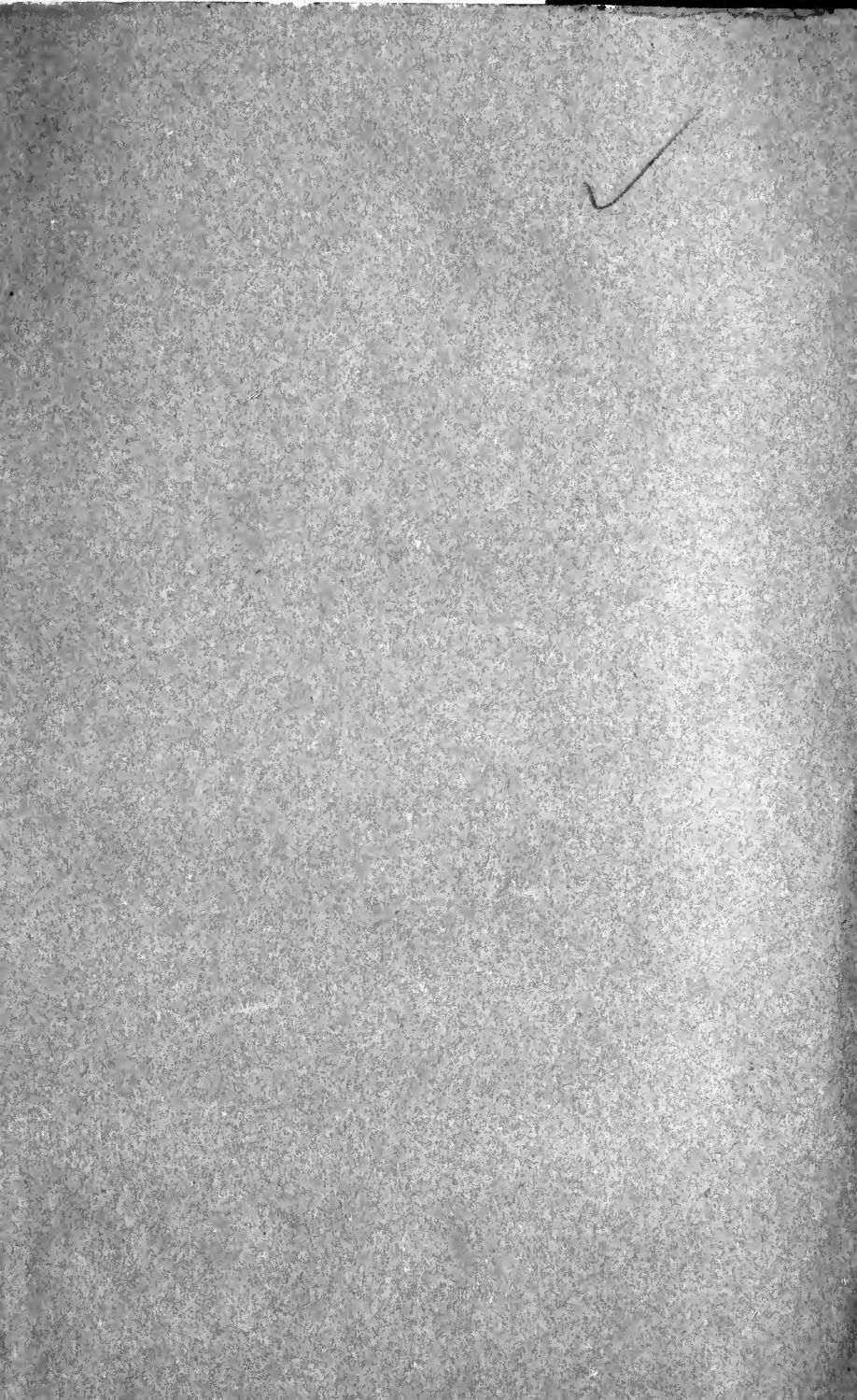


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1. *John G. Talbot, from the Author*
New Year's Eve.
Dec. 31. 1852. **The Psalms :**

A CHRISTIAN MANUAL.



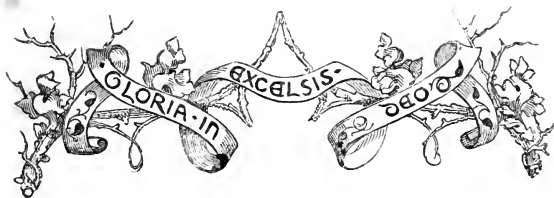
LONDON:
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1849.

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“ What is e'en now the Christian's song of praise,
The storehouse of his prayers, the saint's delight,
The counsellor and guardian of his ways,
The pilgrim's staff and lantern through the night ?
The armory of holy thought ?
'Tis Israel's Psalm-book sweet, by inspiration wrought.”

The Baptistery,—“ The Spiritual Husbandman.”



The Psalms : a Christian Manual.

“ Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be alway acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.”—Psalm xix. 14, 15.

THE great St. Athanasius, by whose name one of the holy creeds of the Christian Church is known, used to say that “ *the book of Psalms was like Paradise* ;”^a and he meant in this way : that as in that happy garden, in which God placed our first parents, He made every pleasant plant to grow,¹ so in the holy and divine Psalms we find, in a few words, the various histories which are written in the other parts of the Bible : they are all gathered together, as it were, into that one place. Thus, for instance, in the book of Genesis we find mention made of the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the Psalms we read :—“ *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.*”² “ *For He hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods.*”³ Again, the book of Exodus tells us how God plagued the Egyptians, and brought His own people out from among them, and led them through the Red Sea and the wilderness. These things we have exactly told us in the Psalms. “ *He sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. And these shewed His tokens among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent dark-*

^a Ep. ad Marcellinum.

“ness, and it was dark ; He turned their waters
 “into blood, and slew their fish ; their land brought
 “forth frogs, yea, even in their kings’ chambers ; He
 “spake the word, and there came all manner of flies
 “and lice in all their quarters ; He smote their vines
 “also, and fig-trees, and destroyed the trees that were
 “in their coasts ; He smote all the first-born in their
 “land”¹—and then “Israel came out of Egypt”—
 and “He led them through the deep as through a wil-
 “derness”²—and “He spread out a cloud to be a
 “covering, and fire to give light in the night-season.”³

¹ Ps. cv. 26-35.

² Ps. cvi. 9.

³ Ps. cv. 38.

And many other verses of these two Psalms I might mention, but I dare say they will occur to your own mind ; at all events, you can easily see them in your Prayer-books. This will be enough to shew you what the good Athanasius meant when he said that the Psalms told us, in a short and simple way, of the same things as the other books of the Old Testament.

I would add also, that sometimes the holy Psalms shew us the true meaning of the commands which God gave by Moses more plainly than Moses himself. I mean in this way : God commanded that Aaron should wash his hands before he approached to minister at the altar ;⁴ but the Psalmist says, “I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to Thine altar.”⁵ Plainly telling us that it is the “pure heart,” rather than the “clean hands,” which the Almighty looks for.^b

Farther, we may venture to add, that the Psalms tell us very much of what God’s goodness has given us in the New Testament also. When a Christian reads the Songs of David, I think he must see that they are full of our most holy Saviour. In almost every Psalm He seems to be coming to meet us ; and to be saying and doing those same things which we know, from the Gospels, that He said and did.

Acts ii. 25. “David speaketh concerning Him,” said St. Peter.⁶

^b Other instances of this use of the Psalms we may see in xl. 8 ; li. 16, 17.

“Thou hast Him in every Psalm,” says St. Athanasius.^c “Who is there,” asks St. Augustin,^d “who does not in the Psalms recognise Christ whom we preach?” We have, as it were, His whole life put before our eyes, though, of course, in some places more plainly than in others; thus, for example, that He was to come: “*Our God shall come,*”¹ and “*Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*”²—That He should be “made flesh:” “*Of Zion it shall be reported that He was born in her.*”³—That the Jews should lay wait for Him: “*The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed.*”⁴—That He should die: “*Thou shalt bring me into the dust of death.*”⁵—That His death should be on the cross: “*They pierced my hands and my feet.*”⁶—That He should lie in the grave, descend into hell, and rise again: “*I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest.*”⁷ For “*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*”⁸—That He should ascend into heaven: “*God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trump.*”⁹ “*Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.*”¹⁰—And, lastly, that He shall come again to judge the quick (*i. e.* the living) and the dead: “*God is Judge Himself.*”¹¹ “*God standeth in the congregation of princes, He is a Judge among gods.*”¹²—In this manner, then, you see the life of the blessed Jesus is drawn out for us in the Psalms.

Here too, in these sacred songs, besides those great truths which I have mentioned, we find the other great mysteries of the Christian faith. Thus, for example, we find the awful doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity in this verse: “*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth.*”¹³ “*The Word,*” we know from St. John,¹⁴ is our Lord and Saviour; and “*the breath*” of God’s mouth is His Spirit.¹⁵ Again, in this verse: “*With Thee is the well of life,*

^c Ep. ad Marcellinum.

^d De civit. Dei, xvii. 16.

¹ Ps. l. 3.

² Ps. cxviii. 26.

³ Ps. lxxxvii. 5.

⁴ Ps. ii. 2.

⁵ Ps. xxii. 15.

⁶ Ps. xxii. 17.

⁷ Ps. iv. 9.

⁸ Ps. xvi. 11.

⁹ Ps. xlvi. 5.

¹⁰ Ps. xxiv. 7-10.

¹¹ Ps. l. 6.

¹² Ps. lxxxii. 1.

¹³ Ps. xxxiii. 6.

¹⁴ i. 1.

¹⁵ Job xxvi. 13.

- ¹ Ps. xxxvi. 9. *and in Thy light shall we see light.*¹ The “*well of life,*” or “*living water,*” is the figure under which our Saviour spake of the Holy Ghost,² while He Himself is “*the true light ;*”³ and then there is God the Father, with whom the Light and Life are. Or, to take another example, we have in the Psalms the true doctrine of the Holy Sacraments : “*Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*”⁴ Here is Holy Baptism ; and the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper we find in “*Bread to strengthen man’s heart, and wine to make it glad ;*”⁵ that wine which is “*the cup of salvation.*”⁶

Or, to view the Psalms in another light, we may regard them not only as teaching the faith, but as giving the true and proper rules of life. Thus we are warned to keep chastity, for God “*has destroyed all them that commit fornication against Him.*”⁷ Not to envy evil men, however great : “*Neither be thou envious against the evil doers,*”⁸ for this reason, their power is all nothing. “*I went by, and lo, he was gone ; I sought him, but his place could no where be found.*”⁹ We are taught that lowliness of mind is a good : *Lord, I am not high-minded, I have no proud looks.*¹⁰ And again, we learn that pity is a praiseworthy thing : “*The good man is merciful, and lendeth ;*”¹¹ and farther, that we should ever be exercised in giving alms ; for that will bring a blessing to us : “*He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor :*” and, “*his righteousness remaineth for ever.*”¹² They instruct us also in the duties of fasting and humiliation : “*I put on,*” says holy David, “*sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting.*”¹³ And of prayer and praise : “*In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day will I pray.*”¹⁴ “*Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments.*”¹⁵—And so on as regards every grace and virtue.^e

^e See this thought followed out more fully by St. Chrysostom, Hom. ix. on Ep. to Colossians.

Once more, to regard this holy book in yet another light; we shall see, if we look carefully into it, that it is full of instruction to us as regards earthly and created things. I mean in this way, for example: we might ask, whence are our bodies made? David tells us, God "*remembereth that we are but dust.*"¹—In what way are the mountains of use? "*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and so are the stony rocks for the conies.*"²—How are the animals fed? "*These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them meat in due season.*"³—The heavens are great and high, because they "*declare the glory of God;*"⁴ but yet they shall pass away with all things else, for "*they shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.*"⁵ And thus, as said St. Chrysostom, "the sweet singer of Israel will tell thee both of things present and things to come, of things seen, and of the invisible things of God."^f

There is, however, one peculiarity which these holy songs have, beyond the other parts of sacred Scripture, which I will here mention. The other books of the Holy Bible, by God's mercy, teach us what we ought to do to please God; but the Psalms not only teach us this, but also *how* we are to obey God and keep His commandments. For example, St. Paul says: "*We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.*"⁶ But David, by his example and in his Psalms, shews how tribulations (that is, sorrow and trouble) are to be borne: "*I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my calling;*"⁷ and how each man may try, and prove himself, whether troubles are working patience in him: "*Before I was troubled, I went wrong; but now*

^f See Hom. xxviii. on Ep. to Romans.

*“ have I kept Thy word.” “ It is good for me that I
 “ have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy sta-
 “ tutes;”*¹ and also what words are suitable for those
 who have hope in God, to express that hope as Chris-
 tians ought to express it: *“ 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 ?”*² Again, to take another example,
 we are commanded to give thanks always for all
 things, and how can we do so better than in the
 wonderful words of the Psalmist?—*“ I will magnify
 “ Thee, O Lord, my King, and I will praise Thy
 “ name for ever and ever.”*³ *“ Praise the Lord, O
 “ my soul ; and all that is within me, praise His holy
 “ name.”*⁴ And again: when we are in penitence and
 sorrow, which is so earnestly enjoined upon us who
 have fallen from our baptismal purity, where shall
 we find words wherewith to approach our Saviour,
 more fitting for us than the 51st Psalm; that Psalm
 wherein David expressed his deep sorrow for his
 past sins? *“ Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy
 “ great goodness : according to the multitude of Thy
 “ mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly
 “ from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin ;
 “ for I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever be-
 “ fore me :”*—and so on through the whole Psalm.
 Or, to give one instance more of the way in which
 this divine book helps us to obey God’s commands,
 we are told, as you may remember, to be *“ instant in
 “ prayer ;”*⁵ to be *“ praying always with all prayer
 “ and supplication in the Spirit.”*⁶ Now the Psalms
 are, as it were, the Spirit’s prayers, for they were all
 written by God’s Holy Spirit; and in them we shall
 find prayers, not only for ourselves, but for all God’s
 Church, and that under all the changes and chances
 of this mortal life.

For ourselves we may pray daily in the words of
 the 25th Psalm: *“ Shew me Thy ways, O Lord, and
 teach me Thy paths. Lead me forth in Thy truth,
 and learn me ; for Thou art the God of my salva-*

¹ Ps. cxix.
67, 71.

² Ps. xxvii.
1.

³ Ps. cxlv. 1.

⁴ Ps. ciii. 1.

⁵ Rom. xii.
12.

⁶ Eph. vi. 18.

tion ; in Thee hath been my hope all the day long. Call to remembrance, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old. O remember not the sins and offences of my youth ; but according to Thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord, for Thy goodness."¹ In like manner ¹ 3, 4, 5, 6. for God's Church : " Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt ; Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou madest room for it ; and when it had taken root it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees. She stretched out her branches to the sea, and her boughs unto the river. Why hast Thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off her grapes ? The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up, and the wild beasts of the field devour it. Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, look down from heaven : behold, and visit this vine ; and the place of the vineyard that Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou madest so strong for Thyself."²

² Ps. lxxx.
8-15.

Another remarkable feature of the Psalms, in connexion with what I have just been saying, is this:—when a person devoutly uses the Psalms, they will always seem to him as if written on purpose for himself, as if they gave exact expression to his thoughts and feelings. And surely this is of itself a very great blessing which God has given us ; these holy prayers and hymns which we may use as if they were quite our own. We are warned in Holy Scripture to watch over our lips when we speak to Almighty God,³ and here He has Himself given us words ³ Eccles. v. 2. to use which express our feelings in language better than any of our own ; language, of whose perfect truth we are quite sure. And besides, as it was said of old time, that God takes delight in hearing from His children the Lord's prayer, because the words of that prayer are the words of His " well-beloved Son,"[§] so we may humbly hope that He will be well

[§] See St. Cyprian on Lord's Prayer.

pleased to hear the Psalms from us in prayer and praise, they being the words of His most Holy Spirit.

And when we use the Psalms in this way, it must be an exceeding comfort to us to bear in mind that the Holy Jesus Himself seems to have used them so. We know for certain that more than once He made them His prayers, as in that solemn and awful cry to His Father from the cross :
 “ *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?*”¹
 —and again : “ *Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*”² From this it has been reasonably thought, that not only these words from the 22d and 31st Psalms, but that the whole of these Psalms, and others, were then and always in our Lord’s mind.

¹ St. Matt.
xxvii. 46.

² St. Luke
xxiii. 46.

And thus, as this holy book was hallowed by our Lord’s use, and commended to His disciples by His example, so we find that when the Church was in her best and purest days, then did she most of all use the sacred Psalms ; in public her priests and people read them through, from beginning to end, every week : and good and holy men, “ the noble army of martyrs,” and those great saints whom we are accustomed to call “ the Fathers,” did ever, in their private devotions, constantly use the same. Nor may we forget to mention a holy deacon of the Church in England, who is now at rest, who with his family was in the regular habit of reading through, “ from the first to the last verse,” the whole Psalms in every twenty-four hours. With very good reason indeed, therefore, has this book of Psalms been called “ The prayer-book of Christ and His saints.”

One caution I must here give. When we use the Psalms, the great thing which we have to bear in mind is this :—that we use them not as men, but as Christians ; that if we were not Christians (weak, and blind, and sinful, indeed, but still Christians) we could never rightly use the Psalms at all. This will, I think, remove any difficulties which might stop our using them.

Those Psalms, for instance, which are full of hard words against our enemies, which seem to be calling down God's anger and wrath upon our fellow-men; these, being Christians, we may say, or chant, because they are God's words. It is not we who speak, but God who is speaking by us: and He is speaking not of our enemies, but of His own—the enemies of Himself and His Church.

Again: those Psalms which are so full of longing for God, and of being athirst for Him—such Psalms even the very best of men might shrink from saying of himself; in such cases, then, when we chant the Psalms, we are expressing what God's Holy Church feels towards her Lord. The Church of God is "*the King's daughter*," and she "*is all glorious within*;" and she is the spouse and bride of Christ, and is ever crying after Him, and praying for His coming. When therefore we, as members of the Church, use such Psalms as the 42d, we shew forth not our feelings only, but the feelings of the whole body of Christ: His whole Church—Apostles and Prophets, and martyrs and saints.

“ Every spirit blessed,
From realms of triumph or of rest,
From him who saw creation's morn,
Of all Thine angels eldest born,
To the poor babe who died to-day,
Take part in our thanksgiving lay.”*

“ MAY we not think that this, amongst others, hath
“ been a cause of the decay of right and true devo-
“ tion in these latter days, namely, the neglect of
“ this excellent book” of Psalms? “ I would not have

* The Christian Year,—“ Holy Communion.”

“ David’s Psalms disused, but used frequently ; and made, as they were by Athanasius and St. Jerome, a great, if not the greatest, part of our private devotions.”^h

So spake a holy Bishop of the Church. I will subjoin a list of Psalms, and the occasions on which they may suitably be used ; chiefly from St. Athanasius :—

1. If thou wouldest describe the blessed man, who he is, and what makes him so, thou hast the 1st, 32d, 41st, 112th, and 128th Psalms.

2. If in troubles thou hast called upon God, and He has heard thee, give Him thanks in the 4th, 40th, and 116th Psalms.

3. If thou feelest afraid of God’s judgments, thou mayest say the 6th, 38th, and 88th Psalms.

4. If thou knowest that men are taking counsel against thee, sing to God the 7th Psalm.

5. If thou wouldest praise God for a prosperous gathering of thy fruits, use the 8th Psalm.

6. If thou wouldest have thine enemy kept back and thy soul saved, trust not in thyself, but in the Son of God ; and say the 9th Psalm.

7. If God be angry with His people, thou mayest appease Him by saying the 10th, 60th, and 74th Psalms.

8. When man threatens thee, trust in God, saying the 11th Psalm.

9. When tempted to despair, call upon the Lord, and sing the 13th, 22d, and 61st Psalms.

10. If thou hearest any blaspheme God, do thou make haste to Him, and say the 14th and 55th Psalms.

11. If thou seest one in trouble and adversity, comfort him and pray for him in the 20th Psalm.

12. If thou seest God to be thy Defender and Keeper, thou mayest be glad thereof, and praise Him in the 23d Psalm.

13. If thou art building again thy house, both of

^h Bp. Sparrow, *Rationale*, pp. 23, 24 ; ed. 1722.

the soul, wherein God is thy guest, or thy temporal dwelling-place, sing to Him the 30th, 48th, and 127th Psalms.

14. If thou wouldest call to mind God's wonders of old time, thou mayest do so in the 44th, 78th, 89th, 106th, and 114th Psalms.

15. If thou wouldest move thyself to trust in God, who giveth to all men all things richly to enjoy, do so by the 49th Psalm.

16. If thou hast sinned, say the 51st Psalm.

17. If trouble comes on thee suddenly, say to God the 57th, 116th, and 142d Psalms.

18. If thou wouldest praise God, do so in the 65th, 66th, 148th, 149th, and 150th Psalms.

19. If thou seekest mercy, pray for it in the 67th Psalm.

20. If thou seest wicked men prosper in peace, be not offended, but sing unto God the 73d Psalm.

21. If God permit His enemies to get the upper hand, and to defile His house and persecute His Church, pray His mercy in the 79th Psalm.

22. If thou wouldest meditate on the Church as distinguished from Dissent, thou hast for this purpose the 87th Psalm.

23. If thou wouldest see and praise God's Providence in His works, thou hast the 100th, 147th, and 148th Psalms.

24. If thou wouldest remember God's judgment, thou hast the 101st Psalm.

25. If wandering thoughts hold thee captive, say the 137th Psalm.

26. After temptation thou mayest give God thanks in the 140th Psalm.

27. After the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 103d Psalm.

If thou wouldest meditate on thy Saviour, thou hast Him in every Psalm:—

1. His Birth; 19th, 45th, 85th, 89th, 110th, and 132d Psalms.

2. His Cross and Passion ; 22d, 40th, 54th, 69th, and 88th Psalms.

3. His Resurrection ; 2d, 57th, 111th, 113th, 114th, and 118th Psalms.

4. His Ascension ; 8th, 15th, 21st, 24th, 47th, and 108th Psalms.

5. His sitting at the right-hand of God ; 110th Psalm.

6. His return for judgment ; 50th, 72d, and 82d Psalms.

When first thou risest in the morning, think of thy Saviour's resurrection and thine own ; and say, solemnly,—

*“ I laid me down and slept, and rose up again ;
“ for the Lord sustained me.”*

And let thy last thought at night be of thy Saviour's grave and thine own :—

*“ I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest ;
“ for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest me to dwell
“ in safety.”*

THE following is a list of the Psalms which were appointed for each Sunday and holyday, in King Edward's First Book; which, together with the Epistles and Gospels ordered by the Church to be read, will supply us with subjects for sacred meditation on those days:—

PSALM	PSALM
Advent Sunday 1	5th Sunday 84
2d Sunday in Advent 120	Ascension Day 47
3d Sunday in Advent 4	Sunday after Ascension Day 93
4th Sunday in Advent 5	Whit Sunday 33
Christmas Day 98, 8	Whit Monday 100
St. Stephen 52	Whit Tuesday 101
St. John the Evangelist 11	Trinity Sunday 67
The Holy Innocents 79	1st Sunday af- } Part 1 of 119
Sunday after Christmas 121	ter Trinity } 2d Sunday 2 —
The Circumcision 122	3d Sunday 3 —
The Epiphany 96	4th Sunday 4 —
1st Sunday after Epiphany 13	5th Sunday 5 —
2d Sunday 14	6th Sunday 6 —
3d Sunday 15	7th Sunday 7 —
4th Sunday 2	8th Sunday 8 —
5th Sunday* 20	9th Sunday 9 —
Septuagesima Sunday 23	10th Sunday 10 —
Sexagesima 24	11th Sunday 11 —
Quinquagesima 26	12th Sunday 12 —
Ash Wednesday 6	13th Sunday 13 —
1st Sunday in Lent 32	14th Sunday 14 —
2d Sunday 130	15th Sunday 15 —
3d Sunday 43	16th Sunday 16 —
4th Sunday 46	17th Sunday 17 —
5th Sunday 54	18th Sunday 18 —
Sunday before Easter 61	19th Sunday 19 —
Good Friday 22	20th Sunday 20 —
Easter Eve 88	21st Sunday 21 —
Easter Sunday 16, 3	22d Sunday 22 —
Easter Monday 62	23d Sunday 124
Easter Tuesday 113	24th Sunday 125
1st Sunday after Easter 112	25th Sunday 127
2d Sunday 70	St. Andrew 129
3d Sunday 75	St. Thomas 128
4th Sunday 82	

* For the sixth Sunday there was then no provision made.

	PSALM		PSALM
Conversion of St. Paul	. 138	St. Peter	. . . . . 144
Purification	. . . . . 134	St. James	. . . . . 148
St. Matthias	. . . . . 140	St. Bartholomew	. . . . . 115
Annunciation	. . . . . 131	St. Matthew	. . . . . 117
St. Mark	. . . . . 141	St. Michael	. . . . . 113
St. Philip and St. James	133	St. Luke	. . . . . 137
St. Barnabas	. . . . . 142	St. Simon and St. Jude	150
St. John the Baptist	. 143	All Saints	. . . . . 149

