak Walton, in his *Lives*, closes that of ‘Dr. Robert Sanderson, late Lord Bishop of Lincoln,’ with these words : ‘Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence changed this for a better life. ’Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his, for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age ; but I humbly beseech Almighty GOD that my death may, and do as earnestly beg of every Reader to say, Amen. “Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile.”§

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 275.

† Robert Leighton, *Meditations on Psalm xxxii.*

‡ *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 217.

§ *Walton’s Lives*, p. 402.

*Verse 8. Thou art a place to hide me in ; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*—St. Chrysostom tells us that in his time this verse was sung at every funeral, as it is in the Eastern Church to this day ; and very beautifully, when taken in connection with the 91st Psalm, also then recited : ‘ Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.’\*

## PSALM XXXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Praise of the Ruler of the World, as being the Defender of His people.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—In its literal sense, concerning those whom he appointed over the ministry of the LORD ; and spiritually as respects ourselves, a discourse concerning the glory of Deity.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is one of the few Psalms in the First Book, which in the Hebrew is without inscription.

*Verse 1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous ; for it becometh well the just to be thankful.*—This Psalm has from the beginning been applied to the martyrs, as it is said now on the Festival of Many Martyrs. And so it was in the time of St. Augustine. Thus he speaks on such a festival : ‘ Ye know that which we have just been singing, Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O ye righteous. If the righteous rejoice in the LORD, the unrighteous only rejoice in the world.’†

*Verse 2. Praise the Lord with harp.*—Here we have the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms.

It is to be observed that the early Fathers almost with one accord protest against their use in churches ; as they are forbidden in the Eastern Church to this day, where yet, by the consent of all, the singing is infinitely superior to anything

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 502.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 507.

that can be heard in the West. It is not easy to determine when they were first introduced into the West. St. Gregory the Great speaks of organs ; but Amalarius in the eighth century, describing the use of the Church of France, says that no instruments were employed. St. Thomas Aquinas seems to disapprove them, or at least barely tolerates them ; and the Church of Lyons, which held more faithfully to primitive practice than any other in France, admitted them only in the sixteenth century.\*

*Verse 4. All His works are done in truth* (Bible version).

‘ *Truth* is in each flower,  
As well as in the solemnest things of GOD ;  
*Truth* is the voice of nature and of time—  
*Truth* is the startling monitor within us—  
Nought is without it ; it comes from the stars,  
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows—  
*Truth*, it is GOD ! and GOD is everywhere ! †

*Verse 10. The Lord . . . maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsel of princes*—Savonarola wished to bring about Monastic Reform ; and to this end, as a beginning, wished to have the Tuscan congregation of the Dominican order, of which he was the head, and which was united to the Lombard Congregation, freed from all connection with Lombard, as it had been in times past. Accordingly Savonarola sent a petition, with two members of the brotherhood of St. Mark, to Rome to plead the Tuscan cause. The Lombards made a most strenuous opposition to the separation, so that the friends of Savonarola wrote and told him that they had no hope of succeeding. ‘ Do not doubt,’ was his answer ; ‘ be brave, and you will have the victory : “ *The Lord . . . maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsel of princes.*’ After all, victory was obtained in a way which must have appeared nothing short of a providential interposition. The Pope had dismissed the Consistory in consequence of fatigue, declaring that he would transact no more

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 509.

† William Thomas Bacon.



business on that day. The Cardinal of Naples alone remained with him, and, believing that he had found a moment suitable for urging the claims of the Tuscans, brought forth the brief authorizing separation, and entreating the Pope to confirm it. After some pleasantries and altercations on the subject, the Cardinal, in play, snatched the Pope's ring from his finger and sealed the brief.\*

*Verse 20. We have hoped in His holy Name.*

‘JESU'S Name all good doth claim,  
Sweetest sound the tongue can frame,  
Meriteth imperial fame,  
When heard, it giveth joy ;  
In it a Father's glory beams,  
In it a Mother's beauty seems,  
In it a Brother's honour gleams,  
It lifteth brethren high.†

### PSALM XXXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving and teaching of one who has experienced deliverance.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The first ten verses are a HYMN, and the last twelve a SERMON.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—When he goeth into the house of the LORD, and giveth the first-fruits to the priests.

*Origin* (Perowne).—No value can be attached to the superscription, with its historical reference, because, while it is borrowed from 1 Sam. xxi. 14, Abimelech is substituted for Achish, which looks like a confusion with the narrative in Gen. xx., xxi. ; and further, the contents of the Psalm do not very readily, or naturally, harmonize with the supposed circumstances.

*In Church*.—In the Clementine Liturgy is the following Rubric: ‘Let the 33rd Psalm (xxxiv.) be sung while all the

\* Clark's *Savonarola*, p. 143.

† The Sequence *Jesus dulcis Nazareus*.

others are communicating.' This is one of the Psalms said at the Fraction in St. James Liturgy, while a sentence from it, 'O taste and see that the LORD is good,' is sung by the choir immediately before the Communion—a rite mentioned by St. Cyril in the fourth century: 'After this (the Sancta Sanctis) thou hearest him who sings with Divine melody, exhorting you to receive the holy Mysteries, and saying, 'O taste and see how gracious the LORD is.'\*

In the Roman Catholic Church on Maundy Thursday, in the reconciliation of Penitents, Psalms xxxiv., li., lvi. and lvii. are used.†

*The Græco-Russian Church*, true to the rule that every undertaking should begin with prayer and end with thanksgiving, provides children about to begin or resume their studies, with a special service for the purpose of asking the blessing of GOD on their new and perhaps unknown duties. This is the Service: A Naloy (a small movable reading-desk) is placed in the body of the Church, and holy water prepared. The hymn to the HOLY GHOST forms the commencement; it is followed by Psalm xxxiv., which is adapted to the occasion in a remarkable manner, inciting the little ones as it does to the joys of religion. 'O taste and see how gracious the LORD is! blessed is the man that trusteth in Him! Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.' The great Litany is then intoned by the Deacon, with special petitions. After the Litany come the Epistle and Gospel. Before the reading of the Epistle (Eph. i. 16-20 and iii. 18-21) the choir always sing a *prokimon* or preparatory verse. On this occasion we must admire the selection made; it is from Psalm viii. 3 (4), 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained praise; My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. The benediction in the following words concludes this beautiful little service: 'The blessing of GOD

\* *Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 759.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

be with you, and His grace and fulness and mercy, now, henceforth and for ever.' As each child kisses the cross, held in one hand of the Priest, he is sprinkled with holy water from the brush which he holds in the other hand.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—In Archbishop Parker's translation (1567), the title and argument are thus given :

'When David fled to Achish king,  
The door of death he was full near ;  
When saved, he this psalm did sing,  
With all his friends in godly quire,  
To GOD his LORD, to him so dear—  
Give thanks I will, give thanks I will,  
For aye to GOD most gracious.'†

*Bishop Milman's favourite Psalm.*

*The Alphabetical Psalms*, of which this is one, the *psalmi abcedarii*, as the Latin Fathers called them, are nine in number ; and I cannot help thinking it is a pity that, except in the single instance of the hundred and nineteenth, no hint of their existence should have been suffered to appear in our authorised version. I will not take it upon me to affirm with Ewald that no version is faithful in which the acrostic is suppressed ; but I do think that the existence of such a remarkable style of composition might be indicated in one way or another, and that some useful purposes are served by its being actually reproduced in the translation.‡

*Mr. Hapstone* has endeavoured to imitate the alphabetical character of this Psalm in his metrical version. One verse of his translation will suffice :

'At all times bless Jehovah's name will I ;  
His praise shall in my mouth be constantly.  
Boast in Jehovah shall my soul henceforth ;  
Hear it, ye meek ones, and exult with mirth.'

*Verse 1.* *I will alway give thanks unto the Lord ; His praise shall ever be in my mouth.*—St. Theodore the Martyr sang this verse when his flesh was being torn by scourges.§

\* *Græco-Russian Church*, p. 160.

† *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms*, by A. Bonar, p. 115.

‡ *The Psalms ; their History*, etc., by Dr. Binnie.

§ *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol i., p. 526.

*Isaac Walton* in his *Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson*, some time Bishop of Lincoln, says : ‘And this humble man had so conquered all repining and ambitious thoughts, and with them all other unruly passions, that, if the accidents of the day proved to his danger or damage, yet he both began and ended it with an even and undisturbed quietness ; always praising God that he had not withdrawn food or raiment from him and his poor family, nor suffered him to violate his conscience for his safety, or to support himself or them in a more splendid or plentiful condition ; and that he therefore resolved with David, “*That His praise should be always in his mouth.*”’\*

*Verse 3. O praise the Lord with me, and let us magnify His name together.*—Walking about among the old houses of Edinburgh, nothing was, and we may still say is, more noticeable than the frequent inscriptions over houses ; of course we mean the old houses, with their fantastic timbers and stone gables, strange relics of a forgotten order of things. A handsome tenement stands not far from the Cowgate, surmounted with two ornamental gables, bearing on them the initials of the two builders, and over the main doorway the inscription : ‘*Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together, 1643*’ (in Roman characters).†

*Nicholas Ferrar*, after his mother’s death (1634), increased his austerities. He would no longer go to bed, but lay wrapped ‘in a great shag black frieze gown,’ on a bear-skin on the floor, for the few hours’ sleep which he allowed himself ; and in the coldest weather he would scarce ever sit by the fire. A month before his own death ‘he willed a pallet to be made on the floor into which he removed, and came no more off it.

‘On the morning of Advent Sunday he found his strength declining. This Sunday was the first Sunday in the month, the constant usual day for their monthly Communion. He ac-

\* *Isaac Walton’s Lives*, p. 386.

† *Scottish Characteristics*, by Paxton Hood, p. 217.

quainted the minister, that after he had celebrated it at the church, he would come home and give it to him ; for now it was that heavenly food was his only stay, strength, and joy to receive. As for earthly food, he had now done with it ; GOD would ere long hear his prayers and the humble requests of his poor soul. To this end and like effect he spake, but in far better expressions. When the minister came to give it him, he desired absolution, having made again a most full and lively expression of his faith.

‘The minister said, “Shall I give it you in the words of the book?” “Ay, ay,” said he ; “nothing better, nothing better !” Then he received in most devout manner the Sacrament ; which done, gave Almighty GOD most humble and hearty thanks for this inestimable benefit and favour, and used very effectual words to that purpose, and so awhile lay very silent and still. Later on, being demanded, “if the ministers should be called,” who not long before were gone out of the chamber, all supposing he had been asleep, he said : “Entreat them to come in and pray together.” Which being done, he desired them to say that prayer for a dying man ; which ended, he being by them demanded, “How he did?” said, “Pretty well, I thank my GOD and you ; and I shall be better.” And then he lay very still half an hour and more, all standing by him, supposing him to be in a fine slumber. But afterwards he, on a sudden, casting his hands out of the bed with great strength, and looking up and about, with a strong voice and cheerful, said : “Oh, what a blessed change is here ! What do I see ? *Oh, let us come and sing unto the Lord, and magnify His holy Name together.* I have been at a great feast. Oh, magnify the Lord with me !” One of his nieces said presently : ‘At a feast, dear father?’ “Ay,” replied he ; “at a great feast, the great King’s feast.” And this he uttered with as sound and perfect voice as in time of his health. While all stood somewhat amazed and loth to interrupt him, if he should say more, he laid himself down most quietly, putting his hands into the bed, laid them by his side, and then shut his eyes, and in this

posture laid, his legs stretched out, most sweetly and still. The ministers went again presently to prayers, and after a while they said that prayer again (that GOD would be pleased to send His angels to carry his soul to heaven), all kneeling round about his pallet. While these words were saying, he opened his lips and gave one gasp ; and so, not once moving or stirring hand, foot, or eyes, he rendered up his soul, to be carried in their hands into his LORD JESUS CHRIST'S bosom, which was that he so often prayed for. And at that instant the clock struck *one*, the hour that he constantly rose up every morning to praise GOD and to pray unto Him. That very hour and time GOD, you see, called him to his heavenly kingdom to praise Him everlastingly with the blessed angels and saints above, and, as one of the company said, "He ended the Sabbath here on earth to begin the everlasting Sabbath in heaven."\*

*Verse 7. The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.*—This is the first time that in the Psalter we read of the ministrations of Angels. But many Fathers rather take this passage of the 'Angel of the Great Counsel,' and gloriously to Him it applies.†

*Phylacteries.*—The virtues of these appendages are described in the Talmud to be very great. Whosoever has the *tephillim* bound to his head and arm, and the *tsitsith* thrown over his garments, and the *mezuzah* fixed on his door-post, is protected from sin ; for these are excellent talismans, and the angels rescue him from sin, as it is written : ' *The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them*' (Psalm xxxiv. 7). The *mezuzah* is a piece of vellum, on which are written two portions of Scripture in Hebrew, viz., Deut. vi. 4-9 and xi. 13-20. The vellum is rolled up with the ends of the lines inward. The Hebrew word *Shaddai*, one of the names of the Almighty, is written on the outside. The roll is then

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 267, 269.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 534.

put in a glass tube or tin case, in which a hole is cut, through which the word *Shaddai* may be seen by the passers-by. This title is fastened to the door-post by a nail at each end.\*

*Verse 8. O taste and see how gracious the Lord is.*—In the Bible to ‘taste’ is used metaphorically, as in this Psalm. So again in *King Henry V.* we read :

‘And not a man of them that we can take,  
Shall *taste* our mercy.’

Act IV., Sc. vii.†

*Verses 9, 10. O fear the Lord, ye that are His saints, for they that fear Him lack nothing. The lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.*—Many miracles were attributed to St. Cuthbert by the loving credulity of his contemporaries. Some of these are picturesque, if not poetical. He is going to a distance to preach, with a boy for his companion. While yet far from their destination they begin to be hungry, but know of no one on their road who can offer them hospitality. ‘Learn, my son,’ Cuthbert tells his companion, ‘to have faith in GOD, for he that serves Him never perishes with hunger’ (clearly alluding to Psalm xxxiv. 9, 10). An eagle flies past, and Cuthbert says that it is in the power of God to make her minister to their wants. Presently the eagle alights by the side of a river, the boy is sent to see if she has provided anything, and returns with a fish of some size; he is reprovèd for bringing the whole, their *minister* must have her share; the fish is cut in two, and half left for the eagle; the rest is taken to the nearest dwelling, where it is roasted, and they feast on it, sharing it with the people of the house, while Cuthbert preaches the Word of GOD to them, and praises Him for all His benefits.‡

*Verses 10, 11. They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good. Come, ye children, and hearken unto me.*—

\* ‘Pictures from Jewish Life,’ *Sunday at Home*, 1877, p. 487.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*.

‡ *Diocesan History of Durham*, p. 63.

The last days of Columba were full of comfort and rest. Perceiving the sorrow of one of the brethren on whose arm he leant for support, he said: 'This day in the Sacred Scriptures is called *Sabbatum*, or rest, and truly will it be a day of rest to me, for this day shall I bid farewell to the toils of my life, and enter into the rest of heaven. For now my LORD JESUS CHRIST deigns to invite me, and to Him shall I at midnight depart.' Then the two turn back towards the monastery; . . . descending, they entered the little wattled hut, and the saint began to transcribe the 34th Psalm; but on coming to the words in the eleventh verse, '*They who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good,*' he remarked that he had come to the end of a page, and to a place where he might well stop. 'The next words,' said he, "*Come, ye children, hearken unto me,*" belong rather to my successors than to myself.' Then, rising, he went to vespers, and when they were ended returned to his cell, and sent his last exhortation by his companion to his disciples, urging them to mutual love and goodwill, and expressing his hope of meeting them hereafter.\*

*Verses 12, 13. What man is he that lusteth to live; and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.*—It is told of Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, that he proclaimed one day in the market-place that he had by him an elixir of life, which had the power of renewing youth and prolonging existence. A great crowd assembled at his house to obtain the precious fluid, and leading them in, he opened the Psalter and read the verses: '*What man is he that lusteth to live; and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.*'†

*Verse 15. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.*—Milton, in his description of the contrition of our first parents, illustrates this verse:

\* *Apostles of Mediæval Europe*, by Dr. Maclear, p. 55.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 343.



‘How much more, if we pray Him, will His ear  
Be open, and His heart to pity incline!’

*Paradise Lost*, x.

And again, more perfectly, in the *Samson Agonistes* :

‘. . . Despair not of his final pardon,  
Whose ear is ever open, and His eye  
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant.’\*

*Verse 17.* *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*—This verse, no doubt, is one reason why the Psalm in which it occurs is appropriated to the Commemoration of Martyrs. Delivered out of all their troubles they are, not in the earthly sense of liberation; but, as the ancient poem says :

‘By one short hour of death and pain  
Life everlasting they obtain.’†

### PSALM XXXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Call to arms against ungrateful persecutors—addressed to God.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David; literally referring to his pursuit of the Edomites; also the supplication of the righteous.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, if it be, as the inscription tells us, a Psalm of David, must have been composed either during his persecution by Saul, or during the revolt of Absalom. It is usual to connect it with his words in 1 Sam. xxiv. 15 (16), ‘JEHOVAH therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause’ (the same expression as in verse 1 of the Psalm), ‘and deliver me by His judgment out of thine hand.’

*Whole Psalm.*—This is the second of the Passion Psalms; the first being Psalm xxii. So highly did the African Church esteem it, that it was given to St. Augustine by his fellow-Bishops to write a treatise on.‡

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 114.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 541.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 548.

*Verse 1. Plead Thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me, and fight Thou against them that fight against me.*—At the first General Convention at Philadelphia, to give proper dignity and solemnity to the proceedings of the House, it was moved on the following day that each morning of the Session should be opened with prayer. To this it was demurred that, as the delegates were of different religious sects, they might not consent to join in the same form of worship. Upon this Mr. Samuel Adams arose and said, ‘he would willingly join in prayer with any gentleman of piety and virtue whatever might be his cloth, provided he was a friend of his country;’ and he moved that the Rev. Mr. Duché, of Philadelphia, who answered to that description, might be invited to officiate as chaplain. This was one step to unanimity of feeling, Mr. Adams being a strong Congregationalist, and Mr. Duché an eminent Episcopalian clergyman. The motion was carried into effect; the invitation was given and accepted. In the course of the day a rumour reached Philadelphia that Boston had been cannonaded by the British. It produced a strong sensation, and when Congress met on the following morning (7th) the effect was visible in every countenance.

The delegates from the East were greeted with a warmer grasp of the hand by their associates from the South. The Rev. Mr. Duché, according to invitation, appeared in his canonicals attended by his clerk. The morning service of the Episcopal Church was read with great solemnity, the clerk making the responses. The Psalter for the 7th day of the month includes the 35th Psalm, wherein David prays for protection against the enemies: ‘*Plead Thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Draw out also the spear and stop the way of them that persecute me. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. . . .*’

The imploring words of this Psalm spoke the feelings of all hearts present, but especially of those from New England. John Adams writes, in a letter to his wife: ‘You must re-

member this was the morning after we heard the horrible rumour of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning.\*

*Verse 9. And, my soul, be joyful in the Lord ; it shall rejoice in His salvation.*—St. James, surnamed Intercisus, was a native of Beth-Lapeta, a royal city of Persia, and a nobleman of the first rank. The king, Vararanes, condemned him to a most cruel death, because he would not renounce the faith of Christ.

At the place of execution the heathen conjured him, with the most passionate and moving expressions and gestures to dissemble his religion only for the present time, saying he might immediately return to it again. The martyr answered them, ‘This death, which appeared to them to wear so dreadful a face, was very little for the purchase of eternal life.’ As each limb was cut off, he prayed, ‘O SAVIOUR of Christians, receive a branch of the tree. It will putrefy, but will bud again, and, as I am assured, will be clothed with glory.’ And again: ‘The vine dies in winter, yet revives in spring: and shall not the body when cut down sprout up again?’ When his first finger was cut off, he cried out, ‘*My heart hath rejoiced in the Lord; and my soul hath exulted in His salvation.* Receive, O LORD, another branch.’ At the end, ‘lying a naked trunk, and having already lost half his body, he still continued to pray, and praise GOD with cheerfulness, till a guard, by severing his head from his body, completed his martyrdom. This was executed on the 27th of November, in the year of our Lord 421, the second of King Vararanes.

The triumph of this illustrious penitent and martyr has, in all succeeding ages, been most renowned in the Churches of the Persians, Syrians, Copts, Greeks, and Latins.†

\* *Life of Washington*, by Washington Irving, vol. i., chap. xxxv., p. 341.

† Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*.

*Verse 12. They rewarded me evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul.*—In the month of June, 1815, while at Heidelberg, the (then) Emperor Alexander of Russia handed M. Empeytaz, of Geneva (who had passed many years in the household of Madame de Krudener), a Bible, and asked him to read Psalm xxxv. When he came to the passage: ‘*They rewarded me evil for good, to the great discomfort of my soul.* Nevertheless, when they were sick, I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting. . . . I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I went heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother,’ he said: ‘I pray day and night for my enemies, and I feel I can love them as the Gospel enjoins me to do.’ At the words, ‘Awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my GOD and my LORD,’ he added, ‘GOD *will* do this; of that I am firmly convinced. The cause for which we are fighting is His cause; for we have no other object than the happiness of nations. May GOD but grant me the grace to be able to procure peace for Europe, and gladly will I give up my life for it!’\*

*Verse 14. His mother.*—Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect, when he instantly replied, ‘The mother, the mother, the mother.’

*Verse 15. Yea, the objects gathered themselves together against me.*

‘We are the queen’s *objects*, and must obey.’

*King Richard III., Act I., Sc. i.*

*i.e.*, treated by her as *objects*, or *vile persons*, rather than as *subjects* ought to be treated.

This word occurs once in the Bible, and once in Shakespeare. †

\* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, April, 1863, p. 291.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, chap. ii., p. 29.

## PSALM XXXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The curse of Alienation from GOD, and the Blessing of Fellowship with Him.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Song of Happy Service.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, while Saul was pursuing him ; signifying to us the rebuke of our enemies, and, moreover, containing a discourse concerning Deity.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is not so distinct in its features that we can assign it to any particular occasion in the life of David, or associate it with any definite period of Jewish history.

*The Whole Psalm*.—For an aspect of Nature from another side, take the 36th Psalm. As if reeling from a cavern, the Psalmist looks out from his heart at the cupola of the deep blue sky over-vaulting the hills. They remind him of his GOD ; he thinks of an unchanging youth and fulness of beauty. The same thought was in his soul when he wrote, ‘Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures,’ as in his who, more than two thousand years after, cried to the new-born cataract :

‘Unperishing youth !  
Thou leapest from forth  
The cell of thy hidden nativity,  
Thou at once full-born,  
Madden’st in thy joyaunce.’

Then follow words whose depth and beauty no thought can fathom—the blended images of the fountain rising with drifted spray and delicate shadows cast on the silver jet ; the light in which it sparkles ; the life which is the sum of all we yearn for, which the great sculptor Carpeau cried for in the death agony : ‘La vie ! la vie !’—those images which reach their height only in the Christian theology of the Holy and Blessed Trinity :

‘With Thee is the fountain of Life ;  
In Thy Light shall we see Light.’\*

*Verses 3, 4. The words of his mouth are unrighteous, and full of deceit ; he hath left off to behave himself wisely, and to do good. He imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way ; neither doth he abhor anything that is evil.*

‘Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock  
Number the midnight watches, on his bed  
Devising mischief more ; and early rose,  
And made most hellish meals of good men’s names.  
From door to door you might have seen him speed,  
Or placed amid a group of gaping fools.  
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made  
His haunts ; and, like a moral pestilence,  
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms  
Of social joy and happiness decayed.  
Fools only in his company were seen,  
And those forsaken of GOD, and to themselves  
Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house  
As one who had a deadly moral plague.’

ROBERT POLLOCK, 1799—1827.

*Verses 5-9. Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens, and Thy faithfulness unto the clouds. . . . For with Thee is the well of life ; and in Thy light shall we see light.*

‘Thy mercie, LORD, doth to the HEAVENS extend,  
Thy faithfulness doth to the CLOUDES assend ;  
Thy justice stedfast as a MOUNTAINE is,  
Thy JUDGEMENTS deepe as is the great Abisse ;  
Thy noble mercies saue all liueinge thinges,  
The sonnes of men creepe underneath Thy winges :  
With Thy great plenty they are fedd at will,  
And of Thy pleasure’s streame they drinke their fill ;  
For euen the well of life remains with Thee,  
And in Thy glorious light we light shalt see.’†

*Verse 8. Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures, as out of the river.*—St. Augustine tells us that one day he was about to write something upon the eighth verse of the 36th Psalm, ‘Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures,’ and being almost swallowed up with the contemplation of

\* *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 194.

† Sir John Davies, 1569-1626.

heavenly joys, one called unto him very loudly by his name ; and, inquiring who it was, he answered : ‘ I am Hierom, with whom in thy life-time thou hadst so much conference concerning doubts in Scripture, and am now best experienced to resolve thee of any doubts concerning the joys of heaven.

‘ But only let me first ask thee this question, “ Art thou able to put the whole earth, and all the waters of the sea, into a little pot ? Canst thou measure the waters in thy fist, and mete out heaven with thy span ? or weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ? If not, no more is it possible that thy understanding should comprehend the least of those joys.’\*

*Verse 9.* In *Thy light shall we see light* is, of course, the basis of that clause in the Nicene creed, ‘ Light of Light.’ †

Frederick Locker :

‘ From mother Earth’s green orchard trees  
The fairest fruit is blown ;  
The lad was gay who slumbers near,  
The lass he loved is gone :  
Death lifts the burden from the poor,  
And will not spare the throne.

‘ And vainly are we fenced about  
From peril ; day and night  
The awful rapids must be shot,  
Our shallop is but slight ;  
So pray, when parting, we descry  
A cheering beacon-light.’

### PSALM XXXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The seeming prosperity of the wicked and the real prosperity of the Godly.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—concerning them that say, Wherefore doth not the LORD take vengeance upon the insolent ?

§ *The Whole Psalm.*—Tertullian calls this Psalm ‘ *Providenticæ*

\* Spencer : *The Biblical Museum.*

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 578.

*speculum*'; Isidore, '*Potio contra murmur*'; Luther, '*Vestis piorum cui adscriptum : His sanctorum patientia est.*'\*

*St. Augustine's commentary* (on this Psalm) is chiefly remarkable on this account, that from its perusal St. Fulgentius is said to have been converted.†

*Origen* seems to have valued this Psalm above all others, calling it the most precious medicine of the human soul.‡

*This Psalm* may well be styled, The good man's cordial in bad times ; a sovereign plaister for the plague of discontent ; or a choice antidote against the poison of impatience.§

In the war with Napoleon, in 1812, when the news arrived at Heidelberg of the advantages gained by the French over the allied armies, all those about the Russian Emperor were filled with alarm, almost with despondency ; but he himself relied with unshaken confidence on the Divine protection, and made his supplication for strength and counsel. After a fervent prayer he took up the Bible, opened it at Psalm xxxvii., and read, and then hastened to his allies, exhorted them to be of good cheer, and marched against the enemy.||

*Verse 3. Put thou thy trust in the Lord.*—The motto of Don Manuel, King of Portugal, was '*Spera in Domino.*' He misspelt *sphera*, and so surmounted all the Churches of his time in Portugal with a sphere—intending it as an emblem of hope, not, as the casual visitor is so apt to take it, in the sense of the world.¶

*Verse 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord.*—'Give to the winds thy fears.' This is John Wesley's translation (1739) of part of Paul Gerhard's most popular hymn :

'Commit thou all thy griefs  
And wash into His hands.'

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 307.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 583.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Nathaniel Hardy in a *Funeral Sermon*, 1649.

|| *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, April, 1863, p. 291.

¶ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 584.



It is said to have been written at the time when, owing to his views differing from those of the King, he was ordered to quit the country. He went, in reduced circumstances, with his wife, on foot. One night, on seeking a refuge in a village inn, his wife, affected by their altered condition, burst into tears. Then the poet reminded her of the verse '*Commit thy way unto the Lord*' (Psalm xxxvii. 5), and, retiring to an arbour, wrote this hymn upon these words. The same night two gentlemen arrived who had come by order of Duke Christian of Meneberg to invite the poet to Meneberg, and to inform him that the Duke had settled a considerable pension on him as a compensation for the injustice of which he was the victim. Gerhard then gave his wife the hymn he had written in trouble, but in faith, and said, 'See how GOD provides. Did I not bid you to trust in GOD, and all would be well?'

*Verse 25. I have been young, and now am old ; and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.*—Dr. Clarke, with touching expression, says: 'I am now grey-headed myself, I have travelled in different countries, and have had many opportunities of seeing and conversing with religious people in all situations of life, and have not, to my knowledge, seen one instance to the contrary. I have seen no righteous man forsaken, nor any children of the righteous begging their bread.'\*

*Verse 27. Flee from evil, and do the thing that is good, and dwell for evermore.*—The manner of life at Little Gidding, where saintly Nicholas Ferrar set such an example of nearness to GOD, was as simple as it was devout, and so were the surroundings. 'The house' in which they all lived (the Hall) 'was furnished with the utmost plainness and simplicity, and had a grave religious aspect, befitting the life which its inmates had chosen. Even the walls are not idle, but something is written or painted there which may excite the reader to a thought of piety.'

\* *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bourchier, vol. i., p. 255.

'A brass plate affixed to the outer door bore the words, "*Flee from evil, and do good, and dwell for evermore;*" and in the parlour, in which it was the custom of the family to receive strangers, a tablet was placed, admonishing all comers in what temper of mind they should visit this devout household.'

In the September of the year in which the English Polyglot was published, 1657, the earthly remains of John Ferrar were laid in Gidding churchyard, and his noble conception, viz., the printing of the Holy Bible in eight several languages, was left a dream unrealized.

On the memorial brass, which still remains in Gidding Church, is inscribed, beneath his name and arms, the same text which, on his first coming to Gidding, was engraved over the door of the house: '*Flee from evil, and do ye the thing y<sup>t</sup> is right, and dwell for evermore.*'\*

*Verse 30. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*—Mahomet, the false prophet of Arabia, in the only *direct* citation from the Bible which occurs in the Koran, has quoted Psalm xxxvii. 29 (30) in a Soorah composed at Mecca, and therefore written by him before the Hegira, A.D. 622. This is an irrefragable proof of the super-eminent estimation and general use which the Psalter had obtained throughout Arabia in the early part of the seventh century. †

*Verses 36, 37. I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree. I went by, and, lo, he was gone; I sought him, but his place could nowhere be found.*

'To-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hopes, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him.  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do.' ‡

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 109, 318.

† *The Book of Psalms*, Coleman (preface).

‡ Shakespeare, *Henry VIII.*

*Verse 37* (Bible version). *Mark the perfect man.*—Ecce Homo!

Luther closes his Exposition of the Psalm with the words, ‘Oh, shame on our faithlessness, mistrust, and vile unbelief, that we do not believe such rich, powerful, consolatory declarations of God, and take up so readily with little grounds of offence, whenever we but hear the wicked speeches of the ungodly. Help, O GOD, that we may once attain to right faith. Amen.’\*

### PSALM XXXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for the changing of merited wrath into rescuing love.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—when the Philistines said to Achish the king, This is David that killed Goliath; we will not that he go with us against Saul; moreover, now, as respects ourselves, instruction in the duty of confession.

*In Church.*—This Psalm was said in the Greek morning office as one of the series Hexapsalmus. Verses 21 and 22 were repeated at the end of it.

In the Roman Church it may be used (with others) in the Visitation of the Sick.

In the Anglican Church, it is one of the Matin Psalms (No. 3) for Ash Wednesday.

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm is the third Penitential, against Gluttony, and was said at all times when the Litanies were recited; and according to the Primitive use, retained in the Sarum, but dropped in the Roman Breviary, was recited after the 51st Psalm at Terce, daily during Lent. In most editions of the Vulgate it has 21 verses; and Innocent III. sees in this a triple Sabbath. Triple either in honour of the Blessed Trinity, or with reference to the three Sabbaths which the true servant of GOD must of necessity have: that of rest amidst the

\* *The Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 217.

warfare of this world ; that of peace when that warfare is accomplished, but before the final consummation of blessedness ; and the eternal Sabbath of heaven.\*

*Verse 4.* *For my wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear.*—St. Paulinus has a singular allegory in connection with this verse, concerning the hair of Samson—how, when it was severed from his head, his iniquities did indeed go over it ; and this, taken in contrast with St. Mary Magdalene wiping our LORD'S feet with her hair, and thus transferring, as it were, to them, and by them so soon after to the cross, the weight of her own guilt.†

*Verse 17.* (Bible version) *My sorrow is continually before Me.*

‘O sweet, O wakeful-hearted Child !  
Sleep on, dear JESUS ! sleep ;  
For Thou must one day wake for me  
To suffer and to weep ’‡

## PSALM XXXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayers of one sorely tired at the sight of the prosperity of the Ungodly.

*Contents* (Syriac).—To Jeduthun. A supplication, also a commandment to keep the tongue from impure conversation, and the sight, and all the senses.

*Origin* (Perowne).—One thing concerning this Psalm is perfectly clear, that whether David were the author or not, the Psalm is individual, not national.

*In Church.*—The present Psalm is fitly appointed by the Church of England to be used at the Burial of the Dead.§

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. i., p. 606.

† *Ibid.*

‡ F. W. Faber.

§ Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 57.

*The Whole Psalm.*—You are, of course, aware that this is one of the two Psalms appointed by our Church for its funeral service; and, as Bishop Horne justly remarks, a funeral is the best comment on it. An anecdote is told of Archbishop Leighton which well illustrates the remark. Being asked by a friend, as he was returning homewards, if he had been to a sermon, ‘I met a sermon,’ was his answer, ‘for I met a corpse. And rightly and profitably are the funeral rites performed when the living lay it to heart.\*

*Heinrich Ewald* says this is the most beautiful of all the elegies in the Psalter.

*Verse 1.* *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue.*—The story is well known how Pambo, a recluse of the Egyptian desert, when about to enter on his novitiate, betook himself to an aged monk and requested from him instructions for his new course of life. The old man opened his Psalter, and began to read the present verse. ‘That is enough, said Pambo; ‘let me go home and practise it.’ And long long after, being asked by one of his brethren whether he were yet perfect in his first lesson, the saint, now in his turn an aged man, replied: ‘Forty-and-nine years have I dwelt in this desert, and am only just beginning to learn how to obey the commandment.’†

*Verse 6.* As the Psalmist complains, ‘Thou hast made my days as it were a *span* long,’ so we read in *As You Like It*:

‘How brief the life of man!  
The stretching of a *span*  
Buckles in his sum of age.’  
Act III., Sc. ii. ‡

*Verse 7.* *For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

\* *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol. i., p. 266.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 2.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 147.

‘To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
 To the last syllable of recorded time ;  
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle !  
 Life’s but a walking shadow ; a poor player,  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
 And then is heard no more ; it is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing.’\*

There is a passage nearly resembling this in the *Ajax* of Sophocles :

‘I see all we who live are nothing else  
 But empty phantasmas or shadows vain ;’

and Shakespeare may illustrate both this and the previous verse :

‘ . . . We are such stuff  
 As dreams are made of ; and our little life  
 Is rounded with a sleep.’†

*Verse 10. I became dumb and opened not my mouth, for it was Thy doing.*—St. Francis of Sales on his mother’s death wrote :

‘It has pleased GOD to take my most excellent and very dear mother from this weary world, and He has given her a place in Paradise, I believe ; for hers was one of the most lovely, pure souls it would be possible to find. GOD is ever good, and His mercy is never-failing ; all that He does is holy and true, and I bow beneath the trial of this long separation. It is a sharp pang, in truth, but a very peaceful grief, and I can say with David, *I was silent and opened not my mouth, for it was Thy doing.* But for that I should be inconsolable.’

*Verse 13. Hold not Thy peace at my tears.*—The poet finely adds ‘at my tears,’

‘ . . . The saddest, sweetest, lowest sound,  
 Nearest akin to perfect silence.’‡

*Verse 14. I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all*

\* Shakespeare.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 134.

‡ *St. Augustine’s Holiday, and other Poems*, by Bishop Alexander, p. 233.

*my fathers were.*—St. Philip alone of the four Metropolitans of Russia, buried in the cathedral at Moscow, came into collision with the imperial power, and that was expressly and distinctly with the personal cruelties, not with the secular authority, of Ivan the Terrible. ‘As the image of the Divinity, I reverence thee; as a man, thou art but dust and ashes.’

It is a true glory of the Russian Church, and an example to the hierarchy of all Churches, that its one martyred prelate should have suffered, not for any high ecclesiastical pretensions, but in the simple cause of justice and mercy.

‘Silence,’ he said, as he rebuked the Czar, ‘lays sin upon the soul, and brings death to the whole people. *I am a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, as all my fathers were,* and I am ready to suffer for the truth. Where would my faith be if I kept silence? . . . Here we are offering up the bloodless sacrifice to the LORD; while behind the altar flows the innocent blood of Christian men.’

As he was dragged away from the cathedral, his one word was, ‘Pray.’ As he received his executioners in the narrow cell of his prison in the Convent of Tuer, his one word was, ‘Perform thy mission.’

Here is an illustration of the wickedness of Ivan: He retired sometimes for weeks together to a monastery which he had built for himself near Moscow. He rang the bell for Matins at three in the morning. During the services, which lasted seven hours, he read, chanted, and prayed with such fervour that the marks of his prostrations remained on his forehead. At dinner, whilst his attendants sat like mutes, he read books of religious instruction. In the intervals he went to the dungeons under the monastery to see with his own eyes his prisoners tortured, and always returned, it was observed, with a face beaming with delight.\*

\* Dean Stanley's *Eastern Church*, p. 329.

## PSALM XL.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving, or offering up of one's self; and prayer.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—in its literal sense understood to have been composed when Shemaiah brought to him the names of them that minister in the house of the LORD; and spiritually—thanksgiving to GOD from the ministers and the Church.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Whether David was the author of this Psalm is a question which we can hardly hope now to decide. There are expressions in it not unlike those which we find in Psalms unquestionably his; but we cannot pretend to point to any circumstances in his life to which it undoubtedly refers.

*In Church*.—In the 1549 Prayer-Book this Psalm, or Psalm cxxxii., or Psalm cxxxv. was the Introit at the Form and Manner of Ordering Priests, and the same Psalm or Psalms could be used at the ordaining or consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop in 1849. It is also a Good Friday Psalm, so obviously prophetic are the words in which the Psalmist offers himself as a sacrifice to do GOD'S will—of Him Who became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

*Verse 1.* *I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling.* On the feast of St. John (1622) the Bishop (St. Francis de Sales) was conscious on rising that his sight was imperfect. He spoke of it to his attendants, saying, 'That means that I am going, and I bless GOD for it; the failing body weighs down the soul.' When dressed he made his own confession, said Mass, communicated the Sisters, and, after hearing the Superior's confession, remained some little time in conversation with her. She was struck with the alteration in his face, and asked if he felt worse, but he would only answer that 'All things work together for good to them that



love GOD.' Leaving the Church, Francis met the Duc de Bellegarde and M. de Villeroy, Governors of Lyons and Burgundy, and he remained some time talking to them, with his head bare, notwithstanding the bitter cold and fog of the atmosphere, and then he went to the Prince of Piedmont, returning home at length quite exhausted.

After taking some food the Bishop began to write letters, until he was interrupted by visitors. His servants noticed that, contrary to his wont, he did not conduct these visitors to the door when they left, but remained sitting in his chair. They were sure by this that the Bishop felt very ill, and were trying to persuade him to postpone leaving Lyons the day following (as he proposed), when Francis fainted. He was moved to his bed, and shortly after a sort of seizure followed, which, however, did not affect his mind. The Rector of the Jesuits kept making acts of faith, hope, love and contrition for him, and as he was able Francis repeated them after him. A friendly Religious came in and explained his regret at the Bishop's state. 'Father,' he replied, 'I am waiting on GOD's mercy. "*Expectans expectavi Dominum et intendit mihi.*"\* 'If it were GOD's Will, you would gladly depart at once?' the Religious asked. 'If GOD wills it, I will it, too,' the Bishop answered, smiling gently: 'now, or a little while hence. What does it matter? "*Bonum est sperare in DOMINO. DOMINUS est, quod bonum est in oculis suis faciat.*"† I give myself up to the LORD, and let Him do as He will.'

Soon after the Bishop received the Sacrament of penitence and extreme unction. Early the next morning the Bishop of Damascus came to see his friend. 'I have come to help you in your last battle. "*Frater qui adjuratur a fratre quasi civitas firma*"' (Prov. xviii. 19. The English version gives quite a different rendering). "*Et DOMINUS salvabit utrumque*"' ('The LORD shall save both'), the sick man answered.

\* 'I waited patiently for the LORD . . . and He heard my calling.'—Ps. xl. 1.

† 'It is better to trust in the LORD.'—Eng. Ver. Ps. cxviii. 9.

Soon after the Bishop of Damascus spoke again: 'Jacta super DOMINUM curam tuam,'\* 'Et ipse te enutriet,' Francis completed the quotation, adding, 'My meat is to do the Will of the FATHER.'

Among other people the Père Forrier, once Francis' director, came in, and asked the dying Bishop if he remembered him. 'Si oblitus fuero tui,' Francis answered earnestly, 'oblivioni detur dextera mea.†

'You must say with St. Martin, "DOMINE si adhuc populo tuo sum necessarius non recuso laborem,"' ('LORD, if I am necessary yet to Thy people, I would not refuse toil'), the Father said. 'I necessary!' Francis exclaimed; 'no, no! I am an altogether useless servant.' And he repeated three times slowly and fervently, 'Servus inutilis, inutilis, inutilis!' He often said little kindly words of consolation to his servants and friends, whose grief as they ministered to him sometimes broke forth; and the words of the *Miserere* were continually on his lips, as in his heart. Once, as he murmured the words, 'Amplius lava me, DOMINE,' someone exclaimed that of a truth his conscience needed no more cleansing, but was pure in GOD'S sight. 'Not so: you are mistaken indeed!' the Bishop said earnestly.

Often he was heard repeating the words, 'My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the Courts of the LORD, my heart and my flesh rejoice in the Living GOD. . . . My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the LORD. When I am in heaviness, I will think upon GOD. . . . When shall I come to appear before the Presence of GOD?‡ He often, too, repeated the words of the bride in the Canticles, 'Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon' (Cant. i. 7). And hearing someone near his bed begin to say the Sanctus: 'Holy, Holy,

\* 'Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall nourish thee.'—Ps. lv. 22.

† 'If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning.'—Ps. cxxxvii. 5.

‡ Psalms lxxxiv., lxxxix., lxxvii., xlii.

Holy,' Francis went on, 'Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.'

The fatal drowsiness increased upon him, and when the Archbishop of Embrun came in, Francis did not address him directly, but went on murmuring broken words of the Psalms: 'All my desire is before Thee.' 'Thou knowest all my groaning—my GOD and my all; I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.\*'

Some bystander bade the sufferer unite his pains to those of the Thorn-crowned Saviour, and Francis quietly answered: 'My pains do not deserve the name compared to His.' Again, some bystander asked whether he feared the last struggle. 'Oculi mei semper ad DOMINUM quoniam ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos,'† was the reply. 'There was one traitor among the Apostles,' someone said. 'Expectans expectavi DOMINUM, et exaudivit preces meas, et educit me de lacu miseræ et de lacu fecis,'‡ he replied, and in a moment he added, 'Qui cœpit ipse perficiet' ('He who begins will make perfect his work'). In a little while the dying Saint turned round and, pressing the hand of a loving attendant, muttered, 'Advesperascit et inclinata est jam dies' ('It is towards evening, and the day is far spent'—St. Luke xxiv. 29). They were the last words he spoke, save that the Name of JESUS hung awhile upon the lips that had so often lovingly named It, and which would next be opened to take part in the Song of the Lamb.

A movement of the eyes and lips showed that till the feeble silver thread was cut, and the golden bowl loosed, there was a loving response to each petition raised heavenwards by those who strove to the edge of the dark river with him they loved so well. At length, about eight in the evening, they saw that the last moment had really come, and, kneeling round, began the

\* Psalms xxxviii. 9; cxxi. 1.

† 'Mine eyes are ever looking unto the LORD, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.'—Ps. xxv. 14.

‡ 'I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling. He brought me also out of the horrible pit.'—Ps. xl. 1, 2.

last prayers, the last music of praise to fall upon the ear which soon should waken to more joyful strains.

The familiar Litanies had not gone far—the clause

‘ Omnes sancti Innocentes  
Orate pro eo ’

had just been said thrice, for it was Holy Innocents’ Day—when, calmly and peacefully, as he had lived, Francis de Sales died.

‘ Obdormivit in JESU.’

The body of St. Francis de Sales was laid to rest in the Church of the Visitation, Annecy, until in the Revolution it became necessary to remove the venerable remains, in order to save them from desecration. When that dark storm had passed away, a new convent and church were built, and it is in the latter that St. Francis de Sales now lies, beneath the high altar. He was solemnly canonized in the year 1665, by Pope Alexander VII.\*

*Verse 6 (5). O Lord my God, great are the wondrous works which Thou hast done, like as be also Thy thoughts which are to us-ward, and yet there is no man that ordereth them unto Thee.*—Milton has imitated this passage of the Psalmist in the 7th book of the *Paradise Lost*.

‘ Great are Thy works, JEHOVAH, infinite  
Thy power, what thought can measure Thee, or tongue  
Relate Thee !’ †

*Verse 8. Sacrifice, and meat-offering, Thou wouldest not, but mine ears hast Thou opened.*—Those who receive Psalm xl. as Messianic find in it, with the fact of the Atonement, the Theology of the Atonement.

‘ Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire.  
Then said I, “ Lo ! I come : in the volume of the Book it is written of me.” ’ ‡

\* *S. Francis de Sales*, pp. 259-264.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Bishop Mant, p. 137.

‡ *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 217.

*Mine ears hast Thou opened.*—In quoting this Psalm, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews renders the last clause, ‘a body hast Thou prepared me.’ This is the LXX. version. It is thought to be a free translation of the Hebrew, and both are taken to mean, ‘Thou hast made me Thy servant’ (see Exodus xxi. 6).\*

*I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy law is within my heart* (Bible version).

‘Every act of obedience is an act of worship.’†

*Verses 9, 10. Lo I come . . . that I should fulfil Thy will.*—The holy will of GOD, that was his (Bishop Dupanloup’s) constant thought. In 1861, on the 8th of December, he writes: ‘I am going to make the will of GOD the subject of this week’s meditation. If one could only think of it continually; not take a step except in accordance with it: see always *quæ sit voluntas Dei bona, et bene placens, et perfecta*; and be able to say continually: *Quæ placita sunt ei facio semper*, and, *A me ipso facio mihi*. How admirable are those words of our LORD! One ought to have them always on one’s lips, in one’s heart. In the morning: *Ecce venio Deus, ut faciam voluntatem Tuam!* In the evening: *Deus meus, volui, et legem Tuam in medio cordis mei!* At night add: *In pace, in idipsum, dormiam at requiescam!*‡

*Verse 17. Let them be ashamed, and driven backward, and put to rebuke, that wish me evil.*—Guthlac, an Anglo-Saxon hermit, being tempted by devils to commit self-destruction (they endeavoured to persuade him that it would be a laudable action to try to fast for six days, and eat only on the seventh), overcame them by exclaiming: ‘Let them be driven backward that wish me evil!’ and immediately afterwards ate a small piece of barley bread according to his daily custom.

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 275.

† *Stepping Heavenward*.

‡ *Life of Bishop Dupanloup*, p. 472.

*Verses 20, 21. As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me. Thou art my helper and redeemer, make no long tarrying, O my God.*—In Dr. Malan's memoir, the editor, one of his sons, thus writes of his brother Jocelyn, who was for some years prior to his death the subject of intense bodily sufferings: 'One striking feature in his character was his holy fear of GOD, and reverence for His will. One day I was repeating a verse from the Psalms—"As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me, for Thou art my helper and deliverer; O Lord, make no long tarrying." He said: "Mother, I love that verse, all but the last bit; it looks like a murmur against GOD. He never 'tarryes' in my case.'"\*

### PSALM XLI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Complaint of a Sufferer of being surrounded by Hostile and Treacherous Persons.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he appointed stewards to care for the poor; also a prophecy concerning CHRIST and concerning Iscariot.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm seems to have been written in a season of recovery from sickness, and under a deep sense of the hypocrisy and ingratitude of false friends, who came to the Psalmist pretending to condole with him in his sickness, whilst in reality they hated him in their hearts, and wished for his death.

*Title*.—Vulgate: In finem, Psalmus ipsi David.

LXX.: Εἰς τὸ τέλος, ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαβὶδ.

*The Whole Psalm*.—The first three books of the Psalter end with a double Amen. The fourth book (cvi. 48) ends with 'Amen, Hallelujah.' The last five Psalms of the fifth or last

\* *The Life, Labours, and Writings of Caesar Malan (1787-1864).*

book all begin with Hallelujah, and they all end with Hallelujah.

Thus there is a gradual ascent to higher degrees of adoration.\*

*Verses 1, 3. Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. . . . The Lord comfort him, when he lieth sick upon his bed; make Thou all his bed in his sickness.*—Thomas Fuller tells how Queen Mary of England, abstracted from her evil counsellors, had good features of character. She erected again the hospital of the Savoy, which had been founded by her grandfather, Henry VII., and her maids of honour, out of their own wardrobes, furnished it with beds, blankets, and sheets; and then he adds: ‘Were any of those ladies still alive, I would pray for them in the language of the Psalmist—“The LORD make all their bed in their sickness.” And He is a good bed-maker indeed, who can and will make it fit the person, and please the patient. But seeing such are all long since deceased, it will be no superstition to praise God for their piety, and commend their practice to the imitation of posterity.’†

*Verse 3. The Lord comfort him, when he lieth sick upon his bed; make Thou all his bed in his sickness.*

‘O how soft that bed must be,  
Made in sickness, Lord, by Thee,  
And that rest,—how calm and sweet—  
Where Jesus and the sufferer meet.

‘It was the Good Physician now  
Soothed my cheek and chafed my brow,  
Whispering, as He raised my head,  
“It is I, be not afraid.”’‡

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\* Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 63.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*.

‡ Monsell.





## BOOK II.

### PSALMS XLII.—LXXII.

‘The Hebrews divided the Psalter into five books, so that it is another Pentateuch.’—*Hippolytus*.

‘The Psalter was the Hymn-book and Prayer-book of Christ.’—*Bishop Wordsworth*.



## PSALM XLII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Longing for Zion in a Hostile Country.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the sons of Korah ; Supplication of the prophets ; and a Psalm which David sang during his persecution, and when he desired to return to Jerusalem.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, though its date and authorship are uncertain, leaves us no doubt as to the locality in which it was written. The sacred poet was in the land beyond the Jordan, near the mountain ridges of Hermon (verse 6), in that land which was ‘emphatically the land of exile—the refuge of exiles.’ Some ascribe it to David, others to a priest, who either in the time of Jeremiah was shut out from all access to the Temple, or who was among those who were carried away by the Chaldeans after the capture of Jerusalem. Another thinks that the words may have been those of Jehoiakim himself, when in the hands of his captors, who perhaps halted somewhere in this neighbourhood for a night on their return to Assyria. But the general tone of the Psalm is rather that of one looking for *speedy* restoration to his native land, than of one carried away from enduring captivity in Babylon.

*The Second Book* of Psalms differs from the first by one distinguishing characteristic—its use of the Divine Name. In the first, GOD is spoken of and addressed as Jehovah ; in the second, as Elohim, the latter name being that which in our version is rendered GOD.\*

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 338.

*The Sons of Korah* (in the title).—Venerable Bede says Kore by interpretation is Calvary, in the place of which name our LORD was crucified; wherefore they are worthily called the sons of Kore, who, under the banner of that Passion, serve with the whole devotion of their minds.

This Psalm fits every Christian who is kindled with the flame of the LORD'S love. We ought all to remember what blessed Jerome saith: 'Whilst I carefully examine the whole Psalter, I nowhere find that the sons of Kore were the authors of a melancholy Psalm; everything in their Psalms is glad and joyous; and while they despise earthly delights, and desire that which is celestial and eternal, they will agree with the meaning of their name.'

*In Church*.—This Psalm and the next are used together in the Hebrew Synagogue at the Great Festival of the Tabernacle.

This Psalm is appointed in the *Roman Office* for the Baptism of Adults\* (with others—Pss. viii., xxix.).

In the Liturgy of St. Mark, the priest is directed to say a certain prayer, or the *Quemadmodum desiderat*, i.e., Psalm xlii., immediately before his own Communion.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—There are good grounds for concluding that this Psalm and the next constituted originally but one poem. . . . On the other hand, there can be no doubt that each Psalm is complete in itself, and it is conceivable that, though originally existing as one poem, the present arrangement might have been adopted the better to suit the purposes either of personal or liturgical use.‡

*St. Francis de Sales*, when thought to be dying at Annecy, asked the cathedral choir—who had come to ask after him—to sing him the Psalm *Quemadmodum desiderat* ('Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks'); and having listened

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 251.

† *Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 739.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 340.

with tears in his eyes, he turned to the wall and repeated the *Miserere* aloud.\*

*Verse 1.* *Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God.*—The figure of Psalm xlii. 1 is often repeated in the Roman Catacombs.

*The royal family of France* and every nobleman in the days of Clement Marot chose a Psalm or a song which expressed his own personal feeling, adapted to his own tune. The Dauphin, afterwards Henri II., a great hunter, when he went to the chase was singing, ‘Aussi qu’on vit le cerf bruyere’ (*Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks*). There is a curious portrait of the mistress of Henri II., the famous Diane de Poitiers, recently published, in which is inscribed this verse of the Psalm. On a portrait which exhibits Diane in an attitude rather unsuitable to so solemn an application, no reason could be found to account for this discordance; perhaps the painter, or the lady herself, chose to adopt the favourite Psalm of her royal lover, proudly to designate the object of her love, besides its double allusion to her name.†

*Mary, Queen of Scots*, used this verse on her way to execution, speaking to Sir Andrew Melville, her steward, who met her, and fell on his knees before her, weeping and lamenting that he should be the bearer of such tidings to Scotland. ‘Weep not, good Melville,’ she said, ‘but rather rejoice that an end has come to the sorrows of Mary Stuart, for know that all this world is vanity. And this message I pray you bear from me, that I die a true woman to my religion, and a true woman to Scotland and to France. But GOD forgive those that have long desired my end and thirsted for my blood *as the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks*. O GOD, who art the Author of all truth, Thou knowest the inmost recesses of my heart, and how that I was ever willing that England and Scotland should be united. Commend me to my son; tell him that I have

\* *S. Francis de Sales*, p. 92.

† *Curiosities of Literature*, Psalm-singing, vol. ii., p. 476.

done nothing to prejudice his right as King of Scotland. And now, good Melville, fare thee well.\*

Frederick George Lee :

‘ They lie beneath the waving grass,  
When o’er them moving cloudlets pass ;  
The sleet may drift, may fall the snow,  
Long seasons come, long seasons go.  
They lie in peace, in GOD they sleep,  
Temptations past, their hope is deep ;  
Stern woes grip not, nor sorrows chill,  
They long for Sion’s holy hill.  
Like as bird flies to hidden nest,  
Like as babe turns to mother’s breast,  
*Like as the hart for brooklet longs,*  
So these for joy of Sion’s songs.’

*St. Teresa* (1515-1582) used to fall into ‘raptures.’ ‘Richard of St. Victor teaches that raptures arise from a vehement fire of divine love in the will, or from excessive spiritual joy, or from a beam of heavenly light darting from the understanding. . . . No effects of a rapture are so remarkable or profitable as the clear sight which the soul receives in it of her own imperfections, baseness, and nothingness, together with the most profound sentiments of humility ; and, on the other side, a great knowledge of the goodness, majesty, and boundless power of GOD, with the most ardent love and desires of speedily possessing Him for ever. Hence, *St. Teresa*, when her soul was deeply wounded, and totally inflamed, as it were, by a spark falling from the immense fire of the love our LORD bore her, often repeated with incredible earnestness that verse : “ *As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.*” †

*Herman Hugo*, who died of the plague in his charitable labours amongst plague-stricken men at Antwerp, has an elegy in his *Pia Desideria* on this verse, where he does not fail to introduce the legend of the stag and the serpent :

‘ Vis dicam, mea lux, quam te meus ardor anhelat ?  
Cervus ut irrigui fontis anhelat aquas

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. clxxvii.

† *Alban Butler’s Lives of the Saints*.

Nempe venenifero pastas serpente medullas.  
Cervus agit totis hausta venena fibris.'

'Shall I, then, tell Thee, O my Light, how pants my love for Thee?  
As pants the stag to reach a fount where water streameth free,  
When he hath fed on venom'd snakes, and speedeth on in pain,  
As he perceives the poison-taint that works in every vein.'

This legend—the stock allegory of the Middle Ages—is given in the words of St. Augustine: 'It destroys serpents, and after the killing of serpents, it is inflamed with thirst yet more violent; having destroyed serpents, it runs to the water-brooks with thirst more keen than before. The serpents are thy vices; destroy the serpents of iniquity, then wilt thou long yet more for the fountain of truth.'\*

*Verse 3. My tears have been my meat day and night.*—The plaintive cry of the hermit of Warkworth, 'Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ panes die ac nocte,' is carved on the rough lintel of his lonely leafy hermitage, on the bank of the river Coquet (in Northumberland).†

*Where is now Thy God?*

"Where is now thy GOD?" Oh, sorrow!  
Hourly thus to hear him say,  
Finding thus the longed-for morrow,  
Mournful as the dark to-day.  
Yet not thus my soul would languish,  
Would not thus be grieved and shamed,  
But for that severer anguish,  
When I hear the LORD defamed.

"Where is now thy GOD?" Oh! aid me,  
LORD of mercy, to reply,  
"He is HERE—though foes invade me,  
Know His outstretched arm is nigh,"  
Help me thus to be victorious,  
While the shield of faith I take;  
LORD, appear, and make Thee glorious;  
Help me for Thy honour's sake.'‡

*Verses 6, 7. Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me?*—In the dying injunc-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 58.

† *Sunday at Home*, 1883, p. 531.

‡ Henry March, 1823.

tion left to his sons, Vladimir Monomachus says amongst other things: 'Never take the name of GOD in vain; and never break the oath you have made in kissing the crucifix. My brethren said to me, "Help us to drive out the sons of Rostislaf, or else give up our alliance." But I said, "I cannot forget that I have kissed the cross." I opened then the Book of Psalms, and read there with deep emotion: "*Why art thou so vexed, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? Put thy trust in God. I will confess my faults, and He is gracious.*"'\*

*Verse 15. O put thy trust in God . . . which is the help of my countenance and my God.*—When St. Francis of Sales was seriously ill at Annecy, his mother came to nurse him. Madame de Boisy herself told her son of his danger, and reproaching himself with a want of sufficiently deep and real contrition, he at once began to recall every slight sin of omission and commission, crying out partly in the words of Job and David: 'I will speak in the littleness of my soul, Do not Thou condemn me. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death. My sins are ever before me, and by reason of my impenitence the fear of death oppresseth me. LORD, be pitiful, for how grievously have I sinned all my life long! When Thou comest to judge the earth, whither shall I hide myself from Thee? Truly fear hath seized me, and shame hath covered my face!' While Francis was thus pouring out his soul before God in sorrow at his own want of contrition, those who stood around were filled with silent wonder and admiration at the depth of heartfelt penitence, which all who knew him felt was not called for by his outer life, so singular in its holiness and purity; though well knowing that in GOD's sight there is none whom penitence does not well befit, no soul that may venture boldly into that Presence which 'will gladden thee, but will pierce thee too.' As they stood by, they saw the anguish

\* Dean Stanley's *Eastern Church*, p. 313.



of penitence, the sorrow of deep contrition, pass by, and all the fulness of perfect love pour over and satiate that longing, waiting, trusting soul, which, having laid its burden in simple confidence at the foot of the cross, now waited in like resting love for the issues of life or death. ‘He had no choice. “The LORD’S tender Mercy will keep me, whether I go to Him now or later,” he said ; “and longer life will but add to my need of mercy. All the ways of the LORD are mercy and truth. *I will trust in God, Who is the help of my countenance and my God.* He knows the fittest season in which to gather the fruit.” A little later he said in reply to some remark : “Do not let us dwell so much upon trifling circumstances. Let us think of nothing save His Holy Will ; that is our guiding star, and it will lead us to JESUS CHRIST, whether in the manger or on Calvary. ‘He that believeth in Me shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life.’” \*

## PSALM XLIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Longing for Zion in a Hostile Country.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; when Jonathan made known to him that Saul sought to slay him ; moreover, the supplication of the prophets ; wherein also the Psalmist casts reproach upon the Jews.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm was sung in the Cathedral of Milan, A.D. 389, at the baptism of St. Augustine by St. Ambrose.†

*In Church*.—This Psalm is fitly recited in the Latin Church in the Matins of Corpus Christi, as well as (verse 4) in the form of an introit to the altar, though the Vulgate translation is different : ‘And I will enter in to the altar of God, to the God who giveth joy to my youth.’‡

\* *S. Francis de Sales*, pp. 89, 90.

† *Confessions*, ix. 14.

‡ Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 71.

*Verse 1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause* (Bible version).—These words were inscribed on a banner on which was painted Darnley lying dead under the apple-tree, and his infant kneeling by him, with the legend, ‘*Judge . . . O Lord,*’ coming out of his mouth. This banner was displayed by those who had risen to seize Bothwell. They had put forth proclamations calling on everyone to join in delivering the Queen from her wicked and murderous oppressor, and to save the little prince from the slayer of his father. Mary’s army dwindled away, and she surrendered, stipulating that Bothwell should not be taken or slain on the spot. Bothwell fled to Orkney, and escaped to Denmark. Mary was imprisoned in Lochleven Castle.\*

*Verse 4. I may go unto the Altar of God.*—‘My very excellent and most dear Father,—I must tell you something. On the second day of my Retreat in the Séminaire de Saint Sulpice, I got congestion of the lungs. I said to myself, If I give in before the ordination I shall not be a deacon, and a deacon I must and will be. So I held out, and did not give up the Retreat ; but on Saturday last, after the ordination, I was quite *a bout de forces*. I had only just time to get to bed, and they bled me. To-day, Wednesday, I can breathe rather better. One day, during the Retreat, when I was very much upset, I wrote four pages to you ; but just as I was sending my letter, I was seized with remorse, for I had complained in it, so I tore it up. At last I am a deacon ! You will see that by dint of perseverance, little by little I shall attain to the priesthood. *Introibo ad altare Dei*. In truth I hope some day to offer there a heart full of love to God and man.’†

*Verse 5. Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me?*—It may have been like St. Paul’s thorn in the flesh, sent lest he should be exalted above measure by so many gifts and graces ; but so it was, that when seven-

\* *Cameos from English History*, clv.

† *Henri Perreye*, by A. Gratry, p. 63.

teen, a season of temptation came over the young man (St. Francis de Sales), and he began to fear that he was not in a state of grace, that GOD'S favour had departed from him, and that he should inevitably yield to the first mortal sin which tempted him. Vainly he strove to banish the bewildering thoughts with King David's cry, '*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? Put thy trust in GOD. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O my GOD.*'

Assuredly he was not forsaken of his dear LORD and MASTER, but the grateful, soothing sense of His Presence was no longer consciously felt, and his health began visibly to suffer under the strain of mental anguish. Then he resolved, boy as he was, deeply to study what great theologians had written on the vexed question of predestination. But he could not see his way to an entire acceptance of what he read in St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and after much study he wrote the following protest, which seems to have given him comfort and strength :

'Prostrate at the feet of the blessed Augustine and St. Thomas, and willing to abide in ignorance of whatsoever God hides from me, save Christ crucified; believing what I have written to be true, inasmuch as I saw no sound cause for doubt; nevertheless, as I cannot perceive everything, and this mighty mystery dazzles my weak sight, should I hereafter believe otherwise, and should I be condemned to hell (which, O LORD JESUS! be far from me) by that holy Will which St. Thomas believes to set forth the justice of God towards sinners, I would with willing submission bow before the Most High, saying with the prophet: "My soul truly waiteth still upon God."\* "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." In the bitterness of my soul I would cry out thus, until He changed His sentence and answered: "Be trustful, my son, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner,—the dead praise not the LORD, neither they that go down into silence,—I made thee for Myself,—the Will

\* *Psalm* lxii. 1.

of God is thy sanctification,—I abhor nothing which I have made. *Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God, which is the help of thy countenance and thy God.* Go not down into hell, but rather go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the GOD of Jacob. He is not dead, but sleepeth; this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of GOD. Be of good cheer, my lowly child, unworthy indeed, but faithful in that thy hope is in Me, thy trust in My Mercy. Forasmuch as thou hast been faithful in that which is least, ready to accept damnation were it for My Glory, I will make thee ruler over many things. Forasmuch as thou wouldst glorify My Name, even by the sacrifice of thyself—though in truth that were but a sorry praise to Me, Who willeth not the loss, but salvation of men—therefore I will make thee ruler over many things, and thou shalt eternally sing My praises, and enter into the joy of thy LORD.” And to this what else shall I answer, save once more, “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight; my heart is ready, whether to suffer or to rejoice for Thy name. JESUS, I am, as it were, a beast before Thee; nevertheless, I am alway by Thee, for Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Be it unto me according to Thy Word.” “I will not the death of a sinner, but that he turn from his way and live.” In Thy name lift I up my hands. Amen, JESU, Mary.\*

*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? . . . put thy trust in God.*—March 8, 1885, was the last Sunday of Bishop Wordsworth, of Lincoln, at church. As he walked home he stopped two or three times to repeat, with the fervour that those who knew him can imagine, the verses which occur three times in the Psalms for that evening: ‘*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? . . . put thy trust in God.*’†

\* *Life of S. Francis de Sales*, pp. 17, 18.

† *Life of Bishop Wordsworth*, p. 479.

## PSALM XLIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A Litany of Israel, hard pressed by the enemy, and yet faithful to its GOD.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the Sons of Korah, which the people sang at Horeb with Moses ; containing, moreover, the supplication of the prophets of David and others ; and signifying to us triumph and victory against them that fight against us.

*Origin* (Perowne).—We know of no period of Jewish history previous to the Exile, when the assertion would be true that the people had not forgotten GOD, nor ‘stretched out their hands to any strange god.’ Hence, many interpreters refer the Psalm to the time of the Maccabees, and the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. v. 11-20).

The nation was then free from the taint of idolatry, and it suffered cruelly. So far as the internal evidence goes, it is unquestionably in favour of this period. But the history of the Canon is said to be against it.

Gesenius and others have argued that Psalms composed at so late a date would not have been received into the Canon which was finally settled in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. This, however, is an entire mistake. The formation of the Canon was a slow and gradual work, extending over a very considerable period of time, and cannot be said to have been finally completed before the age of the Maccabees. Calvin says with perfect truth that, if anything is clear, it is that the Psalm was written by anyone rather than by David. The complaints which it contains, he observes, are most suitable to the wretched and calamitous times when the cruel tyranny of Antiochus was exercised without check.


*In Church*.—It will be observed that the first and last verses of this Psalm are introduced into the Litany. The first verse formed part of some editions of the Sarum Litany.\*

\* *Housman on the Psalms*, p. 80.

*The Whole Psalm.*—St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Jerome call this Psalm ‘A Psalm of Martyrs,’ no doubt because the victory of David seems to have been gained after much loss of life on his side (see verses 9-12, 22). The spiritual conquests of Christ were achieved after much carnage of the noble army of Martyrs.

St. Paul himself suggests this application by quoting this Psalm as prophetic of the sufferings of the primitive Christians (see Rom. viii. 36, citing verse 22), and therefore there is good ground for the heading of this Psalm in our Authorized Version: ‘The Church, in memory of former favours, complaineth of her present evils, and she fervently prayeth for succour.’\*

*Verse 3. For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword; neither was it their own arm that helped them.*—It was probably with reference to this verse that Achior in his speech to Holofernes, is made, in the Vulgate, to say (Judith v. 16), ‘Everywhere they entered in without arrow and bow, and without shield and sword; for their God did fight for them, and overcame.’†

*Verse 6. In Thy Name we will tread them under, that rise up against us.*—No doubt it was in great measure from this text that those early emperors carried the  on their standards.

‘Christus purpureum gemmanti textus in auro  
Signabat Labarum.’

‘The Name of Christ, inwrought with jewelled gold,  
Adorned the purple Labarum.’‡

*Verse 9. Will praise Thy Name for ever.*

‘Thee, O Name of JESUS sweet,  
Stone from mountain hewn, we greet,  
Living nurture of the soul,  
Man prays Thee to make him whole.

\* Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 66.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 76.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

‘ Hail, O Name, for aye renowned,  
Through the wide world yet to sound ;  
JESU, sweet of Whom to tell,  
Kindle us to love Thee well.

‘ Hail, O wealthy KING of day,  
SON of GOD, be Thou my stay ;  
Lest the Amorites succeed,  
JESU, think on me in need.

‘ This song was made and set forth by a certain grey monk lowly,  
In praise of JESUS CHRIST the LORD, for solace of the holy.’\*

*Verse 18. Nor behave ourselves frowardly in Thy covenant.*—This is a verse on which Bishop Wren prepared a sermon during his imprisonment. In his prison he had prepared sermons and discourses on abandoning the Scottish Covenant (one on the text ‘ *Neither behave thyself frowardly in the covenant* ’), and similar subjects which he now dispersed through his late and his present diocese, while he lodged where he could in London, as he was not allowed to go back to either his palace, or Ely House in Holborn† (see on Psalm li. for account of Bishop Wren).

*Verse 22. As sheep appointed to be slain.*—Edward Dering, at one time Rector of Pluckley, was Chaplain to Queen Elizabeth at the Tower. He was also Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and a Prebendary of Salisbury. He was a man of fearless boldness, and in a sermon preached before the Queen in 1569 he warned her lest she, who had been (‘ *tanquam ovis* ’) ‘ *as a sheep appointed to be slain* ’ (Psalm xlv. 22), should come to be chastised (‘ *tanquam indomita juvenca* ’) as an untamed and unruly heifer (Jer. xxxi. 18). Her Majesty deemed the allusion a little too forcible, and Edward Dering was forbidden to preach any more before the Court. Some time afterwards he was prosecuted for Puritanism before the High Commission, and after a long suit was suspended from all his clerical functions.‡

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 81.

† *Sir Christopher Wren and his Times*, chap. v.

‡ *Diocesan History of Canterbury*, p. 306.

*Verse 23.* *Up, Lord, why sleepest Thou? awake, and be not absent from us for ever.*—There is a Jewish tradition that in the Maccabee period the Levites, ascending the pulpit in the synagogue, daily chanted this verse; but that John Hyrcanus, High Priest and King B.C. 107, forbade the custom, saying, ‘Doth GOD sleep? Hath not the Scripture said, “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep”?’

*Verses 22, 26.*—*Vocem ergo Martyrum* (says St. Augustine) *audiamus in hoc Psalmo.*

### PSALM XLV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Marriage-song in honour of the peerless King.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Song of loves. Not a carnal sentimental love-song, but a celestial canticle of everlasting love fit for the tongues and ears of angels.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by the sons of Korah, in the days of Moses; the manifestation of the Messiah; also concerning the Church and concerning the glorious power of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is evidently a Marriage-song composed for some day of royal espousals. It celebrates the nuptials of a Jewish king with a princess, apparently of foreign extraction; but in honour of what particular king it was written is a matter of conjecture. The older and perhaps the more common interpretation refers it to Solomon’s nuptials with the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. On the whole, the general character of the Psalm, describing as it does the majesty and persuasive eloquence of the king, the splendour of his appearance and of his palace, and the hopes which he raised for the future, is such as to make it more justly applicable to Solomon than to any other of the Jewish monarchs, so far as we are acquainted with their fortunes.



*In Church.*—In the orthodox Church of the East this Psalm (or parts of it) is used at Baptism and Confirmation. In the former Sacrament, the Priest, immediately before immersing the catechumen, anoints him thrice with holy oil, saying, ‘The servant of GOD is anointed with the oil of gladness (verse 8) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’\*

We are about to contemplate the graces of the Church, the Queen and Bride of CHRIST, glorified by means of her union with Him. The Church has recognised this by the appointment of this Psalm for Christmas Day. The Sarum use, the Latin use, the present Church of England use, all agree in the appointment of this Psalm for Christmas Day. In the Gregorian use, it was appointed for the Festival which celebrates the angelic message of the Incarnation of the Annunciation.†

*The Whole Psalm.*—A psalm sung by Columba near the fortress of the king of the Northern Picts, by the mouth of the river Ness. Adamnan, his biographer, says: ‘But another story concerning the great and wonderful power of his voice should not be omitted. The thing is said to have taken place near the fortress of King Brude. When the Saint himself was chanting the evening hymns, with a few of the brethren, some Druids coming near to them did all they could to prevent GOD’s praises being sung in the midst of a pagan nation. On seeing this the Saint began to sing the 44th (our 45th) Psalm, and at the same moment so wonderfully loud, like pealing thunder, that the king and people were struck with amazement and fear.’ Adamnan tells that his voice could be heard at five hundred, and sometimes even a thousand paces, and yet that when near it did not seem exceeding loud.‡

*Verse 3. Thou art fairer than the children of men.*—In spite of the whole phalanx of Eastern Doctors, take this verse of

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 267.

† Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 68.

‡ *The Psalms in History and Biography*.

that dear LORD'S external beauty as man. I firmly believe that a certain type of the Face of our Blessed LORD would not have been so universally received in Eastern and early Western art unless it had possessed some real foundation. Everyone must be acquainted with the general idea of That Countenance as given in Byzantine icons, and crystallized, if we may so speak, in the West under the name of the Dieu d'Amiens.\*

O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies ; but O ten thousand thousand times fairer LORD JESUS ! Alas ! I have wronged Him in making the comparison this way. O black sun and moon ! but O fair LORD JESUS ! O black flowers, and black lilies, and roses ! but O fair, fair, ever fair, LORD JESUS ! O black heaven ! but O fair CHRIST ! O black angels ! but O surpassingly fair LORD JESUS. †

*Verse 4. Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty.*—These words are used when the Priest puts on the Epigonation as he vests for Mass in the Græco-Russian Church. Here are the prayers used at vesting—the whole account is by a very ingenuous writer. ‘The first thing each Priest does on coming unto the Altar of the Church about to be consecrated, is to dress himself, or, rather, suffer himself to be dressed by the Sacristan (generally one of the Readers) in his full canonicals, five in number, which are as follows (each is kissed and signed with the cross before the wearer puts it on):

‘First, the Alb, a sort of frock with loose sleeves, donned with these words: “My soul doth magnify the LORD, who clotheth me in the garment of salvation.”

‘Secondly, the cuffs. The right hand one is laced with these words: “The right hand of the LORD hath the pre-eminence; the right hand of the LORD bringeth mighty things to pass” (Psalm cxviii. 16): the left one with, “Thy hands have made

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 99.

† Samuel Rutherford.

me and fashioned me : O give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments ” (Psalm cxix. 73).

‘Thirdly, the belt. “Blessed be the LORD, who girdeth me with strength and maketh my path undefiled.”

‘Fourthly, the stole. “Blessed be GOD, who hath poured His grace on His priests.”

‘Fifthly, the chasuble or upper garment. “Thy priests, O LORD, are decked with health, and Thy Saints shall rejoice and sing ” (Psalm cxxxii. 17).

‘There is also a sixth article which is called the Epigonation, which is bestowed for long and faithful service, and consequently not worn by the younger priests. It is of no use, apparently, being merely a square, stiff thing made of brocade, about nine inches long and six broad ; it is trimmed with gold fringe, and with an embroidered cross in the middle ; strings are sewn to the upper corners, and secure it to the shoulder of the wearer.

‘The ejaculation used when this is put on is, “*Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty !*”

‘The Russian name for the Epigonation signifies *something worn on the hip*.\*

Milton has imitated the passage :

‘Go then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s might ;  
Ascend thy chariot, guide the rapid wheels  
That shake heaven’s basis, bring forth all my war,  
My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,  
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh.†

*Verses 4 and 5. Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty, according to thy worship and renown. Good luck have thou with thine honour, ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*—There is much reason to suppose that the ceremonies with which the Church fenced admission to the order of knighthood were drawn in a great measure from

\* *Græco-Russian Church*, p. 89.

† Milton, Bk. vi., lines 710-714.

this verse. There was the solemn *girding on* of the sword in front of the altar, the triple vow to defend the truth—the word of *truth*; the cause of widows and orphans—the word of *meekness*; and to be loyal, just and true—the word of *righteousness*; followed by the new-made knight mounting a courser, and *riding in*, or caracoling, fully armed, to display his strength and dexterity.\*

*Verse 5. Ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness.*—‘What love (Henri Perreyve) won from all! Perhaps he was the man whom Père Lacordaire loved best of all the world; it was to Henri that that noble soul addressed the words, “You live eternally in my heart, as my son and my friend.” His exquisite moral beauty was the means of raising, guiding, comforting many a soul; worthy follower therein of his Master, Whose it is to “*ride on prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.*” “*Specie tua et pulchritudine tua intende, prospere procede, et regna.*”

‘His whole life was but one noble, earnest call which sets no lower ideal of life before the Christian than one of absolute moral beauty, the very Beauty of GOD Himself. “Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in Heaven is perfect.” There is but one way to attain this height, either practically or intellectually; and that is, to aim ceaselessly at all that is highest, noblest, most beautiful; and of all the men I have ever known, this dear brother pursued such an aim most earnestly.†

*Verse 8. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.*—When St. Gregory VII., the great Reformer of the Church of the eleventh century, lay dying at Salerno, his last words were: ‘*Dilexi justitiam et odii iniquitatem, et ideo morior in exilio.*’ One of those who stood round his death-bed answered him, quoting the 2nd Psalm, ‘Servant of CHRIST, in exile thou canst not die, seeing that GOD hath given thee the heathen for thine

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 103.

† *Henri Perreyve*, by H. L. Sidney Lear, p. 2.

inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.\*

*Verse 10. Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold.*—Some behold here the Church Triumphant, the Jerusalem that is, the Mother of us all, while others, among them Athanasius, Hugh of St. Victor, the Angelic Doctor, and St. Peter Damiani, see in it the Blessed Mother of GOD. The Holy Eastern Church has put its seal upon this interpretation in the office of Prothesis, or preparation of the Bread and Wine for the Liturgy. After the priest has cut from the loaf the first portion, technically called the Holy Lamb, he takes a second, and saying, ‘In honour of the most excellent and glorious Lady, the Mother of GOD and Ever-Virgin Mary, by whose intercessions receive, O LORD, this Sacrifice to Thy heavenly Altar,’ he places it at the right of the Holy Lamb, and recites this verse of the Psalm.†

*Verse 11. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.*—St. Chrysippus calls this verse and the following the bridal song of the Mother of GOD.

*Archbishop Warham* during the visitation of his diocese visited the Priory of St. Sepulchre, a foundation of nuns, after a sermon on the text *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear.* The prioress confesses that they do not rise to matins in the middle of the night, but at daybreak, because the enclosures of the convent are under repair, and great tumults were heard around the Church.‡

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 105.

† *Ibid.*, p. 111.

‡ *Diocesan History of Canterbury*, p. 222.

## PSALM XLVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A sure stronghold is our GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Song of Holy Confidence.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the sons of Korah, in which David sings concerning the affliction that happeneth to the people—As respects prophecy, the preaching of the Apostles is mystically represented.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This and the two following Psalms are hymns of triumph, composed on the occasion of some great deliverance. I am inclined to think they all celebrate the same event, the sudden and miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib under the walls of Jerusalem.

*In Church*.—In the Sarum and Latin Use this Psalm is appointed on the Festival of the Epiphany. In the Sarum Use it was appointed also for Trinity Sunday.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm is said to be Luther's favourite, and is the basis of his hymn :

‘ Ein Feste Burg, ist unser Gott,  
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen

‘ A safe stronghold our GOD is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon.’

*The Grand Prince Demetrius* in his advance against the Tartars (called the Battle of the Don, 1380), when his heart failed, was cheered and supported by the blessing and prayers of Sergius.

At this battle he sang aloud the 46th Psalm. No historical picture or sculpture in Russia is more frequent than that which represents the youthful warrior receiving the benediction of the aged hermit—Sergius was canonized in 1428. Demetrius himself was ‘almost a Saint,’ in that he went daily to Church, received the Blessed Sacrament once a week, and wore a hair shirt next his skin.

\* Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 71.

He is as dear to Russian hearts, and as familiar among Russian homes, as William Tell to a Swiss, or as Joan of Arc to a Frenchman.\*

*Martin Luther.*—On the Easter Tuesday of 1521 Luther set forth to attend the Diet of Worms. The town council provided a covered waggon for him to travel in, with four companions—a monk, a lawyer, a young Swedish nobleman, and another friend.

At Naumberg a priest made him the significant present of a portrait of Savonarola, whose martyrdom was but thirty-three years old. Luther kissed it, and the priest said: ‘Be steadfast to thy God, and He will be steadfast to thee.’

At Weimar, his next stage, he found emissaries everywhere posting up and proclaiming the imperial decrees for the burning of his works, consequent on his excommunication. ‘Well, Doctor, will you go on?’ said the herald. ‘Yes,’ Luther answered; ‘though they should kindle a fire between Wittemberg and Wurms to reach to heaven, I will go on! I will confess Christ in Behemoth’s mouth, between his great teeth.’

At Erfurth, his old University, the Rector thereof, at the head of a cavalcade of forty horsemen, met him two miles off and brought him in a triumphal procession to his old Augustinian home, where he was warmly welcomed.

When Wurms came in sight, he stood up in the waggon, and began to sing one of his hymns. It is believed to have been his paraphrase of the 46th Psalm, beginning ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,’ which is often called Gustavus Adolphus’ battle-song, and which a French writer terms the Marseillaise of the Reformation. †

Luther and his companions, with all their readiness for danger and death in the cause of truth, had times when their feelings were akin to those of a divine singer who said: ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul!’ But in such hours the unflinching

\* Dean Stanley’s *Eastern Church*, p. 339.

† *Cameos*, 3rd series, p. 391.

Reformer would cheerily say to his friend Melancthon, ‘Come, Philip, let us sing the 46th Psalm.’\*

The *Veni, vidi, vici* of the Psalter.†

I think *Holy Bernard* must have had the imagery of this Psalm in mind when he sketched that striking allegory on the efficacy of prayer. He supposes Jerusalem (the Church) besieged by the king of Babylon (the world), and reduced to great extremities; a faint-hearted soldier, Fear, exclaims: ‘Who shall help us now?’ Wisdom replies: ‘Dost thou not know that the GOD whom we serve is able to deliver? Is He not the LORD OF HOSTS, even the LORD mighty in battle? We will send a messenger to Him.’ ‘What messenger?’ Fear replies. ‘See you not our walls begirt with an armed host? what messenger can find or force his way through such?’ Wisdom calls to Faith and bids him send Prayer, and says: ‘Lo! here is a messenger.’ Prayer has her message, flies up to heaven’s gate, and delivers in her petitions. Back again returns Prayer, laden with the news of consolation and deliverance, that were their enemies more innumerable than the locusts of Egypt, and more strong than the giant sons of Anak, yet ‘GOD is a very present help in time of trouble; He will fight for you, and you shall be delivered.’‡

*Verse 2. Though the earth be moved.*—John Wesley preached in Hyde Park on the occasion of the earthquake felt in London, March 8, 1750, and repeated these words. Charles Wesley composed Hymn 67, in Wesley’s Collection, the following lines of which illustrate this verse:—

‘How happy, then, are we,  
Who build, O LORD, on Thee!  
What can our foundation shock?  
Though the shatter’d earth remove,  
Stands our city on a rock,  
On the rock of heavenly love.’§

\* *Hymn-Writers and their Hymns*, 1866.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*.

‡ *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol i., p. 307.

§ *The Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 385.



*Verse 8. O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord.*—Dismantled castles and ruined abbeys in our own land stand as memorials of the LORD'S victories over oppression and superstition. May there soon be more of such desolations!

'Ye gloomy piles, ye tombs of living men,  
Ye sepulchres of womanhood, or worse;  
Ye refuges of lies, soon may ye fall,  
And 'mid your ruins may the owl and bat  
And dragon find congenial resting-place!'

*Verse 11. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge.*—The death of John Wesley is the death of the triumphant Christian. GOD grant that my last end may be like his! The evening came on. 'How necessary it is,' he exclaimed, 'for everyone to be on the right foundation!

'I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.

We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification.'

The next day he was lethargic. 'There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of JESUS,' he said in a low but distinct voice.

Shaking off the languor of disease, he repeated two or three times during the day: 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS.'

On Tuesday, the 1st of March, he sank rapidly; but he wished to depart, as so many thousands of his followers had, with 'singing and shouting.' He began the day by singing one of his brother's lyrics:

'All glory to God in the sky.'

His voice failed at the end of the second stanza. He asked for pen and ink, but could not write. A friend taking the pen to write for him, asked: 'What shall I write?' 'Nothing,' replied the dying patriarch, 'but that God is with us.' During

\* The late Mr. Spurgeon (*Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 383).

the forenoon he again surprised his mourning friends by singing the rapturous hymn :

‘I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath.’

Still later he seemed to summon his remaining strength to speak, but could only say in broken accents : ‘Nature is—nature is——’

One of his attendants added, ‘nearly exhausted ; but you are entering a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits.’ ‘Certainly,’ he responded, clasping his hands and exclaiming, ‘JESUS!’ But his voice failed, and though his lips continued to move, his murmurings could not be understood.

He was placed on his chair, and, with a failing voice, he prayed aloud : ‘LORD, Thou that givest strength to those that speak and those that cannot ; speak, LORD, to all our hearts, and let them know that Thou loosest the tongue.’ Raising his voice, he sang two lines of the Doxology. But he could proceed no further. ‘Now we have done, let us all go,’ he added. The ruling passion was strong in death ; he evidently supposed himself dismissing one of his assemblies. He was again laid upon his bed, to rise no more. After a short sleep he called those present to offer prayer and praise. They knelt around his bed, says one of them ; ‘the room seemed filled with the Divine Presence.’ A second time they knelt in like manner, and his fervent responses showed that he was yet able to share in their devotions. He uttered an emphatic ‘Amen’ to a point of the prayer which alluded to the perpetuation and universal spread of the doctrine and discipline to which he had devoted his life. When they rose from their knees he took leave of each, grasping their hands and saying : ‘Farewell, Friends.’ Soon after another visitor entered the chamber. He attempted to speak, but observing that he could not be understood, he paused, and collecting all his strength, exclaimed : ‘*The best of all is, God is with us!*’ ‘Who are these?’ he asked, noticing a group of persons at his bedside. ‘Sir,’ replied Rogers, who with his wife, Hester Ann Rogers, ministered to

him in his last hours, 'Sir, we are come to rejoice with you ; you are going to receive your crown.' 'It is the LORD'S doing, and marvellous in our eyes,' he replied. On being informed that the widow of Charles Wesley was come, he said in allusion to his deceased brother : 'He giveth His saints rest.' He thanked her as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. As they wetted his lips, he said : 'We thank Thee, O LORD, for these and all Thy mercies ; bless the Church and King, and grant us truth and peace, through JESUS CHRIST Our LORD, for ever and ever.' It was his usual thanksgiving after meals. 'He causeth His servants to lie down in peace.' 'The clouds drop fatness.' '*The Lord is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*' Such were some of his broken but rapturous ejaculations in these last hours.

Again he summoned the company to kneel and pray at his bedside. The chamber had become not merely a sanctuary, it seemed the gate of heaven. He joined in the service with increased fervour.

During the night he attempted frequently to repeat the hymn of Watts which he had sung the preceding day, but could only utter, 'I'll praise, I'll praise.'

The next morning the sublime scene closed. Joseph Bradford, long his ministerial travelling companion, the sharer of his trials and successes, prayed with him. 'Farewell !' was the last word and benediction of the dying apostle.\*

## PSALM XLVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Exultation at the LORD'S Ascension.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the sons of Korah—concerning the glory of God on Mount Sinai ; also referring to the calling of the Gentiles.

*Origin* (Perowne).—I see no reason, however, why the Psalm should not have been composed, like the 46th and 48th,

\* Steven's *History of Methodism*.

after the defeat of Sennacherib ; and Hupfield is, I think, right in calling it 'a lyrical expansion of the idea prominent in xlvi. 10 (11), that JEHOVAH is high exalted above the nations, and the great KING over all the earth.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed for Ascension Day. In the Latin Use and the Sarum Use it is appointed also for Trinity Sunday.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—Bishop Heber has made this Psalm the foundation of one of the graceful effusions of his pious muse.

### PSALM XLVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The inaccessibleness of the city of GOD.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by the sons of Korah against the pride of the Gentiles ; a hymn of the Church to GOD ; the destruction of the persecutors.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, there is every reason to suppose, was composed on the same occasion as the two preceding. It celebrates GOD's protecting care of Jerusalem, and especially the deliverance of the city from the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 19 ; Isa. xxxvi.), as may be inferred from many verbal coincidences which present themselves on a comparison of the Psalm with the prophecies of Israel relating to the Assyrian invasion.

*In Church.*—This Psalm was used in the Temple service for the second day throughout the year. The victory which this Psalm celebrates, over the confederate forces of hostile powers rising in rebellion against GOD and His Church, will be effected, not by an arm of flesh, but by the Spirit of GOD. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 72.

saith the Lord of Hosts,' and therefore the present Psalm is appointed for Whitsun Day. The Sarum Use, the Latin Use, the Gregorian Use, and the present Church of England Use agree in this. In the two former it is appointed also for Christmas Day and Trinity Sunday; and it is described in the Syriac version as a thanksgiving of the Church to GOD for the destruction of the persecutors.

*Verse 2. The hill of Sion is a fair place.*

‘ Fair Jerusalem,  
The holy city, lifted high her towers,  
And higher yet the glorious temple rear’d  
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount  
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires.’\*

*Verse 3. For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*—‘ No sooner together than scattered. What! Have they so suddenly fled? Even thus shall the haters of the Church vanish from the field. Papists, Ritualists, Arians, Sceptics, they shall each have their day, and shall pass on to the limbo of forgetfulness.’†

*Verse 12. Mark well her bulwarks.*

‘ O none can tell thy bulwarks,  
How gloriously they rise;  
O none can tell thy capitals  
Of beautiful device!  
Thy loneliness oppresses  
All human thought and heart;  
And none, O peace, O Sion,  
Can sing thee as thou art.’‡

*Verse 13. For this God is our God for ever and ever; He shall be our Guide unto death.*—The martyred Bishop Hannington was consecrated to the work and office of a Bishop in the Church of GOD on St. John Baptist’s Day, June 24, 1888, in the parish church of Lambeth.

\* *Paradise Regained.*

† The late Mr. Spurgeon (*Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 403).

‡ St. Bernard.

On that day two missionary bishops were consecrated for foreign work, the other being the Hon. and Rev. A. J. K. Anson, who was appointed to the diocese of Assiniboia.

Shortly before eleven o'clock the two Bishops-designate met the Archbishop together with the Bishops of London, St. Albans, Rochester, Lichfield, Dover, Ohio, and Saskatchewan, in the library of Lambeth Palace; thence they proceeded to the church. As the procession entered the sacred building the Choir chanted the *Magnus Dominus*, Psalm xlvi., the concluding words of which came to the two new Bishops as a message from heaven—to Hannington almost as an omen—‘*This God is our God for ever and ever; He shall be our Guide unto death.*’

In due course the two Bishops-designate are kneeling before the Archbishop, and the *Veni Creator* is sung:

‘Come, HOLY GHOST, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire.’

And when they rise it is with the injunction that they so care for the flock entrusted to them, that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, they may receive the never-fading crown of glory, through JESUS CHRIST their LORD.\* Bishop Hannington met a martyr’s death in Central Africa, and his bones, discovered in a wonderful way, will rest beneath the Cathedral of the See at Uganda.

### PSALM XLIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Of the vanity of Earthly prosperity and good; a Didactic poem.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the Sons of Korah: a prophecy concerning the power of the Gentiles and the doctrine of Divine Judgment.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm is not inaptly described in the ancient Latin version of the Psalms (published with the

\* *Life of Bishop Hannington*, p. 258.

Anglo-Saxon Paraphrase by Thorpe), as *Vox Ecclesie super Lazaro et divite purpurato*.\*

Strange it is that two Psalms so near together as this and the forty-fifth should, and should alone, imitate, or be the fore-runners of two works of David's son; this—Ecclesiastes, the former—the Canticles.†

*Verse 4. I will incline mine ear.*—The *inclining* of the ear is the act significant of ready obedience on the part of man; the *revealing* or uncovering the ear denotes the imparting of supernatural knowledge, heavenly wisdom, and the like, on the part of GOD — Isa. 1. 5. Similarly Wordsworth, speaking of a maiden whose soul is filled, and whose very features are moulded by the inspiration caught from the world of Nature:

‘ . . . she shall *lean her ear*  
 In many a secret place,  
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
 And beauty born of murmuring sound  
 Shall pass into her face.’‡

*My dark speech upon the harp.*—What dark speech? Surely this, that ‘it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.’

‘As the string of minstrel's lyre  
 Yields at length its note entire,  
 When he striketh with the key,  
 So the martyr's cruel straining  
 On the psaltery of paining,  
 Maketh Christian melody.’§

*Verses 6 to 16. ‘There be some that put their trust in goods. . . .’*—Nowhere, perhaps, has this subject (the powerlessness of those who trust in their wealth) been more finely treated than by Massillon in the first part of his sermon, ‘*Sur la Mort du Pécheur et la Mort du Juste.*’||

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 385.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 151.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 384.

§ ‘Adam of St. Victor’ (Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 154).

|| *An Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms*, by J. F. Thrupp, vol. i., p. 288.

*Verse 14. Death gnaweth upon them* (LXX., Death shall be their shepherd).—St. Augustine says : ‘Death is the shepherd of the infidel. Life (*i.e.*, CHRIST) is the Shepherd of the faithful.’ ‘In inferno sunt oves quibus pastor Mors est ; in cœlo sunt oves quibus pastor Vita est.’ And so Keble—

‘Even as a flock arrayed are they  
For the dark grave ; Death guides their way,  
Death is their shepherd now.\*

*Verse 17. For he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth.*

‘Haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas,  
Nudus ab inferna, stulte, vehere rate.†

‘No wealth canst thou carry to Acheron’s pool,  
Naked shalt thou be borne in hell’s wherry, thou fool.’

*He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him.*—The Psalmist teaches us that the rich man ‘shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him’ (xlix. 17). And the Apostle, that ‘as we brought nothing into this world, so it is certain we can carry nothing out’ (1 Tim. ii. 7).

These words require no confirmation : and yet the great Earl of Warwick is well chosen to speak as follows when he comes to die :

‘Lo, now my glory smeared in dust and blood !  
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,  
Even now forsake me, and of all my lands  
Is nothing left me but my body’s length !  
Why, what is *pomp*, rule, reign, but earth and dust ?  
And live we how we can, yet *die we must*.’

*King Henry VI.*, Part III., Act. V., Sc. ii.‡

I remember an *Eastern legend* which I have always thought furnished a remarkable though unconscious commentary on these words of the Psalmist. Alexander the Great, we are

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*.

† *Propertius*, iii. 3, 35.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 290.



there told, being upon his death-bed, commanded that when he was carried forth to the grave his hands should not be wrapped as was usual in the cere-cloths, but should be left outside the bier, so that all might see them, and might see that they were empty, that there was nothing in them; that he, born to one empire, and the conqueror of another, the possessor while he lived of two worlds—of the East and of the West—and of the treasures of both, yet now when he was dead could retain no smallest portion of these treasures; that in this matter the poorest beggar and he were at length upon equal terms.\*

## PSALM L.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Divine discourse concerning the true sacrifice and worship.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by Asaph the prophet concerning the legal sacrifices of the covenant of Moses and their abrogation. In which also GOD warns that if we do not keep His commandments we shall be reprobate before Him, for this reason, that we have contemned the inspired Scriptures.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm furnishes us with no evidence as to the time of its composition, but in elegance and sublimity of language, in force and dignity, it is worthy of the best days of Hebrew poetry.

*The Whole Psalm*.—There is a mystery about the authorship of that wonderful hymn, Dies Iræ, ‘Day of judgment, day of burning,’ which adds to its power as it falls from the bosom of distant centuries, like the tones of a cathedral bell, dropping slow and solemn from the tower at midnight. It is now generally ascribed to Thomas of Celano, who lived in the thirteenth century; but little is known of him.

The first verse of the hymn, ‘Teste David cum Sibylla,’

\* Archbishop Trench.

represents the heathen prophetess as joining David in looking forward to the consummation of all things in the fire of the final day. It has been matter of discussion what passage in the Psalms is referred to, and opinions are divided between Psalm l. 3, and Psalm cii. 26. The starting note seems struck most distinctly in these sublime words, ‘Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.’\*

*Verse 15. Call upon Me in the time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me.*—Robinson Crusoe, when shipwrecked (June 28, 1660), said: ‘These words were very apt to my case.’

## PSALM LI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Penitential prayer and intercession for restoration to favour.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—‘It is a marvel, but nevertheless a fact, that writers have been found to deny David’s authorship of this Psalm; but their objections are frivolous, the Psalm is David-like all over. It would be far easier to imitate Milton, Shakespeare, or Tennyson, than David. His style is altogether *sui generis*, and is as easily distinguishable as the touch of Raffaele or the colouring of Rubens.’†

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—when he sinned and killed Uriah; and as respects ourselves, containing instruction, and *inculcating the duty of confession*.

*Origin* (Perowne).—I see, then, no ground for departing from the constant and reasonable belief of the Church, that the Psalm was written by David under the circumstances indicated in

\* *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 82.

† *The Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 449.

the title.—A Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

*St. Athanasius* calls the Psalm ψαλμὸς ἐξομολογήσεως.

‘*Not of an age, but for all time.*’—This Psalm, written three thousand years ago, might have been written yesterday; it describes the vicissitudes of spiritual life in an Englishman as truly as in a Jew.\*

*In Church.*—And now let us turn to the use of this Psalm in the Church. St. Basil in one of his epistles gives us a particular description of the Antelucan or night assemblies, though but in general terms, whilst he makes an apology for the practices of his own Church against some who charged them with innovations. The words are these: ‘The customs,’ says he, ‘which now prevail among us are consonant and agreeable to all the Churches of God. For with us the people, rising early, whilst it is night, come to the house of Prayer, and there with much labour, and affection, and contrition, and tears make confession of their sins to God. When this is done they rise from prayer and dispose themselves to psalmody: sometimes dividing themselves into two parts, *they answer one another in singing or singing alternately*—ἀντιψάλλουσιν ἀλλήλοις, and after this, again, they permit me alone to begin the Psalms; the rest *join in the close of every verse*—ὑπῆρχοῦσι. And thus, with this variety of psalmody, they carry on the night, *praying betwixt whiles*, or intermingling prayer with their Psalms—μεταξὺ προσευχομένοι. At last, when the day begins to break forth, they all in common, *as with one mouth and one heart, offer up to God the Psalm of Confession*—του τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως ψαλμὸς τῷ Κυρίῳ ἀναφέρουσι—everyone making the words of this Psalm to be the expression of his own repentance! Here we have the plain order of these nocturnal or morning devotions: (1) Confession of sins. (2) Psalms sung alternately. (3) Psalms sung by one alone. (4) Prayer between the Psalms. (5) Lastly, the common Psalm of Confession, or the Peni-

\* *Sermon VII.* (2nd Series), by F. W. Robertson, p. 96.

tential Psalm, in the close of all. This Psalm was particularly noted among the ancients by the name of *The Psalm of Confession.*\*

In the Roman Church it is the first Psalm of Lauds on Monday, and the second in the Benedictine Lauds. It is recited with the other Penitential Psalms in the public expulsion of penitents on Ash Wednesday, in the absolution of an excommunicate person, and it is used as the third Psalm of the Reconciliation of Penitents on Maundy Thursday. It is one of the Psalms which may be used in the Visitation of the Sick, and is appointed for use in the Burial of the Dead.

In the Eastern Church it is sung in the Morning Office; together with Psalm xcv. 6-11 in the Confession of Penitents; also at the Unction of the Sick and at the Burial of the Dead—both priests and laity. It is also recited in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, by the Deacon and Priest together, after the censuring which follows the Cherubic Hymn.

In the English Church this Psalm is used in the Communion Service on Ash Wednesday.

In the Armenian Church it is said at the beginning of the Office for Holy Baptism, and at the Unction of the Sick.

Mrs. Romanoff, in her interesting book, graphically describes the singing of this Psalm in the Liturgy: 'After kissing the sacred picture and the royal gates, he (the Bishop in this case—in others a priest) waves incense round the throne, and then comes out again from the royal gates (which are open all the time of a Bishop's Liturgy, except during the consecration and receiving of the elements), and waving it to the people, repeating, not intoning, part of Psalm li. Never in my life, from the lips of Englishman, German, or Russian, did I hear any portion of Scripture so exquisitely yet so simply, so free from all effort, repeated as those few verses. Completely unprepared, and situated so as to be able to hear the slightest intonations of his voice, I drank in every syllable—tears, to my own extreme surprise, streaming down my face.

\* *Bingham*, vol. iv., p. 569.

“*Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice,*” were the last words I heard, as he turned unto the altar again, and I think I shall never forget them. The congregation glanced at each other in silent rapture.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm has, of all inspired compositions, with the one exception of the LORD’S Prayer, been repeated oftenest by the Church. How often, then, and under what various circumstances, has this Psalm been recited in all ages! For some thirteen hundred years, wherever the hours were kept, it was said seven times a day. Well may St. Augustine say, ‘O most blessed sin of David, so gloriously atoned for! O most happy fault, which has brought so many straying sheep to the Good Shepherd.’

One hundred and fifty-nine Catholic commentators, twenty-seven Lutheran, and many Calvinistic commentators have written upon this Psalm, while one, Alfonso de Tostado, has published a folio volume of 1,200 pages on it. Thus, as Dr. Neale remarks, how dear it has been to the Church in all ages, and not only so, but for those beyond the Church it has its own charm, for the precious ointment of this Psalm not only ran down the beard, and went down to the skirts of Aaron’s clothing, but was diffused even among the other sheep which were not of the fold.

It may be noticed here how many theological expressions have their first origin in this Psalm, and how many great theological verities are therein set forth. “The *Kyrie Eleison* at the beginning; the *clean heart*; the *broken and contrite heart*; the *sinner shall be converted*; and above all, here is first to be noticed the first faint foreshadowing of one of the foundation truths of the Catholic faith—*Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*’ Of the great theological truths, ‘here you have the Incarnation; the calling of the Gentiles; sin, both original and actual; the nature and effect of preaching; grace, both justify-

\* *Rites and Customs of the Græco-Russian Church*, pp. 403, 404.

ing and sanctifying; the Atonement; the Institution of the Church; the Mission of the HOLY GHOST.\*

*Personal Testimony.*—When we come to the personal testimonies of this Psalm, we may truly say that millions of penitents have found in it a well-spring of hope and contrition. Savonarola, the great preacher, reserved it for a time of trouble, and wrote a comment on it while in prison before his death. As Godfrey de Bouillon and his Crusaders rode into Jerusalem, this Psalm was being sung in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Again and again it has soothed and comforted the last hours of the dying.

St. Margaret of Scotland repeated it on her death-bed, as she held a fragment of the True Cross, and waited for tidings of her husband and sons.

Henry V. had it recited to him in his last agony, and he repeated the words, 'Build thou the walls of Jerusalem,' saying, had he lived, he had purposed delivering Jerusalem from the Infidel.

The Chevalier Bayard, the noble and true, as he lay a-dying said, kissing the cruciform hilt of his sword, '*Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.*'

Lady Jane Grey recited it before her executioners, and so did the martyr Sir Thomas More, kneeling down, and in a loud voice.

The noble-minded Egmont, during the troublous times of Philip II., found comfort in its words as he went his way to an ignominious death.

The last words of John Oecolampadius, the Swiss Reformer, who died in 1531, were those which he distinctly, though with panting, breathed for the remission of his sins, using this penitential prayer of David; and so, too, a few years later, died Bullinger, another Swiss Reformer.

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., pp. 181, 182.

The martyr Rogers recited the same on his way to the stake; and its words of penitence and prayer fell upon the dying ears of Arnold of Rugby.

Indeed, the history of this Psalm is the history of the Christian soul, and in it the suffering and sinning of all ages have found the expression of their own unworthiness and the comfort that comes from a true confession.

*'Where sin hath abounded grace did much more abound.'*—For consider how, for nearly three thousand years, that sin of David, that one momentary glance from the housetop, has given occasion to the enemies of the LORD, in each successive age, to blaspheme, down from the Lucians and Porphyries of primitive times, to the Voltaires and Humes and Paines of our own. And yet, no doubt, the encouragement it has given to those who otherwise would have despaired, may be known to the Searcher of all Hearts, far to outweigh the mischief and the blasphemy. So St. Augustine said in his time: so St. Bernard taught in his: so the latest of those who have any claim to the title of mediæval teachers, St. Thomas de Villanova, more than once asserts: so the great Schools which have their rise on the one hand from St. Vincent de Paul, on the other from De Hauranne, differing as far as Catholics can possibly differ on the subject, are nevertheless agreed in this. One can only remember St. Augustine's words, with respect to a still sadder fall, and apply them to this: 'O Sin of Adam, certainly necessary, which merited such and so great a Redeemer.'\*

*John Keble* in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick which he generally used, introduced this Psalm. He commonly began with the first Prayer for Good Friday, 'This thy servant' being substituted for 'This thy family'; then there would be always some kind of confession, very frequently *the fifty-first Psalm* (indeed, I believe, he very seldom, if ever, said prayers with any sick person without

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 182.

introducing some verses at least of that Psalm); then came the prayer in the Visitation Service, and often Collects, special petitions being introduced here and there, to suit the particular case, sometimes in his own words, sometimes in the words of the Psalm, or of the Prayer-Book. When death was imminent, over and above the Commendatory Prayer, I have known him repeat at intervals verses or passages of Scripture, interspersed with short suffrages and ejaculations, extending over a considerable space of time.\*

*Lady Jane Grey*, the Queen of ten days, and but sixteen years of age at her cruel death, found comfort in this Psalm. The only thing recorded of Lady Jane Grey concerning her husband at his execution was, 'that Jane looked from her window as he walked by; then, an hour after, as he was carried back, a corpse, to the chapel. She then wrote on her tablets in French: "If his slain body shall accuse me before men, his blessed soul shall vindicate me before GOD;" in Latin, "Man's justice destroyed his body, GOD's mercy preserve his soul;" in English, "If my fault deserved punishment, my youth and inexperience were worthy of excuse; GOD and posterity will show me favour." The using different languages probably was a relief, in the awful tension of spirit, in her condition. She gave these tablets to the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Brydes, who came presently to lead her to the scaffold, which, on account of her royal descent, was erected within the Tower. She rose readily, and walked forth. She made a short speech, declaring that she had done wrong in consenting to Northumberland's scheme, but adding that it was none of her seeking, and desiring the prayers of those who stood around. Then she and Dr. Feckenham (Queen Mary's Chaplain) together repeated what they could join in, in their full hearts, the *Miserere*, and then the fair, thoughtful young head was laid on the block and severed at one stroke.†

\* *Life of John Keble*, by S. J. Coleridge, p. 559.

† *Cameos from English History* (4th Series), p. 200.



We now have to record how this Psalm comforted two of the martyrs in Queen Mary's reign.

*John Rogers* was the first who, on the score of religion, was burnt at Smithfield. He had formerly, when chaplain to the factory at Antwerp, assisted Tyndall and Coverdale in translating the Bible into English, and in the reign of Edward VI. he returned to England and was made a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral. He was degraded by Bishop Bonner of London, who stripped off, one by one, the priestly vestments. This fact is one well worth noticing, as it was an acknowledgment of the validity of Rogers' orders. All the priests ordained in King Edward VI.'s reign were treated as true priests, and it was not until two hundred years later that the Church of Rome disputed the validity of English orders.

On his way to execution, singing the *Miserere*, he was met by his wife and their eleven children, and with her he exchanged a few last words. At the stake, to which he was fastened with a chain, he was, for the last time, offered a free pardon if he would recant. This he refused to do, and he was burnt, bathing his hands in the flame 'as if it had been in cold water.'\*

*Rowland Taylor*, the good Vicar of Hadleigh, was the other martyr who found consolation in this Psalm at his last end. He was formerly chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer, but on his presentation to the rectory of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, he devoted himself to his duties as a parish priest, and won the warmest love of his people by his saintly character. He was condemned and degraded by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and sent down to Hadleigh to die. The account of his last days is most touching, and, as a modern historian says, 'the terror of death was powerless against men like these.' As he was being led through the streets of London, his wife, 'suspecting that her husband should that night be carried away,' had waited

\* *Cameos from English History* (4th Series), p. 236.

through the darkness with her children in the porch of St. Botolph's, beside Aldgate. 'Now, when the sheriff and his company came against St. Botolph's Church, Elizabeth cried, saying, "O my dear father! Mother! mother! here is my father led away!" Then cried his wife, "Rowland, Rowland, where art thou?"—for it was a very dark morning, that the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor answered, "I am here, dear wife," and stayed. The sheriff's men would have led him forth, but the sheriff said, "Stay a little, masters, I pray you, and let him speak to his wife." Then came she to him, and he took his daughter Mary in his arms, and he and his wife and Elizabeth knelt down and said the LORD'S Prayer. At which sight the sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company. After they had prayed, he rose up and kissed his wife, and shook her by the hand, and said, "Farewell, my dear wife, be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience. GOD shall still be a father to my children!" . . . Then said his wife, "GOD be with thee, dear Rowland. I will, with GOD'S grace, meet thee at Hadleigh." . . . All the way Dr. Taylor was merry and cheerful, as one that accounted himself going to a most pleasant banquet or bridal. . . . Coming within two miles of Hadleigh, he desired to light off his horse, which done, he leaped and set a frisk or twain, as men commonly do for dancing. "Why, Master Doctor," quoth the sheriff, "how do you now?" He answered, "Well, GOD be praised, Master Sheriff, never better; for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house!" . . . The streets of Hadleigh were beset on both sides with men and women of the town and country who waited to see him; whom, when they beheld so led to death, with weeping eyes and lamentable voices, they cried: "Ah, good LORD! There goeth our good shepherd from us!"'

The journey was at last over. "What place is this," he asked, "and what meaneth it that so much people are gathered together?" It was answered: "It is Oldham Common, the

place where you must suffer, and the people are come to look upon you." Then said he, "Thanked be GOD, I am even at home!" . . . But when the people saw his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping tears and cried, saying: "GOD save thee, good Dr. Taylor; GOD strengthen thee and help thee; the HOLY GHOST comfort thee!" He wished, but was not suffered, to speak.

'When he had prayed, he went to the stake and kissed it, and set himself into a pitch-barrel which they had set for him to stand on, and so stood, with his back upright against the stake, with his hands folded together and his eyes towards heaven, and so let himself be burned.' One of the executioners 'cruelly cast a fagot at him, which hit upon his head and brake his face, that the blood ran down his visage. Then said Dr. Taylor, "O friend, I have harm enough, what needed that?"' He now began the *fifty-first Psalm* in English, and one of the guard struck him on the lips, bidding him speak Latin. After fire had been kindled, one man cleft his skull with a halberd, so that he fell dead, having hardly felt the flames. This martyr was the grandfather of Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor—the learned author of 'Holy Living and Holy Dying.'\*

*Count Egmont*, the celebrated and patriotic Flemish noble, repeated this Psalm on his way to the scaffold.

Egmont was asleep in bed when the Bishop of Ypres came to him, and, unable to speak, gave him a copy of the order for his execution on the following day. Egmont was a brave man, and read the paper through without flinching, though in all his nine months' imprisonment he had never expected matters to end thus. He asked if there was no hope, and when convinced that there was none, he uttered some hot words of indignation at the cruel injustice of the sentence, and spoke of his wife and children. The Bishop advised him to put away all thoughts, save those of GOD and the unseen world, and he confessed.

\* *Cameos from English History* (4th Series), p. 239.

Mass was celebrated, and he received his last communion, and asked afterwards what prayer he should say at the last. The Bishop said none was like the LORD'S Prayer. The Count felt himself much comforted by these devotions, but a burst of bitter grief swept over him again as he thought of his wife and her little children; and when the Bishop tried to help him compose himself, he said: 'Alas! how frail is our nature, that when we should think of GOD alone, we cannot shut out the thought of wife and children.' He wrote a dignified and loyal letter to the King, asserting his perfect innocence, and signing himself, 'Ready to die, His Majesty's very humble and loyal vassal and servant. . . . D'Egmont. . . .'

The great square at Brussels, where Egmont had figured in many a grand procession, and excelled in many a tournament, was to be the place of his death. A scaffold stood there covered with black cloth, and on it a table with a silver crucifix and two velvet cushions near. It was guarded by three thousand Spanish soldiers, who prevented any near approach, but the windows were thronged, and Alva himself was at one of them. At eleven o'clock Egmont came forth in a red damask dress and short black cloak, and a black silk hat with black and white feathers, repeating aloud the *Miserere*, and attended by the Bishop. He walked round the scaffold two or three times, and once more asked if there was no hope of respite, and ground his teeth for a moment at the hard, dry, cold Spanish negative; but, recovering himself, he took off his cloak and hat, and gave up the Collar of the Golden Fleece, knelt on the cushion, said the LORD'S Prayer aloud, and asked the Bishop to say it three times more. He stood once more, kissed the crucifix, drew a cap over his eyes, knelt, saying, 'LORD, into Thy hands I commend my spirit'; held out his arms for the signal, when the executioner swept off his head with a single stroke of the sword. Even Alva burst into tears, and so did some of the Spaniards, who had known Egmont as a brave leader, while the French Ambassador whispered that there fell the head before which his country had often trembled.

Egmont's body was visited all that day and night, when it was placed in the church of St. Clara, by thousands of people, who wept, kissed the corpse, and dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood.\*

*Sir Thomas More*, rightly accounted a martyr, and a true defender of the Faith concerning the headship of the Catholic Church, had the words of this Psalm on his lips in the hour of his execution.

The chief charge brought against him was that he had deprived the King of his dignity and title, by denying him to be the Head of the Church. There he stood in a plain woollen gown, his face keen and benevolent as ever, though his hair had turned gray in his imprisonment, a perfect lawyer still, and well able to defend himself. Sentence of death was pronounced. More heard it calmly, and then made open confession, that seven years of diligent study had only convinced him that it was impossible that a layman could be Head of the Church. He was asked if he would be wiser than all the learned men in Europe, to which he replied that all the rest of Christendom was of his opinion. . . . As he was being led out with the axe, with the edge turned towards him, his son knelt down to ask his blessing, as he had so often done from his own aged father; and when the barge reached the Tower wharf, down through all the guards with bills and halberts rushed his daughter Margaret, flinging her arms round his neck and kissing him, with sobs of 'Oh! my father, my father!' He blessed and comforted her, but twice after he had moved on she came back and hung about him, so that the guards themselves were in tears. . . . On the 6th of July he was to die, early in the morning, within the Tower. He was his true self to the last, with the old playful humour and deep devotion. The scaffold was not firm, and he asked for help in mounting it: 'Master Lieutenant, give me thine hand, I pray thee, see me safe up; for my coming down let me shift for myself.' Then he knelt

\* *Cameos from English History*, clx.

and prayed the *fifty-first Psalm* most devoutly, and, as the executioner asked his pardon, he gave it him, telling him it was the greatest of services he was about to do him. Yet even then his last word was to ask leave to take his beard out of the way, 'since it was no traitor ; it had never offended His Highness.' . . . Charles the Fifth was greatly shocked. He sent for the English Ambassador, and asked if it were true that King Henry had put Sir Thomas More to death, adding : ' And this we will say, that if he had been ours, we would rather have lost the best city in our dominions than such a Councillor.\*'

*Pierre du Terrail Bayard*, the *Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, uttered the words of this Psalm in his death-hour.

He was serving under Admiral Bonnivet in Italy against the Imperialists under the Constable de Bourbon. As the siege of Milan made no progress, the Admiral resolved to retreat upon Piedmont, and, as he was wounded, he gave up the command to Bayard, who was in the rear-guard, fighting most bravely until, on the 30th of April, 1524, near Romagnano, a stone from an arquebus struck him on the right side, fracturing the spine. His cry was, ' JESUS, my GOD, I am slain !' and, lowering his sword, he held up the cross-hilt before him. As he turned pale and reeled in the saddle, his friends came round and wanted to carry him out of the fight ; but he said, ' It is all over with me, and I will not turn my back on the enemy at my death.' He was then lifted from his horse and placed under a tree, begging that his face might still be towards the enemy.

His squire wept bitterly, but he comforted him, saying, ' Jacques, my friend, cease to sorrow ; it is God's will to take me from the world, where by His grace I have lived long enough, and I have received more honours and favours than belong to me. All my grief is for not having done my duty as well as I ought.' As there was no priest near, he made his last confession to his squire, and he then besought his friends

\* *Cameos from English History* (4th Series), p. 69.

to leave him, as the rapid motion was great pain to him, and he did not wish them to be taken prisoners. Much against their will, and with many tears, they did this, and the last they saw of him was with his cross-hilted sword before him, reciting the *Miserere*. The brave knight lived three hours after this, and died in peace in his 48th year, treated well by his enemies.\*

*Mother Tèrese de S. Augustin* (Madame Louise de France), Prioress of the Carmelite Convent of St. Denis, found comfort in this Psalm. Her bones were amongst those cast into the great pit by the Revolutionists in the first French Revolution when they desecrated the royal graves at St. Denis. Her biographer thus recounts her last hours :

‘Sœur Raphael, returning very shortly, told the Mother that she might receive the Viaticum at once. At this announcement the dying Princess could not contain her joy ; she thanked the sister warmly for keeping her promise, adding with her wonted humility, “I will show my gratitude when I come to His presence if He deigns to have mercy upon me.” Sœur Raphael could not help exclaiming : “Oh, Mother, how happy you are to be so near heaven, while we have to linger here on earth !” “All my hope is in GOD,” the Mother answered. “I will not forget you. But don’t lose time, let everything be made ready that I may have the blessing of receiving my Lord.” Her confessor arrived speedily, but he still proposed to give her the Viaticum first, delaying Extreme Unction, as he did not think she was really so near death. When she was told that he had gone to the Church to fetch the Blessed Sacrament, her love and joy waxed even stronger, and she began to say the *Miserere*, asking her nurses to say it with her, as well as the Magnificat ; she also repeated several times, “In te Domine speravi, non confundar in æternum.” When the priest entered, bearing the Blessed Sacrament, she cried out :

\* *Cameos from English History* (4th Series), p. 5.

“My Heavenly Kingdom has come. Oh, my GOD, it is very blessed to offer my life to Thee,” and then she received the longed-for Viaticum with intense devotion and fervour.\*

*Mrs. Hannah More* in her last illness (she died in 1833) found much comfort in the fifty-first Psalm. ‘Upon one occasion,’ says the faithful friend who was always about her dying bed, ‘in the early part of her illness I read to her the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, and the Burial Service in the Book of Common Prayer. She was still and engaged, while I was reading, with her hands clasped in devotion. Some of the verses in the Psalms, after I had begun them, she would finish, exclaiming with rapture, “How delightful, how sweet—delighting the taste and touching the heart!” The fifty-first Psalm was continually on her lips: “Create in me a clean heart, O GOD, and renew a right spirit within me.”’

*Fra Girolamo Savonarola*, the great Florentine preacher and reformer, during the interval that elapsed between the examinations of himself and his two companions, employed his time in writing short commentaries on the thirty-first and fifty-first Psalms, throwing all his old energy into their composition. It is worthy of note that the profligate Pope Alexander VI. speaks of these three holy men as ‘those three sons of perdition.’

*Bishop Blomfield* used this Psalm as his nightly prayer for many years previous to his death.

*Joseph Haydn*, the musician, was once asked why his sacred music was so joyful, and he answered that it was ‘because GOD was so good, that he would set the fifty-first Psalm in allegro!’†

*Schuch*, the martyr of St. Hippolytus, near Vosges, repeated this Psalm at the stake, until the smoke stifled his voice.

\* *Madame Louise de France.*

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 126.



*Verse 1. Miserere mei, Deus.*—Nearly every verse in this Psalm has its special history. *Henry Vaughan*, the poet, who departed this life in 1695, desired the following inscription should be placed on his tomb: *Servus inutilis, Peccator maximus, Hic jaceo Gloria! Miserere!*

*Dr. Carey*, the pioneer Indian Missionary, suffering from a dangerous illness, was asked: 'If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text of your funeral sermon?' He replied, 'Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature as I, is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon should be preached, let it be from the fifty-first Psalm and first verse.'

Lima, the capital of Peru, with Callao, its port-town, was completely desolated by an earthquake, October 28th, 1764. The city contained about three thousand inhabitants, of whom only one escaped. This solitary survivor, standing on a fort which overlooked the harbour, saw the sea retiring, then, in a mountainous surge, returning with awful violence, and the inhabitants at the same instant retreating from their houses in the utmost terror and confusion. He heard a cry ascending from all parts of the city—*Miserere*; and instantly there was universal silence. The sea had overwhelmed the city. The same inundating wave drove a little boat near to the spectator, and by throwing himself into it he was saved.

*The Lesser Litany* at Morning Prayer. 'LORD, have mercy upon us. CHRIST, have mercy upon us. LORD, have mercy upon us,' is a Christian version of the Synagogue Prayer taken from the first verse of this Psalm. It dates from the earliest period. The Greek form 'Kyrie Christe—Kyrie Eleison,' each thrice, was retained in the Breviaries.\*

*Verse 3. My sin is ever before me.*—*Robert Southwell*, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, ten times racked, and at last hanged,

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 65.

drawn, and quartered, for the great crime of being a Priest in the Church of Rome, in his poem *St. Peter's Complaint*, illustrates this verse :

‘My guilty eye still seems to see my sin,  
 All things are characters to spell my fall ;  
 What eye doth see without, heart sees within,  
 What heart doth see, to pensive thought is gall,  
 Which when the thought would by the tongue digest,  
 The ear conveys it back into the breast.’

*Verse 6. Behold! Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*  
 —With regard to the Christian character in relation to *self*, as delineated in the Psalter, the deepest prayer for purity which the Minister of GOD is taught by the Church to utter is, ‘Almighty GOD, unto whom all hearts be open’ (*cui omne cor loquitur*), ‘cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy HOLY SPIRIT.’ Is even *that* more unequivocally a prayer referring to one of the most distinct claims of our LORD over our souls, than such verses as these in the Psalms :

‘Behold! Thou desirest truth in the inward parts. . . .  
 Create in me a clean heart, O GOD! . . . Search me, O GOD,  
 and try my heart: know me, and try my thoughts’?\*

*Verse 7. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*—Shakespeare does not so much quote as imitate, adapt, or allude to, and sometimes he imitates the general sense of several passages, instead of modelling his phrases on one alone. An example of this is met with in *Hamlet*, Act III., Sc. iv. :

‘What if this cursed hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother’s blood?  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
 To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy?’

From the use of the word ‘wash,’ it can hardly be doubted but that one passage in remembrance was verse 7 of Psalm li. :

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\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity.*

‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’\*

*Verse 7. Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*—Probably the northernmost grave on the surface of the earth is one made for a member of the expedition of Sir George Nares to the Arctic Sea in the ship *Alert*. It is near Cape Beechy, on the brow of a hill covered with snow, and commanding a view of crowded masses of ice, which stretch away into the mysterious Northern Ocean, where, hung like a lamp over the door of the unknown, shines the polar star. A large stone covers the dead, and on a copper tablet at the head the words are engraved: ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’†

*Verse 10. Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.*—Louis de Bourbon, the Grand Condé, was a lifelong friend of Bossuet, and it was he who pronounced his funeral oration. Bossuet says: ‘The last moments are worthy of record, not because they were remarkable, but precisely because they were *not* so, and because there was nothing done or said for effect by a Prince so well known to the world.’—‘Three times successively he asked for the last prayer for the dying, and thanking his physicians, he turned to the priests standing by, and said: “These are now my best doctors.” His confessor said something of the need to ask GOD to mould his people’s hearts, suggesting the prayer: “*Make me a clean heart, O God.*” Condé remained awhile pondering deeply, and then, turning to the priest, he said: “I never had any religious doubts, whatever people may have said; but now,” he went on, “I believe more than ever. All the great mysteries of the faith grow clearer and clearer to my mind. Yes, indeed, we shall see GOD as He is, face to face”; and he repeated again and again, fondly dwelling on them, the Latin words, “*Sicuti est, facie ad faciem.*””‡

\* *Notes and Queries*, April 11, 1868.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 86.

‡ *Life of Bossuet*, p. 322.

When *Sir Walter Raleigh* had laid his head upon the block, he was asked by the executioner whether it lay right. Whereupon, with the calmness of a hero and the faith of a true Christian, he replied: 'It matters little, my friend, how the head lies, provided the *heart is right.*'

*Verses 10 and 11. Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence: and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*—In the Eastern Church, during the Prayer of Consecration, these words are recited by the Priests and Deacons.

*Verse 12. O give me the comfort of Thy help again: and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.*—The following is the last entry in the diary of *Dr. Arnold*: 'Saturday evening, June 11th.—The day after to-morrow is my birthday, if I am permitted to live to see it—my forty-seventh birthday since my birth. How large a portion of my life on earth is already passed! And, then, what is to follow this life? How visibly my outward work seems contracted and softened away into the gentler employment of old age! In one sense, how nearly can I now say "Vixi," and I thank GOD that, as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust, fully mortified; I have no desire other than to step back from my present place in the world, and not to rise to a higher. Still, there are works that, with GOD's permission, I would do before the night cometh; especially the great work, if I might be permitted to take part in it. But, after all, let me mind my own personal work; to keep myself pure and zealous to the last; labour to do GOD's will, yet not anxious that it should be done by me rather than by others, if GOD disapprove of my doing it.'

It was between five and six on Sunday morning that he awoke with a sharp pain upon the chest, which he mentioned to his wife on her asking whether he felt well, adding that he had felt it slightly on the preceding day before and after bathing. He then again composed himself to sleep; but her

watchful care, always anxious even to nervousness at the least indication of illness, was at once awakened, for finding from him that the pain increased, and that it seemed to pass from his chest to his left arm, her alarm was so much roused from a remembrance of having heard of this in connection with Angina Pectoris and its fatal consequences, that, in spite of his remonstrances, she rose and called up an old servant whom they usually consulted in cases of illness, from her having so long attended the sick-bed of his sister Susannah. Reassured by her confidence that there was no ground for fear, but still anxious, Mrs. Arnold returned to his room. She observed him, as she was dressing herself, lying still, but with his hands clasped, his lips moving, and his eyes raised as if engaged in prayer; when all at once he repeated firmly and earnestly, 'And JESUS said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed,' and soon afterwards, with a solemnity of manner and depth of utterance which spoke more than the words themselves, 'But if ye be without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.' From time to time he seemed to be in severe suffering. The more than usual earnestness which marked his tone and manner, especially in repeating the verses from Scripture, had again roused her worst fears; and she advised messengers to be sent for medical assistance, which he at first requested her not to do, from not liking to disturb, at that early hour, the usual medical attendant, who had been suffering from indisposition. She then took up the Prayer-Book, and was looking for a psalm to read to him, when he said quickly, '*The fifty-first*,' which she accordingly read by his bedside, reminding him at the 7th verse, that it was the favourite verse of one of the old alms-women whom he was in the habit of visiting; and at the 12th verse, '*O give me the comfort of Thy help again, and stablish me with Thy free spirit*,' he repeated it after her very earnestly. She then read the prayer in the 'Visitation of the Sick,' beginning 'The Almighty LORD, who is a most strong tower,' etc.;

knelt herself at the foot of the bed, and altered it into a common prayer for them both. His son had now entered the sick-room, together with his physician, Dr. Bucknill. Meanwhile, his wife, who still had sounding in her ears the tone in which he had repeated the passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, again turned to the Prayer-Book and began to read the Exhortation, in which it occurs in the Visitation of the Sick. He listened with deep attention, saying emphatically, 'Yes,' at the end of many of the sentences. 'There should be no greater comfort to Christian persons, than to be made like unto CHRIST.'—'Yes.' 'By suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses.'—'Yes.' 'He entered not into His glory before He was crucified.'—'Yes.' At the words 'everlasting life' she stopped, and his son said, 'I wish, dear papa, we had you at Fox How' (where five of his children were staying, and where he expected to spend the holidays). He made no answer, but the last conscious look, which remained fixed in his wife's memory, was the look of intense tenderness and love with which he smiled upon them both at that moment. Thus died, as we would die, one of the noblest and manliest of Christian men.\*

*Verse 13. Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*—One (*St. Augustine*) who was himself a notable example of the grace of GOD in converting a sinner into a teacher, cites this verse against the Donatists, who, like the Novatians, censured the discipline of the Church as too easy in the reinstatement of the lapsed, and he did but follow in the steps of a far earlier Christian writer (the author of the Apostolic Constitutions), who quotes the immediately preceding verses of the Psalm in the same sense.†

*Verse 14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.*—At length came the fatal 30th of January (1649), and King Charles,

\* *Life of Dr. Arnold*, vol. ii., p. 282.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 202.

attended by Bishop Juxon, walked to the scaffold, and said: 'I have a good cause and a gracious GOD on my side; I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no disturbance can be—no disturbance in the world!'

There was one of the King's loyal subjects who, we may well believe, envied Bishop Juxon his privilege of attendance on his master to the last; and that was Bishop Wren, who had been with him in bright, early days, when, as Prince of Wales, he had accompanied him on his romantic journey to Spain, who, when the weight of the crown first came upon the Prince's head, had accompanied him on the journey to Scotland for his coronation at Scone, and who since then had been so trusted by him.

Bishop Wren, at the time of the King's murder, was in the Tower, where he had been since 1641 for loyalty to King Charles. He was released by General Monk in 1660, after an imprisonment of eighteen years. When the news of the martyr's death first reached the faithful Bishop, no word of his own grief, of his unavailing longing to see his King once more, and once more kiss his hand, is expressed in the brief record in his diary. It is simply, '*A sanguinibus, O Deus!*' (From blood-guiltiness, O GOD!).\*

*Verse 15. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall show Thy praise.*—The Versicles and the Doxology at Morning Prayer, which have been used from the sixth century, at least as a commencement of Nocturns in the West, are taken from Psalms li. 15, and lxxi. This verse also occurs in the early part of the Greek Morning Office.†

*Verse 17. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise.*—On one occasion when Whitfield was preaching at Exeter, a man was present who had his pockets full of stones in order to fling them at the preacher. He heard his prayer, however, with patience; but no sooner had he named his text,

\* *Sir Christopher Wren and his Times*, chap. iv.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 61.

than the man pulled a stone out of his pocket and held it in his hand, waiting for a fair opportunity to throw. But GOD willed otherwise, and sent a sword to the man's heart, so that the stone dropped from his hand. After the sermon was over, he went to Mr. Whitfield and told him: 'Sir, I came to hear you this day with a view to break your head, but the Spirit of the LORD, through your ministry, has given me a *broken heart*.'

*St. Teresa* quoted this verse in her last moments. 'The holy viaticum being brought into her chamber on the 3rd of October in the evening, she sprung up in her bed, though exceedingly weak, and, among other fervent ejaculations, said: "O LORD, and my Spouse, the desired hour is now come; it is now time for me to depart hence. Thy will be done! The hour is at last come, wherein I shall pass out of this exile, and my soul shall enjoy in Thy company what it hath so earnestly longed for." At nine o'clock the same evening she desired and received extreme unction. Father Antony asked her if she would not be buried in her own convent at Avila, to which she answered: "Have I anything mine in this world? or will they not afford me here a little earth?" She recited often certain verses of the *Miserere* Psalm, especially those words, "*A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*" This she repeated till her speech failed her. After this she remained fourteen hours as it were in a trance, holding a crucifix fast in her hand, and calmly expired at nine o'clock in the evening, on the 4th of October, 1582.\*

*Verse 18. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.*—Henry V. of England, 'the most Christian champion of the Church,' just before his death revised his will, adding legacies to his faithful friends and servants, and then demanded of his physicians how long they thought his time would yet be. They avoided reply till he exerted that resolute will which none had resisted; and then

\* Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.



one of them, kneeling down by his bed, said: 'Sir, think of your soul, for, without a miracle, in our judgment, you have not two hours to live.' His confessor was present, and he devoutly received the last Sacraments, and when they were ended, desired that they would recite the penitential Psalms. All this time he lay still, until when, in the fifty-first Psalm, they came to the verse '*Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem,*' he interrupted them, to say: 'I protest in the faith of a dying king, that, had it pleased the LORD GOD to lengthen my life, it was my full purpose, after restoring peace to France, to have gone forth against the Infidels, and to have delivered Jerusalem from their tyranny.' He then bade them proceed, and soon after the close of the last Psalm passed away in sleep, on the morning of the 31st of August, 1422.\*

*Verse 29. Then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thine altar.*—In the Eastern Church, at the veiling of the elements, as the priest censes them, he repeats these words.

Thus there has passed before us a great and varied host, all testifying to the value and excellency of the *Miserere*. Fathers and Saints of the undivided Church; Kings and Queens; Martyrs and Confessors; Warriors and Patriots; Bishops, Priests, and Religious; the Catholic Church, Roman, Greek, Armenian, and Anglican; commentators, Catholic and Protestant, ancient and modern; courtiers, scholastics, and musicians have but one voice, and that the voice of praise, thanksgiving, and testimony for this Psalm.

## PSALM LII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The punishment that awaits the evil tongue.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David; in which he reproveth every evil temper, and showeth the end thereof.

\* *Cameos from English History*, lxxix.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Whether this Psalm was really composed by David on the occasion to which the title refers it, may be a matter of doubt. We know too little of Doeg to be able to say if the description in verses 1-4 applies to him or not; nor, in fact, does the title intimate that he is the subject of the Psalm. It only points out the occasion on which the Psalm was written, and Saul's name is mentioned in it as well as Doeg's. . . . Whilst, therefore, the faith and courage which breathe in this Psalm are such as to incline me to think that it was written by David, and whilst there may even be an allusion in verse 8 to the sanctuary at Nob, I see little reason on other grounds for maintaining the accuracy of the inscription.

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm belongs to a series of Psalms connected with the persecution of David by Saul (Psalms vii., xxxiv., lii., liv., lvi., lvii., lix., cxlii.), which are called 'Psalmi fugitivi' by Augustine.\*

When *Charles I.* was a prisoner in the Scottish Army, one of the fanatics, after his sermon, ordered the 52nd Psalm to be sung.

'Why dost thou, tyrant, boast thyself  
Thy wicked deeds to praise?'

The King immediately asked for the 56th Psalm—

'Have mercy, LORD, on me, I pray,  
For men would me devour,'

which was sung instead.

*Verse 3. Cuttest like a sharp razor.*—For want, I suppose, of some higher topic, Lorinus, who always will say something, here enters into a dissertation as to the first Christian author in whom we find mention of a razor. It is in St. Sidonius Apollinaris, Lib. 1, Epist. 2. But, as he also observes, *Non refert.*

\* Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 81.

## PSALM LIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Elohimic variation of the Jahve—Psalm xiv.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Song of Man's Disease.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning Ahitophel, that counselled Absalom to pursue David his father, and slay him ; and his wickedness returned upon his own head, and he died—Also disclosing to us the revelation of a SAVIOUR, and deliverance from the people that are without GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is only another version of Psalm xiv., from which it differs in two particulars. First, in the use of the Name of GOD, which here is Elohim, instead of JEHOVAH, a peculiarity which is characteristic of all the Psalms of the 2nd Book. Next in the remarkable deviation, verse 5 (6), from the language of the parallel passage, verses 5 and 6 of Psalm xiv. There seems to have been an intentional alteration, with a view of adapting the Psalms to different circumstances.

## PSALM LIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Consolation in the presence of blood-thirsty adversaries.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—When the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us ?

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he sent Joab and his army to fight with Absalom ; and signifying to us the victory and prayer of him that is preserved of GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, like several of the Psalms ascribed to David in the 2nd Book, refers, according to the

title, to the time of his persecution by Saul. The particular occasion was this : David had taken refuge with 600 men in the fastness of Keilah ; but, warned by Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, that the men of Keilah were not to be trusted, he escaped into the wilderness of Ziph. Here, however, he was very near falling into the hands of the Ziphites, who would have betrayed him to Saul, when, happily, an irruption of the Philistines into the country compelled the king to desist from his pursuit, and to turn his armies in another direction. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, and the additional particulars furnished by the later annalist, 1 Sam. xxvi. 1, from which sources the title is borrowed.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed to be used on the day of CHRIST'S Passion, Good Friday, not only by the Church of England use, but it is also found in the Sarum use and the Latin use. In the two latter it is appointed also for Easter Even. It is also appointed in the Greek office for the Visitation of the Sick.

*Verse 6. An offering of a free heart will I give Thee, and praise Thy Name, O Lord, because it is so comfortable.*

‘O Thou only beautiful,  
 Thou only wise, I thank Thee that at length,  
 Seeing all else was vain, I turned to Thee,  
 And laid my weary load of sin and shame  
 Upon Thy bleeding back, to bear away  
 Into the wilderness of that last cry,  
 “ My GOD, My GOD, Thou hast forsaken Me !”  
 I cannot thank Thee, I can only say,  
 “ Take, dearest LORD, this crushed and bleeding heart,  
 And lay it in Thine Hand, Thy pierced Hand,  
 That Thine atoning Blood may mix with mine,  
 Till I and my Beloved are all one.”’\*

### PSALM LV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer of one who is maliciously beset and betrayed by his friend.

\* Digby Mackworth Dolben.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he mourned for Absalom his son, who had been slain; also a prophecy concerning them that sinned presumptuously against the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—As this Psalm is, in the title, ascribed to David, and as it contains a bitter complaint of the faithlessness of a trusted friend, it has been commonly supposed to refer to the desertion and treachery of Ahitophel, in Absalom's rebellion. . . . The Psalm, however, seems to have been composed under other circumstances, and to be directed at some person of whom we know nothing, beyond what the Psalm itself tells us.

*The Whole Psalm*.—On the 9th of February, Mary Queen of Scots went to the wedding of her favourite servants, Sebastian Pages, commonly called Bastien, and Margaret Cawood, both of whom had been with her in her flight from Holyrood. She went to the wedding dinner, supped at Lady Argyle's, and then went back to the dance—a masked ball—sending French Paris to fetch a favourite fur coverlet which she had left at Kirk of Field. Bothwell was one of the guests, but presently went away, and, meeting his Border followers, they obtained from French Paris the keys of the Queen's chamber, and silently carried into it a quantity of powder stored in bags, moving the Queen's bed, and piling them just under where that of the King stood in the room overhead. But there must have been a mine besides, as the very foundation stones were thrown up. Mary was to sleep in Holyrood that night, but between the supper and the ball she went home to bid good-night to the victim. He had spent the last day of his life in hearing Mass, and then had talked with various gentlemen. When the Queen had parted with him, he bade his page Taylor read to him the 55th Psalm, his favourite, and then went to bed. . . . Two men and two boys were taken out, crushed to death among the ruins, but Henry Stewart's own body was found at five o'clock on that winter's morning, under an apple-tree about eighty yards

off. That of his page Taylor was near him, but neither of them was burned or scorched.\*

Darnley, before or after the Queen's visit, was said to have opened the Prayer-Book, and read over the 55th Psalm, which, by a strange coincidence, was in the English Service for the day that was dawning (Feb. 10th, 1567). Such was the tale; the words have a singular appropriateness: 'Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me: and a horrible dread hath overwhelmed me. It is not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour . . . but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend (verses 12, 5, 14).†

*Verses 2 and 3. O cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall nourish thee.*—George Herbert, in a letter to his mother in her sickness, dated 'Trin. Coll., May 25th, 1622,' gives her this advice: Lastly, for those afflictions of the soul; consider that GOD intends that to be as a Sacred Temple for Himself to dwell in, and will not allow any room there for such an inmate as grief: or allow that any sadness shall be His competitor. And, above all, if any care of future things molest you, remember those admirable words of the Psalmist: '*Cast thy care on the Lord, and He shall nourish thee!*' To which join that of St. Peter, 'Casting all your care on the LORD, for He careth for you.' What an admirable thing is this, that GOD puts His shoulder to our burden, and entertains our care for us, that we may the more quietly intend His service!‡

*Verse 6. O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest.*

'O that gifted and uplifted,  
With twain pinions of a dove,  
To the glorious Cross victorious  
Might my soul fly swift above;

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. clv.

† Froude's *History of England*, viii. 369, 370.

‡ *Izaak Walton's Lives*, p. 284.

Where, 'mid bruising and abusing,  
 JESUS, darling of the earth,  
 Though unbounded, hangs confounded,  
 Made a mark for scorn and mirth.\*

'Oh! had I, my SAVIOUR, the wings of a dove,  
 How soon would I soar to Thy presence above!  
 How soon would I flee where the weary have rest,  
 And hide all my cares in Thy sheltering breast.†

*Verse 7. Lo, then would I get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness.*—Francisco Borja, the great friend of the Emperor Charles V., preaching at the celebration of his obsequies at Valladolid, took for his text, '*Lo, then would I get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness,*' in allusion to the Emperor's retirement.

*St. Francis de Sales*, as he grew older, and especially when he was made chaplain to the Princess of Piedmont, was anxious to have help, so Jean François de Sales, his brother, was appointed his deputy, and soon after coadjutor, with the title of Bishop of Chalcedon. St. Francis was not in his element at Court. 'It is certainly preferable to be poor within the courts of God's House,' the Bishop wrote to Madame de Chantal, 'rather than to dwell in kings' palaces. I have gone through my novitiate at Court, but I should be very sorry to make my profession.' His wish would have been to give up everything to the coadjutor, and himself to retire to a quiet spot on the Lake of Annecy, where he had restored an old chapel, and built a few hermit-like cells. It was close to the Benedictine monastery of Talloires, and Francis told its prior how he looked forward to coming there, and serving GOD with his pen and his breviary, during his declining days. He had several spiritual works in his mind, which his present active life gave him no time to write, 'and I think that ideas will pour down upon me from above like winter snowflakes upon our mountains. *O for the wings of a dove, that I might fly away to that sacred*

\* *Corolla Walraffii*—Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 230.

† *Poems* by the Rev. H. F. Lyte, p. 163.

*resting-place, and take rest beneath the shadow of the cross.*  
 Expectabo donec veniat immortatio mea.\*

*Charles Kingsley*, in a paper on the opening of the National Gallery to the public, says: Picture galleries should be the workman's paradise, a garden of pleasure, to which he goes to refresh his eyes and heart with beautiful shapes and sweet colouring, when they are wearied with dull bricks and mortar, and the ugly, colourless things which fill the workshop and the factory. . . . Believe it, toil-worn worker, in spite of thy foul alley, thy crowded lodging, thy grimed clothing, thy ill-fed children, thy thin, pale wife—believe it, thou, too, and thine, will some day have your share of beauty. GOD made you love beautiful things only because He intends hereafter to give you your fill of them. That pictured face on the wall is lovely, but lovelier still may the wife of thy bosom be when she meets thee on the resurrection morn! Those baby cherubs in the old Italian painting—how gracefully they flutter and sport among the soft clouds, full of rich young life and baby joy! Yes, beautiful, indeed, but just such a one at this very moment is that once pining, deformed child of thine, over whose death-cradle thou wast weeping a month ago; now a child angel, whom thou shalt meet again, never to part! Those landscapes, too, painted by loving, wise old Claude, two hundred years ago, are still as fresh as ever. How still the meadows are! how pure and free that vault of deep blue sky! No wonder that thy worn heart, as thou lookest, sighs aloud, '*O that I had wings as a dove, then would I flee away, and be at rest!*' Ay, but gayer meadows and bluer skies await thee in the *world to come*—that fairyland made real—the new heavens and the new earth,' which GOD has prepared for the pure and the loving, the just and the brave, who have conquered in this sore fight of life!†

A passage in the *Octavia* of Seneca has been referred to

\* *St. Francis de Sales*, p. 240.

† *Charles Kingsley*, p. 128.



as being parallel to this of David. It is in the answer of Octavia to the Chorus, Act V., verses 914-923.

‘My woes, who enough can bewail?  
 O what notes can my sorrows express?  
 Sweet Philomel’s self e’en would fail  
 To respond with her plaintive distress.  
 O had I her wings, I would fly  
 To where sorrows I ne’er should feel more,  
 Upborne on her plumes through the sky,  
 Regions far from mankind would explore.  
 In a grove where sad silence should reign,  
 On a spray would I seat me alone;  
 In shrill lamentations complain,  
 And in wailings would pour forth my moan.’  
 J. B. CLARKE (from Adam Clarke’s *Commentary*).

*Verses 12, 13, and 14. For it is not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour: for then I could have borne it. Neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me: for then peradventure I would have hid myself from him.*

*But it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend.*

‘Alas! they had been friends in youth;  
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
 And constancy lives in realms above,  
 And life is thorny, and youth is vain,  
 And to be wroth with one we love  
 Doth work like madness in the brain.  
 And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
 With Roland and Sir Leoline.  
 Each spake words of high disdain  
 And insult to his heart’s best brother;  
 They parted—ne’er to meet again!  
 But never either found another  
 To free the hollow heart from paining.  
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining  
 Like cliffs which have been rent asunder;  
 A dreary sea now flows between;  
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
 The marks of that which once hath been.’\*

*Verse 15. We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the*

\* Coleridge.

*house of God as friends.*—This verse is repeated by the Jews of Italy when in sight of the synagogue.

*Verse 18. In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day will I pray, and that instantly.*—Here we have the first authorization of the Canonical Hours.\*

This was the custom of the pious Hebrews (see Dan. vi. 10). The Hebrews began their day in the *evening*, and hence David mentions the *evening first*. The Rabbins say, men should pray three times each day, because the day changes three times. This was observed in the primitive Church; but the times in different places were various. The old Psalter gives this a curious turn: ‘At *even* I sall tel his louing (praise) what tim Crist was on the Crosse; and at *morn* I sall schew his louing, what tim he ros fra dede. And sua he sall here my voice at *midday*, that is sitand at the right hand of his fader, wheder he stegh (ascended) at midday.’†

*The Shemonah Esrah.*—The most important of the leading prayers of the Hebrew ritual is the *Shemonah Esrah*, or ‘eighteen supplications.’ This prayer is thought to be of very great antiquity; it is said to have been written by Ezra and the Sanhedrim, in the form in which it has come down to us. But, in reality, these ‘eighteen prayers’ are nineteen, for there is one—viz., the twelfth—which was interpolated at a later age by one Rabbi Gamaliel, and in which the wrath of GOD is called down upon all the enemies of the Jewish race. The *Shemonah Esrah* is to be said by every Jew three times every day, viz., in the morning before breakfast, with the phylacteries on his arm and head, next at vespers, and lastly in the evening.

It is the most essential, and, at the same time, the most popular of all the prayers. While reciting it, the Jew must stand in an eastward position, with his feet close together all the time; he must not allow any interruption whatsoever to disturb him, and at the end of the prayer he must go three

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 235.

† Adam Clarke’s *Commentary*.

steps backward ; upon which ground, in the everyday language of the Jews, the *Shemonah Esrah* walk means the same thing as what the Americans call progressing backwards. It may be remarked that the compulsory recitation of this prayer three times a day is based upon the words of the Psalmist, '*evening and morning and at noon will I pray*'—Psalm lv. 17 (18); and on the passage in Daniel, who 'kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his GOD, as he did aforetime.'

*Verse 21. The words of his mouth were softer than butter, having war in his heart ; his words were smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords.*

Well, when I came to the justice again, there was Mr. Foster, of Bedford, who, coming out of another room, and seeing me by the light of the candle, for it was dark night when I came thither, he said unto me, 'Who is there? John Bunyan?' with much seeming affection, as if he would have leaped on my neck and kissed me, which made me somewhat wonder that such a man as he, with whom I had so little acquaintance, and, besides, that had ever been a close opposer of the ways of GOD, should carry himself so full of love to me, but afterwards, when I saw what he did, it caused me to remember those sayings: '*Their tongues were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*'\*

*Verse 23. O cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall nourish thee : and shall not suffer the righteous to fall for ever.*

Francesco d'Assisi, the founder of the Franciscans in 1210, was an Italian by birth. After an inaugural discourse to his first disciples, he placed them in the form of a cross, and dismissed them with this blessing: '*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall nourish thee.*'

\* *John Bunyan. In relation to J. B.'s imprisonment: written by himself, vol. i., p. 52.*

*Martin Luther*, on his last journey to Eislaben, wrote to his wife: ‘*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, for He careth for thee.*’

*Dr. Neale*, in his comment on this verse, says: ‘*Cast thy burden on Him in the same way that the ship in a storm casts her burden on the anchor, which anchor holds on to its sure fixing-place. And, to my mind, that is the more beautiful sense of the two—a sense which, once entered into, may be followed out in these glorious verses:*

‘And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road ;  
The low reef booming on her lee ; the swell of ocean poured,  
Sea after sea, from stem to stern ; the mainmast by the board :  
The bulwarks down ; the rudder gone ; the boats stove by the chains ;  
But courage still, brave mariners ! the ANCHOR yet remains ;  
And he will flinch—no, never an inch, until ye pitch sky high ;  
Then he moves his head, as if he said : “ Fear nought, for here am I ! ” \*’

*Verse 25. The bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, nevertheless my trust shall be in Thee, O Lord.*

*Thomas Bozius*, a Latin, turns this verse against the Eastern Church, and observes—which is perfectly true—that no Emperor of Constantinople reigned more than forty years, except one who held the sceptre for forty-three, and two who ruled for fifty-six. One can only be sorry that so good a man as *Lorinus* should have given a kind of endorsement to this interpretation. †

## PSALM LVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cheerful courage of a fugitive.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Thanksgiving of the righteous man because he was delivered from the enemy, and from the hand of Saul ; also concerning the Jews and concerning the Messiah.

\* *Ferguson, Forging of the Anchor.*

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary, vol. ii., p. 240.*

*Origin* (Perowne).—According to the inscription, it was composed when David was detained in Gath by the Philistines. But on neither occasion when he visited Gath does the history inform us of any such detention (1 Sam. xxi. 11-16, and xxvii.—xxix.). Hupfield concludes, from the absence of anything in the history corresponding to the title of the Psalm, that the title is not to be trusted. Yet it is, perhaps, more likely on this very account that it rests upon some ancient tradition. A modern compiler would have endeavoured to make the title square better with the history.

*In Church*.—In the Roman Catholic Church, in the Reconciliation of Penitents on Maundy Thursday, Psalms xxxiv., li., lvi., and lvii. are used.\*

It is also the 1st Psalm of the Mesorion of the 6th hour in the East.†

*Verse 1. Be merciful unto me, O God*.—This is the second of the Psalms beginning with the *Miserere*, the fifty-first being the first of them.‡

*Verse 4. I have put my trust in God, and will not fear what flesh can do unto me*.—Dr. Williams, Lord Keeper, Bishop of Lincoln, and Dean of Westminster (who also held, besides, several livings and prebendal stalls, as great a pluralist as Wolsey), was a great enemy of Laud. Here is an extract from Laud's diary which illustrates this: 'Jan. 25th—It was Sunday. I was alone and languishing with I know not what sadness. I was much concerned with the envy and undeserved hatred borne to me by the Lord Keeper. I took into my hands the Greek Testament, that I might read the portion of the day. I lighted upon the thirteenth chapter to the Hebrews, wherein that of David, Psalm lvi., occurred to me then grieving and fearing: "*The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can*

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 259.

‡ C. H. Spurgeon.

*do unto me.*" I thought an example was set to me, and who is not safe under that shield? Protect me, O LORD my GOD!\*

*Verse 8. Thou tellest my flittings; put my tears into Thy bottle, are not these things noted in Thy book?*—This verse has been beautifully imitated in P. Gerhardt's hymn:

'Du zählst wie oft ein Christe wein.†

Compare George Herbert's line,

'I have not lost one single tear.'

*St. Bernard* says, with quaint beauty: 'The tears of penitents are the wine of angels.'

A verse frequently in the mouth of *Archbishop Usher*, one of the best and most learned men of his time, born in Dublin, 1580, driven to and fro through England and Ireland amid the troubles in Church and State, during one of the most troublous times in our history, and at length finding the rest he often sighed for at Reigate in England, 1655, after he had preached the Gospel for fifty-five years.‡

## PSALM LVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Before falling asleep in the wilderness.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—One of the 'Destroy not' Psalms (from Abtaschith, *i.e.*, destroy not).

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when Saul turned to pursue him; also thanksgiving and the calling of the Gentiles to the Faith.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is, in many respects, like the last, and, like that, was probably written by David. . . .

\* *Mozley's Essays*, vol. i., *Archbishop Laud*, p. 137.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 437.

‡ *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 89.

According to the title, it was written by David 'into the cave.' The history tells us of two occasions on which David found refuge in a cave. The one cave was that of Adullam, situate in the face of the cliffs which skirt the low valley of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxii. ; the other was that of Engedi, one of the numerous caves in the limestone rock among the 'Alps' or high pastures of the district on the western bank of the Dead Sea. . . . But this is a question which must be left. There is nothing in the Psalm either for or against the title.

*In Church.*—This is the second Psalm at Matins on Easter Day. On Easter Day the Church sings this Psalm as it were by the sepulchre where her Beloved is sleeping, awaking the morning dawn to call upon Him to arise, and set up Himself above the Heavens, and His glory above all the Earth.\*

In the Roman Catholic Church this Psalm is used (with Psalms xxxiv., li., and lvi.) in the Reconciliation of Penitents on Maundy Thursday.†

*Verse 1. For my soul trusteth in Thee.*—This hemistich was adopted as his motto by Pope Nicolas III.‡

*Verses 1 and 2. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in Thee ; and under the shadow of Thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be overpast. I will call unto the Most High God.*—In the late Franco-German war an English writer entered the church at Bourget immediately after an action. On the altar, which was dented with a bullet-hole, with a bloodstained book on its steps, lay the great Psalter. The book was opened at the 56th (57th) Psalm, *Miserere mei, Deus . . . clamabo ad Deum altissimum.*§

*Verse 2. I will call unto the Most High God.*—The Targumist entered well into both the locale and the spirit of the Psalm

\* Housman, p. 103.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 263.

§ *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 279.

when he gave this curious paraphrase of verse 2 : ‘ *I will pray in the presence of the most high and mighty God, who hath bidden the spider complete in the cavern its web for my sake.* How this paraphrase originated it is difficult to say ; but it furnishes a striking anticipation of the well-known anecdote of Robert Bruce in his Irish cabin when in exile in the Isle of Rachlin.

Delitzsch, who gives a turn to the Targumist’s words which those familiar with the story of Bruce will scarcely relish, that the web, providentially woven, would deceive Saul into the belief that the cave was empty, adduces in illustration two lines of the Christian poet, Paulinus of Nola :

‘ Sicuti Christus adest, fiet vel aranea murus :  
Sicuti Christus abest, vel murus aranea fiet.’\*

*Verse 6. Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens, and Thy glory above all the earth.*—In the Orthodox Eastern Church, in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, after the people have received, the Priest blesses them, saying Psalm xxviii. 10, and immediately afterwards, returning to the altar, says Psalm lvii. 6, ‘ *Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens, and Thy glory above all the earth.*’†

### PSALM LVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cry for vengeance upon those who pervert justice.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This is the fourth of the Psalms of the Golden Secret, and the second of the ‘Destroy not.’

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; when Saul was angry with the priests because they did not reveal to him concerning David, that they knew where he was ; also unfolding to us the doctrine of the just judgment of God.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The title ascribes this Psalm to David,

\* Thrupp, vol. i., p. 327.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.



but without assigning it to any particular occasion in his life. Various guesses have been made as to the date of its composition, but the Psalm furnishes us with no data for any certain or even probable conclusion.

*The Whole Psalm.*—Let us remark the rugged and terrible energy of the hurried images in the 58th Psalm—the young lion, with his broken tusks; the waters hurrying away; the arrow snapped upon the string; the snail melting until it is shrivelled and wasted; the abortion that never sees the sun; the whirlwind spoiling the robber's feast, and sweeping off alike the green living branch and the angry heated ember.\*

*Verses 4 and 5.* They are as venomous as the poison of a serpent: even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer: charm he never so wisely.—In the *Second Part of Henry VI.* Queen Margaret says to the king:

‘What, dost thou turn away, and hide thy face?  
I am no loathsome leper, look on me.  
What, art thou, *like the adder*, waxen deaf?  
Be poisonous too, and kill thy forlorn queen.’  
Act III., Sc. ii.

This beautiful image seems to have struck the imagination of our poet, and not without reason. He therefore makes use of it again, and with singular propriety, in *Troilus and Cressida*, where Hector says to Paris and Troilus:

‘Pleasure and revenge  
Have ears *more deaf than adders*, to the voice  
Of any true decision.’  
Act III., Sc. ii.†

Milton puts into the mouth of Samson a fine allusion to this passage of the Psalmist:

‘Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,  
No more on me have power; their force is nulled;  
So much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd,  
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.‡

\* *Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 195.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 52.

‡ Mant on *The Psalms*, p. 189.

*Verse 6. Let them fall away like water that runneth apace.*

*'Buckingham.* For those you make friends,  
And give your hearts to, when they perceive  
The least rub in your fortunes, *fall away*  
*Like water* from ye, never found again  
But where they mean to sink ye.'

*Henry VIII., Act II., Sc. i.*

In the Prayer-Book version of Psalm lviii. 6, it is said of the ungodly, '*Let them fall away like water that runneth apace*'—*ad nihilum devenient tanquam aqua decurrens* (lviii. 8). As the underlined phrase, so part of Shakespeare's thought agrees with the image which our version would set forth, of the swift descent, or passing away from before the gazers' eyes, of each successive portion of the stream. In Job vi. 15 the imagery is different, the falling away of deceitful friends being likened to the drying up of a mountain snow-stream, which in the day of early heats gladdens the country, and the thirsty traveller, and on the morrow of the drought is gone.

## PSALM LIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer of an innocent man, whom men are trying to take.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Another 'Destroy not' Psalm.

*Contents* (Syriac).—David sang it when he heard that Saul had slain the priests; it unfolds to us the turning of the Gentiles to the Faith, and the reprobation of the Jews.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, whose tone, colouring, and expression have much in common with the four preceding Psalms, is said, in the title, to have been composed by David when Saul's emissaries watched him in his own house. The history is given in 1 Sam. xix. 11-18. . . . But the internal evidence lends little confirmation to the accuracy of the title.

The allusions in verses 6 and 14 are obviously not peculiarly applicable to Saul's emissaries; and all that seems certain

is that the Psalm was called forth by some attack upon the life of its author.

*Verse 5.*—At the end of the comments on this verse, in the *Commentary on the Psalms* by Doctors Neale and Littledale, we have these words: ‘At this point the Commentary of John Mason Neale ceases. The pen, fallen from the hand of the great scholar, poet and divine, is henceforth taken up by the weak fingers of his disciple, R. F. L.’

*Verse 7.* ‘Behold they speak with their mouth, and swords are in their lips, for who doth hear?’—‘I will speak daggers,’ says Hamlet, Act III., Sc. ii., using a metaphor which the Bible has made familiar to us. ‘Swords are in their lips,’ says the Psalmist; and again, ‘Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words’ (lxiv. 3). And no doubt there are many cases in which this is found by experience to be too true. For instance:

‘Tis slander:  
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue  
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie  
All corners of the world; kings, queens, and states,  
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave  
This viperous slander enters.’

*Cymbeline*, Act III., Sc. iv.\*

*Verse 10.* ‘The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies’ (Bible version).—This is a favourite passage with Augustine in his arguments against the Pelagians. He often alleges it in proof of the doctrine that the grace of God precedes all merit of man. And here he observes: ‘Quid in me invenisti nisi sola peccata? . . . Antequam aliquid boni ego faciam, misericordia ejus praeveniet me. Quid hic respondebit infelix Pelagius?’†

*Verse 15.* ‘They will run here and there for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.’—S. Albert Magnus dryly observes, ‘This verse may also be read against archdeacons, who are

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 234.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 453.

literally scattered through the episcopate, not to preach, but to eat, and who murmur if they are not provided for according to their fancy. Not like Eliezer, who says (Gen. xxiv. 33), "I will not eat till I have told mine errand." And when he had finished he was content with a little; for it is found in the same place, "And there was bread set before him" (Gen. xxiv. 33, Vulg.)\*

### PSALM LX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Drill Psalm after a lost battle.

*Contents* (Syriac).—David sang it when he said, 'If I fall into the hands of Saul, I die,' and he sought for safety in flight, and also they that were with him. Moreover it maketh known to us the conversion of the Gentiles, and the termination of the Jewish dispensation.

*Origin* (Perowne).—According to the title, this Psalm was composed in memory of Joab's victory over the Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

Nothing is said in the scanty record, in 2 Samuel viii., of the circumstances which led to this war; but it is probable that whilst David was engaged in his first Syrian campaign, the Edomites turned the opportunity to good account, and threatened to, if they did not actually, invade Palestine.

The King was compelled hastily to detach Joab and some part of his forces to meet these new enemies . . . a severe battle was fought in the Valley of Salt, near the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, in which the Edomites were defeated with great slaughter . . . it was in the interval between the first great battle and the final subjugation of the country that this Psalm, as Hengstenberg and others suppose, was written. . . . On the other hand, it opens with a wail of lamentation which implies that the arms of Israel had met

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 289.

with some terrible reverses, or that the State had been shaken by intestine disorders.

But we have no record, in the history, of any such catastrophe at the time. On the contrary, David seems to have been at the very height of his glory, and to have been everywhere victorious. . . . To say the least, therefore, it is not certain that the Psalm belongs to the age of David.

*Verse 6. 'O God, Thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad, Thou hast been displeas'd : O turn Thee unto us again.'*—About Christmas, 686, being persuaded that his end was drawing near, Cuthbert laid aside his episcopal function and returned to end his days in the beloved solitude of Farne (an island, one of a group which lie off the coast about six miles from Holy Island). Nearly three months he lived on the island at that wintry and inclement season. In two months he was sufficiently strong to be able to leave his cell to meet the brethren who came to see him; but about the end of February he became so much worse that he could no longer do so. It was not long before the end came. On Tuesday, March 19, 687, Walstod (one of the two brethren whom the community had prevailed upon him to accept as companions) came out of the cell, and told the Abbot of Lindisfarne (Herefrid), who frequently visited the saint, that the Bishop desired to see him. Herefrid found him in the oratory, lying in a corner before the altar. He sat down by his side and inquired what farewell message he had to send to the brethren. Cuthbert was now very weak, and could not speak long at a time. . . . Having finished his broken and interrupted instructions, Cuthbert spent the rest of the day in looking forward to his end and the future glory. The night he gave to watching and prayer. About midnight he received the last rites of religion from Herefrid, and strengthened himself for his passage by partaking of the Body and Blood of the LORD. Then, lifting up his eyes and stretching out his hand towards Heaven, in the early morning he breathed out his soul to GOD, on the Wednesday after

Mid-Lent Sunday, 20th March, 687. Herefrid immediately communicated the sad news to the two brethren who were watching outside. At that moment they were saying the Psalms of the office for matins, and had come to the one beginning: '*Deus repulisti nos et destruxisti nos; iratus es, et misertus es robis,*' '*O God, Thou hast cast us out.*' According to an arrangement previously agreed upon, one of them lighted two torches, went up to an elevated spot, and made a signal to the brethren at Lindisfarne that the blessed spirit of their father had passed to GOD. The brother who was watching at Lindisfarne saw the signal, and hastened to the church; they were assembled for matins, and at the moment the messenger entered the choir were singing the same Psalm, '*Deus repulisti.*' The coincidence was afterwards remembered as if it had been prophetic of troubles—of what precise nature we are not informed—which followed immediately on the death of the Bishop.\*

*Verse 4.* '*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee*' (Bible version).—The delivery of a banner into the hands of a suppliant was a sure pledge of protection in the East.†

*Verse 8.* '*Over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*'—The casting of a shoe is still an emblem of subjugation in India and Abyssinia.‡

*Verse 12.* '*Through God will we do great acts, for it is He that shall tread down our enemies.*'—Wherefore the Holy Eastern Church speaks thus in her Great Compline, that defiance of the infidel, which she chants as a war-song in Lent alone.

'God is with us, know it ye nations, and be made weak.

*For God is with us.*

Hear ye, to the ends of the earth.

*For God is with us.*

\* *Diocesan History of Durham*, p. 59.

† *Observations on Divers Passages of Scripture*, by Thomas Harmer.

‡ Tholuck.

Though ye were strong, ye were made weak.

*For God is with us.*

And if again ye shall strengthen yourselves, again shall ye be weakened.

*For God is with us.*

And if ye shall devise any counsel, the Lord will scatter it.

*For God is with us.*

And if ye speak any word, it shall not abide in you.

*For God is with us.*

And we will not be afraid of your fear, neither will we be troubled.

*For God is with us.\**

### PSALM LXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled king on his way back to the throne.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; when Jonathan made known to him the purpose of Saul, who was seeking his destruction ; and spiritually signifying supplication with thanksgiving.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The title of this Psalm ascribes it to David, but does not say under what circumstances it was composed (though, according to the Syriac version, it was when Jonathan revealed to him Saul's design to slay him). There is no reason to doubt that David was the author, and the language of verse 2 renders it probable that it was written when he was shut out from the sanctuary, and, therefore, either during his persecutions by Saul, or during the rebellion of Absalom ; verse 4 makes the latter the more probable occasion. At a time when the Tabernacle had itself no settled resting-place, the wish to dwell and abide in it, as Delitzsch has rightly remarked, is not so natural as afterwards, when the Ark was fixed on Mount Zion.

*In Church*.—This Psalm was sung at daily Matins in the

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 304.

earliest ages of the Church; see the Apostolic Constitutions: thus, too, Athanasius and other Fathers.\*

It is also appointed in the Greek Church, in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick.†

*Verse 3. O set me up upon the rock that is higher than I.*—This verse is inscribed in Alderley Church, on the tablet erected to the memory of Catherine Stanley, the mother of Dean Stanley. Dean Stanley says: ‘That 5th of March’ (the day of her death) ‘was the Ash Wednesday of 1862, when her surviving son was absent in attendance on the Prince of Wales, on a journey through Egypt and Palestine. On another Ash Wednesday, the 1st of March, 1876, he stood by the deathbed of her by whose supporting love he had been comforted after his mother’s death, and whose character, although cast in another mould, remains to him, with that of his mother, the brightest and most sacred vision of his earthly experience.’‡

In the *Memoir of Edward* (Bishop of Norwich) and *Catherine Stanley* there occur the following uses of certain Psalms. The first illustration is taken from this Psalm:

The sense of the effect of religion in elevating the mind and character above external circumstances:

‘*O set me up upon the rock that is higher than I.*’—Psalm lxi. 3.

Thankfulness for the vicissitudes of happiness and sorrow:

‘*O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou showed me! And yet didst Thou turn and refresh me, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again.*’—Psalm lxxi. 18.

The unexpected growth of good out of evil:

‘*Unto the ungodly there ariseth up light in the darkness.*’—Psalm cxii. 4.

\* The Speaker’s *Commentary*, p. 306.

† *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 261.

‡ *Memoir of Edward and Catherine Stanley*, by their son, Dean Stanley.



The uncertainty and mystery of the mode of the Divine nature combined with the certainty of its moral perfection :

*'Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat.'*—Psalm xcvi. 2.

The effect of criticism on the Bible :

*'Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and' yet 'Thy servant loveth it.'*—Psalm cxix. 140.

The gradual formation of character :

*'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'*—Proverbs iv. 18.\*

## PSALM LXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Resignation to GOD when foes crowd in upon me.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—From the sixfold use of the word AC, or ONLY, we have been wont to call it THE ONLY PSALM.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by Jeduthun the Psalmist. In its literal sense it is said to contain an allusion to the following narrative : When the young men of Abner and the young men of David were playing together and slew each other, one of those that pertaineth to Abner slew the youngest brother of the son of Zeruah, viz., the brother of Joab. And Joab kept it *in mind* a long time, and slew Abner, a mighty man in the time of Saul. And in its spiritual sense it indicates to us now the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin, if we repent and confess.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm and the 39th are Psalms which, though very different in their subject, yet are so similar in the phraseology which they employ, that there can be no doubt that they were written by the same author.

\* *Memoir*, p. 326.

*The Whole Psalm.*—St. Athanasius says of this Psalm : ‘Against all attempts upon thy body, thy state, thy soul, thy fame, temptations, tribulations, machinations, defamations, say this Psalm.’

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed for Trinity Sunday in the Latin and Sarum use.\*

*Verse 1. My soul truly waiteth upon God.*—Forty-three years ago, four men were left to starve on an Antarctic isle, whither they had gone in the hope of preaching the Gospel to some of the lowest savages which the earth contains. Three of them slowly died of hunger; the fourth, Captain Allan Gardiner, survived them in a prolongation of agony. When the winter was over, a ship touched on that bleak shore, and his remains were found near the entrance of the cave which had given rude shelter. Can you imagine a lot more lonely or horrible? Here was a noble and holy man, filled with the burning and the sole desire to make known the love of JESUS CHRIST to the miserable Fuegians, and GOD allowed him to starve to death in lonely anguish on a desert isle. And did his faith fail in that extremity of horror? Not for one moment. At the entrance of the cave, in red paint, he had painted a rude hand pointing downward, and under it the words, ‘*My soul, trust thou still upon God.*’ The diary containing his last words, as for weeks he slowly starved to death, is written with the sunshine of joy and peace in God. ‘Asleep or awake,’ said one of his starving companions, ‘I am happy beyond the poor compass of language to tell.’ The very last words which Allan Gardiner wrote in his diary were these: ‘I know not how to thank my gracious God for His marvellous lovingkindness.’ Many a man, many a king, many a prince, many a millionaire, might give all that he had ever done, and all he had ever possessed, to die a death like that. And did these saintly heroes die in vain? No! Their very deaths brought about that Patagonian mission on which their labours had been spent.†

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 92.

† *The Guardian*.

## PSALM LXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Morning hymn of one who is persecuted, in a waterless district.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The distinguishing word of this Psalm is 'EARLY.' When the bed is softest we are most tempted to rise at lazy hours; but when comfort is gone, and the couch is hard, if we rise earlier to seek the LORD, we have much for which to thank the wilderness.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David; literally, when he said to the King of Moab, My father and my mother abode with thee when they fled from the face of Saul; and, in like manner, I have fled unto thee. And by us, now, it is understood to be the thanksgiving of the man that is perfect before GOD, in the Spirit. *Blessed are they that thirst after righteousness*, etc.

*Origin* (Perowne).—In many respects the Psalm bears a striking resemblance to Psalm lxi., and both Ewald and Maurer observe that the two must clearly be referred to the same circumstances and the same author. That the author was David I see no reason to doubt. . . . According to the inscription, it was written in the wilderness of Judah, which would seem to intimate that it was written during the persecution of Saul (*cf.* 1 Sam. xxii. 6). But against this is verse 11, where David, as in lxi., speaks of himself in the third person, and speaks of himself as a king. Hence it is more probable that the Psalm was composed when he was on the other side of the Jordan, in his flight from Absalom.

*In Church*.—According to the Apostolical Constitutions, Morning Prayer began with Psalm lxiii. The first verse suggests it as appropriate. St. Chrysostom and Cassian also mention it as serving this purpose; and St. Athanasius commends it as suitable likewise for early morning devotions.

This Psalm is the 3rd Psalm of the Greek Hexapsalmus, said at the Morning Office. The last two verses are repeated. It is also the 3rd Psalm at Sunday Lauds in the Western Office; again, it is the 2nd Psalm after the 51st at Monday Lauds; the 4th in the Benedictine Sunday Lauds.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—An old English divine, Dr. Donne, once Dean of St. Paul's, says: 'As the whole Book of Psalms is, *oleum effusum* (as the spouse speaks of the name of CHRIST), an ointment poured out upon all sorts of sores, a cerecloth that supple all bruises, a balm that searches all wounds; so are there some certain Psalms that are imperial Psalms, that command over all affections, and spread themselves over all occasions—catholic, universal Psalms, that apply themselves to all necessities. This is one of these; for, of those constitutions which are called apostolical, one is that the Church should meet every day to sing this Psalm.†

*The Doctrine of Grace* is marvellously stated in the 63rd Psalm:

' My soul followeth hard after Thee ;  
Thy right hand upholdeth me.'

The well-known line,

' Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,'

does not adequately express it. All controversies on Grace and Free-will are hushed and folded up within it. The soul is always clinging, yet ever moving; always holding, yet always held. We grasp, or we should not have the hearts of children; but we are safe, as the child is safe, not on account of its tiny grasp, but because it is held by the strength of a protecting love.‡

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 263.

† *Sermons on Psalms*, by W. J. Stracey, p. 89.

‡ *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 218.

*Verse 7. Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking?*—On this verse Dr. Donne observes: ‘Now, as the spirit and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm, so is the spirit and soul of the whole Psalm contracted into this verse.’

## PSALM LXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Invocation of Divine protection against the falseness of men.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Composed by David, when the prophet Gad warned him, saying, Abide not in the hold, for Saul seeketh to kill thee; and, as respects ourselves, in a spiritual sense, the triumph of the Agonists, and the instruction of them: that fear GOD, and victory in battle.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The Psalm is said to be David’s, and Ewald observes that it so nearly resembles Psalm vii. that one might be tempted to ascribe it to David, did not a careful comparison contradict such a supposition; the minute criticism may very well be distrusted, and the title suffered to stand.

*The Whole Psalm*.—There is a Jewish tradition in the Midrash that this Psalm was prophetic of Daniel, and that it was recited by him in the lions’ den. It unquestionably contains several passages peculiarly apposite to that event.\*

In many of our English cathedrals, over the stall of each Prebendary, the numbers of certain Psalms are still painted. The reason, some of us will be glad to hear from Donne in a sermon on the 64th Psalm, which he entitles, ‘The third of my Prebend Sermons upon my five Psalms.’ Our predecessors

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 333.

in the service of this Church have declared such devotion to this particular Book of Scripture as that, by distributing the one hundred and fifty Psalms into thirty portions (of which number the body of our Church consists), and assigning to every one of those thirty persons his five Psalms, to be said by him every day, every day GOD receives from us (howsoever we be divided from one another in place) the sacrifice of praise in the whole Book of Psalms. And though we may be absent from this quire, yet, wheresoever dispersed, we make up a quire in this service of saying over all the Psalms every day. As the whole Book is manna, so these five Psalms are my gomer, which I am to fill and empty every day of the manna.\*

*This Psalm is a Manual* for those who are debarred by sickness, or any other cause, from the privilege of public worship and communion in the Church of GOD.†

*Verse 1. Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*—This petition is embodied in both our Morning and Evening Prayer. ‘That we, surely trusting in Thy defence, *may not fear the power of any adversaries*’ (Morning Prayer, 2nd Collect). ‘That we, being *defended from the fear of our enemies*, may pass our time in rest and quietness’ (Evening Prayer, 2nd Collect).‡

*Verse 8 (Bible version). So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves.*

‘ In these cases,

We still have judgment here, that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison’d chalice  
To our own lips.’§

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 94.

† Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 94.

‡ Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 194.

§ Shakespeare.

## PSALM LXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving song for victory and blessings bestowed.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Lyrical Poem.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—literally, when he brought up the Ark of God to Zion; and, as respects ourselves, spiritually, containing an allusion to the preaching of the Apostles, who converted the Gentiles by the proclamation of the Gospel.

*Origin* (Perowne).—We can hardly doubt that this Psalm was composed on the occasion of an abundant harvest, and was intended to be sung as a hymn of thanksgiving by the whole congregation gathered before God in Zion.

From the allusions in verses 7 and 8, it would seem that the time was one of great political convulsion, of a shaking of nations and kingdoms, in the midst of which God had manifested His goodness to His people.

This twofold character of the Psalm is best explained by referring it to the time immediately subsequent to the destruction of the Assyrian army before Jerusalem. An abundant harvest, it had been promised (Isa. xxxvii. 30), should follow that event; and the fields so lately trampled beneath the feet of the invader seemed now, with their waving crops, to sing and shout for joy. The title of the Psalm assigns it to David, but it is impossible to read it and not to feel that it bears every evidence of a later date. So strong, indeed, is this evidence, that even Delitzsch, who is usually a strenuous supporter of the Inscriptions, abandons the tradition here, and, with Ewald, thinks that the Psalm was written about the time of Sennacherib's overthrow (*i.e.*, *circa* 712 B.C.).

*In Church.*—Let us read the 65th Psalm with the application which has long been given to it by the deepest Christian spirits. For that Psalm forms part of the Office for the Dead in most of the Western services. The second verse is its Antiphon :

‘O Thou that hearest prayer,  
Unto Thee shall all flesh come.’

He is ‘the Hope of all the ends of the earth,’ of those who rest beneath the sod in lands that are far away. A cry rises over the furrowed graves. Faith looks for a time

‘When with joy the hills shall be girded.’

The song rises :

‘O blessed is the land of GOD,  
Where saints abide for ever.’

This interpretation seems to be justified by the teaching of our LORD and of St. Paul.\*

In the Holy Eastern Church at the Burial of the Dead. At the Burial of the Laity it is the Antiphon to the Gospel (Psalm lxv. 4), and also at the Burial of Priests.†

*The Whole Psalm.*—The Commentary of Gerhohus upon this Psalm is a powerful treatise on the corruptions of the Church in his day, extending to one hundred and seventy-six chapters or sections, of great historical interest, but contributing only at rare intervals, and then most slenderly, to the elucidation of the text, which is used throughout more as furnishing mottoes than as matter for exposition.‡

*Verse 1.* *Thou, O God, art praised in Sion ; and unto Thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.*—St. Brendan was a

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 198.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 275.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 343.



monk who, in 559 A.D., founded the Abbey of Clonfert (in the Barony of Longford, Co. Galway). He was a man famous for his great abstinence and virtues, and the father of 3,000 monks. There is a famous legend of St. Brendan and his seven years' voyage in search of the 'land promised to the Saints.'

The tale was so popular in the Middle Ages, that it appears in different shapes in almost every early European lay. It was not only the delight of monks, but it stirred up to wild voyages many a secular man in search of St. Brendan's isle, 'which is not found when it is sought,' but was said to be visible at times from Palma in the Canaries.' . . . The whole tale, from whatever dim reports of fact they may have sprung, is truly 'a monkish Odyssey, and nothing more. It is a dream of the hermit's cell. No woman, no city, no nation, is ever seen during the seven years' voyage.' Ideal monasteries and ideal hermits people the 'deserts of the oceans.' All beings therein (save demons and cyclops) are Christians, even to the very birds, and keep the festivals of the Church as eternal laws of nature. The voyage succeeds, not by seamanship or geographic knowledge, nor even by chance, but by the miraculous prescience of the saint, or those whom he meets; and the wanderings of Ulysses or of Sinbad are rational and human in comparison with those of St. Brendan.

Among his travels he came to an 'isle, very grassy and wooded, and full of flowers, with a beautiful fountain'; over it was a huge tree of wonderful breadth, but no great height, covered with snow-white birds, so that its leaves and boughs could scarce be seen. . . . Then one of those birds flew off from the tree, and his wings sounded like bells over the boat. And he sat on the prow and spread his wings joyfully, and looked quietly on St. Brendan; and when the man of God questioned that bird, it told how they were of the spirits which fell in the great ruin of the old enemy, not by sin or by consent, but predestined by the piety of God to fall with those with whom they were created. But they suffered no punishment, only they could not, in part, behold the presence of God. They

wandered about this world, like other spirits of the air, and firmament, and earth. But on holy days they took these shapes of birds, and praised their Creator in that place. Then the bird told him how he and his monks had wandered one year already, and should wander for six more, and every year should celebrate their Easter in that place, and after find the Land of Promise, and so flew back to its tree.

And when the eventide was come, the birds began all with one voice to sing, and clap their wings, saying: '*Thou, O Lord, art praised in Sion, and unto Thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.*' And always they repeated that verse for an hour, and their melody and the clapping of wings was like music which drew tears by its sweetness. And when the man of GOD wakened his monks at the third watch of the night with the verse, 'Thou shalt open my lips, O LORD,' all the birds answered, 'Praise the LORD, all angels, praise Him, all His virtues' (cxlviii. 2). And when the dawn shone they sang again, 'The splendour of the LORD GOD is over us'; and at the third hour, 'Sing psalms to our GOD, sing; sing to our King, sing with wisdom' (xlvii. 6). And at the sixth hour, 'The LORD hath lifted up the light of His countenance upon us, and had mercy on us' (iv. 6). And at the ninth hour, 'Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity' (cxxxiii. 1). So day and night these birds gave praise to GOD. St. Brendan, therefore, seeing these things, gave thanks to GOD for all His marvels, and the brethren were refreshed with that spiritual food till the octave of Easter.\*

*Verse 3. My misdeeds prevail against me, O be thou merciful unto our sins.*—The old Scottish version of this verse in their singing Psalms is most execrable:

'Iniquities I must confess,  
Prevail against me do;  
And as for our trans-gres-si-ons,  
Them purge away wilt Thou.'

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\* *The Hermits* (Kingsley), p. 265.

O David, if thou art capable of hearing such abominable doggerel substituted for the nervous words thou didst compose by the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST, what must thou feel, if chagrin can affect the inhabitants of heaven?\*

*Verse 6. Thou that art the hope of them that remain in the broad sea.*

‘ Who dies in CHRIST the LORD dies well,  
 Though on the lonely main ;  
 As soft the pillows of the deep,  
 As tranquil the uncurtained sleep,  
 As on the couch where fond ones weep,—  
 And they shall rise again.

‘ Not safer on the sea of glass  
 Before the throne of GOD ;  
 As sacred is that ocean-cave,  
 Where weeds instead of myrtle wave,  
 As near to God that unknown grave,  
 As the dear churchyard’s sod.

‘ The sea shall give them back, though death  
 The well-known form destroy ;  
 Nor rock, nor sand, nor foam can chain,  
 Nor mortal prison-house retain,  
 Each atom shall awake again,  
 And rise with song and joy.’†

## PSALM LXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving for a National and personal deliverance.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning sacrifices and burnt offerings, and the incense of rams ; and spiritually, the calling of the Gentiles and preaching.

*Origin* (Perowne).—From the language of verses 8-12, the Psalm would seem to have been composed on the occasion of

\* Dr. Adam Clarke’s *Commentary*, p. 2138.  
 † *The Graves of Ocean*, by Dr. Bonar.

some special deliverance, but the expressions used are too general to lead to any certain conclusion as to the time when it was written . . . not a single critic of any name has ventured to place this Psalm earlier than the times of Hezekiah.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is said to be recited on Easter Day by the Greek Church ; it is described in the Greek Bible as *A Psalm of the Resurrection*, and may be understood to refer, in a prophetic sense, to the regeneration of the world, through the conversion of the Gentiles.\*

*Verse 4. O come hither, and behold the works of God.*—‘Francis traced out for himself at this time a rule of life which is remarkable for a young man not yet twenty. Beginning with what he calls his “preparation,” he looks forward to the day’s cares and duties, the danger and temptation it may present, and the way to meet them with firm resolution, commending his heart and mind, his will, memory, and whole being to GOD. “My first waking thought,” he says, “shall be a thanksgiving, and I will call to mind the shepherds at Bethlehem, and the holy women at the sepulchre, like them dedicating the dawn of day to my risen LORD, the Light of the world. I will daily hear Mass with all the earnestness of my soul, crying out : ‘*O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord.*’ ‘Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the LORD hath made known to us.’ My meditation must be carefully made, and if it is hindered during the day, I must shorten sleep rather than neglect it. And if I wake during the night, I will kindle my heart with the words : ‘At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!’ and, remembering that He was born amid the darkness of the night, I will ask of Him to be born anew in my heart ; the shadows

\* *Psalms of David*, by Daniel Cresswell.

of night shall speak to me of the darkness of indifference and sin, and I will pray the LORD to lighten our darkness with His own life-giving light. I will call to mind what the Psalmist said: 'Lift up your hands, and praise the LORD.\*' 'I water my couch with my tears!†' If any nocturnal terrors beset, I will remember that my guardian angel is at hand, and say: 'He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.‡' 'He shall defend thee under His wings, and thou shalt be safe under His feathers; thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night.§' 'The LORD is my light and my salvation; of whom then shall I be afraid?'||''¶

*Verse 11. We went through fire and water, and Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*—A young Presbyterian minister from Jamaica, the Rev. Mr. Winton, had visited England, and was carrying back with him his young bride. The Sunday before he sailed in the ill-fated *Amazon*, he preached from the text (Ps. lxvi. 12), '*We went through fire, and through water, but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*' All our readers will remember the burning of the *Amazon*, and some who were saved from the burning wreck have testified that when last they saw the young minister he was kneeling on the deck, with his arms round his young wife; and so 'through fire and through water' GOD brought them into His 'wealthy place.'\*\*

*Lorinus*, writing at a time when the Turkish corsairs ravaged the Mediterranean coasts, and even at times the shores of Northern Europe, applies the text to the hard lot of the Christian captives in Algiers and Morocco.

Again we are told of the sufferings of the martyrs, some

\* Ps. cxxxiv. 3.

† Ps. vi. 6.

‡ Ps. cxxi. 4.

§ Ps. xci. 4, 5.

|| Ps. xxvii. 1.

¶ *St. Francis de Sales*, p. 24.

\*\* *The Pulpit, Ancient and Modern*, by Paxton Hood, chap. viii.

winning their crown in fire, like St. Polycarp, some in water, as St. Clement of Rome.\*

‘Yea, the better part she chooseth,  
 She elects, for conscience’ sake,  
 Torments in the scalding water,  
 This the couch she wills to make,  
 If through fire, and if through water,  
 She to song eternal wake.  
 Thou who givest palm to martyrs,  
 To the virgins fair renown,  
 Grant to us with Saint Cecilia  
 Here to bear the casting down,  
 So with her we win hereafter  
 Recompense, reward, and crown.’†

*Verses 13 and 14. I will offer unto Thee fat burnt-sacrifices, with the incense of rams : I will offer bullocks and goats.*

*O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God : and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.*

There was in the city of Beth-Asa, in the province of Adiabene, and at no great distance from Mosul, two brothers, by name Jonas and Brich-Jesus. Having heard that in the city of Hubaha an unusual number of apostasies had occurred, they determined themselves to travel thither, and to endeavour, so far as might be in their power, to strengthen their brethren. Their efforts were crowned with much success ; and besides a larger number of confessors, they had the satisfaction of reckoning nine martyrs among their pupils. The names of the latter were Zebinas, Lazarus, Maruthas, Narseter, Elias, Mahares, Abibus, Sabas, and Shembaitas. The Governor of the city, hearing of the arrival and of the enthusiasm of the strangers, summoned them before his tribunal, and endeavoured, at first with kindness, to bend them to his will. Refusing to worship the sun, the moon, fire, and the holy water, they were scourged with orange boughs, from which, says the historian, the knots and buds had not been removed, and were then confined in

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 360.

† W. Chatterton Dix.

separate prisons, under the idea that, if divided, each might be more easily overcome.

Jonas was the first who was again called before the magistrate, and, on his second refusal, was scourged more severely than before, his weight being suspended in the meantime on a blunted point put under the centre of the stomach. The annalist, who was present, and who seems to have taken down what he uttered, gives his words as follows :

‘I yield Thee thanks, GOD of Abraham, our Father, who didst of old time call him by his grace from this place’—the city in which he suffered was the ancient Ur of the Chaldees—‘and hast made me worthy by the mysteries of faith to know some few things out of many concerning Thee. And now I pray Thee, O LORD, give me to make good that which the HOLY GHOST of old time spake by the mouth of David: *I will offer unto Thee fat burnt-sacrifices with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks and goats. O come hither and hearken, ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.*’ And one verse which seems to have been continually in his mouth was: ‘One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I require.’

It were endless to go through with the torments by which this martyr of CHRIST was tried. It is said that, being thrown into a caldron of boiling pitch, he came forth unhurt. Finally he was cut in pieces, his remains being thrown into a well, and a guard of soldiers set over them, to preserve them from the adoration of the Christians.\*

These Persian martyrs gained their crown in the year of our LORD 327.

\* *The Holy Eastern Church: Patriarchate of Antioch*, by Dr. Neale, p. 117.

## PSALM LXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Harvest Thanksgiving Song.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Of uncertain authorship. The people sang it when they conducted David over the River Jordan; and to us, moreover, it signifies a prophetic intimation of the call of the Gentiles, the preaching of the Apostles, and the judgment of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, which, like the last, is anonymous, and which is evidently much later than the age of David, may have been composed either in the time of Hezekiah, when great hopes began to be entertained of GOD'S purposes towards the nation, or at a time subsequent to the return from the exile, when those hopes were so signally revived. . . . Clearly designed for liturgical use, and may have been written, like the 65th, at the time of the gathering in of the harvest (see verse 6).

*In Church*.—The 67th Psalm has been used at Lauds.

It had become familiar to the English Church, coupled with a bidding prayer on Sunday, in the Salisbury use.

In 1552 it was allowed as an alternative to the *Nunc Dimittis*.\*

It is used in several benedictions, as the Churching of Women, and the blessing of bells, and in the processions for fine weather.†

*Evensong Canticle; Holy Matrimony*.—When sung as an Evensong Canticle, the catholicity of blessing invoked is the leading idea; but when used as a wedding song, the two last verses, invoking increase and blessing, are more prominent.‡

*The Whole Psalm*.—Luther composed his hymn, 'The LORD

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 71.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, p. 366.

‡ Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 119.



be merciful unto us' ('Es wolle GOTT uns gnaldig sein'), after this Psalm.\*

*The Pater Noster* of the Ancient Church.

*The great sacramental ideas* of the Gospel are also provided for in the Psalter. It has strains which imply and go forth to meet the conception of entrance into the new community by a new birth, and of the continual sustenance of the spiritual life by a Eucharistic Feast. In the 87th Psalm we have the three-fold asseveration that, in the days of the Church's expansion into all lands, every citizen of the Sion can only be introduced into it, and registered among its people, by an act which is looked upon as nothing less than a new birth.

‘This man was born there,  
And of Zion it shall be said,  
This and that man was born in her. . . .  
The Lord shall rehearse, when He writeth up the people  
That this man was born there.’

How deeply this thought sank into the hearts of the people is witnessed by the Talmud and the Cabalists.

The saying of the Great Teacher to Nicodemus—‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD’—floods the 87th Psalm with light. The font is its best interpreter.†

*Verse 1. God be merciful unto us—Deus misereatur.*—This was a favourite expression of Bishop Milman's in his journals. We first meet with it when he was at Delhi giving an address at the Mission College :

‘I spoke for an hour and a half. I heard afterwards that the natives received the address well, and that it was well adapted for the missionaries' object in asking for it. *Deus misereatur.*’

\* Tholuck's *Commentary*, p. 4.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 248.

‘St. Paul’s Day, 1873,’ he writes in his journal—‘my fifty-seventh birthday. *Deus misereatur!* After Holy Communion in the cathedral, I took the Bengali service for Sandel, who was ill.’\*

Bishop Milman’s name will go down to posterity associated with his beautiful book, ‘The Love of the Atonement.’ When he was appointed to the See of Calcutta in 1867, it contained nearly 1,000,000 square miles, or two-thirds of all India—about the same amount of territory as is comprised in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Spain—with a population of 150,000,000 inhabitants.

Bishop Milman died at Rawul Pindi, in March, 1876.

### PSALM LXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hymn of war and victory in the style of Deborah.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A most soul-stirring hymn. The first verses were often the battle-song of the Covenanters and Ironsides; and the whole Psalm fitly pictures the way of the LORD JESUS among His saints, and His ascent to glory.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David when the kings made ready to fight with him; and, secondarily, a prophecy concerning the dispensation of the Messiah, and concerning the call of the Gentiles to the Faith.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There is the greatest difference of opinion both as to the occasion for which and the period at which the Psalm was written, some regarding it as one of the later, or even of the very latest, of Hebrew poems. It remains for us to consider how far the allusions in the Psalm itself may help us to determine its age and the occasion for which it was composed.

\* *Memoir of Robert Milman*, pp. 32, 232.

First, then, it is clear that the great central idea of the Psalm is the choice of Zion as the dwelling-place of JEHOVAH.

Secondly, this fact of itself would lead us to fix upon the age of David as the most probable time for the composition of the Psalm, and the removal of the ark to Zion as the most probable occasion.

Thirdly, the mention of the four tribes, Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, and Naphtali, as representatives of the south and north kingdoms respectively, seems more natural than at any later period.

Fourthly, the peculiar manner in which the tribe of Benjamin is introduced, as 'little Benjamin their ruler,' does not seem suitable to post-exile times, but is very naturally to be explained at a time shortly subsequent to the death of Saul. The tribe which had been the royal tribe, and had so lately enjoyed the pre-eminence in Israel, might still be honoured with the title of 'ruler.'

Fifthly, Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned evidently as the great nations of the world, then occupying the most prominent position.

So far, then, as the historical allusions of the Psalm are concerned, the evidence is on the whole in favour of the age of David, rather than of a much later period.

*In Church.*—In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost—the anniversary of the giving of the Law, and the Feast of Finished Harvest.\*

This Psalm is appointed for use on Whitsun Day—not that the primary or historical element is to be lost sight of, but that it should only be remembered so far as it represents something higher still. It is no longer a hymn telling how GOD, in days of old, led the Jewish Church, as in a triumphal march, from Sinai to Zion, but how CHRIST, having founded His kingdom upon earth, is preparing it now, by victory over the opposing powers of sin and death, for the great consummation, when,

\* Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 204.

having put all enemies under His feet, He shall gather into one all the kingdoms of the earth, and as a mighty victor and triumphant leader He shall be proclaimed by every tongue to be 'King of kings' and 'Lord of lords.'\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—In rougher days, a Psalm once did much to decide the fortune of a battle. In 1589, Henri IV., with his little army, was overtaken by the host of Mayenne, at Arques, near Dieppe. His forces were almost crushed by the weight of superior numbers. The Huguenots of Dieppe had only been able to raise two strong companies to help their champion. 'Come, M. le Ministre,' cried the King to Pastor Damour, 'lift the Psalm. It is full time!' Then, over all the din, a cadence marked the stately tramp of the strong soldiers. It was the 68th Psalm, in the version of Clément Marot, set to an austere melody.

'Que Dieu se montre seulement,  
Et l'on verra soudainement  
Abandonner la place,  
Le camp des ennemis épars,  
Epouvanter de toutes par,  
Fuir devant à face ;  
Dieu les fera tous enfuir.'

Slowly moving on, the two companies split the army of the League like two iron wedges. At that moment the fog, which had rolled in from the sea, and hung over a castle which commanded the position, cleared away. The artillery-men of Henri could take aim. The swing of the Psalm was timed by the long roll of the guns, and the Leaguers were scattered. Strange to find this Psalm playing such a part in modern France, and again at the Battle of Dunbar (1650). Over the German Ocean, just then, bursts the first gleam of the level sun upon us, 'and I heard Nol say, in the words of the Psalmist : "Let GOD arise, let His enemies be scattered."†

*Verses 1, 2. Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered,*

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 126.

† Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell*, vol. iii., p. 49.

*let them also that hate Him flee before Him. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away : and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God.*—St. Antony, tempted by the devil, dwelt in an empty enclosure in the mountain-side. ‘Thus he passed a long time there training himself, and only twice a year received loaves, let down from above through the roof. But those of his acquaintance who came to him, as they often remained days and nights outside (for he did not allow anyone to enter), used to hear as it were crowds inside clamouring, thundering, lamenting, crying, “Depart from our ground ! What dost thou even in the desert ? Thou canst not abide our onset !” At first, those that were without thought that there were some men fighting with him, and that they had got in by ladders ; but when, peeping in through a crack, they saw no one, then they took for granted that they were demons, and, being terrified, called themselves on St. Antony. But he rather listened to them than cared for the others. For his acquaintances came up continually, expecting to find him dead, and heard him singing : “*Let the Lord arise, and His enemies shall be scattered : and let them that hate Him flee before Him. As wax melts before the face of the fire, so shall sinners perish from before the face of God.*”’\*

*Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered.*—Fra Domenico da Pescia, a monk of Savonarola’s convent, offered to prove the truth of his master’s doctrines by passing through fire, if one of his opponents would undergo the same ordeal, in defence of their opinions. The challenge was accepted by a Franciscan monk, and Savonarola, with his champion, appeared at the head of a large procession chanting Psalm lxviii., ‘*Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered.*’ The Franciscan also presented himself ; the fire was kindled, and Domenico was ready to enter the flames, bearing the Host in his hands. But the crowd exclaimed against this—a sacrilege, as they termed it—and as Domenico persisted in his determination, he thus

\* *The Hermits*, by Charles Kingsley, p. 45.

happily escaped the ordeal for which he had offered himself. But this event was fatal to Savonarola. The people loaded him with insults, and he was thrown into prison.\*

*Verse 4. O sing unto God, and sing praises unto His Name : magnify Him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse.*—The sublime passages of the Old Testament, in which the attributes of man or of angels are assigned to Almighty GOD, as, for instance, where He is said to ‘ride upon the heavens,’ Deut. xxxiii. 26, Psalm lxxviii. 4 ; or ‘to walk’ or ‘fly upon the wings of the wind,’ Psalm civ. 3, xviii. 10 ; or that ‘His hand is not shortened,’ Numbers xi. 23, Isaiah l. 2, lix. 1 ; might expect to find their likenesses in Shakespeare, and they do find them : yet so softened and disguised that no comparison which might suggest thoughts of irreverence is provoked by the imitation.

It is Romeo who thus, from Capulet’s garden, addresses Juliet at her window :

‘O ! speak again, bright angel, for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o’er my head,  
As is a winged messenger of Heaven  
Unto the white upturned wondering eyes  
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,  
When he *bestrides the lazy-facing clouds,*  
And *sails upon the bosom of the air.*’†

Act III., Sc. ii.

*Verse 5. He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows : even God in His holy habitation.*—The tender mercy and loving-kindness of the Divine Being, more especially towards those who need them most, are exhibited by our poet, again and again, in passages which represent the teaching of Scripture no less faithfully. For example : He who ‘is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widow,’ is thus described in *King Richard II.* :

\* *Encyclopædia*, vol. xii., p. 780.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 324.

‘*Duchess.* Where then, alas! may I complain myself?

*Gaunt.* To Heaven—the *Widow's Champion and Defence!*’\*

Act I., Sc. ii.

*Verse 6.* He is the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and bringeth the prisoners out of captivity: but letteth the runagates continue in scarceness.—Runagate = fugitive, rebel, apostate; French, *renégat*.

‘GOD bringeth the prisoners out of captivity, but letteth the runagates continue in scarceness’—Prayer-Book version of this verse, where the Bible has ‘the rebellious.’

‘I’ll send to one in Mantua,  
Where that same banished *runagate* doth live.’†

*Romeo and Juliet*, Act III., Sc. v.

*Verse 8.* The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at the presence of God, even as Sinai also was moved at the presence of God, who is the God of Israel.—Cf. Homer, X., xiii. 19, 20.

‘—The lofty mountains nod,  
The forests shake, earth trembled as he trod,  
And felt the footsteps of the immortal God.’

POPE. ‡

*Verse 11.* The Lord gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.—GOD commands; His commands are fulfilled, many messengers tell of their fulfilment. The Church adopts this as a suitable motto for Whitsunday.§

*Verse 13.* Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove: that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold.—(See also on Psalm lxxx. and xlv.) Archbishop Wareham, in the year 1511, made a visitation of his Diocese. The collegiate church of Wingham was next visited, after a sermon from a text, which seems rather singularly chosen for the occasion, ‘*Though ye have lien among the pots,*

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 109.

† *Ibid.*, p. 42.

‡ Mant, p. 209.

§ *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 285.

yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, that is covered with silver wings, and has feathers like gold,' although, as several of the houses of the canons were in ruinous condition, and called for injunctions to repair them from the Archbishop, there would seem to be some grounds for the selection of such a theme. At this visitation one or two suggestive circumstances are noted. None of the canons resided at his own house and kept his own table, which was contrary to their statutes; almost all the houses were in a state of disrepair; several canons exhibited letters of orders and dispensations which 'were nothing to the purpose'; and so were peremptorily ordered to cease from performing service; others appeared as pluralists; others complain that the benefices which they ought to have had are given to strangers. This visitation called for many admonitions of the Archbishop.\*

Miss Whately says: 'The roofs in Egypt are usually in a great state of litter, and were it not that Hasna, the seller of *Geeleh*, gets a palm branch and makes a clearance once in a while, her roof would assuredly give way under the accumulation of rubbish. One thing never seemed cleared away, however, and that was the heaps of old broken pitchers, sherds, and pots, that in these and similar houses are piled up in some corner; and there is a curious observation in connection with this. A little before sunset numbers of pigeons suddenly emerge from behind the pitchers and other rubbish, where they have been sleeping in the heat of the day, or pecking about to find food. They dart upwards and career through the air in large circles, their outspread wings catching the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, so that they really resemble shining "yellow gold"; then, as they wheel round and are seen against the light, they appear as if turned into molten silver, most of them being pure white, or else very light coloured. This may seem fanciful, but the effect of light in these regions is difficult to describe to those who

\* *Diocesan History of Canterbury*, p. 222.



have not seen it, and evening after evening we watched the circling flight of the doves, and always observed the same appearance. “*Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold*” (Psalm lxviii. 13). It was beautiful to see these birds rising clean and unsoiled, as doves always do, from the dust and dirt in which they had been hidden, and soaring aloft in the sky till nearly out of sight among the bright sunset clouds. Thus a believer, who leaves behind him the corruptions of the world, and is rendered bright by the Sun of Righteousness shining upon his soul, rises higher and higher, nearer and nearer to the light, till, lost to the view of those who stay behind, he has passed into the unknown brightness above !\*’

*Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove.*—Sir J. J. Coleridge (his biographer) wrote to Keble asking for an explanation of a phrase, October 18, 1865. ‘Reading St. Bernard’s Sermons on the Advent, I am puzzled with this phrase twice occurring : He is speaking of our LORD’s two advents ; he urges his monks to ponder how much He has performed in the one, how much He has promised in the other, and then says, “*Utinam certe dormiatis inter medios clericos. Hæc sunt enim duo brachia Spousi ; inter quæ Spousa dormiens aiebat. Læva ejus sub capite mes et dextera ejus amplexabitur me,*” and goes on quoting Cantic. ii. 6. And again, “*Sint ergo si dormire volumus inter medios clericos, id est duos adventus, pennæ nostræ deargentatæ.*” The words “*medios clericos*” are in my edition printed in italics as a quotation. Don’t trouble yourself about this, if it does not come into your head at once.’

This is Keble’s answer on October 26 :

‘. . . I have borrowed a St. Bernard from the Vicar here, and have thought over your question as well as I could with the help of the Bible, the LXX., and Gesenius. I dare say you

\* *Ragged Life in Egypt*, by Miss Whately.

have long ago found out that the clause is from the Vulgate version of Psalm 68 (67), v. 13 (14), and that *inter medios cleros* is what our Bible version renders "among the pots," the Vulgate apparently adopting the word *κλήρους* from the LXX. *ἀνάμεσον τῶν κληρών*. So the question is how the LXX. came to translate the Hebrew word, which we render "pots," by "lots" or "portions," and the phrase "between the portions" somehow led my mind back to the rite of dividing victims offered to sanction a covenant, as in Genesis xv. and Jeremiah xxxiv., and a passing between the portions of the victims. Also the Hebrew of "pots" is nearly the same as that rendered "hooks" in Ezekiel xl. 43, where plainly something is meant on which, or by means of which, the flesh of the offerings for sacrifice was deposited on each side of certain entrances to the Temple, so that the offerer or votary going in would pass between the hooks, *i.e.*, between the portions of the sacrifice (our translation in the margin there says "or endirons, on the two hearth stones"). The mystical meaning, then, of being *between* these portions would be "being under a covenant by sacrifice" (Psalm li. 5), and *sleeping* between them, as Abram seems to have done, would be *being at rest* in that covenant, for which purpose we must be sanctified as Christians, there must be "the wings of a dove," etc.

'I wish this may be intelligible, and have something in it; at any rate it interested me greatly.\*

*The wings of a dove that is covered with silver wings.*—Thomas Dove, Dean of Norwich, and one of Elizabeth's chaplains, succeeded Howland in 1600. We find but little record of him, except that he was much in favour with the Queen (Elizabeth), who called him her dove with silver wings. He seems to have been sufficiently strict in exacting conformity from his clergy, for it is said that in one morning he suspended five ministers for nonconformity, to which King James said it was enough to serve for five years.†

\* *Keble's Life*, p. 523. † *Diocesan History of Peterborough*, p. 207.

*Mr. Plumptre*, in a spirited translation of this Psalm, has

‘The hosts their might display,  
Like silver dove with wings of golden glow.’

*Verse 14.* *When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake, then were they as white as snow in Salmon.*—These words recall the famous ‘Alleluia Battle,’ when the Pictish hosts fled before the shout uplifted by the British army, as it stood upon the hills, clad in the white chrisom-robe of baptism, no unfit type of those armies in heaven, which, on white horses, and clothed in fine linen, white and clean, follow Him who is called Faithful and True.\*

*Verse 17.* *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: and the Lord God is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai.*—This description, which is in the finest style of magnificence, has not escaped the imitation of Milton:

‘Attended with ten thousand thousand saints,  
He onward came; far off his coming shone,  
And twenty thousand (I their number heard)  
Chariots of GOD, half on each hand, were seen.’†

And again,

‘About His chariot numberless were poured  
Cherub and seraph, potentates and thrones,  
And virtues, winged spirits, and chariots winged,  
From the armoury of GOD, where stood of old  
Myriads.’‡

*Verse 18.* *Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.*

‘Now that He is ascended up on high  
To His celestial throne,  
And hath led captive all captivity,  
He’ll not receive alone,  
But likewise give  
Gifts unto all that live.

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 382.

† *Paradise Lost*, vii.

‡ *Ibid.*, vii. 196.

‘To all that live by Him, that they may be,  
 In His due time, each one,  
 Partakers with Him in His victory,  
 Nor He triumph alone ;  
 But take all His  
 Unto Him where He is.’\*

*Thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also.*  
 —GOD’S gifts are for the rebellious also. I am a rebel, therefore they are for me.—*John Bunyan.*

*Verse 20. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation : God is the Lord, by whom we escape death.*—Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul’s, was one of the Lent preachers at Court. Izaak Walton gives the following account of his last sermon : ‘He was appointed to preach upon his old constant day, the first Friday in Lent ; he had notice of it, and had in his sickness so prepared for that employment, that, as he had long thirsted for it, so he resolved his weakness should not hinder his journey. He came therefore to London some few days before his appointed day of preaching. At his coming thither, many of his friends—who with sorrow saw his sickness had left him but so much flesh as did only cover his bones—doubted his strength to perform that task, and did therefore dissuade him from undertaking it, assuring him, however, it was like to shorten his life ; but he passionately denied their requests, saying, “he would not doubt that that GOD, who in so many weaknesses had assisted him with an unexpected strength, would now withdraw it in his last employment, professing an holy ambition to perform that sacred work.” And when, to the amazement of some beholders, he appeared in the pulpit, many of them thought he presented himself, not to preach mortification by a living voice, but mortality by a decayed body, and a dying face. And doubtless many did secretly ask that question in Ezekiel, “Do these bones live ? or, Can that soul organize that tongue, to speak so long time as the sand in that glass will move towards its centre, and measure out an hour of

\* George Herbert.

this dying man's unspent life? Doubtless it cannot." And yet, after some faint pauses in his zealous prayer, his strong desires enabled his weak body to discharge his memory of his preconceived meditations, which were of dying; the text being, "To GOD the LORD belong the issues from death." Many that then saw his tears, and heard his faint and hollow voice, professed they thought the text prophetically chosen, and that Dr. Donne had preached his own Funeral Sermon.'

This discourse was printed at London in 1633 in quarto, under the quaint title of 'Death's Duel, or a Consolation to the soule against the Dying Life and Living Death of the Body.' The text is from Psalm lxviii. 20. It is the last discourse in the third volume of Dr. Donne's Sermons.

Being full of joy that GOD had enabled him to perform this desired duty, he hastened to his house; out of which he never moved, till, like St. Stephen, 'he was carried by devout men to his grave.'\*

*Verses 24 to 31. It is well seen, O God, how Thou goest: how Thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary. . . . Then shall the princes come out of Egypt: the Morians' land shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*—It is well known how the spectacle of the solemn majesty of Christian worship contributed to the spread of the Gospel among the rude nations of Europe in the Middle Ages.†

*Verses 28, 29. Stablish the thing, O God, that Thou hast wrought in us. For Thy Temple's sake at Jerusalem.*—In Confirmation in the Roman Church these words are used when the Bishop cleanses his hands from the oil.‡

*Verse 31. Then shall the princes come out of Egypt.*—The Vulgate reads, *ambassadors shall come.* They tell a legend, how that Philo of Alexandria, sent on a mission to the court of

\* *Isaak Walton's Lives*, pp. 70, 71.

† Thrupp on *The Psalms*, vol. i., p. 371.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 268.

the Emperor Caius, met St. Peter in Rome, and learnt from him the Faith, which he then followed in his country, under the guidance of St. Mark, thus fulfilling the prophecy.\*

*Verse 34. Ascribe ye the power to God over Israel.*

‘Ascribes the glory of his conquest got,  
First to my GOD, and next unto your grace.’  
*First Part of Henry VI., Act III., Sc. iv.*

The Prayer-Book version of Psalm lxviii. 34 is, ‘Ascribe ye the power to GOD over Israel.’ The Vulgate (lxvii. 35) is: ‘Date gloriam Deo super Israel.’ It is not very likely that Shakespeare would of himself translated ‘date’ by ‘ascribe’; it is probable, therefore, that he either took ‘Ascribe the glory’ directly from a version containing these words, or else that he had a mixed remembrance of the verse as it occurs both in a version containing ‘ascribe’ and in the Vulgate.

## PSALM LXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer out of the depth of affliction borne for the sake of the truth.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Lily among thorns; the Lily of the valley, fair and beautiful, blooming in the garden of Gethsemane.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—literally when Sheba the son of Bichri sounded a trumpet, and the people desisted from following after David; understood also to be a prophecy concerning those things that the Messiah suffered, and concerning the reprobation of the Jews.

*Origin* (Perowne).—When and by whom this Psalm was written we have no very certain clue to guide us; unless, indeed, we are disposed to accept the authority of the inscrip-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 393.

tion, which tells us it was written by David. All that is certain from the general tenor of the Psalm is that it was written under circumstances of great and unmerited suffering, by one who was persecuted for righteousness' sake. . . . Yet if any inference can be drawn from the style and language, if criticism had any testing power, it would hardly be too much to say that this Psalm could not have been written by David. Moreover, to what possible circumstances in David's life could verses 11, 12, and 21 refer, or what meaning could verse 35 have in his mouth? The fact that it is cited as his in Romans xi. 9 proves nothing, for 'David' there means nothing more than the Book of Psalms.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is a Passion Psalm appointed for use on Good Friday. It is evidently so appointed because it is eminently Messianic in character, the sufferings of the prophet being in so signal a degree typical of those which in after-ages were inflicted upon Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.

In the Sarum use and Latin use it is appointed for the Eve of Christ's Passion (Maundy Thursday), as are also the next eight Psalms, viz., Psalms 69, 70-77.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—There is no portion of the Old Testament Scriptures more frequently quoted in the New, with the exception of Psalm xxii., than this.

Obs. I. Verses 4 and 7 are applied to our LORD in St. John ii. 17, xv. 25; Romans xv. 3; verse 25 to Judas in Acts i. 20; verses 22 and 23 to the Jews in Romans xi. 9, 10.

Obs. II. When St. John quotes the account of our LORD'S *first* Purification of the Temple he refers to verse 9. Shortly after His *second* Purification of it our LORD Himself uses language which seems to refer to verse 25.

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 105.

*Verse 2. I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me.*—St. Gregory the Great was very reluctant to be appointed Pope; he wished to remain in his monastery, the one, dedicated to St. Andrew, which he had founded on the site of his own house, near the Church of St. John and St. Paul at Rome, in which he himself had become a monk and abbot. He used various artifices to escape election. No election of a Pope could at this time take effect without the Emperor's confirmation, and an embassy had to be sent to Constantinople to obtain it. Gregory therefore sent at the same time a letter to the Emperor (Mauricius), imploring him to withhold his confirmation; but it was intercepted by the prefect of the city, and another from the clergy, senate, and people sent in its place, entreating approval of their choice. At length the imperial confirmation of his election arrived. He still refused, fled from the city in disguise, eluding the guards set to watch the gates, and hid himself in a forest cave. Pursued and discovered by means, it is said, of a supernatural light, he was brought back in triumph, conducted to the Church of St. Peter, and at once ordained, on the 3rd of September, 590.

This reluctance was real, for five letters remain written by him soon after his accession, in which he expresses his feelings on the occasion. In one addressed to Theoctista, the Emperor's sister, he says: 'Under the colour of the episcopate I have been brought back to the world; I am enslaved to greater earthly cares than I ever remember to have been subjected as a layman. For I have lost the joys of my rest, and seem to have risen outwardly, while inwardly I have fallen. I lament that I am driven far away from my Maker's face. For I used to strive to live daily outside the world, outside the flesh; to drive from the eyes of the mind all phantasms of the body, and incorporeally to see supernal joys. . . . But now, driven from the eminence by the whirlwind of this temptation, I have fallen into fears and tremblings; though I fear nothing for myself, I am greatly afraid for those who have been committed to me. On all sides am I tossed by the waves of business, and pressed



down by storms, so that I can say with truth, “ *I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me* ” (Psalm lxix. 2).\*

*The floods run over me.*—The word *flood* in these two verses is the well-known Shibboleth, which the Ephraimites were unable to pronounce (Jud. xii. 6). It occurs again in Isaiah xxvii. 12, ‘flood of the river.’†

*Verse 3. My throat is dry ; my sight faileth me for waiting so long upon my God.*

‘ How fast His hands and feet are nailed !  
His blessèd tongue with thirst is tied ;  
His failing eyes are blind with blood ;  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.‡

*Verses 7 and 8. For Thy sake have I suffered reproof : shame hath covered my face.*

*I am become a stranger unto my brethren, even an alien unto my mother’s children.*

Madame Guyon left Thonon for Turin, after going through great persecutions. She had to cross the Alpine pass of Mont Cenis. A journey along frightful precipices and over mountains piled to the clouds, accompanied, too, by this reflection, that those who were prosecuting it had no home, no resting-place, must have been exceedingly trying to anyone whose mind was not sustained by strong faith. ‘The words,’ she says, ‘which are found in the Gospel of St. Matthew were deeply impressed upon my mind—“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” This I have since experienced in all its extent, having no sure abode, no refuge among my friends, who were ashamed of me, and openly renounced me at the time when there was a great and general outcry against me ; nor amongst my relations, the most of whom declared themselves my adversaries and were my greatest persecutors ; whilst others looked on me with con-

\* *Fathers of the English Church : Gregory the Great*, p. 42.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne.

‡ Frederick William Faber.

tempt and indignation. My state began to be like that of Job, when he was left of all ; or perhaps I might say with David : “ *For Thy sake I have borne reproach ; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children* ”—a reproach to men, and despised of the people.\*

*Verse 7. For Thy sake have I suffered reproof ; shame hath covered my face.*

‘ He reigns below ; He reigns alone,  
And having life in love foregone  
Beneath the crown of sovran thorns,  
He reigns the jealous God. Who mourns  
Or rules with Him, while days go on ?

‘ By anguish which made pale the sun,  
I heard Him charge His saints that none  
Among His creatures anywhere  
Blaspheme against Him with despair,  
However darkly days go on.’†

*Verse 9. The zeal of Thine house hath even eaten me.*—When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire, with this motto, *Talis est Basilus*. Basil is such a one ; he is all on a-light fire for GOD.‡

*The rebukes of them that rebuked Thee are fallen on me.*—It was a brave speech of Ambrose. ‘ He wished it would please GOD to turn all the adversaries from the Church upon himself, and let them satisfy their thirst with his blood.’

And so Nazianzen, when contention rose about him, says he : ‘ Cast me into the sea, let me lose my place, rather than the name of CHRIST should suffer for me.’§

*Verse 12. The drunkards make songs against me.*—Not only

\* *Life of Madame Guyon*, p. 209.

† *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*.

‡ Thomas Brooks.

§ Jeremiah Burroughs.

was the Arian heresy encouraged by the chiefs of the State, but the ribald songs of the heresiarch's own *Thalia*, directed against the Consubstantial, were trolled in the wine-shops of Alexandria.\*

*Archbishop Laud* was now under the special surveillance of a mixed mob of Brownists, Anabaptists, and London apprentices, who invariably accompanied him to and from the 'Tower, saw him enter Westminster Hall for his day's trial, and saw him safe in the Tower gates again,' and an impertinent, staring, multitudinous eye seemed always upon him; a specimen of an unwelcome, uncongenial companionship, which almost reminds one of some of the poet's punishments in the infernal regions—those curious inflictions which are made expressly to fit the individuals themselves.

The Danaidæ had their buckets, and Sisyphus his large stone, and Laud his mob. Libels and ballads against him were sung up and down the streets, with pictures of him in a cage, and 'fastened to a post by a chain.' They enlivened taverns and alehouses, and the '*drunkards made songs upon me,*' he says. 'God, of His mercy, forgive the misguided people !'†

It is a touching anecdote which is told of the late *Sir Andrew Agnew*, whose exertions for God's Sabbaths, once reviled and scoffed at, are now honoured and acknowledged. He felt deeply the taunts and revilings and the jeers to which his efforts exposed him; his very name was a by-word among the ungodly, and he was literally the song of the drunkards in the streets. One morning, as he was sitting in his room in some street in London, he heard some ribald songster making foul mention of his name under his window. The iron entered into his soul, and he almost instinctively opened his Bible, to close, if possible, his ear and heart against the sound; it opened at this very Psalm, and his eye, as if guided, caught this very verse: '*They that sit*

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 405.

† Mozley's *Essays: Archbishop Laud*, vol. i., p. 212.

*in the gate speak against me, and the drunkards make songs upon me.\**

*Verse 13. Lord, I make my prayer unto Thee in an acceptable time.*

‘Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;  
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.  
If sky and wind were always fair,  
The sailor would not watch the star;  
And David’s Psalms had ne’er been sung  
If grief his heart had never wrung.’†

*Verse 21. Thy rebuke hath broken my heart.*

‘The grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o’er-fraught heart, and bids it break.’

*I looked for some to have pity upon me.*—‘Pity’—‘sympathy.’ This is the only place in the Psalter where the word is found. The word ‘sympathy’ has nowhere been employed by our translators, but it exactly conveys the force of the Hebrew word, inasmuch as it is used of sympathy in joy as well as in sorrow; see Job xlii. 11, where our version renders, ‘and they bemoaned him’—‘and they sympathized with him’ would have been better. They would not *bemoan* him on his restoration to health and prosperity. This word also is used several times by Jeremiah (xv. 5, xvi. 5, xlviii. 17).‡

*Verse 24. Lct their eyes be blinded that they see not, and ever bow Thou down their backs.*—*Blinded* to the true meaning of Scripture, *bowed down* under the weight of the Law. And St. Augustine (Serm. de Temp.) compares the attitude of Jews and Christians towards the truth to the spies carrying the grapes on the pole. The Jews go first, counting themselves to have the pre-eminence, but not seeing the precious freight, and even turning their backs upon it; while the Christian, coming behind, beholds and worships.

\* *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol. i., p. 446.

† From the German.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 446.

‘They who were grace-expectant, they who lived and died in grace,  
They who saw Christ far off, and they who see, though veiled, His face—  
Those went before : these follow, they are all one brotherhood,  
And in the midst the True Vine hangs upon the Holy Rood.’

A. M. MORGAN : *The True Vine*.\*

*Verse 32. This also shall please the Lord, better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*—Here the LORD puts dishonour upon mere outward offerings by speaking of the horns and hoofs, the offal of the victim. The *opus operatum*, which our ritualists think so much of, the LORD puffs at. The horning and hoofing are nothing to Him, though to Jewish ritualists these were great points, and matters for critical examination. Our modern Rabbis are just as precise as to the mingling of water with their wine, the baking of their wafers, the cut of their vestments, and the performance of genuflections towards the right quarter of the compass. O fools, and slow of heart to perceive all that the LORD hath declared. ‘Offer unto GOD thanksgiving’ is the everlasting rubric of the true directory of worship.†

True, Mr. Spurgeon, and yet only part of the truth. How loving in contrast is the exposition of Dr. Neale, who sees in this verse, ‘the oblation of the Gospel, the most Holy Eucharist, dearer to GOD than all sacrifice besides.

‘Therefore we, before It bending,  
This great Sacrament adore ;  
Types and shadows have their ending  
In the new rite evermore ;  
Faith, our outward sense amending,  
Maketh good defects before.’‡

## PSALM LXX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cry of a persecuted one for help.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; literally when he sent Joab to seize Sheba, who had rebelled, and secondarily, the supplications of the righteous and of the Messiah.

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 410.

† *The Treasury of David*, vol. iii., p. 269.

‡ Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 415.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is a repetition, with some variations, of the last five verses of Psalm xl. . . . I see no reason to abandon the opinion which I have expressed in the note on Psalm xl. 13—that this Psalm formed originally a part of Psalm xl., and was subsequently detached and altered for a special occasion.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is the 3rd Psalm of the Mesorion of the 6th Hour. It is also used in the late Evensong and in the Greek Office for the Dying.\*

This Psalm is, with but very slight variations, merely a repetition of Psalm xl. 16 to the end. But the first verse is noticeable as being oftener recited in the Western Church than any other part of the Old Testament. The Versicle and Response, ‘O GOD, make speed to save me,’ ‘O LORD, make haste to help me,’ which are prefixed to the offices of all the Canonical Hours, and which are retained in the plural, by the Anglican Matins and Evensong, are taken from it.

On this usage let us hear Dionysius the Carthusian (A.D. 1471): ‘Great and wonderful is the virtue of the first verse of the present Psalm, wherefore rightly hath our mother, the Church, instructed by the HOLY GHOST, appointed that this verse should be recited at the beginning or near the beginning of each of the Hours, so that, protected by the shield of the Divine assistance, we may escape all the snares of the enemy, who plots against us more wickedly when we are engaged in beginning Divine Service.’†

## PSALM LXXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer of a gray-headed servant of GOD for further Divine aid.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Prayer of the Aged Believer.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Composed by David, when Saul was

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 267.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 420.

fighting with the House of David—also a prophecy concerning the Passion and the Resurrection of the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is without any Inscription in the Hebrew. In the LXX. its title is ‘(A Psalm) of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first led captive,’ a curiously composite title, which contains a contradiction in itself. It may, however, have been intended to denote that, in the opinion of the translators, the Psalm was Davidic in origin, and, at the same time, to record his tradition that it was a favourite Psalm with the Rechabites and the earlier exiles. On two points only do we gather any certain information from the Psalm itself. First, it is evident that it was written by one already past the meridian of life and verging upon old age. And, secondly, it borrows so largely from other Psalms—the 22nd, 31st, 35th, and 40th, some of them probably Psalms written long after the time of David—that it must be regarded as one of the later specimens of Hebrew poetry. Other evidence of an internal kind renders it not improbable that the Psalm was written by Jeremiah. It would apply obviously to his circumstances. . . . All this falls in very well with the tradition which has been preserved by the LXX. A Psalm written by Jeremiah would very naturally have a peculiar value in the eyes of the Rechabites, whom the prophet mentions so honourably, and in the eyes of the first exiles, who had so often listened to the words of his lips.

*In Church*.—This Psalm, with the exception of the five last verses, which are omitted for obvious reasons, is used in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. Especially is its appropriateness felt when suffering or aged; but for all, in time of weakness and pain, is there new and deeper meaning in the words, ‘Forsake me not, when my strength faileth.’

‘Go not far from me, O GOD,  
My GOD, haste Thee to help me.’\*

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\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 132.

*In the Sarum Manual* this Psalm and the Anthem following it commenced the Office of Extreme Unction.\*

*The one Prayer-Book Antiphon.*—There is one class of these Psalms which has in later times been generally termed subjectively Messianic, *i.e.*, in which the suffering or glorified SAVIOUR is Himself the Speaker. The Ancient Church believed that such Psalms are numerous. It cannot fairly be doubted by those who receive Holy Scripture, and reason consistently from it, that four at least, if not five, are pointed out in the New Testament to be such—the 16th, 22nd, 40th, 69th, and perhaps the 109th. Many others (pre-eminently the 23rd, 28th, 30th, 35th, 71st, 120th, and the 142nd) have been generally received by the Church in this sense until recent times. This is so interpreted by our Church in the one Antiphon preserved in the Prayer-Book, that at the end of the 71st Psalm in the service for the Visitation of the Sick: ‘O SAVIOUR of the world, who by Thy cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, Save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O LORD!’ This shows that the voice which wails through that Psalm is believed by the Church to be the Voice of the ‘SAVIOUR of the World.’†

*Verse 1. In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust.*—The last words of Cardinal Ximenes were, ‘In te Domine speravi.’

*Verse 2. Thou art my hope, even from my youth.*—The good Bishop loved his mother, and delighted to visit her haunts, one of these near St. Francis in the Bauges—‘the first parish his uncle held, and to which his mother had gone the year after his reception at the French Academy, when he had attained the highest summit of honour and renown. With a feeling of the profoundest humility, he felt anxious to go and see the place and revive the recollection of it in his heart.

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 209.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, pp. 33, 34.



‘At last I saw St. Francis, the church, and the presbytery. Poor mother! what past recollections! She went there seven-and-forty years ago for the last time, to take leave of her uncle. Her leaving for Paris must have been sad for him; but GOD had His designs, and led me whither He would—to Saint Sulpice—for my first communion, and what followed. I said my office in this spot with great and deep happiness, praying for those through whose means GOD first sent me His good gifts.

‘*Domine spes mea à juventute meâ.* How true it is! *In te cantatio mea semper.* So indeed it ought to be. *Ego sum vermis et non homo et abjectis plebis.* That was my condition, but . . . *In te projectus sum ex utero.* Then, having said these beautiful words, I began the office of St. Euverte, my holy predecessor. What a miracle! what an incredible transformation! *Elegit ipsum Dominus ab omni vivente.* What an election was mine!

‘Then, after a quiet breakfast in the beloved dwelling of the priest at St. François, I went down the road which my mother took. It was quite easily traceable. I went alone with my own thoughts, with GOD, and with my poor mother.’\*

*Verse 8. Cast me not away in the time of age: forsake me not when my strength faileth me.*—I would say, if I may so speak, that this Psalm is especially the old man’s Psalm; at least, I can easily believe that no religious old man can ever read, or hear read, this verse: ‘Cast me not away in the time of age; forsake me not when my strength faileth me’; or that later one in this same Psalm: ‘Forsake me not, O GOD, in my old age, when I am gray-headed,’ without feeling his heart melting into tenderness at the love of GOD in having permitted His servant David to indite, and His HOLY SPIRIT to preserve, such sweet and appropriate prayers and memorials for the LORD’S kindness, for that season when His servants have become ‘old and gray-headed.’†

\* *Life of Mgr. Dupanloup of Orleans*, vol. ii., p. 189.

† *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, p. 460.

*Forsake me not when my strength faileth me.*—These are the last words of George Herbert. ‘I am now ready to die.’ After which words he said, ‘*Lord, forsake me not now my strength faileth me :* but grant me mercy for the merits of my JESUS. And now, LORD—LORD, now receive my soul.’ And with those words he breathed forth his divine soul, without any apparent disturbance. Thus he lived, and thus he died, like a saint, unspotted of the world, full of alms-deeds, full of humility, and all the example of a virtuous life ; which I cannot conclude better than with this borrowed observation

‘All must to their cold graves ;  
But the religious actions of the just  
Smell sweet in death, and blossom in the dust.’\*

*Dr. Robert Sanderson*, at one time Bishop of Lincoln, after taking his bed, and about a day before his death, desired his chaplain, Mr. Pullin, to give him absolution ; and at his performing that office, he pulled off his cap, that Mr. Pullin might lay his hand upon his bare head. After this desire of his was satisfied, his body seemed to be at more ease, and his mind more cheerful, and he said, ‘*Lord, forsake me not, now my strength faileth me ;* but continue Thy mercy, and let my mouth be filled with Thy praise.’ He continued the remaining night and day very patient, and thankful for any of the little offices that were performed for his ease and refreshment ; and during that time did often say the 103rd Psalm to himself, and very often these words : ‘My heart is fixed, O GOD ! my heart is fixed where true joy is to be found.’ His thoughts seemed now to be wholly of death, for which he was so prepared that the King of Terrors could not surprise him as a thief in the night ; for he had often said he was prepared, and longed for it. And as this desire seemed to come from heaven, so it left him not, till his soul ascended to that region of blessed spirits, whose employments are to join in concert with him, and sing praise and glory to that GOD who hath brought them to that

\* *Izaak Walton's Lives*, p. 321.

place, into which sin and sorrow cannot enter. Thus this pattern of meekness and innocence changed this for a better life.

'Tis now too late to wish that my life might be like his, for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age; but I humbly beseech Almighty GOD that my death may, and do as earnestly beg of every Reader to say—Amen. Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile (Psalm xxxii. 2).\*

*Verse 14. I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God.*—On the news of his being definitely appointed Bishop of Lincoln, which came on a Sunday, Bishop Wordsworth gathered his family about him, as was his wont, to pray for 'Southwell Minster and Palace, in City of Lincoln, Canon of Westminster and Vicar here.'

On January 1 one of his daughters says: 'I went with my father, he to administer Communion to two old men, afterwards a long walk with him on the Farringdon Road. Prospects of diocese. Providence that has been with me all my life; Abraham's example, as on this day; subdivision of diocese and other plans.'

It was in this same spirit that he took to himself, in his sermon on his last Sunday at Stanford, the beautiful words of Psalm lxxi.—the Psalm of David's old age: '*I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God.*'†

## PSALM LXXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for the dominion of peace of the Anointed One of GOD.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he made Solomon king; a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the calling of the Gentiles.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Two Psalms only in the entire compass

\* *Izaak Walton's Lives*, p. 401.

† *Bishop Wordsworth's Life*, p. 208.

of the Psalter—this and the 127th—bear the name of Solomon. . . . The Inscription, beyond all doubt, means to say that the Psalm is Solomon's. Nor do I see any reason for rejecting the tradition thus conveyed to us. . . . Delitzsch conjectures that he may have composed the Psalm shortly after his accession, and have designed it as a prayer to be offered for himself, as the inheritor of David's throne and David's promises, in the public services of the Temple.

The allusion to Sheba and to Tarshish, and even the extent of dominion which it is hoped would be given to the king, all harmonize with the reign of Solomon better than of any other Jewish monarch.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed in the Latin Church for the Festival of the Epiphany, and in the Sarum and Latin use for Trinity Sunday also, and in the Sarum and Gregorian use for the Festival of the Nativity.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—Three years after Heber wrote the hymn, 'From Greenland's icy mountains,' James Montgomery repeated, at the close of a missionary speech at Liverpool, his noble hymn :

'Hail to the LORD'S Anointed,  
Great David's greater Son!'

a rendering of the 72nd Psalm, in which there is a somewhat similar stanza describing the coming of different and distant peoples to CHRIST :

'Arabia's desert-ranger  
To Him shall bow the knee,  
The Ethiopian stranger  
His glory come to see. †

Dr. Watts's best paraphrase,

'JESUS shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run,'

is also founded upon this Psalm.

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 112.

† *Hymns and Scripture (Sunday at Home, 1876, p. 407).*

*Verse 14. Dear shall their blood be in His sight.*

‘When persecution’s torrent-blaze  
Wraps the unshrinking Martyr’s head,  
When fade all earthly flowers and bays,  
When summer friends are gone and fled,  
Is he alone in that dark hour,  
Who owns the LORD of love and power?

‘Or waves there not around his brow  
A wand no human arm may wield,  
Fraught with a spell no angels know,  
His steps to guide, his soul to shield?  
Thou, SAVIOUR, art his Charmèd Bower,  
His Magic Ring, his Rock, his Tower.’\*

*Verse 19. Blessed be the Name of His Majesty for ever and ever : and all the earth shall be filled with His Majesty. Amen, Amen.*—James, Earl of Derby said, as he laid his head on the block, ‘*Blessed be God’s holy Name for ever and ever ; let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen.*’ And the executioner not being ready, he repeated it again.

\* John Keble.



BOOK III.

PSALMS LXXIII—LXXXIX.

‘What the heart is in man, that the Psalter is in the Bible.’—*Joh. Arndt.*





PSALM LXXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Temptation to Apostasy overcome.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by Asaph the Recorder, concerning the death of Absalom; and secondarily, a confession of human infirmity, treating also of the prosperity of the wicked and the long-suffering of God.

*The Whole Psalm*.—Savonarola preached sermons on this Psalm, which are considered to be theologically the best of his discourses. From some strong expressions in these sermons on the doctrine of Divine grace, some have discovered in them a tendency to Protestantism. Such, however, is not the case; they are simply echoes of the language of St. Augustine, the greater Father of the Latin Church.\*

*Verse 11.* *Tush, say they, how should God perceive it: is there knowledge in the most High?*

“Our FATHER!’ If He heard us, He would surely  
(For they call Him good and mild)  
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,  
“Come and rest with Me, My child.”  
“But no!” say the children, weeping faster,  
“He is speechless as a stone;  
And they tell us, of His image is the master  
Who commands us to work on.  
Go to!” say the children; “up in heaven,  
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.  
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—  
We look up for GOD, but tears have made us blind.’  
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,  
O my brothers, what ye preach?  
For GOD’s possible is taught by His world’s loving—  
And the children doubt of each.’†

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\* *Savonarola*, by Prebendary Clark, p. 153.

† *Cry of the Children*, by E. B. Browning.

*Verse 24. Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.*

‘ Lord of Earth and Heaven ! my breast  
 Seeks in Thee its only rest ;  
 I was lost ; Thy accents mild  
 Homeward lured Thy wandering child.  
 I was blind ; Thy healing ray  
 Charmed the long eclipse away.  
 Source of every joy I know,  
 Solace of my every woe,  
 O, if once Thy smile divine  
 Ceased upon my soul to shine,  
 What were Earth and Heaven to me ?  
 What have I in each but Thee ?\*’

*Verse 25. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever,* was the last verse on which the thoughts of Charles Wesley rested, and with which his sanctified genius rose to higher notes among angels and ransomed spirits. His death was like his life. He called his wife, and bade her write to his dictation. It was the last of seven thousand hymns, some of them the finest in the English language, which had welled from his heart day and night, wherever he moved.

‘ In age and feebleness extreme,  
 Who shall a sinful worm redeem ?  
 JESUS, my only hope Thou art,  
 Strength of my failing flesh and heart ;  
 O, could I catch a smile from Thee,  
 And drop into eternity !†’

*God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

‘ My heart to Thee I give for aye, O JESU, sweetest, best ;  
 Thy Heart to me give Thou, I pray, O JESU, loveliest !  
 Our hearts alone Thou dost require,  
 Our hearts alone Thou dost desire,  
 Make me love Thee as Thou dost me,  
 O JESU, Fount of Charity !‡’

*Verse 26. For lo, they that forsake Thee shall perish.*—  
 Madame Guyon had gone back in the religious life, owing to her entertaining certain proposals of marriage.

\* Sir Robert Grant.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 101.

‡ John Lorinus.

‘I left off prayer, I became as a vineyard exposed to pillage, whose hedges, torn down, gave liberty to all the creatures to ravage it. I began to seek in the creature what I had found in GOD. And Thou, O my GOD, didst leave me to myself, because I left Thee first, and wast pleased in permitting me to sink into the horrible pit, to make me see and feel the necessity of maintaining a state of continual watchfulness and communion with Thyself. Thou hast taught Thy people that Thou wilt destroy those who, by indulging wrongly-placed affections, depart from Thee (Ps. lxxii. 26). Alas! their departure alone causes their destruction; since, in departing from Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, they enter into the region of darkness and the shadow of death, and there, bereft of all true strength, they will remain. It is not possible that they will ever rise again, unless Thou shalt revisit them—unless Thou shalt restore them to light, by illuminating their darkness, and by melting their icy hearts. Thou didst leave me to myself because I left Thee first; but such was Thy goodness, that it seemed to me that Thou didst leave me with regret.’\*

## PSALM LXXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Appeal to GOD against religious persecution, in which the Temple is violated.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph, when David saw the angel destroying the people, and wept, and said, ‘Let thine hand be against me and against my seed, and not against these innocent sheep’; and secondarily, a prediction of the siege of the city of the Jews forty years after the Ascension, by Vespasian, and Titus his son, who slew myriads of the Jews, and destroyed Jerusalem; and the Jews are rejected even to this day.

*Origin* (Perowne).—On the whole, I am inclined to think

\* *Life of Madame Guyon*, p. 15.

that this Psalm may be most naturally explained by events that took place in the time of the Maccabees. If, in any particular, the language seems too strong as applied to that time—as, for instance, the description of the burning of the Temple—this may be as readily explained by poetic exaggeration, as verse 9 is so explained by those who hold the opposite view.

Or, perhaps, as Calvin suggests, the writer, overcome by the mournful spectacle before his eyes, could not but carry back his thoughts to the earlier catastrophe, and thence borrowed some images, blending, in his imagination, the two calamities in one.

*The Whole Psalm.*—When Henri Arnaud, in 1689, at the head of the exiled Vaudois, fought his way back to his native soil, and, after incredible exertions and toil, found himself once more in his own valleys, and, pursuing his success, had seized the passes of Col di Guiliand, and entered the town of Bobbio, ‘Then,’ says Mr. Gilbey, ‘the gallant patriots took an oath of fidelity to each other, and celebrated Divine Service in one of their own churches for the first time since their banishment. The enthusiasm of the moment was irrepressible; they chanted the 74th Psalm to the clash of arms, and Henri Arnaud, mounting the pulpit with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other, preached from the 129th Psalm, and once more declared in the face of heaven that he would never resume his pastoral office in patience and peace, until he should witness the restoration of his brethren to their ancient and rightful settlements.’\*

*Verses 5-9. They break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers (verse 7).*—It is probable that the great majority of educated people who read verses 5-9 of this Psalm instinctively apply them to modern iconoclasm, and have in mind the ruined abbeys of Great Britain and the defaced

\* *Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol. ii., p. 374.

shrines of many foreign lands. Yet there is almost total silence on the subject in the commentators, early or late.

Cassiodorus, who lived when the memory of Attila and Genseric was still fresh; Remigius, the contemporary of the worst inroads of the Northmen; the Greek Offices for Orthodox Sunday, composed against the destroyers of icons; and even the Jesuit Lorinus, who lived during much of the Thirty Years' War, have not a word on the subject. A brief allusion in Corderius, a fuller one in a Lutheran commentator, directed against Carolstadt, and a lament of De Muis over Orleans Cathedral, are all I have found. Even the great controversialist Bellarmine himself is silent; and I will follow his example.\*

*Verse 12. Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, why pluckest Thou not Thy right hand out of Thy bosom to consume the enemy?—Sternhold and Hopkins, though their version is harsh, and some of their expressions quaint almost to ridicule, yet they have hit the true meaning which our prose translators have missed:*

‘Why dost Thou draw Thy hand aback,  
And hide it in Thy lap?  
Oh pluck it out, and be not slack  
To give Thy foes a rap!’†

*Verse 24. Forget not the voice of Thine enemies; the presumption of them that hate Thee increaseth ever more and more.—*Much of this Psalm has passed over our mind while beholding the idolatries of Rome, and remembering her bloody persecution of the saints. ‘O LORD, how long shall it be ere Thou wilt ease Thyself of these profane wretches, the priests, and cast the harlot of Babylon into the ditch of corruption? May Thy Church never cease to plead with Thee till judgment shall be executed, and the LORD avenged upon Antichrist!’‡

These vindictive words are in strange contrast to the forbear-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 497.

† Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, p. 2170.

‡ C. H. Spurgeon: *Treasury of David*, vol. iii., p. 374.

ing spirit shown in the preceding extract, by these 'profane wretches, the priests,' themselves.

### PSALM LXXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The nearness of the Judge with the cup of wrath.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Another of the 'Destroy not' Psalms.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—Theological truth respecting the Messiah, and warning of the Judgment.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There are no clearly-marked historical allusions in the Psalm. It seems, however, not improbable, as has been conjectured by many commentators (Ewald, Tholuck, Delitzsch, etc.), that it may refer to the time of the Assyrian invasion, either as celebrating, or immediately anticipating, the defeat of Sennacherib. Like Psalm xlvi., it bears some resemblance to the prophecies of Isaiah uttered at that time.

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

*Verse 7. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south.*—When Lord North was Prime Minister of England, one of his chaplains, with a look at his Lordship, took for his text, with the happiest results: '*Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor yet from the South.*'†

*Verse 10. As for the dregs thereof, all the ungodly of the earth shall drink them and suck them out.*—This image is found, not only frequently in other places in the Old Testament, but also

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 35.

† *Monthly Packet*, June, 1881, p. 615.

very often in the Arabian poets. Thus, Taabbata Scharran, in a passage of an Arabic Anthology, by Alb. Schultens: 'To those of the tribe of Hodail, we gave the cup of death, whose dregs were confusion, shame, and reproach.' Another poet says: 'A cup such as they gave us, we gave to them.' When Calif Almansor had his valiant though dreaded general, Abre-Moslem, murdered, he repeated the following verse, in which he addressed the corpse: 'A cup such as he gave, gave I him, bitterer to the taste than wormwood.'\*

## PSALM LXXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Praise of God after His judgment has gone forth.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A most jubilant war-song, a pæan to the King of kings, the hymn of a theocratic nation to its Divine ruler.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph, when Rabba of the children of Ammon was destroyed; and secondarily setting forth the vengeance of the Messiah's judgment upon the wicked.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is one of several Psalms which, as has been remarked in the Introduction to Psalm xlvi., were composed in celebration of the miraculous overthrow of Sennacherib's army. From the days of Israel's first occupation of the land, when GOD went forth with their hosts, giving the victory by signs and wonders from heaven, no deliverance so signal had been witnessed. Hence it roused in an extraordinary degree the religious fervour of the nation, and called forth loud songs of thanksgiving. Like Psalms xlvi., xlvii., and xlviii., this is an ode of victory over the Assyrians. . . . The internal evidence points so clearly to the occasion for which the

\* Burder.

Psalm was written, that the LXX. have inscribed it Ἰπρὸς τὸν Ἄσσυριον, and this reference has, with few exceptions, been recognised by commentators, ancient and modern.

*The Whole Psalm.*—Times without number this Psalm has been sung, as furnishing the fittest expression of the thoughts and feelings of GOD'S people in view of deliverances wrought for them. When the Covenanters at Drumclog closed their ranks to meet the onset of Claverhouse and his dragoons, they sang the opening verses to the tune of *Martyrs* :

‘ In Judah’s land GOD is well known,  
His name’s in Isr’el great ;  
In Salem is His tabernacle,  
In Zion is His seat.

‘ Their arrows of the bow He brake,  
The shield, the sword, the war ;  
More glorious Thou than hills of prey,  
More excellent art far.

‘ Those that were stout of heart are spoiled,  
They slept their sleep outright ;  
And none of those their hands did find,  
That were the men of might.’\*

*The Spanish Armada* was dispersed in 1588. When the first rumours of its discomfiture reached Edinburgh, and the citizens assembled to render thanks to GOD, Robert Bruce addressed them in the West Kirk, taking this Psalm for his text, and the two noble sermons he preached on the occasion were, from beginning to end, little more than a running commentary on the Psalm. And every hearer must have felt that the whole was as appropriate to the circumstances as if the Psalm had been written for the occasion.

*Verse 4. Thou art of more honour and might than the hills of the robbers.*—Charles Kingsley had a special love for this Psalm. When sailing up the Rhine, and looking on the ruined strongholds of the old freebooters, he writes : ‘ How strange that my favourite Psalm about the hills of the robbers (hills of prey)

\* *The Psalms : Their History, Teaching, etc.*, by Dr. Binnie, p. 91.



should have come in course the very day I went up the Rhine !\*

*Verse 6. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are fallen.*—Byron's animated lines on the destruction of Sennacherib, which may have been partly suggested by this Psalm, will occur to every reader :

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

### PSALM LXXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Comfort derived from the history of the past during years of affliction.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—concerning the long-suffering of GOD and His wondrous works, and how David overcame the enemies of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—By whom the Psalm was written, or to what period of the history it is to be referred, it is now impossible to say. The manner in which, towards the close, the passage of the Red Sea is dwelt upon, has led many to conclude that it was written by one of the exiles during the Babylonish captivity. Those two memorable events, the deliverance from Babylon and the deliverance from Egypt, were always associated in the minds of the Jews, the one being regarded, in fact, as the pledge of the other. This, however, in itself, is not decisive. . . . But whenever, and by whomsoever, the Psalm may have been written, it clearly is individual, not national.

*Verse 1. I will cry unto God with my voice.*—Note the stress

\* *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 106.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 43.

on MY voice. They who pray must do it for themselves, must do it with the articulate, intelligent voice of a man, not with the inarticulate sound of a beast, must direct their petition to GOD Himself. And hence it is laid down by all canonists that a cleric or religious, who is bound to the recitation of certain offices, does not satisfy his obligation by being merely present, while another is reciting them, without taking any more direct share himself, nor yet by silently reciting the service, nor even by hasty and muttered recitation. He must cry to GOD with his *voice*, for ‘with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.’\*

*Verse 6. I call to remembrance my song.*—There was one more night of most distressing restlessness, and no sleep came; he asked his wife to read the 77th Psalm, and when she had done so, he said, ‘Oh, how beautiful that is! Read it again.’

‘*I call to remembrance my song.*’ Those who in later years at Newland heard him sing alone the first few words of the *Venite* or *Magnificat* before the choir joined in, can never forget the beauty of that song, or the reverent worship which it expressed. All through the night psalms and hymns were read to him, as he could bear it; he could not sing them yet.

When the doctor came on Thursday morning he saw that the end was approaching, but did not tell this to Mrs. Skinner. She sent a friend to be with her husband for a little, and to her he reproached himself for procrastination, saying that he had undertaken too much. ‘But what is time to me *now*,’ he added, ‘except to know more of the love, and consolation, and liberality, and tenderness of GOD?’ Then he murmured, ‘Pax! Rest! O GOD, have mercy!’ and twice made the Sign of the Cross. The dew of death was on his forehead, yet he never thought he was dying; roused himself by one last effort, and was settled in his chair by mid-day. Mr. Dunn called and had prayers with him; he said that he knew he could not bear more than the shortest service at his Communion on the

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 528.

morrow, and gave minute directions as to what he wished to be done, speaking in a strong, earnest voice.

When they were alone together, his wife said to him, 'Dr. H——, I fear, thinks you much weaker to-day'; for she had perceived this, and thought he ought to know it. He turned his head quickly, looked at her earnestly, and said in a rather surprised tone, 'Does he?' She could not speak; he seemed to see in her face all that she would say, and after a little pause looked upward, and said slowly: 'This life has no attraction for me beyond yourself; you are my only tie. My hope and firm trust is in my blessed, dearest LORD, Who loves me. Vile and unworthy as I am, I *know* how greatly He loves me, and in that love I place *all* my hope and confidence.' He spoke in a feeble voice, and as if it were a difficulty to him to articulate, but his face shone with an expression of rapture.

His wife tried to say a few words of love, and of their blessed life together, but she could hardly speak. He turned again, looking earnestly and tenderly at her, and said: 'Do not let us upset each other; we *must* not upset each other.'

He seemed faint and tired, but said that when he was rested she was to bring him paper and pencil, and he would dictate a few last wishes. She left him for luncheon, little dreaming how near was the end; when she returned he bade her bring a sheet of paper, and write a letter for him; then he dictated a note, asking about an address, and, taking the pen from her hand, signed it himself. Then he seemed quite exhausted, closed his eyes, and lay still. Once again he looked at his wife, asked for a cordial, drank a little and seemed revived, but disposed to sleep. She sat watching him as he slept quietly, his breathing so much less laboured than it had been, that she hoped he would wake up refreshed, and about 4 p.m. carried a book to the window, as the light was waning. She heard suddenly a slight, gentle sound, and was in an instant by his side. He lay as in the same calm sleep of the last hour; there was no trace of suffering, only the drops stood thick on his brow. She did

not know, until her faithful servant told her, that the last bonds which held the spirit captive had been gently broken, and that the land of everlasting rest was won.

‘When I wake up, I am present with Thee.’\*

### PSALM LXXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The warning-mirror of history from Moses to David.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph, in which he intimates to the Jews they should keep the commandments of the LORD, and not be like their forefathers.

*Origin* (Perowne).—In this, the longest of the historical Psalms, the history of Israel is briefly recapitulated, from the time of the Exodus to the final union of the tribes under David, and the establishment of the kingdom in his family. This appeal to the past is made evidently with a purpose. The Psalmist comes forward as a prophet to rebuke the sin, the ingratitude, the rebellion of his people. . . . It is, however, remarkable that another and more special purpose appears in the Psalm. If the whole nation is rebuked, the rebuke falls heaviest on Ephraim. Ephraim is singled out as the leader in the earlier apostasy of the people, as the very type of a faithless and recreant spirit (verse 12). The rejection of Ephraim and the choice of Judah are dwelt upon at the close in a tone of satisfaction and triumph, as the fulfilment of the purpose of GOD. It is scarcely possible, therefore, to resist the conclusion that the Psalm was written after the defection of the Ten Tribes, and that it was designed either to curb the pride of the northern kingdom, or to address a warning to Judah, based on the example of Ephraim.

\* *James Skinner*, p. 382.

*Verse 10.* Like as the children of Ephraim, who, being harnessed and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle.—The Targum here mentions a Jewish legend, that the Ephraimites sallied out of Egypt thirty years before the Exodus, and after a severe defeat from the first enemies they encountered, returned to their bondage.\*

*Verse 37.* For their heart was not whole with Him: neither continued they steadfast in His covenant.—Those who are interested in such details, may like to know that the Jews counted this 37th verse to be the middle one of the Psalter.†

*Verse 40.* They were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

‘And what’s a life? A weary pilgrimage,  
Whose glory in one day doth fill thy stage  
With childhood, manhood, and decrepit age.

‘And what’s a life? The flourishing array  
Of the proud summer meadow, which to-day  
Wears her green blush, and is to-morrow hay.

‘And what’s a life? A blast sustained with clothing,  
Maintained with food, retained with vile self-loathing,  
Then, weary of itself, again to nothing.‡

## PSALM LXXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Supplicatory Prayer in a time of Devastation, or bloodshed, and of derision.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Psalm of Complaint.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph, written concerning the desolation of Jerusalem.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is a lamentation over the same great national calamity which is bewailed in terms so

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 546.

† *Ibid.*, p. 560.

‡ Francis Quarles’ *Emblems*, iii. 13.

pathetic in the 74th. . . . There can be little doubt that both Psalms, even if not written by the same poet, yet bewail the same calamity. It is equally certain that there are but two periods of the national history to which the language of either could properly apply. But, in attempting to draw our inference from this Psalm, the same difficulties meet us which have already met us in an attempt to determine the date of Psalm lxxiv. Does the Psalm deplore the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, or is it a dirge over the sack of the city by Antiochus Epiphanes?

*The Whole Psalm.*—Dante had been charmed by the *dolce salmodia* (Purg. xxiii. 1) of this Psalm, and interpreted its language of the low spiritual state of the Church; and long afterwards it expressed the feelings of sons and daughters of our own land during the Indian Mutiny. Nor must we forget that in the massacre of Alcimus (B.C. 162), the writer of 1 Macc. vii. 16, 17, finds a fulfilment of the second verse of our Psalm.\*

*Verse 1. O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance: Thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones.*—At this point (end of verse 1) the Golden Commentary of Gerhohus ceases. That portion of his great work which he completed first, by no means equal to the latter, begins with Psalm cxix.

*St. Ambrose and the Empress Justina.*—Troops were sent under arms to occupy the church; and it seems as if from the first the fidelity of the orthodox soldiers to their heretical mistress was more than suspected, since a contingent of Goths, who were Arians, formed part of the detachment. Ambrose passed the whole of the day, apparently Tuesday in Holy Week, in the church, dreading that blood should be shed, so strong was the feeling of the people. At night he went home to rest, but returned to his post on the Wednesday before sunrise. He found the church surrounded with soldiers, but their behaviour

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 223.

was quiet, and many of them made no secret of their attachment to him and the Catholic cause. The service of the day had commenced, when he learnt that another church, the 'new basilica,' was filled with people, who implored him to come to them. He remained, however, where he was, and preached. The lessons of the day were from the Book of Job, and he took occasion to speak of the Christian virtues of faith and patience, commending the people for their gentleness, so like that of Job, and their faithful reply to the imperial menaces and censures: 'We do not fight your Majesty, and we do not fear; we only make our prayer.'

Then he showed how the trials that beset Job had been permitted to come upon him, their pastor; the tempter had endeavoured to rob him of his spiritual heritage and his spiritual children. Last of all, in the spirit of that famous sermon which John Chrysostom preached some eighteen years later against an empress, he inveighed against Justina in a way which scarcely commends itself to our taste. 'All the worst trials that have assailed GOD'S people have come through women. Job's wife tempted him, saying, "Curse GOD and die"; and a woman now bids me, Give up the altar of GOD! So Eve led Adam astray, Jezebel persecuted Elijah, and Herodias compassed the death of John the Baptist.'

As the sermon proceeded, it was announced to him (though, as it turned out, without foundation) that the imperial curtains had been removed from the Portian Church, a token of yielding on the part of his opponents. 'How wonderful,' he burst out, 'are the dealings of GOD! We have this day sung in the Psalms, "*O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance.*" Heathen and Goths of many a tribe and race have come into Thine inheritance, and seized on Thy temple. But many of them have remained there; many of those who came to invade the inheritance have been made with us the heirs of GOD; there brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.' He was pressed to go to one of the other churches, but he still declined; he sent, however, some

presbyters to the Portian Church, imagining that the Emperor had withdrawn his mother's claim. But he was disappointed to find himself shortly after taken to task by a messenger from the palace, who taxed him with 'tyranny.' 'I would not go myself to the church,' was his reply, 'but I sent my presbyters, because I believed that the Emperor had at last come round to our side. As to priestly tyranny, all that I am guilty of is expressed in the words, "When I am weak, then am I strong." The ministers of GOD have often endured, but never practised, tyranny.'

That night was passed in the church, for egress was prevented by the soldiers. Like St. Paul in prison, the brethren spent their time in reciting psalms and hymns. Next morning (Maundy Thursday) Ambrose preached on the effects of penitence, from the Book of Jonah, which was read in the lessons for the day. He had scarcely concluded, when the welcome news came that the soldiers were withdrawn from the churches, and the sentences passed a few days before remitted; the people, soldiers and civilians alike, testified their joy in the most lively manner.

*Verses 1, 8, 9. O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance: Thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem an heap of stones. . . . O remember not our old sins, and have mercy upon us, and that soon. . . . Help us, O God of our salvation.*—In 1564, the Duke Emanuel Philibert (of Savoy) recovered a part of the Chablais, which the Bernese had wrested in 1536 from the Duke of Savoy. It was not, however, until the peace of 1593 that Chablais and Ternier were finally ceded to Savoy. The religious condition of the people by this time was pitiable; they had learnt to measure their faith according to their political position, and were for the most part converted to Catholicism by the Duke's warriors, or terrified into Protestantism by Bernese arquebuses. When at length there was a reasonable hope of lasting security, Charles Emanuel (the successor of Duke Emanuel Philibert) wished to see his subjects restored to



the Church, and he applied to the Bishop of Geneva, requesting him to exercise his apostolic zeal for this desirable end. Bishop Granier fully appreciated the necessity, though, perhaps, scarcely the difficulty, and at once sent a worthy and learned Priest, François Bouchut by name, to Thonon as Curé, but he soon quitted his post. The Provost of Geneva (St. Francis) was the man best fitted for the task. The Bishop knew this, and so in full chapter read the Duke of Savoy's letter. There was profound silence. Toil, difficulty, dangers, were the only earthly side visible of the mission set before them, and M. Bouchut's failure had discouraged them. All eyes turned to the Provost, and, as head of the chapter, it was his place to speak first. Probably none present more fully appreciated the arduous nature of the work than himself. Amid the disheartening silence he rose and said in brief words, but with a glowing countenance, 'Monseigneur, if you hold me to be capable of this work, and bid me undertake it, I am ready. In verbo tuo laxabo rete.' . . .

As they (*i.e.*, St. Francis and his cousin, Canon Louis de Sales, who was his only companion) crossed the boundary of Chablais, we are told that they knelt down and commended their work specially to GOD and to the Guardian Angels: 'Ecce ego mittam Angelum meum, qui præcedat te, et custodiat in vici, et introducat in locum quem paravi; observa eum, et audi vocem ejus. . . .'

With regard to this mission, Faith and Perseverance had their reward, and the tide began to turn in Francis's favour from the time he moved to Thonon. His devoted life, his unflinching gentleness and meekness, the charity with which he met all needs, spiritual and temporal, giving away all but what his very most pressing necessities demanded, even of food and clothing, won the admiration of all save the most prejudiced minds.

\*                     \*                     \*                     \*                     \*

There were many exciting incidents in this mission. Accompanied by a faithful servant, George Rolland, St. Francis was

overtaken by darkness in a thick forest, when returning to Allinges, and, after vainly endeavouring to find the way, they resolved to shelter for the night amid the ruins of a chapel on which they had stumbled. There, Rolland used to relate how his master poured out his fervent prayers over the desecrated moss-grown walls in the plaintive words of David: '*Thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem an heap of stones: they have laid waste Thy dwelling-place. O remember not our sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon. Help us, O God of our salvation.*'\* 'Turn us again, O GOD; show the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole. . . . Why hast Thou broken down our hedge? Look down, and visit this vine.†' 'They break down all the carved work thereof, with axes and hammers. O GOD, wherefore art Thou absent from us so long? why is Thy wrath so hot against the sheep of Thy pasture? O think upon Thy congregation, whom Thou hast purchased, and redeemed of old.‡§'

*Verses 5, 8. Lord, how long wilt Thou be angry? . . . O remember not our old sins.*—St. Augustine, when in the garden of his house at Milan, weeping, cried out: 'How long wilt Thou be angry? . . . O remember not my old sins, but have mercy upon me.' After which he heard a voice saying, 'Tolle, lege.'

*Verse 8. O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon.*—A cry which forms an echo in the Litany: 'Remember not, LORD, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins.'

In the Church of England, prior to the Reformation, this was one of the Psalms appointed for All Saints' Day. The martyr tone it breathes brings it into close connection with that hymn of martyrdom, Heb. xi., while its cry to the Great Judge for justice finds a parallel in that of the souls under the altar (Rev. vi. 13).

\* Psalm lxxix. 1-8.

† Psalm lxxx. 3, 12, 14.

‡ Psalm lxxiv. 7, 1, 2; § *S. Francis de Sales*, p. 64.

It is much to be regretted that this Festival is still unprovided with special Psalms. Bishop Cosin proposed the following: Matins, Psalms 1, 15, 84, 91; Evensong, Psalms 112, 113, 119 (1st part), 145, 149.\*

## PSALM LXXX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for Jahvé's vine.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A testimony of the Church as a 'lily among thorns.'

*Origin* (Perowne).—As in the case of most of the historical Psalms, so in the case of this, it is impossible to say with certainty at what period it was written. The allusions are never sufficiently definite to lead to any positive conclusion. . . . All that is certain is that the time was a time of great disaster, that the nation was trampled down under the foot of foreign invaders.

*Verse 1.* *Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep; show Thyself also, Thou that sittest upon the cherubims.*—Theodoret says that when Julian, Tyrant and Apostate, was to fight his last battle with the Persians, on the same day one Julian, surnamed Saba, a religious and devout man, prayed that GOD would preserve His Church against that Persecutor, and therefore for his prayer used the 80th Psalm: '*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, and Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*'

And it is said that while he was with tears repeating this Psalm, and earnestly beseeching GOD for His Church's deliverance, his sorrowful passion was suddenly stayed, and an extraordinary joy possessed his heart. Whereupon some devout friends, who it seems had accompanied him in that work, asked the reason. 'Oh now (quoth he) that Bore of the Wood

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 186.

which hath wasted the Vineyard of the LORD, hath received his just meed for contemning CHRIST, and lyeth now dead, never more to be feared. And it was knowne afterward, that the very same day, and as neere as they could guesse the selfe-same houre also, wherein Saba prayed the 80th Psalm aforesayd, he was miserably slaine, no doubt by the immediate judgment of GOD from Heaven; for, being not in the Armie, but on his journey, he embrued his hands in his own blood, and sprinkling it into the aire, cryed: "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean."\*

*Verse 13. The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field devour it.*—According to the Talmud, the middle letter of the word rendered 'wood' in this verse is the middle letter of the Hebrew Psalter, and it is a conceit of the Jews to mark this middle letter by suspending it above the line of the other letters.

*The comparisons derived from animals*, with which the Bible has familiarized us, are to be found no less in the pages of Shakespeare. For instance, in *King Henry IV.*, the description of the hostile approach of Alcibiades—

'Who, like a boar too savage doth root up  
His country's peace.'

Act V., Sc. ii.

—is derived from the Psalmist's description of the enemies of Jerusalem represented as a vine: *The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up; and the wild beasts of the field devour it.* (Psalm lxxx. 13).†

*Verse 14. Behold, and visit this vine.*—Archbishop Warham, in the year 1511, and in the eighth year of his primacy, made a careful visitation of his Diocese. The celebrated Cuthbert Tonsal, the Chancellor of the Archbishop, accompanied him throughout his visitation, which began on the 9th of September,

\* *A Preparation to the Psalter*, by G. Wither, chap. xiv., p. 130.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 330.

in the chapter-house of the Cathedral, after Mass of the Holy Ghost, and a Latin sermon on the appropriate text, '*Behold, and visit this vine.*'\*

## PSALM LXXXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Easter Festival Salutation and Discourse.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—by which David prepared himself for the Festivals of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm was apparently intended to be sung at one or more of the great national Festivals. There has, however, been much difference of opinion as to the particular Festival or Festivals for which it was originally composed.

*In Church*.—This Psalm was sung in the second Temple on the fifth day of the week. It was also sung at the New Year's Day Morning Service.

*Verse 1.* *Sing we merrily unto God our strength.*—There is a trifling error in the Prayer-Book rendering of this verse, corrected by all the other translations; *we* should be *ye*.†

*Verse 3.* *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon.*—The *shophar* is especially remarkable as being the only instrument which has been preserved to the present day in the religious services of the Jews. It is still blown, as in time of old, at the Jewish New Year's festival, according to the command of Moses. There is one in the Great Synagogue in London, which has this verse of the Psalm inscribed on it.‡

*Verse 6.* *I eased his shoulder from the burden: and his hands were delivered from making the pots.*—Of the language of this

\* *Diocesan History of Canterbury*, p. 220.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 2.

‡ *History of Music* (Engel), p. 292.

verse a remarkable illustration meets us in the circumstances mentioned by Tholuck, and by other recent commentators on the Psalter, that among the remaining Egyptian sculptures have been found some representing, as is supposed, the Israelites with the vessels in which they carried the clay and the tiles.\*

*Verse 17.* *He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour.*—On account of this verse, this Psalm is appointed for recitation on the Feast of Corpus Christi, with this verse for the Antiphon.†

### PSALM LXXXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—GOD'S judgment upon the gods of the earth.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Asaph's sermon before the judges.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—Reproof of the wicked Jews.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The language of the Psalm is so general that it might belong to any period of the history; and the history itself, and the utterance of the prophets, show us that the evil here denounced was not the evil of any age, but of all.

*In the Jewish Church.*—This Psalm was sung in the Temple service on the third day of the week throughout the year.‡

*Verse 1.* *God standeth in the congregation of princes: He is a Judge among gods.*—In the reign of Henry IV. of Germany, the whole empire was in a state of disorder. There were two Emperors, two Popes, and in every bishopric and dukedom two bishops and two dukes. At length civil war broke out. The

\* Thrupp on *The Psalms*, vol. ii., p. 51.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 14.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 277.

first engagement at Melrichstag was indecisive, so it was arranged that another battle should be fought at Grona on the Elster. Here the opposing forces assembled in 1080. Rudolf, supported by Otho, took his stand at the head of his army, and, previous to the engagement, raised the Israelites' song: '*God standeth in the congregation of princes: He is a Judge among gods.*' In this engagement Rudolf was mortally wounded, and his party, thus deprived of their head, gradually dwindled away, whilst Henry's party increased daily.

A striking illustration of the whole verse is afforded by that custom of the ancient Councils, still adhered to by the Holy Eastern Church in all solemn assemblies, of placing the Book of the Gospels in their midst, as a symbol of the unseen presence of CHRIST. And when accusations against some Bishops were offered to Constantine the Great at the Council of Nice, he tore them up, saying: 'Ye have been given as gods to us by GOD, and it is not fitting that a man should judge gods, but only He of whom it is written, *God standeth in the synagogue of the gods: He is a Judge among gods.*'\*

## PSALM LXXXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Battle-cry to GOD against allied people.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The patriotic poet sings again of wars and dangers imminent, but it is no godless song of a thoughtless nation entering upon war with a light heart.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—a supplication to GOD in behalf of the people that suffered affliction, and a prophecy concerning the dispersion of the enemies of the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—We know of no period in the history of Israel when all the various tribes here enumerated were united together for the extermination of their enemy. The annals

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 18.

have preserved no record of a confederacy so extensive. Hence it has been assumed that the enumeration in the Psalm is merely designed to subserve the purposes of poetry, to heighten the colouring, to represent the danger as even greater and more formidable than it really was.

*The Whole Psalm.*—Charles Kingsley, in his great piece of historical painting, ‘Hypatia,’ gives a graphic picture of the preaching of St. Augustine, which no one at all acquainted with either his exposition of the Psalms, of the Gospel according to St. John, or, indeed, of any of his writings, will think at all exaggerated. He was preaching to a mixed multitude; he, the master of ancient rhetoric, the courtly and learned student, had before him not merely an assemblage of monks, but of rough soldiers—Thracians, Gauls, Belgians, and others. Certainly, one attentive listener wondered what the great Bishop of Hippo could have to say to these, and then, when he took his text from a Psalm he had just read—one of the battle Psalms concerning Moab and Amalek, one of the old battle-cries of Palestine—he wondered what he would have to say about that. And then he seemed to start lamely enough, in spite of the exquisite grace of his voice, the beauty of his language, and the epigrammatic terseness of his sentences. His treatment of his text at first seemed like fanciful allegorizing of the Psalm, and yet somehow there began to look out a great comprehensiveness of purpose, so that the apparent foolish allegorizing presently became very obviously personal, and although the Edomites had been made to put on their name to signify one sort of sin, the Ammonites another, and the Amalekites another, the hearer and all the hearers began to wince, and very soon to confess that, whether Augustine knew truths for all men or not, he knew sins for all men, for himself as well as his hearers.

And it soon became clear that there was in the mind of the Father a real, vital, organic connection with what seemed to be an arbitrary allegory, while all the outward people of the Psalm represented really the powers and people of the soul; and his



hearers were taught that they were weak against Moors and earthly enemies, because they were weak against enemies more deadly than Moors, and that they could not fight for GOD outwardly while they were fighting against Him inwardly. He would not go forth with their hosts—how could He?—when He was not amongst their hosts. He, a Spirit, must dwell in their spirits, and the shout of a King would be among them, and one of them should chase a thousand.

We have always regarded this passage in 'Hypatia' as a fine reproduction of the style of St. Augustine in dealing with texts, and it is very interesting to notice it, for this great master of Western theology has, more or less unconsciously, ruled the method of the pulpit from his time, and it is only in ours that it has known decay or decline.\*

*Benedict Biscop* was a Saxon of noble descent, who held office under King Oswy, and had been endowed by him with an estate suitable to his dignity. At the age of twenty-five he renounced the secular life, and left home, kindred and country for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, declining marriage in the flesh that he might follow the Virgin Lamb to the heavenly country. He received the tonsure at a famous monastery at Lerins, a small island lying off the south coast of France. On his return to his native Northumbria, the King, Egfrid, gave him some land on the north side of the mouth of the River Wear on which to build a monastery. Later on the King made him a further grant at the mouth of the Tyne to build a second monastery. This was Jarrow.

Benedict during the last years of his life was afflicted with paralysis. Three years he survived in entire helplessness, the whole lower part of his body being, as it were, dead. . . . It was a cold and stormy night in January when it became clear that the end was near at hand. The brethren met in the church to solace their grief by singing psalms, while some remained with the dying father. All the night through, to

\* *The Pulpit, Ancient and Modern*, by Paxton Hood, chap. viii.

soothe his pain, the Gospel was read by a presbyter. When the hour of his departure drew near, he received the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the LORD as provision for his last journey. Then he quietly passed away. It was hailed as an indication that his exit had been guarded from the assaults of evil spirits, that at the moment of his death they were singing in the Church the 82nd Psalm (our 83rd), in which we see the enemies of GOD, plotting against the Church and every believing soul, put to utter confusion by the LORD, to whom none is to be compared, who only is the Most High over all the earth.\*

*Two Cardinals of mediæval times* (Joannes Vitalis and Hugo of St. Cher) interpret this text of the nepotism of great nobles, ecclesiastical and lay, making the dignities, benefices and goods of the Church the hereditary feoffs of their families, the appanages of their children; and the latter of them applies his censure more particularly to the greed of the Roman Court of his day, averring that the Romans not only kept the Popedom in their own hands, but nominated some of themselves to every vacant prebend in Christendom, to the injury of episcopal rights and the ruin of the Church. Lorinus hints at this passage, but is too discreet to quote it, recommending his hearers to peruse it for themselves.†

*Verse 13. O my God, make them like unto a wheel, and as the stubble before the wind.*—An Eastern traveller, formerly resident in Syria, sends the following illustration of the term ‘a rolling thing,’ occurring in these passages: ‘What are these light balls that come rolling before the wind over the plain of Syria, leaping, bounding, hurrying on, driven by the eddying blast, charging in our face, and frightening our sober horses? They are, probably, the “rolling thing” mentioned by Isaiah, and also, we think, by David. “GOD shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the

\* *Diocesan History of Durham*, p. 72.

† *Neale's Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 31.

whirlwind" (Isaiah xvii. 13). So in the thirteenth verse of Psalm lxxxiii., "*O my God, make them like a wheel (or rolling thing), as the stubble before the wind.*" This is just like a modern Arab imprecation, "May you be whirled like the *Akkul* before the wind, until you are caught in the thorns, or plunged in the sea." The *Akkul*, the "rolling thing," the Hebrew *gulgal*, is the wild artichoke. This vegetable is chewed by the native Syrians, although it is very insipid. The plant, in growing, sends out numerous shoots of equal size, which form into a kind of ball, about a foot in diameter. When the sap of the vegetable ceases in autumn, and the whole plant is dry and brittle, the stem easily breaks off at the ground, so that a blast of wind severs the ball from the root, and sends it adrift. Then hundreds and thousands come bounding over the plain, along with the chaff of the threshing-floors, to the great perturbation of the brute creation and the annoyance of travellers. So are the wicked when GOD forces them from all restraints of conscience, and sends them adrift, "seeking rest, and finding none," till they fall into some mischief, and miserably perish.'

*Verse 16. Then understood I the end of these men.*—There is a famous story of Providence in Bradwardine to this purpose: A certain hermit that was much tempted, and was utterly unsatisfied concerning the providence of GOD, resolved to journey from place to place till he met with someone who could satisfy him. An angel in the shape of a man joined himself with him, telling him that he was sent from GOD to satisfy him in his doubts of Providence. The first night they lodged at the house of a very holy man, and they spent their time in discourses of heaven, and praises of GOD, and were entertained with a great deal of freedom and joy. In the morning, when they departed, the angel took with him a great cup of gold. The next night they came to the house of another holy man, who made them very welcome, and exceedingly rejoiced in their society and discourse. The angel,

notwithstanding, at his departure killed an infant in the cradle, which was his only son, he having been for many years before childless, and therefore was a very fond father of this child. The third night they came to another house, where they had like free entertainment as before. The master of the family had a steward whom he highly prized, and told them how happy he accounted himself in having such a faithful servant. Next morning he sent this his steward with them part of the way, to direct them therein. As they were going over the bridge the angel flung the steward into the river and drowned him. The last night they came to a very wicked man's house, where they had very untoward entertainment; yet the angel, next morning, gave him the cup of gold. All this being done, the angel asked the hermit whether he understood those things? He answered his doubts of Providence were increased, not resolved, for he could not understand why he should deal so hardly with those holy men, who received them with so much love and joy, and yet give such a gift to that wicked man who used them so unworthily. The angel said, 'I will now expound these things unto you. The first house where we came the master of it was a holy man; yet, drinking in that cup every morning, it being too large, it did somewhat unfit him for holy duties, though not so much that others or himself did perceive it; so I took it away, since it is better for him to lose the cup of gold than his temperance. The master of the family where we lay the second night was a man given much to prayer and meditation, and spent much time in holy duties, and was very liberal to the poor all the time he was childless; but as soon as he had a son he grew so fond of it, and spent so much time in playing with it, that he exceedingly neglected his former holy exercise, and gave but little to the poor, thinking he could never lay up enough for his child; therefore I have taken the infant to heaven, and left him to serve GOD better on earth. The steward, whom I did drown, had plotted to kill his master the night following; and as to that wicked man to whom I gave the cup of gold,

he was to have nothing in the other world, I therefore gave him something in this, which, notwithstanding, will prove a snare to him, for he will be more intemperate; and “let him that is filthy be filthy still.”’

The truth of this story I affirm not, but the moral is very good, for it shows that GOD is an indulgent Father to the Saints when He most afflicts them, and that when He sets the wicked on high, He sets them also in slippery places, and their prosperity is their ruin.\*

## PSALM LXXXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Longing for the house of GOD and for the happiness of dwelling there.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Pearl of Psalms. If the xxiii. be the most popular, the ciii. the most joyful, the cxix. the most deeply experimental, the li. the most plaintive, this is one of the most sweet of the Psalms of peace.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the sons of Korah. The message of David when he went from Zion to worship in the House of GOD. Also said to be a prophecy concerning the MESSIAH, and concerning His Church.

*Origin* (Perowne).—In its general character this Psalm very nearly resembles Psalms xlii., xliii. Like that, it is the ardent outpouring of a man of no common depth and tenderness of feeling, the expression of a devoted love for the house and worship of JEHOVAH. Like that, it is written under circumstances of suffering and depression, at a time when the Psalmist was in exile or at a distance from the Sanctuary. Like that, it touches and pictures the crowd of pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. In both Psalms there is the same deep pathos, the same ‘exquisite delicacy and tenderness of

\* *A Treatise of the Power of Godliness*, by Thomas White.

thought ;' in both, the same strain of remembrance and of anticipation, half sad, half joyful. . . .

From the general likeness in structure and sentiment, and colouring of language, and yet perfect distinctness and originality of the two Poems, Ewald is doubtless right in concluding that both are by the same author. Whether he is right in inferring from verse nine (ten) of this Psalm that the author was a king, has been questioned. Ewald supposes the king to have been Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah).

*The Whole Psalm.*—See Francis Henry Lyte's beautiful version of this Psalm (No. 240, Hymns Ancient and Modern).

‘ Pleasant are Thy courts above,  
In the land of light and love ;  
Pleasant are Thy courts below,  
In this land of sin and woe :  
Oh, my spirit longs and fains  
For the converse of Thy Saints,  
For the brightness of Thy Face,  
For Thy fulness, GOD of grace.’

*Psalm of Preparation.*—The Psalms present the Christian worshipper with a wealth of strains which fit themselves in every part of his connections. The 84th Psalm is his preparation before, the 150th his thanksgiving after. The 23rd is literally his Communion Hymn.

*In Church: the Greek Church.*—This Psalm, together with the 23rd and 145th, is sung by the choir in the Græco-Russian Church at the consecration of a Church, and at the washing of the Altar Throne (for particulars of this see on Psalm xxiii.).

It is also one of the Psalms at the Burial of Priests in the Holy Eastern Church.

In the *Roman Church* at the Consecration of Bishops this Psalm may be used.

*Verse 1.* *O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of hosts !*—Paula, the friend of Jerome, was seen by those who

were gathered around her in her last hour to move her lips, and when they stooped to listen, they heard the words: '*How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.*'\*

*Verses 1, 2. O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord.*—At an early period in his life, before 1591, when he took his doctor's degree, S. Francis de Sales' career was threatened to be cut short by a serious illness; rheumatic fever, induced, perhaps, by too great carelessness of personal comfort, laid him low in exceeding suffering, and at last the poor Abbé Déage, hearing from several physicians whom he had summoned that there was little hope of their patient's recovery, found himself constrained to tell the pupil—whom he loved as his own child—that his days were numbered. 'My son,' he said, striving to conceal his emotion, 'if GOD saw fit to call you to Himself, you would accept His Holy Will meekly, would you not?' Francis instantly caught the Abbé's meaning, and replied: 'Most surely. GOD's Will be done, whether for life or death. It is very sweet to live for CHRIST, and very sweet, too, to die for Him.' And he quoted the words:

'Sive mori me, Christe, jubes, seu vivere maris,  
Dulce mihi tecum vivere; dulce mori.'

After a while he went on pouring out his soul in the words of Holy Writ, '*O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord.*† All my days will I wait until my appointed time come. The LORD is my light and my salvation; of whom then shall I be afraid?‡ Blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD his GOD.§ Seeing him so calm and restful, the Abbé Déage ventured to ask as to Francis's wishes in the event of his death, which were immediately given, and then the patient received the last Sacraments, and each hour was

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 38.

† Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2.

‡ Psalm xxvii. 1.

§ Psalm cxlvi. 5.

looked upon as his last. But GOD willed otherwise; the malady subsided, and Francis recovered perfect health, and with it a firmer conviction than ever in his vocation to the priesthood.\*

*Charles Kingsley.*—It was a happy circumstance, and an important one to Charles Kingsley, that Chester was the first cathedral with which he was connected. Choral services had hitherto had little attraction for him, the slovenliness which in bygone years characterized them having shocked him from the æsthetic, and still more from the religious, point of view. Had this been the case at Chester, it would have been a serious drawback to the happiness of his life while there. But there all was in harmony with his ideal of Christian worship. And it filled the new Canon's heart with thankfulness that the lot had fallen to him in a cathedral where the dignity of the services, the reverence of all who conducted them, from its visitor, Bishop Jacobson, much beloved, down to the 'little chorister' boys, impressed him deeply; where not only the Dean, but all the officials, worked earnestly to one end; and he could say with truth, as day by day he entered the venerable cloisters, '*How amiable are Thy dwellings, O Lord, Thou God of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord, for one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.*'†

*Verse 3. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young, even Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.*—Crashaw, the poet, was a great friend of the Ferrars at Little Gidding, and his tender, affectionate, enthusiastic spirit was at once attracted by their life of devotion. At Gidding he found his ideal 'Religious House' in a visible shape.

\* *S. Francis de Sales*, p. 27.

† *Charles Kingsley*, p. 238.



'Walks and unshorn woods, and souls, just so  
 Unforced and genuine ; but not shady tho' ;

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Our lodging hard, and homely as our fare,  
 That chaste and cheap as the few clothes we wear.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 A hasty portion of prescribed sleep,  
 Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep,  
 And sing, and sigh, and work, and sleep again,  
 Still rowling a round spear of still returning pain.  
 Hands full of hearty labours. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Reverent discipline, and religious fear,  
 And soft obedience finds sweet hiding here,  
 Silence and sacred rest ; peace and pure joys.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers  
 Her kindred with the stars, nor basely hovers  
 Below, but meditates her immortal way,  
 Home to the original source of light and intellectual day.'

Crashaw's sympathy with the life of Gidding was not expressed in words alone. He was himself often to be found among those

'Holy hands and humble hearts'

of whom he sings, delighting to join in their prayers and watchings, and when in Cambridge his leisure time was spent 'in the temple of God, under His wing,' in 'St. Marie's Church, near St. Peter's College. There he lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels ; there he made his rest more gladly than *David's swallow near the house of God*, where, like a primitive saint, he offered more prayers in the night than others in the day.'\*

*Verse 4. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house : they will be always praising Thee.—St. Brendan.*—They sailed away from the Paradise of Birds with forty days' provision, the man being their guide (the man who always tended them, and who now said he would lead them to the land promised to the saints), till after forty days they came at evening to a great darkness which lay round the Promised Land. But after sailing through it for an hour, a great light shone round them,

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 238.

and the boat stopped at a shore. And when landed, they saw a spacious land, full of trees, bearing fruit as in autumn time. And they walked about that land forty days, eating of the fruit and drinking of the fountains, and found no end thereof. And there was no night there, but light shone like the light of the sun. At last they came to a great river, which they could not cross, so that they could not find out the extent of the land. And as they were pondering over this, a youth with shining face, and fair to look upon, met them and kissed them with great joy, calling them each by his name, and said: 'Brethren, peace be with you, and with all that follow the peace of CHRIST.' And after that, '*Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall be for ever praising Thee.*'

Then he told St. Brendan that that was the land he had been seeking for seven years, and that he must now return to his own country, taking of the fruits of the land, and of its precious gems, as much as his ship could carry, for the days of his departing were at hand, when he should sleep in peace with his holy brethren.\*

*Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house.* — That year he received the tonsure, which was a great joy to him. He wished very much for it, but did not dare ask for it, thinking himself unworthy. M. Gosselin (his director at that time) took the initiative. M. Borderies, afterwards Bishop of Versailles, was the 'father and master of his soul,' while M. de Rohan was an 'incomparable friend and protector' so says the biographer. The Duc de Rohan, who was then a deacon waiting for priest's orders, wrote to him the following affectionate letter the night before :

' . . . You are about to take your first step towards the altar of GOD, to GOD who giveth joy to your youth. Oh, my dear Felix, rejoice with gladness and love for our dear LORD, who treats you with such mercy. In a few hours He will be the portion of your inheritance. . . . His house will be your

\* *The Hermits*, by C. Kingsley, p. 276.

refuge, His altar your delight and your repose. Happy those who make their dwelling-place with Thee, O LORD!—*Beati qui habitant in domo tuâ Domine.* Oh, my dear friend, what a beautiful, happy, sublime vocation! How delicious are Thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts. Say this with the prophet-king: Thy altars, O my GOD. You see them from afar off. I have already passed the first stages; one step only remains for me to find myself in the very face of my GOD. Would that I had many worlds to offer Him in sacrifice, to lay at His feet, and at the foot of His altar, on that day!

‘And now, my dear child, courage, generosity! Go forward with confidence towards the house of the LORD. Draw near to His altar to lay there the spoils of the world and clothe yourself with JESUS CHRIST. In Him, for Him, with Him, I embrace you with all the tenderness of my heart. Again, I close this letter by repeating the words: “*Become a saint.*”’\*

*Verse 6. Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well.*—All the ancient versions render ‘Baca’ (misery) by ‘weeping.’ Burckhardt tells us that he found a valley in the neighbourhood of Sinai which bore the name of ‘the valley of weeping.’†

*Verse 11. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God: than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.*—Bossuet and Bonar remark that this sentiment would come appropriately from the lips of the Korahites, some of whom were employed to keep the gates of the sanctuary (1 Chron. ix. 19). But the Korahite psalmist spoke in the name of the Israelite pilgrims, and the *visiting* in GOD’S house contrasts better with the *dwelling* in the tents of wickedness.‡

On the love which the Saints have shown for the lowliest tasks in GOD’S house, let us hear St. Paulinus of Nola:

\* *Life of Mgr. Dupanloup*, Bishop of Orleans, p. 43.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 120.

‡ Thrupp on *The Psalms*, vol. i., p. 38.

‘ There easy yokes, light burden, service soft  
 We shall have with Thee, Lord, although no need  
 Hast Thou, the Righteous, of ungodly slaves ;  
 But Thou wilt suffer, and wilt love all those  
 Vowed to Thee by CHRIST’s gift to serve at morn,  
 Cleansing Thy gates and thresholds, and at night  
 Keeping pure watch by turns, and in this charge  
 Closing a holy life with worn-out frame.’

Even heathens were not insensible to this kind of happiness. The Greek poet (Euripid., ‘ Ion,’ 128) makes his hero sing, as he sweeps the threshold of Apollo’s temple :

‘ A pleasant task, O Phœbus, I discharge  
 Before thine house, in reverence of thy seat  
 Of prophecy, an honoured task to me,  
 To give my hand in service to the gods,  
 Not unto mortals, but immortal ones,  
 And labouring in such blessed tasks as these  
 I weary not.’\*

*Verse 12. No good thing shall He withhold from them that live a godly life.*—When Thomas Carlyle was leaving in doubt and despondency his quiet mountain home at Craigenputtock for the untried tumult of London, he quoted part of this verse for comfort to his brother Alexander and himself, but mingled it with the words of another passage, Rom. viii. 28. It must be confessed that his accuracy in Scripture knowledge is not so remarkable as in some other matters, and he himself would have owned that the exact words of the Psalmist are more suited to his philosophy than those of the Apostle. Yet his faith in its core is Christian : ‘ I turned my thoughts heavenward, for it is in heaven only that I find any basis for our poor pilgrimage on this earth. Surely as the blue dome of heaven encircles us all, so does the providence of the LORD of heaven. “ *He will withhold no good things from those that love Him.*” This, as it was the ancient Psalmist’s faith, let it likewise be ours. It is the Alpha and the Omega, I reckon, of all possessions that can belong to man.’†

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 50.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 112.

## PSALM LXXXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Petition of the hitherto favoured people for a restoration of favour.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The prayer of a patriot for his afflicted country.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of the sons of Korah ; the recompense and the deliverance which they had from God, and a prophecy concerning the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There seems every reason to conclude that this Psalm was written after the return of the exiles from the Babylonish Captivity.

*In Church*.—This is the third Psalm at Matins for Christmas Day. The Nativity of our LORD was the true turning away the captivity of His people, inasmuch as He came ‘to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.’ And as His first coming evermore includes and looks onwards to the second, so in this Psalm the prophet looks beyond the present deliverance to one more complete and blessed still, even to the setting up on earth of that kingdom of righteousness and peace which, however dim it may have appeared in vision to his eyes, has been now brought near in all its loveliness to those who wait for it and are hastening its coming.\*

*Verse 11.* *Truth shall flourish out of the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.*—This is the verse which, in the Vulgate form of the past tense, supplies the Antiphon for the Psalm in its use throughout the Western Church on Christmas Day. *Truth*, the Very Truth, the Son of GOD, *hath sprung out of the earth*, hath been born of His Virgin Mother ;

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 169.

*righteousness looked down from heaven* when the Eternal Word stooped from His throne of glory, and united Himself in hypostatic union to the nature of man.\*

### PSALM LXXXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer of a persecuted saint.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This Psalm would seem to have been specially known as David's Prayer, even as the ninetieth is the 'Prayer of Moses.'

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he built a house to the LORD ; a prophecy also of the calling of the Gentiles ; and, again, the special prayer of the righteous man.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is the only one in the Third Book ascribed to David. That it was written by him we can hardly suppose. Many of the expressions are, no doubt, such as we meet with in his Psalms, but there are also many which are borrowed from other passages of Scripture. Indeed, the numerous adaptations of phrases employed by other writers may reasonably be taken as evidence of a much later date.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed in the Latin and Sarum Use for the Festival of the Epiphany, or Manifestation of CHRIST to the Gentiles (see verse 9) : 'All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee.'†

It is appointed in the Roman Office for the Visitation of the Sick.‡

*The Whole Psalm*.—The great scholar, Casaubon, whose life has recently been made of such interest to Oxford men by a writer who singularly combines industry with refinement, was

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 62.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 136.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 279.

going to the Huguenot worship at Charenton in an open barge, August 20th, 1668. A heavy boat ran in astern. His wife fell over into the Seine, but he pulled her in after almost losing his own life. At the same time he dropped into the river his Psalm-book, the gift of his wife, his constant companion for twenty-two years, out of which they were singing the 86th Psalm when the accident occurred. 'I could not but remember,' says Casaubon in his journals, 'that place of Ambrose where he says—This is the peculiarity of the Psalter, that everyone can use its words, as if they were peculiarly and individually his own.'\*

*Spurgeon* trenchantly says: 'The name of GOD occurs very frequently in this Psalm; sometimes it is JEHOVAH, but more commonly Adonai, which it is believed by many learned scholars was written by the Jewish transcribers, instead of the sublimer title, because their superstitious dread led them to do so; we, labouring under no such tormenting fear, rejoice in Jehovah our GOD. It is singular that those who were so afraid of their God that they dared not write His name, had yet so little godly fear that they dared to alter His word.'

*Verse 9. All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy Name.*—St. Augustine applies this verse to a refutation of the Donatists, who held that the true faith of the Catholic Church was limited to one corner of Africa.

*Verse 11. O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name.*

'Give Me thine heart but as I gave it thee;  
Or give it Me at least as I  
Have given Mine  
To purchase thine.  
I halv'd it not when I did die,  
But gave Myself to set thee free.

---

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 66.

- ‘The heart I gave thee was a living heart ;  
 And when thy heart by sin was slain,  
 I laid down Mine  
 To ransom thine,  
 That thy dead heart might live again,  
 And live entirely perfect, not in part.
- ‘But whilst thine heart’s divided, it is dead :  
 Dead unto Me, unless it live  
 To Me alone,  
 It is all one  
 To keep all, and a part to give ;  
 For what’s a body worth without an head ?
- ‘Yet this is worse, that what thou keep’st from Me  
 Thou dost bestow upon My foes ;  
 And those not Mine  
 Alone, but thine ;  
 The proper causes of thy woes,  
 From whom I gave My life to set thee free.
- ‘Have I betroth’d thee to Myself, and shall  
 The devil and the world intrude  
 Upon My right  
 E’en in My sight ?  
 Think not thou canst Me so delude :  
 I will have none, unless I may have all.
- ‘I made it all, I gave it all to thee,  
 I gave all that I had for it ;  
 If I must lose,  
 I’d rather choose  
 My interest in all to quit :  
 Or keep it whole, or give it whole to Me.’\*

## PSALM LXXXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The city of the new birth of the nations.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A song in honour of Zion or Jerusalem.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning the redemption of Jerusalem.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There are two principal epochs to which the Psalm may be referred :

\* *The School of the Heart*, by Francis Quarles.



1. Its tone falls in with that of some of the prophecies of Isaiah. Hence it has been referred, not without reason, to the reign of Hezekiah. Some have supposed that it was a song of triumph, written, like Psalms xlvi.-xlviii., after the defeat of Sennacherib; others, more probably, that it was a hymn composed for some solemn reception of proselytes into the Church, 'the Psalmist and his brother Levites exulting in this admission of converts as they would do in a national victory.'

2. Calvin and others refer the Psalm to a time subsequent to the return from the Captivity. It was designed, as Calvin thinks, to console the exiles, whose hearts must have died down within them as they thought of the present enfeebled, impoverished, defenceless state of the city.

*The Whole Psalm.*—We may justly say with St. Augustine that it is 'brevis numero verborum, magnus pondere sententiarum,' and exclaim when we have read it, 'In small bulk great heart.'\*

*The conception of a New Birth*, and of spiritual life sustained and strengthened by a Eucharistic Feast, is in the Psalter. Every citizen of the new Sion is solemnly introduced into it, and registered among its people by an act which is one of New Birth.

'This man was born there,  
And of Sion it shall be said,  
This and that man was born there.  
The LORD shall rehearse when He writeth up the people,  
That this man was born there.'

And just as our LORD'S saying, 'Except a man be born again of water and the SPIRIT,' refers to and interprets the 87th Psalm, so His teaching on the other Sacrament of the Gospel includes a reference to another Psalm.†

*Verse 1. Her foundations are upon the holy hills.*—'There

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 134.

† *Ibid.*

is a curious Rabbinical belief that in the days of Messiah Mount Sion will be exalted by the heaping up of Sinai, Tabor, and Carmel, as a base beneath it, while restored Jerusalem crowns the height. And this they take as the sense of that prophecy, 'The mountains of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.'\*

### PSALM LXXXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Plaintive prayer of a patient sufferer like Job.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—If ever there was a song of sorrow and a Psalm of sadness, this is one.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning the people in Babylon.

*Origin* (Perowne).—As to the author, and the circumstances under which the Psalm was written, various conjectures have been made, but they are really worth nothing. One thing only is clear, that it is not a national Psalm, and that it does not deplore the Babylonish Captivity, or any other *national* calamity. It is throughout personal and individual. Uzziah when smitten with leprosy, Jeremiah in the dungeon, Hezekiah in sickness, Job in his sufferings—to all these in turn has the authorship of the Psalm been assigned.

*In Church*.—A proper Psalm for Good Friday.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm stands alone in all the Psalter for the unrelieved gloom, the hopeless sorrow of its tone. Even the very saddest of the others, and the Lamentations themselves, admit some variation of key, some strains of hopefulness; here only all is darkness to the close.†

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 83.

† Dr. Neale on *The Psalms*, vol. iii., p. 92.

*Henry of Navarre.*—It was this Psalm (or part of it), in the French metrical version, that Henry of Navarre was heard repeating to himself, and that D'Aubigné and D'Armagnac hailed as a sign of returning grace.

Henry of Navarre (afterwards Henry IV. of France) had so lived at Court that he was supposed by the most clear-sighted to be just such another as his weak, easy-going, dissipated father. One night, the 2nd of February, 1676, he had a slight feverish attack. Two of his own gentlemen, Agrippa d'Aubigné and the Count of Armagnac, were sitting with him, and had drawn his curtains, thinking him dying, when they heard him sigh, and then chant to himself the Huguenot version of part of the 88th Psalm.

‘ Tu m’otes, pour comble d’ennuie,  
L’ami que j’avais cru fidèle  
C’est en vain que ma voix l’appelle  
Dans l’état funeste où, je suis.  
Hélas ! au fort de ma détresse  
Chacun se cache et me délaisse.’

This was so unlike the laughing, merry trifler that Henri usually appeared, that D'Aubigné exclaimed : ‘ Then can it be, sire, that the Good SPIRIT still dwells and works in you? If so, why are you a captive here obeying a woman, while your own people are fighting? Those who guarded your cradle had far rather fight under your standards than those of Alençon. As to ourselves, sire, we had made up our minds to flee to-morrow ; and those who may succeed us may not scruple to use the poison or the knife.’ All night they talked, and Henri came to the decision that this was the time to shake off the yoke he had endured for nearly four years. Accordingly he escaped from Court and went to his own counties of Béarn and Foix.\*

*Verse 9. My sight faileth for very trouble.*—The first clause seems literally to mean the soreness and dimness of sight

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. clxx.

caused by excessive weeping, and is so taken by many of the commentators, and Lorinus aptly quotes a Latin poet (Catullus) in illustration :

‘ Nor my sad eyes to pine with constant tears  
Could cease.’\*

*Verse 11* (Bible version). *Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction?*—The beauty and pathos of this Psalm struck Wordsworth, as given in the words of the Scottish version. The passage is in the funeral song in the *Solitary* :

‘ A solemn voice,  
Of several voices in one solemn sound,  
Was heard ascending : mournful, deep and slow,  
The cadence as of Psalms—a funeral dirge !  
We listened, looking down upon the host,  
But seeing no one : meanwhile, from below,  
The strain continued, spiritual as before ;  
And now distinctly could I recognise  
These words :—*Shall in the grave Thy love be known ?  
In death Thy faithfulness ?*†

*Verse 13. Early shall my prayer come before Thee.*—

‘ When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave  
To do the like ; our bodies but forerun  
The spirit’s duty. True hearts spread and heave  
Unto their GOD, as flowers do to the sun.  
Give Him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep  
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

‘ Yet never sleep the sun up. Prayer should  
Dawn with the day. There are set, awful hours  
Twixt heaven and us. The manna was not good  
After sun-rising ; far-day sullies flowers.  
Rise to prevent the sun ; sleep doth sins glut,  
And heaven’s gate opens when this world’s is shut.’‡

*Verse 15. Even from my youth up Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.*—During his time at Clare, there is no trace of friendships formed by Ferrar among his contemporaries. Perhaps the boy, though so greatly beloved by his elders, was

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 99.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 116.

‡ Henry Vaughan, *Rules and Lessons*.

considered rather old-fashioned and sententious by his young companions. There was a precocious gravity about him; his natural seriousness was deepened by family sorrows. He writes to his parents of his dearest brother Erasmus, and 'your other children that are departed in the LORD,' and we have glimpses of deep melancholy, of an inward strife that rose at times to anguish. 'My soul has been almost rent,' he writes; '*I may truly say that from youth up Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.*' His talents were of a sort to delight his teachers more than his equals.\*

*Verse 15 (LXX. and Vulg.). I am poor and in labours from my youth.*—The nephews and kindred of Popes and Cardinals cannot apply this verse to themselves, caustically remarks Cardinal Hugo, for they are rich, and get benefices from their cradles.†

## PSALM LXXXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for a renewal of the mercies of David.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The majestic Covenant Psalm.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning the people in Babylon.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There can be little doubt that this Psalm was written in the latter days of the Jewish monarchy, when the throne of David had fallen, or was already tottering to its fall, and when the prospect for the future was so dark that it seemed as if God had forgotten His covenant and His promise.

Tholuck's conjecture is not improbable, that the king of whom the Psalm speaks (verse 45) [46] is the youthful Jehoiachin, who, after a reign of three months, was deposed and

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 15.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 104.

imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar, and of whom it was said that no man of his seed should 'prosper, sitting on the throne of David.'

*In Church.*—This Psalm is the first at Evensong on Christmas Day.

The sadness which extends over much of this Psalm might, at first sight, seem to deprive it of any right to mingle with the happy hymns of Christians. This would be so were its significance limited to occasions for which it was originally composed. But it looks far beyond, and it is not too much to say that, of all Psalms, this is the most appropriate for the Festival of the Nativity, as no other expresses in terms so plain the promise of the Messiah, answering to the message of the angel to the Blessed Virgin: 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end' (St. Luke i. 32, 33).

David's kingdom was figurative of CHRIST'S kingdom, and promises which were made by the faithfulness of GOD to the one shall ultimately find accomplishment in the other. But the covenant has two sides; it is necessary, for the fulfilment of these promises, that the seed of David should be true and loyal to Him who gave David the kingdom, so the spiritual seed must be faithful. Thus, in the midst of our Christian joy, this Psalm stands as a merciful warning lest, after all the Incarnation has wrought for us, we should, through unfaithfulness, lose our crown.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—The present Psalm makes a pair with the preceding one. It is a spiritual Allegro to that *Penseroso*.<sup>†</sup>

The chapel of *Thomas Bradbury*—'Bold Bradbury,' as he was called, 'as much a man of war in theology as in politics'

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 183.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 141.

—stood in New Street, Fetter Lane, and was remarkable as being the place where George I. was first prayed for as Sovereign of Great Britain. Queen Anne died on the morning of Sunday, August 14, 1714. It was known she was *in extremis*, and Bishop Burnet had promised to send word to Bradbury the moment she expired. The preconcerted signal, the dropping a white handkerchief from the gallery, was given before the sermon was finished, and in the concluding prayer Bradbury invoked the Divine blessing on ‘George, King of Great Britain and Ireland,’ and then gave out the 89th Psalm :

‘A man of might I have erect  
Your King and guide to be,  
And set him up whom I elect  
Among the folk to me.’

Another version of the story—that the signal came before the sermon began, and that Bradbury gave out as his text 2 Kings ix. 34, ‘Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her, for she is a king’s daughter’—may safely be rejected. The Fetter Lane chapel has quite disappeared, and so has that in New Court, Carey Street, Chancery Lane, to which Bradbury removed on the occurrence of the schism in his congregation between the Trinitarians and the Arianisers, already mentioned, by which it has been said ‘perished the good accord of English dissent.’\*

*Verse 1. My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord.*—Chancellor Le Tellier (the friend of Bossuet) uttered these words on his death-bed. It was he who officially signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (granted by Henri IV., April 13, 1598, and revoked by Louis XIV., October 22, 1685). Bossuet says of him, ‘No good man ever trusted in God’s grace with a firmer confidence, no sinner ever asked forgiveness more humbly.’ Surrounded by his children, and not afraid of weakness in enjoying their tenderness, the old man cried out amid his bodily pains, ‘I do not crave deliverance from

\* *The Guardian.*

suffering, but I crave for the sight of GOD'; and another time he exclaimed, 'I thank GOD to allow my body to fail before my mind!' His last breath was drawn as he began to utter the Psalm '*Misericordias Domini in æternam cantabo.*'\*

*Verse 15 (Bible Version). Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.*—He who blows the horn or trumpet is called 'Baal Tokea,' the master of blowing. The 'Baal Tokea,' before commencing to blow the trumpet, offers up an extraordinary prayer. After this prayer, and the repetition of some passages of Scripture, four blasts of the trumpet are given, after which the whole congregation shout, '*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound,*' etc. (Psalm lxxxix. 15-18). The first is 'Tekeah,' a long-drawn-out sound; the next 'Shevorim,' a broken sound; then 'Teruah,' which is a loud blast, and lastly 'Tekeah' again.

These four sounds are repeated many times over, with an alternate prayer, and this service is closed by saying: 'And then may it be acceptable before Thy presence, O LORD! my GOD, and the GOD of my ancestors, that the angels which go forth from the Shophar, and from the Tekeah, and from the Shevorah, and from the Teruah, that they bring them forth before the throne of Thy glory, and that they may plead good on our behalf as an atonement for all our sins.†'

*Verses 16, 17. Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee; they shall walk in the light of Thy countenance. Their delight shall be daily in Thy name, and in Thy righteousness shall they make their boast.*'—There is a two-fold Rabbinical tradition respecting these verses, that they were the original prayer recited by Moses as a blessing on the work of making the Tabernacle and its ornaments, and that subsequently he employed them as the usual formula of benediction

\* *Life of Bossuet*, p. 319.

† *The Jewish New Year (Sunday at Home, 1876, p. 570).*



for any newly undertaken task, whenever God's *glorious majesty* was to be consulted for an answer by Urim and Thummim.\*

*Verse 27. But Thou hast abhorred and forsaken Thine anointed, and art displeased at him.*—The boldness of the expostulation has scandalized the Jewish interpreters. Aben Ezra tells the story of a wise and pious Jew in Spain, who would never read nor listen to this Psalm, and he and others would get rid of the offence by taking verses 37-44 as expressing the scoff of enemies, not the reproach of the Psalmist.†

\* Oliver's *Syriac Version*, p. 190.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 153.



## BOOK IV.

### PSALMS XC.—CVI.

‘The Fourth Book of Psalms, which begins with the ninetieth and ends with the hundred and sixth—seventeen in all—is remarkable in this respect, that all but three Psalms are anonymous in the original.’—‘*The Companion to the Psalter*,’ by Rev. J. Gurnhill.

‘This book has a very comprehensive character . . . it goes back to Moses, and it goes forward to the Captivity, and to the return from it (Ps. cii.). It reaches from Moses to Malachi.’—*Bishop Wordsworth*.



## PSALM XC.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Taking refuge in the loving-kindness of the Eternal One under the wrathful judgment of death.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Moses sings of the frailty of man and the shortness of life, contrasting these with the eternity of God, and founding thereon earnest appeals for compassion.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Moses.

*Origin* (Perowne).—All the ablest critics, even those who, like Ewald and Hupfield, deny the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm, nevertheless admit that in depth and loftiness of thought, in solemnity of feeling, and in majesty of diction, it is worthy of the great Lawgiver and Prophet. . . . There are points of resemblance between the language of the Psalm and expressions occurring in parts of the Pentateuch, and more particularly in Deuteronomy. To those who believe, as I do, that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, they furnish an argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Psalm.

*The Whole Psalm*.—St. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, ‘received the viaticum and extreme unction on St. Matthew’s Day, but survived till the 17th of November. On that day he caused many monks and priests, besides his chaplains, to recite the Divine Office in his chamber. Seeing them weep, he said many tender things to comfort them, and laying his hand upon them one by one, recommended them to the Divine custody.

His voice beginning to fail, he ordered the floor to be swept, and a cross of blessed ashes to be strewed upon it; and whilst the *ninetieth Psalm*, at Compline, was read, would be lifted out of bed and laid upon that cross, in which posture, as he was repeating the canticle, *Nunc Dimittis*, he calmly expired, in the year of our Lord 1200, of his age sixty, of his episcopal charge fifteen.\*

*In Church.*—The Church appoints this Psalm, called by Herder ‘that ancient Psalm, that hymn of eternity,’ to be used for the ministration of spiritual comfort to the Christian mourner at the Burial of the Dead.†

*The Whole Psalm.*—‘John Hampden,’ says the inscription on the monument in Chalgrove Field, ‘died while fighting in defence of the free Monarchy and antient liberties of England, June 18th, 1643.’ He received his wound from the bursting of his pistol on Chalgrove Field; but he died in the town of Thame, where he received his early education, and where he had been conveyed after the battle. On the Sunday following his death, attended by such of the Rebel soldiery as could be conveniently assembled, the corpse of Hampden was carried from the Market-place at Thame to its resting place among the Chiltern Hills. Through the adjacent village of Kingsly towards Princes Risborough, and then along the old Icknield Way up to Great Hampden, with arms reversed and to the sound of muffled drum, they bore their burden.

He was buried in the chancel of Great Hampden Church. Those who followed as mourners sang the *ninetieth Psalm*, *Domine refugium*, as they carried the corpse into Church, and *Judica me Deus*, the *forty-third Psalm*, on leaving the grave.‡

It has been observed that the *Ninetieth Psalm* is the prayer

\* Alban Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*.

† Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 145.

‡ *History of the Church of the B. V. Mary of Thame*, by Dr. Lee, p. 542.

which is read over the mortal dust of some hundreds of the children of men every week in London alone.

When the pious and gallant young Englishman, Hudson, was killed on the Matterhorn in 1865, it was suggested that a short Funeral Service should be held. 'Poor Hudson's Prayer-book,' says the officiating clergyman, 'was produced for the purpose. I read out of it the ninetieth Psalm. Imagine us standing with our guides, in the centre of a snowfield, with that awful mountain above us, under a cloudless sky, in the very sight, as it were, of the Almighty.

'Try and catch the sound of the words :

' " Lord, Thou hast been our refuge in all generations,  
Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the  
world were formed.  
From everlasting to everlasting Thou art GOD." '\*

*Henry Martyn*, as he lay half fainting on his couch, the last Sunday at Cawnpore, asked his friends to sing to him :

' O GOD, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come.'

*Verse 3. Thou turnest man to destruction; again Thou sayest,* <sup>to repentance to be in</sup> *Come again, ye children of men.*—Elishah ben Abuyah, a most learned man, became in after-life an apostate. When he waxed old he was taken sick, and Rabbi Meir (who had been one of his pupils, and who had never failed in the great love which he bore for his teacher), learning of his illness, called upon him. 'Oh, return, return unto thy GOD,' entreated Rabbi Meir. 'What,' exclaimed Elishah, 'return! And could He receive my penitence, the penitence of an apostate who has so rebelled against Him?' 'Is it not written,' said Meir, ' "*Thou turnest man to contrition*"? No matter how the soul of man may be crushed, he can still turn to his GOD and find relief.'

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity.*

Elishah listened to these words, wept bitterly, and died. Not many years after his death his daughters came, poverty-stricken, asking relief from the colleges. 'Remember,' said they, 'the merit of our father's learning, not his conduct.' The colleges listened to the appeal, and supported the daughters of Elishah.\*

*Verse 4. A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, seeing that it is past as a watch in the night.*—The late Dean Alford, in 'The Queen's English,' makes the following useful remark upon this verse. Psalm xc. 4, in the Prayer-Book version, runs thus: 'A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday, *seeing that it is past as a watch in the night.*' Here, of course, *that* is the demonstrative pronoun, and refers to *yesterday*, which has just been spoken of; and it ought, in reading, to have a certain emphasis laid on it. But not unfrequently we hear it read in the responses of the congregation as if it were the conjunction, 'Seeing that is past as a watch in the night.' I remember having some trouble in curing our choristers at Canterbury of singing it thus.†

*Sir John Chardin* observes in a note on this verse, that, as the people of the East have no clocks, the several parts of the day, and of the night, which are small, are given notice of. In the Indies the parts of the night are made known as well by instruments of music, in great cities, as by the rounds of the watchmen, who with cries and small drums give them notice that the fourth part of the night is past. Now, as these cries awaken those who had slept all that quarter part of the night, it appeared to them but a moment.‡

*The Childhood of the World.*—You will ask how it is that we know these remains of early man to be so very, very old.

\* *Talmud*, p. 275.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 188.

‡ Harmer's *Observations*.



To make my reply as clear as possible, I will describe to you one of the many places in which the old bones and weapons have been found. There is a large cavern at Brixham, on the south coast of Devonshire, which was discovered fourteen years ago through the falling in of a part of the roof. The floor is of stalagmite, or particles of lime, which have been brought down from the roof by the dropping of water, and become hardened into stone again. *Stalagmite* comes from a Greek word which means a *drop*. In this floor, which is about one foot in thickness, were found bones of the reindeer and cave bear ; while below it was a red loamy mass, fifteen feet thick in some parts, in which were buried flint flakes, or knives, and bones of the mammoth. Beneath this was a bed of gravel, more than twenty feet thick, in which flint flakes and some small bones were found. Altogether, more than thirty flints were found in the same cave with the bones of bears and woolly elephants ; and as they are known to have been chipped by the hand of man, it is not hard to prove that he lived in this country when those creatures roamed over it.

But what proof have we, you ask, that the bones of these creatures are so very old ?

Apart from the fact that for many centuries no living mammoth has been seen, we have the finding of its bones buried at a goodly depth ; and as it is certain that no one would trouble to dig a grave to put them in, there must be some other cause for the mass of loam under which they are found.

There are several ways by which the various bones may have got into the cave. The creatures to which they belonged may have died on the hillside, and their bones have been washed into the cave ; or they may have sought refuge, or, what in the case I am now describing seems most likely, lived therein ; but be this as it may, we have to account for thirty-five feet of loam and gravel in which their remains are buried.

The agent that thus covered them from view for long, long years is that active tool of nature which before the day when

no living thing was upon the earth, and ever since, has been cutting through rocks, opening the deep valleys, shaping the highest mountains, hollowing out the lowest caverns, and which is carrying the soil from one place to another to form new lands where now the deep sea rolls. It is *water* which carried that deposit into Brixham cavern and covered over the bones, and which, since the day that mammoth and bear and reindeer lived in Devonshire, has scooped out the surrounding valleys 100 feet deeper. And although the time which water takes to deepen a channel, or eat out a cavern, depends upon the speed with which it flows, you may judge that the quickest stream works slowly to those who watch it, when I tell you that the river Thames, flowing at its present rate, takes 11,740 years to scoop out *its valley one foot lower*! Men of science have therefore some reason for believing that the flint weapons were made by men who lived many thousands of years ago.

*'A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past; and as a watch in the night.'*

Science, in thus teaching us the great age of the earth, also teaches us the Eternity of the Ageless God.\*

*Verse 9. We bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.*—There can be little doubt that our forefathers, in and before Shakespeare's time, and even Shakespeare himself, derived, not altogether unprofitably, some portion of their knowledge of Holy Scripture from the exhibitions of religious plays, called miracles or mysteries; and consequently that much which would strike us nowadays as irreverent, or, at best, of questionable propriety when spoken upon the stage, did not appear to them in the same light. I imagine that, when Justice Shallow observed to Silence, his brother justice,

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\* *The Childhood of the World*, chap. viii.

'Death, as the *Psalmist*\* saith, is certain to all ; all shall die'  
(*King Henry IV.*, 2nd Part, Act III., Sc. ii.)

neither the author nor the actor would be conscious of any irreverence in thus introducing the Psalmist's name ; but times are changed, and Mr. Bowdler, by omitting the clause printed in italics, gives us to understand that now it 'cannot with propriety be read' even 'in a family'!†

Cf. verse 4.

*Wordsworth* :

'Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal Silence.'

*Verse 10* (Bible Version). *The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away.*—At the Witan or council assembled by Edwin of Northumbria at Godmundingham (modern name, Godmanham) to debate on the mission of Paulinus, the King was thus addressed by a heathen Thane, one of his chief men :

'The present life of man, O King, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber : outside rages a storm of wind and snow : a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out of the other. For a moment, and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from sight. Such is the brief life of man ; we know not what went before it, and we are utterly ignorant as to what shall follow it. If, therefore, this new doctrine contains anything more certain, it justly deserves to be followed.'‡

\* See *Psalm xc.* 10. In *Psalm xxii.* 15, 'dust of death' may be compared with 'dusty death' in *Macbeth*, Act V., Sc. v.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 289.

‡ *Bede's Chronicle*.

*Verse 10. The days of our age are threescore years and ten.*

‘ How long have I to live ?  
Are threescore years and ten  
All that this life can give ?  
Poor passing tale—and then  
To die.

‘ How long have I to die ?  
A moment’s pang—no more !  
And then—to yonder sky  
Mounting for evermore  
To live.’\*

*Verse 12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*—With all the strength of mind which Queen Elizabeth possessed, she had the weakness of her sex as far as related to her age and her personal attractions. ‘The majesty and gravity of a sceptre,’ says a contemporary of this great princess, ‘could not alter that nature of a woman in her. When Bishop Rudd was appointed to preach before her, he, wishing in a godly zeal, as well became him, that she should think some time of mortality, being then sixty-three years of age, he took his text fit for that purpose out of the Psalms, xc. 12 : “ *O teach us to number our days, that we may incline our hearts unto wisdom ;*” which text he handled most learnedly. But when he spoke of some sacred mystical numbers, as three for the Trinity, three times three for the heavenly hierarchy, seven for the Sabbath, and seven times seven for a jubilee ; and, lastly, nine times seven for the grand climacterical year (her age), she, perceiving whereto it tended, began to be troubled with it. The bishop, discovering all was not well, for the pulpit stood opposite her majesty, he fell to treat of some plausible numbers, as of the number 666, making Latinus, with which he said he could prove Pope to be Antichrist, etc. He still, however, interlarded his sermon with Scripture passages touching the infirmities of age, as that in Ecclesiasticus, “When the grinders shall be few in number, and they wax dark that look out of the

\* *The Gates of Praise*, p. 533.

windows, etc., and the daughter of singing shall be abased ;” and more to that purpose. The queen, as the manner was, opened the window ; but she was so far from giving him thanks or good countenance, that she said plainly : “ He might have kept his arithmetic for himself ; but I see the greatest clerks are not the wisest men ” ; and so she went away discontented.’\*

*Verses 16 and 17. Show Thy servants Thy work, and their children Thy glory. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us ; prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper Thou our handy-work.*—There is a twofold Rabbinical tradition respecting this verse and the preceding one, that they were the original prayer recited by Moses as a blessing on the work of making the Tabernacle and its ornaments, and that subsequently he employed them as the usual formula of benediction for any newly undertaken task, whenever God’s *glorious Majesty* was to be consulted for an answer by Urim and Thummim.†

*Verse 16.* The Rev. G. Maxwell Gordon’s favourite text—the Pilgrim Missionary of the Punjab.

*Verse 17. Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper Thou our handy-work.*—These words, together with ‘Innocency is never better lodged than at the sign of labour,’ were inscribed on the walls of the Concordance Room at Gidding. These harmonies, or, as they are always called in the family manuscripts, the concordances, are most interesting. During Ferrar’s lifetime, the arrangement of the harmonies seems to have been entirely his own, but all the members of the family, from Mrs. Ferrar down to the little girls, assisted in the manufacture. The method of their construction has been already described. The following

\* *Percy Anecdotes.*

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 160.

extract from John Ferrar's account of one originally made for their own use will show how much study must have been bestowed on the arrangement :

‘GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH.

‘The actions, doctrines, and other passages touching our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, as they are related by the four Evangelists, reduced into one complete body of history ; wherein that which is severally related by them is digested into order, and that which is jointly related by all, or any of them, is first expressed in their own words by way of comparison ; secondly, brought into one narration by way of composition ; thirdly, extracted into clear context by way of collection ; yet so as whatsoever was omitted in the context is inserted by way of supplement in another print, and in such a manner as all the four Evangelists may easily be read severally and distinctly, each apart and alone, from first to last. Done at Little Gidding, anno 1630.’

One of these concordances was presented to the King, and it was received by Charles with expressions of pleasure, which meant more than mere royal courtesy.

‘It shall be my *vade mecum*,’ he said to Cosins, and added to Laud, who stood by, ‘How happy a king were I if I had many more such workmen and women in my kingdom ! God’s blessing on their hearts and painful hands !’

This concordance remained in the royal library at Windsor till it was presented by George III. to the British Museum, where it now remains.\*

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, pp. 183, 188.

## PSALM XCI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Talismanic song in time of war and pestilence.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David; concerning Hezekiah the king, who was to be surnamed the Son of David, and spiritually the victory of the Messiah is spoken of, and of everyone that is perfected in Him.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm, which in the Hebrew has no inscription, is by the LXX., apparently without sufficient reason, ascribed to David. . . . Mr. Plumptre speaks of it as ‘an echo, verse by verse almost, of the words in which Eliphaz the Temanite (Job v. 17-23) describes the good man’s life.’ There is no reason to suppose that the Psalm was written during the prevalence of a pestilence, for the variety of figures employed shows that the Psalmist is thinking of peril of every kind, coming from whatever source.

*In Church*.—In the early Church this Psalm was an especial favourite at Compline, being sung then as a commendatory hymn at the approach of the dangers and temptations of the night. ‘And when we sing it devoutly at that time,’ says St. Athanasius, ‘we shall often taste its power and sweetness, wherewith it so wondrously abounds.’\*

This Psalm is used in the Greek Burial Service, and is the sixth in the Greek Late Evensong. It is also appointed (among others) in the Roman Visitation of the Sick.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm has been called the *Invocavit* Psalm of the Church, and in the Talmud ‘a song of

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 163.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 283.

accidents,' *i.e.*, a protection or talismanic song in times of danger.\*

The Talmud writers ascribe not only the 91st, but the nine ensuing, to the pen of Moses ; but from a rule which will in no respect hold, that all the Psalms which are without the name of an author in their respective titles are the production of the poet whose name is given in the nearest preceding title.†

*Stier* mentions that some years ago an eminent physician in St. Petersburg recommended this Psalm as the best preservation against the cholera.

*The whole Lyric* might well be entitled, 'The Commander's Ode, the Soldier's Psalm of Life.' It helped to fortify the courage as well as piety of that brave and admirable man, Captain Hedley Vicars. 'The little book of Psalms you gave me,' he wrote to a friend, 'I take with me whenever I go out to walk. I have just learned by heart Psalm xci., and it has filled me with confidence in JESUS.'‡

*Verse 1. Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*—Some of his friends who knew the designs made upon Francis's life, tried to induce him to give up certain duties he had undertaken, but in vain. '*Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,*' was his quiet answer. 'His faithfulness and truth shall be my shield and buckler ; I trust wholly in Him !' and he pursued his steadfast course.

Here is a specimen of the persecutions Francis endured at this Mission : 'In some places the villagers refused even to sell food to the missionary ; he was accused of being a sorcerer, and the report was spread abroad that Francis had been seen

\* *The Speaker's Commentary*, p. 376.

† *Historical Outline of the Book of Psalms*, by J. M. Good.

‡ *The Biblical Museum*, vol. vi., p. 234.



at a witch's sabbath, and that he bore the devil's mark upon his body! One day he was thus surrounded by an excited crowd, who threatened to pass on from accusations to blows. Francis faced round upon them with his own placid smile, and making the sign of the cross, he said aloud, "This, good friends, is the only mark which I bear in my body, the only charm I use; but it is all-powerful, I fear no storm that man can raise whilst I am defended by it, and in its strength I am not afraid to meet contending hosts."\*

*Verses 9 and 10 (Bible Version). Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*—Moudjleyeh is not more than half an hour distant to the south-east of El Bara, containing a great number of private houses surrounding the church, of which large ruins still remain. But here, again, the most striking and impressive of the Christian remains is a fine sarcophagus in excellent preservation, with an inscription boldly carved on its side from Psalm xci. 9, 10, a most convincing evidence that for the Christians of those days death had lost its sting, the grave its victory. For thus it speaks of the departed, and to the survivors:

*'Thou hast made the Most High thy refuge—no evil shall approach thee—no plague come nigh thy dwelling.'*†

*Verse 11. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*—This verse is quoted in the temptation of our Lord by Satan (St. Matt. iv. 6). If the words were, as we have supposed, spoken originally with regard to Solomon, they have a prophetic reference to our LORD, of whom Solomon in his kingdom of peace is a signal type.‡

\* *Life of S. Francis de Sales*, p. 66.

† Dr. Neale's *Holy Eastern Church: Patriarchate of Antioch*, xxxvi.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 293.

*St. Frances of Rome.*—It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the beautiful legend of St. Frances of Rome, who is alleged to have been favoured with actual vision of her guardian angel, seeing him withdraw when she fell into voluntary sin, and return on her repentance; and on one occasion, when she had been called away several times from her prayers, and had resumed them only to meet with fresh interruptions, to have found the petition she had again and again commenced, written in her office-book with letters of gold by no human hand.\*

*Edmund Spenser :*

‘ And is there care in heaven, and is there love  
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move ?  
There is, else much more wretched were the race  
Of men than beasts. But oh, the exceeding grace  
Of highest GOD, that loves His creatures so,  
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,  
To serve us wicked men, to serve his wicked foe !

‘ How oft do they their silver bowers leave,  
To come to succour us that succour want !  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,  
Against foul fiends to aid us militant !  
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant ;  
And all for love, and nothing for reward.  
Oh, why should heavenly GOD to man have such regard ?’

*John Henry Newman :*

‘ My oldest friend, mine from the hour  
When first I drew my breath ;  
My faithful friend, that shall be mine,  
Unfailing, till my death.

‘ Thou hast been ever at my side ;  
My Maker to thy trust  
Consigned my soul, what time He framed  
The infant child of dust.

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\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 179.

- ‘ No beating heart in holy prayer,  
 No faith, inform’d aright,  
 Gave me to Joseph’s tutelage,  
 Or Michael’s conquering might.
- ‘ Nor patron saint, nor Mary’s love,  
 The dearest and the best,  
 Has known my being as thou hast known,  
 And blest as thou hast blest.
- ‘ Thou wast my sponsor at the font,  
 And thou, each budding year,  
 Didst whisper elements of truth  
 Into my childish ear.
- ‘ And when, ere boyhood yet was gone,  
 My rebel spirit fell,  
 Ah, thou didst see, and shudder too,  
 Yet bear each deed of Hell.
- ‘ And then in turn, when judgments came,  
 And scared me back again,  
 Thy quick soft breath was near to soothe  
 And hallow every pain.
- ‘ Oh, who of all thy toils and cares  
 Can tell the tale complete,  
 To place me under Mary’s smile,  
 And Peter’s royal feet?
- ‘ And thou wilt hang about my bed  
 When life is ebbing low,  
 Of doubt, impatience, and of gloom,  
 The jealous, sleepless foe.
- ‘ Mine, when I stand before the Judge ;  
 And mine, if spared to stay  
 Within the golden furnace, till  
 My sin is burn’d away.
- ‘ And mine, O Brother of my soul,  
 When my release shall come ;  
 Thy gentle arms shall lift me then,  
 Thy wings shall waft me home.\*

*Verse 12. They shall bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.*—That evening I more thoroughly understood M. Ozanain than ever before. It was with tears of affection, of fatherly kindness, and of holy earnestness and enthusiasm, that he answered me. Our wish to devote ourselves to God’s service by means of science and

\* *Verses on Various Occasions*, by Cardinal Newman, p. 276.

literature ; our plan of joining the Abbé Gratray, then Chaplain of the École Normale ; and our dream of a studious congregation which we did not as yet call the Oratoire—all these dreams and hopes, which might never come to anything, assumed a living reality at once to a soul so ready to believe in all that is good as his was. He looked at it all, not as we then were, or as we are actually, or even as we can hope to be for a long time ; and if anything can be a consolation for not having had him to assist in these humble beginnings of our works, which have been so blessed by GOD, it is the knowledge that, at all events, our first start was appreciated by him. All through that evening he cheered me with his kindly words and good wishes ; and then, with a close embrace, we parted.

I went homewards, intoxicated with joy, hope, and strength. I wanted to feed upon my happiness in solitude, far from all men. It was late ; but, unheeding that, I took a mountain path, and went on like a madman, looking at the heavens, regardless of earth. Suddenly an instinct made me draw hastily back. I was on the very edge of a precipice ; one step more, and I must have fallen. I took fright, and gave up my nocturnal wanderings. Dearly beloved child, you need not fear ; you were upheld by angels. I believe in the loving promise, *'They shall bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.'* The angels bore you up all your life, until they bore you to GOD'S Bosom.\*

*Verse 13. Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder ; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.*—In the earlier portion of his life, the late Emperor Alexander of Russia was a man of the world. According to his own confession, however, he found no real satisfaction in all the luxuries which it was easy for him to obtain. Conscience spoke more loudly than the world, and he strove with great assiduity to subdue his own passions, daily reading his Bible, which he always took about with him. In 1813 he left St.

\* *Henri Perreye*, p. 88.

Petersburg to join the army. A lady of Court, to whom his sentiments were known, gave him, at his departure from Riga, a copy of Psalm xci., and begged of him to read it often. The Emperor took the paper, hastily put it into his pocket, pursued his journey, and, as he travelled three successive days without undressing, quite forgot the incident. On the frontier, however, he attended a sermon on Psalm xci. 13: '*Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder; the young lion and dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.*' This sermon, which seemed to have in it something prophetic, excited his attention, and, in looking over his papers that same evening, he found the lady's copy of Psalm xci.

He read it with emotion, and considered the impressive coincidence as urging him to aspire more zealously after true religion.\*

*George Tinworth*, now in Sir Henry Doulton's terra-cotta works at Lambeth, is a sculptor chiefly noted for his Scriptural subjects. He has a keen sense of humour. In a panel of 'Daniel in the Lions' Den' a young lion stands on his hind-legs to read something on the wall. It is Psalm xci., which says: '*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.*' The young lion's concern is explicable immediately, and even Daniel's peril for the moment cannot prevent a smile from the spectator.

*Alexander III.*, as he placed his foot on the neck of Friedrich Barbarossa, in the porch of St. Mark's at Venice, repeated, '*Super aspidem et leonem ambulabis.*'

*Verse 16. With long life will I satisfy him.*

'He liveth long who liveth well!  
All other life is short and vain;  
He liveth longest who can tell  
Of living most for heavenly gain.

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\* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1863, p. 289.

‘He liveth long who liveth well !  
 All else is being flung away ;  
 He liveth longest who can tell  
 Of true things truly done each day.’\*

## PSALM XCII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Sabbath Thoughts.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The subject is the praise of GOD ; praise is Sabbatic work.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous ; concerning the ministry of the Priests, and their Morning Oblation ; a prophecy also concerning rest in the LORD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is called a Psalm for the Sabbath-day, and, as we learn from the Talmud, was appointed to be used in the Temple service on that day. It was sung in the morning when, on the offering of the first lamb, the wine was poured out as a drink offering unto the LORD (Numb. xxviii. 9).

*In Church*.—In the Hebrew Ritual, after the Captivity, this and the two consecutive Psalms were appointed to be sung : the present Psalm on the Sabbath, Psalm xciii. on Good Friday, Psalm xciv. on Wednesday.

It was also sung on the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—There is a singular Rabbinical legend that this Psalm was the song of praise uttered by Adam as the first Sabbath dawned upon the world, and that it descended by tradition as the special hymn for that day. More consonant with actual history is the fact that it was sung in the Temple on the Sabbath, at the offering of the first lamb in the morning, when the wine was poured out, and continues still in

\* Dr. Bonar.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 148.

use as a Sabbatical Psalm in the rites of the synagogue; and that the Roman Church, amongst other tokens of the powerful Judaizing influence which affected its earliest days, retains it as part of the Saturday Lauds in the Breviary. Further, there is a distinct reference in this second verse to the morning and evening sacrifice; while more than one Rabbi is careful to point out that the happy Sabbath of which the Psalmist sings is not one of the present time, but belongs to the future revelation of Messiah in His glory.\*

*Verse 4. For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy works.*—This Psalm is called by Dante (*Purg.* xxviii. 80) *Il Salmo Delectasti*, because, in the Vulgate, the fourth verse begins with the word, ‘*Thou hast made me glad.*’ A beautiful female form, representing the higher life, is introduced as saying, ‘She is so happy, because she can sing, like the Psalm *Delectasti*, “Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through Thy works.”’ †

*Verse 5. O Lord, how glorious are Thy works!*

‘These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then!  
Unspeakable, Who sittest above these heavens,  
To us invisible, or dimly seen  
In these Thy lowest works, yet these declare  
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine. ‡

*Verse 11. The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree.*—Besides this, there are only two passages in the Old Testament where the palm is used in comparison—Cant. vii. 7, where it is said of the bride, ‘Thy stature is like to a palm-tree’; Jer. x. 5, where the idols are said to be ‘upright as a palm-tree’; and one in the Apocrypha, Ecclus. xxiv. 14, ‘I was exalted like a palm-tree in Engaddi.’ This, as Dr. Howson (*Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*, art. ‘Palm-Tree’) has noticed, is remark-

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 186.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 121.

‡ *Paradise Lost*, v. 153.

able, considering the beauty of the tree, and its frequent recurrence in the scenery of Palestine.\*

In *Timon of Athens*, the painter says to the poet, speaking of Timon :

‘You shall see him *a palm* in Athens again, and *flourish* with the highest.’—Act V., Sc. i.

The notion of ‘flourishing like a palm-tree’ is one with which we are familiar from Psalm xcii. 12.†

### PSALM XCIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Royal throne above the sea of the peoples.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Psalm of Omnipotent Sovereignty.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David — concerning the ministry of the LORD.

*In Church*.—This is still a Friday Psalm in the Jewish use, whence it seems that the titles here and elsewhere found in the LXX., but not in the Hebrew, were added for ritual purposes by the Alexandrian Jews, whose use differed in some respects from that of Jerusalem.‡

In the Græco-Russian Church, after the washing of the Altar Throne in the Consecration of a Church, the priests take the *Stratchitza* (the linen covering for the Throne), sprinkle it with holy water, and put it on the Throne, tying it extremely smooth and tight by a thick cotton cord, bound three times round the table in a dent made for the purpose in the thick board ; this is covered with the *Inditia* (covering for the Throne), while the choir sings the 93rd Psalm.§

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 180.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 330.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 195.

§ *Græco-Russian Church*, p. 91.



*The Whole Psalm.*—November 3, 1640, Lord Strafford was impeached before the Long Parliament and sent to the Tower, and the Archbishop was next attacked. . . . The debate which followed ended—as in the temper of the House it was certain to do—in a vote that the Archbishop was a traitor. Allowed the afternoon at Lambeth to collect papers for his defence, he attended the Evening Prayers for the last time in the chapel that he had repaired and adorned with loving care. The service, which he had restored to its full beauty, soothed that bitter hour. ‘The *Psalms of the Day* (Dec. 18th) and chapter l. of Isaiah gave me great comfort. GOD make me worthy to receive it,’ he wrote in his diary. He remained in the custody of Maxwell (the Usher of the Black Rod) ten weeks.\*

*Verses 14-18. Thou didst divide the sea through Thy power. . . . Thou broughtest out fountains and waters. . . . The day is thine, and the night is thine. . . . Thou hast set all the borders of the earth, Thou hast made summer and winter.*—Milton has a very sweet passage, the structure of which was probably suggested by Virgil, not, however, without an eye to this portion of our Psalm, to which it bears a resemblance in sentiment as in form :

‘Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,  
Both turned, and under open sky adored  
The GOD that made both sky, air, earth, and heaven,  
Which they beheld, the moon’s resplendent globe,  
And starry pole : Thou also madest the night,  
Maker Omnipotent, and Thou the day.’  
*Paradise Lost*, iv. †

## PSALM XCIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The consolation of prayer under the oppression of tyrants.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This Psalm is another pathetic form of the old enigma—‘Wherefore do the wicked prosper?’

\* *Sir Christopher Wren and his Times: Monthly Packet*, vol. xxv., chap. ii., p. 152.

† Mant on *The Psalms*, p. 244.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—concerning the congregation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and spiritually concerning the persecutions of the Church.

*Origin* (Perowne).—By the LXX. this is called ‘A lyric Psalm of David, for the fourth day of the week’ (τετράδι σαββάτου). It is probably not a Psalm of David, but the latter part of the Inscription accords with the Talmudic tradition that it was the Psalm appointed to be used in the Temple on the fourth day of the week.

*In Church*.—Appointed in the Hebrew Ritual to be sung on the fourth and fifth days of the Feast of Tabernacles.\*

Psalm xciv. was a constant Psalm for the fourth day of the week in the Temple Service throughout the year.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm was read by the besieged English in the little house at Arrah, Bengal, during the Mutiny, when the natives tried to smoke them out by burning mounds of chillies. The wind veered round, and so the little party were saved.

*Verse 7. The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it*.—The scholars of Rabbi Johanan, the son of Zakai, asked of their teacher this question :

‘Wherefore is it that, according to the law, the punishment of a highwayman is not so severe as the punishment of a sneak thief? According to the Mosaic law, if a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he is required to restore five oxen for the one ox, and four sheep for the one sheep (Exodus xxi. 37), but for the highwayman we find, “When he hath sinned, and is conscious of his guilt, he shall restore that he hath taken violently away; he shall restore it and its principal, and the fifth part thereof he shall add thereto.” Therefore, he who commits a highway robbery pays as punishment one-fifth of the same, while a sneak thief is obliged to return five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep. Wherefore is this?’

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 150.

‘Because,’ replied the teacher, ‘the highway robber treats the servant as the master. He takes away violently in the presence of the servant, the despoiled man, and the master, GOD. But the sneak thief imagines that GOD’S eye is not upon him. He acts secretly, thinking as the Psalmist says, “*The Lord doth not see, neither will the God of Jacob regard it.*” Listen to a parable: Two men made a feast. One invited all the inhabitants of the city, and omitted inviting the king. The other invited neither the king nor his subjects. Which one deserves condemnation? Certainly the one that invited the subjects and not the king. The people of the earth are GOD’S subjects. The sneak thief fears their eyes, yet he does not honour the eye of the King, the eye of GOD, which watches all his actions.’

Rabbi Meir says: ‘This last teaches us how GOD regards industry. If a person steals an ox he must return five in its place, because, while the animal was in his unlawful possession, it could not work for its rightful owner. A lamb, however, does no labour, and is not profitable that way, therefore he is only obliged to replace it fourfold.’\*

*Verse 12. Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord: and teachest him in Thy law.*—As the Bible teaches that ‘it is’—or may and ought to be—‘good to be afflicted’ (Ps. cxix. 71), and that troubles are mercifully sent to try us for our greater benefit, or to wean us from evil (see Job v. 17; Ps. xciv. 12; Heb. xii. 5-11), so we learn upon the testimony of the banished Duke in *As You Like It*, Act II., Sc. i.:

‘Sweet are the uses of adversity;  
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.’

And Leontes confesses, in *Winter’s Tale*:

‘Affliction has a taste as sweet  
As any cordial comfort.’

Act V., Sc. iii.

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\* Talmud, p. 281.

And the wise Nestor is made to say,

‘ In the reproof of chance  
Lies the true proof of men.’  
*Troilus and Cressida*, Act I., Sc. iii.

And Antony would give us this advice :

‘ Bid that welcome  
Which comes to punish us ; and we punish it,  
Seeming to bear it lightly.’  
*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV., Sc. xii.\*

### PSALM XCV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Call to the worship of GOD and to obedience to His Word.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We will call it the Psalm of Provocation.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—literally, when the people passed over Jordan ; in which also the Psalmist showeth the cutting off of the hope of the Jews ; *I was wearied with this generation : so that I swear in my wrath.*

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is one of a series intended for the Temple worship, and possibly composed for some festal occasion. . . . As to the date of its composition nothing certain can be said. The LXX. calls it a Psalm of David ; and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in making a quotation from the Psalm, uses the expression ‘ in David,’ but this is evidently only equivalent to saying ‘ in the Psalms.’ In the Hebrew it has no Inscription.

*In Church*.—In the Orthodox Eastern Church in the Sacrament of Penance (Psalm xcv. 6 to 11, and Psalm li.).†

The Greeks have founded the Invitatory with which they begin their Offices on this Psalm :

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 256.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 268.

‘Come, let us worship and fall down before GOD our King.

‘Come, let us worship and fall down before CHRIST the King our GOD.

‘Come, let us worship and fall down before CHRIST our King and GOD.’

In the West the Psalm, or an Invitatory founded upon it, has been constantly used.\*

*The Whole Psalm.* — This Psalm is twice quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews as a warning to the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem in the writer’s day, that they should not falter in the faith, and despise GOD’S promises as their forefathers had done in the wilderness, lest they should fail of entering into His rest; see Hebrews iii. 7, where verse 7 of this Psalm is introduced with the words, ‘As the HOLY GHOST saith, To-day, if ye will hear My voice;’ see Hebrews iv. 7, where it is said, ‘Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying *in David*, To-day.’

It has been inferred by some from these words that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews ascribes the Psalm to David. It may be so. But it seems not improbable that the words ‘in David’ mean simply the Book of Psalms, the whole being named from the greater part.

It is not entitled in the Hebrews a Psalm of David, but it is so called in the LXX.†

The 95th Psalm has been used from the very earliest period at the commencement of daily service. Thus Athanasius writes of the Constantinopolitan office: ‘Before the beginning of their prayers, the Christians invite and exhort one another in the words of this Psalm.’ In the West the whole Psalm has been usually repeated; in the East an Invitatory to public worship, based on the first, third and sixth verses of it. Before 1549, short invitatories, texts, or versicles waking to praise

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 287.

† Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 151.

were commonly inserted between the various verses; in 1549 the Psalm was directed to be said or sung without any Invitatory.\*

*Honorius of Autun* observes in the *Gemma Animæ* on the Christian use of this Psalm, that the Precentor who begins the invitatory is the herald who summons the soldiers of the watch to mount guard, and when he has done his part, all join in singing the Venite as soldiers assembling in camp to praise their king. And then they apportion the watches amongst themselves, as they proceed to chant the three nocturns.†

### PSALM XCVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A greeting of the coming kingdom of GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A grand Missionary Hymn.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the calling of the Gentiles that should believe in Him.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The LXX. has a double inscription :

(1) ὅτι ὁ οἶκος ᾠψυδομεῖτο μετὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν, which is probably correct, as indicating that the Psalm was composed after the Exile, and for the service of the second Temple.

(2) ᾠδὴ τῷ Λαυδῷ, which seems to contradict the other, but was no doubt occasioned by the circumstance that this Psalm, together with portions of Psalms cv. and cvi., is given, with some variations, by the author of the Book of Chronicles, as the great festal hymn which 'David delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren to thank the LORD,' on the day when the Ark was brought into the sanctuary in Zion.

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 61.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 217.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed in the Sarum Use and Latin Use for Christmas Day, and for the festivals of the Circumcision, Epiphany, and Trinity Sunday.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm has been rightly designated as a missionary hymn for all.†

*St. Augustine* makes mention of a young man, whose name was Theodorus, a Christian, who was seized by Salustius, the officer of a tyrant, who persecuted the Professors of Christianity; and they report that from the break of day until the tenth hour they inflicted torments upon him. Nevertheless, being set on horseback, and on both sides tortured by executioners, he, with a cheerful voice, sang the 96th Psalm, which the congregation had the day before recited. Which undaunted constancy the officer perceiving, sent him back again to prison, reporting to the emperor what was done, and withal told him that, unless he forbore to exercise such cruelties, it would redound to their glory and his shame.‡

*Verse 1.* *Sing unto the Lord.*—As Abbot Absalom says, ‘When the speech does not jar with the life, there is a sweet harmony.’—*Le Blanc*.

*Verse 10.* *Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth.*—‘Dominus regnavit a ligno.’ These words occur in some of the Fathers as a quotation from Psalm xcv. 10, at which place the Hebrew, the Latin Vulgate, and others only have ‘Dominus regnavit,’ or its equivalent. Commiodian thus speaks :

‘In Psalmis canitur Dominus regnavit a ligno,  
Exultent terræ, jocundentur insulæ multæ.’

*Carm. Apologet., ver. 290.*

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 152.

† *The Preacher’s Commentary*, p. 388.

‡ *A Preparation to the Psalter*, by G. Wither, chap. xiv.

The hymn which commences

‘Vexilla Regis prodeunt,’

has the following :

‘Impleta sunt quæ concinit  
David fideli carmine,  
Dicens in nationibus  
Regnavit à lingo Deus.’

The earliest Father who refers to the expression is a very early one indeed—St. Justin, who was martyred 167. In his dialogue with the Jew Trypho, he complains of the Jews having removed the words ‘à ligno’ from Psalm xcvi. 10, leaving only the words ‘Dominus regnavit.’ Καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνενηκостоῦ πέμπτου ψαλμοῦ τῶν διὰ Δαὶδ λέχθεντων λόγων λέξις Βραχείας ἀφείλοντο ταυτας ἄπο τοῦ ζύλον. To this Trypho made no other answer than : ‘Whether, as you assert, the princes of the people have taken away anything from the Scriptures, GOD knows.’ It does not appear that any MSS. of the Latin Vulgate now existing contain the words ‘à ligno,’ but the Fathers, Tertullian, Lactantius, and others, read them in copies extant in their time, and the words were so well known and generally received that the Church retained them in the divine office, and Fortunatus in the sixth century introduced them into his hymn, ‘Vexilla Regis.’\*

*Verse 12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.*—‘Wave high, ye woods, in worship, wave the head,’ is Bishop Mant’s translation, for the Hebrew word rendered in our translation ‘rejoice’ expresses the vibratory motion, either of a dancer’s feet or of a singer’s lip. The reader will be reminded of Adam and Eve’s Morning Hymn :

‘Wave your tops, ye pines,  
With every plant, in sign of worship, wave.  
*Paradise Lost, v.†*

\* *Notes and Queries*, vol. viii., 2nd Series, pp. 470, 517.

† Mant on *The Psalms*, p. 327.



*Verses 12, 13. Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.*

*For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with His truth.*

- ‘ It chanced upon the merry, merry Christmas eve,  
 I went sighing past the church across the moorland dreary,  
 Oh ! never sin and want and woe this earth will leave,  
 And the bells but mock the wailing sound, they sing so cheery,  
 How long, O LORD, how long before Thou come again ?  
 Still in cellar, and in garret, and in moorland dreary,  
 The orphans moan, and widows weep, and poor men toil in vain,  
 Till earth is sick of hope deferred, though Christmas bells be cheery.
- ‘ Then arose a joyous clamour from the wild fowl on the mere,  
 Beneath the stars, across the snow, like clear bells ringing,  
 And a voice within cried, Listen ! Christmas carols even here !  
 Though thou be dumb, yet o’er their work, the stars and snows are  
 singing.  
 Blind ! I live, I love, I reign ; and all the nations through,  
 With the thunder of My judgments even now are ringing ;  
 Do thou fulfil thy work but as yon wild fowl do,  
 Thou wilt heed no less the wailing, yet hear through it angels singing.’\*

## PSALM XCVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The breaking through of the kingdom of GOD, the Judge and SAVIOUR.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, in which he prophesies concerning the coming of the Messiah, and in which, also, he alludes to His revelation at the last.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The use of the past tenses in verses 4-8, and in particular the vivid language in verse 8, where Zion and the daughters of Judah rejoice in the presence of JEHOVAH’S judgments, are most naturally explained as occasioned by some historical event, some great national deliverance or triumph of recent occurrence ; such, for instance, as the overthrow of Babylon and the restoration of the theocracy.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed in the Gregorian and Sarum Use for Christmas Day, and also for the Circumcision

\* Charles Kingsley, 1858.

in both the Latin and Sarum Use, and for Trinity Sunday in the Latin Use.

In verse 11 are the words 'Light is sown for the righteous,' a spiritual interpretation of which seems to suggest its use on Christmas Day and Trinity Sunday. 'CHRIST, the Light of the World, was sown in darkness ; but after His Resurrection from the Dead, His Gospel illumined the World with the glory of the ever-blessed Trinity.'\*

*Verse 7. Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods.*—It grieved Julian to see the Christians celebrate their funerals so openly by day, and with indications of joy rather than grief, especially in their translation of martyrs, which was of the same nature with funerals, and was performed with great magnificence and expressions of joy, with psalmody and hymns to GOD, in a general assembly and concourse of the people. But it was particularly in the translation of Babylas from Daphne to Antioch, which happened in his time, and was one of the great grievances of his reign, for as the historians (Socrates and others) tell us, 'all the Christians of Antioch, men and women, young men and virgins, old men and children, accompanied the coffin all the way, having their precentors to sing Psalms, at the end of every one of which the whole multitude joined, by way of antiphonal response, with this versicle : *'Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that boast themselves in idols or vain gods.'* This they did for the space of 6,000 paces, or forty furlongs, even in the hearing of Julian himself, which so enraged him that the next day he put many of them into prison, and some to extreme torture and death.†

*Verse 11. Light is sown for the righteous.*—Milton uses the same figure, speaking of the dew at dawn :

'Now Morn her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime  
Advancing, sowed the earth with Orient pearl.'‡

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 154.

† Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, vol. viii., p. 127.

‡ *Paradise Lost*, v. 3.

## PSALM XCVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Greeting to Him who is become known in Righteousness and Salvation.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The present Psalm is a kind of Coronation Hymn.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; concerning the deliverance of the people from Egypt, when they triumphed and prevailed ; spiritually, a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah and the calling of the Gentiles to the Faith.

*In Church*.—Appointed in the Latin Use for the Circumcision and Trinity Sunday ; in the Sarum, for Christmas Day and the Circumcision.\*

In the second edition of the Prayer-Book this Psalm was inserted, with a rubric, authorizing its use in the place of the Magnificat on any evening of the month except the 19th, when it was read in the ordinary course of the Psalms. On comparing it with the Song of the Blessed Virgin, it is curious to trace the resemblance between the two, as though the latter had been founded on it.†

This Psalm follows the reading of the First Lesson in the Evening Service. It was first inserted there in 1552, though it had not been sung among the Psalms of Vespers or Compline.‡

*The Inscription* of the Psalm in the Hebrew is only the single word *Mizmor*, ‘Psalm’ (whence probably the title ‘orphan Mizmor’ in the Talmudic treatise *Avodah Zara*).§

*The Whole Psalm*.—There is here a very great similarity between this Psalm and the Song or Magnificat of the Blessed Virgin. I shall note some of the parallels, chiefly from Bishop

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 155.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 217.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 203.

§ *Ibid.*

Nicholson. This Psalm is an evident prophecy of Christ to save the world ; and what is here *foretold* by David is in the Blessed Virgin's song chanted forth as being *accomplished*. David is the *Voice*, and Mary is the *Echo*.

1. *D.* 'O sing unto the LORD a new song.' (The *Voice*.)  
*Mary.* 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' (The *Echo*.)
2. *D.* 'He hath done marvellous things.' (The *V.*)  
*M.* 'He that is mighty hath done great things.' (The *E.*)
3. *D.* 'With His own right hand and holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory.' (The *V.*)  
*M.* 'He hath showed strength with His arm, and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.' (The *E.*)
4. *D.* 'The Lord hath made known His salvation ; His righteousness hath He openly showed,' etc. (The *V.*)  
*M.* 'His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.' (The *E.*)
5. *D.* 'He hath remembered His mercy and His truth towards the house of Israel.' (The *V.*)  
*M.* 'He hath holpen His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy.' (The *E.*)

These parallels are very striking ; and it seems as if the Blessed Virgin had this Psalm in her mind when she composed her song of triumph.\*

*Verses 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.—*

'Ring out, with horn and trumpet ring,  
In shouts before the LORD the King ;  
Let ocean with His fulness swing  
In restless unison.

'Earth's round, and all the dwellers there,  
The mighty floods the burthen bear,  
And clap the hand ; in choral air  
Join every mountain lone.

'Tell out before the LORD, that He  
Is come, the Judge of earth to be,  
To judge the world in equity,  
Do right to realm and throne.†

\* Dr. Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, p. 2,248.

† *The Psalter in English Verse*, by John Keble, p. 192.

## PSALM XCIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Song of Praise in honour of the Thrice Holy One.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This may be called The Sanctus, or the Holy, Holy, Holy Psalm, for the word ‘holy’ is the conclusion and the refrain of its three main divisions.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, concerning the destruction of the Midianites whom Moses and the people of Israel led away captive, a prophecy also of the glory of CHRIST’S kingdom.

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm is well called, by Dr. Delitzsch, ‘An earthly echo of the seraphic Trisagion.’

*Verse 1. He sitteth between the cherubims.*—Hence this Psalm is appointed in the Latin Use for the Festival of the Ascension.\*

*Verse 3. They shall give thanks unto Thy Name, which is great, wonderful, and holy.*—St. Bonaventura, in his life of St. Francis, tells us that whenever the saint, in the course of his reading aloud, had to pronounce the Name of JESUS, he lingered on the sound with a gentle, loving emphasis, and with a musical ring in his tones, unheard at other times; and that he was scrupulous to let no fragment of writing, which had those syllables in it, lie neglected on the ground, or be put to any servile use.†

## PSALM C.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Call of all the world to the service of the True GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Psalm of Praise, or rather of thanksgiving. ‘Let us sing the Old Hundredth,’ is one of the every-

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 156.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 262.

day expressions of the Christian Church, and will be so while men exist whose hearts are loyal to the Great King.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning Joshua, the son of Nun, when he brought to an end the war of the Ammonites, and in the New Testament, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles to the Faith.

*In Church*.—Introduced into the Prayer-Book of 1552, as a substitute for the Hymn of Zacharias on the days when the latter is read in the Lessons.

*The Whole Psalm*.—Luther would have immortalized his name had he done no more than written the majestic air and harmony to which we are accustomed to sing this Psalm.\*

*Dr. Binnie* calls the decade of Psalms which close with the 100th, *The Songs of the Millennium*.

Dr. Delitzsch has, with much felicity, entitled them *Apocalyptic Psalms*. Dr. Binnie gives them his name because ‘They are Messianic in the sense of celebrating the Kingdom of CHRIST, although not Messianic in the narrower sense of celebrating His Person. They soar above the level of the Old Testament economy, several of them carrying the soul forward and upward to a state of things such as the Apostolical Church itself never saw. . . . The hundredth Psalm, for instance, how grandly does it anticipate the millennial time, and summon all the nations to unite in the high praises of the LORD!†

*The Metrical Version.*

‘All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.’

This noble version of the Old Hundredth is, I believe, the most ancient now in common use in our language, as it is certainly one of the very best; faithful to the original, and full of grace and strength. It was first printed in the Psalm Book published for the English exiles at Geneva, in 1561, and is believed

\* Ingram Cobbin.

† *The Psalms: their History, Teaching, etc.*, by Dr. Binnie, p. 97.

to have been written by William Kethe, a native of Scotland, who joined the exiles at Geneva in 1556. From an allusion in Shakespeare, the Psalm in this version, and the well-known melody named after it, would appear to have been as great favourites in Queen Elizabeth's time as they are among ourselves.\*

*Dr. Watts' paraphrase of this Psalm begins: 'Before Jehovah's awful throne.'*

*Verse 2. Be ye sure that the Lord He is God; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.*—The Emperor Henry, when out hunting on the LORD'S DAY called Quinquagesima—his companions being scattered—came unattended to the entrance of a certain wood, and seeing a church hard by, he made for it and, feigning himself to be a soldier, simply requested a Mass of the priest. Now, that priest was a man of notable piety, but so deformed in person that he seemed a monster rather than a man. When he had attentively considered him, the Emperor began to wonder exceedingly why GOD, from whom all beauty proceeds, should permit so deformed a man to administer His Sacraments. But presently when Mass commenced, and they came to that passage, '*Know ye that the Lord He is the God,*' which was chanted by a boy, the priest rebuked the boy for singing negligently, and said with a loud voice, '*It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.*' Struck by these words, and believing the priest to be a prophet, the Emperor raised him, much against his will, to the Archbishopric of Cologne, which see he adorned by his devotion and excellent virtues. †

*The Lord He is God.*

'JESUS is GOD! the glorious bands  
Of golden Angels sing  
Songs of adoring praise to Him,  
Their Maker and their King.

\* *The Psalms: their History, etc.*, by Dr. Binnie, p. 97.

† *Flowers of History*, by Roger Wendover.

He was True GOD in Bethlehem's crib,  
 On Calvary's Cross True GOD ;  
 He Who in heaven eternal reigned,  
 In time on earth abode.

'JESUS is GOD ! If on the earth  
 This blessed faith decays,  
 More tender must our love become,  
 More plentiful our praise.  
 We are not Angels, but we may  
 Down in earth's corners kneel,  
 And multiply sweet acts of love,  
 And murmur what we feel.\*'

### PSALM CI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Vows of a King.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—If we call this The Psalm of Pious Resolutions, we shall perhaps remember it all the more readily.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Asaph—An exhortation of David with reference to those things that are becoming the ministry of the LORD'S house ; and a prophecy of the glory of him that is pure and perfect in GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—After giving a little analysis of the Psalm, Bishop Perowne says : ' All this falls in admirably with the early part of David's reign, and the words are just what we might expect from one who came to the throne with a heart so true to his GOD. If the words, 'When wilt Thou come unto me?' may be taken to express, as seems most natural, David's desire to see the Ark at length fixed in the Tabernacle which he had prepared for it in Zion, the Psalm must have been written whilst the Ark was still in the house of Obed-Edom (2 Sam. vi. 10, 11).

*In Church*.—This Psalm is used in the Service for the Queen's Accession. To kings, and all who wield the delegated power of God, this Psalm must ever be precious, as the

\* *Hymns*, by F. W. Faber, p. 33.



true standard at which to aim; and hence no more suitable words could be chosen to be sung at a royal coronation, and repeated on its anniversaries.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm has been styled ‘the godly purposes and resolves of a King.’ It might also be described as ‘Speculum Regis’—a mirror for kings and all that are in authority.†

*Ernest the Pious.*—Eyding, in his *Life of Ernest the Pious, Duke of Saxe Gotha*, related that he sent an unfaithful minister a copy of the 101st Psalm; and that it became a proverb in the country, when an official had done anything wrong, ‘He will certainly soon receive the Prince’s Psalm to read.’‡

*Prince Vladimir Monomachor.*—The 101st Psalm was beloved by the noblest of Russian Princes, Vladimir Monomachor; and by the gentlest of English Reformers, Nicholas Ridley.§

Vladimir’s date may be fixed in our minds by his marriage with Gytha, daughter of our own Harold. He was not unworthy of the model of a just and religious ruler, in the 101st Psalm, which was sent to him by the Russian Primate, with an exhortation to learn it by heart, to meditate upon it, and to fashion his government accordingly.||

*Nicholas Ridley* (on the accession of Edward VI.) was promoted to be Bishop of London in the stead of Bonner.

This last remained a prisoner, but his old mother was most tenderly and carefully treated by his successor. Every day did Ridley send for her to dine with him at his Palace at Fulham, placing her beside himself in an easy-chair at the head of the table. If anyone of rank tried to take his seat there, the Bishop would say, ‘By your lordship’s leave, this

\* Housman, p. 213.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 212.

‡ F. Delitzsch, p. 107.

§ *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, by Dean Stanley, vol. ii., p. 74.

|| *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, by Dean Stanley, p. 312.

is for my Mother Bonner.' His household was on the model of the 101st Psalm, which he used frequently to read to his servants; and he would give them rewards for learning passages of Scripture by heart, especially the 13th chapter of the Acts.\*

*Antonio Velasquez.*—The most usual treatment of it (this Psalm) is as a discourse on the qualities and duties of a good king, and there is one commentary upon it, with this end, from the pen of one Antonio Velasquez, a Spanish Jesuit, constituting a folio volume of between 400 and 500 pages, published at Antwerp in 1640.†

*The Householder's Psalm.*—This Psalm has been appropriately called 'The Householder's Psalm'; and assuredly if every master of a family would regulate his household by these rules of the conscientious Psalmist, there would be a far greater amount, not merely of domestic happiness and comfort, but of the fulfilment of the more serious and responsible duties which devolve on the respective members of a household.‡

*Verse 1. My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.*—In the month of August, 387, St. Augustine of Hippo, together with Monica, his mother; Adeodatus, his son; Evodius and Alpius, his friends, left Milan, on their way to Africa. They had reached Ostia, the mouth of the Tiber, from which they intended to embark, when Monica was stricken down by fever. It was a time which was very dear to St. Augustine. The mother and son used to sit together talking of the love of JESUS, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before (asking between themselves of what nature the eternal life of the saints would be). The mother's hopes and wishes had been accomplished, and her prayers answered—her son was a member of the Church she loved, and she was con-

\* *Cameos from English History*, 4th Series, p. 160.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 277.

‡ *The Treasury of the Psalter*, vol. iv., p. 408.

tent to die in peace. 'Lay this body anywhere, let not the care for it trouble you at all. This I only ask, that you will remember me at the altar of the LORD, wherever you may be.'

'On the ninth day, then, of her sickness,' says St. Augustine, 'the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine, was that religious and devout soul set free from the body.' At the time of her death Adeodatus 'burst out into wailing, but, being checked by us all, he became quiet. . . . For we did not consider it fitting to celebrate that funeral with tearful plaints and groanings; for in such wise are they, who die unhappy or are altogether dead, wont to be mourned. But she neither died unhappy, nor did she altogether die.' The boy, then, being restrained from weeping, Evodius took up the Psalter, and began to sing—the whole house responding—the Psalm, '*I will sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O Lord.*' A glorious instance of the faith of those who remained behind, and a triumph song of praise fitting the death of one who had experienced the value of the Precious Blood, and who now rested in the Paradise of God.

*Verse 10. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house.*—When Sir George Villiers became the favourite and Prime Minister of King James, Lord Bacon, in a beautiful letter of advice, counselled him to take this Psalm for his rule in the promotion of courtiers. 'In these the choice had need be of honest and faithful servants, as well as of comely outsides, who can bow the knee and kiss the hand.' King David (Psalm ci. 6, 7) propounded a rule to himself for the choice of his courtiers. He was a wise and a good King, and a wise and a good King shall do well to follow such a good example; and if he find any to be faulty, which perhaps cannot suddenly be discovered, let him take on him this resolution, as King David did, '*There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house.*' It would have been well both for the Philosopher and the Favourite if they had been careful to walk by this rule.\*

\* *The Psalms: their History, Teaching, etc.*, by Dr. Binnie, p. 45.

## PSALM CII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer of a patient sufferer for himself, and for Jerusalem that lies in ruins.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—To help the memory, we will call this Psalm ‘The Patriot’s Plaint.’

*Contents* (Syriac).—The lamentation of the Jews, and a prophecy concerning a new people, even the Gentiles, by faith.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm must have been written by one of the exiles in Babylon, probably towards the close of the Captivity, when the hope of a return seemed no longer doubtful.

*John Keble* says :

‘This is the mourner’s prayer when he is faint,  
And to th’ Eternal Father breathes his plaint.’\*

*In Church*.—This Psalm is used in the Greek Office for confessions of Penitents, and in that for the dying, likewise in the late Evensong.†

It is also fitly used by the Church of England on Ash Wednesday, as a penitential expression of her own sorrow for sin, and for the misery consequent upon it.‡

*The Whole Psalm*.—The contemplation of Nature in the Psalms is distinguished by spiritual transparency.

The natural is often introduced as the type of the supernatural.

The 102nd Psalm (composed in all probability by Nehemiah) rises from the ruins of the city to the ruin of the Universe. It is on the same line of thought with Shakespeare, when he passes from the wreck of ‘the gorgeous towers and cloud-capp’d palaces,’ to that of the ‘great globe itself,’ thus (may we dare

\* *The Psalter in English Verse*, p. 196.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 289.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 158.

to say it without irreverence?) reminding us of the words of Him who made the downfall of the Temple the occasion for a transition to the destruction of the world (St. Luke xxi. 5, 6, *seq.*).\*

This Psalm is the keynote to Mrs. Browning's *De Profundis*, written in the anguish of bereavement, and drawing hope from the thought of an unchanging GOD :

'By anguish which made pale the sun,  
I hear him charge his saints that none  
Among the creatures anywhere  
Blaspheme against him with despair  
However darkly days go on.  
And having in thy life-depth thrown  
Being and suffering (which are one)  
As a child drops some pebble small  
Down some deep well, and hears it fall,  
Smiling . . . So I ! THY DAYS GO ON.†

*The fifth of the Penitential Psalms*, against avarice, was formerly recited daily in Lent at Nones after the *Miserere*, a custom retained in the last Sarum breviary, but now disused in the Roman Office.

The private and personal character of the Psalm is marked by its title, which stands alone among the inscriptions of the Psalter, inasmuch as all the other examples are either musical or historical.‡

*Verses 6 and 7. I am become like a pelican in the wilderness : and like an owl that is in the desert.*

*I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow : that sitteth alone upon the house-top.*

There are three kinds and degrees (said Bellarmine) of penitential retirement set before us under the types of the three birds mentioned here : the *pelican*, seeking solitary places, being an apt emblem of the hermits of the Thebaid, and like other solitaries ; the *owl*, dwelling in *ruins* once occupied by

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 197.

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 129.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 286.

men, denoting the common life in the cells of the cloister, bare of the comforts and luxuries of secular life; while the *sparrow* on the *housetop* signifies those living of necessity in the world, but withdrawing at times for secret prayer and contemplation, above the level of temporal concerns, watching anxiously over the spiritual interests of those with whom they have to do.

Amongst the strange legends once current of the pelican, there are two which stand out conspicuously here in the notes of the mediæval commentators. One is that familiar idea of the 'pelican in her piety' feeding her young with blood from her own breast (a tale due to the bird's red-tipped beak, and its custom of pressing this beak against the breast in order to disgorge the fish stowed in the pouch under its lower mandible!); the other, yet wilder, declaring that the mother-bird itself kills its young (or, as others tell us, finds them killed by serpents), and after mourning over them three days, sprinkles them with blood from a wound it makes in its own side, and brings them to life again. These two stories are applied to Christ, feeding His children with His blood, and reviving them, either after they have been slain by the old serpent, or after He has Himself killed sin in them.\*

*Verse 6. A pelican . . . an owl.*—Both are mentioned Lev. xi. 17, 18; and the former as inhabiting the wilderness, Zeph. ii. 14, Isa. xxxiv. 11.

The owl is called in Arabic 'mother of the ruins.'†

*Like an owl that is in the desert.*—A passage in Gray's celebrated elegy may illustrate our Psalmist :

'Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl does to the moon complain,' etc.‡

*Verse 9. For I have eaten ashes as it were bread.*—A Jewish expositor (R. Shelomo) tells us that the Israelites, in the Cap-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 290.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 219.

‡ Mant on *The Psalms*, p. 337.

tivity, were forced, by reason of their poverty, to eat bread roughly baked on the coals, without any proper oven, and that in consequence of this hasty preparation it was mixed with cinders and pebbles. Others, looking to the penitential custom of lying in sackcloth and ashes, assume that food was taken in this attitude, so that it became sprinkled with the ashes from the hands and face of the penitent. A third view treats the act as a deliberate act of mortification, such as has been recorded of more than one Christian saint, as St. Godric of Finchale, or St. Francis of Assisi, the latter of whom is said to have sprinkled ashes on any dainty food served him at great tables, saying with a smile, ‘Brother Ash is pure.’\*

*Verse 14. Thy servants think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.*—Jerusalem itself affords at this day a touching illustration of this passage. There is reason to believe that a considerable portion of the lower part of the walls which enclose the present Mosque of Omar, which occupies the site of the ancient Jewish temple, is the same—or, at least, the southern, western, and eastern sides are the same, as those of Solomon’s Temple. At one part, where the remains of this old wall are the most considerable and of the most massive character—where two courses of masonry, composed of massive blocks of stone, rise to the height of thirty feet—is what is called the Wailing Place of the Jews.

‘Here,’ says Dr. Olin, ‘at the foot of the wall, is an open place paved with flags, where the Jews assemble every Friday, and in small numbers on other days, for the purpose of praying and bewailing the desolation of their holy places. Neither the Jews nor Christians are allowed to enter the Haram, which is consecrated to Mohammedan worship, and this part of the wall is the nearest approach they can make to what they regard as the precise spot within the forbidden enclosure upon which the ancient temple stood. They keep the pavement swept with great care, and take off their shoes as on holy ground.

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 292.

Standing or kneeling with their faces towards the ancient wall, they gaze in silence upon its venerable stones, or pour forth their complaints in half-suppressed, though audible, tones. This, to me, was always a most affecting sight, and I repeated my visit to this interesting spot to enjoy and sympathize with the melancholy yet pleasing spectacle. The poor people sometimes sobbed aloud, and still found tears to pour out for the desolations of their beautiful house. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."\*

*Verse 18.* *This shall be written for those that come after.*—The only place in the Psalms where the memory of great events is said to be preserved in writing ; elsewhere—as in xxii. 30 (31), xlv. 1 (2), lxxviii. 2 (3)—it is left to oral transmission.†

### PSALM CIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hymn in honour of God the All-Compassionate One.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Man's reply to the benedictions of his GOD, his Song on the Mount, answering to his Redeemer's Sermon on the Mount.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David ; concerning his loss of warmth and vitality in his old age ; and, again, instruction and thanksgiving for the men of God.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Nothing certain can be said as to the author and date of the Psalm, though various conjectures have been hazarded. The Hebrew title gives it to David, the Syriac still more definitely assigns it to his old age.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed in the Latin Use for

\* Kitto's *Pictorial Bible*.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 221.



the festival of Ascension. It was also appointed, with Psalm civ., to be said on the Perambulation of Parishes.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—A favourite Psalm of good Bishop McIlvaine's. On his death-bed he begged those by his side to look out 'some tender hymn of love to JESUS.' Amongst others, 'Abide with me' and 'How sweet the name of JESUS sounds!' were special favourites, as also these passages of Scripture: Proverbs xiv., Colossians i., Revelation vii. 9-17, Romans viii., and *Psalm ciii.*

In England, as well as in America, tears fall upon his bier, and blessings are invoked upon his memory. The mother Church and the daughter mourn together. Christians of various names and opinions join in expressions of affectionate veneration for him who was an ornament and bulwark of their common faith—and the nation feels that she has lost one of her noblest sons.†

How often have *saints in Scotland* sung this Psalm in days when they celebrated the Lord's Supper! It is thereby specially known in our land. It is connected, also, with a remarkable case in the days of John Knox. Elizabeth Adamson, a woman who attended on his preaching 'because he more fully opened the fountain of GOD'S mercies than others did,' was led to CHRIST and to rest by hearing this Psalm, after enduring such agony of soul that she said, concerning racking pain of body, 'A thousand years of this torment, and ten times more joined, are not to be compared to a quarter of an hour of my soul's trouble.' She asked for this Psalm again before departing. 'It was in receiving it that my soul first tasted GOD'S mercy, which is now sweeter to me than if all the kingdoms of the earth were given me to possess.'‡

It was *Dr. Sanderson's* constant practice every morning to entertain his first waking thoughts with a repetition of those

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 289.

† *Memorials of Bishop McIlvaine*, p. 363.

‡ Andrew A. Bonar.

very Psalms that the Church had appointed to be constantly read in the daily Morning Service, and having at night laid him in his bed, he as constantly closed his eyes with a repetition of those appointed for the service of the evening, remembering and repeating the very Psalm appointed for every day ; and as the month had formerly ended and began again, so did this exercise of his devotion. And if the firstfruits of his waking thoughts were of the world, he would arraign himself for it. Thus he began that work on earth which is now the employment of Mr. Hammond and him in heaven. After his taking his bed, about a day before his death, he desired his chaplain to give him absolution, and at his performing that office he pulled off his cap that Mr. Pullin might lay his hand upon his head. After this desire of his was satisfied, his body seemed to be at more ease, and his mind more cheerful ; he said often, ‘ LORD, forsake me not now my strength faileth me, but continue Thy mercy, and let my mouth be ever filled with Thy praise.’

He continued the remaining night and day very patient, and during that time did often say to himself the 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, as that is composed of praise and consolations fitted for a dying soul, and say also to himself very often these words : ‘ My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, where true joy is to be found.’\*

The majestic hymn by *John Graumann*,

‘ Now praise the LORD my soul ’  
 (‘ Num lob meine Seele den Herrn ’),

is after this Psalm.†

*Verse 1. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy Name.*—These words are used now and again by Bishop Wilberforce, in his Diary, when thankful, as the Miserere is used when low and depressed. Here is an entry :

\* *Life of Bishop Sanderson*, by Izaak Walton, pp. 48, 49.

† Tholuck on *The Psalms*, p. 4.

' Dec. 31st, 1871.—My cold so threatening that I lay in bed till near twelve. Better then. Read the service, as they were saying it in Church close by. And so the year runs out again. How many its mercies—in some respects signal! My Reg flourishing; his dear wife and three children. My beloved Ernest given me back again from America, certainly in better health, though still pale, worn, and heart-broken. GOD bless him. My own Basil well placed at Southampton, and doing, I trust, a real work for GOD there, his wife helping him; his child stronger. *Bless the Lord, O my soul.* My dear E——' (his daughter, who became a Roman Catholic in 1868), 'though, alas! so parted from us, affectionate. My work something in my Diocese, and though my end seems often very near, yet my strength greatly held up for work. Oh that my last days may be my best days!'

*Cowper* says :

' A soul redeemed demands a life of praise.'

*Verse 2. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*—A cross, erected by the members of Bishop Wordsworth's family, has been placed over his grave and that of his wife. It is of gray Irish limestone, and represents in medallions some of the more important types and antitypes of the Old and New Testament. Engraved on the steps of the cross, which is Runic in character, are the following inscriptions: (East) 'To the glory of GOD, and in loving memory of Christopher Wordsworth and Susanna Hatley, his wife.' (West) 'I look for the Resurrection of the dead and the Life of the world to come.' (North) 'Rejoice in the LORD always, and again I say rejoice.' (South) '*Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*'\*

*Verse 5 (E.V.). Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*—The rendering of the English version, 'so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's,'

\* *Bishop Wordsworth's Life*, p. 487.

is grammatically justifiable, but very unnecessarily makes the Psalmist responsible for the fable of the eagle's renewing its youth. Neither this passage nor Isaiah xl. 31 countenances any such fable. There is an allusion, no doubt, to the yearly moulting of the feathers of the eagle and other birds, the eagle being selected as the liveliest image of strength and vigour. The Prayer-Book Version gives the sense rightly 'making thee young and lusty as an eagle.'

The fable of the eagle's renewing its youth has received different embellishments. The version of Saadia, given by Kimchi, is as follows: The eagle mounts aloft into heaven till he comes near to the seat of central fire in the sun, when, scorched by the heat, he casts himself down into the sea. Thence he emerges again with new vigour and fresh plumage, till at last, in his hundredth year, he perishes in the waves. Augustine's story is more elaborate and far less poetical. According to him, when the eagle grows old, the upper curved portion of the beak becomes so enlarged that the bird is unable to open its mouth to seize its prey. It would die of hunger, therefore, did it not dash this part of its beak against a rock, till the troublesome excrescence is got rid of. Then it can devour its food as before, vigour is restored to its body, splendour to its plumage, it can soar aloft—a kind of resurrection has taken place. Thus it renews its youth. And then, wonderful to say, having told this story gravely, he makes CHRIST the rock, adding, 'In CHRIST thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's.'\*

#### PSALM CIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hymn in honour of the GOD of seven days.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A poet's version of Genesis.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he went with

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 231 (note).

the priests to worship before the ark of the LORD, and in which it teacheth us Confession and Prayer, and alludeth to the first constitution of created things, and unfoldeth truth concerning the angels.

*In Church.*—Appointed by the Church, Latin and Sarum Use, for Whitsun-Day, and by this appointment she reminds her people that the lights of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification are all from one and the same source ; and that the whole world is to be consecrated by the preaching of the Gospel into a holy sanctuary of GOD, in which all nations are to worship Him as their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.\*

In the Orthodox Church of the East appointed at Holy Baptism and Confirmation. After the trine immersion and the singing of Psalm xxxii., thence follows the Troparion, ‘Grant me the garment of light, Thou Who art clothed with light as with a garment (Psalm civ. 2), O most merciful CHRIST our GOD.’†

This Psalm was called by the Greeks the Prefatory Psalm, προειμακόσ ψαλμος, and was used at the commencement of the Evening Office.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm is an inspired ‘Oratorio of Creation.’§

The great *Alexander von Humboldt* expresses his admiration of this Psalm thus : ‘It might almost be said that one single Psalm represents the image of the whole Cosmos. . . . We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such limited compass the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches. The contrast of the labour of man with the animal life of Nature, and the image of omnipresent invisible Power, renewing the earth at will, or sweeping it of inhabitants, is a grand and solemn creation.’||

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 161.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 267.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 291.

§ Bishop Wordsworth.

|| *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 234.

*Verse 4. He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flaming fire.*

‘ And is there care in heaven? And is there love  
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move?  
There is:—else much more wretched were the case  
Of men than beasts. But, O! th’ exceeding grace  
Of Highest GOD that loves His creatures so,  
And all His workes with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed Angels He sends to and fro,  
To serve to wicked man, to serve His wicked foe!

‘ How oft do they their silver bowers leave,  
To come to succour us that succour want!  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave  
The flitting skyes, like flying pursuivant,  
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant!  
They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,  
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;  
And all for love, and nothing for reward:  
O why should heavenly GOD to men have such regard?’\*

*Verse 5. He laid the foundations of the earth, that it never should move at any time.*—This was one of the passages which, according to Father Sanchez, was most strongly relied upon in the controversy with Galileo. †

*Verse 8. They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath.*

*Milton:*

‘ Immediately the mountains huge appear  
Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave  
Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky;  
So high as heaved the timid hills, so low  
Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad and deep,  
Capacious bed of waters.’ ‡

*Verse 26. There go the ships.*—Professor Edward Park tells a story, new to us, how on a Sunday morning, during the last American war with Great Britain, a minister eminent for his genius and learning was just getting ready for his pulpit service, when he was informed that three ships of the British navy were drawing nigh the port where he resided, imperilling

\* Spenser’s *Faery Queene*, II., viii. 1, 2.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 237.

‡ *Paradise Lost*, book vii.

one of the American men-of-war ; he instantly suspended the morning service, hastened to the nearest fortification, and offered his services to the commander. He was ordered to stand by one of the guns. He remained at his post until the three ships of the British line sailed away, and then he returned to his Church in time for the evening service, and took his text from Psalm civ. 26, '*There go the ships.*' It was a pardonable kind of triumph, and no doubt an American brother may feel pleasure in reciting it, though it turned a lofty stanza of poetry into a ludicrous sentence.\*

*There is that Leviathan.*—Milton has used it for the whale :

‘ There leviathian,  
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep  
Stretched like a promontory sleeps or swims,  
And seems a moving land ; and at his gills  
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.’ †

*Verse 34* (Bible Version). *My meditation of Him shall be sweet.*—The last words ever written by Henry Martyn, dying among Mohammedans in Persia, were : ‘ I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my GOD, in solitude my company, my Friend and Comforter.’ ‡

## PSALM CV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving hymn in honour of GOD, who is attested in the earliest history of Israel.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous ; in which allusion is made to the narrative, *Fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt* ; and spiritually teaching us that we should not fear when anyone of us goeth forth to contend with evil spirits ; for GOD is our helper, and fighteth for us.

\* *The Pulpit, Ancient and Modern*, by Rev. E. Paxton Hood, chap. vii .

† Mant on *The Psalms*, p. 351.

‡ *The Treasury of David*, vol. v., p. 35.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is evidently one of the later Psalms, and, like the two which follow (both of which contain allusions to the exile), may have been written after the Return from the Captivity.

*In Church*.—This Psalm was appointed in the Jewish Ritual for use on the first day of the great Festival of Tabernacles.\*

This Psalm is counted by the LXX. and Vulgate (which transfer the closing Alleluia of the previous one to the title of this) as the first of the Alleluiatic Psalms. There is a tradition, preserved by the Pseudo-Epiphanius, that the custom of chanting the Alleluia at the beginning or end of the Psalm was introduced into the ritual of the Second Temple by the Prophet Haggai; and its adoption into the services of the Christian Church in its untranslated form is due to the Hebraistic tone of the Apocalypse.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—These Psalms (cv., cvi., cvii., cxviii., cxxxvi.), beginning with the Hebrew word *Hodu* = ‘giving thanks,’ have been styled *Hodu*, or *Confitemini*, Psalms.‡

*Verse 14. He suffered no man to do them wrong, but reproved even kings for their sakes*—as when He smote Herod with worms; when, as Lactantius tells us, Nero was slain and left unburied; Decius defeated and killed in battle; Valerian made captive, mocked, and flayed alive; Aurelian murdered by his own domestics; Diocletian mad; Maximian strangled; Maximin Daia poisoned; Maxentius drowned in flying from the rout of his army; Licinius stripped of the purple by Constantine and put to death; without counting up the similar histories of succeeding ages.§

*Verse 15. Touch not mine Anointed*.—These words are painted on one of the walls of the Memorial Chapel at St. Petersburg,

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 164.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 343.

‡ *Companion to the Psalter*, by Rev. J. Gurnhill, p. 257.

§ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 350.



erected to commemorate the escape of Alexander II. from assassination (see on Psalm xiii. 5).

*Verse 35. He smote all the first-born in Egypt, even the chief of all their strength.*—There is a Hebrew tradition that at the time of the slaughter of the first-born, judgment went forth also against the idols of Egypt, that the stone images fell into powder, the wooden ones rotted, the metal melted away, and the bull Apis died in his temple; and that this is one sense, at least, of the phrase, *the chief of all their strength*.\*

## PSALM CVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Israel's unfaithfulness from Egypt onwards, and GOD'S faithfulness down to the present time.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A NATIONAL CONFESSION.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. The Psalmist admonishes them concerning the Commandments of the LORD, and teaches us as the Jews sinned, so we should be greatly afraid that we should not speak in Church, nor contend with our brethren for any cause whatever, and especially when we stand in the time of the Mysteries and of prayer; and that when we sin, we should repent.

*Origin* (Perowne).—From verse 47 it may fairly be inferred that the Psalm is of the date of the Exile, or was written shortly after the return of the first company of exiles.

*Verse 1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, and His mercy endureth for ever.*—When St. Athanasius, seated on his throne at Vespers, in the Church of St. Theonas, Alexandria, beheld Syrianus and his soldiers sent to take him, he quietly bade his deacon give out the chant, '*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious, because His mercy endureth*

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 360.

for ever'; and soon after, borne out by his monks in the midst of the tumult which ensued, escaped the hands of his enemies.\*

*Verse 3. Blessed are they that a'way keep judgment, and do righteousness.*—'I have read of Louis, King of France, that when he had, through inadvertency, granted an unjust suit, as soon as ever he had read these words of the Psalmist, "*Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times,*" he presently recollected himself, and, upon better thoughts, gave his judgment quite contrary.'†

*Verse 25. But murmured in their tents.*—St. Benedict laid down as one of the chief precepts of his Rule, 'Above all, that there be no murmurings.' An elder master of the Religious Life than he, St. Pachomius, was wont to relegate to the infirmary any monk guilty of murmuring, as suffering from disease, and needing especial tendance and regimen, under which he was kept until he gave proof of amendment. And that because, as St. Augustine observes, when himself preaching to Religious, murmuring is as contagious and fatal as leprosy, and affects, not only the speaker, but all the hearers.‡

*Verse 29. The plague was great among them.*—There is a Hebrew tradition that the chief weight of the blow (*i.e.*, the plague) fell upon the tribe of Simeon, whose prince Zimri was slain by Phinehas—a notion which is supported by the two-fold census of that tribe before and after the sin in Shittim. At first the Simeonites numbered 59,300 warriors (Numb. i. 23), but afterwards only 22,200 are reckoned (Numb. xxvi. 14).§

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 367.

† Thomas Brooks (1608-1680).

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 378.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

## BOOK V.

PSALMS CVII.—CL.

‘The HOLY GHOST begins the Fifth Book of the Psalter with praise, and ends it with praise, because they who spiritually observe the Pentateuch of the Law shall, with the Angels, praise GOD for evermore.’—*Honorius*.



## PSALM CVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—An admonition to fellow-countrymen to render thanks on account of having got the better of calamities.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Thanksgiving and the motives for it.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. Written concerning Joel and Abiah, the sons of Samuel, who corrupted the Commandments of the LORD. Intimating, also, that as GOD gathered the Jews from the Captivity and brought them up from Babylon, so GOD, the only Begotten Son, JESUS the Messiah, gathered the Gentiles from the four corners of the earth by preaching unto Baptism.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It is obvious that this Psalm is not historical. It describes various incidents of human life, it tells of the perils which befall men, and the goodness of GOD in delivering them, and calls upon all who have experienced His care and protection gratefully to acknowledge them ; and it is perfectly general in its character.

*The Whole Psalm*.—*Dr. Duff*, on his first voyage to India, in 1830, was wrecked off the coast of South Africa. They all reached the shore in safety. Soon after their escape 'a sailor, walking along the beach, noticed an object cast ashore. Going up to it, he found it was a quarto copy of Bagster's Bible and a Scotch Psalm-book, somewhat shattered, but with Mr. Duff's name written distinctly on both. The precious volumes

had not been used on the voyage out. Wrapped in chamois leather, they had been put with other books in a box, which must have been broken to pieces. The sailor who found the volumes high and dry on the beach had been the most attentive at the service which the missionary had held with the crew every Sabbath. Taking Bible and Psalter to the hovel where the passengers sought shelter, with a glowing face he presented them to their owner. All were deeply affected by what they regarded as a message from GOD. Led by Mr. Duff, they kneeled down, and there he spread out the precious books on the white bleached sand. What a meaning to each had the travellers' Psalm, *the 107th*, which he read, as to all exiles, captives, and storm-tossed wanderers since the days when its first singers were gathered from all lands to rebuild Jerusalem! What fervent prayer and thanksgiving followed its words, as the band of shipwrecked, but delivered, men and women lifted their wearied faces to the heavens :

‘Whoso is wise, and will observe these things,  
Even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.’\*

*Dr. Lowth* remarks of this Psalm : ‘No doubt the composition of this Psalm is admirable throughout ; and the descriptive part of it adds at least its share of beauty to the whole ; but what is most to be admired is its *conciseness*, and withal the expressiveness of the diction, which strikes the imagination with inimitable elegance. The *weary and bewildered traveller*, the miserable *captive* in the hideous dungeon, the sick and dying man, the *seaman foundering* in a storm, are described in so affecting a manner that they far exceed anything of the kind, though never so much laboured.’ Adam Clarke then says : ‘I may add, that had such an Idyll appeared in Theocritus or Virgil, or had it been found as a scene in any of the Greek tragedians, even in Æschylus himself, it would probably have been produced as their master-piece.’

*Thanksgiving after a storm*, one writer on the Psalms calls

\* *Life of Dr. Duff*, by George Smith, LL.D., vol. i., p. 76.

this Psalm ; and from Dr. Kay he quotes, in illustration, the Basque proverb, 'Let him who knows not how to pray go to sea.'\*

*Verse 14. For He brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death.*

“ A little while !”

And earth shall pass  
Like a faint vision from our weary gaze,  
And we shall stand upon the “ sea of glass ”  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And death shall lie  
With Satan vanquished at JEHOVAH'S feet,  
And we shall see our SAVIOUR, eye to eye,  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And every grief  
Shall be remembered, but with tears of joy :  
On JESUS' bosom we shall find relief  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And faded flowers  
Shall bloom again for us in yon dear land,  
And we shall wander amid sweetest bowers  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And parted hands  
Shall clasp again upon the heavenly shore,  
Where she—“ Jerusalem the Golden ”—stands  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And every star  
Shall pale and fade before His matchless light,  
Whose unveiled glory fills that city fair  
For evermore !

“ A little while !”

And heaven's gate  
Shall open wide to let the wanderer in,  
Where JESUS sits upon His “ throne of light ”  
For evermore !

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\* Housman on *The Psalms*.

““ A little while !”

Ah, yes !—*not long!*  
Till we shall rest on Jordan’s “sunny side,”  
And find earth’s bitter cross a golden crown  
For evermore !

““ A little while !”

And then !—the dawn !  
The fair sweet breaking of that blissful day  
When He shall come and dwell with us again  
For evermore !

““ A little while !”

And then !—the song  
Of “Hallelujah !” to our SAVIOUR KING !  
The glad hosannas of heaven’s ransomed throng  
*For evermore !\**

*Verses 14-21. For He brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death. . . . Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men.*—How deeply the Jew still feels the necessity of substituting in the shape of a vicarious sacrifice may be seen by a peculiar ceremony which is observed in the ninth of Tishri, the eve of the Day of Atonement, and which is the mere invention of the Rabbis.

The following laws are laid down in the Jewish Prayer-Book with regard to this ceremony :

‘On the eve of the Day of the Atonement, the custom is to make atonement ; a cock is taken for a man, and a hen for a woman. . . . The father of the family first makes the atonement for himself, then for his family, and afterwards for all Israel.’

The order to be observed is as follows :

‘The father takes the cock in his hand and repeats these verses, “Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. . . . They cry unto the LORD. . . . Fools, because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat ; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their

\* *Thoughts on the Book of Psalms*, by the Rev. D. T. K. Drummond, p. 527.



trouble; and He saveth them out of their distresses. He sendeth His word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions. *Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men* (Psalm cvii. 14-21). 'If there be . . . a ransom' (Job xxxiii. 23, 24).

After having uttered this prayer, he moves the 'atonement cock' round his head thrice, saying, 'This is my substitute; this is my commutation; this cock goeth to death, but may I be gathered, and enter into a long and happy life, and into peace.' He then begins again at the words, 'The children of men,' and so he does three times. The same ceremony has to be gone through by each member of the family. After the *Kaparoth* (atoning sacrifice) has been made by the father, the mother takes a hen, and performs the same ceremony, and afterwards follow the children, according to their respective ages.

The prescribed order being performed, each one lays his hand upon his atonement, as was usual with the sacrifices in the Temple, and immediately after it is sent away to be killed.\*

*Verse 15. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness.*—It is told of Sydney Smith, that, when preaching in Edinburgh, in the first quarter of this century, seeing how almost exclusively the congregations were composed of ladies, he gave out as his text, '*Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord!*' laying distinct emphasis on the word 'men.' That was in questionable taste, but it marked a fact. Bishop Ryle, writing in 1853, laments the absence of men from churches, and there are still parishes in which that complaint might be made. It was not so in the Chapel of St. George's during James Hannington's incumbency.†

*Verse 20. He sent His word and healed them, and they were saved from their destruction.*—When George Wishart arrived at

\* *Pictures from Jewish Life (Sunday at Home, 1877, p. 551).*

† *Life of Bishop Hannington, p. 129.*

Dundee, where the plague was raging (1545), he caused intimation to be made that he would preach ; and for that purpose chose his station upon the head of the East-gate, the infected persons standing without, and those that were whole within.

His text was Psalm cvii. 20, *He sent His word and healed them, and they were saved from their destruction*, wherein he treated of the profit and comfort of GOD'S word, the punishment that comes by contempt of it, the readiness of GOD'S mercy to such as truly turn to Him, and the happiness of those whom GOD takes from this misery, etc.

By which sermon he so raised up the hearts of those that heard him, that they regarded not death, but judged them more happy that should then depart, rather than such as should remain behind, considering that they knew not whether they should have such a comforter with them.\*

*Verse 23-32. They that go down to the sea in ships . . . praise Him in the scat of the elders.*—Addison remarks that he prefers this description of a ship in a storm before any others he has ever met with, and for the same reason for which 'Longinus recommends one in Homer, because the poet has not amused himself with little fancies upon the occasion, as authors of an inferior genius, whom he mentions, had done, but because he has gathered together those circumstances which are the most apt to terrify the imagination, and which really happened in the raging of the tempest.' By the way, he adds, 'how much more comfortable, as well as rational, is this system of the Psalmist, than the pagan scheme in Virgil, and other poets, where one deity is represented as raising a storm, and another as laying it! Were we only to consider the sublime in this piece of poetry, what can be nobler than the idea it gives us of the Supreme Being thus raising a tumult among the elements, and recovering them out of their confusion—thus troubling and recalming nature?'†

\* *A General Martyrologie*, by Samuel Clarke.

† *Spectator*, No. 489 (quoted by Bishop Perowne).

*Verse 29. For He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.*—Then about midnight, when the ships were rolling fearfully, and everything on every side was falling to pieces with deafening noise, there came a tremendous sea, washing clean over the ship and filling almost every cabin with water, and an awful yell of agony, ‘Murder.’ I jumped up, with all the fresh life and energy which imminent danger lends for the moment, to ascertain what had befallen us. A poor fellow, a seaman, had been knocked down by the sea and both his legs fearfully shattered to pieces. Then the horses on board one after another, knocked to bits, died, and were thrown overboard; and so we went on bravely existing—the cabin full of water, my very bed drenched—till on the eighth day GOD had pity and stayed the stormy sea, ‘*and delivered us out of our distress*’; ‘*for He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still.*’ That wonderful Psalm, read in church when I was being tossed in the Bay of Biscay on the 22nd, and when you were so anxiously thinking of me, has been much in my thoughts.\*

*Verse 30. And so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.*—These words are on the tablet to the memory of Sir John Franklin and others. It was left at Disco in 1855 by the American expedition, which was unable to reach Beechey Island, and it was set up in its place by Captain McClintock, R.N., who commanded the final expedition of search for ascertaining the fate of Sir John Franklin and his companions in 1858.

To the Memory of  
FRANKLIN,  
CROZIER, FITZJAMES,  
and all their  
gallant brother officers and faithful  
companions who have suffered and perished  
in the cause of science and  
the service of their country.

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\* *Memoir of James Skinner*, p. 148.

This Tablet  
is erected near the spot where  
they passed their first Arctic  
winter, and whence they issued  
forth to conquer difficulties or  
to Die.

It commemorates the grief of their  
admiring countrymen and friends,  
and the anguish, subdued by faith,  
of her who has lost, in the heroic  
leader of the expedition, the most  
devoted and affectionate of  
husbands.

*'And so He bringeth them unto the  
haven where they would be.'*

1855.\*

*Verse 32. That they would exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the seat of the elders.*—Those who have ever been to the chapel at St. Adresse, near Havre, sacred to mariners, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, will be reminded by this verse of their visit. But there, alas! the votive offerings of gratitude and praise are made by those who have been delivered from the perils of the sea, not to the Creator, but only to St. Mary, the most highly honoured of His creatures.†

### PSALM CVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Two Elohimic fragments brought together.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Warrior's Morning Song.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, when he was prepared with a song, for the ministry and psalmody of the House of the LORD; also containing an allusion to the calling of the Gentiles.

\* *The Fate of Sir John Franklin*, by Admiral McClintock, p. 146.

† *The Companion to the Psalter*, by Rev. J. Gurnhill, p. 269.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm consists of portions of two others, the first half of it being taken from the 57th Psalm, verses 7-11 (8-12), and the latter half from the 60th, verses 5-12 (7-14). It bears the name of David because the original passages both occur in Psalms ascribed to him as their author. But there is no reason for concluding that these fragments were thus united by David himself. Some later poet probably adapted them to circumstances of his own time—possibly wished thus to commemorate some victory over Edom or Philistia.

*In Church*.—On Ascension Day Our Blessed LORD, having redeemed the world and conquered death, sat down on the right hand of the Father, ‘from henceforth waiting till His enemies be made His footstool,’ of which completed victory over every opposing power the triumphs of David were a distinct prophecy. This Psalm is therefore appointed the third Psalm at Evensong on Ascension Day.\*

*Verse 2. Awake, thou lute, and harp; I myself will awake right early.*—With reference to this passage, the Talmud says, ‘A cithern used to hang above David’s bed, and when midnight came the north wind blew among the strings, so that they sounded of themselves; and forthwith he arose, and busied himself with the Tôra until the pillar of the dawn ascended.’ Rashi observes, ‘The dawn awakes the other kings, but I, said David, will awake the dawn.’†

Delitzsch translates verse 3 (verse 2), ‘Awake up, O harp and cithern; I will awake the morning dawn.’

*Talmudists* say that before David slept, he used to repeat this verse of the 108th Psalm, ‘*Arise, my glory, awake Psaltery and Harpe; I myselfe will awake right early.*’ As if he should say, ‘Both thou, my Psaltery and Harpe, doe ye beginne be-

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 243.

† Franz Delitzsch.

times by the HOLY SPIRIT, and I will early arise to prophecy.' And hence some of the Jews have concluded that David deserved a pre-eminence above all other Prophets. For (say they) the Day-light rased other Prophets; but the HOLY SPIRIT Himselfe awaked David; that before the Day-spring he might Prophecie.\*

*Verse 9. Moab is my wash-pot.*—The office of washing the feet was in the East commonly performed by slaves, and the meanest of the family, as appears from what Abigail said to David when he took her to wife, 'Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord' (1 Sam. xxv. 41); and from the fact of our SAVIOUR washing His disciples' feet, to give them an example of humility (John xiii. 5).

Gataker and Le Clerc illustrate this text from an anecdote related by Herodotus, concerning Amasis, King of Egypt, who expressed the meanness of his own origin by comparing himself to a pot for washing feet in (Herod., lib. ii., c. 172). When, therefore, it is said, '*Moab is my washing pot,*' the complete and servile subjection of Moab to David is strongly marked. This is expressed, not by comparing Moab to a slave who performs the lowest offices, as presenting to his master the basin for washing his feet, but by comparing him to the mean utensil itself.†

## PSALM CIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Imprecation upon the curser who prefers the curse to the blessing.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David: when the people

\* *A Preparation to the Psalter*, by G. Wither, chap. v., p. 43.

† James Anderson's *Note to Calvin on Psalm lx.*

made Absalom king without his knowledge, for which cause he was slain, and, as respects ourselves, containing an allusion to the sufferings of GOD the Messiah.

*The Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm was called by the ancient Fathers of the Church ‘Psalmus Iscarioticus,’ as referring to the treason of Judas Iscariot, and of all who resemble him in treachery to CHRIST.\*

‘*Mysterious*’ was the one word written opposite this Psalm in the pocket Bible of a late devout and popular writer. It represents the utter perplexity with which it is very generally regarded.†

*Calvin* states, as a thing notorious in his time, that certain monks—the Franciscans especially—made a detestable trade of this Psalm. If anyone had a mortal enemy and wished him destroyed, he would hire one of those wretches to curse him day by day in the words of the 109th Psalm. The reformer adds that he himself knew a lady of rank in France who hired certain Franciscans to imprecate perdition in this way on her only son. Matthew Henry, after mentioning these shameful facts, makes this reflection, that ‘greater impiety can scarcely be imagined that to vent a devilish passion in the language of sacred writ, to kindle strife with coals snatched from God’s altar, and to call for fire from heaven with a tongue set on fire of hell.’‡

*The Patriarch Nikon* resigned the Patriarchal See, 1658, after a quarrel with the Emperor Alexis, and retired finally into the one of his monasteries nearest Moscow. Here he fished in the river, assisted at the drainage of the marshes like a common peasant, and worked like a common stonemason in the erection of the convent church. But neither the ideal nor the

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 174.

† Joseph Hammond.

‡ *The Psalms : their History and Teaching*, by Dr. Binnie, p. 296.

practice of solitary asceticism could enable Nikon to forget that he had been, that he was still, except by his own rash abdication, the Patriarch of Russia. He refused by any act or word to acknowledge a successor to the See. He caused a special office to be sung in the convent, in which day by day were repeated the curses from the 109th Psalm.

'I have not cursed the Czar,' was his answer to the commissioner who came from Moscow to complain; 'I have not cursed the Czar, but I have cursed you, the nobles of the Church; if you have a mind to stay and hear it, I will have the same Office sung over again in your ears.'\* (See also note on verse 16.)

*Verse 7. Let another take his office.*—In Acts i. 20 St. Peter combines a part of the 8th verse of this Psalm, 'his office let another take,' with the words slightly altered from the 25th (Heb. 26th) verse of the 69th Psalm, and applies them to Judas Iscariot. Hence the Psalm has been regarded by the majority of expositors, ancient and modern, as a prophetic and Messianic Psalm. The language has been justified, not as the language of David, but as the language of CHRIST executing His office of Judge.†

*Verse 11. Let the extortioner consume all that he hath.*—Note: he is most miserable who falls into the hands of usurers; for they will flay him alive and drain his blood. The Romans, that they might deter the citizens from usury, placed a statue of Marsyas in the forum or law-court, by which they signified that those who came into the hands of usurers would be skinned alive; and to show that usurers, as the most unjust litigants, deserved hanging, they placed a rope in the hand of the figure.‡ (Marsyas was a piper of Phrygia, who challenged Apollo to a trial of skill as a musician. The defeated one was to be flayed

\* Stanley's *Eastern Church*, p. 369.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 283.

‡ *Le Blanc* (quoted by Spurgeon), vol. v., p. 178.



alive by the conqueror, and, as Apollo was the victor, Marsyas was tied to a tree and flayed alive.)

*Verse 16. He loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.*—Nicon was degraded from his office to the rank of a simple monk, and banished for the rest of his life to do penance in a distant monastery. He maintained his proud sarcastic bearing to the end. ‘Why do you degrade me without the presence of the Czar, in this small church’ (a small church, now destroyed, over the gates of one of the Kremlin convents), ‘and not in the cathedral where you once implored me to ascend the Patriarchal Throne? . . .’ It was in the depths of a Russian winter, and the Czar sent him by one of his kindlier courtiers a present of money and sable furs for the journey to the far north. The impenetrable prelate sternly replied: ‘Take these back to him who sent them; these are not what Nicon wants.’

The courtier entreated him not to affront the Czar by his refusal, and also asked, in the Czar’s name, for his forgiveness and blessing.

‘He loved not blessing,’ said Nicon, in allusion to the 109th Psalm, in which he had before cursed all his enemies except the Czar, ‘and therefore it shall be far from him.’\*

*Verse 30. He shall stand at the right hand of the poor.*—One of the oldest Rabbinical commentaries has a very beautiful gloss on this passage: ‘Whenever a man stands at thy door, the Holy One, blessed be His Name, stands at his right hand. If thou givest him alms, know that thou shalt receive a reward from Him who standeth at his right hand.’†

\* Stanley’s *Eastern Church*, p. 373.

† *Sketches of the Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, by Dr. Edersheim.

## PSALM CX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—To the Priest-King at the right hand of GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The subject is the Priest-King.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David — concerning the Session of the LORD, and concerning His glorious power. A prophecy also of the Messiah and of His triumph over the adversary.

*In Church*.—The Syriac entitles this Psalm ‘A prophecy of CHRIST’S victory over His enemies,’ and the Church has appointed this Psalm to be used on Christmas Day, when she celebrates the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Eternal Word took our nature of the seed of David, and became Emmanuel, God with us, GOD manifest in the flesh, and which was the origin and well-spring of all those glorious prerogatives which are celebrated in this Psalm.

Both the Latin and Sarum Use appoint this Psalm for Christmas Day. It is also appointed in the Latin and Sarum Use for the Festival of the Circumcision, when our LORD received His Name JESUS.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—This Psalm is well characterized by St. Augustine, ‘Brevis numero, verborum, sed magnus pondere sententiarum.’

*Luther* remarks on this Psalm that it is worthy to be set in a frame of gold and diamonds, so full it is, he says, of excellent Christian thought and Divine instruction, and of all the Psalms the very crown and chief. The fifth verse in particular, he says, is like a rich copious mine, from which flow Christian instruction and wisdom, faith, hope and confidence, the like to which no other Scripture supplies.†

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 177.

† *The Speaker’s Commentary*, p. 429.

*This Psalm is quoted* in the New Testament six times : three in the Gospels (St. Matt. xxii. 43, St. Mark xii. 36, St. Luke xx. 42), once in the Acts (Acts ii. 34), and twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. i. 13, v. 6).

*Verse 1. The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou on My right hand, i.e.,* the place of associated power in the sovereignty. An argument against the Arians was based on this very fact.

At a time (A.D. 385) when the leaders of the Arians were exceedingly powerful, and great efforts were being made to secure the patronage of the state for them, St. Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium, headed a deputation of Catholic prelates to Theodosius the Great, to counteract the scheme. The young Arcadius, who had lately been proclaimed Augustus by his father, was seated beside the Emperor, but the aged Bishop omitted him altogether when paying the customary marks of respect to the sovereign. Theodosius, believing this to be an oversight, desired the saint to salute Arcadius. The old man drew near, and caressed the boy, saying, 'Good-day, my son.'

Theodosius, much incensed, and thinking that an insult was intended, gave orders that the Bishop should be driven out of the hall of audience ; but he, turning to the Emperor as the guards were about to execute the mandate, cried out : 'See, Emperor, you cannot bear any disrespect shown to your son, but are exceedingly wroth with those that are insolent to him. Believe, then, that Almighty GOD also hateth them that blaspheme His only-begotten SON, and is indignant with them for their ingratitude towards their SAVIOUR and Benefactor.'

And Theodosius, struck by the cogency of the argument, withdrew his protection from the Arians and Eunomians.\*

*Verse 7. He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head.*—Cf. Shakespeare's lines :

'Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,  
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood.'

*King Henry IV., Act I., Sc. iii.*

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\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 443.

## PSALM CXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Alphabetical song in praise of God.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Psalm of GOD'S Works, intended to excite us to the work of praise.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Concerning the excellency of the works of God, and enjoining upon us to render thanksgiving unto the Messiah. Spoken in the persons of the Apostles.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed by the Latin and Sarum Use for Christmas, and by our own Church for Easter.

*The Whole Psalm*.—The following, taken from *The Psalms Chronologically Arranged*, by 'Four Friends,' will give the reader an idea of the alphabetical character of this Psalm.

All my heart shall praise JEHOVAH,  
 Before the congregation of the righteous ;  
 Deeds of goodness are the deeds of JEHOVAH,  
 Earnestly desired of all them that have pleasure therein ;  
 For His righteousness endureth for ever,  
 Glorious and honourable is His work.  
 He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered,  
 In JEHOVAH is compassion and goodness ;  
 JEHOVAH hath given meat to them that fear Him,  
 Keeping his covenant for ever,  
 Learning His people the power of His works,  
 Making them to possess the heritage of the heathen ;  
 Naught save truth and equity are the works of His hands,  
 Ordered and sure are His commands,  
 Planted fast for ever and ever,  
 Righteous and true are His testimonies ;  
 Salvation hath He sent unto His people,  
 Their covenant hath He made fast for ever ;  
 Upright and holy is His name,  
 Verily, the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
 Yea, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter ;  
 Zealously shall He be praised for ever.

*Verse 4. The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.*—Milton has imitated this passage :

‘For wonderful indeed are all His works,  
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all  
Had in remembrance always with delight.’

*Paradise Lost*, iii.

The following quotation, too, illustrates this verse :

‘Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruit and flowers,  
In mingled clouds to Him ; Whose sun exalts,  
Whose breath perfumes you, and Whose pencil paints.  
Ye forests, bend, ye harvests, wave to Him ;  
Breathe your still song into the reaper’s heart  
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.’

JAMES THOMSON.

*Verse 5. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him.—*

MEAT.—Delitzsch supposes that by the ‘memorial’ (ver. 4, ‘marvellous works . . . be had in remembrance’) is meant the Festivals, which were instituted to keep alive the remembrance of GOD’S mighty works in the days of Moses ; and by the ‘food’ (ver. 5, ‘meat’), the meal accompanying the sacrifices, and the Paschal feast. (It is with reference to this sense, doubtless, that Luther calls the Psalm ‘an Easter or Paschal Psalm.’) Theodoret, Augustine, and others, understand by this ‘food’ in the New Testament sense, the Eucharist, and the Psalm has been accordingly used as a Eucharistic Psalm. It is a curious instance of the way in which a word may draw to itself a whole train of thought with which it has really no connection.\*

*Verse 9. He sent redemption unto His people ; He hath commanded His covenant for ever : holy and reverend is His name.—*

It is the ninth verse which gives its Easter character to this Psalm. The redemption from the bondage of Egypt was figurative of that greater redemption from the captivity of Satan which was accomplished on the day our LORD broke the bonds of death.†

*Verse 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—*

Rabbi Alexander said : ‘He who possesses worldly wisdom, and

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 314.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 253.

fears not the LORD, is as one who designs building a house, and completes only the door; for, as David wrote, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD."\*"

## PSALM CXII.

*Heading.*—Alphabetical song in praise of those who fear GOD.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The blessedness of the righteous man.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous; in which David giveth instruction to Solomon his son: Keep the commandments of the LORD, and serve Him. Also the calling of the Gentiles and the judgment of the Messiah.

*The Whole Psalm.*—It was said of Rabbi Tarphon, that though a very wealthy man, he was not charitable according to his means. One time Rabbi Akiba said to him: 'Shall I invest some money for thee in real estate, in a manner which will be very profitable?' Rabbi Tarphon answered in the affirmative, and brought to Rabbi Akiba four thousand denars in gold, to be so applied. Rabbi Akiba immediately distributed the same among the poor. Some time after this Rabbi Tarphon met Rabbi Akiba, and asked him where the real estate which he had bought for him was situated. Akiba led his friend to the cottage, and showed him a little boy who recited for them the 112th Psalm. When he reached the 9th verse, 'He distributeth, he giveth to the needy, his righteousness endureth for ever,' 'There,' said Akiba, 'thy property is with David, the King of Israel, who said, "He distributeth, he giveth to the needy."' 'And wherefore hast thou done this?' asked Tarphon. 'Knowest thou not,' answered Akiba, 'how Nacdimon, the son of Guryon, was punished because he gave not according to his means?'

\* *The Talmud*, p. 238.

‘Well,’ returned the other, ‘why didst thou not tell me this? Could I not have distributed my means without thy aid?’ ‘Nay,’ said Akiba, ‘it is a greater virtue to cause another to give than to give one’s self.’ From this we may learn that he who is not charitable according to his means will be punished.\*

*Verse 4. Unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness.*—The use of this verse as the Antiphon to the Psalm in the second Vespers of Christmas supplies us at once with the highest sense of the word, as denoting the revelation of CHRIST to the world, a *light* shining in the dark places of the earth, on them who aforetime sat in the shadow of death, and that light Himself, merciful, loving, and righteous.†

*Verse 7. He will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.*—That ‘the righteous are bold as a lion,’ that they ‘will not be afraid of any evil tidings’; and, on the other hand, that the ungodly are ‘brought into great fear even where no fear is,’ and that they ‘flee when no man pursueth’—these and suchlike truths of Holy Scripture are set forth again and again in the pages of Shakespeare with a vividness proportioned to their moral weight. Thus the Duke says, in *Measure for Measure* :

‘Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.’  
Act III., Sc. i.

The Lord Say, in *King Henry VI.*, 2nd Part :

‘The trust I have is in mine innocence,  
And therefore am I bold and resolute.’  
Act IV., Sc. iv.

The ‘good Duke,’ Humphrey of Gloster, in the same play :

‘A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.’  
Act III., Sc. i.

\* *The Talmud*, p. 233.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 466.

The Duke of Albany, in *King Lear* :

‘Where I could not be honest  
I never yet was valiant.’

Act V., Sc. i.\*

*Verse 9. He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor ; and his righteousness remaineth for ever ; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*—The Apostle St. Paul, in quoting this verse with reference to the contributions for which he was asking the Corinthians, prefixes some words of his own which serve as a comment on the latter part of it : ‘GOD is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work ’ (2 Cor. ix. 8).

Then follows the quotation from the Psalm, and the connection makes it clear that the intention in this place is to represent the endurance of righteousness and the exaltation of the horn as GOD’S reward for charitable dealing towards the poor. Accordingly, the words are used as the Versicle and Response to the Hymn in the Office of St. Lawrence, famous in ecclesiastical history for the distribution of the treasures of the Church among the needy. The word *dispersed* implies the extent and freedom of bounty, like the rays of the sun on the drops of the rain. But it was actually perverted by certain Talmudists to mean turning a small sum of money into coins of the lowest value, and bestowing these upon a large number of persons, so as to spread the parsimonious gift over the widest area.†

### PSALM CXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hallelujah to Him who raiseth out of low estate.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—With this Psalm begins the Hallel or Hallelujah of the Jews, which was sung at their solemn feasts ;

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 153.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 470.



we will therefore call it THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE HALLEL.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous ; in which reference is made to the diligence to be shown by the priests in the prime of the morning ; and instructing us who are a new people, regenerated by water and the Spirit, that we should be ready betimes for the service of GOD, having our hearts sprinkled and washed with the HOLY GHOST, and being purified in our minds.

*In Church*.—The Church of England appoints this Psalm as the first Psalm at Evensong on Easter Day, and the Roman Catholic Church uses it at the burial of children. ‘A certain ambiguity in the LXX. and Vulgate, which has *boys* or *children* (παῖδες, pueri) for *servants*, in verse 1, has led to the use of the Psalm in the Latin Office for infant baptism and burial’ (Neale).

*The Whole Psalm*.—With this Psalm begins the great ‘Hallel,’ or Alleluia Magnum, which consisted of six Psalms (Psalm cxiii.-cxviii.), and was sung at the Passover and Tabernacles, and at the Feast of Dedication and New Moon.\*

At the Passover it was divided into two parts, the first consisting of Psalms cxiii., cxiv., sung before the second Cup at the Paschal Supper was passed round, and thus consequently before the meal itself, which began immediately after that ceremony ; the second consisting of Psalms cxv.-cxviii., sung after the filling of the fourth Cup, and supposed to be ‘the hymn’ which CHRIST and the Apostles are stated to have sung at the Last Supper, before they went out to Gethsemane.†

*Paulus Burgensis* styles Psalms cxiii.-cxviii. *Alleluia Judæorum magnum*, and this has been a very usual designation. But according to the ancient Jewish tradition, this series of Psalms is called simply ‘the Hallel,’ or sometimes ‘the

\* Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 179.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 473.

Egyptian Hallel'; whereas the name 'Great Hallel' is given to Psalm cxxxvi., with its 'for His mercy endureth for ever' repeated twenty-six times.\*

*The Song of Hannah.*—This Psalm bears a striking resemblance to the Magnificat of Hannah, see verses 6 and 7, which is reproduced with still greater force in the Magnificat of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, it may be said to be a connecting link between the two.

*Verse 2. Blessed be the Name of the Lord* was the cry of the Huguenots burnt at Paris, under Francis I.

*Verse 6 (7). He taketh up the simple out of the dust, and lifteth the poor out of the mire.*—When the Jews beheld the great procession, and Mordecai honoured in the midst of it, they followed after; and in return to the shouts of the troops they called out loudly: 'Thus shall be done to the man who serves the King who created heaven and earth, and whom He desireth to honour.'

When Esther saw her kinsman thus arrayed, she thanked the LORD and praised Him. 'With the Psalmist I may say,' she exclaimed, '*He raiseth up out of the dust the poor, from the dung-hill He lifteth up the needy*' (Psalm cxiii. 7), 'that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people.'

Mordecai also praised the LORD, and said: 'Thou hast changed my mourning into dancing for me, Thou hast loosened my sackcloth, and girded me with joy; I will extol Thee, O LORD, for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not suffered my enemies to rejoice over me' (Psalm xxx. 12). Four distinct services did Haman render Mordecai. First, he was his hairdresser, for he shaved and anointed him; secondly, he was his valet, for he attended him in the bath; thirdly, he was his footman, for he led the horse Mordecai rode; fourthly, he was his trumpeter, for he proclaimed before him, 'Thus shall be done to the man whom the king desireth to honour.†'

\* *Delitzsch*, vol. iii., p. 203.

† *The Book of Esther* (Talmud), p. 189.

*Verse 8 (9). He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.*—The allusion to barrenness here was suggested, doubtless, by Hannah's history, and by the strain of Hannah's song. The curse of barrenness was so bitter a thing in Jewish eyes, that its removal was hailed as a special mark of Divine favour.\*

## PSALM CXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Commotion of Nature before GOD the Redeemer out of Egypt.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—This sublime SONG OF THE EXODUS.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous; from the old Scriptures, concerning Moses, who sang praises at the sea; and, as respects ourselves, treating of the call of the Gospel, by which we were made a new people, before barbarous, now spiritual unto GOD, Incarnate in JESUS the Messiah, Who redeemed us by His Blood from the curse of Scripture, and purified us from sin by His Spirit.

*Origin* (Perowne).—We have no clue to guide us to the age of the Psalm, or the occasion for which it was written, except that perhaps the forms in verse 8, which are found in other late Psalms, may be taken to indicate a date after the exile.

*In Church.*—The return of the Hebrew people from Babylon was like a national Resurrection from the dead. Therefore, retrospectively, it is connected with the Resurrection of the Israelites of old from the bondage of Egypt; and, prospectively, with the Resurrection of the Israelites of GOD from the thralldom of sin and Death by the Resurrection of CHRIST. . . . Therefore this Psalm is appointed by the English Church for use on Easter Day.†

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 319.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 180.

And so *St. John Damascene* :

‘Come, ye faithful, raise the strain  
Of triumphant gladness !  
GOD hath brought His Israel  
Into joy from sadness :  
Loosed from Pharaoh’s bitter yoke  
Jacob’s sons and daughters ;  
Led them with unmoistened foot  
Through the Red Sea waters.

‘’Tis the spring of souls to-day,  
CHRIST hath burst His prison ;  
And from three days’ sleep in death  
As a sun hath risen.  
All the winter of our sins,  
Long and dark, is flying  
From His light, to Whom we give  
Laud and praise undying.’\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—The same work went on in France as in the Netherlands. The Huguenots felt that the sovereigns were banded against them, and that the peace lately granted was worse than war. . . . Early in 1568 the Admiral de Coligny, who had just lost his wife, brought his little children, whom he was afraid to leave behind him, to the Castle of Noyers in Burgundy, there to consult with the Prince of Condé. They soon learnt that the royal troops were being sent to guard the approaches of the castle. . . . The two friends decided on departing at once, but could hope for no place of safety short of La Rochelle, and they had only 150 horsemen at hand to guard their families. The Admiral had his four young children—two still in arms ; the Prince had a delicate wife and three infants. And D’Andelot’s wife and her two children were with him, while he himself was away collecting assistance in Anjou and Brittany. When the cavalcade of servants, women and children reached the Loire, they found that all the bridges were guarded ; but the stream was low, and a boatman showed them a ford near Sancerre. It was at nightfall, but Condé rode through the water first of all with one of his little boys before him, on his horse, and the rest followed, singing the

\* *Canon for Low Sunday.*

Psalm, ‘*When Israel came out of Egypt.*’ For the Loire was always considered as a sort of boundary-line between the Catholic and the Huguenot. There were, of course, many Catholics in the south, and many reformed in the north ; but, as a general rule, the majority were thus divided. In two days more Condé had reached La Rochelle, where he was enthusiastically received.\*

*Xavier*, styled the Apostle of the Indies, when driven out from Amanguchi, the capital of Magoto, attended only by three converts, made a pilgrimage through the wilderness, and, after a month’s wandering, reached Meaco. But the city was in all the horrors of a siege.

Even the Pope of Japan was too busy to attend to other than military duties, and *Xavier* was forced to retreat, chanting, ‘*When Israel went forth out of Egypt.*’

*Madame Louise de France.*—In the midst of this imposing scene (*i.e.*, the taking of the veil, at which the Nunzio and twenty-two Bishops assisted), *Madame Louise* was naturally the object of every gaze. She remained in her appointed place, calm and recollected, and doubtless thinking less of the visible surroundings than of that Invisible Presence, and cloud of witnesses, which are a greater reality to a fervent heart than the most engrossing realities of the world.

Monseigneur de la Riviere, Bishop of Troyes, preached the sermon, of which no details are given us, save that it was so touching that all present, the royal postulant excepted, were moved to tears. That ended, *Madame Louise* rose, and accompanied by the Dauphine, and followed by the Count, advanced with a steady step towards the cloister she was about to enter. On the threshold she turned one last look upon the world she was leaving, and, with a calm, grateful joy, bade it farewell for ever.

The brilliant assembly which filled the church looked on, half admiring, half marvelling, while the Princess prostrated

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. clvi.

herself at the Feet of Him Whose bride she sought to become, and then saw her raised by the Prioress, who led her to the Choir, preceded by the other Nuns ; the Dauphine and her suite, as well as that of Madame Louise, still accompanying her. The hymn ‘O gloriosa fœminum’ was sung the while. The Princess was placed, kneeling, in front of the grille, her confessor, the Abbé du Ternay, and the King’s chaplain, the Abbé de Colincourt, close to her, while the Bishop of Chartres remained by the Dauphine, whose chaplain he was. The Nunzio then proceeded to put the customary questions as to the motives and intentions with which the postulant was taking this important step, to which Madame Louise replied with dignity and composure.

This done, the choir began to sing the ‘*In exitu Israel*,’ while she retired to take off her gorgeous apparel, and replace it with St. Teresa’s serge, an operation which she performed joyfully, herself throwing off her royal trappings eagerly.

Robed in the dress of a novice, the Princess returned to the choir, and, taking her place at the grille, received the girdle, scapulary, cloak and veil, each blessed by the Nunzio, from the hands of the Dauphine, who could not restrain her tears while fulfilling her office.\*

In the *Purgatorio* of Dante (Canto II. 46) that great and thoughtful poet places ‘*In exitu Israel diu Egypto*’ in the mouth of the spirits who see the shores of heaven from their bark ; and a passage is cited from one of Dante’s prose writings, which showed that he read the 114th Psalm as the voice of thrilling joy, fitted for the lips of all who are emancipated from the bondage of sin, and therefore especially those who, delivered from the bondage of the flesh, are passing into rest.†

*Longfellow—*

‘ Upon the stern stood the Celestial Pilot !  
 Beatitude seemed written in his face !  
 And more than a hundred spirits sat within.

\* *Madame Louise de France*, p. 102.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 178.

“ *In exitu Israel*—out of Egypt !”  
 Thus sang they all together in one voice,  
 With whatso in that Psalm is after written.

‘ Then made he sign of holy rood upon them,  
 Whereat all cast themselves upon the shore,  
 And he departed swiftly as he came.’\*

*Tonus Peregrinus.*—This Psalm has acquired an additional interest for us as being prophetic of our own exodus, in CHRIST, from the Egyptian bondage of Satan. . . . And the Church has marked these characteristics by singing this Psalm for at least 1,000 years in a special tone called ‘*Tonus Peregrinus*’ or ‘*Pilgrim Tone*’—the 9th Gregorian tone . . . which is asserted by some writers on Church music to be derived from the liturgical use of the Hebrew Church.

*Verse 1. When Israel came out of Egypt.*—When the Prince (afterwards Charles I.) returned home, he was welcomed with a tempest of rejoicing, and the popular feeling with regard to Spain was shown even in the anthem selected for the thanksgiving service held in St. Paul’s on the occasion. It was, ‘*When Israel came out of Egypt.*’ On the day when Buckingham stood up in the House, with Prince Charles by his side, to explain the reasons for breaking off the marriage contract, he became for the time the most popular man in England.†

*St. Oduvald*, Abbot, was a Scottish nobleman, and governor of the province of Landon, who, renouncing the world, entered the abbey of Melrose. His joy upon this occasion he expressed by singing these verses of the Psalmist: *In the departing of Israel out of Egypt*, etc., and *The snare is broken, and we are delivered*, etc. During the whole course of his monastic life he was remarkable for his continual advancement in spiritual fervour, and his gift of tears, and constant prayer. His sighs after heaven were crowned with a joyful and happy death in 698, ten years after St. Cuthbert.‡

\* *The Celestial Pilot.*

† *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 73.

‡ *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, May 26.

*Verse 7. Tremble thou, earth, at the presence of the Lord.*—It is not surprising that the usual figure of speech, by which the chroniclers express it (the penance of Henry for Becket's murder) should be, '*The mountains trembled at the presence of the Lord.*' The mountain of Canterbury smoked before Him who touches the hills, and they smoke.

The King arrived at Southampton on Monday, the 8th of July, 1174. From that moment he began to live on a penitential diet of bread and water, and deferred all business till he had fulfilled his vow. When he reached the Cathedral he knelt at the porch (having stripped off his ordinary dress, and walked through the streets in the guise of a penitent pilgrim, barefoot, and with no other covering than a woollen shirt, and a cloak thrown over it to keep off the rain), then entered the Church, and went straight to the scene of the murder in the North Transept. Here he knelt again, and kissed the sacred stone on which the Archbishop had fallen. Then he was conducted to the crypt, where he again knelt, and with groans and tears kissed the tomb, and remained long in prayer. After the absolution and kiss of reconciliation, he knelt again at the tomb, and removed the rough cloak which he had thrown over his shoulders, but still retained the woollen shirt, and received five strokes from each Bishop and Abbot present, and three from each of the eighty monks. Fully absolved, he resumed his clothes, but was still left in the crypt, resting against one of the rude Norman pillars, on the bare ground, with bare feet still unwashed from the muddy streets, and passed the whole night fasting. At early Matins he rose, and went round the altars and shrines of the upper church, then returned to the tomb; and finally, after hearing Mass, drank of the Martyr's well, and carried off one of the usual phials of Canterbury pilgrims, containing water mixed with the blood, and so rode to London.

So deep a humiliation of so great a prince was unparalleled within the memory of that generation. The submission of Theodosius to Ambrose; of Louis the Debonnair at Soissons;



of Otho III. at Ravenna; of Edgar to Dunstan; of the Emperor Henry IV. to Gregory VIII., were only known as matters of history.\*

## PSALM CXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Call to the GOD of Israel, the Living GOD, to rescue the honour of His Name.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is evidently one of the later liturgical Psalms. It was probably composed for the service of the Second Temple, whilst yet the taunts of their heathen adversaries were ringing in the ears of the returned exiles, and whilst yet contempt for the idolatries which they had witnessed in Babylon was fresh in their hearts.

*The Whole Psalm*.—The LXX., Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic have strangely enough, and in defiance of all probability, joined this with the preceding Psalm, and then have restored the balance by dividing Psalm cxvi. into two parts. Even in some Hebrew MSS., Psalms cxiv. and cxv. are found written as one Psalm. But the very structure of Psalm cxiv., its beauty, and completeness in itself, are sufficient to make us wonder what caprice could have led to such an arrangement.†

*Henry I.* commanded this Psalm to be sung on the field of Agincourt after the victory.

*Erasmus'* prayer 'For the Peace of the Church' cf. here: 'Miserere nostri, Redemptor noster, qui facillimè exoraris; *non quod nos misericordià tuâ digni sumus; sed hanc gloriam nomini Tuo dato. Ne patiaris Judæos, Turcas reliquosque, qui vel non noverunt Te vel gloriæ Tuæ invident, perpetuo de nobis triumphare et dicere; "Ubi Deus, ubi Redemptor, ubi Ser-*

\* *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, by Dean Stanley, p. 122.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 324.

vator, ubi Sponsus illorum est?" Hæc contumeliosa verba et convitia in Te, Domine, redundant.\*

*The Battle-song of Sobieski and Christendom in 1683.†*

*And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives* (St. Matt. xxvi. 30).—That the hymn thus consecrated for evermore was the 2nd part of the Hallel, *i.e.*, this Psalm and the three that followed, there can be but little doubt.‡

*Verse 1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise.*—Not even David himself has exhibited more fervent gratitude to the Divine Author of his victories than our pious sovereign, after the defeat of the French in the battle of Agincourt. Thus, when Montjoy, the French herald, announced to the King the tidings, 'The day is yours,' his first exclamation is a *Non nobis, Domine*, in these words :

'Praised be GOD, and not our strength, for it !'  
*King Henry V.*, Act IV., Sc. vii.

And soon after, when the English herald came and delivered more fully the particulars of the victory, more fully rose also from the royal lips the ascription of praise and thanksgiving :

'*K. Henry.* O GOD, Thy arm was here,  
And *not to us, but to Thy arm alone,*  
Ascribe we all. When, without stratagem,  
But in plain shock, and even play of battle,  
Was ever known so great and little loss  
On one part and on the other? Take it, GOD,  
For *it is only Thine !*

*Exeter.* 'Tis wonderful !  
*K. Henry.* Come, go we in procession to the village :  
And be it death proclaimed through our Host  
To boast of this, or *take that praise from God*  
*Which is His only.*'

*Ibid.*, Sc. viii. §

\* Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 369.

† Cheyne on *The Psalms*, p. 308.

‡ Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 260.

§ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 170.

*Haydn.*—On the evening of a day in the beginning of April, 1809, all the lovers of art in Vienna were assembled in the theatre to witness the performance of the oratorio of the ‘Creation.’ The entertainment had been given in honour of the composer of that noble work—the illustrious Haydn. Now that the aged and honoured composer was present, probably for the last time, to hear it, an emotion too deep for utterance seemed to pervade the vast audience. It seemed as if every eye in the assembly was fixed on the calm noble face of the venerable artist; as if every heart beat with love for him; as if all feared to break the spell of hushed and holy silence. Then came, like a succession of heavenly melodies, the music of the ‘Creation,’ and the listeners were as if transported to the infancy of the world. At the words, ‘Let there be light, and there was light,’ when all the instruments were united in one full burst of gorgeous harmony, emotion seemed to shake the whole frame of the aged man. His pale face crimsoned; his bosom heaved convulsively; he raised his eyes, streaming with tears, towards heaven, and, lifting upwards his trembling hands, exclaimed—his voice audible in the pause of the music—‘*Not unto me—not unto me—but unto Thy Name be all the glory, O Lord.*’

*Non nobis Domine, sed tibi sit gloria.*—A part of the Latin version of this Psalm is frequently sung after grace at public dinners, but why we can hardly imagine, except it be for fear that donors should be proud of the guineas they have promised, or gourmands should be vainglorious under the influence of their mighty feeds.\*

*Charles Wesley* quotes this verse in a MS. marginal note attached to his hymn for malefactors, beginning:

‘Return’d unto Thy kingdom, Lord,  
For good remember me,  
And tell a penitent restored,  
I soon shall be with Thee.’

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\* C. H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, vol. v., p. 271.

‘These prayers were answered, Thursday, April 28th, 1785, on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent.

‘“ *Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me!*”’\*

*The Templar’s Banner.*—This first verse was the legend on the Templar’s banner ‘Beauseant.’

*The Russian army*, at their triumphant entry into Paris, in 1814, wore a medal, on which was inscribed, ‘*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise.*’

*Verses 4-8. Their idols are silver and gold, even the work of men’s hands. . . . They that make them are like unto them, and so are all they that put their trust in them.*—Theodoret tells us of St. Publia, the aged Abbess of a company of nuns at Antioch, who used to chant, as Julian went by in idolatrous procession, the Psalm, ‘*Their idols are silver and gold, even the work of men’s hands. . . . They that make them are like unto them, and so are all such as put their trust in them.*’ And he narrates how the angry Emperor caused his soldiers to buffet her till she bled, unable as he was to endure the sting of the old Hebrew song.†

*Verse 16. All the whole heavens are the Lord’s : the earth hath He given to the children of men.*—It is told of Nivard, youngest brother of St. Bernard, that when all the elder sons of the family had resolved to enter the monastic order, Guy de Fontanes, the senior amongst them, said to the boy, ‘Farewell, my little brother Nivard, you will have all the estates and lands to yourself;’ and the lad answered, ‘What, you take heaven for your portion, and leave me only the earth! The division is too unequal.’ Hence we are taught that though the earth is given by GOD to the children of men, yet He has a better country, even heaven, to give to such as will seek it, who are

\* *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, vol. viii., p. 343.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 245.

sons of GOD, not mere children of men, and who can win heaven by exchanging earth for it, in contempt of riches and luxury, of lands and houses, and all things which are not of the Gospel.\*

*Verse 17. The dead praise not Thee, O Lord.*—Solomon was wiser than all other men, wiser even than Adam, who gave names to all the animals of the world, and even to himself, saying: ‘From the dust of the ground I was formed, and therefore shall my name be Adam.’ Rabbi Tanchum said: ‘Where is thy wisdom and thy understanding, O King Solomon? Thy words not only contradict themselves, but also the words of David, thy father. He said, “*Not the dead can praise the Lord*” (Ps. cxv. 17), and thou didst say, “Thereupon praised I the dead that are already dead, more than the living who are still alive” (Eccles. iv. 2); and thou didst also say, “For a living dog fareth better than a dead lion”’ (*Ibid.* ix. 4).

These seeming contradictions, however, may be readily explained. David said, ‘Not the dead can praise the LORD,’ meaning that we should study GOD’S law during life, as after its cessation ’twould be impossible. Solomon said, ‘Thereupon praised I the dead that are already dead.’

When the children of Israel sinned in the wilderness, Moses prayed for them for their own sakes, and his prayer was unanswered; but when he said, ‘Remember Abraham and Isaac and Israel, Thy servants,’ he met with a prompt reply. Therefore did not Solomon speak well in saying, ‘Praise the dead that are already dead?’ Take another instance. A king may decree laws, but many of his subjects may disregard them. Sometimes these laws, even if earnestly observed during the life of the one who made them, may be repealed or become obsolete after his death. Moses, however, made many stringent laws, which have been observed throughout all generations. Therefore Solomon said well, ‘Thereupon will I praise the dead.’

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 495.

Rabbi Judah, in the name of Rab, further explained this verse. He said, 'What is the meaning of the following passage?—"Show me a token for good, that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed"' (Ps. lxxvi. 17). David said to GOD, after his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. xii.), 'Sovereign of the universe, pardon me for my sin.' The LORD answered, 'I will pardon thee.' Then said David, 'Show me the token in my lifetime'; but GOD said, 'Not in thy lifetime, but in the lifetime of Solomon, thy son, will I show it.' Thus, when Solomon dedicated the temple, though he prayed with fervent devotion, he was not answered until he said, 'O LORD GOD, turn not away from the face of Thy anointed. Remember the pious deeds of David, Thy servant' (2 Chron. vi. 42). Then he was speedily answered, for in the next verse we read, 'And when Solomon had made an end of praying, a fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering, and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house.' Then were the enemies of David put to shame, for all Israel knew that GOD had pardoned David for his sin. Did not Solomon say well then, 'Thereupon praised I the dead'? For this reason, further on in the chapter we read, 'And on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month he dismissed the people unto their huts, joyful and glad of heart, because of the good that the LORD had done for David, and for Solomon, and for Israel His people.' Solomon said, 'For a living dog fareth better than a dead lion.' Expounding this verse, Rabbi Judah said, in the name of Rab, 'What is the meaning of the verse, "Let me know, O LORD, my end, and the measure of my days, what it is; I wish to know when I shall cease to be"?' (Ps. xxxix. 5). David said to GOD: 'Let me know, O LORD, my end'; GOD answered, 'I have decreed that for each one his end must be veiled in the future.' Then David said, 'What is the measure of my days?' Again GOD replied, 'No man may know the measure of his days.' 'I wish to know when I shall cease to be,' continued David; and GOD answered, 'Thou wilt die on a Sabbath.' 'Let me die the day after,' en-

treated David ; but the LORD answered, 'No ; then the kingdom will be Solomon's, and one reign may not take away from another reign even so much as a hair's breadth.' 'Then let me die the day before,' exclaimed David, 'for a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' And GOD said, 'One day spent by thee in studying My law is more acceptable than the thousand burnt-offerings thy son Solomon will sacrifice.' It was David's custom to pass every Sabbath in the study of the Bible and its precepts, and he was thus engaged upon the Sabbath which was to be his last. At the back of the King's palace there was an orchard, and David, hearing a noise therein, walked thither to ascertain its cause. On entering the orchard, he fell to the ground, dead. The noise in the orchard had been caused by the barking of the King's dogs, who had not that day received their food. Solomon sent a message to the Rabbinical College, saying, 'My father lies dead in the orchard ; is it allowable to remove his body on the Sabbath ? The dogs of my father are entreating for their food ; is it proper to cut meat for them to-day ?' This answer was returned by the College : 'Thy father's body should not be removed to-day ; but give meat to the dogs.' Therefore said Solomon, 'A living dog fareth better than a dead lion,' justly comparing the son of Jesse to that king of beasts.\*

## PSALM CXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Thanksgiving song of one who has escaped from death.

*Contents* (Syriac).—The progressive advancement of a new people turning to Christian worship, like a child to understanding. In its literal sense containing an allusion to the fact that Saul came and sat at the door of the cave in which David and his men were concealed.

\* *The Talmud*, pp. 197-200.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The Psalm is evidence of the truth and depth of the religious life in individuals after the return from the Exile; for there can be little doubt that it must be assigned to that period.

*In Church*.—At the Holy Eucharist, in the Roman Church, the words of Psalm cxvi. 12 are said by the Priest as he communicates himself with the chalice.

In the Holy Eastern Church, too, at the Burial of Priests. Prokeimenon of the Epistle.

*Office for the Churching of Women*.—This Psalm has two aspects—the original and personal, and the secondary or liturgical. In the festal Hallel it was, of course, used in the latter sense, although it clearly must have been written as an overflowing of individual gratitude upon recovery from a dangerous illness. In our own Church the same double use is retained, its latter character being alone thought of in the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, and its former in ordinary Public Worship.\*

The *Apostolical Constitutions* recommend this (among other passages from the Psalms) for use at the funerals of the faithful.†

*The Whole Psalm*.—The 116th Psalm has furnished the Church with a great Eucharistic motto:

‘What shall I render unto the Lord  
For all His benefits towards me?  
I will take the cup of salvation,  
And call upon the name of the Lord.’‡

There is a *Jewish tradition* that this Psalm was a thanksgiving of Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness, and there are so many parallelisms of language between it and the story of that event, as recorded by Isaiah, that no reasonable doubt

\* Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 262.

† Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 374.

‡ *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 219.



remains that the Psalm is directly based on the Prophet's narrative.\*

*Dr. Cheyne* says, 'See Keble's lovely version.' Here are the lines on the first two verses :

'How dear to me the bliss,  
That God my voice should hear !  
I ask'd Him not amiss,  
For He hath bow'd His ear,  
And I have sworn through all my days  
To seek His aid and sing His praise.'

*Verse 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*  
—St. Frederic was chosen eighth Bishop of Utrecht in the year 820. He incurred the hatred of Judith, wife of the Emperor Lewis, *the Debonnaire*, because he boldly rebuked her for her immoralities. 'Whilst this holy pastor was intent only upon the duties of his charge, one day when he came from the altar, having said Mass, as he was going to kneel down in the chapel of St. John Baptist to perform his thanksgiving and other private devotions, he was stabbed in the bowels by two assassins. He expired in a few minutes, reciting that verse of the 116th Psalm: *I will please the Lord in the land of the living.*' The author of his life says these assassins were employed by the Empress Judith, who could not pardon the liberty he had taken to reprove her incest. †

*Verse 12. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me ?* (Bible version).—*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi ?* This question is asked in the Psalmist's words by an eminent Bishop of Durham more than five centuries ago, Richard of Bury (*c.* 1200 A.D.), the most learned man of his country and age. The answer, as might be expected, is a scholar's answer. He had asked himself again and again, he writes, what pious service would best please the most High God, and confer the greatest benefit on the Church Militant ; and lo, a troop of poor scholars pre-

\* *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 498.

† *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (July 3).

sented themselves to the eye of his mind. These were they who might have grown up into strong pillars of the Church ; but though thirsting for knowledge after the first taste, and apt students of the liberal arts, yet, for the sake of a livelihood, they were forced, by a sort of apostasy, to return to mechanic pursuits, to the great loss of the Church and to the degradation of the whole clergy. So, he adds, his compassionate affection took the special form of providing poor scholars, not only with the exigencies of life, but also with a supply of useful books.

Richard of Bury 'was a man,' writes Petrarch, 'of fervid genius.' In an age when books were scarce, his rooms were strewn with books. His rich library he left to Durham College, Oxford, for the use of the University at large. This was the first beginning of a University or College Library in England on any considerable scale—the true progenitor of the Bodleian. When Bishop Richard's soul migrated hence, his four seals, we are told, were delivered to the Chapter and broken up ; and from the precious metal thus obtained was fashioned a chalice for the sanctuary of Durham Cathedral.\*

*I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.*—Typical emblem of that Eucharistical 'cup of blessing' in which the faithful communicant is admitted to the nearest intimacy with GOD in the Blessed Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper.

The Church of England, in appointing this Psalm as a Thanksgiving for Women after Childbirth, has taught us to make this spiritual application, by exhorting the woman to show her thankfulness by the reception of the Holy Communion.†

*Verse 13. I will pay my vows now in the presence of all His people ; right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*—As St. Babylas of Antioch was on his way to

\* Bishop Lightfoot's *Sermon preached before the University of Durham*, 1892.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 183.

martyrdom under Decius, he recited: '*I will pay my vows now in the presence of all His people; right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul.*'\*

*Verse 13. Dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*—'About this time the good Mère Anne de St. Alexis was taken to her rest. Madame Louise (de France, Reverende Mère Térèse de St. Augustin) had a special affection for this nun, who had watched over her beginnings in the religious life, and whose experience of personal holiness (she had been Superioress during two years at different times) made her advice very useful to the Royal pupil. The venerable Mother was seized with apoplexy while saying the office in choir at the moment that the words, "*Dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints*" were being repeated.'†

*Verse 15. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord.*—This is, in the literal sense, a promise to make the Levitical thankoffering of fine flour, which answers to the festival Cup named earlier in the Psalm, and represents for us the remaining species of the Eucharistic Oblations; whence this Psalm, from verse 10 to the end, is one of those appointed to be recited by Priests of the Western Church before saying Mass.‡

*Verse 16. I will pay my vows unto the Lord.*—Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*, relates the following concerning the martyr John Philpot: He went with the sheriffs to the place of execution, and when he was entering into Smithfield the way was foul, and two officers took him up to bear him to the stake, and then he said merrily, 'What, will ye make me a pope? I am content to go to my journey's end on foot.' But first coming into Smithfield, he kneeled down there, saying these words, 'I will pay my vows in thee, O Smithfield.'

\* Delitzsch's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 219.

† *Madame Louise de France*, p. 231.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 509.

## PSALM CXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Invitation to the people to come into the Kingdom of God.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous; spoken of the company of Ananias when they came out of the furnace; and predicting the call of the Gentiles by the preaching of the Gospel.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This short Psalm may have been a doxology intended to be sung after other Psalms, or perhaps at the beginning or end of the Temple service.

*In Church*.—Psalm cxvii. occurs daily in the Greek Evening Service.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—It may be worth noting that this is at once the shortest chapter of the Scriptures and the central portion of the whole Bible.†

*Elias Hutter*, a learned Protestant Divine of Nuremburg, published in 1589 the 117th Psalm in thirty different languages.‡

*Cromwell* and his soldiers sung this Psalm after the battle of Dunbar.§

*Nicholas Ferrar*, junior, the godson of saintly Nicholas Ferrar, and also his nephew, was wonderful in his knowledge of languages. ‘Among the papers found in his study after his premature death is a scheme for translating the New Testament into fifty languages, and underneath the list of these languages he had written, “This, by the help of GOD, I intend to effect, and also to translate the Church Catechism into these languages, so likewise the 117th Psalm, ‘*Praise the Lord, all*

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 301.

† C. H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, vol. v., p. 316.

‡ Holland's *Psalmists of Britain*, p. 24.

§ Hood's *Life*, p. 234.

*ye heathen : praise Him, all ye nations,*' and present them to the King, that he may print them and send them to all nations." The amount of work of this kind which he actually executed is truly astonishing.

'On the Tuesday before Whit Sunday, May 19, 1640, at the age of twenty-one, Nicholas Ferrar the younger was taken away from the evil to come.'\*

## PSALM CXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Festival Psalm at the Dedication of the New Temple.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous ; in its literal sense referring to Asaph the Recorder, and to the Priests that minister unto the Lord ; and alluding prophetically to the victorious agonists, and to the Messiah.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It is evident that this Psalm was designed to be sung in the Temple worship, and was composed for some festal occasion. . . . The allusions in the latter part, and especially verse 24, 'This is the day which Jehovah hath made,' etc., point to some great festival as the occasion for which it was written. Its general character, and the many passages in it borrowed from earlier writers, render it probable that it is one of the later Psalms, and we may assume that it was composed after the return from the Captivity.

*In Church*.—In the Roman Church at the Holy Eucharist, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the LORD,' Ps. cxviii. 26, after the Sanctus. The whole Psalm also in the Office for the Dying.

In the Orthodox Eastern Church—Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, Holy Eucharist. During the Trisagion the Priest, as he goes

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 279.

towards the Altar, recites, 'Blessed . . . cometh in the Name of the Lord,' Ps. cxviii. 26.

This Psalm is used in solemn official moleben (or thanksgiving service) for the Emperor and the members of the Imperial Family.\*

*Easter Day.*—'The special teaching of this Psalm, when sung on Easter Day, centres in and radiates from verse 22, and it throws a still greater halo of sanctity around its words to remember them as having been sung by the Chief Cornerstone Himself, on the very eve of His rejection, by the Great Sacrifice within a few hours of His being bound with cords to the altar of the cross. Well may we on the Day of Resurrection, in full view of all benefits which His Agony and Death brought us, sing, 'Thou art my GOD, and I will thank Thee; Thou art my GOD, and I will praise Thee.'†

That this Psalm is a prophecy of that triumphal entry on the Sunday before the Passion, we know from our Blessed Lord's authority (see verse 22, compared with St. Matthew xxi. 22); and that it stretches forth in its Divine significance to the following first day of the week, namely, to the Day of the Lord's Resurrection, thenceforward to be called 'The Lord's Day,' is evident from verses 22, 24, 27, and the Western Church has confirmed this opinion, by appointing this Psalm to be used on the weekly Festival of the Lord's Resurrection. The Church of England fitly uses it on Easter Day.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—Their armies (that of Henri of Navarre, the Huguenots, and that of the Duke of Joyeuse) in 1588 lay in sight of one another all night. At dawn Henri put his men in array; but just then one of the pastors, backed by the able statesman Duplessis Mornay, came to him to reproach him with one of his frequent immoralities, assuring him that he could expect no blessing on his arms, unless he showed

\* *Sketches of the Græco-Russian Church*, p. 271.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 270.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*.

penitence. Henri complied, and went through the prescribed penance. Unhappily, it is only too certain that he did not repent, or only for the moment, and that his compliance was simply an act of expediency to obtain the enthusiastic support of the Huguenots. On them it produced full effect. They knelt in prayer, and then thundered forth the 118th Psalm; then Maximilian de Rosny, Henri's most faithful friend, so directed his three cannon that in each of seven discharges they swept away from twenty to thirty men; while Joyeuse's artillery, though far more numerous, were so placed that the balls went harmlessly into a bank without damaging the Huguenots. The latter gained the victory, the first battle the Reformed had ever won.\*

*Luther* wrote on his study wall, 'The 118th Psalm is my Psalm which I love. Without it, neither emperor nor king, though wise and prudent, nor saints, could have helped me.'†

This Psalm was sung by the troops of *William, Prince of Orange*, immediately after their landing at Torbay. William Carstairs accompanied the Prince in his eventful voyage to England, and was the first, Scotsman and Presbyterian as he was, to call down the blessing of heaven on the expedition by the religious service which he celebrated immediately on his landing at Torbay, after which the troops all along the beach, at his instance, joined in the 118th Psalm. From that time he was William's companion on every field of battle, his most trusted adviser in all that related to the affairs of Scotland. Cardinal Carstairs was the name by which he was usually known, alluding to the sayings of Cardinal Ximenes, that he could play at football with the heads of the Castilian grandees.‡

*Charles V.*—In those days when it was the custom for kings and courtiers to choose for themselves special Psalms, this was

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. clxxviii.

† Tholuck.

‡ *History of the Church of Scotland*, by Dean Stanley, p. 117.

the selected of Charles V. The biographer of Clement Marot tells that, in 1540, he presented to that emperor, as he was passing through France, a copy of his Psalter as far as it had been carried.

The emperor accepted it benignly, gave the poet 200 doubloons, and asked him to complete his translation, praying him especially to send him, as soon as he could, the translation of the 118th, *Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus*, as he loved it much.

It took rank along with the 68th Psalm as the battle-song of the Huguenots, and in the fields and woods the 24th verse was the frequent opening of their worship :

‘ La voici l’heureuse journée  
Que Dieu a faite à plein désir ;  
Par nous soit joie démenécé.  
Et prenons en elle plaisir.’\*

*Commendation of Departing Soul.*—In all the mediæval offices for the commendation of a departing spirit, it is always ordered that, when the other prayers have been said, if the soul be yet waiting, the 118th and 119th Psalms should be added. What, the 118th Psalm ! One of the most jubilant in the Psalter ! One beyond which no thanksgiving can go ! One that might suit some signal triumph, some glorious victory ! Why ? Because the poor soul is being delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God. †

*Martin Luther.*—In the midsummer of 1530, when Melancthon was deputed to present the Confession of the Protestant Churches of Germany to the Diet at Augsburg, Luther was advised to abstain from any public appearance. Looking out from his retirement on the perils of the time, ‘The sea and the waves roaring, and men’s hearts failing them from fear,’ he found in the 118th Psalm a word in season, and set his pen to work on an exposition of it. In the dedication, which is

\* *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 139.  
† Dr. Neale’s *Sermons on the Psalms*, p. 255.



dated 'ex eremo, the first of July MDXXX,' he gives a characteristic expression to his love for this portion of the Divine word: 'Since I am obliged to sit here idle in the desert, and, moreover, must sometimes spare my head, and give it a rest and holiday from my great task of translating all the Prophets, I have gone back to my mine of wealth, my treasure. I have taken in hand my precious Psalm, the Confitemini, and put on paper my meditation upon it. For it is my Psalm that I delight in. For although the whole Psalter and the Holy Scripture are dear to me, my proper comfort in life, I have taken so to this Psalm in particular that I must call it my own. Many a service has it done me; out of many great perils has it helped me, when help I had none, either from emperor or king, or wise or prudent. I would not give it in exchange for the honour, wealth, or power of all the world, Pope, Turk, and Emperor. In calling this Psalm mine own, I rob no man of it. CHRIST is mine; nevertheless, He is the same CHRIST to all the saints that He is to me. Would God that all the world would challenge the Psalm for their own as I do; it would be such friendly contention as scarce any unity or love would compare with. Alas, that there should be so few, even among those who might well do it, who will once say to the Holy Scriptures, or to the same particular Psalm, Thou art my book; thou shalt be mine own Psalm!'

*Verses 8, 9. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes.*—Compare these lines from an oracle said to have been given to Esarhaddon (Budge, *History of Esarhaddon*, pp. 3, 4): 'Upon mankind trust not, (but) bend thine eyes upon me—trust to me; for I am Istar of Arbela;' and these from an Egyptian hymn to Amen the sun-god (*Records of the Past*, vi. 99):

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\* Luther's *Saemtliche Schriften* (Watch's edition), vol. v., p. 1704.

'Let no prince be my defender in all my troubles :  
Let not my memorial be placed under the power  
Of any man who is in the house . . . my Lord is [my] defender.\*'

*Verse 10. All nations compassed me round about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.*—St. Bernard when seized with a most dangerous illness, in which he was quite, and for a long time together, given over, was haunted by the fear that, in the multitude of spirits continually passing from this to the next world, his soul might be overlooked, and thus lost from the Presence of God. He fled for refuge to that verse of the Psalm, *All nations compassed me round about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.*†

*Verse 12. They came about me like bees, and are extinct even as the fire among the thorns ; for in the Name of the Lord I will destroy them.*—In *Hamlet*, Polonius warns Ophelia not to trust too readily to the advances of the young prince, however accompanied with protestations of affection :

' These blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat—*extinct* in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,—  
You must not take for *fire*.'

Act I., Sc. iii.

And again in the *First Part of King Henry IV.*, the same image occurs to describe the companions of the sovereign whom Henry had supplanted :

' The skipping king, he ambled up and down  
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,  
*Soon kindled and soon burnt.*'

Act III., Sc. ii.

'Bavin' means *brushwood*. In like manner David, in Psalm cxviii. 12, says of his enemies : 'They are *extinct*, even as *the fire among the thorns* ; for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.'‡

*Whitfield* was born in 1714 at Gloucester. He was of a

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 315.

† Dr. Neale's *Sermons on the Psalms*, p. 271.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 328.

veritable irritable temper, and at times when the tricks of his school-fellows annoyed him beyond endurance, he is said to have declared that ‘*They compass me about like bees ; but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.*’

Chanting verse 12 of Psalm cxviii. with voice that rose high above the din of battle, the Protestant army rushed to victory at Coutras.\*

*Verse 13. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall.—* Thou hast indeed. Thou hast done thy part, O Satan, and it has been well done. Thou hast known my weakest parts, thou hast seen where my armour was not buckled in tightly, and thou hast attacked me at the right time and in the right way. The great Spanish poet Calderon tells of one who wore a heavy suit of armour for a whole year, and laid it by for one hour. In that hour the enemy came, and the man paid for his negligence with his life. ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him.’†

*Verse 17. I shall not die, but live.—*In Bishop Hannington’s diary is the following entry ; he was very ill with dysentery at the time : ‘October 6th. Slightly better, but still in very great pain. To our immense surprise Stokes turned up early this morning. When I heard his voice, I exclaimed, “*I shall live, and not die.*” It inspired me with new life. I felt that they had returned that I might go with them.’‡

*Wycliffe* was now getting old, but the Reformer was worn out rather by the harassing attacks of his foes and his incessant and evergrowing labours than with the weight of years, for he was not yet sixty. He fell sick. With unbounded joy the friars heard that their great enemy was dying. Of course he was overwhelmed with horror and remorse for

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. i., p. 38.

† John Mason Neale.

‡ *Life of Bishop Hannington*, p. 233.

the evil he had done them, and they would hasten to his bedside and receive the expressions of his penitence and sorrow.

In a trice a little crowd of shaven crowns assembled round the couch of the sick man, delegates from the four orders of friars! They began fair with him, 'health and restoration from his distemper'; but speedily changing their tone, they exhorted him, as one on the brink of the grave, to make full confession, and express his unfeigned grief for the injuries he had inflicted on their order.

Wycliffe being silent till they should have made an end, and then making his servant raise him a little on his pillow, and fixing his keen eyes upon them, he said with a loud voice, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the Friars!' The monks rushed in astonishment and confusion from the chamber.\*

*Verse 22. The same stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone in the corner.*—The author of *Historia Scholastica* mentions it as a tradition, that at the building of the second temple there was a particular stone of which that was literally true which is here parabolically rehearsed, viz., that it had the hap to be often taken up by the builders, and as oft rejected, and at last it was found to be perfectly fit for the most honourable place, that of the chief corner stone which coupled the sides of the walls together, the extraordinariness whereof occasioned the speech here following: '*This is the Lord's doing: it is marvellous in our eyes.*'†

*R. F. Littledale:*

'Higher yet, and ever higher, passeth He those ranks above,  
Where the seraphs are enkindled with the flame of endless love;  
Passeth them, for not e'en seraphs ever loved so well as He  
Who hath borne for His beloved, stripes and thorns and shameful tree;  
Ever further, ever onward, where no angel's feet may tread,  
Where the four-and-twenty elders prostrate fall in mystic dread,

\* *The History of Protestantism*, by Dr. Wyllie.

† Henry Hammond.

Where the four strange living creatures sing their hymns before the throne,  
The Despised One and Rejected passeth in His might alone ;  
Passeth through the dazzling rainbow, till upon the FATHER'S right  
He is seated, his Co-equal, GOD of GOD, and Light of Light.\*

*Verse 23. This is the Lord's doing : and it is marvellous in our eyes.*—Queen Elizabeth of England, during the last days of her sister's life, waited at Hatfield, surrounded by courtiers, and daily hearing reports of Mary's death. Sir Nicholas Throckmorton first brought her the real tidings, but she refused to act on them till one of the ladies whom she trusted should have sent her the black enamelled espousal ring, which never left Mary's finger. Before the ring came, however, the councillors themselves had armed and paid their homage to her as their undisputed queen. She sank on her knees, and exclaimed in Latin : '*This is the Lord's doing : and it is marvellous in our eyes.*'\*

*Verse 24. This is the day which the Lord hath made.*—It added not a little to Dr. Wordsworth's gratification to find that Tuesday, November 17th, the day on which he accepted Lincoln, was a marked day in the annals of the diocese. As was his usual habit at Westminster, he had attended the Abbey service, and was struck by the anthem beginning, '*This is the day which the Lord hath made*' On inquiring the reason for its selection, he was told that it was the anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth (the second foundress, so to speak, of Westminster), and also the day of St. Hugh of Lincoln. He often in later life used to refer with pleasure to this coincidence.†

*This is the day which the Lord hath made : we will rejoice and be glad in it.*—This Psalm was the Psalm said by the dear little children of Mrs. Tait every Sunday. She says in her most touching account of the death of her five little ones : 'Sundays were days of great happiness with them. They would

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. cxlvii.

† *Life of Bishop Wordsworth*, p. 207.

often, before we were up, come in, the five together, with their bright, happy Sunday look, take their place beside us, and chant with clear voice, "*This is the day the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it*"; then say all together a Sunday hymn, "Put the spade and wheel away, Do no weary work to-day"; then the 122nd Psalm, "I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the LORD." After their prayers I would explain the Gospel or Epistle to the three eldest. Happy Christian English home! Happy children in Abraham's bosom! Happy mother, now with her loved ones in Paradise the blessed! Happy father, waiting in resting hope the time when all will be one again.\*

*Verse 25. Help me now, O Lord: O Lord, send us now prosperity.*—The cry of the multitudes as they thronged in our LORD's triumphal procession into Jerusalem (St. Matthew xxi. 9; St. Mark xi. 9; St. John xii. 13) was taken from this Psalm, from which they were accustomed to recite the 25th and 26th verses at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the great Hallel, consisting of Psalms cxiii.-cxviii., was chanted by one of the priests, and at certain intervals the multitudes joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm, and shouting as they waved them, 'Hallelujah,' or 'Hosannah,' or 'O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.' This was done at the recitation of the first and last verses of Psalm cxviii., but according to the school of Hillel at the words, 'Save now, we beseech thee! . . .'†

*Verse 26. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*—The liturgical use of these words in the Mass is of remote antiquity. In the Liturgy of St. James, the congregation utters them in response to the Deacon's invitation to draw near the altar for communion. In that of St. Clement they form part of the anthem sung by the people immediately after the 'Holy things for holy persons' has been uttered by the Priest at the

\* *Catherine and Craufurd Tait*, p. 261.

† *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*.

elevation. In that of St. Chrysostom, the Priest uses the words much earlier in the office—just after the Prayer of the Trisagion—and the choir recites it again, as part of the *Ter-sanctus*, before the words of Institution; while the Roman Missal, not dissimilarly, uses it as part of the *Sanctus* at the end of the Preface, immediately before the Canon begins.\*

*Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord* were the words with which Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and William Longespée were received at Acre as Crusaders.

*Verses 26, 27. Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord. . . . God is the Lord.*—The early Christian inhabitants of Syria no doubt abandoned their cities—extensive remains of which exist at the present day—on the irruption of the Persians under Chosroes I., in A.D. 574, or under Chosroes II., A.D. 611, or, at the latest, on the Saracenic invasion of Syria under Abu Bekr, A.D. 634. There is a melancholy interest in contrasting the ancient dignity and grandeur of the Church in Syria, as witnessed to by these stately ruins, with its present deep decline and degradation, as exhibited among the scattered remnants of the flock of Christ which still exist in the city where the disciples were first called Christians.

El-Hass consists of a vast extent of ruins—the most conspicuous that of a church; next to this, the most striking objects are the tombs. They vary very much in character, and many of them are exceedingly handsome. Some have been excavated in the live rock, in the walls of the quarries, out of which the buildings have been erected. Others are solid square structures, sometimes in two stories, covered in some instances with massive semicircular covers, in others with pyramidal roofs, very similar to Absalom's Pillar at Jerusalem.

On one of these latter is a long Greek inscription, beautifully carved, running along the cornice, part of which I deciphered, and found it to contain passages from Psalms cxviii.

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iii., p. 529.

26, 27, and lxxv. 10.—‘*Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord. . . . God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us.—Thou hast visited the earth, and watered it abundantly*’\*

### PSALM CXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A twenty-two fold string of aphorisms by one who is persecuted for the sake of his faith.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—There is no title to this Psalm, neither is any author’s name mentioned. It is the longest Psalm, and this is a sufficiently distinctive name for it.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. A principal meditation upon the excellency that is in GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The date of this Psalm cannot be fixed with anything like certainty, though it may probably be referred to a time subsequent to the return from the Babylonish captivity.

*In Church*.—Verses 1-32 are used in the Roman Office for the Dying, and for the Burial of Children. In the Midnight Office of the Greek Church Psalm cxix. is sung in three portions, each ending with the Glory and Alleluia. These portions end with verses 72, 131, 176. The Psalm is called the Amomos—‘Undeiled.’ It is also used in the Greek Burial Service.†

This Psalm is said through every day from beginning to end in the Offices of the West. In the East it appears to have been appointed for recitation, not every day, but every LORD’S Day. See the homily upon Psalm cxxi., appended in some editions to the works of St. Chrysostom. The author begins his homily thus: ‘As a great treasure, and spiritual wealth, and most delightful benefit of souls, and for the praise and glory of GOD, and for the security of our life, and a pattern of

\* *Holy Eastern Church, Patriarchate of Antioch*, by Dr. Neale, Notes, p. xxxi.

† *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 303.



good works, the noble chiefs and teachers, our Holy Fathers, have directed us to sing and play Psalm cxviii. (A.V. cxix.) upon the first day in the revolution of the week, which day is with us also called the LORD'S Day, because of the LORD'S resurrection upon that day.' In the Sarum and in the Roman Breviary it is said daily at the lesser offices: at Prime, verses 1-32; at Terce, verses 33-80; at Sext, verses 81-128; at None, verses 129-176. In every case the Gloria Patri is said at the end of every sixteen verses (and not at the end of every eight, as the Book of Common Prayer directs), presumably in order to preserve the ancient usage of making the number of Psalms odd.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—The 119th Psalm has ever been unpopular with those who read the Psalter merely as literature. The longest of the entire collection, it is formed of twenty-two strophes, each consisting of eight distichs, the whole eight commencing with the same letter in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The word 'law' occurs twenty-five times, 'statute' twenty-three times, and so on with a succession of synonyms, the word 'word' being repeated some thirty times. Entire phrases are reproduced again and again, especially the prayer 'quicken me.' Yet few Psalms are dearer to the Church's heart. Thousands of Christians repeat the greater portion of it every day. (See Prayers for the third, sixth and ninth hours, in the *Treasury of Devotion*.) It contains the shortest and most pregnant statements of the great principles of the spiritual life. . . . I have spoken in one of these lectures of 'the long colourless distances of the 119th Psalm.' Anyone who wishes to see how these distances may be made to become full of life and colour—how these distichs are interlinked by a higher connection than that of logic—will do well to study Dr. Pusey's Sermons on verses 59, 60 (*Sermons during the Season from Advent to Whit-Sunday*, pp. 156, 170).

I will only add one other testimony—that of Mr. Ruskin in

\* Armfield on *The Gradual Psalms*, p. 96.

the *Fors Clavigera*: 'It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother thus taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my childish mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God.\*'

*Keble* speaks of the 'direct, lightning-like force of the inspired sentences throughout the 119th Psalm.†

*St. Chrysostom* says of this Psalm: The Psalm is an inexhaustible treasury of spiritual riches.

In *Matthew Henry's* account of the Life and Death of his father, Philip Henry, he says: 'Once pressing the study of the Scriptures, he advised us to take a verse of this Psalm every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the Psalm twice in the year; and that, saith he, will bring you to be in love with all the rest of the Scriptures.' He often said, 'All grace grows as love to the Word of GOD grows.‡

In our *German version* it has the appropriate inscription, 'The Christian's golden A B C of the praise, love, power, and use of the Word of GOD.§

*George Wishart*, the chaplain and biographer of 'the great Marquis of Montrose,' as he was called, would have shared the fate of his illustrious patron but for the following singular expedient: When upon the scaffold he availed himself of the custom of the times, which permitted the condemned to choose a Psalm to be sung. He selected the 119th Psalm, and before two-thirds of the Psalm had been sung a pardon arrived, and his life was preserved. It may not be out of place to add that the George Wishart, Bishop of Edinburgh, above referred to, has been too often confounded with the godly martyr of the same name who lived and died a century previously. We only

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 301.

† *Preface to the Psalter*, p. ix.

‡ *The Treasury of the Psalter*, vol. vi., p. 3.

§ Delitzsch.

mention the incident because it has often been quoted as a singular instance of the providential escape of a saintly personage ; whereas it was the very ingenious device of a person who, according to Woodrow, was more renowned for shrewdness than for sanctity. The length of this Psalm was sagaciously employed as the means of gaining time, and, happily, the expedient succeeded.\*

*St. Augustine*, who among his voluminous works left a Comment on the Book of Psalms, delayed to comment on this one till he had finished the whole Psalter, and then yielded only to the long and vehement urgency of his friends, 'because,' he says, 'as often as I essayed to think thereon, it always exceeded the powers of my intent thought and the utmost grasp of my faculties.†

*Henry Martyn*.—There is frequent reference to this Psalm in the diary of Henry Martyn : ' Found some devotion in learning a part of the 119th Psalm.' ' In the evening grew better by reading the 119th Psalm, which generally brings me into a spiritual frame of mind.' ' Again in a fretful frame ; it was not till I learned some of Psalm cxix. that I could return to a proper spirit.‡

*William Wilberforce*.—In the midst of a London season, in the stir and turmoil of a political crisis, 1819, William Wilberforce writes in his diary : ' Walked from Hyde Park Corner repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort.' Many such notices occur down to the last, when he was carried, a dying man, to London, in 1833. ' How differently time appears,' he said to his son, while they halted at an inn, ' while you look at it in the life of an individual or in the mass ! Now I seem to have gone through such a number of various scenes, and such a lapse of time, and yet, when you come to compare it with

\* Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

† William de Burgh (quoted in *The Treasury of David*).

‡ *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 145.

any great period of time—fifty years—how little fifty years seem! Why, it is 3,000 years since the Psalms which I delight in were written. By the way, I have not my Psalter this morning. Do you know where it is?\*

*Cowper*, Bishop of Galloway in 1613, published a folio volume entitled, 'The Holy Alphabet of Zion's Scholars,' by way of commentary on the 119th Psalm. Dr. Manton wrote a series of 190 sermons on the 119th Psalm, for which the bookseller offered him £60, a large sum for the period, being four times the amount paid for the MS. of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Greenham, another Nonconformist, also wrote a large work on this Psalm; and within the last few years a popular volume on the same subject, by Rev. Thomas Bridges, has made its appearance.†

This '*Psalm of the Saints*,' as it is especially called, most probably belongs to the latest period of inspired Hebrew poetry. . . . The Masoretic editors have pointed out that in every verse save one (122) there is a direct reference to the Law under some one of the ten names which stand in English, as *law, word, saying, statute, testimonies, way, precept, commandment, judgment, faithfulness*, and are supposed to have a mystical reference to the Decalogue. It would seem that the Jewish editors ought rather to have fixed on verse 132 as the single exception to their rule, for it is, perhaps, possible to see an indirect allusion to the law in verse 122, but none such is discoverable in verse 132. These terms are not altogether interchangeable (though some of them are doubtless nearly synonymous), and the most obvious classification is as follows: *Law* is the generic phrase, including all the others, and taken for the whole scope of Divine revelation; *testimonies* are such precepts as are prohibitory, *attesting* God's holiness, *protesting* against man's sinfulness; *statutes* are positive enact-

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 280.

† *The Psalmists of Britain*, by Holland, p. 198.

ments, ceremonial ordinances, and the like ; *commandments*, moral enactments ; *judgments*, formal decisions of duties as laid down in the Law ; *precepts* are counsels recommended to individuals for their guidance and profit ; *word* is any verbal revelation of GOD'S will ; *saying*, or, rather, *promise*, the declaration of blessings to follow on obedience ; *way*, the prescribed rule of conduct ; *faithfulness*, the abiding character and permanence of the Law.

Cardinal Bellarmine suggests, not improbably, and in accordance with a Rabbinical tradition, that the great length of the Psalm was intended to fit it for use as a processional hymn for the caravans going up thrice a year to the great festivals in Jerusalem, followed as it is by those gradual Psalms which marked the nearer approach of the pilgrims to the Temple.\*

*Lord William Russell* the night before his execution was singing within himself, and Dr. Burnet asking him what he was singing, he said, 'It was the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, but he should sing better very soon.' His concluding remarks were, 'I have now done with this world, and am going to a better ; I forgive all the world heartily, and I thank GOD I die in charity with all men.'†

'*We speak of the realms of the blest,*' one of our most popular hymns, had its origin in this Psalm, not from any direct reference to the heavenly world, but from the spirit which it breathes, and the longing it excites for all that is pure and perfect. The hymn was written, after reading Bridges on the 119th Psalm, a few weeks before her death, by Mrs. Elizabeth Mills, who died in 1839, at the age of twenty-four.‡

*Verse 18. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law.*—In Ireland, during the whole of the reign of Henry VIII., the old customs with regard to ecclesiastical matters remained. George Davdall, the ex-Prior of the Crutched

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. iv., p. 2.

† *Last Hours of Christian Men*, p. 194.

‡ *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 144.

Friary of Ardace, had been appointed, just before Henry's death, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate, and had obtained confirmation of his appointment from the Pope.

When Edward VI. sent orders for the adoption of the English Prayer-Book, Davdall resisted it, giving as one reason, 'Then shall every illiterate fellow read Mass.' The Viceroy (Sir Anthony St. Leger) replied that there were many priests who did not understand their Latin, but now both clergy and people would understand.

A quarrel thereupon arose between him and St. Leger, on the question whether St. Peter was the head of the Church, ending by the Archbishop rising, with all the Bishops of his province except Staples (an Englishman), Bishop of Meath, and quitting the assembly as a protest. There remained the Archbishop of Dublin (George Browne), with his suffragans, and he accepted the new Prayer-Book, saying that he submitted to the King as our LORD to Cæsar.

For the first time on Easter Day, 1551, in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, the Reformed Liturgy was used; the Archbishop preached a sermon on the text, '*Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.*'\*

*Verse 19. I am a stranger upon earth; O hide not Thy commandments from me.*—On the day of his baptism (Craufurd Tait's) at Rugby, his godfather, the Dean of Wells, who all through his life loved him tenderly, had given him a Bible, with this inscription: '*Psalm cxix. 19—I am a stranger upon earth; O hide not Thy commandments from me.*'

He lived to see his wish fulfilled, to see how, as his godson grew to manhood, the commandments of GOD became his steadfast rule of life.†

*Verse 25. My soul cleaveth to the dust: O quicken Thou me according to Thy word.*—The answer to the Emperor Theodosius' humble words was still a stern one. 'What penitence

\* *Cameos from English History*, No. cxlv.

† *Catherine and Craufurd Tait*, p. 593.

have you been showing for your great fault?' (*i.e.*, the massacre at Thessalonica). 'What remedy have you applied to the incurable wound you have inflicted?'

'It is your duty,' answered the penitent, 'to prepare the remedies, mine to accept what is offered me.'

'Since, then,' said Ambrose, 'you allow your temper to act the part of judge, and permit anger instead of reason to pronounce sentence, you must make a law which shall render such hasty orders null and void. When a sentence of death or confiscation of property is pronounced, let thirty days elapse before it is put into execution. After this time has passed, and you have become cool, let your decree be shown to you. You will then be able to decide rationally whether it is just or not. If the latter, then the writing can be destroyed; if the former, it may be ratified. Where the judgment is right, a little delay will do no harm.'

The emperor consented. The regulation suggested by Ambrose was not new to him; a similar rule had been laid down by Gratian, but had either been forgotten, or not adopted by himself. The necessary document was speedily prepared and signed, and the excommunication was removed. Laying aside every ornament that could mark his rank, Theodosius entered the church with a deep sigh of relief, and fell prostrate on the floor, smiting his breast, and crying, '*My soul cleaveth unto the dust; O quicken Thou me according to Thy word,*' and with every sign of the profoundest compunction besought and received absolution and readmission to the Communion of the Church. To the day of his death he never ceased to deplore his error, and was so watchful over himself, and so careful not to offend, that the more he was irritated the more ready he was to pardon; and offenders were said not to fear, but to wish to see him angry.

Ambrose testified his belief in the sincerity of his repentance by inscribing to him the book he had written in 384, entitled 'The Defence of the Prophet David.'\*

\* *The Fathers for English Readers. St. Ambrose*, p. 70.

*Verse 32. I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.*—In the first months of a happy union a young couple often need direction and guidance. This is what the Bishop wrote on one occasion of the sort :

‘ My child, I bless GOD for the happiness He has given you in this new desert, of which Holy Scripture says, “ The desert shall flourish like a lily.” There is a passage in Holy Writ which I wish you to learn : *I have seen the way of Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart* (Ps. cxviii. 32). Sorrow draws people nearer to GOD, but happiness does so also. When one suffers one has to make an effort, but when one is very happy one has only to let one’s self go. And why should you not both open your hearts joyfully and confidently to this Divine grace ? It is GOD you must see in all the happiness with which your cup to-day overflows. All these joys are like the morning dews which GOD sends before the heat and burden of the day. The flower joyfully drinks in the dew ; it is its way of blessing GOD. You, too, must thank and praise Him. You know the source of all happiness. It comes from GOD, and ought to bring you close to Him. It must not soften or make you idle, but strengthen you to fulfil your duties and renew your faith, love and courage. Resume your old habits of prayer and work ; be diligent in His service ; give a portion of your life to charitable deeds. Perhaps I did not dwell on this point before ; but, believe me, they are the best means of prolonging your happiness and drawing down the blessing of GOD in your daily life. May you increase more and more in love towards Him from whom alone come all human joys !’\*

*Verse 37. O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way.*—Francis’ father, Francis Seigneur de Nouvelles, M. de Boisy (he took the latter name on his marriage, De Boisy being one of the family names of the father of Madame de Boisy), bent on a splendid public career for his

\* *Life of Mgr. Dupanloup of Orleans.*



eldest son, determined on sending him to the College de Navarre in Paris.

St. Francis shrank from manifold temptations, and through his mother, Francis' education was transferred to the College de Clermont, under the Jesuit Fathers. Accompanied to Paris by the Abbé Déage—the same good priest who had been his first religious teacher, and who remained his tutor till long past the time when modern ideas would suppose such guidance necessary—Francis distinguished himself in his classes, and was more than once appointed prefect; but rhetoric and philosophy, taught as they were by most distinguished professors, did not satisfy him, and his desire to study theology, with a view to the priesthood, grew daily stronger.

One day—it was Quinquagesima Sunday—the Abbé Déage was struck with his pupil's grave, almost troubled, countenance, and attributing it to overwork, kindly proposed that they should go out together and see the humours of the Paris carnival. But Francis begged to be excused, adding: 'Averte oculos meos, ne videant vanitatem' (*Turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity*). 'What can I do to cheer you?' the Abbé asked; and the boy, raising his earnest face to his tutor's, answered by quoting the Gospel for the day, the words 'DOMINE ut videam!' (LORD, that I may receive my sight!). 'But what is it that you would see?' inquired the Abbé, much moved; and then Francis poured forth his longing after those theological studies which would, as he believed, enable him to penetrate the deep things of GOD, and help him to approach the only earthly aim he knew—the priesthood.\*

*Verse 49. Oh, think upon Thy servant as concerning Thy word.*  
—Josquin, a celebrated composer, was appointed master of the chapel to Louis XII. of France, who promised him a benefice, but, contrary to his usual custom, forgot him. Josquin, after suffering great inconvenience from the shortness of his Majesty's memory, ventured, by a singular expedient, publicly to remind

\* *S. Francis de Sales*, p. 16.

him of his promise without giving offence. Being commanded to compose a motet for the Chapel Royal, he chose part of the 119th Psalm, beginning '*Oh, think of Thy servant as concerning Thy word,*' which he set in so supplicating and exquisite a manner that it was universally admired, particularly by the King, who was not only charmed with the music, but felt the force of the word so effectually that he soon after granted his petition, by conferring on him the promised appointment.\*

*Verse 59. I called mine own ways to remembrance, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.*—This Psalm drew to it the special admiration of Pascal, who, as his sister, Madame Perier, says, often spoke with such feeling about it 'that he seemed transported—'*qu'il paraissait hors de lui même.*' He used to say that, 'with the deep study of life, it contained the sum of all the Christian virtues.' He singled out verse 59 as giving the turning-point of man's character and destiny: '*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.*'†

*Verse 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.*—This is one of those isolated texts of Scripture which have, by their own inherent force, powerfully moulded the habits and devotions of the Christian Church. We shall find another example later on in this same Psalm, but of this it suffices to say that the Nocturns of East and West alike, and the monastic use of rising at midnight to recite them, are drawn from its inspiration. In the East, moreover, this very Psalm is part of the midnight office, so that the verse is nightly chanted in the great monasteries of the Greek and Russian Churches, Mount Athos, Mount Sinai, Troitzka and the rest.

In the West this verse occurs in the forenoon office of Terce, but the spirit of the midnight service is the same as that of the East. And the very Nocturn office itself testifies to the influence of the Psalm :

\* *Percy Anecdotes.*

† *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 145.

‘Far drive we slumber from our eyes,  
And quickly all of us arise  
To seek at dead of night the LORD  
According to His Prophet’s word.’

(Brev. Rom. : *The Hymn Primo die*, for Sunday Matins).\*

*Dr. Thomas Wilson* was Bishop of Sodor and Man, and the author of two little works highly prized—*Sacra Privata* and *Companion to the Altar*. He died in 1755. One of his biographers says: ‘Bishop Wilson stood like a pilgrim, with his staff in his hand, ready to depart. Whilst thus waiting for his summons, and in hourly expectation of going forth to meet the Bridegroom, he appeared more like an inhabitant of the world of glory, on which he was about to enter, than a sojourner in this vale of tears. His last days were his best days. He was ripening fast for heaven.’

A candidate for the ministry, who at that time resided in his house, and continued with him till his death, delighted to relate the scenes which he then witnessed. He used to tell, with joy in his countenance, of the benignity in the Bishop’s behaviour, the heavenliness of his discourse, and the fervour of his prayers. This student, who slept in a room adjoining the Bishop’s bedchamber, frequently overheard, at midnight, the orisons of the holy man. He could distinguish his whispering voice pouring forth supplications and thanksgivings to the great Preserver of men, who ‘never slumbers nor sleeps.’ Sometimes the words of the pious Psalmist were indistinctly heard: ‘*I will arise at midnight, and give thanks unto Thee. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy Name!*’ Sometimes passages from the *Te Deum*: ‘Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD of Sabaoth.’ Thus did God give His beloved servant songs in the night-season.†

*Verse 72. The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*—You that are gentlemen, remember what Hierom reports of Nepotianus, a young gentleman of

\* *Dr. Neale’s Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 52.

† *Last Hours of Christian Men*, p. 300.

Rome, *qui longa et assidua meditatione Scripturarum pectus suum fecerat bibliothecam Christi*—who by long and assiduous meditation of the Scriptures made his breast the library of CHRIST. Remember what is said of King Alfonsus, that he read over the Bible fourteen times, together with such Commentaries as those times afforded.

You that are scholars, remember Cranmer and Ridley ; the former learned the New Testament by heart on his journey to Rome, the latter in Pembroke Hall walks in Cambridge. Remember what is said of Thomas à Kempis, that he found rest nowhere *nisi in angulo, cum libello*, but in a corner with this Book in his hand. And what is said of Beza—that when he was above fourscore years old he could say perfectly by heart any Greek chapter in Paul's Epistles.

You that are women, consider what Hierom saith of Paula, Eustochiam, and other ladies, who were singularly versed in the Holy Scriptures.

Let all men consider that hyperbolical speech of Luther, that he would not live in Paradise without the Word, and with it he could live well enough in Hell. This speech of Luther must be understood *cum grano salis*.\*

There is a *tradition of a Jewish Rabbi* who was offered a very lucrative situation in a place where there was no synagogue, but who, thinking on this verse, refused it—an instructive example for Christians who readily go to places where there is a 'famine of the words of the LORD,' in order to acquire worldly riches.†

*Verse 73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.*—The words '*Thy hands have made me and fashioned me*' are said by the Priest when he anoints the child with oil on the hands. The infant is then (*i.e.*, after the Benediction of the Water at Holy Baptism) anointed for the first time ; but this is not the Sacrament of Unction. In ancient times, we are told, young

\* Edmund Calamy.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 63.

warriors on the point of going to battle for the first time used to be anointed with oil; thus the new Christian, who will have to battle against the enemies of his salvation—the world, the flesh and the devil—is anointed as ‘Christ’s faithful soldier and servant.’ Olive-oil, possessing salutary properties, is here the type of the inner healing of the soul by baptism. It is also the symbol of the grafting in of the wild olive-tree (*i.e.*, the convert) to the tree (*i.e.*, JESUS CHRIST, Rom. xi. 17). When the Priest anoints the child on the brow, he says, ‘The servant of GOD, Alexis, is anointed with the oil of gladness. In the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen’; on the heart, ‘for the healing of thy soul and body’; on the ears, ‘for the hearing of the word’; on the hands, ‘Thy hands have made me and fashioned me’; on the feet, ‘that his feet may walk in the way of Thy commandments.’\*

*Verse 75. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.*  
—Spurgeon quotes here, in illustration, a poem by Dr. Newman :

- ‘Yet, LORD, in memory’s fondest place  
I shrine those seasons sad,  
When looking up I saw Thy face  
In kind austereness clad.
- ‘I would not miss one sigh or tear,  
Heart pang or throbbing brow;  
Sweet was the chastisement severe,  
And sweet its memory now.
- ‘Yes! let the fragrant scars abide  
Love-tokens in Thy stead,  
Faint shadows of the spear-pierced side  
And thorn-encompassed Head.
- ‘And such Thy tender force be still  
When self would swerve or stray,  
Shaping to truth the froward will  
Along Thy narrow way.’

1829.

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\* *Sketches of the Græco-Russian Church*, p. 71.

*Last Days at Newland.*—‘Every moment that could be spared during these months of preparation for departure was spent by the Warden either in Church, superintending the execution of the last frescoes, or wandering slowly through the precincts of the almshouses, as though taking farewell of each stone and each foot of ground, often resting on the seat under the elm-tree that shadows his child’s grave. There he was wont to talk of her and her death-bed to a friend, and to express his thankfulness to GOD for her blessed rest. Only once he almost broke down, when watching his wife at a little distance amongst her flowers, and said, “We must try and get her a little garden wherever we go.”’

‘It is difficult for any who loved him to dwell on those last days, when much of anxiety and wearing trials combined with the sorrow of leaving his home to break down what remained to him of bodily strength. *‘I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled,’* he had taken as his special text when his daughter died; and now he steadfastly set his heart to consider the same, and to take all sorrows as tokens of a Father’s love. But the frail earthly tabernacle could not but suffer, and he never recovered the effects of special trials at this time.’\*

*Verse 92. If my delight had not been in Thy Law, I should have perished in my trouble.*—There was once a man who pledged his dearest faith to a maiden, beautiful and true. For a time all passed pleasantly, and the maiden lived in happiness. But then the man was called from her side. He left her; long she waited, but he did not return. Friends pitied her, and rivals mocked her. Tauntingly they pointed at her, and said, ‘He has left thee, he will never come back.’ The maiden sought her chamber, and read in secret the letters which her lover had written to her, the letter in which he promised to be ever faithful, ever true. Weeping she read them, but they brought comfort to her heart; she dried her eyes, and doubted

\* *The Life of James Skinner*, p. 332.

not. A joyous day dawned for her; the man she loved returned, and when he learned that others had doubted and asked how she had preserved her faith, she showed his letters to him, declaring her eternal trust.

Israel, in misery and captivity, was mocked by the nations; her hopes of redemption were made a laughing-stock, her sages scoffed at, her holy men derided. Into her synagogues, into her schools, went Israel; she read the letters which her GOD had written, and believed in the holy promises which they contained. GOD will in time redeem her; and when he says, 'How could you alone be faithful of all the mocking nation?' she will point to the law, and answer: '*Had not Thy law been my delight, I should long since have perished in my affliction.*'\*

*Verse 97. Lord, what love have I unto Thy law: all the day long is my study in it.*—Dean Burgon's contributions to the study of Holy Scripture are, as is well known, greatly valuable in other directions. It is well that the words of Psalm cxix. 97 should be cut upon his tomb: '*Dilexi legem tuam, Domine, tota die meditatio mea est.*'

*Verse 105. Thy word is a lantern unto my feet: and a light unto my paths.*—In the *Second Part of King Henry VI.*, the King replies to the Duke of Gloster:

‘Stay, Humphrey, Duke of Gloster; ere thou go  
Give up thy staff: Henry will to himself  
Protector be, and GOD shall be my hope,  
My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet.  
And go in peace, Humphrey; no less beloved  
Than when thou wert protector to thy king.’

Act II., Sc. iii.

Upon the words ‘lantern to my feet,’ Steevens has a note in these words: ‘This image, I think, is from our Liturgy—a lantern to my feet, and a light to my paths.’ If by ‘Liturgy,’ is meant the Psalter, or version of the Psalms contained in the Prayer-Book, this is correct, and a reference should have been

\* *The Talmud*, p. 307.

made to Psalm cxix. 105. But it is a sufficient proof of the little attention that has been paid to the branch of Shakespearian criticism upon which we are engaged, that this loose and inaccurate note should have been allowed to stand, and that both Steevens and Malone, ready as they were to encumber their poet's page, and to disagree, should, on this occasion, have found nothing more to say; though other expressions in the same speech, such as 'my stay,' 'my guide,' and, again, 'go in peace,' might also have received illustration from Holy Scripture. See 2 Sam. xxii. 19; Ps. xviii. 18: 'They prevented me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was *my stay*.' Ps. xlviii. 14: 'This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever: He will be *our Guide*, even unto death.' Exod. iv. 18: 'Jethro said to Moses, *Go in peace*.' 2 Sam. xv. 9: 'The King (David) said to Absalom, *Go in peace*'; and the same phrase occurs frequently elsewhere in the Bible.\*

*George Herbert :*

'God's Cabinet of revealed counsel 'tis :  
 Where weal and woe  
 Are ordered so  
 That every man may know what shall be his ;  
 Unless his own mistake  
 False application make,  
 It is the Index to Eternitie.  
 He cannot miss  
 Of endless bliss  
 That takes this chart to steer his voyage by.  
 Nor can he be mistook  
 That speaketh by this Book.'

*Verse 135. Show the light of Thy countenance upon Thy servant.*

'O when, thou Face in all the world most fair,  
 When shall I win enjoyment of Thy light ?  
 As the sun's absence is the earth's despair,  
 And while he hides the wan day sinks in night :  
 Flowers have no dyes, the pleasant woods no grace,  
 Men hold their peace, the birds their singing hush ;  
 Soon, when his rose-wreathed head uplifts its face,  
 Day laughs in brightness at the purple blush ;

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\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 69.



Woods regain grace, the flowers resume their dyes,  
 Men stir again, and birds their singing give ;  
 So seeing Thee, my Life, I dying rise ;  
 Seeing Thee not, I die, e'en though I live.\*

*Verse 136. Mine eyes gush out with water, because men keep not Thy law.*—Bendetti, a Franciscan monk, author of the *Stabat Mater*, one day was found weeping, and when asked the reason of his tears, he exclaimed: ‘I weep because Love goes about unloved.’†

*Verse 137. Righteous art Thou, O Lord: and upright are Thy judgments.*—In 601 a political change took place at Constantinople. Phocas, who was but a common centurion, but a favourite with the soldiery stationed on the Danube, successfully revolted against the Emperor. Mauricius had to succumb to his ignoble rival, and endeavouring with his wife and children to escape to the Asiatic shore, was compelled by opposing winds to take refuge in a church near Chalcedon. Phocas entered Constantinople, was accepted as Emperor, and anointed with his wife Leontia by Cyriacus, the Patriarch. He was illiterate, sensual, passionate, and cruel. His acts after his accession were in accordance with the picture, and the sons of the deposed Emperor were murdered in succession before their father's eyes, and then the Emperor himself. Their bodies were thrown into the sea, their heads exposed at Court till putrefaction began, and then burned. On witnessing the death of each of his sons, the old father, who was not devoid of piety, is said to have exclaimed: ‘*Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgments are right.*’‡

‘*St. Augustine*, at the close of his comparatively peaceful life,’ says Dean Milman, ‘was exposed to the trial of his severe and lofty principles. His faith and his superiority were brought to the test in the fearful calamities which desolated the whole African province. No part of the empire had so long escaped,

\* Herm. Hugo, *Pia Desideria* (Dr. Neale's *Commentary*).

† W. H. J. P. in *Treasury of David*, vol. ii., p. 388.

‡ *The Fathers for English Readers*: Gregory the Great, p. 131.

no part was so fearfully visited as Africa by the invasion of the Vandals, yet the good Bishop did not fall below his own high notions of Christian, of episcopal duty.

‘When the Vandal army gathered around Hippo, one of the few cities which still afforded a refuge for the persecuted provincials, he refused, though more than seventy years old, to abandon his post. Possidius tells us that these Bishops of the sorely-trying Church of GOD were accustomed to meet together to pray and consider the tremendous judgments of GOD which were before their eyes, saying: “*Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true is Thy judgment,*” and praying with tears and groans and lamentations that He would relieve them in their tribulation.’

*Verses 147, 148. Early in the morning do I cry unto Thee, for in Thy Word is my trust. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might be occupied in Thy words.*—The frequent repetition of the Psalms of David hath been noted to be a great part of the devotion of the primitive Christians; the Psalms having in them not only prayers and holy instructions, but such commemorations of GOD’S mercies, as may preserve, comfort, and confirm our dependence on the power and providence and mercy of our Creator. And this is mentioned in order to telling, that as the holy Psalmist said, that *his eyes should prevent both the dawning of the day and night watches, by meditating on God’s word* (Psalm cxix. 147). So it was Dr. Sanderson’s constant practice every morning to entertain his first waking thoughts with a repetition of those appointed for the service of the evening, remembering and repeating the very Psalms appointed for every day; and as the month had formerly ended and began again, so did this exercise of his devotion. And if his first waking thoughts were of the world or what concerned it, he would arraign and condemn himself for it. Thus he began that work on earth which is now his employment in heaven.\*

\* *Izaak Walton’s Lives*, p. 401.

*Verse 158. It grieveth me when I see the transgressors, because they keep not Thy law.*—“The day when I first met Colonel Gardiner at Leicester, I happened to preach a lecture from Psalm cxix. 158: “*I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not Thy word.*” I was large in describing that mixture of indignation and grief, strongly expressed by the original word there, with which a good man looks on the varying transgressors of the Divine law; and in tracing the causes of that grief, as arising from a regard to the Divine honour and the interest of a Redeemer, and a compassionate concern for the misery such offenders bring on themselves, and for the mischief they do to the world about them. I little thought how exactly I was drawing Colonel Gardiner’s character under each of those heads; and I have often reflected upon it as a happy providence, which opened a much speedier way than I could have expected, to the breast of one of the most amiable and useful friends which I ever expect to find upon earth. We afterwards sung a hymn, which brought over again some of the leading thoughts in the sermon, and struck him so strongly, that, on obtaining a copy of it, he committed it to his memory, and used to repeat it with so forcible an accent, as showed how much every line expressed of his very soul. In this view the reader will pardon my inserting it, especially as I know not when I may get time to publish a volume of these serious though artless compositions, which I sent him in manuscript some years ago, and to which I have since made very large additions :

- “ Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise,  
To torrents melt my streaming eyes ;  
And thou, my heart, with anguish feel  
Those evils which thou canst not heal.
- “ See human nature sunk in shame ;  
See scandals poured on JEST’s name ;  
The Father wounded through the Son ;  
The world abused, and souls undone.
- “ See the short course of vain delight  
Closing in everlasting night,  
In flames that no abatement know,  
Though briny tears for ever flow.

“ My GOD, I feel the mournful scene ;  
 My bowels yearn o'er dying men,  
 And fain my pity would reclaim,  
 And snatch the firebrands from the flame.

“ But feeble my compassion proves,  
 And can but weep where most it loves ;  
 Thy own all-saving arm employ,  
 And turn these drops of grief to joy.”\*

*Celerinus, in Cyprian's Epistles*, acquaints a friend with his great grief for the apostasy of a woman through fear of persecution, which afflicted him so much that at the feast of Easter (the Queen of Feasts in the Primitive Church) he wept night and day, and resolved never to know a moment's delight till, through the mercy of GOD, she should be recovered.†

*Verse 164. Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.*—This is one of the classical passages in the Psalter which has either originated, or else helped to establish, the usage, common to East and West alike, of dividing the daily office into seven canonical hours, a custom which was gradually developed out of the three stated times of prayer which, in compliance with Jewish custom as set by the Prophet Daniel, were adopted by the Early Christians, and seems to have been known at the time when the Apostolical Constitutions were compiled, and certainly at the period when the Ambrosian hymns were written, since one of them runs :

‘ Ut septies diem vere,  
 Orantes cum Psalterio,  
 Laudes cantantes DEO,  
 Læti solvamus debitum.’

‘ That truly seven times a day,  
 With Psalms and prayer in glad accord,  
 Our bounden duty we may pay,  
 By singing praises to the LORD.‡

\* *The Life of Colonel Gardiner*, by Philip Doddridge.

† Charles Bridges on Psalm cxix.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 150.

## PSALM CXX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cry of distress when surrounded by contentious men.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. The first Song of Ascension. The people in Babylon pray that they may be delivered, and so we pray that we may be delivered from evil spirits.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The first in the collection ('Songs of the goings-up') is a prayer against the lying tongues of treacherous neighbours, whom the poet compares, for their cruelty and perfidy, to the savage hordes of the Caucasus or of the Arabian desert. But whether the Psalmist thus pictures the heathen among whom he dwells in exile, or the wild tribes with whom no treaty can be kept, by whom he is beset on his way back from Babylon to Palestine, or the Samaritans, Arabians, and others, who after their return attempted, by false representations to the Persian monarch, to thwart the rebuilding of the temple and the fortification of the city, it is impossible to say.

*Verses 1.* *When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and He heard me.*—The greatest trouble that has shadowed the history of the new Sandringham Hall—the illness that made it the centre of interest for all England in the winter of 1871, when our future King lay here between life and death—is recorded on a brass lectern erected in the church by the Princess of Wales, and bearing the following inscription :

‘To the Glory of God,  
A Thankoffering for His Mercy,  
14th December, 1871.

ALEXANDRA,

*When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and He heard me.*’

*Verses 3.* *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper* (Bible Version).—The special point to be drawn out in the mention of ‘coals of juniper’ is the inextinguishableness of such fuel. There is a marvellous story in the Midrash Tehillim

which illustrates this very well. Two men in a desert sat down under a juniper-tree, and gathered sticks of it, wherewith they cooked their food. After a year they passed over the same spot, where was the dust of what they had burned, and remarking that it was now twelve months since they had the fire, they walked fearlessly upon the dust, and their feet were burned by the 'coals' beneath it, which were still unextinguished.\*

*Verse 4. Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.*—Richard Hooker's marriage was not a happy one, and this is how it came about. A Mrs. Churchman having cured him 'of his late distemper and cold,' and that being 'so gratefully apprehended by Mr. Hooker . . . he thought himself bound in conscience to believe all that she said; so that the good man came to be persuaded by her, 'that he was a man of a tender constitution; and that it was best for him to have a wife that might prove a nurse to him; such a one as might both prolong his life, and make it more comfortable; and such a one she could and would provide for him if he thought fit to marry.' And he, not considering that 'the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;' but, like a true Nathaniel, fearing no guile because he meant none, did give her such a power as Eleazar was trusted with—you may read it in the Book of Genesis—when he was sent to choose a wife for Isaac; for even so he trusted her to choose for him, promising upon a fair summons to return to London and accept of her choice; and he did so in that, or about the year following.

Now, the wife provided for him was her daughter Joan, who brought him neither beauty nor portion; and for her conditions, they were too like that wife's which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house—so that the good man had no reason to 'rejoice in the wife of his youth,' but had too just cause to say with the holy Prophet: '*Woe is me, that I am con-*

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by the Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 138.

*strained to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar!* And by this marriage the good man was drawn from the tranquillity of his college, from that garden of piety, of pleasure, of peace, and a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world—into those corroding cares that attend a married priest and a country parsonage.\*

*Verse 6. I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle.*—Mr. Symmons, an ejected minister in the time of the Commonwealth, gives a singular account of the accusations made against him by Parliament, before whom he was summoned. ‘When I preached against treason, rebellion, and disobedience,’ says he, ‘then they said no question but I meant Parliament; and afterwards, when I preached against lying, slandering, and malice, this they said was against the Parliament, too; and got me to be sent for up again by a pursuivant about the same. Nay, when I did but quote those words of our Saviour, “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth unto death, and many go therein,” this they said was against the Parliament, because the major part of the people in those parts were for the same. When I quoted that passage in the 120th Psalm, where David says that “*he was for peace, but others were for war; when he spake of that they made them ready for battle;*” this, they said, was for the King, and against the Parliament. When I preached against vainglory, upon those words of our Saviour, “I seek not the praise of men,” they said I preached against a particular member, when I protest I never thought of him all the while I was upon that subject (that I know of), save only when I prayed for my enemies.’†

\* *Izaak Walton's Lives*, p. 184.

† *Percy Anecdotes*.

## PSALM CXXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Consolation of Divine protection.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Psalm to the keeper of Israel.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. One of the Psalms of Ascension from Babylon, also the promises of good things.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Under what circumstances the Psalm was written is doubtful. Some (as Ewald and De Wette) suppose it to have been written in exile. . . . Others (as Hupfield) understand by ‘the mountains’ in verse 1, not the mountains of Palestine at large, but the one mountain, or mountain-group of Zion, as the dwelling-place of GOD . . . and leave it an open question whether the Psalmist was in exile, or merely at a distance from the sanctuary.

Others, again, have conjectured that this was the song sung by the caravans of pilgrims going up to the yearly feasts, when first they came within sight of the mountains on which Jerusalem stands.

*In Church*.—In the Sarum Rite this Psalm is employed in a little office for the recovery of the sick. After some versicles, which follow this Psalm, it contains the collect at the end of our modern Communion Office: ‘Assist us mercifully, O LORD.’

In the Greek Church the Psalms cxxi.—cxxxiv. are called Proskyria,  $\pi\rho\sigma\kappa\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$ , from the first words of Psalm cxxi.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—New Year’s Day, 1885, the commencement of the last year of Bishop Hannington’s short life, was the last day of his sojourn in Palestine. It was spent at Jaffa, which he describes as ‘a complete sea of oranges.’ While there he inspected Miss Arnott’s school, of which he jots down the following appreciatory note: ‘Much pleased, the singing being especially

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 309.



good. I wrote in the book to the effect that this was the best school I had inspected.' Mr. Fitch, writing of the time which he spent with his Bishop in Palestine, says: 'How kind and gentle he was to all; how considerate for others, and anxious not to give offence, even where a rebuke was necessary; and so spiritually minded, walking so closely with GOD! I shall never forget our journey together. Every morning, often in the early dusk, we would have prayers together, and always the 121st Psalm, which I had to read. If the books had been packed away, the Bishop himself would say the Psalm by heart. He was so kind and genial, everybody loved him. Wherever he went there was a brightness. On board ship all loved him. Wherever we went in Palestine the people complained their time with him was too short.' Later on in the year we have the following entry in his diary:

'*Sunday, March 1st.*—I preached from the text, "What must I do to be saved?" Jones interpreting. The church was quite full, many sitting outside. Holy Communion afterwards to thirty-four. Fifty candidates are being prepared for Confirmation. At the afternoon service Jones preached from the 121st Psalm. It being my travelling Psalm, I take it as a good omen.

'*March 2nd.*—Just off in excellent health and spirits. "I will go in the strength of the LORD."\*

*Mr. Romaine*, it is said, read this Psalm every day; and sure it is that every word in it is calculated to encourage and strengthen our faith and hope in God.†

*Mr. Kingsley's* ministrations in church (in Clovelly, of which he was rector) and in the cottages were acceptable to Dissenters as well as to Church people. And when the herring fleet put to sea, whatever the weather might be, he would start off 'down street' for the quay, with his wife and boys, to give

\* *Life of Bishop Hannington*, pp. 305, 331.

† *Samuel Eyles Pierce*.

a short parting service, at which 'men who worked' and 'women who wept' would join in singing the 121st Psalm out of the old Prayer-Book, as those only can who have death and danger staring them in the face, and who, 'though storms be sudden and waters deep,' can say :

' To Sion's hill I lift mine eyes,  
From thence expecting aid  
From Sion's hill and Sion's God  
Who heaven and earth has made.'

Such memories made this Psalm, in Tate and Brady's rough versification, more dear and speaking to Charles in after-life than any hymn, 'ancient or modern,' of more artistic form. Such memories still make the name of Kingsley a household word in Clovelly.\*

*Verse 1. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills : from whence cometh my help.*—Fénelon (Archbishop of Cambrai), having been much misunderstood on the question of Madame Guyon and Quietism, in order to show what he really did hold, gave to the world his book, *Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Intérieure*, which, so far from allaying the storm, caused it to break forth with tenfold fury. This book treats solely of the most solemnly sacred subjects affecting the soul and GOD ; but, at the instigation of Louis XIV., who was endeavouring to atone for a life of profligacy by a few words of bigotry, was condemned by the whole Sacred College. The conduct of Fénelon was beautiful throughout, and in one of his letters to the Abbé de la Crote de Chanterac, his friend, who represented him at Rome (the King having refused to let Fénelon himself go there), he quotes the words of this Psalm : 'Take care of your health, and defend prayer in the spirit of prayer and pure love with a disinterested heart. Seek GOD only in defending His cause. "*I lift up mine eyes to the hills, whence cometh my help.*" I say with Mordecai, "Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest, LORD, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any

\* *Charles Kingsley's Letters*, pp. 9, 10.

desire of glory!" If GOD be satisfied, we ought to be, whatever humiliation He may lay upon us.\*

*Sir Henry Lawrence.*—The natives of India used to say that when Sir Henry Lawrence looked twice to heaven and then to earth, he knew what to do.

*Verse 4. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*—To deny sleep to GOD, as the Psalmist does—‘Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep’ (Ps. cxxi. 4)—is an image that beautifully expresses the vigilance of His providential care; for we know of no created being in the world that sleepeth not. And the taunt, therefore, of Elijah against the priests of Baal, when he mocked them and said, ‘Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure *he sleepeth*, and *must be awaked*’ (1 Kings xviii. 27), is just and natural. It is by an adoption of the same image that, in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Cleon says to his wife Dionyza:

‘Our tongues sound deep our woes  
Into the air; our eyes do weep, till lungs  
Fetch breath that may proclaim them louder; that,  
If *heaven slumbers*, while their creatures want,  
They may *awake their helps* to comfort them’  
(Act I., Sc. iv.)

—where the old copy reads ‘helpers.’ We have ‘help’ used in the same way in Gen. ii. 18.†

*Jewish tradition* tells us that John Hyrcanus (B.C. 107) forbade the Levites to chant daily in the synagogues the verse, ‘Up, LORD, why sleepest Thou?’ saying, ‘*He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*’

*Verse 6. So that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night.*—In the Benediction said on the appearance of the new moon, Psalm cxxi. (‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the

\* *Life of Fénelon*, p. 185.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 83.

hills') is one of the three Psalms with which the Benediction closes. The reason of this selection is probably to be found in the verse, 'So that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night.'\*

*Nor the moon by night.*

\* The moon, the governess of floods,  
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound.†

*Verse 8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.*—These words may be most truly taken of GOD's protection of the soul in its hour of departure from the prison of this world, and in its happy entrance into the Paradise of rest. 'Therefore,' prays the Western Church over her dying children, 'as thy soul goeth forth from the body, let the bright host of angels meet thee; let the Apostles who shall judge the world come unto thee; let the conquering army of white-robed martyrs welcome thee; let the lily-crowned band of shining confessors compass thee; let the choir of rejoicing virgins greet thee; let the Patriarchs receive thee to rest happily in their bosom: let CHRIST JESUS look upon thee in gentleness and joy, and set thee for ever amongst them who stand before Him.'‡

*El-Bara* is about one hour north of El-Hass, and there the ruins are even more extensive than Hass, and not less important. 'In this place we noticed for the first time sacred inscriptions upon the houses . . . these are curious as illustrating the pious practices of the age to which they belong. The first carried my thoughts to Castle Ashby, where the Latin version of the same inscription, wrought in the open battlement, "welcomes the coming and speeds the parting guest." "*The Lord preserve thy coming in, and thy going out, from this time*

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by H. T. Armfield, p. 122.

† *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

‡ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 176.

*forth and for evermore.*" This was on the lintel of a small house.\*

*Keble :*

'God keep thee safe from harm and sin,  
Thy spirit keep ; the LORD watch o'er  
Thy going out, thy coming in,  
From this time, evermore.'†

## PSALM CXXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—A well-wishing glance back at the pilgrim's city.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—one of the Psalms of Ascension. When Cyrus commanded the Captivity to go up, and, spiritually, the promise of good things.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm . . . was evidently composed with immediate reference to one of the three yearly festivals, when the caravans of pilgrims 'went up' to the Holy City. . . . The Psalm is called in the title a song of David. It is certainly possible that Psalms written by him might be comprised in a collection which formed a hymn-book for the pilgrims.

*In Church*—This Psalm and the 127th were appointed in the Sarum Use for the Festival of the Circumcision of CHRIST.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—A *Gradual Psalm* had the distinction of furnishing the very first words of the Office used for the Coronation of Queen Victoria, when verses 1, 5, 6, 7 of Ps. cxxii. ('I was glad,' etc.) formed the anthem with which she was received on her entrance into the Church.

*Horne* mentions from De Thou that Theodore Zuinger felt

\* Dr. Neale's *Eastern Church: Patriarchate of Antioch*, Introduction, p. xxxiii.

† *The Psalter in English Verse*, p. 254.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 198.

this Psalm so appropriate to one getting near glory, that he spent his last hours in versifying it in Latin, for he could sing :

‘Per CHRISTI meritum patet  
Vitæ porta beatæ.’\*

*Verse 1. I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord.*—A fragment of a Gradual Psalm forms part of the formula which is said on entering the Synagogue before the Daily Morning Service. I translate the whole prayer, which, it will be seen, is made up entirely of selections from the Psalms :—A song of the Degrees of David. ‘I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the LORD. I am as glad of Thy word, as one that findeth great spoils. Hearken to the voice of my crying, my King and my GOD : for unto Thee do I make my supplications. O LORD, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice ; in the morning I will direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up. I called upon Thee : for Thou shalt answer me, O GOD. Incline Thine ear unto me, hear my prayer. My foot standeth right ; I will praise the LORD in the congregation.†

*Wolfgang Schuch*, the martyr of St. Hippolyte, near the Vosges, was tried for heresy and condemned by Bonaventure Reuel, confessor to Duke Antony the Good. When his sentence was made known to him, he said mildly : ‘*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*’

*Gregory Nazianzen* writeth that his father being a heathen, and often besought by his wife to become a Christian, had this verse suggested unto him in a dream, and was much wrought upon thereby.‡

*St. Francis Solano* was born at Montietia in Andalusia in 1549, and twenty years later he made his religious profession

\* *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms*, by A. Bonar, p. 386.

† *The Gradual Psalms*, by H. T. Armfield, p. 127.

‡ John Trapp (in *Treasury of the Psalter*).

amongst the Franciscans. An extraordinary humility and contempt of himself, and of worldly vanity and applause, self-denial, obedience, meekness, patience, and the love of silence, recollection, and prayer, mental and vocal, formed his character. Whole nights he frequently passed without sleep on the steps of the altar, before the Blessed Sacrament, in meditation and devout prayer, with wonderful interior delight and devotion. He was sent on a mission to America, and the five last years of his life he preached chiefly at Lima, and induced the inhabitants of that great city, by sincere repentance, to appease the Divine anger, which they had provoked by their sins. Before his death he was purified by a lingering illness, and in his last moments repeated those words of the Psalmist: *'I have rejoiced in those things which have been said to me: We will go into the house of the Lord.'* He departed this life on the 14th of June, 1610, in the sixty-second year of his age, and fortieth of his religious profession.\*

*St. Alphonsus Turibius* was Archbishop of Lima in 1606. During a visitation of his Diocese, at the age of sixty-eight, he fell sick at Santa. He would be carried to the church, there to receive the holy Viaticum, but received extreme unction in his sick-bed. He often repeated those words of St. Paul, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST,' and in his last moments he ordered to be sung by his bedside those of the Psalmist: *'I rejoiced in the things that were said to me: We will go into the house of the Lord.'* He died on the 23rd of March, repeating those other words of the same prophet: 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'†

*Verse 2. Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.*

'Lo, towered Jerusalem salutes the eyes!  
A thousand pointing fingers tell the tale;  
"Jerusalem!" a thousand voices cry.  
"All hail, Jerusalem!" hill, down, and dale  
Catch the glad sounds, and shout "Jerusalem, all hail!" ‡

\* Butler's *Lives of the Saints* (July 24).

† *Ibid.*

‡ Torquato Tasso.

*W. Chatterton Dix :*

- ‘There are, who in some vast Cathedral nave  
 Seek a brief respite from the city’s din ;  
 We, too, but worship in the outer courts,  
 And may not go the mystic shrine within.
- ‘Like them, we hear at best but broken notes  
 Of Alleluias, which are clear and strong :  
 We strain our eager eyes, and only catch  
 Bright fleeting glimpses of the white-robed throng.
- ‘We may not gain that holiest place of all,  
 Nor yet our feet may tread its jewelled way ;  
 Nor are our voices tuned to swell those songs  
 Which wreath its ageless pillars day by day.’

*Verses 6 to 9. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem . . . because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good.*—The last four verses of a Gradual Psalm are embodied in the long meditation formula that is read in the ‘Additional Service’ for Sabbath. I transcribe the piece as a specimen of such poems. ‘Rabbi Eliezer says that Rabbi Chauma thus taught : “Wise men promote peace in the world ; as it is said, All thy children shall be taught of GOD, and great shall be the peace of thy children. Read not ‘thy children,’ but ‘thy builders’ (the letters are the same in Hebrew). Abundant peace have they who love Thy law : none shall obstruct them. May there be peace within Thy walls, and prosperity within Thy palaces ! (Ps. cxxii. 6 to end). For the sake of my birth and friends, I will say, Peace be within thee. For the sake of the house of the LORD our GOD, I will seek thy good, and the LORD will give strength unto His people ; the LORD will bless His people with peace.” ’\*

### PSALM CXXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Upward glance to the LORD in times of contempt.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Let us know it as ‘the Psalm of the Eyes.’

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by H. T. Armfield, p. 125.



*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—one of the Psalms of Ascension, spoken in the person of Zerubbabel, Prince of the Captivity.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This Psalm is either the sigh of the exile, towards the close of the Captivity, looking in faith and patience for the deliverance which he had reason to hope was now nigh at hand; or it is the sigh of those who, having already returned to their native land, were still exposed to ‘the scorn and contempt’ of the Samaritans and others, who, favoured by the Persian Government, took every opportunity of harassing and insulting the Jews.

*In Church*.—Psalm cxxiii. is sung as a hymn during the Greek Vespers.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—Alsted beautifully entitles this Psalm *Oculus Sperans*, ‘The Eye of Hope.’†

*Verse 2*. *Behold, even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress: even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us.*—There are indeed many occasions in the Hebrew ritual where fragments of the Gradual Psalms are introduced. A curious example of this is found in the Service of Blessing said by Priests, called in Hebrew ‘The order of lifting up of the hands.’ In that service they pronounce the blessing which Aaron was divinely commanded to bless the children of Israel with (Num. vi. 24-26):

‘The LORD bless thee and keep thee :

‘The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee :

‘The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’

But the method in which this blessing is delivered is peculiar. The fifteen Hebrew words which compose it are separately

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 309.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 376.

recited, and at each separate word the congregation respond with a verse or phrase of Scripture appropriate to the word. The second verse of Psalm cxxiii., '*Behold, even as the eyes of servants . . . mercy upon us,*' forms the response to the one Hebrew word which represents the phrase, 'And be gracious unto thee.'\*

I have seen a fine illustration of this passage in a gentleman's house at Damascus. The people of the East do not speak so much or so quick as those in the West, and a sign of the hand is frequently the only instruction given to the servants in waiting. As soon as we were introduced and seated on the divan, a wave of the master's hand indicated that sherbet was to be served. Another wave brought coffee and pipes; another sweetmeats. At another signal dinner was made ready. The attendants watched their master's eye and hand, to know his will and do it instantly. Such is the attention with which we ought to wait upon the LORD, anxious to fulfil His holy pleasure, our great desire being, 'LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?'

An equally pointed and more homely illustration may be seen any day on our own River Thames, or in any of our large seaport towns, where the call-boy watches attentively the hand of the captain of the boat, and conveys his will to the engine-men.†

*Bishop Dupanloup* says: 1. In the interior life: all is contained in the *love of God in Christ Jesus*, and in the *love of souls for God*. The love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS consists in exercises of piety before all things, which must never be interrupted; they are the peaceful and constant exercise and nourishment of love itself; 2nd, in private worship (Mass, thanksgiving, frequent visits), and in public worship of the Blessed Sacrament, which I ought by all possible means to promote (Benedictions, Perpetual Adoration, Altar of the Sacred Heart in my cathedral; Life of our LORD, written with

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by the Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 125.

† *The Sunday at Home* (quoted in the *Treasury of David*, vol. vi., p. 448)

fervent love); 3rd, in the submission and entire surrender to the will of GOD, which is true love.

Herein lies the great resolution. It must be the *quæ placita sunt et facio semper*, and the *sicut oculi ancille in manibus dominæ suæ*. The love which I owe to our LORD ought to be a love of entire dependence every hour, like a child towards its mother; desiring nothing for myself, looking always to Him with detachment and entire personal disinterestedness, to desire and to do only that which is pleasing to Him every moment, always with joy, for love, and by His grace present with me.

*Ecce sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum suorum ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum.* At the least sign, to act for love, with love.

*The love of souls for God.* My priests first, then men who are not sufficiently considered; the sheep of my *ovile*; by letters and by word of mouth; souls at a distance towards whom I have a special duty; in short, the Church and my diocese; but here begins my exterior life.\*

## PSALM CXXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Deliverer from death in waters and in a snare.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. A Thanksgiving. A Psalm of Ascension.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There can be little doubt that this Psalm records the feelings of the exiles when the proclamation of Cyrus at length permitted them to return to their native land.

*In the Jewish Church.*—The joyous, hopeful character, which has always been felt to attach to the Gradual Psalms, makes one of them well fitting for use at the Feast of Purim—the feast

\* *Life of Mgr. Dupanloup*, vol. ii., pp. 298, 299.

wherein the Hebrew nation commemorates its deliverance from the plot of Haman, narrated in the Book of Esther. Psalm cxxiv., which contains the verse, 'Our soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler,' is employed on that occasion.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This and the two following may be called historical Psalms.†

*Luther* composed his hymn 'Were not GOD with us at this time' ('Wær' Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit') after this Psalm.‡

*Masier John Durie*, a Presbyterian minister, lectured James against all his dangerous practices, including the acceptance of some house from the Duke of Guise, calling Guise a murderer of the saints and a messenger of the Devil. Mr. Durie belonged to the party of Lords Mar, Glamys and Lindsay, who wished to combat the French influence; Lennox and Arran on the other side. 'Lennox could, however, do nothing but tear his beard for anger as Master John Durie was conducted back to Edinburgh by a triumphal procession of 2,000 people singing the 124th Psalm.'§

*Verse 6. Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are delivered.*—In the chambers of this great subterranean city (Rome), small apsidal chapels may be met with. The round part of these, called the archosolium (and which exactly resembles a tomb often seen in our English churches and crypts), is occasionally ornamented with foliage, fruit and flowers, lamps, etc., as are the divisions between the excavations, which we find in many instances covered with symbolical designs in fresco, such as birds, intending, no doubt, to convey, by an allegory and symbol, the escape of the soul, of which the Psalmist speaks: '*My soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is*

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 123.

† *The Pilgrim Psalms*, by S. Cox, p. 154.

‡ Dr. Tholuck's *Commentary*, p. 4.

§ *Camcos from English History*, No. clxxiii.

*broken, and we are delivered.*' In the cemetery of Pretextatus, De Rossi has lately discovered a painting on the roof, of a whole nest of birds in the middle of a garland of roses and ears of corn, receiving or waiting for the nourishment from their mother's beak. From the earliest times birds were looked upon as symbols of martyrs, taking flight, as they do, to the regions above.\*

*The Duke of Gandia*, in the year 1549, claimed a promise of being allowed to retire from the world, and, making over all his estates and honours to his son, he entered an order as Francesco Borja. As he left his Castle to carry out this long-cherished desire of joining the Order of the Jesuits, he exclaimed, '*My soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.*'†

## PSALM CXXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Israel's bulwark against temptation to Apostasy.

*Verse 3.* *The rod of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous.*—In our liturgic version this clause is thus rendered: 'The word of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous.' This is *one*, and not the *worst* of the many sad blemishes which deform the version in our national Prayer-Book. In short, the version of the Psalms in that book is wholly unworthy of regard, and should be thrown aside, and that in the *Authorized Version* in the Bible substituted for it. The people of God are misled by it, and they are confounded by the *great* and *glaring differences* they find between it, and what they find in their Bibles, where they have a version of a much better character delivered to them by the authority of *Church* and *State*. Why do not our present excellent and

\* *Chapters on Early Church History* (*Monthly Packet*, vol. xxii., p. 22).

† *Cameos from English History*, No. cxxxiii.

learned prelates lay this to heart, and take away this sore stumbling-block out of the way of the people?\*

### PSALM CXXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Harvest of Joy after the sowing of tears.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We will call it, ‘Leading captivity captive.’

*Contents* (Syriac).—One of the Psalms of Ascension. Anonymous. Spoken concerning Haggai and Zechariah, who went up from Babylon with the Captivity; and Spiritually the expectation of good things to come.

*The Whole Psalm*.—In domestic life among the Hebrews, a Gradual Psalm occupies a foremost position. The Grace after Meat is with them a somewhat lengthy service, and it always opens with a Psalm. On Sabbath and Holy Days, Psalm cxxvi. is the one appointed to be said (*‘When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion’*). On the other days this is replaced by Psalm cxxxvii., ‘By the waters of Babylon.’

*Verse 1. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream.*—So Livy tells us that when the Greeks heard at the Isthmian games after the defeat of the Macedonians by T. Q. Flaminius, the proclamation of the herald that they should, by the free gift of the Roman people, retain their liberty, ‘the joy was too great for men to take it all in. None could well believe that he had heard aright, and they looked on one another in wonder, like the empty show of a dream; and as for each person singly, having no confidence in their own ears, they all questioned those standing nearest to them. The herald, called back because everyone was anxious not only to hear but to see the messenger

\* Adam Clarke’s *Commentary*, p. 2359.

of freedom, repeated the proclamation. Then, when they knew that the good news was certain, such applause and shouting was raised and renewed again and again, that it was easy to see that of all good things nothing is dearer to the people than liberty. The games were then hurriedly gone through, because no one's mind or attention was bent on the sight at all, to such a degree had that one joy taken up the room of every other pleasure.\*

*Verse 2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter.* It will not be forgotten how the gladness of the greatest of Church festivals, sometimes passing the bounds of moderation, gave rise to the phrase *Risus Paschales*, 'Easter laughter.†

*Verse 6. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

'Go forth ! go forth to the labour,  
For the harvest will soon be here,  
With tasselled grain and ripened fruits,  
And golden corn in the ear :  
"For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

'What boots the dark clouds above thee  
"If they return after the rain?"  
Go forth with faith, for the harvest  
Has promised thee golden grain :  
"For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

'For they that sow in the morning,  
E'en tho' they sow through their tears,  
Shall reap their joy in the evening,  
And find sweet rest to their cares :  
"For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

'Faith, then, must open the furrow,  
And hope, too, must drop in her seed,  
Love then shall gather her harvest.  
Go forth in earnest—take heed :  
"For they that sow in tears shall reap in joy."‡

\* *Liv. Hist.*, xxxiii. 32, B.C. 196 (quoted in Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 202).

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 204.

‡ Sophia Eckley's *Poems*, p. 51.

## PSALM CXXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Everything depends upon the blessing of God.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Builders' Psalm.

*Contents* (Syriac).—One of the Songs of Ascension written by David concerning Solomon, and intended also of Haggai and Zechariah, who forwarded the building of the Temple.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There is not a word in either (this or the next) Psalm to guide us as to the time of its composition. The title gives the 127th to Solomon (only one other in the entire Psalter—the 72nd—being ascribed to him), but it may be doubted whether with sufficient reason.

*In Church*.—Psalm cxxvii. is appointed in the Churching of Women.\*

*The Whole Psalm*.—If the three previous songs may be called historical Psalms, this and the next may very certainly be described as *domestic* Psalms.†

In the *Title* this Psalm is called 'a Psalm for Solomon'; *i.e.*, a Psalm suggested to Solomon by the HOLY SPIRIT.‡

*Verse 1. Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.*—On the lintel of the door in many an old English house we may still read the words, 'Nisi DOMINUS frustra,' the Latin version of the opening words of the Psalm. Let us also trust in Him, and inscribe these words over the portal of 'the house of our pilgrimage,' and beyond a doubt it *will* be well with us, both in this world and in that which is to come.§

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 311.

† *The Pilgrim Psalms*, by S. Cox, p. 155.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 201.

§ *The Pilgrim Psalms*, by S. Cox, p. 176.



*Dr. Wordsworth*, in 1850, entered on the work of a country clergyman. He undertook the charge of the parish of Stanford, in Berkshire.

The first thing a visitor to the Vicarage would probably notice was the inscription on a stone over the principal door: '*Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, vanus est labor ædificantium eam.*' The dining-room ceiling bore on the sides of its low rafters the words, 'Whether ye eat or drink . . . do all to the glory of GOD;' 'Speak evil of no man;' 'Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness,' and 'In everything give thanks.' The store-closet contained a delicate little warning to the anxious mistress of the house in the words, *Μάρθα Μάρθα*, and the entrance to the Vicar's study was headed by 'Ἐξαγορά ζεσθε τὸν καιρὸν, while round the bow-window inside were the words: *Εἰ τις ἐν Χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις, τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρήλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονε καινὰ τὰ πάντα.* Over his dressing-room door he had the text, '*Nolumus exspoliari sed supervestiri.*'\*

*The Marquis of Northampton's* mansion is, of course, the most prominent object in this parish (Castle Ashby). The Comptons were among the most zealous and illustrious of the families which supported Charles I. in arms. A lettered balustrade, formed of the words of the 127th Psalm, '*Nisi DOMINUS ædificaverit*' (*Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it*), runs round the quadrangle.†

*Verse 2. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*—One important lesson, says her biographer, which *Madame Guyon* learned from these temptations of others—a lesson as important as any which the nature of the Christian life renders indispensable—was that of her entire dependence on Divine grace. 'I became,' she says, 'deeply assured of what the prophet hath said, "*Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*" When I looked to Thee, O my LORD, Thou wast my faithful keeper: Thou didst continually

\* *Bishop Wordsworth's Life*, p. 134.

† *Diocesan Histories*: Peterborough, p. 217.

defend my heart against all kinds of enemies. But, alas! when left to myself, I was all weakness. How early did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their victories to their own fidelity; as for myself, I shall never attribute them to anything else than Thy paternal care. I have too often experienced, to my cost, what I should be without Thee, to presume in the least in any wisdom or efforts of my own. It is to Thee, O GOD, my Deliverer, that I owe everything! And it is a source of infinite satisfaction, that I am thus indebted to Thee.\*

*Verse 3. He giveth his beloved sleep.*—Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

‘Of all the thoughts of GOD that are  
Borne inward unto souls afar,  
Along the Psalmist’s music deep,  
Now tell me if there any is  
For gift or grace surpassing this—  
“*He giveth His beloved sleep.*”’

*Verse 6. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*—Mr. Merrick mentions a Chinese proverb: ‘When a son is born, a bow and arrow are hung before the gate.’†

*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.*—We may discover the tenderness of a parent’s heart in Shakespeare’s writings; where the clown, in ‘All’s well that ends well,’ quotes the proverb, ‘Bairns are blessings’ (Act I., Sc. iii.).‡

### PSALM CXXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The family prosperity of the God-fearing man.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Family Hymn.

\* *Life of Madame Guyon*, by Thomas Upham, p. 69.

† Bishop Horne’s *Commentary*, vol. ii., p. 373.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 196.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Ascension. Anonymous. Intended of Zerubbabel, Prince of Judah, who forwarded the building of the Temple; in which is also indicated the calling of the Gentiles.

*In Church*.—In the Eastern Church this Psalm is used in the Office for Matrimony. It is said in procession, with a responsory to every verse; the responsory is ‘Glory be to Thee, O LORD; glory to Thee.’\*

It is also used in our own Church in the Office for Holy Marriage.

In the Roman Church the fifth and sixth verses of this Psalm are the closing words of the Confirmation Office.\*

Another characteristic use, for I cannot pretend to notice every single individual use, of a Gradual Psalm lies in the employment of one of them (Ps. cxxviii., ‘Blessed are all they that fear the LORD and walk in His ways’) in the weekly office—said on most Thursdays of the year—of the venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist. It occurs likewise in a Sacramental aspect at Vespers, at the Feast of Corpus Christi, with a paraphrase of one of its own verses as Antiphon: ‘As the olive branches, may the sons of the Church be round about the table of the LORD.’

A further employment of Ps. cxxviii., which has survived in our own Marriage Service in the Book of Common Prayer, is found in its presence in the Ancient Service for Holy Matrimony, where it was said without Antiphon, and without musical accompaniment.

The same Psalm is used in the Ancient Office for Purification of Women after Child-birth. At the door of the church the rubric ran: ‘Let the Priest and his minister say the following Psalms,’ the Psalms in question being Ps. cxxi., ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help,’ and

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., pp. 273, 268.

Ps. cxxviii., 'Blessed are all they that fear the LORD and walk in His ways.'

In the Sarum Office for Confirmation of Children the fifth and sixth verses of Ps. cxxviii. were used at the close of office with an obvious appropriateness to the occasion. 'Lo, thus shall the man be blessed : that feareth the LORD. The LORD from out of Zion shall so bless thee : that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long.'

They had been used in the Confirmation Office at least from the time of Egbert, Archbishop of York, 950, and are now in the Roman Use.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—This is a Song of the Home, pure and simple. It is the 'Home, sweet Home' of the Hebrew race.†

*Luther* calls this Psalm a fit Epithalamium or Marriage Song for Christians.‡

Luther's words are : 'Wherefore to this Psalm we will give this title, that is an Epithalamium or Marriage Song, wherein the Prophet comforteth them that are married, wishing unto them and promising them from GOD all manner of blessings.'

## PSALM CXXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The end of the oppressors of Zion.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Ascension. Anonymous. Concerning the oppression of the people ; and signifying to us the victory and triumph of the servants of GOD.

*Verse 6. Let them be even as the grass growing upon the house-*

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 102.

† *The Pilgrim Psalms*, by S. Cox, p. 177.

‡ *The Speaker's Commentary*, p. 465.

*top, which withereth afore it be plucked up.*—The word translated ‘groweth up’ is ‘shalaph,’ which properly signifies ‘to pull up.’ Accordingly it is translated in the Liturgy Psalms ‘before it is plucked up.’ This is approved by Maundrell (‘Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem’), who thus writes :

‘All that occurred new in these days’ travel was a particular way used by the country people in gathering their corn, it being now harvest time (May). They plucked it up by handfuls from the roots, leaving the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had ever grown on them. This was their practice in places of the East that I have seen, and the reason is that they may lose none of their straw, which is generally very short, and necessary for the sustenance of their cattle, no hay being here made. I mention this because it seems to give light to that expression of the Psalmist, “which withereth before it be plucked up,” where there seems to be a manifest allusion to this custom.’\*

### PSALM CXXX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—De Profundis.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We name this the De Profundis Psalm.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Ascension—Intended of Nehemiah the Priest ; in which allusion is also made to the prayer of the Martyrs.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It may be taken as evidence of the late date of the Psalm that the word rendered ‘attentive,’ verse 2, occurs besides only in 2 Chron. vi. 40, vii. 15, and the word ‘forgiveness,’ verse 4, only in Dan. ix. 9, Neh. ix. 17.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed in the Sarum Use and the Latin Use for Christmas Day, probably on account of the

\* *Sunday at Home* (1861), p. 527.

promise of redemption in verse 8—a promise fulfilled in Him whose Name was to be called ‘JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.’\*

Psalm cxxx. is a daily Psalm of the Greek Evensong Office. It is a Burial Psalm in the Roman Use.†

It is also the second Psalm at Evensong on Ash Wednesday in the Church of England.

The use of this Psalm in the Western Church at burials and in the Office of the Dead points to this sense of it : The prayer of expectant souls, whether of martyrs under the altar or others further from their consummation, that they may be taken up by the LORD out of their state of waiting into the bliss of His presence.‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—On November the 8th the vaults beneath the cathedral at Meaux were searched, and Bossuet’s coffin was discovered, placed, as he had desired, at the feet of his immediate forerunner, De Ligny.

An interesting record of this day was given by M. Floquet, dated :

‘FORMENTIN, CALVADOS, *November 16th, 1854.*

‘On my return from Meaux, after the discovery and recognition of Bossuet’s coffin.

‘Returning from Meaux, where I have been spending two days in Bossuet’s cathedral, I feel an urgent desire to narrate what I have been privileged to see. There, in a coffin just opened, I beheld the revered head of the great Bishop, majestic, beaming, almost exactly as Rigault painted it at Germigny in 1701. I saw that inspired mouth, ready yet, as it well might seem, to utter those words of power which GOD had committed to him. A limited number of priests and laymen

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 204.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 311.

‡ Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, p. 228.

crowded round the sleeping pontiff, gazing eagerly upon him, waiting awestruck, almost listening, as though he might yet speak. The whole house of GOD was hushed in reverence and devotion; and ere long, at a sign given by the venerable and pious successor of Bossuet, who was visibly moved by the spectacle, every one simultaneously followed his example and knelt down, and followed him in a loud, fervent *De Profundis*, more striking, more solemn than ever uttered at the royal obsequies of St. Denis. . . .\*

*Luther* composed his hymn

‘Out of deep sorrow I cry unto Thee’  
 (‘Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu Dir’)

after this Psalm.†

*Charles V.* on his deathbed had this Psalm read to him by Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo.

‘When *Luther*, in the year 1530, was in the fortress of Coburg, on four occasions during the night there seemed to pass before his eyes burning torches, and this was followed by a severe headache. One night he saw three blazing torches come in at the window of his room, and he swooned away. His servant, coming to his assistance, poured oil of almonds into his ear, and rubbed his feet with hot napkins. As soon as he recovered he bade him read to him a portion of the Epistle of the Galatians, and during the reading fell asleep. The danger was over, and when he awoke, he cried out joyfully: “Come, to spite the devil, let us sing the Psalm *De Profundis* in four parts.”’‡

*Verse 1.* *Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.* — Bishop Milman of Calcutta died at Rawul Pindi, a station about 100 miles from Peshawur. At

\* *Life of Bossuet*, p. 586.

† Tholuck's *Commentary*, p. 4.

‡ Delitzsch.

the last his mind wandered a little, and he repeated many Hindustani prayers. His last moments are thus recorded by Mr. Jacob, his chaplain :

' 15th.—At 7 a.m. the Bishop revived a little and was quite conscious. On my asking him if he remembered the words, "The eternal GOD is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," he replied, "Yes, eternal GOD, refuge," and he gave signs of acceptance. I then said slowly such other verses as "GOD so loved the world," "I know whom I have believed," "FATHER, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Finding he was following me, I began the 130th Psalm—"Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice"—and he immediately took it up, and said the second verse himself: "O let Thine ear consider well the voice of my complaint." I said the third verse—"If Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O LORD, who may abide it?"—and the Bishop responded, "For there is mercy with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared." I then finished the Psalm, and the Bishop said the Gloria Patri himself. I knelt down, said the first collect in the Visitation Service, the LORD'S Prayer, and "the Grace." The Bishop repeated the LORD'S Prayer, and saying "Amen" after the other prayers, gently raised his hand to cover his eyes. A few minutes afterwards he was heard saying: "The creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD." Then, looking up, he said: "When shall I be delivered from this bondage?" "Soon," was the reply. "How soon?" said the Bishop eagerly. "Very soon," was the answer. And the Bishop murmured quietly, "The glorious liberty of the children of GOD," then a few words in Hindustani, and he passed quietly away.\*

*Verse 3. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it?*—This verse is one of the great texts used by the Catholics in the controversy against the Novatians,

\* *The Life of Bishop Milman*, p. 363.



who, in an unwise zeal for the purity of the Church, denied all power of returning, even after severe penance, to those who had fallen away under the stress of persecution. For, as they note, the Psalmist does not say 'I cannot abide it,' but *who may abide it?*

Seeing that no man is safe from sins which howl around him, none is of perfectly spotless conscience, none pure in heart, because of his own righteousness.\*

*Verse 4. For there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared.*—Dr. Sanderson, sometime Bishop of Lincoln, was, in 1616, at Oxford chosen Senior Proctor. Izaak Walton says that at this time 'the magisterial part of the Proctor required more diligence, and was more difficult to be managed, than formerly, by reason of a multiplicity of new Statutes, which begot much confusion; some of which Statutes were then, and others suddenly after, put into an useful execution. And though these Statutes were not then made so perfectly useful as they were designed, till Archbishop Laud's time—who assisted in the forming and promoting them—yet our present Proctor made them as effectual as discretion and diligence could do: of which one example may seem worthy the noting, namely, that if in his night walk he met with irregular scholars absent from their colleges at University hours, or disordered by drink, or in scandalous company, he did not use his power of punishing to an extremity, but did usually take their names, and a promise to appear before him unsent for next morning; and when they did, convinced them, with such obligingness, and reason added to it, that they parted from him with such resolutions, as the man after GOD's own heart was possessed with, when he said: "*There is mercy with Thee, and therefore Thou shalt be feared*" (Psalm cxxx. 4). And by this, and a like behaviour to all men, he was so happy as to lay down this dangerous employment as but very few, if any, have done, even without an enemy.†

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 230.

† *Izaak Walton's Lives*, p. 343.

*Verse 6. My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.*—*My soul (looketh) for,* literally, ‘my soul is unto the LORD’ (as in Psalm cxliii. 6, ‘my soul is unto Thee’), as the eyes of watchers through the long and weary night look eagerly for the first streaks of the coming day.

Delitzsch quotes, in illustration of the expression, the words of Chr. A. Crusius on his deathbed, when, lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he exclaimed: ‘My soul is full of the grace of JESUS CHRIST; *my whole soul is unto God.*’\*

*Bishop Selwyn*, the great Bishop, lay dying on Tuesday, April 9th, 1878. ‘Bishop Abraham, who was going to administer Confirmation at a distant spot, visited his friend before six o’clock in the morning. The curtains in his bedroom were still drawn, and the light of day was streaming into the room through the openings. Psalm cxxx. had just been read, and when the words “*My soul fleeth to Thee before the morning watch*” were uttered, he added, in tones almost startling from their distinctness: “I say, before the morning watch.” All were struck with the strong feeling of thankfulness to GOD which he felt for the sufferings through which he had been carried.

‘The words in the Visitation Service, “to be made like unto CHRIST” in suffering, were very precious to him. Amid the wanderings caused by bodily weakness, his thoughts were with the distant islands for whom he had done so much, and to whose evangelization, when his own active labours had ended, he had given his son.

‘At one time he would exclaim, with kindling eye, “A light to lighten the Gentiles”; at another he would murmur, “They will all come back,” as, indeed, the larger portion of those Maoris who apostatised have already returned; and then in the soft Maori language, which for a quarter of a century was familiar to him as his mother tongue, he would say, “It is all

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 398.

light." On Thursday, April 11th, the end came. He had been unconscious for hours, but gave signs of pleasure at hearing Bonar's hymn, "A few more years shall roll," which had been sung at the consecration of the burial-ground at the workhouse at Stoke, and had much affected the old pauper inmates. About noon, surrounded by those who loved him well, who had shared his counsels and his labours on either side of the globe, the Commendatory prayer having been said by Bishop Abraham, he entered into his rest. A few moments there were of deep silence, and then, as was fitting, all stood up and recited the Apostles' Creed, never more thoroughly realizing the mystery, or more thankfully professing faith in "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."\*

## PSALM CXXXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Child-like resignation to God.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—Comparing all the Psalms to gems, we should liken this to a pearl.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—one of the Psalms of the Ascension. Intended of Joshua, the son of Josedech the High Priest; also concerning humility.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Whether written by David, to whom the title gives it, or not, this short Psalm—one of the most beautiful in the whole Book—assuredly breathes David's spirit.

*The Whole Psalm*.—The ideal of the spiritual character in the Psalter is crowned by . . . traits which are . . . marvelously in advance of their day. Such are the broken spirit; the broken and contrite heart; such, above all, the character painted in that perfect miniature, the 131st Psalm.

\* *The Life of Bishop Selwyn*, p. 373.

It is the abnegation of pride in its secret spring, in its visible expressions, in its sphere of action. The lines of Keble,

‘The common round, the *trivial task*,  
Will furnish all I ought to ask,’

are but the translation of, ‘Neither do I exercise in great matters.’

He has diligently lulled the disquietudes and levelled the aspirations of the proud yet grovelling human heart, and conformed it to the type of a little child. The Psalm remained. It was like a string of a Christian ‘Lyra Innocentium’ placed among its chords out of due season, silent until CHRIST gave it utterance by setting a little child in the midst, and saying, ‘Except ye be converted and become as little children.’ Its undying echoes are awakened whenever the Baptismal Gospel is read beside a font. By whomsoever composed, from whatever heart this ‘Song of the Upgoings’ may first have issued, it is equally ours. It may have been, as modern critics incline to think, a strain of pilgrims, content to be left alone, happy enough in seeing Jerusalem. It may have been a Psalm of David, first uttered when he was heart-sick under misrepresentations. But Augustine’s words are equally true: ‘This should be received, not as the voice of one man singing, but as the voice of all who are the Body of CHRIST. This Temple of GOD, the Body of CHRIST, the congregation of the faithful, has one voice. It is as it were one man who chanteth the Psalms.’\*

*Dr. Wolff*, in his researches, mentions a book, written by a converted Jew in the East, in which it is recommended that, when a person is not able to sleep, he should read this Psalm. The recommendation is in harmony with the quiet and trusting meekness of the sacred Poet.

*Verse 3. But I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child*

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*,’ pp 119, 120.

*that is weaned from his mother ; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.*—‘As a weaned child *upon* his mother’ (*i.e.*, as he lies resting upon his mother’s bosom); ‘as the weaned child (I say), lies my soul upon me.’

The figure is beautifully expressive of the humility of a soul chastened by disappointment. . . . ‘The weaned child,’ writes a mother, with reference to this passage, ‘has for the first time become *conscious of grief*. The piteous longing for the sweet nourishment of his life, the broken sob of disappointment, mark the trouble of his innocent heart ; it is not so much the *bodily* suffering ; he has felt that pain before, and cried while it lasted ; but now his *joy and comfort are taken away*, and he knows not why. When his head is once more laid on his mother’s bosom, then he trusts and loves and rests ; but he has learned the first lesson of humility, he is cast down, and clings with fond helplessness to his one friend.’

At a time when the devices of our modern civilization are fast tending to obliterate the beauty of this figure—mothers no longer doing their duty by their children—it seems the more necessary to draw attention to it.\*

## PSALM CXXXII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for the House of GOD, and the House of David.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Ascension. Anonymous. When the people sought to build a house unto the LORD of Sabaoth ; also a prayer of David, and a revelation of the Messiah.

*In Church*.—Psalm cxxxii. is a Proper Psalm for Christmas Day.†

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 401.

† *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 311.

In the 132nd Psalm the song mysteriously hovers over Bethlehem. The careful reader, with the second Lesson for Christmas Morning and the Greek version of the Psalms before him, seems to catch anticipations of St. Luke's narrative, and to hear broken snatches of 'Venite adoremus' floating in the air.\*

This Psalm is appointed to be used on Christmas Day because it declares David's earnest desire to find a habitation for the LORD, and because it records the promise which GOD made to David, after he had brought the Ark of the LORD to the place of its rest on Mount Sion. In that promise GOD assured him that He would raise CHRIST from the fruit of his body, and would give everlasting continuance to his seed and to his monarchy in Him. Hence, therefore, the Church of England, with much propriety, adopts these words on Christmas Day (so likewise the Sarum and Latin Use), when she thanks GOD for the fulfilment of that promise in the Incarnation of the SON OF GOD.†

*Burial of the Dead.*—Amongst all the uses of individual Gradual Psalms, one of the most beautiful examples is the employment of Psalm cxxxii. as one of the Psalms in the ancient English Office for the Burial of the Dead. Nothing could surpass the exquisite turn of meaning given to the Psalm by the Antiphon, under which it is said: '*This shall be my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*'‡

*The Whole Psalm.*—Tropologically, also, the Psalm admonishes us to swear and vow a vow that we will not come into the tabernacle of our house until within ourselves we find a place for the LORD, purifying our hearts from superfluous care, from inordinate affection, and from all sloth. It was, no doubt, some one, or perhaps all, of these last meanings that

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, pp. 24, 25.

† Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 206.

‡ *The Gradual Psalms*, by Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 97.

caused this one of the Gradual Psalms to be selected for recitation by those about to celebrate the Holy Communion of the LORD'S Supper. It is appointed to be said by Priests and Deacons as a preparation for the service in the Divine Liturgy, according to the rite and ceremonies of the orthodox Armenian Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator.\*

*Verse 4. I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber, neither the temples of my head to take any rest.*—When, in the *Third Part of King Henry VI.*, the Earl of Warwick says to Richard Plantagenet,

‘Victorious Prince of York,  
Before I see thee seated in that throne,  
Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,  
I vow by heaven *these eyes shall never close*’  
(Act. I., Sc. i.)†

we need not doubt that our poet had in view a resolution of King David (Ps. cxxxii. 4).

*Verse 9. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Thy saints sing with joyfulness.*—This verse is one of those most frequently recited by the Church. Divided into a Versicle and Response, it forms part of the Ferial Preces of Lauds, and formerly of Vespers too, in the Breviary, whence it has been transferred to the Matins and Evensong of the Book of Common Prayer; and it appears also in various other forms, such as the *Preparatio ad Missam*, etc.

Christian priests, like the Jewish ones, are taught their duty by their official garb, intended to bring their Master to their mind. So the verses run :

‘Priest, whensoever thou celebratest Mass,  
Remember, and devoutly bear in mind,  
What conflicts for thy sake CHRIST hath endured.  
The Amice marks Him blindfolded and mocked,  
The linen vest Him in white robe despised,  
The Zone and Maniple are His cruel bonds,  
The Stole the image of the Cross He bore.

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by the Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 345.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 341.

The marks of wounded Head, pierced hands and feet,  
 See in the Amice, four times in the Alb ;  
 Chasuble brings to mind the purple robe,  
 How CHRIST was covered with His ruddy gore.  
 And as the Priest unto the altar hastes,  
 Think in a grateful mind how CHRIST went up  
 To Calvary's mount to die on Cross for thee.\*

*Verses 15, 16. This shall be My rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.*—A recent traveller in Spain visited in Cadiz the 'Casa de Misericordia.' High up above the wall runs the inscription :

'This is my rest :  
 Here will I dwell.  
 I will abundantly bless her provision :  
 I will satisfy her poor with bread.'

The eye and ear miss two words in the first line—'for ever.' A recent traveller mentions that, as he looked up, the Superior, with a smile, explained the omission : 'This Casa is the home of the poor, but not for ever.†

*St. Francis de Sales* established an order called the 'Order of the Visitation.' The little house they had chosen was occupied for the first time (at Annecy) on Trinity Sunday, June 6, 1610. There were three, Madame de Chantal, sister to the Archbishop of Bruges, who was, next to St. Francis, the moving spirit in the matter ; Mademoiselle de Brechard, a young lady of noble birth, from Nivernois ; and Jaqueline Favre, a daughter of the Bishop's old friend, the Senateur Favre. During the course of the first few months five other postulants joined them. These first three members of the community made their profession on the anniversary of their entry into their little home, the Bishop himself having taken continued pains during that interval to teach them and train their souls for the true religious life. At last the day arrived, and Francis de Sales professed the three novices. As she returned to her place, Madame de Chantal broke forth, without any premedita-

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 246.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 279.



tion, in the words of the 132nd Psalm, '*This shall be my rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein*' ('*Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi ; hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam*'), and in consequence this verse has always since been used on similar occasions in the Order of the Visitation.\*

Pope Gregory X. had called a General Council, the second of Lyons, with a view of extinguishing the Greek schism, and raising succour to defend the Holy Land against the Saracens. St. Thomas Aquinas was directed by the Pope to be present, and defend the 'Catholic cause against the Greek schismatics.' He grew ill on the way, and 'was forced to stop at Forsa-Nuova, a famous abbey of the Cistercians, in the diocese of Terracina, where formerly stood the city called Forum Appii. Entering the monastery, he went first to pray, before the Blessed Sacrament, according to his custom. He poured forth his soul with extraordinary fervour, in the presence of Him who now called him to His kingdom. Passing thence unto the cloister, which he never lived to go out of, he repeated these words : '*This is my rest for ages without end.*'†

## PSALM CXXXIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Praise of brotherly fellowship.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The benefit of the Communion of Saints.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—one of the Psalms of Ascension. Understood of Moses and Aaron, who dwelt in a tabernacle in the house of the LORD, in which there is also allusion made to a perfect people.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There is not a syllable in the Psalm which can lead us to any conclusion respecting its date. Such a vision of the blessedness of unity may have charmed the

\* *Life of S. Francis de Sales*, p. 196.

† *Lives of the Saints*, by Alban Butler.

poet's heart, and inspired the poet's song at any period of the national history.

*In Church.*—With an obvious propriety, Psalm cxxxiii. ('Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity') was said in the Sarum office at the anointing of a Bishop in his consecration, with two of its own verses for an Antiphon, which was to be repeated after every verse of the Psalm.

The Antiphon was as follows: The ointment on the head, which ran down unto the beard, even Aaron's beard, which ran down to the border of his garment. The LORD commanded His blessing for evermore.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—Herder says of this exquisite little song, that 'it has the fragrance of a lovely rose.'†

*Verse 1.* *Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity.*—It may surely be received as a special blessing, granted to their continual prayer, that even in the darkest years of the Commonwealth the family of Gidding were never deprived of the Sacraments of the Church.

'Where shall we now receive Viaticum with safety? How shall we be baptized? For to this pass is it come, sir,' wrote John Evelyn, in 1655, to his 'ghostly father,' Jeremy Taylor. 'The Shepherds are smitten, and the sheep must of a necessity be scattered, unlesse the greate Shepherde of Soules oppose, or some of his delegates reduce and direct us. Deare sir, we are now preparing to take our last sad farewell (as they threaten) of GOD's service in this citty, or anywhere else in publique. I must confess it is a sad consideration, but it is what GOD sees best, and to what we must submitt. My comfort is, *Deus providebit.*'

In the tiny church at Gidding, hidden by its sheltering woods, the edict of 'Julianus Redivivus,' as Evelyn terms Cromwell, could perhaps be safely disregarded; if it were not

\* *The Gradual Psalms*, by Rev. H. T. Armfield, p. 104.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 410.

so, at least in the great parlour, or the oratories sanctified by years of nightly intercession, the holy Mysteries might still be celebrated by the faithful friend who for so many years had fed that little flock with the Bread of Life.

The remaining members of the family still clung together.

‘My dear swete sister,’ writes Susannah Chedly (formerly Susannah Mapletoft) to Virginia Ferrar, in 1650, ‘*the blessed Psalm saith, it is a joyful thing when brethren dwell together in unity, as I am sure you do.*’\*

*Augustine* says of this first verse, that the very sound of it is so sweet that it was chanted even by persons who knew nothing of the rest of the Psalter. He also says that this verse gave birth to monasteries; it was like a trumpet-call to those who wished to dwell together *as brethren* (*fratres* or friars).†

*In the legend of St. Brendan* searching for the ‘land promised to the Saints,’ we read he came to a little island: ‘The isle was very small, about a furlong round; a bare rock, and so steep that the saint and his companions could find no landing-place. But at last they found a creek, into which they thrust their boats. They then discovered a very difficult ascent, up which the man of GOD climbed, bidding them wait for him, for they must not enter the isle without the hermit’s leave. And when he came to the top he saw two caves, with mouths opposite each other, and a small round well before the cave’s mouth. As he went to one entrance, the old man came out of the other, saying: ‘*Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity,*’ and bade him call up the brethren from the boat. And when they came he kissed them, and called them each by his name. Whereat they marvelled not only at his spirit of prophecy, but also at his attire, for he was all covered with his locks and beard, and with the hair of his body down to his feet. This old man was Paul the Spiritual, and he told them that he had been nourished at

\* *Life of Nicholas Ferrar*, p. 315.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 411.

St. Patrick's monastery for fifty years, and that he took care of the cemetery; and how, when one day he was digging a grave, an old man appeared, and bade him go down to the sea, and he would find a boat, which would take him to a place where he must wait for the day of his death; and how he landed on that rock, and thrust the boat off with his foot, and it went swiftly back to its own land; and how on the very first day a beast came to him walking on its hind-paws, and between its fore-paws was a fish, and some grass to make a fire, and laid them down at his feet; and on every third day for twenty years, and every LORD'S day, a little water came out of the rock, so that he could drink and wash his hands; and how, after thirty years, he had found these caves and fountain, and had fed for the last sixty years on nought but the water thereof.

For all the years of his life were one hundred and fifty, and henceforth he awaited the day of his judgment, in that his flesh; and then he took that water, and they received his blessing, and kissed each other in the peace of CHRIST, and sailed southward.\*

*Savonarola.*—During the onslaught on the convent of St. Mark by the people of Florence, the Vicar (Savonarola) and some of the brethren were still before the altar in prayer, sometimes ministering to the wounded and dying. While Herico (a German brother) is discharging his arquebus from the pulpit, and stones and sticks are flying in all directions, there is a youth wounded to death borne into the choir, Domenica (a Frà, who suffered with Savonarola), murmuring as he dies, happy in dying near his beloved teacher: 'Quanto è dolce ai fratelli ritrovarsi insieme' (*Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together.*)†

*Verse 3. Like as the dew of Hermon.*—The similitude of the dew has taken shape in a legend. An old pilgrim narrates

\* *The Hermits*, by Charles Kingsley, p. 274.

† *The Life of Savonarola*, by Rev. W. Clark, p. 360.

that every morning at sunrise a handful of dew floated down from the summit of Hermon, and deposited itself upon the Church of St. Mary, where it was immediately gathered up by Christian leeches, and was found a sovereign remedy for all diseases. It was of this dew he declares that David spoke prophetically in this Psalm.\*

## PSALM CXXXIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Night-watch greeting, and counter-greeting.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—concerning the Priests whom he appointed to attend the ministry of the LORD by night; and, spiritually, the doctrine of life.

*In Church*.—Psalm cxxxiv. was used at the close of the Greek Nocturns, and was also the last Psalm at Compline.†

There are some facts which seem specially to connect the Gradual Psalms with the close of the day. The last of them (this one), *e.g.*, both in the Ancient English Book and in the Roman Breviary, forms the last Psalm of the Compline Office, and thus has the honour of furnishing, day by day, the invariable cadence of that long sequence of Psalm and Canticle which formed the thread of every day's devotion in the ancient Church.‡

This Psalm is also used in the Orthodox Eastern Church, in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.§

*The Whole Psalm*.—The Christian use of this Psalm at Compline, both in the East and West, is meant to remind those religious who recite it at the time when others are going

\* *Itinerary of S. Anthony* (Perowne, vol. ii., p. 413).

† *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 313.

‡ *The Gradual Psalms*, by the Rev. T. Armfield, p. 94.

§ Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 269.

to rest until the next working day begins, that they, as GOD'S servants, have not ended their service, but still have, later on in the night, to stand in His house and praise Him in the midnight office of Nocturns and Lauds. So runs the hymn at the Matins of Wednesday :

‘Mentes manusque tollimus  
Propheta sicut noctibus  
Nobis gerendum præcipit,  
Paulusque gestis censuit.

‘We lift our hearts, we lift our hands  
By night time, as with his commands  
The Prophet ureth us to do,  
And Paul's example taught us too.’\*

#### PSALM CXXXV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Four-voiced Hallelujahs to the GOD of Israel, the GOD of Gods.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. In its spiritual sense to be understood of a soul that, conscious, hymns in trance, while waking in union with the Trinity. In which there is also an allusion to the conversion of the people of the Messiah to the Faith.

*The Whole Psalm*.—Delitzsch styles this Psalm a Mosaic, made up for the most part of pieces selected from other Psalms, and from the prophetical writings. Psalms xcvi. and xcvi. are specimens among the Psalms of similar compilations.

*The Polyteles*.—Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi., said together, are called by the Greeks the Polyteles, from the continued repetition in the latter of the mercy of GOD.†

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 263.

† *The Speaker's Commentary*, p. 474.

*Verse 3. O praise the Lord, for the Lord is gracious: O sing praises unto His name, for it is lovely.*

'Come, lovely Name! appear from forth the bright  
Regions of peaceful light;  
Look from Thine own illustrious home,  
Fair King of names, and come:  
Leave all Thy native glories in their gorgeous nest,  
And give Thyself awhile the gracious guest  
Of humble souls that seek to find  
The hidden sweets  
Which man's heart meets  
When Thou art master of the mind.

'Come, lovely Name! life of our hope,  
Lo, we hold our hearts wide ope;  
Unlock Thy cabinet of day,  
Dearest sweet, and come away.\*

## PSALM CXXXVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. Understood of Moses and Israel singing praises to the LORD on account of them that were delivered. Also concerning the redemption of souls from Gehenna, from the power of Satan, by the Messiah our Saviour, their Deliverer.

*The Whole Psalm.*—According to an old rule of writing observed in some of the most ancient of MSS., the two lines of the verses ought to be arranged each in a separate column, or, as the phrase runs, 'half-brick upon half-brick, brick upon brick.†

*A Battle-song.*—As an example of a Psalm being used as a battle-song may be mentioned the victory of Jehosaphat over the Ammonites in the wilderness of Tekoah, when the Priests and Levites advanced singing the 136th Psalm, and the enemies turned and fled, dying by the hand of God; and we read of the army of Judas Maccabæus singing the same Psalm after

\* *Name of Jesus*, by Crashaw.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 420.

they had discomfited Georgias and all his host (1 Macc. iv. 24). See also 2 Macc. x. 38, xv. 29.\*

*St. Athanasius.*—On the night of Thursday, the 9th of February, 358, Athanasius with his congregation was, after the manner of the Coptic Church, keeping vigil through the whole night in the Church of St. Theonas in preparation for the Eucharist of the following day. Suddenly at midnight there was a tumult without. The church, which was of unusual size, was surrounded with armed men. The presence of mind for which he was famous did not desert the Bishop. Behind the altar was the episcopal throne. On this he took his seat, and ordered his attendant deacon to read the *136th Psalm*, which has for every verse the response, ‘For His mercy endureth for ever.’ It was while these responses were being thundered forth by the congregation that the doors burst open, and the imperial general and notary entered at the head of his soldiers. The soldiers were for the moment terror-struck by the chanting of the Psalm. But as they pressed forward, a shower of arrows flew through the church. The swords flashed in the light of the sacred torches, the din of their shouts mingled with the rattle of their arms. The wounded fell one upon another, and were trampled down; the nuns were seized and stripped, the church was plundered. Athanasius had refused to go till most of the congregation had retired, but now he was swept away in the crowd. (A mob has in all ages, and amongst all shades of ecclesiastical party, been a ready instrument for theological agitators against their opponents. Of all mobs, the Alexandrian, whether heathen or Christian, was the most terrible. On this occasion it was united with the soldiers.)†

*The Great Hallel.*—This Psalm, with its twenty-six utterances of ‘His mercy endureth for ever,’ is sometimes called ‘the Great Hallel.’‡

\* *Historical Battle-songs (Monthly Packet, vol. xxvi., p. 307).*

† Stanley’s *Eastern Church*, p. 239.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 210.



*The Rabbins* say that the Psalm consists of twenty-six verses (the 27th is not in Hebrew nor LXX.), because that is exactly the number of generations recorded in the Pentateuch between the Creation of the World and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.\*

*Verses 7, 8, 9. Who hath made great lights. . . . The sun to rule the day. . . . The moon and the stars to govern the night: for His mercy endureth for ever.*—This passage of the Psalter was made a great battlefield during the strife of the subject of Investitures which raged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as it was argued that the Church and State, especially the Empire, were the two great lights of the heavens, but that the Church, as the Sun, had rule over all that belonged to spiritual questions, *the day*; while the State, deriving its authority from GOD through the Church, was but as the *moon*, restricted in its rule to temporal questions, matters of *the night* only, and was therefore incompetent to encroach on the privileges of the hierarchy in matters of patronage.†

*Verse 13. Who divided the Red Sea in two parts.*—The word *two*, inserted by the Prayer-Book in verse 13, is not in the Hebrew, nor in the other versions. There is a Rabbinical tradition that the number of channels into which the Red Sea was parted was twelve, so as to give a separate line of march to each tribe.‡

*Between verses 16 and 17 the Arabic interpolates :*

‘And made waters flow from the solid rock :  
For His mercy endureth for ever.’

This is, however, of no authority, and may have originally been the pious amplification of some reader who felt that these were but samples of GOD’S many mercies. Like that devout

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 288.

† *Ibid.*, p. 291.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

soul who said to a friend that we might, in the very spirit of this Psalm, give thanks for affliction, singing :

‘To Him who withered our gourds :  
For His mercy endureth for ever.’\*

### PSALM CXXXVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—By the rivers of Babylon.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—An opalesque Psalm within whose mild radiance there glows a fire which strikes the beholder with wonder.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David. The words of the Saints that were carried away captives to Babylon.

*Origin* (Perowne).—There can be no doubt whatever as to the time when this Psalm was written. It expresses the feeling of an exile who has but just returned from the land of his captivity. In all probability the writer was a Levite, who had been carried away by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar when Jerusalem was sacked and the Temple destroyed, and who was one of the first, as soon as the edict of Cyrus was published, to return to Jerusalem.

*The Whole Psalm.*—*Odd Metrical English Versions of this Psalm.*—An amusing chapter of the curiosities of our literature might be compiled of the various whimsical metrical English versions of the Psalms which have been made from time to time. Perhaps not many readers even of *Notes and Queries* are aware that a portion of the 137th Psalm has been adapted to Sapphic measure as follows :

Fast by thy stream, O Babylon, reclining,  
Woebegone exile, to the gale of evening  
Only responsive, my forsaken harp I  
Hung on the willow.

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\* *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms*, by A. Bonar, p. 414.

'Gushed the big teardrops as my soul remembered  
Zion, thy mountain paradise, my country !  
When the fierce bands Assyrian, who led us  
Captive from Salem,

'Claimed, in our mournful bitterness of anguish,  
Songs and unseasoned madrigals of joyance :  
Sing the sweet-tempered carol that ye wont to  
Warble in Zion.

'Dumb be my tuneful eloquence, if ever  
Strange echoes answer to a song of Zion :  
Blasted this right hand, if I should forget thee,  
Land of my fathers !'

This curious essay is copied from the *Panoramic Miscellany ; or, Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art*, vol. i., 1826 ; possibly Southey's youthful Jacobin effusions in Sapphic measure, so admirably and withal so mercilessly parodied by Canning, may have suggested the idea of attempting to improve upon Sternhold and Hopkins, by adapting one of the Psalms to the same kind of rhyme ; but however this may have been, it can hardly be allowed that the result as above is very felicitous.\*

*Camœns*, the national poet of Portugal, calls this Psalm the Psalm of pious patriotic memory.

Among poetic paraphrases of Psalm cxxxvii., may I refer to Crashaw's in *Steps to the Temple* (1648), and Lord Bacon's in *Certaine Psalmes* (1625), the one lovely, the other dignified ?†

*Verse 1.* *By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.*—St. Vincent of Paul, being captured by pirates whilst on a voyage, was sold as a slave. He was at length bought by a renegade Christian, who had several Turkish wives. One of these, having a great admiration for Christianity, went often into the field where Vincent was digging, and asked him to sing the praises of God. In compliance with her request, he chanted often with tears in his eyes the Psalm so appropriate to his sad condition, '*By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept.*'

\* *Notes and Queries*, vol. xii. (5th series), p. 43.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 346.

This woman, although still a Mahomedan herself, reproached her husband so bitterly with having relinquished so excellent a religion, that he resolved to escape to France with Vincent de Paul, and was soon afterwards received back again into the Church.

*Verses 2, 4. As for our harps we hanged them up, upon the trees that are therein. . . . How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*—Jeremiah the prophet returned to Jerusalem, and accompanied his unfortunate brethren, who went out almost naked. When they reached a place called Bet Kuro, Jeremiah obtained better clothing for them. And he spoke to Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, and said: 'Think not that of your own strength you were able to overcome the people chosen of the LORD; 'tis their iniquities which have condemned them to this sorrow.'

Then the people journeyed on with crying and moaning until they reached the rivers of Babylon.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said to him: 'Sing, ye people, play for me—sing the songs ye were wont to sing before your great LORD in Jerusalem.'

In answer to this command, the Levites hung their harps upon the willow-trees near the banks of the river, as it is written, '*Upon the willow in her midst had we hung up our harps.*'

Then they said: 'If we had but performed the will of God, and sung His praises devoutly, we should not have been delivered into thy hands. Now, how can we sing before thee the prayers and hymns that belong only to the One Eternal GOD? as it is said, *How should we sing the song of the Lord on the soil of the stranger?*'\*

*Verse 4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*—It is one of the pathetic touches about the English captivity of King John II. of France, that, once sitting as a

\* *Talmud*, p. 321.

guest to see a great tournament held in his honour, he looked on sorrowfully, and being urged by some of those about him to be cheerful and enjoy the splendid pageant, he answered with a mournful smile, '*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*'\*

*Verse 5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*—CUNNING: subst. *skill*; adject, *knowing, skilful*:

'Let my right hand forget her *cunning*.'  
Ps. cxxxvii. 5.

'In our sports my better *cunning* faints  
Under his chance.'  
*Ant. and Cleop.*, Act II., Sc. iii.

'Aholiab, a *cunning* workman and embroiderer.'  
Exod. xxxviii. 23.

'To *cunning* men  
I will be very kind and liberal.'  
*Taming of the Shrew*, Act I., Sc. i.†

In the Bible we read: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.'

So in *King Henry V.*:

'We therefore have great cause for thankfulness,  
And shall *forget the office of our hand*  
Sooner than quittance of desert and merit.'  
Act II., Sc. ii.‡

Pope Gregory X. at his enthronement quoted the words, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning*, referring to his hopes of sending forth a new Crusade.

*Verse 6. (A.V.) If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*—The last prayer of St. Polycarp, and of our own Archbishop Whitgift was, 'Pro Ecclesia Dei.'§

\* Polydore Virgil, 1555.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 34.

‡ *Ibid.* (Appendix), p. 378.

§ Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 212.

*Verse 9. Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children, and throweth them against the stones.*—Byron in his metrical version of this Psalm has omitted the clause containing the prayer for Jerusalem's retribution, at the end of the Psalm ; several others have done the same, while some, especially among the old poets, have developed it more expressively than fidelity required.

It may be hoped that in our day no person could be found fanatic enough to derive from the verse alluded to, a preceptive meaning, as was done in the time of Cromwell. Stephen Marshall, one of the authors of *Smectymmius*, preaching in 1641, says: 'What soldier's heart would not start deliberately to come into a subdued city, and take the little ones on a spear's point, to take them by the heels, and *beat out their brains against* the wall! Yet if this work be to revenge GOD'S Church against Babylon, he is a blessed man that takes and dashes the little ones against the stones.' GOD'S Church, the Presbyterian ; Babylon, The Church of England.\*

### PSALM CXXXVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The Mediator and Perfecter.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by David. A Thanksgiving with Prophecy.

*Origin* (Perowne).—According to the Hebrew title this is a Psalm of David. The LXX. have added to this title the names of Haggai and Zechariah (τῷ Δαυὶδ, Ἀγγαίου καὶ Ζαχαρίου), which would seem to show that the translators were not satisfied with the traditional view as to the authorship of the Psalm, and would rather refer it to a time subsequent to the Exile. So far as the Psalm itself is concerned, we have no clue to guide us ; neither the language nor the allusions will warrant any conclusions as to date or authorship.

\* Bowles, *Life of Bishop Ken*, vol. i., p. 118 (quoted by Holland, p. 286).

*In the Jewish Church.*—‘To this day the Hebrews in every country of their exile and dispersion have continued to observe the 9th day of the month Ab (which corresponds with our 25th day of July), in memory of both the first and second destruction of their city and synagogue; next to the great Day of Atonement, it is the most strictly kept of all their fasts. Even on the previous day the pious Israelite takes nothing beyond what absolute necessity requires. He seats himself on the ground either at home or in the synagogue, by the dim light of a small candle, and the evening service commences with the 138th Psalm. Mournful and penitential Psalms are chanted in succession throughout the day (every Hebrew day begins at sunset).\*

*In Church.*—In the Greek Church the coronation of the bridegroom and bride, which is appointed to follow the espousals, begins with the 138th Psalm, sung by the priest, the people responding at the end of each verse, ‘Glory to Thee, our GOD, glory to Thee.’†

*Psalms cxxviii. to cxlv.*—These eight Psalms are the devout Israelite’s Manual of *private* prayer and praise.‡

## PSALM CXXXIX.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Adoration of the Omniscient and Omnipresent One.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David; when one who was called Shimei, the son of Gera, cried out and reproached him because he had rebelled, saying, ‘O thou shedder of blood;’ and in its spiritual sense, theological truth and prayer with supplication.

\* *Israel and the Gentiles*, by Dr. I. Da Costa.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 205.

‡ Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The Psalm both in the Hebrew and LXX. is ascribed to David. In some copies of the latter it is also said to be a Psalm of Zechariah, with the further addition by a second hand of the words ‘in the dispersion,’ which Origen tells us he found in some MSS. The strongly Aramaic colouring of the language certainly makes it more probable that the Psalm was written after the Exile than before.

*The Whole Psalm.*—The contemplation of Nature in the Psalms is distinguished by three characteristics—(1) grandeur, (2) spiritual transparency, (3) religious reflection.

It is distinguished by grandeur.

It is often said that the discovery of Copernicus has destroyed the traditional way of looking at heaven. The assertion is undoubtedly true if by traditional is meant *mediæval*, but it is not true if by traditional is meant Biblical. Think of the ample spaces which must have extended before the spirit of him who said in the 139th Psalm :

‘If I took the wings of the dawn,  
And made my home in the uttermost parts of the sea.’

Think of the eighth Psalm, with the vastness of its conceptions :

‘Thy heaven, the work of Thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained.’

Let science reach as far as it will, the Psalmists see the undiscovered margin beyond. It may have been this feature in the Psalms which made them so dear to Murchison—who was not without doubt and hesitation as to some things in Scripture—which drew from him smiles and tears when his lips could not frame words, and the pencil no longer obeyed his feeble hand.\*

*Thomas Erskine*, of Linlathen, touched on the 139th Psalm with its description of the penetrating omniscience of GOD.

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 196.



‘That is the Psalm which I should wish to have before me on my death-bed.’\*

*The Franklin Expedition.*—It could have been no haphazard accident that, when the relics of the Franklin Expedition were exhibited at the museum of the United Service Club, a Prayer-book, one of the articles recovered, lay open at this Psalm.†

It may be that the striking description of Divine Providence, which we read in *Troilus and Cressida*, is pitched too high for heathen characters; but if admissible there at all, it could not be better placed than it is in the mouth of Ulysses:

‘The providence that’s in a watchful state,  
Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps;  
Keeps place with thought, and almost, *like the gods*,  
Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.’

Act III., Sc. iii.

In a note upon this passage, Mr. Henley asks, ‘Is there not here some allusion to the sublime description of the Divine Omnipresence in the 139th Psalm?’‡

‘*This Psalm is very glorious,*’ says Ibn Ezra; ‘in these five books there is none like it.’ Julius Hammer’s metrical translation and Merrick’s paraphrase have caught its spirit, and that is the chief point, for the debased Hebrew of the original is not worthy of the noble thoughts.§

*Verse 6. Whither shall I go then from Thy presence?*

‘Where shall I fly? What dark untrodden path  
Will lead a sinner from his Maker’s wrath?  
Alas! where’er I bend my outcast way,  
His eye can search, His mighty hand hath sway.  
‘Is there no island in the depths of space,  
No distant world, where I may shun His chase?  
Ah, no! of all He is the spring and soul:  
All feel His care, all own His high control.’

\* *Letters of Thomas Erskine*, p. 455.

† Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 300.

‡ *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 103.

§ *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 349.

- ‘But there is night ;—perhaps her murky womb  
 May wrap and hide me in its depths of gloom !  
 No ; He that says, “ Be light, and there is light,”  
 Can look Omniscience through the dimmest night.
- ‘Give me then morning’s wings : I’ll fling me where  
 The desert waste ne’er claims His eye or care.  
 Vain hope ! If He were absent, conscience then  
 Would act the GOD, and scare me back to men.
- ‘Well, then, the ocean : she my head shall hide,  
 And quench His bolts in her o’ersheltering tide.  
 Fool ! the dark waves cleave wide at His command,  
 And, lo ! He walks them as He walks the land.
- ‘What say the rocks ? Stern marble, ope thy breast  
 And lock me in to monumental rest.  
 Vain, vain ! His voice the rocks have often heard ;  
 Nay, worlds dissolve before His lightest word.
- ‘Be death, then, mine ! At least the grave, or hell,  
 Will yield some sullen nook where I may dwell,—  
 No ! the last trump shall burst the bars of death,  
 And GOD’s stern presence felt wakes hell beneath.
- ‘Where, then, to flee ? How shun His arm, His eye ?  
 Where find what earth, and heaven, and hell deny ?  
 How pass beyond His infinite patrol,  
 Who fills, pervades, informs the mighty whole ?
- ‘O, where to flee ? There is but one retreat,  
 ’Tis that which brings me contrite to His feet,  
 A change of heart, and not a change of place,  
 That flees from Justice, to the arms of Grace.
- ‘The SAVIOUR calls, “ Come, trembler, to My breast ;  
 Beneath My Cross thou may’st securely rest ;  
 Washed in My Blood, thy guilt will all remove,  
 And wrath eternal grow Eternal Love.” \*’

*Sophia F. A. Caufield* :—

- “ Flee from Thy Presence ?” Life were little worth  
 As some poor waif and stray on this cold earth.  
 The inner chambers of my soul are dim,  
 But were like night itself deprived of Him !
- ‘How could I flee Thee, ever present found ?  
 Or Thy blest hosts my soul encamped around ?  
 How could I flee, in Whose dread Hand I lie ?  
 Poor atom, in Thy vast infinity !
- ‘I cannot hide,—nor would Thy creature seek  
 Its life apart from Thee. Dear Master, speak  
 With sweet familiar Voice to this poor soul—  
 For at Thy Feet my bliss, my rest, my goal !’

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\* *Poems*, by Rev. F. H. Lyte, p. 56.

*Verse 7. If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also.*—On the death of Captain Hedley Vicars, who was killed in a sortie, Canon Kingsley writes to Miss Marsh :

‘Bideford, *May 9, 1855.*— . . . These things are most bitter, and the only comfort which I can see in them is that they are bringing us all face to face with the realities of human life, as it has been in all ages, and giving us sterner, and yet more loving, more human, and more Divine thoughts about ourselves and our business here, and the fate of those who are gone, and awakening us out of the luxurious, frivolous, unreal dream (full, nevertheless, of harsh judgments, and dealings forth of damnation), in which we have been living so long, to trust in a living FATHER who is really and practically governing this world, and all worlds, and who willeth that none should perish—and therefore has not forgotten, or suddenly begun to hate or torment, one single poor soul which is passed out of this life into some other, on that accursed Crimean soil. All one in our Father’s hands ; and, as David says, “ Though they go down into hell, *He is there.* Oh, blessed thought ! more blessed to me at this moment (who think of the many than of the few) than the other thought, that though they ascend into heaven with your poor lost hero, He is there also . . . ’\*

*Verse 11. The darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day.*—Cf. Newman’s fine verses on Sleeplessness, beginning :

‘ Unwearied God, before whose face  
The night is clear as day.’

*Verse 12. Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.*—Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans visited his home after twenty years’ absence. It was not without emotion that he set foot once more on his native soil. His old great-uncle, the Curé,

\* *Life of Charles Kingsley*, vol. i., p. 335.

who was no longer at St. Francis, but at Cellières, near Annecy, received him with the greatest joy. At Annecy he astonished everybody by the fidelity of his recollections; he went backwards and forwards everywhere without requiring a guide, and would see all his old familiar spots on the border of the lake. Menthon, Talloires, the Marquisat, la Puya, the house of la Françon, the fountain Aix, Haute Combe, the Mont du Chat, the Valley of Salanche, even up to Mont Blanc! Nor did he forget St. Felix. On visiting the church where he had been baptized, he expressed a deep feeling of gratitude. 'Here,' he exclaimed, 'I received the first great blessing, and since! *Benedictus t'us! Te Deum! Miserere! Tu es Deus, susceptor meus ab utero!*' But he was not alone, and so could not give vent to all his feelings; he writes: 'I advise all those who revisit their home after twenty years' absence to do so *alone*, and unknown. Men overpower one at such times—they don't understand one—and they feel nothing which piety suggests in these moments.\*'

*Verse 21. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee?*—The whole life of a Jew is devoted to the carrying out of this law, or mitsvah, and the celebration of the youth's coming of age as a bar-mitsvah is simply his initiation into the Law. He now counts for an adult in public worship . . . during morning prayer he is expected to recite the thirteen fundamental articles of the Jewish faith, which were framed in the Middle Ages by Maimonides, a Spanish Jew of immense learning, known as the author of a book called 'More Nebuchim,' or 'Guide to the Erring.'

'Whosoever,' says Maimonides, 'shall believe all these fundamental articles to be true, enters into the bosom of Israel, and is entitled to receive from us all those demonstrations of brotherly love and goodwill which GOD has enjoined us to show to each other. . . . But if any man shall deny one of

\* *Life of Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans*, p. 85.

these fundamental articles, he is fallen from the bosom of Israel, he denies a foundation of the faith, and is to be esteemed a heretic, an Epicurean, and a destroyer of plants, wherefore we are bound to persecute him with every odium and injury according to the Psalmist, "*Shall not I hate him, O God, that hateth Thee ?*"\*

## PSALM CXI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Prayer for protection against wicked, crafty men.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The Cry of a Hunted Soul.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Written by David when Saul cast a javelin at him to slay him, and it entered the wall; and, spiritually, the word of him that clingeth unto GOD, and contendeth with them that hate Him.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The general strain of the Psalm is like that of many which occur in the earlier Books, and like them it is ascribed to David. . . . The impression left upon the mind in reading this and the two following Psalms is that they are cast in David's vein, and in imitation of his manner, rather than written by David himself.

*In Church*.—This Psalm is appointed for the Eve of CHRIST'S Passion in the Latin and Sarum Use.†

*Verse 10.* *Let hot burning coals fall upon them.*

‘O! war, thou son of Hell,  
Whom *angry Heavens do make their minister,*  
Throw in the frozen bosom of our part  
*Hot coals of vengeance!*

*King Henry VI., 2nd Part, Act V., Sc. ii.*

\* *Pictures from Jewish Life (Sunday at Home, 1877, p. 140).*

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 216.

Mr. Steevens has remarked that the last phrase is Scriptural, and he quotes Ps. cxl. 10 in the Prayer-book version :

‘Let hot burning coals fall upon them.’\*

## PSALM CXLI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Evening Psalm in the times of Absalom.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David, as he mused in the ministry of the evening ; also of the prayers of him that is perfect in God.

*Origin* (Perowne).—It has been usual to accept the Inscription which assigns the Psalm to David, and to assign it to the time of his persecution by Saul. Delitzsch, with more probability, refers the Psalm to the time of Absalom’s rebellion.

*In Church*.—In the Roman Church, at the Holy Eucharist, Psalm cxli. 2, 3, 4, at censing the Altar, is recited secretly by the Priest.†

Psalms cxli. and cxlii. were used in the Greek Evening Service daily.‡

In the early Christian Church this Psalm began Daily Even-song, as Psalm lxii. began Daily Matins.§

This Psalm is appointed in the Latin Use for the Eve of CHRIST’S Passion.||

*Verse 2.* *Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.*—This Psalm the Author of Constitutions calls emphatically, Τὸν Ἐπιλόγιον Ψαλμὸν, *the Evening Psalm*, in the place where he ascribes the order of the Service.

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 286.

† Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 271.

‡ *The Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 317.

§ Housman on *The Psalms*, p. 300.

¶ Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 216.

St. Chrysostom in his commentary upon the Psalms, takes notice of the use of it in the Church upon this particular occasion. 'Hearken diligently,' says he; 'for it was not without reason that our fathers appointed this Psalm to be said every evening, not barely for the sake of that single expression, *'Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice,'* for other Psalms have expressions of the same nature, as that which says, 'At evening, and morning, and noontide, will I show forth Thy praise;' and again, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' And many other such-like Psalms may one find that are proper for the evening season. Therefore our fathers did not order this Psalm to be said on account of this expression; but they appointed the reading of it as a sort of salutary medicine to cleanse us from sin; that whatever defilement we may have contracted throughout the whole day, either abroad in the market, or at home, or in whatsoever place, when the evening comes, we might put it all off by this spiritual charm or song, which is medicine to purge away all such corruption.\*

*Verses 1, 2, 3, 4. Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense.*—During the forty-nine days of Lent, the service is widely different from that of the rest of the year. Another exception to the usual course of the service is the singing an Anthem before the ambon, which is generally performed by the readers and the choristers; but any of the congregation who wish to sing it may do so, always supposing that they are all to do it well, or at any rate passably. The words are taken from the 141st Psalm, in the following order:

*'Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense: and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.'*

*'Lord, I call upon Thee, haste Thee unto me: and consider my voice when I cry unto Thee.'*

*'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and keep the door of my lips.'*

\* Bingham, vol. iv., p. 575.

*'O let not mine heart be inclined to any evil thing: let me not be occupied in ungodly works.'*

Each verse is repeated by the choir, who, with the congregation, kneel during the repetition. The melody of this anthem is very sweet, and the effect of the whole very striking.\*

*Verse 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.*—That was a wise saying of Xenocrates, who was asked why he had made no answer to one that reviled him: 'I have often had to repent of having spoken, but never of being silent.'†

## PSALM CXLII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Cry sent forth from the prison to the best of friends.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—concerning the famine that continued three years on account of the iniquity of Saul. Spiritually, the words of the Agonists and the supplication and prayer that bringeth us near to GOD.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is the last of the eight Psalms which, according to their Inscriptions, are to be referred to David's persecution by Saul. . . . Whether this Psalm is written only in imitation of David's manner, or whether it is a genuine work of David's, extracted, perhaps, from some history, and added, at a time subsequent to the Exile, to the present collection, it is impossible now to determine.

*In Church.*—In this Psalm we seem to be listening to the words of CHRIST on the Cross. It is therefore appointed in the Sarum Use and Latin Use for the eve of Good Friday.

*Verse 1. I cried unto the Lord with my voice; yea, even unto the Lord did I make my supplication.*—St. Bonaventura says:

\* *Sketches of the Græco-Russian Church*, p. 125.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 338.



‘And as all the brethren surrounded him (St. Francis of Assisi), he extended his hands over them in the form of a Cross, crossing his arms in the form of that sign which he had ever loved; and so he blessed all his brethren, whether present or absent, in the Name and in the power of the Crucified. “Farewell, my children, in the fear of the Lord,” he said. “Great tribulations and temptations will come upon you, but blessed are they who persevere in the work which they have begun; and now go to GOD, to whom I commend you all.” . . . When he had said all he had to say, he commanded the Gospels to be brought to him, and the passage to be read beginning, “Ante diem festum paschal” (Before the Feast of the Passover), the beginning of the 13th chapter of St. John.

‘When the reading was ended, he began with his broken and feeble voice to sing, “*Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi*” (“*With my voice have I cried unto the Lord*”), Ps. cxlii. How solemnly through the still cell, over the heads of the kneeling brethren, must these words have sounded: “I cried unto Thee, . . . bountifully with me.”’

Such, as far as any records inform us, were the last words of Francis. They rose, trembling on the voice, once so sonorous, full and sweet, which had praised GOD by all the Umbrian ways, and proclaimed His Name from East to West, to Gaul and Spaniard, to Turk and Saracen, in knights’ castles and seamen’s galleys—wherever the herald of GOD could penetrate. It sank now in dying quavers, under the humble roof, in that rude and miserable cell, where not a luxury, not a comfort, solaced the closing life, but only love and faith—those supreme riches which are the inheritance of the poor. Amid the brethren kneeling round him, weeping or exulting, as personal feeling or spiritual triumph rose highest in them, Francis lay absorbed, wrapped in that ineffable separation in which the shadow of death enfolds the still living, singing, with interrupted breath and pathetic pauses, his death-song. ‘*Me expectant justi donec retribuas mihi,*’ says the Latin version—‘The righteous wait expectant, till I receive my recompense.’

Where could words more appropriate be found for the close of such a life? The companions of his toil around, the cloud of witnesses above, his brethren on earth and his brethren in heaven waiting till the end was accomplished and his life made perfect.\*

*Verse 4. I looked also upon my right hand, and saw there was no man that would know me.*—To Staupitz, his great friend, Luther wrote: ‘The world may call me proud, covetous, a murderer, anti-Pope—one who is guilty of every crime. What matters it? provided I am not reproached with having wickedly kept silence at the moment our LORD said with sorrow, “*I looked on My right hand, and behold, but there was no man that would know Me.*”’

### PSALM CXLIII.

*Heading.*—Longing after mercy in the midst of dark imprisonment.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—The outcry of an overwhelmed spirit.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—concerning the Edomites who came against him. And the prayer of him that returneth thanks continually by reason of troubles.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The spirit and the language of this Psalm are not unworthy of David; yet the many passages borrowed from earlier Psalms make it more probable that this Psalm is the work of some later poet.

*In Church.*—This Psalm is appointed in the Latin Use for Good Friday; and it is also one of the seven Penitential Psalms appointed for use on Ash Wednesday.†

Psalm cxliiii. is used in the Greek Late Evensong.‡

\* *Life of S. Francis of Assisi*, p. 293.

† Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 218.

‡ *Interleaved Prayer-Book*.

In the Eastern Church, in Unction of the Sick, this Psalm is used at the beginning of the office.\*

*Verse 2. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord.*  
—Robert Sherburne, Bishop of Chichester, died in extreme old age, just before the dissolution of the monasteries, but he survived to witness some of the most tragical and heartshaking events in the reign of Henry VIII.—the fall of Wolsey, the divorce of Katharine, the rapid rise of Cromwell, the coronation of Anne Boleyn and her death, the execution of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and of Sir Thomas More. It is touching to read the clause in his will which, as with a presentiment of impending days of spoliation, he attempts to propitiate the spoiler: ‘And to my singular goode Lorde Cromwell, one cup of silver gilt with a cover of xx ounces, desyring him to be goode Lorde to my executors for performing my last will.’ The death of Bishop Sherburne coincides with the termination of the mediæval state of things. ‘The tomb which is often referred to in his document was prepared under his own direction, and in his will he desires his body to be buried in his cathedral church in “a poore remembrance that I have made there in the south side of the same church.” This “poore remembrance” is really a very handsome piece of work. It is a recess in the wall, enclosed by a carved canopy, beneath which is an alabaster effigy, painted and gilded, of the bishop in his robes. The background is blue, spangled with stars, in the midst of which are the figures of two angels bearing the mitre of the bishop, over his coat-of-arms, and the motto, “Operibus credite.” Below the figure is the text, “*Non intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, Domine, Roberto Sherburne.*”’

Fuller, after his quaint manner, says that Bishop Sherburne ‘decorated the cathedral church with many ornaments,’ and that if ‘Bishop Seffrid †II. bestowed the cloth and making of the church, Bishop Sherburne gave the trimming and best lace thereto.’†

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 273.

† *Diocesan History of Chichester*, p. 174.

*Luther*, in his answer to Cardinal de Vio, wrote: '*Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* Woe to me, however honourable and however praiseworthy their lives may have been, if a judgment from which mercy was excluded should be pronounced upon them.'

*Verse 8. Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee.*—Extract from a letter of Savonarola, giving his reasons for abandoning the world. Such a decision came from his beholding 'the great misery of the world, the iniquity of men, the rapes, the adulteries, the robberies, the idolatry, the cruel blasphemy, which have come to such a height in the world that there is no longer anyone found who does good.' 'I could not bear,' he goes on, 'the great wickedness of the blinded people of Italy; and so much the more that I saw virtue everywhere disdained, and vice held in honour. This was the greatest suffering that I could have had to endure in this world; on which account I pray every day to the LORD JESUS CHRIST that He would deign to raise me up out of this mire. And I made continual short prayers to GOD, with the most earnest devotion, saying, "*Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee*"' (Notam fac mihi viam in qua ambulem quia ad te levavi animam meam).\*

*Verse 12. For I am Thy servant.*—As the Virgin Martyr St. Agatha replied, when upbraided with stooping to tasks unworthy her high birth, 'Our nobility consists in this, that we are the servants of CHRIST (Act. St. Agathæ).†

\* *The Life of Savonarola*, by Rev. W. Clark, M.A., p. 34.

† Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 366.

## PSALM CXLIV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Taking courage in GOD before a decisive combat.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David —when he slew Asaph, the brother of Goliath; also the thanksgiving of him that is victorious.

*The Title*.—The LXX adds to the title ‘*πρὸς τὸν Γολιάθ.*’

*Verse 2. My hope and my fortress*.—In the Bible the LORD is described by the Psalmist as his ‘fortress.’

So in *Part I. of King Henry VI.*, we read ‘God is our fortress’ (Act II., Sc. i).\*

*Verse 12. That our sons may grow up as the young plants*.—In a striking sermon on this verse, the late Archdeacon Hare says of the figure here employed: ‘There is something so palpable and striking in this type, that five-and-twenty years ago, in speaking of the gentlemanly character, I was led to say: “If a gentleman is to grow up, he must grow like a tree—there must be nothing between him and Heaven.” This figure marks the nature, strength and vigour and freedom of the youth of the land, as the next does the polished gracefulness, the quiet beauty, of the maidens. They are like the exquisitely sculptured forms (the caryatides) which adorned the corners of some magnificent hall or chamber of a palace.’†

\* *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 377.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 459.

## PSALM CXLV.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hymn in praise of the All-bountiful King.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—It is David's, David's very own, David's favourite. It is David's Praise, just as another (Psalm lxxxvi.) is David's Prayer.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of David—Praise with theological truth.

*Origin* (Perowne).—This is the last of the Alphabetical Psalms, of which there are eight in all, if we reckon the 9th and 10th Psalms as forming one. Like four other of the Alphabetical Psalms, this bears the name of David, although there can in this case be no doubt that the Inscription is not to be trusted.

*In Church*.—This final utterance of David, which closes with an appeal to all nations to bless GOD, and which is called by Theodoret a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, is happily connected by the Church with the Festival of Whit Sunday, the consummation of all the festivals of the Gospel.\*

In the *Græco-Russian Church* this Psalm, together with Psalms xxiii. and lxxxiv., is sung by the choir at the consecration of a church, while washing the altar throne (see on Psalm xxiii.).

*The Whole Psalm*.—Everyone who repeats the Tehillah of David thrice a day may be sure that he is a child of the world to come. And why? Not merely because the Psalm is alphabetical (for that the 119th is, and in an eight-fold degree), nor only because it praises GOD'S providence over all creation (for that the Great Hallel does, cxxxvi. 25), but because it unites both these properties in itself.

\* Bishop Wordsworth's *Commentary*, p. 221.

The acrostic is not perfect, as the letter *Nun* is missing, albeit the LXX. have supplied it with a verse which the Vulgate has adopted, beginning with the word *Faithful*, but it is almost certainly an interpolation (Delitzsch). The Talmud gives a singular reason for the omission of *Nun*—that it is the letter which begins the fatal verse, ‘The Virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise, she is forsaken upon the land, there is none to raise her up’ (Amos v. 2).

This is the verse supplied by the LXX.: ‘The LORD is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works.’

Cassiodorus quaintly remarks that the Psalms in which the alphabetical order is complete are specially fitted for the righteous in the Church Triumphant, but those in which one letter is missing are for the Church Militant here on earth, as still imperfect, and needing to be purified from defect.\*

*The Confessions of St. Augustine* begin with quotations from this and Psalm cxlvii.

This Psalm is the *last of the Alphabetical Psalms*. It is the only Psalm which bears as its title the word *Tehillah* (praise), a title taken most probably from the last verse—and from which the whole of the Psalter derives its name, *Tillim* or *Tehillim*. It is said to have been the ancient Church’s Psalm for the mid-day meal, and St. Chrysostom says that the 15th verse was used at the Holy Communion.†

Justly did *Emile Saissset* admire this Psalm as a specimen of pure and tender-spirited universalistic theism, and well said Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, ‘Before praying, repeat Psalm cxlv.’ (Talm. Jer. *Berakhoth* 5).‡

*Verse 7. The Memorial of Thine abundant kindness shall be showed.*

\* Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 383.

† *The Speaker’s Commentary*, p. 494.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 360.

‘Bread of the world in mercy broken,  
 Wine of the world in mercy shed,  
 By Whom the words of Life were spoken,  
 And in Whose Death our sins are dead ;  
 Look on the heart by sorrow broken,  
 Look on the tears by sinners shed,  
 And be Thy Feast to us the token  
 That by Thy Grace our souls are fed.’

REGINALD HEBER.

*Verse 13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.*—A traveller has observed that the great Cathedral of Damascus is still standing. But the Christian Church has been turned into a mosque. Over one magnificent portal remains legibly inscribed, in Greek characters, the 13th verse of the 145th Psalm with the addition of one single word :

Ἡ Βασιλεία σου, Χριστέ, Βασιλεία πάντων τῶν αἰώνων.

There stands the clause in letters unobliterated by time or hostile hands ; unheeded by the haughty ignorance of the Moslem ; saddening for the moment, at least, every Christian who can read it as he passes by : ‘ Thy Kingdom, O CHRIST, is an everlasting Kingdom !’ (Tristram, *Holy Land*, p. 618). This instance, at least, affords evidence how those who reared the Church interpreted and applied the 145th Psalm, and with it many other parts of the Psalter. It was for them an act of worship, addressed to our Incarnate LORD.\*

*Verse 15. The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season.*—Then came the moment of first communion, when our eyes were closed to all earthly things and to everyone around us, and we saw but the altar and the tabernacle ; and when the actual moment came for us to draw near those rails, full of the tenderest and truest emotions, we felt ourselves, as it were, annihilated before GOD. The after-communion was, first a moment of awe, then of confidence, gratitude and joy. . . . All our parents were there in reserved seats, looking upon us with the tenderest interest.

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 193.



Our catechists, I remember, actually cried for joy at seeing this happy result of all their labours; and we, with the grace of GOD in our hearts, felt a happiness so pure and so divine that we seemed to have nothing more to wish for on earth. . . . Even to-day, when I try to think over all the good which GOD then did to my soul, I can only say that I realized the words of the prophet :

*‘Oculi omnium in te sperant, Domine, et tu das illi escam in tempore opportuno.’*

Yes, that is what a first communion should be. To me it was ‘the accepted time, the day of salvation,’ the hour chosen by GOD. For a long time I had been unhappy at a distance from Him, and in the depths of my soul I asked Him for that, which alone could renew my life and fill the void in my heart, and then it was, O LORD! that Thou openedst Thy Hand and filled Thy little creature with Thy abundance.

*‘Aperuisti manum Tuam et imple omne animal benedictione.’†*

### PSALM CXLVI.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hallelujah to GOD the one true helper.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—We are now among the Hallelujahs. The rest of the journey lies through the Delectable Mountains. All is praise to the close of the book.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Spoken by Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets who went up with the Captivity from Babylon, concerning the ministry of the priests to be executed in the morning. Also supplication and praise with theological truth.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The LXX. ascribe this Psalm, as they do the 138th and the next two Psalms (or the next three, accord-

\* *Life of Monseigneur Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans*, by the Abbé F. Lagrange, vol. i., pp. 16, 17.

ing to their reckoning, for they divide the 147th into two), to Haggai and Zechariah. It is by no means improbable that this Inscription represents an ancient tradition, for nothing would be more natural than that these Prophets should directly or indirectly have contributed to the liturgy of the Second Temple, to which these Psalms so evidently belong. . . . The Psalm bears evident traces, both in style and language, and also in its allusions to other Psalms, of belonging to the post-Exile literature.

*In Church.*—In the Sarum Use this Psalm is appointed for Trinity Sunday, and also for Christmas Day.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—To the wonderful coincidences of the Psalter with Christian Theology may be added its Trinitarian anticipations. Of that strange threefold vibration in the blessings and ascriptions in the Old Testament (Num. vi. 22 ; Isa. vi. 13-17) it abundantly partakes. A Psalm like the 146th scarcely needs the Gloria at the close to bring it fully into unison with our Christian worship. It contains a threefold Three in One. It has a heart of adoration which beats in threes.\*

*Verse 2. Put not your trust in princes* was all Lord Strafford said when he heard that his death-warrant had been signed.

*William Shakespeare :*

‘O, how wretched  
Is that poor man that hangs on princes’ favour !  
There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,  
That sweet aspect of princes and their ruin,  
More pangs and fears than wars and women have :  
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,  
Never to hope again.’

*King Henry VIII., Act iii., Sc. ii.*

*Verse 3. For when the breath of man goeth forth he shall turn again to his earth, and then all his thoughts perish.*—It is recorded of the great Saladin, that every evening in his camp

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 223.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 233.

an officer on horseback lifted up a black shroud as a standard upon a lance, while one of two mollahs made proclamations, 'Saladin, king of kings, Saladin, conqueror of conquerors, Saladin must die.' And the other made response, 'Extolled be the perfection of the Living Who dieth not.' The slave in the chariot of a Roman general during a triumph, with his repeated phrase, 'Remember that thou art a man,' was not so impressively solemn a warning as this.\*

## PSALM CXLVII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hallelujah to the Sustainer of all things, the Restorer of Jerusalem.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Psalm of the city and of the field, of the first and the second creations, of the commonwealth, and of the Church.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Haggai and Zechariah—concerning Zerubbabel and Joshua the Priest, and Ezra, who forwarded the building of Jerusalem; and as respects ourselves praise with theological truth. Second portion: Of Haggai and Zechariah; when they forwarded the completion of the Temple of Jerusalem. Also praise with theological truth.

(Psalm cxlvii. in our version is Psalms cxlvi. and cxlvii. in the Syriac.)

*Origin* (Perowne).—Like the last Psalm, and like those which follow it, this is evidently an anthem intended for the service of the Second Temple. It celebrates God's almighty and gracious rule over His people and over the world of nature, but mingles with this a special commemoration of His goodness in bringing back His people from their captivity and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

\* Dr. Neale's *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 399.

*In Church.*—This Psalm was appointed in the Sarum Use for Trinity Sunday and Christmas Day.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—How different the choking sobs of the 102nd Psalm from the rapture and the movement of that grand processional, the 147th, chanted round the walls of Jerusalem at the restoration under Nehemiah! The general subject is the excellence of praise :

‘It is good to make melody to our God,  
For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.’

This is the germ which expands into the glorious flower common to all Liturgies—‘Vere dignum et justum est.’ But the great peculiarity is this: Others are as rich in images taken from nature and history. But this uses the natural as the type of the supernatural—the historical and actual as the mirror of the ideal and spiritual.

So with the various natural objects which are mentioned. ‘The stars’ point to Abraham’s seed; not one star in the field of space is missing; not one of Israel’s outcasts is unknown. He calls each by name. This was in the Good Shepherd’s heart when he said, τὰ ἴδια περιβρατα φωνεῖ κατ’ ὄνομα. The ‘clouds and rain’ are the images of dispensations at once dark with sorrows and rich with blessings.

If the ravens are heard with their harsh cries, how much more ‘His Holy Dove’!

If His word ‘runneth very swiftly’ in nature, we are to pray also that in grace ‘it may have free course (may run) and be glorified.’ ‘He giveth forth snow like wool’; that is, chilling dispensations of GOD’S severe providence coming down on His Church, yet forming a mantle to preserve it from more intense cold. Each image from the region of nature is transfigured in the realm of grace.†

\* Bishop Wordsworth’s *Commentary*, p. 224.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 197.

*Verse 3. He healeth those that are broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness.*

‘Lo, a star  
Of Eastern splendour on His brow doth shine  
Who walks immortal. All that dared repine  
With hopeless anguish at His feet lie hushed  
In sacred peace. Himself He doth incline,  
And from the ground He takes the blossom crushed,  
And on His heart again its faded leaves have blushed.’

GERARD LEIGH.

*Verse 8. Herb for the use of men.*—The addition of the LXX. to verse 8, preserved in our Prayer-Book version, ‘and herb for the use of men,’ destroys the whole force of the passage. It was borrowed from Psalm civ. 14, where it is in place.\*

*Verse 9. Feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him.*—Where good old Adam, in *As You Like It*, says to Orlando,

‘I have five hundred crowns,  
The thrifty hire I saved under your father.

Take that; and *He that doth the ravens feed,*  
*Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,*  
Be comfort to my age!’

(Act II., Sc. iii.)

can we fail to see that our poet had in mind the Psalmist, who writes of GOD, that ‘He feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him’?†

*Verse 14. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.*—There is no doubt of what is intended here—the Sacrament of the Altar is the bond of union and mutual charity amongst the children of Sion. Hence the ancient rite of the kiss of peace, which made a part of every Liturgy in the Early Church, from at least the time of St. Justin Martyr. Hear another ancient Christian writer: ‘We know nothing of Communion without peace.’‡

\* Thrupp on *The Psalms*, vol. ii., p. 320.

† *Shakespeare and the Bible*, p. 104.

‡ Dr. Neale’s *Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 416.

*Verses 13, 14. He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders.*—St. Augustine was preaching on the 147th Psalm in the Basilica at Hippo. In the course of his exposition he read the 13th verse: ‘Benedixit filios tuos in te’—a pause, and he proceeded—‘Benedixit *quis?* Qui posuit fines tuos Pacem!’ There may have been some tenderer cadence in that grand and pathetic voice. But, without a single additional word, without one sentence of the preacher’s exposition, a thrill ran round the church, and sighs of aspiration and voices of joy were heard among the people. ‘I have said nothing,’ said the preacher; ‘I did but pronounce the verse, and you exclaimed. What have I shown to you? Why do you cry out if you do not love? Why do you love if you cannot see? Peace is invisible. What is that eye wherewith we see it, that it may be loved? You would not cry out if you did not love. These are the sights which God lends us to things which are unseen. With what beauty hath the understanding of peace smitten your heart? Why should I now speak of peace, or of its praises? Your affections go before my words. I do not fill up—I cannot—I am weak. “*Dif-feramus omnes laudes pacis ad illam patriam Pacis.*”’

Is it impossible for the Psalter to possess something of that power in the nineteenth century for Englishmen, which it possessed for the fishermen of Hippo in the fourth century? I believe that it is not. The result of deeper study of the Psalm, of critical science brought to bear upon its contents, may be a new enthusiasm, more subdued and less demonstrative, but not less real than that of which St. Augustine speaks. The days when this new enthusiasm for the inspired Psalm shall have passed from the English clergy to the English people will be days of new life for the Church as regards (1) her own services, and (2) the best separatists from her.

(1) In the African Church a Psalm was often appointed to be chanted by the Lector alone; and then explained. St. Augustine says: ‘*Ipsius servi vox est illa evidens quam in lamentationibus audistis in Psalmo, et movebamini cum audi-*

retis, quia inde estis. Quod *cantabatur ab unis*, de omnibus *cordibus resonabat*. Felices qui se in illis vocibus tanquam in speculo cognoscebant' (In *Joann. Evang.*, Tract X., cap. i.). This custom was thought even to have a spiritual meaning: 'In Psalmis aliquando plures cantant, ut ostendatur quia de fiat de pluribus' (Tract XII., cap. iii.). Might not this practice be profitably tried in some of our own Churches?\*

## PSALM CXLVIII.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—Hallelujah of all heavenly and earthly beings.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A song of nature and of grace.

*Contents* (Syriac).—A Psalm of Haggai and Zechariah. Theological truth that, as celestial, so terrestrial beings should praise the glorious LORD, the LORD of Sabaoth, the GOD Almighty.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Whether this Psalm is exclusively the utterance of a heart filled to the full with the thought of the infinite majesty of GOD, or whether it is also an anticipation, a prophetic forecast, of the final glory of creation, when, at the manifestation of the Sons of GOD, the creation itself shall also be redeemed from the bondage of corruption (Rom. viii. 18-23), and the homage of praise shall indeed be rendered by all things that are in heaven and earth and under the earth, is a question into which we need not enter. The former seems to my mind the more probable view.

*In Church*.—Psalms cxlviii. to cl. are sung as morning Psalms before the concluding Litany and Benediction of the Greek Morning Office. They are also used at the burial of priests. The Greeks call them *Αἶνοι*—Lauds. They are used as the con-

\* *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 274.

cluding Psalms of Western Lauds, and are appointed at the burial of children in the Roman Use.\*

*The Whole Psalm.*—It is but faintly and afar off that the ancient liturgies (except so far as they merely copied their originals) come up to the majesty and the wide compass of the Hebrew worship, such as is indicated in the 148th Psalm. Neither Ambrose, nor Gregory, nor the Greeks have reached or approached this level, and in tempering the boldness of their originals by admixtures of what is more Christian-like and spiritual, the added elements sustain an injury, which is not compensated by what they bring forward of a purer or less earthly kind; feeble indeed is the tone of these anthems of the ancient Church, sophisticated or artificial in their style.†

*The earliest imitation* of this Psalm is ‘The Song of the Three Children,’ interpolated by the LXX. into the third chapter of Daniel. The hymn of Francis of Assisi, in which he calls upon the creatures to praise GOD, *propter honorabilem fratrem nostrum solem*, has also been compared with it, though there is really no comparison between the two. The same Francis, who thus calls the sun our ‘honourable brother,’ could also address a cricket as his sister—‘Canta, soror mea cicado, et DOMINUM, creatorem tuum júbilo lauda.’ But neither in this Psalm nor elsewhere in Scripture is this brotherly and sisterly relation of things inanimate and irrational to man recognised or implied.‡

*St. Bernard’s* funeral sermon, in which he describes his brother Gerard’s last night on earth :

“GOD grant that I may not have lost thee, but only have sent thee before me! GOD grant that at some future time, even though remote, I may follow thee, whithersoever thou art gone! For there is no doubt that thou art gone to those whom,

\* *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 321.

† *Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 157.

‡ *The Book of Psalms*, by J. J. Stewart Perowne, vol. ii., p. 473.



towards the middle of thy last night upon earth, thou invitedst to join in praise, when, to the astonishment of all present, with a voice and countenance of exultation, thou didst break forth into that Psalm of David, '*Praise the Lord of heaven, praise Him in the height.*' Already, my brother, the dark midnight was becoming day to thee, and the night was made bright as the day. That night was all brightness to thee in thy heavenly joys. I was summoned to the miracle, to see a man exulting in death, nay, heaping scorn upon death. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' No longer is there a sting, but joyfulness. A man dies singing, and sings dying. O mother of mourning, thou art pressed into the service of gladness! O enemy of glory, thou art made a handmaid of glory! thou gate of hell art become an entrance to the kingdom! thou pitfall of perdition art turned to a means of salvation!—and all this by a sinful man. And justly, too, for thou rashly hast usurped dominion over the innocent and just! Thou art dead, O death, and pierced by the hook thou hast imprudently swallowed, which saith, in the words of the prophet, 'O death, I will be thy death! O hell, I will be thy bite.' Pierced, I say, by that hook! To the faithful who go through the midst of thee thou offerest a broad and pleasant pathway into life. Gerard fears thee not, thou ghastly form! Gerard passes through thy jaws into his own country not only fearless, but singing songs of praise and rejoicing. When, after the summons, I had reached his side, and he, with a clear voice, in my hearing, had finished the last words of the Psalm, looking up into heaven, he said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!' and repeating the passage, he said again and again, 'Father, Father!' Then, turning to me with a brightening countenance, he said: 'How gracious of God to be the Father of men! What a glory to men to be the sons of God, to be the heirs of God: for if children, then heirs!' Thus did he sing for whom we mourn. He hath, I confess, almost turned my grief into rejoicing. While I gaze on his glory my own misery almost vanishes away."<sup>\*</sup>

\* *Life of S. Bernard*, p. 238.

There are two *Psalms* in which we seem to touch the opposite ends of the gamut of emotion—the *De Profundis* and the *Laudate Dominum in Excelsis*.\*

George Herbert's 'Antiphon':

*Cho.* Let all the world in every corner sing,  
My God and King.

*Vers.* The heavens are not too high,  
His praise may thither fly;  
The earth is not too low,  
His praises there may grow.

*Cho.* Let all the world in every corner sing,  
My God and King.

*Vers.* The Church with *Psalms* must shout,  
No door can keep them out;  
But above all, the heart  
Must bear the longest part.

*Cho.* Let all the world in every corner sing,  
My God and King.

*Bishop Lowth* says: 'A very elegant imitation of this hymn is appropriately attributed to Adam in Paradise by our great poet Milton':

'Neither various style  
Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise  
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung  
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence  
Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse  
More tuneable than needed lute or harp  
To add more sweetness.'

*Paradise Lost*, v., line 153.

*Verse 5.* *He spake the word, and they were made: He commanded, and they were created*—GOD as the Creator.—Among the stories about Abraham which are preserved in certain ancient books is the following:

'Abraham left a cave in which he had dwelt, and stood on the face of the desert. And when he saw the sun shining in all its glory, he was filled with wonder, and he thought, "Surely the sun is GOD the Creator," and he knelt down and worshipped the sun. But when the evening came, the sun went down in

\* *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 364.

the west, and Abraham said, "No, the Author of creation cannot set." Now the moon arose in the east, and the stars looked out of the sky. Then said Abraham, "This moon must indeed be GOD, and all the stars are His host"; and, kneeling down, he adored the moon. But the moon set also, and from the east appeared once more the sun's bright face. Then said Abraham: "Verily, these heavenly bodies are no gods, for they obey law; I will worship Him whose laws they obey."\*

*Verses 9 and 10. Mountains and all hills: fruitful trees and all cedars. Beasts and all cattle: worms and feathered fowls.—*Alluded to by Mohammed, *Korân*, Sur. xxxiv. 10, 'And we did give David grace from us, "O ye mountains, echo (GOD's praises) with him, and ye birds."†

*Verse 13. All His saints shall praise Him: even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth Him (Alleluia!).*

'This is the strain, the eternal strain, the LORD of all things loves:  
Alleluia!  
This is the song, the heavenly song, that CHRIST Himself approves:  
Alleluia!  
Wherefore we sing, both heart and voice awaking, Alleluia!  
And children's voices echo, answer making, Alleluia!‡

## PSALM CXLIX.

*Heading (Delitzsch).—*Hallelujah, to the GOD of victory, of His people.

*Title (Spurgeon).—*This is 'a new song,' evidently intended for the new creation, and the men who are of new heart.

*Contents (Syriac).—*Concerning the new Temple. This Psalm is anonymous. Praise with theological truth.

\* *The Childhood of the World*, by Edward Clodd, p. 107.

† *The Book of Psalms*, by Rev. T. K. Cheyne, p. 364.

‡ Gottschalk, *The Sequence, Cantemus: cuncti melodiam*.

*Origin* (Perowne).—The feelings expressed in this Psalm are perfectly in accordance with the time and the circumstances to which we have already referred the whole of this closing group of Hallelujah Psalms, beginning with the 146th.

*Verses 6-9. Let the praises of God be in their mouth : and a two-edged sword in their hands ; To be avenged of the heathen : and to rebuke the people ; To bind their kings in chains : and their nobles with links of iron. That they may be avenged of them, as it is written : such honour have all His saints.*—The dream that it was possible to use such a prayer as this, without a spiritual transubstantiation of the words, has made them the signal for some of the greatest crimes with which the Church has ever been stained. It was by means of this Psalm that Casper Sciopius, in his ‘Clarion of the Sacred War’ (*Classicum Belli Sacri*), a work written, as it has been said, not with ink, but with blood, roused and inflamed the Roman Catholic princes to the ‘Thirty Years’ War. It was by means of this Psalm that, in the Protestant community, Thomas Münzer fanned the flames of the War of the Peasants.

We see from these and other instances that when in her interpretation of such a Psalm the Church forgets the words of the Apostle, ‘the weapons of our warfare are not carnal’ (2 Cor. x. 4), she falls back upon the ground of the Old Testament, beyond which she has long since advanced. . . . The Christian must transpose the letter of this Psalm into the spirit of the New Testament.\*

*Verses 9. Such honour have all His saints.*—Sung by the African confessors (in the Arian persecution of Huneric) on their release from the horrible dungeon where they had been confined.

\* Delitzsch.

## PSALM CL.

*Heading* (Delitzsch).—The final Hallelujah.

*Title* (Spurgeon).—A Rapture.

*Contents* (Syriac).—Anonymous. An exhortation to the general praise of those things that are written and sealed by the Spirit.

*Origin* (Perowne).—Is one of those Psalms which declare their own intention as anthems, adapted for that public worship which was the glory and delight of the Hebrew people; a worship carrying with it the soul of the multitude by its simple majesty and by the powers of music, brought in their utmost force to recommend the devotions of earth in the ears of heaven.

*In Church*.—In the Liturgy of St. Gregory, the people say the 150th Psalm after the Fraction, but before the Communion.\*

This Psalm is used at the Greek late Evensong.†

In the Roman Catholic Church it is used at the Burial of Children, with the Antiphon, Psalm cxlviii. 12.

*The Whole Psalm*.—There is an interesting association connected with this Psalm which deserves to be recorded at least in a note—that in former times, when the casting of church bells was more of a religious ceremony, this Psalm was chanted by the brethren of the guild, as they stood ranged round the furnace, and while the molten metal was prepared to be let off into the mould ready to receive it. One may picture these swarthy sons of the furnace with the ruddy glow of the fire upon their faces as they stood around, while their deep voices

\* *Notitia Eucharistica*, p. 760.

† *Interleaved Prayer-Book*, p. 321.

sung forth this hymn of praise. 'There are few that know not Schiller's 'Song of the Bells.'\*

*Gregory of Nyssa* says on this Psalm: 'There all creatures, after the disorders of sin have been removed, are harmoniously united, *εἰς μίαν χοροστασίαν*, and the chorus of mankind in concert with the angelic choir becomes one cymbal of Divine praise, and a final song of victory peals out to GOD, and the Psalter, after all its depths, dies away, not as the first three books in Amen, not as the fourth, in Amen Hallelujah, but in Hallelujah !†

*Bossuet's* account of this Psalm is as follows: 'Quicquid sonat, Deum sonet.'

*At the end of the Syriac we have this colophon:* 'The hundred and fifty Psalms are completed.' There are five books, fifteen Psalms of degrees, and sixty of praises. The number of verses is four thousand eight hundred and thirty-two. There are some who have added twelve others; but we don't need them. And may GOD be praised for ever ‡

*The first three Books* of the Psalter ended with 'Amen and Amen,' the firm expression of faith's reliance on GOD'S truth. Book IV. ended 'Amen, Hallelujah.' *Now* faith has been lost in joyful realization. GOD'S salvation has been completed. Henceforth there is only the ever-enduring anthem, Hallelujah.§

*Verse 6. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.—* At the approach of the Greek Church to the Slavonic nations on the shores of the Danube, the first labour of the missionaries, Cyril (or Constantine) and Methodius, was to invent an alphabet for the yet unwritten language of the Slavonic tribes, in order at once to render into this language the whole of the

\* *Manna in the Heart: Daily Comments on the Psalms*, by B. Bouchier, vol. ii., p. 464.

† *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, p. 183.

‡ Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, p. 2411.

§ Kay on *The Psalms*, p. 460.

New Testament, except the Apocalypse, and the whole of the Psalter in the Old.

Bulgaria, by its position on the frontiers of the Greek and Latin Churches, was a constant source of discord between them. On this occasion the use of the versions already sanctioned by Constantine was also referred to Rome, and was allowed on grounds which, in fact, justify the use of vernacular translations everywhere, though it was afterwards condemned by the same authority with that remarkable inconsistency and fluctuation which have always distinguished the policy of the Papal chair on the subject of the circulation of the Bible. It was sanctioned on the ground that the Psalmist says, '*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord,*' i.e., in the different languages. It was condemned on the ground that Methodius was a heretic, by a strange confusion between him and his Arian predecessor, Ulfilas.\*

*St. Severinus the Hermit* for two years had foretold that his end was near, and foretold, too, that the people for whom he had spent himself would go forth in safety, as Israel out of Egypt, and find a refuge in some other Roman province, leaving behind them so utter a solitude that the barbarians, in their search for the hidden treasures of civilization which they had exterminated, should dig up the very graves of the dead. Only when the LORD willed that people to deliver them, they must carry away his bones with them, as the children of Israel carried the bones of Joseph.

Then on the Nones of January 7th he was smitten slightly with a pain in his side. And when that had continued for three days, at midnight he bade the brethren come to him. He renewed his talk about the coming *emigration*, and entreated again that his bones might not be left behind; and having bidden all in turn come near and kiss him, and having received the Sacrament of Communion, he forbade them to weep for him, and commanded them to sing a psalm. They hesitated,

\* Stanley's *Eastern Church*, p. 310.

weeping. He himself gave out the Psalm, '*Praise the Lord in His saints, and let all that hath breath praise the Lord;*' and so went to rest in the LORD (402 A.D.).\*

*Let every breath* (or with Vulgate, *spirit*) *praise the Lord.*—It is with a most deep significance that these words form the Antiphon to this Psalm when it is used in the *Office of the Dead*, as teaching us that when the body is crumbling in the grave the soul is alive to GOD, and the whole being of man can say, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh,' which stands as the noble epigraph over the tombs of the Kings of Spain in the Escorial.†

*Dr. Ker* beautifully closes his collection of notes with the words: 'Whatever connection we may be able to find in the place which particular Psalms hold to one another, there can be no doubt of an arrangement as to the whole. The book begins with benediction and ends with praise—first, blessing to man, and then glory to God. The entire book is divided into five portions, each with a similar close, and evidently intended for the public worship of the ancient Church—the 41st, the 72nd, the 89th, the 135th, and the 150th. The last Psalm is the great Hallelujah, the triumphant acclaim to Him Who hath gotten the victory, after the manifold sorrows and conflicts through which the Church of GOD and the believing soul have passed. The temple thrills and throbs with the burst of gladness, as all the powers of man and all the creatures in the universe are summoned to aid the song. It seems as if this were the very summit and climax of the praise that can ascend to GOD, the loftiest wave of the many waters that break at the foot of the throne; and yet it yields to that joy of which the Apostle speaks, which is "unspeakable and full of glory." In one of Raphael's great pictures, St. Cecilia and the singers round her have caught hearing of the accents of the praise of

\* *The Hermits*, by Charles Kingsley, p. 237.

† *Dr. Neale's Commentary*, vol. iv., p. 445.



heaven, and, as some look down and listen in profound thought, and others look up in rapt wonder and ecstasy, the instruments of earth fall from their hands and lie broken at their feet. When we read this Psalm, and pass forward to the new song which fell on the entranced ear of John in Patmos, we feel as if the poet-painter had some vision like this before him: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."\*

## PSALM CLI.

This Psalm was never published in the Hebrew, nor was it admitted into the Canon of Scripture nor even among the Apocryphal Books. It is in the Septuagint, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions. The narrative differs from that in 1 Sam. xvii. They are all silent as to the sling and stone, except the Arabic, which adds, 'I threw at him three stones into his forehead,' but says nothing of the sling.

Dr. Gill, in his Commentary, has given an English translation of this Psalm. Having been rejected by the Latin Church, it is very rarely found in ancient MS. copies of the Vulgate.†

The *Title* is 'A Psalm in the handwriting of David, beyond the number of the Psalms composed by David, when he fought in single combat with Goliath.‡'

*Dr. Adam Clarke's translation:*

\* *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 176.

† *Notes and Queries*, vol. v., 2nd series, p. 487.

‡ *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, p. 2411.

1 I was the least among my brethren ; and the youngest in my father's house ; and I kept also my father's sheep.

2 My hands made the organ ; and my fingers joined the psaltery.

3 And who told it to my LORD? [*Arab.* And who is he who taught me?] The LORD Himself He is my Master, and the Hearer of all that call upon Him.

4 He sent His angel, and took me away from my father's sheep ; and anointed me with the oil of His anointing [*others, the oil of His mercy*].

5 My brethren were taller and more beautiful than I ; nevertheless the LORD delighted not in them.

6 I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols.

7 [*Arab.* In the strength of the LORD I cast three stones at him. *I smote* him in the forehead, and felled him to the earth.]

8 And I drew out his own sword from its sheath and cut off his head, and took away the reproach from the children of Israel.

*Metrical Version* of this Psalm :

‘ Among my brethren I was least,  
 And of my father's stock  
 I was the youngest in his house—  
 The shepherd of his flock.  
 Rare instruments of music oft  
 My hands, well practised, made ;  
 And on the sacred Psaltery  
 My skilful fingers play'd.  
 But who of me shall speak to GOD,  
 And tell Him all my care ?  
 The LORD Himself, lo ! even now  
 Doth hearken to my prayer.  
 He sent His messenger and took  
 Me from the Shepherd's toil ;  
 And on my head sweet unction pour'd  
 His own anointing oil.  
 My brethren, beautiful and tall,  
 Held theirs a happy lot ;  
 But in them and their comeliness  
 The LORD delighted not.

To meet the boasting alien chief,  
I went forth on their part ;  
He cursed me by his idols, and  
Despised me from his heart.  
But having slain, I with his sword  
Cut off his head at once,  
And took away the foul reproach  
Of Israel's daunted sons.\*

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\* Holland's *Psalmists of Britain*, p. 295.

Gaus Deo.

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