

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALTER.

THE main purpose of this Introduction—as prefatory to the special annotations on each Psalm—is to examine the general character, style, and structure of the Psalter, especially in relation to its use in the Service of the Church in all ages.

(I.) THE PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PSALMS.—The Psalms occupy a peculiar position in Holy Scripture. This peculiarity was indicated in the threefold Jewish division of the Old Testament—known certainly (see Preface to *Ecclesiasticus*) in the second century B.C. as already old, and described in Luke xxiv. 44 as a division into “the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” In this description “the Psalms” evidently include the kindred Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, commonly united with the Psalter in “the writings” or *Hagiographa*. But the Psalms, properly so called, express the dominant idea of the whole. For in “the Law and the Prophets” we have the Word of God to man; in the History reciting for man’s knowledge and admonition the record of His creation and government of the world; in the Law and Prophecy, revealing to man His Will, and through His Will something of His Nature. But in “the Psalms”—primarily in the Psalter itself, as to some extent in the other Books included with it in the same division—we have the answer of the human soul under the inspiration of God to the Divine Message. Most often that answer is of the nature of simple Adoration, whether in Confession and Prayer, or in Praise and Thanksgiving; sometimes of meditation and reflection on God’s Word, or on His works in Nature and History; sometimes even of enquiry and remonstrance, when such meditation has brought home to the soul the sense of perplexity and mystery in God’s dealings with man. In form this answer of the soul clothes itself in the language of poetry, but a poetry of a singularly free and unartificial type, unlike that of modern literatures in this—that it is marked, not by formal arrangement of words in rhyme or metre, but by a simple correspondence of ideas, so repeated in successive clauses as, by parallelism or by antithesis, to illustrate each other, to enforce the thought conveyed, and to impress it on the memory.

The Psalm is thus the lyric poetry of the Old Testament. Such poetry we find in all literatures, embodying the expression of inward thought and emotion, as distinct from the epic recital, or the dramatic representation, of things without. But it is notable that, whereas in many literatures the lyric element, being most deeply coloured by the special characteristics of age and nation, is apt to be the most evanescent in its vitality, the Psalms have proved to be the most enduring of all parts, even of the Old Testament, as an expression of thought and emotion in all ages. The reason of this is obvious. It is that they deal

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with that relation of the soul to God, which is always the same in essence, although it may vary in form and degree, and which, therefore, while it is in all points exalted and in some modified by our higher consciousness of God through the light and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, has been realized in all the ages and races of Christendom in the same essential features, as by Jewish prophet or psalmist in his ancient and peculiar covenant with the Lord Jehovah.

PSALMS NOT IN THE PSALTER.—This “Psalmic element” of the Old Testament is not confined to the Psalter. Psalms, in this general sense of the word, are naturally found scattered through the Historical and Prophetic Books. Thus in the time of the Exodus we find the Psalm of triumph (Exod. xv, 1-21) after the passage of the Red Sea; the Song of the Well (Num. xxi. 17, 18); the quotation from the Song of the “Wars of the Lord” (Num. xxi. 14, 15); and the magnificent Song of Moses (“taught to the children of Israel”) in Deut. xxxii. In Josh. x. 13 (as also in 2 Sam. i. 18) we find reference to the “book of Jasher,” probably the “book of the Upright,” a celebration of the worthies of Israel, somewhat resembling in tone the Psalm properly so called. The Song of Deborah (Judg. v.) is a magnificent specimen of a patriotic hymn of triumph and rejoicing before God in the hour of victory; the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1-10) of deep religious thanksgiving; the Elegy of David over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 19-27) of religious mourning. In the Book of Job a large portion is of the nature of the Psalm, as being direct address of communing and pleading with God (see chs. iii., x., xxxi.). Turning to the books included with the Psalter in the Jewish division, we find grand passages of didactic and meditative poetry in the Book of Proverbs (see Prov. i. 20-32; ii. 1-22; iii. 13-26), and of allegorical poetry in Ecclesiastes (see Eccl. xii. 1-7); while the whole of Canticles is an Idyll of pastoral life and love, under which ancient interpreters delighted to read a religious meaning. Interspersed again in the Prophetic Books are passages virtually Psalms; in which the prophet turns from his usual task as messenger of God to men, to speak either for himself or for them to God. Such is the song of thanksgiving in Isa. xii.; the lamentation of remonstrance in Jer. xx. 7-18; the cry of faith in the very face of death in Jonah ii. 1-9; the psalm of glad resignation before the Divine Majesty in Hab. iii.; the thanksgiving of Hezekiah for restored life in Isa. xxxviii. 9-20. The Book of Lamentations is one long psalm of mourning, full of Confession and Prayer—the greater part being cast into an acrostic form. Even of David himself we have (2 Sam. xxiii. 2-6) a notable psalm—the “last words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel”—not included in the Psalter.

THE PSALTER IN RELATION TO TEMPLE WORSHIP.—The contents of the Psalter were, no doubt, determined by use in the worship of the Tabernacle and of the Temple. Of such use we have traces in the record of the first dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. v. 13; vii. 3); where we find described the burst of instrumental music, with “cymbals and psalteries, and harps and trumpets,” from the Levites “which were the singers,” and the response of the people, “Praise the Lord: for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever” (see Ps. cxviii. 1; cxxxvi. &c.). Similarly, at the restorations of the worship of the Temple by Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah (2 Chron. xx. 19, 21; xxix. 27-30), we find mention of the same offering of “praise to the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever,” and of the Song of the Lord “with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel,” and expressed “in the words of David and of Asaph the Seer.” Again, in Ezra iii. 10 and Neh. xii. 40, 45, 46, we find the revival of the Psalmody of the old Temple made a prominent part of the worship, which hallowed the building and dedication of the new.

This destination is also indicated in the headings to the Psalms. These headings—found in the Hebrew MSS., and translated in our Bible Version—though not to be taken as of absolute authority, yet embody ancient and most interesting traditions, and are recognised as of high historical value. In these no less than fifty-five Psalms are inscribed, “For the chief Musician,” clearly for use in worship; and (as will be seen hereafter) several are attributed to the authorship of those who are known to have been the heads of the families of the Levites attached to the Temple. Subsequently the Talmud enumerates particular Psalms, as accompanying particular sacrifices, and appointed, at least in the Second Temple, for the Service of particular days. In the time of Our Lord and His Apostles it would appear that the use of the Psalms in the Temple Service regularly followed the meat and drink offering (which had been preceded by Prayers, Readings, and Blessing); that for each of the six days of the week was appointed a special Psalm, *viz.*, Ps. xxiv., xlviii., lxxxii., xciv., lxxxix., xciii., while to the Sabbath was appropriated Ps. xcii., which in the ancient heading bears the title “a Psalm for the Sabbath Day.” Besides these there were Psalms appointed for days and occasions of special solemnity; such as the “Great Hallel” (Ps. cxiii.—cxviii.) at the chief yearly Festivals, and “the Songs of Degrees” on the pilgrimages to the Holy City. It was no doubt by such use that the Psalms, beyond all other parts of Holy Scripture, became familiar in the Jewish, as afterwards in the Christian Church; and it is a remarkable evidence of such familiarity, that of all the quotations from the Old Testament in the New it has been calculated that about two-fifths are taken from the Psalms alone.

THE HEBREW TITLE.—The original Hebrew title of the whole Book, signifying “the Praises,” or “Songs of Praise,” and the title “the Prayers,” which in Ps. lxxii. 20 (“the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended”) seems to refer to the division of the Psalter (Ps. xlii.—lxxii.) then closed, indicate this origin of the Psalter itself. It has been remarked that, considered strictly, many of the Psalms do not altogether fall under either category of praise or prayer. But these names are well justified by their use in worship, of which the higher element, marking the perfect worship of Heaven, is Praise, and the lower element, belonging to our present state of imperfection, is Prayer. The headings of special Psalms carry out this general description. Thus some Psalms (as Ps. xxxviii., lxx.) are “for Remembrance”—that is “Memorial” of prayer and penitence before God. Others (as Ps. c.) are “for Thank-giving.” Others again (as Ps. ix.) represent the didactic element in worship. They are “for Teaching,” perhaps, like the Song of Moses, to be committed to memory. Some of the Hebrew names, moreover, given to particular Psalms carry out this last meaning; as *Maschil* (“Instruction” or “skill” in execution); *Michtam*, probably “a golden Psalm,” rendered in the Greek version by a word signifying “inscription for a pillar.” All these names, connecting the Psalms with the worship and teaching of the Service of God, describe them in their intrinsic character and purpose.

THE GREEK TITLE.—On the other hand the name “Psalms,” originating in the Greek Septuagint Version, and from it passing into all modern European languages, describes simply their poetical form and musical setting, as “songs accompanied by stringed instruments.” It is a historical justification of the use of instrumental music in the Service of God; and from the different headings of Psalms iv., vi. (“for strings”), and Ps. v. (“for flutes”), it is clear that in practice it was held to include not only stringed instruments, but also the wind instruments, which in our own days furnish the most usual accompaniment. Some of the Hebrew designations attached to special Psalms mark varieties of musical style. Thus *Shir* (see Ps. xlv.) seems to mean simply “a Song,” while *Mizmor* (see Ps. xlviii.) is “a Song accompanied by music.” *Shiggaion* is probably an “Ode” of more imaginative and erratic style. (It is curious that these correspond remarkably to the “Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs,” described in Ephes. v. 19, as belonging to early Christian worship.) Other headings, according to the usual interpretation, supply other musical details. In Ps. xlv., the word *Alamoth* (“after the manner of maidens”) is thought to indicate the use of treble voices, and in Ps. vi. *Sheminith* (“on the octave”) the use of bass. In Ps. xxii., xlv., lvi., the

Hebrew words signifying "the Hind of the Dawn," "after the Lilies," and "the Silent Dove," are generally supposed to represent the names of the tunes to which these Psalms were set. The word *Selah*, often interspersed, translated by the Greek *diapsalma*, or "interposed symphony," is thought to be the signal "Strike up!" given for such musical interlude. All seems to shew that the use of the Psalms in worship was to the ancient Israelites, not only an education of devotion, but a training also in sacred music.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE PSALTER.—This same use of the Psalter in worship is further indicated by its ancient division into five books, each ending with a solemn doxology. These books are as follows:—

- Book I. Ps. i.—xli.
- Book II. Ps. xlii.—lxxii.
- Book III. Ps. lxxiii.—lxxxix.
- Book IV. Ps. xc.—cvi.
- Book V. Ps. cvii.—cl.

The exact number five may probably have been suggested by analogy with the five Books of the Law and the five Books of the Prophets (the twelve Minor Prophets forming but one book). But in general these Books appear to represent a gradual historical growth of the Psalter from time to time, in connection with the organisation or the restoration of the Temple Service.

The First Book (Ps. i.—xli.), in which almost all the Psalms are referred to David, stands alone. It is by general consent believed to have been the original Psalter, probably collected by Solomon, to whom the First Psalm prefixed to the Book is traditionally ascribed, and presumably forming the first body of Psalms for use in the Temple.

The Second and Third Books are closely connected, and evidently belong to a later period.

The date of the Second Book (Ps. xlii.—lxxii.), which contains eighteen Psalms ascribed to David, and eight to the "sons of Korah," and which ends with the words "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," is doubtful. It is referred by most authorities to the later times of the kingdom; by some to the revivals of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah.

The Third Book (Ps. lxxiii.—lxxxix.) is mainly ascribed to other authors, "Asaph," and "the sons of Korah," and is evidently of later formation. From the labours of collection ascribed to the men of Hezekiah in Prov. xxv. 1, and the mention in the record of Hezekiah's Services of "the words of David and Asaph the Seer" (2 Chron. xxix. 30), it has been thought by many that the formation both of this and of the preceding book belongs to his time.

The Fourth and Fifth Books (Ps. xc.—cvi., and cvii.—cl.) are again closely connected, and are generally referred to a later date, probably to the restoration of the Exiles in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Except seventeen Psalms ascribed to David, one to Moses, and one to Solomon, they are anonymous, and have few descriptive or musical titles; and most of the book, especially the Songs of Degrees (Ps. cxx.—cxxxiv.), and such Psalms as Ps. cxxxvii., evidently belong to the period after the return from Exile.

It has been contended by many that some of the Psalms are of still later date, belonging even to Maccabean times. By some critics, indeed—against the testimony of all ancient tradition—the great bulk of the Psalter has been referred to the period after the Exile, and much of it to the time of the Maccabees. But the evidence for this supposition, which contradicts the constant Jewish tradition of the close of the Canon in the generation after the completion of the Restoration, appears to be insufficient, and not unfrequently based on somewhat arbitrary criticism. As the Psalter undoubtedly became the Service-Book of the Second Temple, it is very likely—as, indeed, our own experience in the use of Hymnody would suggest—that Psalms may have been in course of time modified and added to, with a view to adapt them to the worship of later ages. But substantially it is probable that it grew up as has been described above.

(This division accounts for the fact that some Psalms are repeated. Thus Ps. xiv. (in the Bible Version) in the First Book, and Ps. liii. in the Second Book are nearly identical; Ps. lxx. in the Second Book is a repetition of Ps. xl. 16-21 in the First; and Ps. cviii. in the Fifth Book is made up of passages from Ps. lx. and lvii. in the Second Book.)

ELOHISTIC AND JEHOVISTIC PSALMS.—It might have been hoped that some clue to the relative date of the various parts of the Psalter would be gained from the well-known distinction between the *Elohistic* and *Jehovistic* Psalms—that is, the Psalms in which the more ancient and general name of God (*Elohim*) is used, and those in which it is replaced by the later and more distinctive title of *JEHOVAH*. But on examination this idea breaks utterly down. Speaking generally, the First Book, undoubtedly the earliest, and especially the Psalms of David which it contains, are *Jehovistic*; and the same is true of the Fourth and Fifth Books, which are obviously the latest. On the other hand, the intermediate Second and Third Books, especially the Psalms of Asaph and the sons of Korah, are *Elohistic*. The distinction is probably due merely to difference of authorship, or possibly difference of occasion and character; and there is, of course, no reason whatever, historical or

theoretical, why the two names should not have been used side by side.

(II.) AUTHORSHIP OF THE PSALMS.—This gradual formation of the Psalter stretches over a period of at least five hundred years. The Psalms are the work of many ages and many authors; their general unity of tone and character belongs to their unity of Inspiration and purpose. About a third of the Psalms are anonymous. The ancient headings prefixed to the Psalms refer the other two-thirds to various authors. Of these, seventy-three (Ps. iii.—ix.; xi.—xxxii.; xxxv.—xli.; li.—lxv.; lxxviii.—lxx.; lxxxvi., ci., ciii.; cvii.—cx.; cxxii., cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii.; cxxxviii.—cxlv.) are ascribed to David; two (Ps. lxxii., cxxvii.) to Solomon; one (Ps. xc.) to Moses. Of the rest, twelve (Ps. i., lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) are attributed to "Asaph," described in 1 Chron. vi. 39 as the head of the family of the Levites descended from Gershom the son of Levi, which was one of the three families set by David "over the Service of Song." He seems to have stood out with special prominence as "the chief musician"; so that in Ezra ii. 41 "the sons of Asaph" seem equivalent to "the singers." To the second of these families descended from Kohath, son of Levi, but called "the sons of Korah" (grandson of Kohath), are ascribed twelve Psalms (Ps. xlii.—xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.), of which one (Ps. lxxxviii.) is referred to Heman, their head, contemporary with Asaph. To Ethan, the corresponding head of the family of the Merarites, is ascribed one Psalm (Ps. lxxxix.).

What weight is to be assigned to these inscriptions has been a matter of much controversy. It must, of course, be allowed that they are not of absolute authority, and that in some cases they appear to be inconsistent with the style and substance of the Psalms to which they are prefixed. By one School of Commentators they are unhesitatingly set aside as worthless. The age and possible authorship of each Psalm are confidently determined by simple conjecture—on the ground, moreover, not so much of linguistic criticism as of supposed internal evidence; and by some the old universal belief in the Psalms, as in any degree "the Psalms of David," is summarily dismissed. But here, as in other cases, it appears impossible, on sober consideration, to disregard altogether the authority of an almost unvarying Jewish tradition, merely because in some few cases it seems to be erroneous; and certainly the *à priori* grounds, on which this sweeping conclusion is justified, are themselves open to much criticism, as involving many arbitrary assumptions as to the supposed spiritual and poetic capacity of this or that age, and, in the case of David at any rate, a singular misconception of his true character. Giving to the

whole evidences, external and internal, their due weight, we shall be safe in concluding that the ancient tradition, although not infallible, is entitled to very serious regard.

What may be the precise sense of the ascriptions themselves is, again, a matter for thoughtful consideration. In some cases they undoubtedly are literal ascriptions of authorship; in others, a "Psalm of David" or a "Psalm of Asaph" may simply mean that the Psalm was found in a collection bearing their names, much as in the "Proverbs of Solomon." Each case will have accordingly to be considered on its own merits. It is also to be remembered that the date of the composition of a Psalm must be distinguished from the date of its inclusion in the regular use of the Psalter. The later Books, for example, contain several Psalms ascribed to David. In this inclusion note must be taken of the great probability that these ancient Psalms may have been adapted to later use; and, indeed, in some of the ancient versions the names of later prophets (Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah) are actually subjoined to the name of David in the titles of Psalms.

Accordingly, accepting provisionally this degree of authority in the old traditions, we may examine each class of the Psalms, referred by them to various authors.

PSALMS OF DAVID.—Of the Psalms of David not a few may be referred, either by inscription or by strong internal evidence, to various periods of his life. These references are examined in detail in the annotations to each Psalm; a few, however, may be noticed here.

Some may well belong to the period of his early life till his accession to the throne. Of these Ps. viii. (the contemplation of the heavens), Ps. xxiii. ("the Lord is my Shepherd"), and Ps. lxxviii. (the vision of God in the storm), breathe the associations of his early shepherd life. The rest are of the days of flight and exile. Ps. vii. belongs to some persecution by "Cush the Benjamite"; Ps. lix. describes the time when the bloodhounds of Saul were watching his house; Ps. lii. denounces the malice of Doeg at the time of David's flight; Ps. xxxiv. (as also perhaps xxxv.) praises God for deliverance, when he feigned madness before Achish; Ps. lvi., also composed in Gath, is a Psalm of anxiety and cry for help; Ps. liv. describes the bitterness of his soul when the Ziphites betrayed him; Ps. lvii. and cxlii., composed "in the cave" of Adullam or Engedi, alternate between sense of danger and confidence of faith in God. Through these it has been remarked that there run certain general characteristics—an abruptness and vividness of style, a strong sense of innocence, a certain fierceness of wrath against his enemies, and an almost unclouded trust in God.

The second class of Psalms refer to the period of his greatness and prosperity. With the bringing up of the Ark it is impossible not to associate Ps. xxiv. ("Lift up your heads; O ye gates") and Ps. xv. ("Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord"); possibly to this time, perhaps more probably to the Dedication Festival of Solomon, belongs the magnificent Psalm lxxviii. ("Let God arise"), taking its motto from the words used at the setting out of the Ark in the wilderness (Num. x. 35). Ps. lx. marks the decisive struggle against the Syrians (see 2 Sam. x. 6-19). To the completion of victories (see 2 Sam. xxii. 1) clearly belongs Ps. xviii.—a *Te Deum* of triumphant thanksgiving ("I will praise thee, O God, my strength"); and perhaps also Ps. xx. and xxi., full of trust in God in the hour of battle, and of the blessing and triumph of the King. To the time of the promise of "the sure mercies of David" (2 Sam. vii. 12-27), Ps. cx. ("Jehovah said unto my Lord") may well be referred. Ps. ci. (the king's vow of mercy and judgment) marks the same time of prosperity and peace in the favour of God. Perhaps to this time also belongs Ps. xxx., connected in the heading with the "Dedication of the House," either his own house, or (as Jewish tradition has it) the site of the future Temple on Mount Moriah after the numbering of the people. In all these may be noted greater perfection and maturity of style, a more kingly tone of dignity, and a deeper thought and intensity of devotion.

Other Psalms, again, belong to the last period of decline and decay after his great sin. Ps. li. declares itself expressly as the outpouring of godly sorrow, not without hope, in the hour of his repentance; and possibly to the same time may be referred Ps. xxxii., "Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven." Ps. vi., xxxviii., xxxix., xli., are all similarly Psalms of deep self-abasement and sorrow, indicating apparently special sickness and suffering, and full of marked reference to treason of trusted friends. They may well belong to the time of weakness and decay before the rebellion of Absalom, and indicate the treachery of false friends like Ahithophel. Ps. iii. is expressly referred to the flight from Absalom; and Ps. lxiii. to the first halt in the "wilderness of Judah." Through all there runs a deeper and sadder tone, pathetic in sense of weakness and suffering, but yet with an underlying peace and hope. Like a gleam at sunset, after these come the "last words of David," not included in the Psalter (2 Sam. xxiii. 2-5), full of the sense of the unfailing glory and strength of righteousness, and the trust, even in defect therefrom, in the sure promise of God.

PSALMS OF ASAPH.—The Psalms of Asaph (whatever be the exact meaning of the title) have certainly marked character-

istics of their own. They use the general name *Elohim*, instead of the deeper and more awful name Jehovah. They dwell especially (see Ps. lxxvii. 15; lxxx. 5; lxxx. 1) on "Joseph" and Israel, as distinct from Judah, and in the last case on "Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses," the tribes of the western camp in the wilderness, close to which the Gershonite Levites pitched (see Num. ii. 18-24; iii. 23); and in Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68 on the transference of the supremacy from Ephraim to Judah. They seem to have a meditative and thoughtful cast; as in Ps. lxxiii., putting before us the great problem of God's moral government, which forms the subject of the Book of Job; and in the grand Psalm l., urging the true spirituality of sacrifice and of covenant with God. They have frequently a national character, of lamentation in Ps. lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx., of triumph in Ps. lxxv., lxxvi., lxxx. One is the first great historical Psalm (Ps. lxxviii.), surveying the story of Israel from the Exodus to the choice of David. Similarly Ps. lxxxiii., in prayer against a confederacy of enemies, chronicles God's deliverance from Sisera and from Midian in the ancient days of Gideon. Another is a grave didactic admonition (Ps. lxxxii.) to the judges of Israel. If they have not the depth and vigour of the Psalms of David, they suit well the grave authoritative character of the chief of the Levites and "the seer."

PSALMS OF THE SONS OF KORAH.—The Psalms of this family of Levites, and HEMAN their chief (Ps. xlii.—xlix., lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.), are, as perhaps might be expected, in the main Psalms not so much of personal devotion, as of national and ecclesiastical feeling, looking to God especially as the King of Israel. Thus Ps. xlv. is the cry to God in some national disaster; Ps. xlvi., xlvii., xlviii. form a group of thanksgivings to "God our hope and strength" in the hour of deliverance, when "He goes up with the sound of the trumpet," and "reigns over the heathen from His holy seat." Ps. xlv. is a Marriage Hymn (probably at the wedding of Solomon); Ps. lxxxiv. ("O how amiable are thy dwellings") is a song of devotion in the Temple; Ps. lxxxv. a thanksgiving to God for "turning away captivity"; and Ps. lxxxvii. a song of the glory of Zion "above all dwellings of Jacob." But in this group there are some deeply personal Psalms, one of which (Ps. lxxxviii.) is ascribed expressly to Heman. Ps. xlii., xliii. (which form really one Psalm) express the longing for God in exile from Him, with the burden, "Why art thou so cast down, O my soul. . . Put thy trust in God." Ps. xlix. is a pensive meditation on the vanity and transitoriness of all mortal things. Ps. lxxxviii. (greatly resembling some notable passages in the Book of Job) is the cry of the dark hour, in sense of

present sorrow, and in terror of the shadowy mystery of the world beyond the grave, and yet in a sad but steadfast trust in God. All three bear so strong a personal impress of pensiveness and of intense but not unclouded faith, that it is difficult not to refer them to individual authorship.

These are closed by a long Psalm of ETHAN, head of the sons of Merari (Ps. lxxxix.), pleading the covenant of the sure mercies of David, and crying out through it for deliverance from humiliation and the burden of God's displeasure.

(III.) LATER GROUPS OF PSALMS.—Other marked groups, though not ascribed to any particular authors, may also be noted. Thus Ps. xci.—c. have been thought to form a group, some of the Psalms being actually connected together in the MSS.; and in these certain striking similarities to the latter part of the Book of Isaiah have been pointed out. (See the Introduction to the Psalter in the *Speaker's Commentary*.) They are almost entirely Psalms of glad confidence and thanksgiving. Ps. xci. breathes the faith in Him "who gives His angels charge over us"; Ps. xcii. (a "Psalm for the Sabbath") declares how good a thing it is to praise and bless God; Ps. xciii., xcvi., xcvi., xcix., are all Psalms of Adoration, proclaiming that "the Lord is King" over Israel and over all the earth; Ps. xciv. is a confident invocation of Him "to whom vengeance belongeth"; Ps. xcvi. is the great Psalm of Invitation to the Worship of the Lord, our Creator and our Father; Ps. xcvi., xcvi., call on us to "sing to the Lord the new Song" before the heathen and over all the earth; and Ps. c. is the traditional Psalm of Jubilation to God, because He is good and "His mercy endures from generation to generation."

A similar group of Psalms are those usually called the GREAT HALLEL (cxiii.—cxviii.), used by the Jews at the three great Festivals, and the Feast of Dedication. These are naturally Psalms of Thanksgiving to the Lord from the House of Israel, and from the Priesthood, "the House of Aaron," with constant remembrance of His mercies of old. The first two Psalms (cxiii., cxiv.), sung together at an early stage of the Passover Feast, are simply an ascription of Praise to the Lord as the protector of the lowly, with reminiscences of the going forth of the Presence of the Lord, "when Israel went out of Egypt." The last four (Ps. cxv.—cxviii.), sung together at a later stage, begin (Ps. cxv.) with a contrast of the greatness of the Lord with the vanity of the idols of the heathen, and an exultant confidence in His promised blessing. Then (Ps. cxvi.) follows an expression of faith, even out of affliction and perplexity, an enquiry, "What can I render to the Lord?" and an offering to Him of the sacrifice of thanksgiving. To this succeeds (in Ps. cxvii.) a short concluding burst of Praise to the Lord before

all nations. Finally, Ps. cxviii.—the "Hosanna" Psalm, from which the cries of welcome at Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem were taken—especially appropriated to the exuberant thanksgiving of the Feast of Tabernacles—presents in dramatic vividness the picture of a king, coming with his train to the Temple, welcomed by the Priests from within, and surrounded by the shouts of the people from without, which hail him "who cometh in the Name of the Lord," and finally entering into the Temple to thank and praise the Lord as His God. The whole form a magnificent group of Psalms of Adoration and Praise, belonging in measure to the earthly kingdom, in perfection to the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah.

Another equally remarkable group is the series of SONGS OF DEGREES—that is properly, "Songs of the Ascents." This title is considered by some interpreters to describe a certain regular gradation in the structure of the Psalms. But it is more usually interpreted either (as in the LXX.) of Psalms sung on the broad "steps" of the Temple, with the number of which the number of the Psalms (fifteen) curiously corresponds, or of "Songs of the Goings up" of the Pilgrims to the Temple, collected or composed in the gladness of its restoration after the Captivity. These are Ps. cxx.—cxxxiv.; four ascribed to David (Ps. cxxii., cxxiv., cxxxi., cxxxiii.), one to Solomon (Ps. cxxvii.); but mostly of later date. They seem to fall into lesser groups, through which, amidst much variety of tone and idea, we trace indications of their general purpose. Thus Ps. cxx. is the utterance of the Pilgrim, who dwells amidst men of contention, and longs for peace in God; in Ps. cxxi. he lifts up his eyes to the hills of Jerusalem, and feels God's protection day and night in his approach to it; in Ps. cxxii. he stands in sight of the Holy City, glad to enter into the House of the Lord, and praying for the peace of Jerusalem. Again, Ps. cxxiii. is a cry of one despised and oppressed; Ps. cxxiv. (ascribed to David) of one against whom the waves of enmity break, but who is delivered by the Lord of heaven and earth; in Ps. cxxv. he looks on Jerusalem surrounded by the mountains, seeing in its position a type of the encompassing protection of God; and in Ps. cxxvi. exults in the turning of the Captivity of Zion, by which they who have sown in tears now reap in joy. Then the more reflective Ps. cxxvii. (ascribed to Solomon) is the declaration of the vanity of all human care, unless the Lord build the house and keep the city; succeeded by Ps. cxxviii., a Psalm of domestic joy and blessing for all who fear the Lord. Next we find a group of sadder tone; Ps. cxxix. is the prayer of the soul, persecuted but not forsaken, to the Lord, who will confound the enemies of his people; Ps. cxxx. (the *De Profundis*) is a cry of patient faith out of the very depths of sorrow and death;



and Ps. cxxxi. throws the soul, like the "soul of the weaned child," upon the bosom of the Lord. Lastly, we have in Ps. cxxxii. the remembrance of the longing of David to build the house of the Lord, of the sure promise given to him, and the abundant blessing on priests and people in the Temple; Ps. cxxxiii. dwells on the glory of godly unity; and Ps. cxxxiv. is the final burst of praise and blessing from the servants of the Lord.

Besides these well-marked groups, there is an interesting succession of Psalms (cii.—cvii.), broken indeed by the division of the Fourth and Fifth Books, but certainly having a remarkable coherence of idea. Thus Ps. cii., ciii. are the Psalms of the spiritual life of the individual; the one of "the afflicted pouring out his complaint before the Lord," and ending in faith in the Unchangeable God; the other of unclouded joy, praising the Lord for all His benefits, especially for His forgiveness, forbearance, and sympathy towards His weak and sinful children. Ps. civ. is the great "Psalm of Nature," following with wonder and thankfulness the marvellous order of Creation, and seeing God everywhere in His works. Ps. cv., cvi. are "Psalms of History," tracing out, from the first covenant with Abraham through the wandering life of the Patriarchs, and in the history of the people in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the Promised Land, the goodness of God, prevailing over the weakness and the sinfulness of man. Ps. cvii. is the "Psalm of Life"—a series of pictures of life's emergencies and trials, in exile, captivity, sickness, danger on the sea, fruitfulness or famine—not perhaps without reference to the history of Israel, but embracing the vicissitudes of human life as such, and ending each section with the burden, "O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness!"

THE PSALMS IN THE JEWISH CHURCH.—Such were the original purpose and general character of the Psalms in the Jewish Church. It is impossible to doubt that, at least as much as any other element of the Old Testament, they told on the spiritual education of individuals, and the religious faith and character of the nation. In their direct relation to worship, they express, and so tend to preserve, the spirituality of devotion, which gave religious vitality to the ritual and ceremonial system; they bring out the true idea of the sacredness of the Temple and the priesthood, of the splendid and joyous worship of the sanctuary, and especially of its sacrifices in all their various forms; while at the same time they are, perhaps even more often, the outpouring of the private devotion, in which the soul is alone face to face with God. In their larger relation to religious faith and life they are the inspired response to the Prophetic teaching, shewing the acceptance and understanding of the message of

God. Thus, if it was a part of the Prophetic mission to teach obedience to the Law of God in the spirit and not in the letter, through love and not through fear, what can express the acceptance of that teaching more remarkably than the reiterated delight in "the statutes," "the commandments," "the testimonies," which pervades the great 119th Psalm? If the Prophet taught the spiritual sacrifice of the soul, as contrasted with mere outward sacrifice and worship (as, for example, in Isa. i. 10-20; Mic. vi. 6-8), the Psalms are the expression of desire to offer from the heart the sacrifice of thanksgiving (Ps. i. 7-15), of penitence (Ps. li. 16, 17), and of obedience (Ps. xl. 8-13). If again the Prophet had to exalt Jehovah, as the only true King of Israel, of whom earthly kings were but the viceroyants, and to shew that the strength of Israel lay in no material power, but in faithfulness to this religious allegiance, the Psalms (see Ps. xx., xxi., lvii., ci.) are full of the heartiest acknowledgment of this spiritual loyalty from kings and people alike. If the Prophets in their ministry to the future had to keep alive faith in the great Promise to Abraham and to David, by preparing for the coming of the Messiah, the Psalms, as will be seen hereafter, are full of Messianic anticipation, through the sense of that communion of humanity with God, of which the coming of the Messiah was to be the perfection. Everywhere the Psalm, like the Prophecy, is the recognition of the presence of God in the soul and of the devotion of the soul to Him. It may dwell on God in history, in the wonderful record of the life of the Chosen People (Ps. lxxviii., cv., cvi.); it may contemplate God in Nature and Life (Ps. civ., cvii.); it may extol the glory of the Law and the beauty of worship (Ps. cxix., lxxxiv., xcii.). But the true essence of the Psalm comes out most emphatically in such consciousness of the Presence of God to the soul, as is expressed in Ps. cxxxix., and in the "thirst for God, yea, even for the living God," which breathes in Ps. xlii., lxiii. In it is expressed the vital principle of true spiritual religion.

(IV.) THE PSALMS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—Hence it was but natural that from Jewish usage in the Temple, or, perhaps even more, in the Synagogue, the Psalms should pass into the public and private devotion of the Church of Christ. In the first account given us of an assembly of the disciples, we find a quotation from Ps. lxix. 25 rise at once to the lips of St. Peter (Acts i. 20) in his address to the brethren; we find that Ps. xvi. 8-11, and Ps. cx. 1, 2, supply the prophecies of the Resurrection and Ascension, on which he dwells in his first Sermon on the Day of Pentecost; and in the first record of united Christian worship it is Ps. ii. which suggests the idea and form of the prayer. The passages (in Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16) which suggest to Christians the "speaking to themselves," and "admonishing

one another," in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"; the command, "Is any merry? let him sing Psalms" (James v. 13); even the complaint, "Every one hath a psalm, hath a doctrine" (1 Cor. xiv. 26)—all clearly indicate a free use of the Psalms in public and private devotion. The constant quotation of the Psalms in the New Testament (already noticed) appeals to the familiarity arising from such use. These indications of the practice of the Apostolic age naturally lead on to countless passages in the writings of the Fathers, which shew how high a place was occupied by the Psalms in the worship and in the teaching of subsequent ages; till at last, with the Canticles and the later Hymns, catching to some degree their inspiration from them, they may be said to have moulded the whole of the element of Praise and Thanksgiving in the Services of the Church.

LITURGICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE PSALTER.—Subsequently we find elaborate arrangements of the Psalms for continual use, both in the East and in the West, evidently independent, though not so wholly dissimilar as to obliterate some community of principal features. In the Western Church, with which we are especially concerned, the theory of the various arrangements of the Psalms was that, although not in order of succession, and not without some repetitions, the whole Psalter should be sung weekly; that on the numerous holy-days, festal or penitential, special selections should supersede the regular Psalms of the day; and that of all the Occasional Services appropriate Psalms should form a prominent part. With the Psalms were used "Antiphons," or responses of Prayer and Praise. These were originally designed to lay hold of the main idea of each Psalm, with a view to its better adaptation to Christian worship. In fact, the *Gloria Patri*, used from old times in the West at the end of each Psalm, in the East at the end of each group of Psalms, may be regarded as the most striking and universal specimen of such Antiphons. But in practice, so far at any rate as the public Services were concerned, the complaint of the Preface to the Prayer Book of 1549 was well founded: "Notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers have divided the Psalms into seven portions, whereof every one was called a Nocturn; now of late times a few of them have been daily said and the rest utterly omitted"; and the Antiphons, beautiful in themselves, were often irrelevant, rather obscuring than elucidating the sense of the Psalms. Happily in the various Primers selections from Psalms were found in English, containing among others the Seven Penitential Psalms, the "Psalms of Degrees," the "Psalms of the Passion," &c.; and these were, no doubt, largely used in the devotions of the people both at Church and at home.

THE PRAYER BOOK ARRANGEMENT.—In the Prayer Book of 1549, in this point, as in all others, resolution was taken to simplify the previous elaborate arrangements, with a view to form Services of really Common Prayer, and to provide for such regularity of recitation as should make the whole Psalter thoroughly familiar to the people. This led to the substitution of the monthly for the weekly recitation of the Psalter, the Psalms being sung in strict order of succession, and a moderate number assigned to each Morning and Evening Service. With a view better to preserve this principle of regularity, and under the idea that "Anthems, Responds, and Invitatories" "did break the continued course of the reading of the Scriptures," the compilers of the Prayer Book, instead of simplifying them, struck all out, often with loss of much beauty and instructiveness. At the same time, retaining the use of appropriate Psalms in the Occasional Services, they considerably reduced their number. Similarly, while keeping to the principle of Special Selections of Psalms for solemn occasions, they restricted this interference with the regular arrangement to the four great Festivals—Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsuntide (to which in 1559 the two chief Fasts, Ash-Wednesday and Good Friday, were added); and, even in regard to Psalms occupying the place of Canticles in the Daily Services (such as Ps. xcvi.), provided very carefully against any chance of repetition. Subsequently the Psalms used specially as Introits in the Prayer Book of 1549 (see *Introduction to the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels*) were struck out. In fact, in the Psalms, even more than in the Lessons, the principle of regularity has been allowed complete predominance, and speciality confined within the narrowest limits. The appropriateness of the Services to particular occasions may have been impaired thereby; and, indeed, in the American Prayer Book it has been thought well to rectify this defect by increase of the number of the days for which Proper Psalms are appointed, and by the provision of selections of Psalms which may be substituted at the discretion of the Minister for the Psalms of the day. But the desired result has certainly followed, in the wide extension of knowledge and use of the Psalter by all classes of the members of the Church of England.

(V.) THE CHRISTIAN USE OF THE PSALMS.—With this familiar use of the Psalter as a treasure-house of Christian thought and devotion are closely connected two questions of great interest.

THEIR EVANGELICAL CHARACTER.—This question, indeed, bears directly on the propriety of the use itself. Is the spirit of the Psalter, belonging as it does to the Old Covenant, so far "Evangelical" that it can rightly express the religious



life of Christians under the New? The practice of ages has, indeed, unhesitatingly answered the question in the affirmative; and the leading characteristic of the Psalms already noticed—the profound sense of a spiritual Communion with a God, who has covenant with man, and on whom the soul can rest with an absolute trust—may well justify the answer. In our deeper knowledge of this fundamental conception, on which the Psalms rest, we may even be able to enter more fully into their inspired meaning than those who first heard or sang them, and so may claim them as not less, but more, properly our own. But while this is true in the main, yet still in many points we have to do what the appending of the *Gloria* to each Psalm may be held to symbolize—that is, to translate them into the fuller and higher language of the Gospel. For of them, as of all other parts of the ancient system, it is true that “the Law”—the old Covenant—“made nothing perfect.” Thus, for example, in relation to the future life—while there is undoubtedly the germ of the full Christian belief, certainly in a future state, perhaps in a Resurrection—yet this imperfection is marked by the alternation of the sure confidence of Ps. xvi., xvii. that “God will not leave the soul in hell,” and that we shall “awake up after His likeness,” with the bewilderment of Ps. lxxxviii., cxv., in regard of the “land where all things”—even God’s glory—would seem “to be forgotten,” and “the dead go down into silence, and praise Him not.” It is an imperfection which, except in dark hours of passing despondency, none should feel, for whom the Lord Jesus Christ “has brought life and immortality to light.” Again, in the relation to God, while—with such notable exceptions as Ps. li.—there is less profound sense of the unworthiness of man to assert innocence and challenge judgment, than belongs to the fuller conception which the Christian has of “the exceeding sinfulness of sin,” yet—strange as this may seem—there is also a less complete subordination of the spirit of fear and awe to love, than accords with such consciousness of God’s love to us, as is breathed by St. Paul in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, or by St. John in the fifth chapter of his first Epistle. Still more evidently in relation to man, the fierceness of the “Imprecatory Psalms” (see Ps. xxxv. 4-8; lxix. 22-28; cix. 6-20), crying out for vengeance on the enemies of the Psalmist, as enemies of goodness and of God—a vengeance, which, after the fashion of old times, may be extended even to their children—belongs to the “spirit of Elias” rather than the “spirit of Christ.” So the last martyr of the Old Testament (2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22) died with the cry “The Lord look upon it, and require it,” the first martyr of the New with the prayer of forgiveness, “Lord, lay not this sin to

their charge” (Acts vii. 60). These Psalms, indeed, have their lessons to us still, warning us against weak condonation of evil and lukewarmness in the battle against it. It is eternally right to hate sin, to recognise the unceasing need of struggle against it and those who sustain it, to long for and trust in a Divine retribution, to rejoice in believing that the enemies of God must fall. But Our Lord has taught us, while we hate the sin, to love and pity the sinner, while we look for judgment, to leave it wholly to God’s Righteousness and Mercy, and to beware of thinking that the enemies of God’s servants are necessarily enemies of God Himself. In these things, and such things as these, it is right to read the Psalms (as probably we mostly do half-unconsciously) in the light of the word and the grace of Christ, dispelling whatever is in them of darkness and imperfection, and transfiguring their brightness into a diviner beauty.

THEIR MESSIANIC WITNESS.—The other question is of less practical urgency, though hardly of less religious interest. How far are the Psalms Messianic? How far did they, consciously or unconsciously, foreshadow the true Christ?

Here also Christian tradition has pronounced a similar affirmative; and has sometimes pushed, even to the verge of fanciful exaggeration, its instinctive consciousness of this witness to Christ in the Psalter. That in some sense there is Messianic anticipation in the Psalter is absolutely certain, as by the undoubting belief of the Jews before Our Lord came, so by the express claim of Himself (see, for example, Matt. xxii. 42) and His Apostles (see Acts ii. 25-35; xiii. 33-35). Considering, indeed, the universal tendency to Messianic expectation in the whole idea of the Ancient Covenant, and so in the whole of the Old Testament Revelation and in Jewish thought, it is inconceivable that in this utterance of what is deepest and most spiritual in that Covenant, such anticipation should be wanting. Accordingly, when we read the Psalter carefully, we undoubtedly trace this expectation of the Messiah in His twofold nature, as the true Son of Man and as the manifestation of “God with us,” constantly underlying its utterances, and breaking forth plainly again and again. His royalty, as Son of David, in a kingdom over all nations, which is a kingdom of God, is perhaps the dominant idea; less marked, and less recognised by Israel, but not less real, is the foreshadowing of His suffering, and of His partaking, as Son of Man, of the weakness and burden of humanity; nor less evident, in contrast with this, the acknowledgment of Him as the true Son of God.

But it may be well to examine more closely this Messianic application in a few characteristic instances. It will then

appear that in some cases this anticipation is unconscious. The application of the Psalms, even on the highest authority, may be simply application. Thus, when the denunciation of the treachery of the "familiar friend" of Ps. xli. 9 is applied by Our Lord to the treason of Judas (John xiii. 18), and when the judgment invoked in Ps. lxxix. 25; cix. 8, is applied by St. Peter to his terrible doom, it is not necessarily implied that such application was known and intended by the Psalmist. So again, the complaint of Ps. lxxix. 21, "They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink," while it was signally fulfilled in the great Passion of Calvary, was probably to the Psalmist only a figure of insulting and malignant cruelty. In such cases as these, although to us there must be association with the Christ after the event, there may well have been no conscious anticipation of Him.

But, putting these aside, the Messianic foreshadowings of the Psalms are, as a rule, typical rather than directly prophetic.

There are, indeed, Psalms which are of the character of prophecy, because in them the writer does not express any emotion or aspiration of his own, but contemplates as from without the revelation of the Kingdom of God. Such is Ps. ii. (quoted in Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5), foretelling the struggle against enemies, and the enthronement in Zion of a King, who is the Son of God. Such, again, is Ps. xlv. (quoted in Heb. i. 8), contemplating in exultation the marriage feast of the King, who is hailed with the Divine title. Such, above all, is Ps. cx., quoted by Our Lord Himself as well as His Apostles (Matt. xxii. 44; Acts ii. 34; Heb. i. 13; x. 12), as foreseeing the "Lord of David," the "Priest after the order of Melchisedech," enthroned at the right hand of God, till His enemies be made His footstool. These are direct prophecies, and—whatever lesser fulfilments they may have had—it is impossible to doubt that they pointed on to the expected Messiah.

But these are exceptional. As a rule, the Psalm is simply the expression of a conscious communion with God, which implies two things—the revelation of Jehovah Himself to the soul of man (such as is promised in Jer. xxxi. 33), writing itself plainly both on mind and heart; and the exaltation of humanity, as made in the Divine Image, to an inspired realization of this Revelation of God. Now, it is not only clear, but it was familiarly known to the Jews, that both these elements of the communion with God were to be perfected in the Messiah; for the Messiah was at once an "Emmanuel" (Isa. vii. 14), a manifestation of "Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6); and on the other hand, a Son of Man, "seed of Abraham" and "Son of David," although on Him are accumulated (as in Isa. ix. 6) attributes far above humanity, essentially Divine.

So far, therefore, as any Psalmist realized the Communion with God in both its phases, so far he always was, and often knew himself to be, a type of the Messiah; so far he used language true in measure of himself, true without measure of "Him who was to come." He prophesied (so to speak) from within.

Thus, to take the celebrated example of Ps. xvi. 8-11, it is obviously in its original conception the expression of a joyful and thankful sense of unity with God, first in the familiar blessings of this world, next in the unknown mystery of Hell (Hades) and the grave; yet it is no less obvious (as both St. Peter and St. Paul argue) that it must be fulfilled perfectly, not in David, who underwent the common lot of man, but in Him who broke the chains, because He had "the keys, of Hell and of death." So also Ps. xl. 6-10 is in itself a declaration of the truth, so often urged by the Prophets, that sacrifice in itself is nothing, and the devotion of heart and life is everything; but yet, so far as it announces the passing away of the old sacrificial system, as merely typical of good things to come, it is clear (as is argued in Heb. x. 1-10), that it could be uttered only by the great Antitype Himself. Similarly in the great Messianic Psalm (Ps. cxviii.), while we have primarily a vivid dramatic picture of a triumphant King, coming with his train to worship in the Temple, yet the instinct of the people of Jerusalem on the day of Our Lord's triumphal entry rightly applied to the Messiah the cry "Hosanna" and the blessing on "Him who cometh in the Name of the Lord." Nor less strikingly, in that memorable picture of the suffering for a time in this world of sin of the Messenger of God (Ps. xxii.), we recognise, indeed, the pathetic utterance of the soul of the persecuted Psalmist himself, and yet, even had not Our Lord on the Cross taken this utterance as His own, we could hardly have failed to read in the whole Psalm a marvellous foreshadowing, even in its details, of the great Passion on Calvary—corresponding from the side of inner consciousness to the celebrated picture from without of the Suffering Messiah in Isa. liii. In these instances, as in many others, the general principle is clearly brought out. As Christian life is the conscious reproduction of the Life of Christ manifested on earth, so, far more vaguely but still truly, the godly life of the ancient servants of God was a foreshadowing of that which was to be revealed. It is in virtue of this fundamental principle that all Christian ages have followed the early Apostolic teaching, by acknowledging in the Psalms a typical witness of Christ.

(VI.) THE FORM OF THE PSALMS.—It remains now only to notice briefly the peculiar poetical form of the Psalm, and the various methods of its musical recitation.

The poetry of the Psalm, like all the other poetry of Holy Scriptures, although in the original it has a kind of rhythmical cadence in each clause, is chiefly marked by a PARALLELISM of idea, generally expressed within the limits of each verse, sometimes extending to groups of verses. Each verse is mostly of the nature of a distich, in which there is a close correspondence of the two members in three chief relations.

(a) Most frequently this relation is a relation of Identity—the latter half of the verse simply repeating the idea of the former in different words; as—

“The Lord hath heard my petition,  
The Lord will receive my prayer.”

Or—

“His travail shall come on his own head,  
His wickedness shall fall on his own pate.”

(b) Sometimes the relation is of Antithesis—the latter clause supplying an idea exactly opposite to that of the former; as—

“The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;  
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Or—

“There is neither speech nor language:  
But their voices are heard among them.”

(c) Sometimes the relation is of Inference—the latter clause containing a conclusion drawn from the former; as—

“The Lord is known to execute judgment;  
The ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands.”

Or—

“The Lord is my Shepherd:  
Therefore can I lack nothing.”

Occasionally, but more rarely, the verse assumes the character of a tristich, or three-line stanza—the latter member being (so to speak) enlarged; as—

“Thou shalt shew me the path of life:  
In Thy Presence is fulness of joy;  
At Thy right hand is pleasure for evermore.”

Or—

“My heart was glad;  
My glory rejoiced;  
My flesh shall rest in hope.”

Occasionally even of a tetrastich or four-line stanza; as—

“The ungodly have drawn the sword,  
They have bent their bow:  
To cast down the poor and needy,  
To slay such as are of right conversation.”

Besides, however, this parallelism in successive verses, we find cases in which the correspondence extends over groups of successive verses; as—

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
Be lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of Glory shall come in.  
Who is the King of Glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Be lift up, ye everlasting doors:  
And the King of Glory shall come in.  
Who is the King of Glory?  
The Lord of Hosts:  
He is the King of Glory.”

In this case, as in some others, the beginning and end of the connected group of verses is marked by the insertion of “Selah,” indicating (as we have seen) the interposition of a musical symphony. By this (for example) we see that Ps. iii. is divided into three stanzas; the first two of two verses each, contrasting the sense of trouble expressed in vs. 1, 2, with the sense of God’s protection in vs. 3, 4; the last of four verses applying both in mingled prayer and thanksgiving. So again Ps. lxi. is similarly divided into two stanzas, each of four verses.

In other cases this division of idea is marked by the recurrence of a burden with or without the interposed “Selah.” Thus in Ps. xlvii., the last two sections (vs. 4-7, 8-11) end with the joyful exclamation—

“The Lord of Hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.”

Again, in Ps. xlii., xliii., which are virtually one Psalm, we have three such sections—each ended with the cry—

“Why art thou so heavy, O my soul?  
Why art thou so disquieted within me?  
Put thy trust in God;  
I will yet give Him thanks;  
Who is the help of my countenance and my God.”

The grandest instance is, however, Ps. cvii., in which the first four sections, containing distinct pictures of life’s vicissitudes, are ended with a burden, of which the first member is always the same—

“O that men would praise God for His goodness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

while the second member varies at each successive repetition.

In a few Psalms the acrostic principle is preserved in successive clauses (as in Ps. cxi., cxii.); in successive verses (as in Ps. xxv., xxxiv., cxlv.); or in successive groups of verses (as in Ps. xxxvii., cxix.). (Occasionally this acrostic arrangement is imperfectly carried out, as notably in Ps. ix., x.) This is, however, exceptional; it has more artificiality of system than usual, and tends to break up the sense of the Psalm into separate ideas or maxims. It was probably adopted as a help to memory.

In these various ways, without being subjected to the rigid fetters of metre or rhyme, the language of the Psalms has impressed upon it that modulation and partial artificiality of form, which in all literatures seems to intensify, by confining within limits, the imaginative force of poetry. It is remarkable, and singularly conducive to the universal use of the Psalter, that since this kind of poetic form, unlike those of more modern poetry, attaches to idea more than word, it admits of free rendering in all the various languages into which the Psalms have been translated.

**THE MUSICAL RECITATION OF THE PSALMS.**—In some degree correspondent to this parallelism is the nature of the music, to which in the Christian Church the Psalms have been set. Of the methods of musical recitation of the Psalms, as they existed in the Jewish Church, although much speculation, more or less probable, has been employed, we cannot be said to know anything with certainty. In the Christian Church we not only know from very early times that, as their original intention demanded, they were sung and not said, and, where there was opportunity, musically accompanied; but we learn of three methods of singing them. Sometimes they were sung in full by the whole Congregation; sometimes they were sung responsively, a Precentor singing alternate verses and Congregation or Choir taking up the others; sometimes, and most frequently of all, they were sung antiphonally by the two sides of the Choir or the Congregation. The last method is of immemorial antiquity in the East, and it is said to have been introduced into the West by St. Ambrose in the fifth century. With this introduction is connected the origination of the old Ambrosian settings, which were afterwards improved by Gregory the Great (about A.D. 600) into the well-known Gregorian Tones. From that time onwards the prevalence of antiphonal singing—not, however, without some exemplifications of the other two forms—has been the rule of the Church; and various forms of Chant have been introduced, all having the same character of correspondence, as is perceptible in the idea of the Psalms themselves, and in the older forms preserving the completeness of each verse as a whole. Like other

preservations of ancient usage, it was attacked by the more extreme Puritan party, who would have superseded its congregational use by the new Hymnody, and in plain disregard of the intrinsic character of the Psalter, claimed that it should be used only as other parts of Holy Scripture are used. Even in 1689, among other proposals of the Revisers, it was suggested that all chanting should be abolished. But happily these proposals have never been carried out. In her use of the Psalter the Church of England has remained in harmony with the best traditions of the ancient Church; and the Psalms have continued to be the leading element in her Service of Praise, and a most powerful influence over the spiritual devotion of her members.

[It should be noticed that the Psalter in the Prayer Book is still taken from the Version of the "Great Bible" of 1540, which, unlike the Authorised Bible Version of 1611 and the still more accurate Revised Version of 1885, often follows the Vulgate, and through it the Septuagint, where they vary from the present Hebrew text. For this older Version had become by familiarity so endeared to the people, that it was felt undesirable to change it, and it certainly seems to lend itself with special appropriateness and beauty to Liturgical use.]

THE  
PSALMS OF DAVID.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE PSALTER.

THIS contains forty-one Psalms; of which all, except Ps. i., ii., x., xxxiii. (which have no titles), are ascribed to David. It is undoubtedly the earliest in date, and it is thought by some to have been the original Psalter, completed in the time of Solomon for the service of the Temple.

PSALM I.

This Psalm, which, unlike almost all the Psalms of the First Book, is anonymous, appears to have been prefixed to that Book as a kind of didactic Preface. (It is notable that in some of the best MSS. of Acts xiii. 33 a quotation from our second Psalm is given as from "the first Psalm," as though this Psalm was not reckoned as an integral part of the Book.) The Psalm is obviously paraphrased in Jer. xvii. 5-8. In its style and tone of thought it breathes the spirit of the Book of Proverbs and some parts of the Book of Job, and has been not improbably referred to the age, and perhaps the hand, of Solomon, at the time when the inauguration of the Temple Service would suggest the formation of a Psalter.

The subject is the contrast of the blessing of God on the righteous and His curse on the wicked—according alike with the "first thoughts" of simple faith, and the "third thoughts" of mature conviction, to which the soul returns after the sense of the contradictions and imperfections of life, so emphatically brought out in the Book of Job and many of the Psalms.

v. 1. There is here a climax in the stages of evil: first, the entering into the ideas and thoughts of the ungodly (properly, of those who have no stay or rest; comp. Is. lvii. 20, 21); next, the deliberate stand taken in the way of active sin; lastly, the assumption of the seat of leadership and authority among the profane scoffers at God and at goodness.

v. 2. Stress is laid on the Law—taken in its largest sense as the known declaration of God's will—as drawing to itself both the heart in delight, and the mind in constant meditation (see Deut. vi. 6-9).

vv. 3, 4. The image is singularly perfect. The tree draws through its root, from the moisture of the river of God, the power of growth and freshness in all the heat of trial; it is always green in living beauty; at right seasons it yields solid fruit; and this fruit is brought to perfection. (Comp. John xv. 1-8.) In the

close of verse 4 the metaphor is applied.

v. 5. The contrary image does not exactly correspond; for the wicked are not worthy of comparison even with a worthless tree: they are briefly described as mere chaff, separated by God from the true wheat, and swept away by the wind from the high threshing-floor. (Comp. Matt. iii. 12.)

vv. 6, 7. At the end all metaphor is dropped. The Judgment comes in this world or the next; the wicked cannot stand before it, or find place in the holy "congregation" of God's people. (Comp. Rev. vi. 15; vii. 9, 10.) For the way of the righteous is "known," that is, blessed of God (see Is. xliii. 1; Job xxiii. 1; John x. 2-4; 2 Tim. ii. 19); therefore, being His way, it leads to life. The way of the ungodly loses itself necessarily in darkness, simply because it is the self-chosen way, which God disowns.

THE  
PSALMS OF DAVID.

DAY I. Morning Prayer.

PSALM 1.

*Beatus vir, qui non abiit, &c.*  
**B**LESSED is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners: and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law will he exercise himself day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the water-side: that will bring forth his fruit in due season.

4 His leaf also shall not wither: and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

5 As for the ungodly, it is not so with them: but they are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.

6 Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment: neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

7 But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM 2.

*Quare fremuerunt gentes?*  
**W**HY do the heathen so furiously rage together: and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together: against the Lord, and against his Anointed.

3 Let us break their bonds asunder: and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath: and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my King: upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will preach the law, where-

of the Lord hath said unto me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

8 Desire of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance: and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron: and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord in fear: and rejoice unto him with reverence.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way: if his wrath be kindled, (yea, but a little,) blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

PSALM 3.

*Domine, quid multiplicati?*  
**L**ORD, how are they increased that trouble me: many are they that rise against me.

2 Many one there be that say of my soul: There is no help for him in his God.

3 But thou, O Lord, art my defender: thou art my worship, and the lifter up of my head.

4 I did call upon the Lord with my voice: and he heard me out of his holy hill.

5 I laid me down and slept, and rose up again: for the Lord sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people: that have set themselves against me round about.

7 Up, Lord, and help me, O my God: for thou smitest all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: and thy blessing is upon thy people.

This Psalm stands out in vigorous contrast with the didactic calmness of the preceding. It is a grand prophetic Psalm, setting forth with singular dramatic vividness the establishment, the conflict, and the victory, of the kingdom of the "Anointed One." No one who considers the grandeur of its promises can doubt that in its full sense it is a Messianic Psalm, as was certainly held by ancient Jewish interpreters, and as is expressly declared in the New Testament (Acts iv. 26; xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5; comp. Rev. ii. 27). Naturally it is used as one of the Proper Psalms for EASTER-DAY. But the type of this greater Antitype is evidently some anointed king of Israel, menaced by rebellion of subject nations, yet relying on the Divine decree, and proudly confident of triumph. Now the Psalm is referred to David in Acts iv. 25, and both its position in the Psalter and its style suit well with that reference. In the great promise to David (2 Sam. vii. 14) we read, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son"—there applied to his promised successor, though quoted in Ps. lxxxix. 20—37 as applicable to David himself. Probably therefore the "Anointed" of this Psalm is primarily David himself or Solomon; the occasion either the final risings against David after the establishment of his kingdom (2 Sam. viii. x.) or the rebellions against Solomon in his early days, clearly indicated in 1 Kin. xi. 14—25.

The Psalm falls into four sections: (a) *vv.* 1—3, the rebellion of the enemies; (b) *vv.* 4—6, the rebuke of the Lord Jehovah; (c) *vv.* 7—9, the triumphant claim of the promise by the Anointed One; (d) *vv.* 10—12, the warning against rebellion by the Psalmist.

*v.* 1. *The people*—properly, "the peoples," that is, the subject nations.

*v.* 2. *His Anointed*. "The Lord's Anointed" is the name given to the kings of Israel, especially in the days of David and Solomon (1 Sam. ii. 10; xii. 3, 5; xvi. 6, &c.). All these are types of Him, who was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38), to whom properly the words apply. "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (John i. 49). We note that the words of this verse strike the key-note of the first recorded prayer in the persecuted kingdom of Christ (Acts iv. 24—27).

*vv.* 4, 5. *Laugh them to scorn*. So in Ps. xxxvii. 13; lix. 8, the Lord Himself, like His prophet (1 Kin. xviii. 27), is represented as first visiting His foes with the righteous scorn stirred by the sight of vanity and folly; then, as speaking in the righteous wrath, which visits what is more than folly. This belongs to the sterner revelation of the Old Testament; yet even Our Lord uses irony (Mark vii. 9) and the most unsparring severity of denunciation (Matt. xxiii. 1—33).

*v.* 6. *Yet have I, &c.* The "I" is emphatic; the establishment of the Kingdom is Divine and therefore unassailable. The hill of Zion, the citadel of David, and the place of

the first habitation of the ark in David's time (2 Sam. v. 7—9; vi. 12), is the type at once of holiness and of strength (Ps. xlvi. 1—8).

*v.* 7. It should be (as in the Bible Version), "I will declare the decree." The Anointed One speaks with clear reference to the great promise of God, made to the seed of David (2 Sam. vii. 14).

*This day have I begotten Thee*—that is (as the context shews), "I have proclaimed Thee My Son, and so raised Thee to a higher sonship. The words are applied to Our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension (Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5), in which He enters on His Messianic royalty, and is (see Col. i. 18) "the first-born from the dead."

*vv.* 8, 9. The universality of the Messianic kingdom is always one of its essential features, fulfilling the universal promise to Abraham (see Ps. lxxii. 8—11; Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27). In accordance with the occasion of the Psalm, its character as a kingdom of peace and love is lost in the declaration of its final triumph over the enemies (comp. Rev. ii. 27; xix. 11—21).

*v.* 12. *Kiss the Son*. The word rendered "Son" is not the same as in *v.* 7; it is an Aramaic word, and is not found except in the later Hebrew (see Prov. xxxi. 2). The translation

of our version certainly best suits the context; it is that of the Syriac version, and of some of the best Hebrew scholars. The kiss is, of course, the sign of homage to the Anointed King (comp. 1 Sam. xi.). But the majority of the ancient versions and Targums are against it. The LXX. and Vulgate have "accept discipline" or warning; others render "worship in purity"

or "worship the chosen one." If our version be rejected, probably the LXX. rendering is best. It is an exhortation to yield to the Divine decree, lest the wrath of God be provoked. The latter part of the verse is best rendered, "lest He" (Jehovah) "be angry, and so ye perish on your way. In a little" (speedily) "is His wrath kindled. Blessed are they that trust in Him."

## PSALM III.

The superscription, "A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son" (2 Sam. xv. 14), may be unhesitatingly accepted, as supported both by the style and substance of the Psalm. It is evidently a Morning Hymn (see *v.* 5), divided into four sections, each (except the third) closing with the *Selah*, indicating a musical interlude. Of these sections (a) the first (*vv.* 1, 2) describes the gathering of the scornful enemies; (b) *vv.* 3, 4, are the expression of unshaken confidence in the Lord; (c) *vv.* 5, 6, accordingly defy the countless enemies in God's Name; (d) *vv.* 7, 8, cry to Him for victorious help and blessing on His people.

*v.* 1. *Lord, how, &c.* The rapid growth of the conspiracy is emphatically marked in the history (2 Sam. xv. 12—14); and it was clearly for the time beyond David's power to resist; hence his hurried flight.

*v.* 2. *There is no help for him in God*. Compare the thought expressed in the curse of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 8), "The Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom," David is looked upon as under Divine wrath. God's chastisement is mistaken for condemnation.

*v.* 3. *My defender*—properly, as in the Bible Version, "a shield about me" (see Ps. xviii. 2; xxviii. 7); *my worship*—properly, "my glory." There is a climax in the promise of protection, glory, triumph.

*v.* 4. *I did call, &c.*—properly, "I cry, and He answereth me."

*Out of His holy hill*—evidently Mount Zion, where the ark was still left (2 Sam. xv. 24—29) by David's express command. In spirit David still worships before it, and realizes God's Presence there, answering his prayer. Compare the prayer of Solomon (1 Kin. viii. 30, 33, &c.) for

all who "worship towards this house."

*v.* 5. *I laid me down, &c.*—probably on the evening of his flight, laying his unsheltered head in the wilderness, not without imminent danger of death (2 Sam. xvii. 1—22). In the fresh morning he rises in trustful sense of God's hand over him.

*v.* 6. *Ten thousands of the people* (see 2 Sam. xv. 12; xvii. 11).

*v.* 7. *Up, Lord*. The call, like the *Ezurgat Deus* of Ps. lxviii., is evidently taken from the prayer of Moses in the wilderness at the moving of the ark (Num. x. 35). The ark is far away; but the Lord of Hosts is with David—to smite the foe like wild beasts "on the jaw," and "to break the teeth" of their devouring fury.

*v.* 8. In this last verse there is a peculiar beauty. In the midst of the desertion and ingratitude of Israel David forgets himself in prayer for them. "Thy blessing be on Thy people." (Comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.) Whether God give him victory or not, he pleads for the covenant with His people; in which He is their salvation.

## PSALM IV.

This Psalm, by many correspondences of detail with Ps. iii., and by the allusion in *v.* 9, is evidently referred to the same time and occasion. It is the contemporaneous Evening Hymn of the fugitive king (used as the first Psalm at Compline in the old Service book).

In the heading we find, as in fifty-four other Psalms (almost all Psalms of David, Asaph, or the sons of Korah), "to the Chief Musician," or



"Precentor," implying a direction to use the Psalm in the Temple Service; and in this case there is the addition "upon *Neginoth*," that is, to accompaniment of "stringed instruments." This heading must, of course, belong to the time of its insertion in the Psalter, not of its composition in the wilderness.

It falls into three sections: (a) the opening verse of prayer (v. 1); (b) the address of rebuke and caution to the "sons of men" (vv. 2-5); (c) the encouragement of despondency and distress (vv. 6-9).

v. 1. *O God of my righteousness.* The phrase is emphatic. David was thought to be cast off by the Lord; but in His grace and forgiveness he finds through penitence the true "righteousness which is by faith" (see Ps. li. 7-12).

*Hast set me at liberty*—properly (as in R.V.), "set me at large," that is, given me room in the straits of difficulty (see Ps. xviii. 36).

v. 2. *Sons of men.* The original word seems to imply "sons of the great" or "the brave," evidently the professed warriors or "mighty men," whom the wars of Saul and David had so brought out as to make them "too strong" for the king. The address throughout may be to the warriors with Absalom, or alternately (in vv. 2, 3 and vv. 4, 5) to them and to the "sons of Zeruah" on his own side.

vv. 2, 3. *How long.* The remonstrance is twofold—against open rebellion, "turning his glory into shame" (see A.V.), and against baseless calumny ("leasing," i.e. "lying"). From these he appeals to the evidence of God's acceptance of his prayer; as a sign that he is "godly" (comp. John ix. 30-33). The word rendered "godly," frequent in the Psalter, appears to mean either "merciful" or (as in margin of R.V.), "one who receives mercy" (of God). The latter sense seems best to suit the context here.

v. 4. *Stand in awe.* There is much to be said for the reading of the LXX. (adopted in Eph. iv. 26), "Be angry" (if ye will) "and sin not"; especially if it be taken as applied to moderate the fierceness of such men as Joab against those who were still brethren. The counsel of self-communing "in the chamber" is not unlike the "Let not the sun go down on your wrath" of Eph. iv. 26. The command to take refuge in God, offering the "sacrifices of righteousness" (see Ps. li. 19), is similarly an appeal from the wrath of men to the righteous judgment of Him who has said, "Vengeance is mine" (comp. Rom. xii. 19).

vv. 6-8 are evidently an encouragement to his own men, despondent in their weariness and distress for food (2 Sam. xvii. 29)—speaking of a joy in the "light of God's countenance," "more than they have when their corn and wine and oil are increased" (see R.V.) The reference is clearly to the prosperous camp of the enemies, who had all Judah at their back. In v. 7 there is a reminiscence of the priestly blessing (Num. vi. 26). Comp. Ps. xxxi. 1c; lxxvii. 1; lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

v. 9 is the last waking utterance of faith (exactly corresponding with iii. 5) in God, who gives the "peace" and safety "which the world cannot give."

## PSALM V.

This Psalm is evidently (see v. 3) another Morning Hymn. In the heading it is called "A Psalm of David." Evidently the Psalmist is now at Jerusalem, having access to the Sanctuary, in which he delights to take refuge from the treachery and hatred of his enemies. If it be really David's, it may perhaps be referred to the time of depression and weakness, just before the outburst of the rebellion of Absalom—laying as it does emphatic stress on treachery and falsehood, guided by evil counsel.

The addition "to the Chief Musician" indicates its designation for Temple worship, and "upon *Nehiloth*" directs its use with a "flute accompaniment," perhaps because of its pathetic and plaintive character.

It has three divisions: (a) the introductory prayer (vv. 1-3); (b) the confidence in acceptance (vv. 4-7); (c) prayer against the enemies of man and God (vv. 8-13).

## PSALM 4.

*Cum invocarem.*

**H**EAR me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honour: and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?

3 Know this also, that the Lord hath chosen to himself the man that is godly: when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.

5 Offer the sacrifice of righteousness: and put your trust in the Lord.

6 There be many that say: Who will shew us any good?

7 Lord, lift thou up: the light of thy countenance upon us.

8 Thou hast put gladness in my heart: since the time that their corn, and wine, and oil, increased.

9 I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest: for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety.

## PSALM 5.

*Verba mea auribus.*

**P**ONDER my words, O Lord: consider my meditation.

2 O hearken thou unto the voice of my calling, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I make my prayer.

3 My voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord: early in the morn-

ing will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

4 For thou art the God that hast no pleasure in wickedness: neither shall any evil dwell with thee.

5 Such as be foolish shall not stand in thy sight: for thou hatest all them that work vanity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor both the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.

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.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies: make thy way plain before my face.

9 For there is no faithfulness in his mouth: their inward parts are very wickedness.

10 Their throat is an open sepulchre: they flatter with their tongue.

11 Destroy thou them, O God; let them perish through their own imaginations: cast them out in the multitude of their ungodliness; for they have rebelled against thee.

12 And let all them that put their trust in thee rejoice: they shall ever be giving of thanks, because thou defendest them; they that love thy Name shall be joyful in thee;

13 For thou, Lord, wilt give thy blessing unto the righteous: and with thy favourable kindness wilt thou defend him as with a shield.

## DAY 1.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 6.

*Domine, ne in furore.*

**O**LORD, rebuke me not in thine indignation: neither chasten me in thy displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

3 My soul also is sore troubled: but, Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?

4 Turn thee, O Lord, and de-

liver my soul: O save me for thy mercy's sake.

5 For in death no man remembereth thee: and who will give thee thanks in the pit?

6 I am weary of my groaning; every night wash I my bed: and water my couch with my tears.

7 My beauty is gone for very trouble: and worn away because of all mine enemies.

8 Away from me, all ye that

vv. 1, 2. The "words" of the Psalmist are described as including the two phases of worship—the "meditation," which is the low murmur of nearly silent prayer, and the "calling," that is, the cry of impassioned vehemence.

v. 3. There is an emphasis on the phrase "in the morning" (as in Ps. cxxx. 6; cxxxix. 18). The "waking thoughts" of the Psalmist are "bright with God's praise." The word *direct* is properly "set in order," a word specially used for the preparation of sacrifice (Lev. i. 7, 8; vi. 12), to which prayer is here by implication likened, as explicitly in Ps. cxli. 2. The same comparison is even more frequently and naturally applied to thanksgiving (Ps. i. 14; lxi. 30, 31; cvii. 22; Heb. xiii. 15).

v. 4. This special conception of God, as One who in His righteousness rejects the evil and loves the good, is evidently suggested by the circumstances of the Psalmist. But, as usual, it is in the sense not of his own goodness, but of "the multitude of God's lovingkindnesses" that he ventures to approach Him (v. 7); and even then in the "fear" of humble reverence.

vv. 5, 6. There is a climax in the description of wickedness—beginning with "folly" (empty boastfulness), passing on to deliberate "work of iniquity" and "lying," ending at last in the union of "bloodthirstiness and deceit" (with

apparently a personal reference, possibly to Ahithophel).

v. 7. The words "house" and "temple" have been supposed to shew that the Psalm was written after the time of David; and certainly it is to the fixed Temple that they are most commonly applied. But as they seem to mean only "habitation" and "palace," there is no reason why they should not have been used of the Tabernacle on Mount Zion.

v. 9. The chief emphasis is throughout on treachery—in the mouth that cannot be trusted, the inner heart a gulf of wickedness, the throat a sepulchre leading to the abyss, the tongue "made smooth" (like a serpent's) that the prey may slip over it.

v. 10. Finally this treachery is viewed not as a wrong to man, but a sin against God. Thereupon follows the prayer (like that of 2 Sam. xv. 31) that "their counsel may be turned to foolishness," and that the wanton "multiplication of transgressions" may cast them out of God's favour.

vv. 12, 13. The tone of the Psalm suddenly changes from plaintiveness to the brightest hope. Those who take refuge in God are to have not only safety and comfort under His shield, but such joy and exultation in His blessing, as is, even amidst the contradictions of this life, the natural heritage of the children of God. Comp. Phil. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16–18; 1 Pet. iv. 13.

## PSALM VI.

This Psalm (the first of the seven Penitential Psalms, used on Ash-Wednesday) is at first sight more of sorrow than penitence; but the undercurrent of repentant consciousness is seen in the view of trouble, as God's "rebuke and chastening," and in the sense of the loss of His Presence (v. 4). It is traditionally "A Psalm of David"; and with this the style and character well agree. The whole idea of the Psalm—in its mingled sorrow and hope—is like that of Ps. v., and it may well refer to the same period of depression which preceded the rebellion of Absalom. But in Ps. v. the main cause of that depression is from enmity without; here, rather from sickness and sorrow within.

The heading, besides noting the accompaniment of stringed instruments (as in Ps. iv.), adds "upon *Sheminith*," which seems to mean "on the octave"—to be sung, that is, by bass voices, as suiting its sad and sombre tone of thought.

It falls into three divisions: (a) vv. 1–3, the cry "O Lord, how long?" (b) vv. 4–7, the picture of the sufferer, fainting in excess of sorrow even to death; (c) vv. 8–10, the sudden brightness of comfort and confidence in God.

v. 1. The sorrow is viewed partly as rebuke on the past, partly as chastening for the future. In both

aspects the prayer, repeated in Ps. xxxviii. 1, is no doubt, that, if possible, it may pass away altogether

but that in any case it may not be sent in the severity of God's righteous displeasure. It approaches the idea of Jer. x. 24 ("O Lord, correct me . . . bring me to nothing").

v. 3. The original (see A. V.) is far more striking in its abruptness, simply, "O Lord, how long . . .?" (Comp. Ps. xiii. 1; xc. 13; Rev. vi. 10.) The suffering is evidently twofold—bodily pain piercing to the bones (see Job xxx. 17; xxxiii. 19) and trouble of soul.

v. 4. *Turn thee, O Lord.* The words imply (as in xxiii. 1; xc. 13, &c.) a sense of God's face turned away. In this is the essence of sorrow; in this His servant faints, and cannot live.

v. 5. *In the pit*—that is, in the *Sheol* or *Hades*, the shadowy region of the departed soul, distinguished from the resting-place of the body (see xvi. 10). The whole tone of this verse (with which compare Ps. xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 11; cxv. 17; Is. xxxviii. 18) belongs to the ancient twilight of belief in the future life, as real in-

deed, but unknown and dark, and therefore standing in strong contrast with the brightness of blessing and opportunity in this life. In the New Testament, on the contrary, all is changed by the revelation of Christ. "To depart, &c., is far better" (Phil. i. 21, 23), and "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), because our "life is hid in Him," "who is the Resurrection and the Life."

v. 7. The picture is one of extreme weakness and despondency—such as seems from the history to have characterized David at the time to which the Psalm is referred. *My beauty* should be (as in A. V. and R. V.) "my eye," "dim" and worn out with excess of weeping.

v. 8. Here, even more than in Ps. v. 12, there is an almost startling suddenness of change in tone. The Psalmist's foes are defied; for he feels that his prayer is heard and answered; and therefore all enmity is instantly confounded.

## PSALM VII.

This Psalm is called in the heading *Shiggaion*, which appears to signify a poem of a freer and more erratic kind—an "ode" or "spiritual song" (Eph. v. 19)—and well deserves that title by its bold vividness of painting and freedom of transition from one thought to another. It is "A Psalm of David," evidently, by its freshness of tone and style, belonging to his earlier days. In the heading it is said to have been "sung concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite"—some unknown adherent of Saul who had slandered David to his master. (Comp. 1 Sam. xxiv. 9; xxvi. 19.) The idea that the name is metaphorically used must be rejected. This probably refers it to the days of Saul's persecution and David's wandering—the days of present trouble, but of conscious innocence and certain hope.

It contains (a) a prayer of trust in God (vv. 1, 2); (b) a vehement protestation of innocence and defiance of accusation (vv. 3–5); (c) a cry to God to arise in the judgment, which must surely come (vv. 6–17); (d) a final burst of praise (v. 18).

v. 2. *Lest he devour, &c.* The verse (as also v. 5), singling out one chief enemy, suits well the time of Saul's fierce and deadly enmity against David's "glory," which he envied, and his "life," from which he feared ruin. Before it David avows himself absolutely helpless in 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; xxvi. 20.

vv. 3, 4. These verses, in which David indignantly repels some definite accusation of iniquity and ingratitude to friends, are sometimes interpreted thus: "If I have re-

warded evil to him who dealt friendly with me; if I have displaced" (or "despoiled") "him that without cause was my enemy," so keeping the usual parallelism. But our rendering is probably best, making the second half of the line a parenthetical recollection of an act, going beyond even the returning good for good; and it is almost impossible not to refer it to David's generosity to Saul, when he was hunting his life "without a cause" (1 Sam. xxiv. 4–15; xxvi. 7–20).

vv. 6, 7. The prayer to God to arise in judgment goes beyond the Psalmist's immediate need. It is a grand invocation of the universal retribution on evil from His hand. For v. 6 should be, "Let the host of the peoples be gathered round Thee" (for judgment), "and over it return Thou on high" (unveiling Thy presence from the height of the judgment seat).

v. 8. Here we have one of those almost startling protestations of innocence common in David's earlier Psalms. It is used in relation to the undeserved persecution, so patiently and nobly borne; and, so used, it is natural and right. But it stands in marked contrast with the sense of unworthiness before God brought out in the Psalms of deeper spiritual insight, and still more with the penitent consciousness of guilt running through those which were written after his great sin. In us, who have fuller knowledge of God, and of the true idea of humanity in Jesus Christ, such protestations must be less unreserved.

v. 9. *Guide* should be (as in A.V.) "establish"; *defence* is (as in Ps. iii. 3; v. 12) "shield." Wickedness comes of itself "to an end": the inner righteousness "of the heart and reins" must be "established" for ever, because it is the image of the Eternal.

v. 10. The words "strong and patient" are taken from the LXX. They

are not found in the Hebrew; nor do they exactly suit the context, which emphasizes not so much God's patience, as the preparation, already beginning, of certain retribution for the impenitent. It is better to render (with R.V.) "God is a righteous Judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day."

v. 13. *He ordaineth, &c.*, should be, "He maketh His arrows arrows of fire"—the lightnings of His wrath. The metaphor is taken from the arrows, bearing with them the flame of some inflammable stuff wrapped round them, commonly used in ancient sieges.

v. 15. The sudden change of person marks the abrupt style of the Psalm. By a striking transition the sinner is seen, unconscious of the gathering storm of retribution, travelling slowly in the monstrous birth of iniquity, first conceiving evil in the heart, then bringing forth falsehood in word and deed. The judgment also is viewed as the inevitable consequence, under God's law, of his own deed; he digs the pit of treachery for his own feet; he hurls at others the open violence, only to fall back on his own head.

v. 17. The last verse, as so often, marks the clearing up of all vicissitudes of feeling into thanksgiving and praise of Jehovah, not only as the Most High, but as the All-righteous. It is like the *non confundar in æternum* of the *Te Deum*.

## PSALM VIII.

This Psalm, also "A Psalm of David," is clearly a Psalm of the night. There is nothing to determine its date, although we are naturally tempted to refer it to the night-watches of his shepherd life, or of his life as a fugitive, with which latter, possibly, the heading *Gittith* (see below) may agree. Whenever written, it shows a calm maturity of thought and expression. The idea which runs through it is of the union of littleness and greatness in man, as but one creature of the vast universe, and yet one whom God brings into covenant with Himself. To us the sense of both elements of the antithesis should be immeasurably strengthened; for we know infinitely more at once of the vastness of Nature and of the wonder of God's covenant with man, crowned in the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly in the New Testament we find this picture of the humiliation and exaltation of humanity in general applied in all its fulness to the contrast between the Incarnation and Passion, and the Ascension and Glorification of the true Son of Man (1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 6-9). Hence its use as one of the Psalms of ASCENSION-DAY.

It expresses its main idea, first (a) by implication (in vv. 1-3), speaking in one breath of the exhibition of God's glory in the heavens, and the confession of it by the infant tongue; next (b) explicitly (vv. 4-9), in the

work vanity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The Lord hath heard my petition: the Lord will receive my prayer.

10 All mine enemies shall be confounded, and sore vexed: they shall be turned back, and put to shame suddenly.

### PSALM 7.

*Domine, Deus meus.*

**O** LORD my God, in thee have I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me;

2 Lest he devour my soul, like a lion, and tear it in pieces: while there is none to help.

3 O Lord my God, if I have done any such thing: or if there be any wickedness in my hands;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me: yea, I have delivered him that without any cause is mine enemy;

5 Then let mine enemy persecute my soul, and take me: yea, let him tread my life down upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.

6 Stand up, O Lord, in thy wrath, and lift up thyself, because of the indignation of mine enemies: arise up for me in the judgment that thou hast commanded.

7 And so shall the congregation of the people come about thee: for their sakes therefore lift up thyself again.

8 The Lord shall judge the people; give sentence with me, O Lord: according to my righteousness, and according to the innocency that is in me.

9 O let the wickedness of the ungodly come to an end: but guide thou the just.

10 For the righteous God: trieth the very hearts and reins.

11 My help cometh of God: who preserveth them that are true of heart.

12 God is a righteous Judge, strong, and patient: and God is provoked every day.

13 If a man will not turn, he will whet his sword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

14 He hath prepared for him the instruments of death: he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

15 Behold, he travaileth with mischief: he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth ungodliness.

16 He hath graven and digged up a pit: and is fallen himself into the destruction that he made for other.

17 For his travail shall come upon his own head: and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate.

18 I will give thanks unto the Lord, according to his righteousness: and I will praise the Name of the Lord most High.

### PSALM 8.

*Domine, Dominus noster.*

**O** LORD our Governour, how excellent is thy Name in all the world: thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies: that thou mightest still the enemy, and the avenger.

3 For I will consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers: the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 Thou madest him lower than the angels: to crown him with glory and worship.

6 Thou makest him to have dominion of the works of thy hands: and thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet;

7 All sheep and oxen: yea, and the beasts of the field;

8 The fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea: and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas.

9 O Lord our Governour: how excellent is thy Name in all the world!

contrast of the littleness of man in himself and the majesty in which God has clothed him.

The heading directs it to be used on *Gittith* (as in Ps. lxxxi. of Asaph, and Ps. lxxxiv. of the sons of Korah), and this appears certainly to mean in the lyre, or after the music, of Gath, which the Targum says that David brought back after his sojourn there (1 Sam. xxvii. 1-4).

v. 1. The antithesis of this verse is remarkable. God's "glory" in itself is "set above"—perhaps better "upon"—"the heavens," His "Name," that is, His revelation to His rational creatures, is "in all the earth."

v. 2. *Ordained* (or founded) *strength*. This gives the real sense of the Hebrew rather than the reading of the LXX., "perfected praise"—which is perhaps a true gloss explanatory of the meaning, and is applied by Our Lord Himself (Matt. xxi. 16) to the acclamations of the children on His triumphal entry. There is a wonderful boldness and beauty in the idea that God manifests and founds His strength, not so much in the grandeur of Nature as in the human acknowledgment of His kingdom, even by the childish tongue—the universal instinctive witness to Him as the Supreme ruler in righteousness, against "the enemy and the self-avenger" (self-truster). Compare a similar juxtaposition of ideas in Ps. cxlvii. 3, 4.

v. 4. The cry "What is man?" in itself expresses that bewildering and humiliating sense of man's littleness, in presence of the revelation of the vastness of Creation through the star-lit sky, which increases with our intellectual conception of that

vastness. But the addition "that Thou visitest him," expressing the moral faith in God, as One who has communion and covenant with man, is the utterance of all true religion, which changes bewilderment into adoration, and humiliation into sense of exaltation through God's grace.

v. 5. *Lower than the angels*—the rendering of the Septuagint, quoted in the New Testament (Heb. ii. 7-9), and of other ancient versions. The original word *Elohim* might bear this sense (see Ps. lxxxii. 6), but the common use of the word, and the context here, are both in favour of the translation (see R.V.) "than God." The Psalm (like Gen. i. 27, 28) dwells on man as having in him the image of God veiled in flesh, and in virtue of this being "crowned with glory and dominion" over all the works of God's hands. Nothing less than this is the consciousness of all true religion, brought out perfectly in the knowledge of the Incarnation; and in it there should be no thought of any being, except the soul and God.

v. 9 is the repetition of the first verse, but now with deeper and more thoughtful consciousness, after the reflections of the intervening verses.

## PSALM IX.

This Psalm has so many points of likeness with Ps. x. as to argue common authorship and close connection. In Ps. ix. there is a distinct, although imperfect, acrostic arrangement, which, after an interval, is obviously taken up in Ps. x. 1, 2 and 13-20; and Ps. x., almost alone in Book I., has no heading of its own. Hence in the LXX. the two are made one Psalm. But decisive against this is the slightest consideration of their whole tone and character; for Ps. ix. is a glad song of victory over the heathen, Ps. x. a troubled prayer against domestic rebellion. Probably the latter is a supplement to the former, added not long after by the same hand.

The heading makes Ps. ix. "A Psalm of David." The acrostic arrangement, especially in its incompleteness, is no decisive argument against this ascription to him. If it be accepted, the Psalm may be well referred to the great crowning victory over the Syrians and Ammonites, recorded in 2 Sam. x., which was soon followed by David's great sin and the internal troubles which succeeded it.

It adds "*on Muth-labben*," which seems to mean "Death of the Son," and is usually supposed to be the name of some well-known tune, to be used for this Psalm. We may observe that the verbal order is unusually symmetrical, falling into ten sections of four lines each.

The order of subject is also well marked: (a) the opening of praise (vv. 1, 2); (b) the triumphant picture of judgment upon the heathen (vv. 3-6); (c) the opposite picture of God's protection over His people (vv. 7-10); (d) the remembrance of prayer in trouble answered by His goodness (vv. 11-16); (e) the final contrast of the failure of self-trusting humanity and the hope of the faithful in God (vv. 17-20).

vv. 1, 2, take up and expand the closing verse of Ps. vii., to which in general idea this Psalm bears much resemblance.

v. 3. *While, &c.* It should be, "because my enemies . . . because they fall," &c.

v. 4. *That judgest right*—rather *judging righteously*. Here (as in vv. 8, 9, 12, 16) the goodness of God to His people is viewed as no arbitrary favour, but the support of righteousness against wrong, of true faith against godlessness, of the covenant, in which all nations shall be blessed, against all that ignores and would obliterate it. As in the prophetic books, He is seen as "the Judge of the whole world," who must "do right."

v. 6. *O thou enemy, &c.* This rendering is certainly wrong. It should be (much as in R.V.) "the enemy are come to an end, they are desolate for ever: the cities which Thou hast destroyed, the very memory of them has perished."

v. 9. *Due time*. The original is simply "time of trouble."

*A defence and refuge*, properly, a high fortress; such as crowned many points of the hill-country of Palestine, which David knew so well in his early times of trouble.

v. 12. *When He maketh*. God is spoken of as "the Avenger of blood," that is—according to ancient Eastern custom, recognised and regulated by the Law (Num. xxxv. 12-28)—the nearest of kin, exacting vengeance for blood shed by violence. That vengeance God exacts for all (Gen. ix. 5); but in the use of this special phrase here (as in Job xix. 25) God's Fatherhood towards Israel seems to be implied. He is nearer to each than the nearest of kin.

vv. 13, 14. If the reading of these verses be correct, they must be a

quotation of "the complaint of the poor," i.e. the afflicted, referred to in the previous verse. Otherwise they would break unmeaningly on the triumphant tenour of the whole Psalm, which is, indeed, the fulfilment of the prayer itself, "that I may shew all Thy praises," &c.

vv. 15, 16. Probably there is some special reference to devices of the enemy, which had signally defeated themselves. But the idea itself—that wickedness works its own ruin, and deceit deceives itself—is the expression of a great Law of God's Providence, and therefore is frequent in the Psalms (see v. 11; vii. 15-17, &c.).

vv. 17, 18. *Shall be turned into hell*—properly, "shall return to *Sheol*" or *Hades* (see vi. 5)—that is, shall pass away in death to the unknown spiritual world, just as the body shall return to the dust. The idea is not of the punishment of evil, but of its unsubstantiality and transitoriness. Being without God—forgetting Him whom to some degree they might know (Rom. i. 19-23)—the nations are "subject to vanity" and "have no hope." (Comp. Rom. viii. 19-22; Eph. ii. 11, 12.) On the other hand, "the patient abiding" of faith, even though it seem forgotten, shall reach the eternal reality. In such passages there is undoubtedly the vague but certain hope of a future beyond the grave.

vv. 19, 20. *Up, Lord* (see iii. 7). These verses may (like vv. 13, 14) describe the utterance of "the patient abiding of the meek" spoken of above. But perhaps they are better taken as a final prayer that God will complete and continue His judgment, shewing the proud enemies that, after all, they are before Him but weak men.

This Psalm, closely connected with Psalm ix.—a mournful supplement, under changed circumstances, to its triumphant thanksgiving—draws a singularly vivid and terrible picture of a time of rebelliousness and disorder, of treachery and godlessness in Israel. If it be a Psalm of David, it may well belong to the time of disorganisation and decay before the rebellion of Absalom.

It has three distinct parts: (a) the indignant description of the pride, the cruelty, and the treachery of the wicked (*vv.* 1—12); (b) an earnest prayer to God for help against them (*vv.* 13—17); (c) a burst of praise over the anticipation, or reality, of God's answer to that prayer (*vv.* 18—20).

*v.* 2. The best rendering appears to be—

"In the pride of the wicked, the poor is set on fire;

In the snares which they have devised, the poor are taken."

There is here the double idea, which runs through the Psalm, of the proud cruelty which consumes, and the treachery which ensnares.

*v.* 3. This should be—

"The wicked sings praise over his own heart's lust;

The covetous utters blessing, yet despises the Lord."

The image is striking; the hymn of praise and blessing he utters over his own successful lust; God, to whom alone it is due, he utterly despises. The R.V., however, taking the word "bless" to signify "bid farewell," gives, perhaps, a simpler sense, "renounceth, yea, contemneth the Lord."

*v.* 4. *Neither is God.* The true rendering is either (with A.V. and some ancient versions), "In the pride of his countenance he will not enquire; God is not in all his thoughts,"—expressing a foregone conclusion, in which the wish is father to the thought; or (with R.V.),

"In the pride of his countenance, he saith, He will not require it.

"All his thoughts are, There is no God."

(Comp. Ps. lxxiii. 2; xciv. 7.)

*v.* 5. *Grievous.* It should be "firm" or "secure," because God's judgment is too high for him to see, and at human enmity he scoffs.

*v.* 7. His words are "the cursing" of pride, and the "deceit of guile"; under these lurk the "mischief and iniquity," which are the Satanic opposites of the love and truth, the essentials of true humanity.

*vv.* 8—10. The mingled treachery and violence of the robber, lying in wait for the helpless, naturally suggest the metaphor of the lion crouching for his prey, expressed in *vv.* 9, 10.

*v.* 8. *The thievish corners, &c.,* should be "the lurking places of the villages." Outside these the robber lurks; in his den he murders, and still his eyes lay ambush for more victims. Like the lion in his lair, he watches for them and drags down his prey. He stoops to crouch low, that the helpless may fall into his jaws.

*v.* 11. The original is, "He croucheth, he boweth down, that the helpless may fall under his strong ones." If the metaphor is kept, this should mean his strong teeth or claws.

*v.* 12. This verse returns to the idea of *v.* 4. All the treachery and cruelty of the enemy are ruthless and reckless, because while he uses the Name of God, he ignores Him as a living Ruler and Judge. To him He is the unknowing and unknown; and to say this is to say "There is no God."

*vv.* 13—17 are a prayer of the mingled pathos and remonstrance with God, so frequent in the Psalms—pleading, indeed, the cause of the poor, the helpless, the fatherless, for whom He cares, but pleading also the scandal of contemptuous blasphemy—accordingly praying not only for the "breaking of the power of wickedness and malice" against men, but for "the taking away of ungodliness," till it vanishes from before God. The idea is that of Ps. lxxix. 9, 10; Dan. ix. 19, praying God "for his Name's sake," because the ignoring of His Name is to men in effect worse than the worst cruelty and oppression.

*vv.* 18—20. In this outburst of glad confidence in God's answer to the prayer, the sentence "the heathen . . . land" has an apparent abruptness. Probably the victory over the heathen comes in simply as associated naturally with the kingship of Jehovah, and as typical, moreover, of His righteous avenging of His own, on all—the "men of the earth" and earthly—who ignore Him and persecute them.

## DAY 2.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 9.

*Confitebor tibi.*

I WILL give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will speak of all thy marvellous works.

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee : yea, my songs will I make of thy Name, O thou most High-est.

3 While mine enemies are driven back : they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause : thou art set in the throne that judgest right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, and destroyed the ungodly : thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end : even as the cities which thou hast destroyed ; their memorial is perished with them.

7 But the Lord shall endure for ever : he hath also prepared his seat for judgment.

8 For he shall judge the world in righteousness : and minister true judgment unto the people.

9 The Lord also will be a defence for the oppressed : even a refuge in due time of trouble.

10 And they that know thy Name will put their trust in thee : for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.

11 O praise the Lord which dwelleth in Sion : shew the people of his doings.

12 For, when he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them : and forgetteth not the complaint of the poor.

13 Have mercy upon me, O Lord ; consider the trouble which I suffer of them that hate me : thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.

14 That I may shew all thy praises within the ports of the daughter of Sion : I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15 The heathen are sunk down

in the pit that they made : in the same net which they hid privily, is their foot taken.

16 The Lord is known to execute judgment : the ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell : and all the people that forget God.

18 For the poor shall not always be forgotten : the patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.

19 Up, Lord, and let not man have the upper hand : let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O Lord : that the heathen may know themselves to be but men.

## PSALM 10.

*Ut quid, Domine ?*

WHY standest thou so far off, O Lord : and hidest thy face in the needful time of trouble ?

2 The ungodly for his own lust doth persecute the poor : let them be taken in the crafty williness that they have imagined.

3 For the ungodly hath made boast of his own heart's desire : and speaketh good of the covetous, whom God abhorreth.

4 The ungodly is so proud, that he careth not for God : neither is God in all his thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous : thy judgments are far above out of his sight, and therefore defieth he all his enemies.

6 For he hath said in his heart, Tush, I shall never be cast down : there shall no harm happen unto me.

7 His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud : under his tongue is ungodliness and vanity.

8 He sitteth lurking in the thievish corners of the streets : and privily in his lurking dens doth he murder the innocent ; his eyes are set against the poor.

9 For he lieth waiting secretly, even as a lion lurketh he in his den : that he may ravish the poor.



PSALM XI.

This Psalm is ascribed to David, and in all probability rightly. It is an answer of confident faith to despondent counsels of friends in time of danger. The simplicity and vigour of style, and the strong consciousness of innocence, seem to refer it to his early days of danger in the court of Saul.

Its structure is simple: (a) the counsels of faintheartedness (vv. 1-3); (b) the answer of faith (vv. 4-8).

v. 1 begins the quotation of the timid advice of friends, "Flee, as a bird, to the hill" (comp. 1 Sam. xxvi. 20)—clearly the hill-country of Judah, where David so often did take refuge.

v. 2. *Within the quiver.* It should be upon the string. The same metaphor is continued, pointing to the stealthy arrow, already aimed at the fugitive, as at a bird in its flight.

v. 3 is another remonstrance, dropping all metaphor. "If the foundations" of society "be cast down"—if truth and justice fail where they should most be sought—"what can the righteous do?" (for so it should be rendered)—what avail innocence and true service?

v. 4. The answer is plain and solemn. If all on earth has failed, God is unchanged; He sits above, high in Majesty of Eternal Righteousness, yet not too high to behold the earth, and work out judgment thereon.

v. 6. *Alloweth.* This rendering obscures the true idea of the passage. It should be "trieth," glancing here at the true explanation of the problem which so vexed Job. The adversity of the righteous is discipline

(Job v. 17, 18; Prov. iii. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 4-17), the destruction of the ungodly is vengeance (Heb. x. 26-31).

v. 7. *Snares.* This word breaks the metaphor, and some would read accordingly, more simply, "coals of fire." But the word may well stand. The frequent idea of God's wrath catching the wicked as in a snare, is perhaps especially suggested here by vv. 1, 2; and breach of metaphor is frequent in ancient poetry, and, indeed, in all poetry of intense feeling.

*Fire and brimstone.* The allusion to the destruction of Sodom (Gen. xix. 24) is unquestionable. Compare Ps. xviii. 12, 13.

*Storm and tempest,* properly "fiery wind"; generally referred to the deadly Simoon of the desert.

v. 8. *His countenance,* &c. The rendering should be either (as in A.V.), "His countenance beholds the upright," or more probably (with R.V.) "The upright shall behold His face." It is the privilege of "the pure in heart" to "see God," in the Presence of mercy and righteousness which Moses saw (Ex. xxxiv. 5-8)—veiled perhaps, though still bright, through all the clouds of this life—unveiled in the life to come (see Ps. xvii. 15; 1 John iii. 2).

PSALM XII.

This Psalm, also called "A Psalm of David," stands in marked contrast with the confidence and conscious innocence of the preceding Psalm. It is an utterance, pensive and half-despondent, though still hearing and believing God's promise. The evil here, moreover, is not persecution, but deceit, not open violence, but crafty injustice. The description is more like that given by the later prophets (see Jer. vi. 2; Mic. vii. 2, &c.); if it really belongs to David's reign, it suits best with the tone of his declining years.

Like other Psalms of the same character (see Ps. vi.), it was to be sung "upon *Sheminith*," i.e. "on the Octave" by the heavy bass voices.

It opens (a) with complaint and prayer against evil (vv. 1-5); and to these succeed (b) the promise of the Lord and the acceptance of it in a faith, saddened by the present, yet hopeful for the future (vv. 6-9).

10 He doth ravish the poor : when he getteth him into his net.

11 He falleth down, and humbleth himself : that the congregation of the poor may fall into the hands of his captains.

12 He hath said in his heart, Tush, God hath forgotten : he hideth away his face, and he will never see it.

13 Arise, O Lord God, and lift up thine hand : forget not the poor.

14 Wherefore should the wicked blaspheme God : while he doth say in his heart, Tush, thou God carest not for it.

15 Surely thou hast seen it : for thou beholdest ungodliness and wrong.

16 That thou mayest take the matter into thine hand : the poor committeth himself unto thee ; for thou art the helper of the friendless.

17 Break thou the power of the ungodly and malicious : take away his ungodliness, and thou shalt find none.

18 The Lord is King for ever and ever : and the heathen are perished out of the land.

19 Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the poor : thou preparest their heart, and thine ear hearkeneth thereto ;

20 To help the fatherless and poor unto their right : that the man of the earth be no more exalted against them.

PSALM 11.

*In Domino confido.*

IN the Lord put I my trust : how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as a bird unto the hill ?

2 For lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver : that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart.

3 For the foundations will be cast down : and what hath the righteous done ?

4 The Lord is in his holy temple : the Lord's seat is in heaven.

5 His eyes consider the poor : and his eye-lids try the children of men.

6 The Lord alloweth the righteous : but the ungodly, and him that delighteth in wickedness doth his soul abhor.

7 Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest : this shall be their portion to drink.

8 For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness : his countenance will behold the thing that is just.

DAY 2.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 12.

*Salvum me fac.*

HELP me, Lord, for there is not one godly man left : for the faithful are minished from among the children of men.

2 They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour : they do but flatter with their lips, and dissembles in their double heart.

3 The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips : and the tongue that speaketh proud things ;

4 Which have said, With our tongue will we prevail : we are they that ought to speak, who is lord over us ?

5 Now for the comfortless trou-

bles' sake of the needy : and because of the deep sighing of the poor,

6 I will up, saith the Lord : and will help every one from him that swelleth against him, and will set him at rest.

7 The words of the Lord are pure words : even as the silver, which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire.

8 Thou shalt keep them, O Lord : thou shalt preserve him from this generation for ever.

9 The ungodly walk on every side : when they are exalted, the children of men are put to rebuke.



v. 1. *Not one godly man left.* So Elijah said, "I, even I, alone am left," while God had "reserved to Himself seven thousand in Israel" (1 Kin. xix. 10, 14, 18). The judgment even of God's servants lacks the mercy and discrimination of His judgment.

v. 2. *Vanity* is here "falsehood." The latter part of the verse is a paraphrase of the abruptness of the original, "with flattering lips, with a double heart, they speak."

v. 3 should be a prayer, "May the Lord," &c.

v. 4. *We are they, &c.*—properly, "Our lips are with us," either, "Our tongues are our own," or, "Our tongues are our strength." The special evil contemplated is characteristic of an outwardly peaceful condition of society—the crafty and self-confident power of the tongue, especially oppressive towards the poor and simple; who are pathetically described as "comfortless," because unsupported in trial, and "as sighing deeply," because they dare not cry out.

v. 6. *I will up.* The answer to the cry, "Up, Lord!" so often repeated

(see Ps. iii. 7; ix. 19; x. 13); *will help . . . rest,* should probably be, "will establish in salvation him who pants for it" (as "the hart for the water brooks," Ps. xlii. 1).

v. 7. *The words of the Lord*—that is, the promise of salvation just made—are strikingly described as "tried seven times in the fire" of fierce and obstinate resistance of evil—then, and not till then, to come out "pure," from all human misconception of their meaning, and from all temporary hindrances to perfect fulfilment. The application of the metaphor is unusual; for commonly it is not God's truth, but man's faith in it, which is tried in the fire (1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 12; 1 Cor. iii. 13; Rev. iii. 18). But its accuracy has again and again been verified in the history of the Church.

v. 9. This verse should be rendered, "The ungodly prowls round on every side; vileness is exalted among the children of men." It is a sad description of the character of "this generation"—from one, not, indeed, disbelieving God's promise of salvation from it, but perhaps half complaining that it is still allowed to continue.

PSALM XIII.

This Psalm, again ascribed with great probability to David, seems (like Ps. xi.) to belong to the time of his early persecution by Saul "his enemy." But it represents a different phase of feeling—the hour of impatient longing for deliverance, darkened by doubt whether God's face is not hid from him, but clearing up at last into confidence in His salvation. What was originally written of conflict with a temporal enemy has been often applied by God's servants to the struggle against the spiritual foe in their hours of distress.

The Psalm passes by natural gradation from (a) vehement complaint and remonstrance (vv. 1, 2) through (b) earnestness of prayer (vv. 3, 4), to (c) a burst of confidence and joy (vv. 5, 6).

v. 1. *How long, &c.* The complaint is but an expansion of the "Lord, how long?" of Ps. vi. 3. The question may be a double question, "How long?" "Shall it be for ever?" or a single question, in the natural self-contradiction of half-despondent faith, "How long shall this endless forgetfulness last?"

v. 2. *So vexed in my heart.* The original is "with sorrow of heart by day"—suggesting the idea of the vain

"counsels" of the night-watches, giving way to weary sorrow on waking.

*My enemy,* here and in v. 4, has clearly a definite personal meaning, referring, perhaps, to Saul, perhaps to one of his instruments (comp. Ps. vii.)—in distinction from the many who "trouble" the Psalmist and would "rejoice" over his fall.

v. 3. *Lighten mine eyes.* This phrase probably, though not necessarily,

marks this as a Psalm of the night watches. In the physical darkness, the gloom of trouble and despondency always becomes heavier. David feels that it is overpowering his strength, and that he will literally "sleep the sleep of death," unless some gleam of hope comes.

v. 4. The parallelism of the original is lost in the translation of the last clause, which should run, "Lest my oppressors rejoice that I am shaken."

v. 5, 6. In this prayer the hour of darkness passes away, not merely into trust in God's mercy, but into

joyful assurance of salvation, breaking out in songs of praise to Him, who, even in adversity, had "dealt lovingly"—or rather "bountifully"—with His servant. So in Col. i. 11 we have the climax of "patience, long-suffering, joyfulness"; and in Gal. v. 22 read that the true fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace." The spiritual life, which knows no joy in the midst of trouble, has not yet attained to perfection.

(The last clause, "Yea, I will," &c., taken from the LXX., is not in the Hebrew, although it certainly completes the perfection of the parallelism. It is repeated from vii. 17.)

PSALM XIV.

(In this Psalm vv. 5, 6, 7 of our Prayer Book Version are not in the Hebrew, and are accordingly omitted in the Bible Versions. They are found in some MSS. of the Septuagint, and so of the Vulgate (which the Prayer Book Version follows), and may possibly have found their way thither from Rom. iii. 10—18, where they are quoted by St. Paul from various parts of the Old Testament in connection with vv. 2—4 of this Psalm.)

This Psalm (of which Ps. liii. is a repetition with slight variations) is called "A Psalm of David." The style and the substance, which describes much the same condition of things as Ps. xii., agree well with this. The only apparent objection to this is the allusion to the "Captivity" in the last verse, on which see note.

The opening verse is introductory; then follows (a) the picture of Jehovah looking down on the corrupted earth in His wrath (vv. 2—4, 8); and the Psalm ends (b) with the terror of the wicked, and the confident prayer for salvation of the righteous (vv. 9—11).

v. 1. *The fool (nabal)* is said in Is. xxxii. 6 to be "one who worketh iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and utter error against the Lord"; in Ps. lxxiv. 18, 22 the name is applied to the people or the individual, who blaspheme God. Compare also the application of the word to Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 25). It is clear by the context that the application here is connected with the moral perversity of one who does "not like to retain God in his knowledge" and has "his heart darkened" thereby (Rom. i. 21, 28). But the regarding evil as "folly"—so common in the Proverbs, though rare in the Psalms—still places the source of it in the wilful neglect or blindness of the understanding, which refuses the manifold witness given by God of Himself, stifles the natural instinct of God, and having refused to see Him, declares complacently that He is not (Rom. i. 19—22). From this follows the consequence of moral

"corruption"—by the loss of the supreme relation of duty—expressing itself in "abominable doings."

v. 3. *Looked down* (see Gen. vi. 12; xviii. 21; Ps. xxxiii. 13, 14). The phrase is, of course, one of those which apply to God the vigilance, searching yet merciful, of a human judge.

v. 4. *There is none.* The language is the sweeping language of human despondency, as in Ps. xii. 1. There was, indeed (see v. 9), a righteous "generation," but so small and oppressed, as to be of no account before man, though known and loved by God.

v. 8 is the word of Jehovah Himself, condemning the utter folly of the wicked, under the two cognate aspects described by Our Lord in Luke xviii. 2—the oppression which "regards not man," devouring the poor (Mic. iii. 1—3) like daily bread—

the practical atheism which "calls not on God."

*vv.* 9—11. The Psalmist pictures with singular truth to nature the effect of the condemnation of God: first, the trembling of momentary fear and compunction, like that of Felix (Acts xxiv. 25); then the reaction of mockery against trust in an unseen God by one who is "poor," *i. e.*, helpless. Against this he prays for God's "deliverance out of Zion."

*v.* 11. The latter part of this verse

("When the Lord," &c.) can hardly suit with any condition of things in David's time. It is true that "captivity" is used in a wide sense (see Job xlii. 10; Ezek. xvi. 53) of any state of ruin and misery; but the concluding phrase, "Then shall," &c., evidently belongs to some truly national disaster and deliverance. Yet the Psalm itself cannot be referred to a late period. Probably it is best to take this concluding sentence as a liturgical addition of subsequent date (comp. Ps. cxxxvi. 1).

## PSALM XV.

This Psalm—asccribed again with great probability to David—seems, by its marked resemblance to xxiv. 3—5, to have been written at the same time, that is, at the time of the establishment of the Ark on Mount Zion (2 Sam. vi. 12—19). The whole idea of the Psalm is simply the enforcement of the truth, so often taught by the Prophets, that the true worship of God is the devotion of the heart, expressing itself in the life (see Is. i. 11—18; Mic. vi. 6—8; Ps. xl. 6—10; 1. 8—15). It was probably specially needed, and, therefore, emphatically uttered, at the very moment of the inauguration of the local sanctuary in Zion, hallowing the new city of David. Dealing with the exaltation of pure humanity to the Presence of God, it is naturally used as one of the Psalms for ASCENSION-DAY.

*v.* 1. *Dwell* should be "sojourn as a guest," while *rest* really signifies to "dwell." The former word is appropriately used in relation to the moveable "Tabernacle," the latter to the hill, where it was now fixed.

*vv.* 2—5. The characteristics of the man fit to approach the presence of God are drawn out with great distinctness: (a) TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS—a pure life, an active energy of righteousness, an inner truthfulness of heart (*v.* 2); (b) KINDNESS—with no slander ("deceit") on his tongue, no malice in his actions, no taking up of reproach ("slander") and repeating it wantonly (*v.* 3); (c) HUMILITY (*v.* 4)—thinking little of himself, much of all other servants of God (Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 3). It is impossible not to refer here to David's own acts and words at this time; see 2 Sam. vi. 20—22. (It is, however, to be noted that the more usually accepted interpretation of the original of *v.* 4 is (as in the LXX. and our Bible Versions) "In whose eyes the reprobate is despised, but he honoureth," &c. The reference would then be not to

Humility, but to spiritual discernment between the good and the evil.) (d) UNSELFISHNESS AND GENEROSITY (*v.* 5)—keeping his word to his own hurt, refraining from all usury (forbidden in Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 36), disdaining all bribes. The whole may be summed up in the "being true in love" of Eph. iv. 15. Much of it reminds us of the picture of Charity in 1 Cor. xiii. 4—6. We note that throughout it is the duty to man which is made the test of love of God (comp. Matt. xix. 17—19; James i. 27; 1 John iv. 20, 21). There is a passage of remarkable similarity in Is. xxxiii. 13—17.

*v.* 5 curiously combines two readings—that of the Hebrew, "to his own hurt," and that of the LXX., "to his neighbour." The whole version, though very beautiful, is unusually paraphrastic in this Psalm.

*v.* 6. The conclusion is not, "Who-so doeth these things shall approach God"; but a higher promise, "He shall never fall" or "be moved"; because catching some likeness of the Divine Righteousness, he shall partake of its unshaken permanence.

## PSALM 13.

*Usque quo, Domine?*

HOW long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever: how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I seek counsel in my soul, and be so vexed in my heart: how long shall mine enemies triumph over me?

3 Consider, and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him: for if I be cast down, they that trouble me will rejoice at it.

5 But my trust is in thy mercy: and my heart is joyful in thy salvation.

6 I will sing of the Lord, because he hath dealt so lovingly with me: yea, I will praise the Name of the Lord most Highest.

## PSALM 14.

*Dixit insipiens.*

THE fool hath said in his heart: There is no God.

2 They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings: there is none that doeth good, no not one.

3 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men:

## DAY 3.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 15.

*Domine, quis habitabit?*

LORD, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle: or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?

2 Even he, that leadeth an uncorrupt life: and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.

3 He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbour: and hath not slandered his neighbour.

4 He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes: and maketh much of them that fear the Lord.

5 He that sweareth unto his

to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after God.

4 But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable: there is none that doeth good, no not one.

5 Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues have they deceived: the poison of asps is under their lips.

6 Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood.

7 Destruction and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.

8 Have they no knowledge, that they are all such workers of mischief: eating up my people as it were bread, and call not upon the Lord?

9 There were they brought in great fear, even where no fear was: for God is in the generation of the righteous.

10 As for you, ye have made a mock at the counsel of the poor: because he putteth his trust in the Lord.

11 Who shall give salvation unto Israel out of Sion? When the Lord turneth the captivity of his people: then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

neighbour, and disappointeth him not: though it were to his own hindrance.

6 He that hath not given his money upon usury: nor taken reward against the innocent.

7 Whoso doeth these things: shall never fall.

## PSALM 16.

*Conserva me, Domine.*

PRESERVE me, O God: for in thee have I put my trust.

2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord: Thou art my God, my goods are nothing unto thee.

3 All my delight is upon the saints, that are in the earth: and upon such as excel in virtue.

## PSALM XVI.

This Psalm is not only in the heading termed "A Psalm of David," but is expressly referred to him in the Apostolic arguments of Acts ii. 25—31; xiii. 35, as one known by all to be his. Like Psalms lvi.—lx.—all ascribed to David—it is called *Michtam*, which is either (according to most ancient authorities) "a golden Psalm," or (according to the versions of the LXX. and Vulgate) "a Sculpture Psalm," one of strongly marked incisive thought. It seems by its character of fresh joyous confidence to belong to the early part of his career; some, from the allusion in v. 4, have referred it to the time of his wanderings in heathen or half-heathen lands; but against this is the description of his prosperity in v. 7.

It is a Psalm doubly notable: (a) first, because it contains one of the brightest and most unhesitating expressions of faith in the Presence of God, as extending through and beyond death. It therefore stands in marked contrast with the desponding doubts of such Psalms as Ps. lxxxviii.—basing itself on the conviction, which Our Lord declared to underlie the whole Covenant, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (b) Secondly, because it is quoted most explicitly in the New Testament as a Messianic prophecy—an inspired utterance, which was no doubt in some degree applied by the Psalmist to himself, as having a spiritual unity with God, indestructible by death, but which could be in its full meaning spoken of the Messiah alone (Acts ii. 25—31; xiii. 35). For in Him alone was the unity with God to be perfect—so that He should be at once "the Son of David" and yet "God with us"—therefore in Him alone was it impossible that humanity could be "holden by death," either in the "prison" of Hades (1 Pet. iii. 19) or "the corruption" of the grave.

The Psalm falls into two sections: (a) in vv. 1—7 the declaration of faith in the Lord alone, as against idolatry, and the thankful sense of His blessings, temporal and spiritual, here; (b) in vv. 8—12 an extension of that faith beyond the grave to the conviction of eternal life and bliss in God.

v. 1 is the customary introduction of declaration of trust in Jehovah (see vii. 1; xi. 1), prefacing alike thanksgiving and complaint, praise and prayer, because it lies at the root of all religious life.

v. 2. *O my soul.* These words are not in the original. By a slight variation of the present text we should read (with the ancient versions), "I have said," &c.

*My goods are nothing unto Thee.* The most probable sense of this difficult verse is, "My prosperity is not beyond Thee," i.e. (as in R.V.) "I have no good beyond Thee"—no true blessing of life except in Thee.

v. 3. This verse, also one of great difficulty and of some abruptness, in respect of connection with the preceding verse, is best rendered with the R.V. text or margin,—

"I have said to the saints that are in the earth,

They are the excellent, in whom is all my delight,"

Or simply,—

"As for the saints," &c.

The Psalmist, in his sense of unity with God, recognises the Communion of Saints, just as he repudiates indignantly in the next verse the fellowship of those who "go after" or "woo by gifts another god."

v. 5. *Drink offerings of blood.* The use of blood as a drink offering was against the whole direction of the Mosaic law, which allowed "the blood which is the life" only to be offered before God in sin offering, otherwise to be "poured on the earth as water" (Lev. vii. 26; Deut. xii. 16, 23). The phrase here may be literally taken to designate heathen sacrifice as such, or metaphorically, to signify sacrifice unholy, or offered by unholy hands.

vv. 6, 7. *Portion.* Comp. Num. xviii. 20; Deut. x. 9, where it is said of the tribe of Levi, "The Lord is his inheritance." The believer is thus as a priest before God; in this is his true heritage. But it seems to be implied that to this possession "of the kingdom of God and His righteousness all else shall be added."

"His lines (see A.V.) fall in pleasant places," and "his heritage is goodly"—in temporal prosperity as well as in spiritual blessing. Compare David's words in 2 Sam. vii. 18—29.

vv. 8—10. *Warning* should be simply "counsel," and *chasten* should be "instruct." The idea is not of godly fear or sorrow, but of the thoughtful wisdom given by God, through which the heart ("the reins"), communing with itself in the night-season, looks beyond the visible and the present to the inner life and the eternal hereafter. Then it finds in the faith that God is always with him—a living Presence leading him by his "right hand"—that certainty of immortality (see Matt. xxii. 31, 32, and compare John xi. 24—26), not only firm, but exultant, which otherwise the loftiest human speculation lacks.

v. 10. *Glory* (as in Ps. vii. 6; xxxii. 12; lvii. 9) signifies the spirit of man, made in God's image, and therefore the reflection of the glory which is properly His (comp. 1 Cor. xi. 7). Here it is opposed to *my flesh*, which clearly means the body, but the living body. The spirit exults; the body "dwells in safety": for this is the true rendering (as in R.V.). Our version, "rest in hope" (taken from the LXX.), is suggested by a wrong idea of the passage. For this verse looks to the present, not the future.

v. 11. In this the Psalmist passes in thought beyond the grave. He expresses his joyful confidence that the soul, of which (as in Job iv. 13—

19; vii. 10, 11; x. 21, 22) he knows that it shall pass into *Sheol*—the shadowy unknown world—shall not be left there, deserted by the God in whom it has lived. In this he speaks the conviction, held in greater or less clearness by all true religion. But he evidently implies further that God's "holy one" shall not "see corruption" or "the pit" (of absolute destruction); and taking this in connection with the parallel of the spirit and the flesh in the previous verse, it seems that he grasps in some degree the idea of a resurrection of the body out of the grave (see on this Is. xxvi. 19, 21; Dan. xii. 2; possibly Job xix. 26, 27), which in its perfection belongs especially to Christian faith.

In all this the Psalmist, so far as he is a holy one, is a type of "the Holy One of God"; in whom alone (as St. Peter and St. Paul argue) the promise, like all the higher promises to humanity, is absolutely fulfilled. The Psalmist "was laid to his fathers and saw corruption." His Lord and ours, by the intrinsic power of the indwelling Godhead, was untouched by the chains of Hades, and by the corruption of the grave. We, who are His, and who yet have been under the power of sin, pass into both, and by Him are brought out of both.

v. 12. *The path of life*—evidently the way to the new life in God (on which see John xiv. 2—6)—for the soul out of Hades, for the body out of the pit. That new life is described as a true Heaven—that is, as bliss, not given in measure but in "fulness," not in time, but for "evermore."

## PSALM XVII.

This Psalm is called in the heading "A Prayer" (as also Ps. lxxxvi., xc., cii., cxlii.), probably from the "supplication" dwelt upon in verse 1. It is traditionally ascribed to David; and both in style and matter corresponds well with the tone of the Psalms of his early days, during the unrighteous persecution of his innocence. It presents some striking links of connection with Ps. xvi., although it differs from it somewhat in tone. The objections made to the ascription of this Psalm (as of Ps. xvi.) to David rest simply on the baseless assumption that such confidence in a future life as is found in v. 15 belongs only to the period after the Exile.

The Psalm (a) opens with a prayer (vv. 1—7) based on a strong protestation of innocence; it next (b) draws a picture (vv. 8—12) of the pride, persistency, and fierceness of the persecutors; lastly (vv. 13—16), in renewed prayer for God's protection, contrasts the self-satisfied prosperity of the worldly, which must pass away, with the spiritual blessing of communion with God, which will last for ever.

vv. 1—5. This strong protestation of innocence (like that of Ps. vii. 3—8) has properly a double reference—first to innocence in relation to his persecutors, next to single-hearted devotion to the service of God. On both the Psalmist could speak boldly, without self-deception or self-complacency, appealing to God who knows the heart, and praying Him “to behold equity” (v. 2). At the same time it is true that the undoubting tone of this protestation belongs in character to David’s early days, before his fall had taught him his own weakness, and that, in the deeper sense of sin which belongs to the Gospel, it can but seldom be the full language of Christian experience.

v. 3. *My mouth shall not offend* (or “swerve”). The idea (as in the denial of “feigned lips” in v. 1) is that of a religious profession honestly taken up, and earnestly kept to through all trials.

vv. 4, 5 would be better rendered—  
“As for men’s works,—by the word of Thy lips

I have kept me from the way of the destroyer.

My steps have held fast to Thy ways,

My feet have not slipped.”

God’s commandment has been his security—against temptation to the way of sinners, and falling from God’s ways, as truly as against the violence of the enemy. So it was with David in the wilderness, when he resisted the temptation to revenge himself on Saul, and yet was kept safe from his hands (1 Sam. xxiv., xxvi.).

vv. 6—8. These verses express with the greatest vividness the confidence which lies at the root of all true vital religion—the confidence in God’s personal care and love for the soul that trusts in Him—not hoping, but knowing, that He hears its prayer—not being content to feel vaguely His general Providence over the Universe, but relying on the special tenderness, which deals with each as if he stood alone.

v. 8. On the beautiful image of this verse compare the still fuller expression of Deut. xxxii. 10, 11. The former clause describes the soul as precious, the latter as tenderly beloved.

vv. 10—12. *They are inclosed, &c.* An incisive picture, singularly true to nature, of sleek selfishness and proud self-sufficiency, not incompatible, on occasion, with crafty and ruthless activity against the righteousness, which thwarts and rebukes them. (Compare the description of the same character, given with great fulness and beauty, in Wisdom ii. 6—19).

v. 11 should be (as in R.V.) “They set their eyes” (watch) “to cast us to the ground.”

In v. 12 the change to the singular number indicates the prominence of some one leader (Saul?).

v. 13. *Which is a sword of thine.* It should be simply (as in R.V.) “by Thy sword,” as in the next verse “by Thy hand.” The idea of our version might stand grammatically; but, though true in itself, it does not suit the general notion of the Psalm, in which the evil are viewed, not as instruments, but as rebels, in relation to God.

vv. 14—16, like many other passages (such as Job xxi. 7—13; Ps. lxxiii. 12), clearly show how little “the old fathers looked,” or, indeed, could have looked, “only for transitory promises.” While they held, and rightly held, that under the general law of God’s Providence happiness should follow obedience to the Will of Him, who made and guides all things, they yet recognised the disturbing influence of evil in the world, through which the unrighteous prosper, having to the full the only portion they care for (comp. Matt. vi. 2, 5; Luke xvi. 25), leaving wealth and fame to their children. At times this was to them a sore trial of faith (Ps. lxxiii. 3)—sorer than to us who have the clear vision of the future life. But they felt that far above this outward prosperity was that which the worldly cannot have—the communion with God, in itself the life eternal of the soul.

v. 16. This verse is either a prayer or an expression of assurance. It should be, “As for me, I shall” (or “let me”) “behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be” (or “let me be”) “satisfied, when I awake, with Thy Likeness” (or Image.) Its sense cannot well be doubtful.

4 But they that run after another god : shall have great trouble.

5 Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer : neither make mention of their names within my lips.

6 The Lord himself is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup : thou shalt maintain my lot.

7 The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground : yea, I have a goodly heritage.

8 I will thank the Lord for giving me warning : my reins also chasten me in the night-season.

9 I have set God always before me : for he is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall.

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

11 For why? thou shalt not leave my soul in hell : neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

12 Thou shalt shew me the path of life ; in thy presence is the fulness of joy : and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

PSALM 17.

*Exaudi, Domine.*

**H**EAR the right, O Lord, consider my complaint : and hearken unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence : and let thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal.

3 Thou hast proved and visited mine heart in the night-season ; thou hast tried me, and shalt find no wickedness in me : for I am utterly purposed that my mouth shall not offend.

4 Because of men’s works, that

are done against the words of thy lips : I have kept me from the ways of the destroyer.

5 O hold thou up my goings in thy paths : that my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, O God, for thou shalt hear me : incline thine ear to me, and hearken unto my words.

7 Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, thou that art the Saviour of them which put their trust in thee : from such as resist thy right hand.

8 Keep me as the apple of an eye : hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the ungodly that trouble me : mine enemies compass me round about to take away my soul.

10 They are inclosed in their own fat : and their mouth speaketh proud things.

11 They lie waiting in our way on every side : turning their eyes down to the ground ;

12 Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey : and as it were a lion’s whelp, lurking in secret places.

13 Up, Lord, disappoint him, and cast him down : deliver my soul from the ungodly, which is a sword of thine ;

14 From the men of thy hand, O Lord, from the men, I say, and from the evil world : which have their portion in this life, whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure.

15 They have children at their desire : and leave the rest of their substance for their babes.

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.

DAY 3.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 18.

*Diligam te, Domine.*

**I** WILL love thee, O Lord, my strength ; the Lord is my stony rock, and my defence : my Saviour, my God, and my might, in

whom I will trust, my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge.

2 I will call upon the Lord, which is worthy to be praised : so shall I be safe from mine enemies.

3 The sorrows of death com-

The Psalmist trusts that now "he shall behold the Face of God in righteousness," and in it have the higher spiritual life. Therefore (as in Ps. xvi. 9, 10) he draws the inference which Our Lord Himself justifies, that death cannot break the tie of this communion; therefore that he shall "awake," and be "satisfied with" the "Image," the unveiled Presence of God (as in Num. xii. 6—8), having in fulness that which on earth he can only desire and long for

(comp. 1 John iii. 1, 2). The correspondence with xvi. 9—11 makes this sense of the verse even clearer. All other explanations of the "awaking" utterly fail to rise to the true spirit of the passage, and could never have been thought of, except to support the false conclusion, that, because the knowledge of a future life in heaven was not unchequered by doubt in the saints of old, therefore it had no flashes of brightness and reality.

## PSALM XVIII.

In the heading this magnificent Psalm is designated with unusual explicitness "To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this Song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul;" and the Psalm, under a similar heading, is embodied with many slight variations in the Second Book of Samuel (*ch. xxii.*). It was, therefore, clearly written to be sung on some solemn occasion or occasions (like the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxii.); and its date is fixed, both by external and by internal evidence, to the time of David's full prosperity after the completion of his conquests and the crushing of all revolts, and after the sealing of his prosperity by the great promise through Nathan (see 2 Sam. vii.—x.), before his great sin and its chastisement darkened his glory, and took away the bright hopefulness of his life. It is a great *Te Deum* of victorious thanksgiving, which has, indeed, natural touches of fierce exultation and delight in the sense of strength and prowess, but in which these are absorbed into the dominant idea of God's majesty, as shewn in righteousness and goodness, and therefore regarded not only with awe and faith, but with confidence of love.

Its structure (with a view perhaps to its solemn festive use) is strongly marked and symmetrical, the verses falling into clearly defined groups. It opens (*a*) with a brief exordium of enthusiastic thanksgiving (*vv. 1, 2*); it then (*b*) paints, in striking magnificence of expression, David's overwhelming trouble, and the visible intervention of the Lord to judge His enemies and deliver His servant (*vv. 3—19*); from this it passes (*c*) to a declaration of the ground of this deliverance, as a succour of righteousness against evil, in which the Lord manifests Himself to each according to his works (*vv. 20—30*); thence, (*d*) describing David's own part in the victory under the blessing of God, it tells of his victorious strength, crushing the vain struggles of his enemies, and ruling the conquered children of the strangers (*vv. 31—46*); and ends (*e*), as it began, with ascription of praise and blessing to Him, from whose lovingkindness to His Anointed the triumph comes (*vv. 47—51*).

*v. 1. I will love Thee.* The word "love" here (as in John xxi. 16) is expressive of personal affection, as distinct from reverence and faith—impossible to those who contemplate only God's infinite majesty—possible only to one who feels himself a child of God.

The rapid accumulation of imagery marks this verse as an outburst of enthusiasm: all the seven titles (in

metaphors drawn from the warfare of a mountain country) are variations on the one theme of God, as the "strength" of His servant. God is the high cliff of safety, the fortress of defence, the active Deliverer. God is the rock of strength on which to rest secure (comp. Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, &c.), the shield of protection, the horn of strong salvation, the high tower ("refuge") of exalted majesty.

passed me; and the overflowings of ungodliness made me afraid.

4 The pains of hell came about me: the snares of death overtook me.

5 In my trouble I will call upon the Lord: and complain unto my God.

6 So shall he hear my voice out of his holy temple: and my complaint shall come before him, it shall enter even into his ears.

7 The earth trembled and quaked: the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed, because he was wroth.

8 There went a smoke out in his presence: and a consuming fire out of his mouth, so that coals were kindled at it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and it was dark under his feet.

10 He rode upon the cherubims, and did fly: he came flying upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him.

12 At the brightness of his presence his clouds removed: hail-stones, and coals of fire.

13 The Lord also thundered out of heaven, and the Highest gave his thunder: hail-stones, and coals of fire.

14 He sent out his arrows, and scattered them: he cast forth lightnings, and destroyed them.

15 The springs of waters were seen, and the foundations of the round world were discovered, at thy chiding, O Lord: at the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure.

16 He shall send down from on high to fetch me: and shall take me out of many waters.

17 He shall deliver me from my strongest enemy, and from them which hate me: for they are too mighty for me.

18 They prevented me in the day of my trouble: but the Lord was my upholder.

19 He brought me forth also

into a place of liberty: he brought me forth, even because he had a favour unto me.

20 The Lord shall reward me after my righteous dealing: according to the cleanness of my hands shall he recompense me.

21 Because I have kept the ways of the Lord: and have not forsaken my God, as the wicked doth.

22 For I have an eye unto all his laws: and will not cast out his commandments from me.

23 I was also uncorrupt before him: and eschewed mine own wickedness.

24 Therefore shall the Lord reward me after my righteous dealing: and according unto the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

25 With the holy thou shalt be holy: and with a perfect man thou shalt be perfect.

26 With the clean thou shalt be clean: and with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness.

27 For thou shalt save the people that are in adversity: and shalt bring down the high looks of the proud.

28 Thou also shalt light my candle: the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light.

29 For in thee I shall discomfit an host of men: and with the help of my God I shall leap over the wall.

30 The way of God is an undefiled way: the word of the Lord also is tried in the fire; he is the defender of all them that put their trust in him.

31 For who is God, but the Lord: or who hath any strength, except our God?

32 It is God, that girdeth me with strength of war: and maketh my way perfect.

33 He maketh my feet like harts' feet: and setteth me up on high.

34 He teacheth mine hands to fight: and mine arms shall break even a bow of steel.

35 Thou hast given me the defence of thy salvation: thy right



v. 3. *The sorrows of death.* Here, and in the next verse, the true rendering is the "bands" or "cords" of death and Hades. But in 2 Sam. xxii. 5 this verse has the "waves of death," suiting far better with the flood of ungodliness (properly "Belial" or "Lawlessness") in the second clause.

v. 6. *His Holy Temple, i.e.* (as in 1 Kin. viii. 30, 39) the Temple of Heaven, His dwelling place. God is no God, if He be not "the high and holy One which inhabiteth Eternity," yet He is not our God, unless we are sure that "our complaint will come before Him" there. Both ideas are united in the address of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

vv. 7—15. The intervention of the Lord here, as so often in the Prophets (see, for example, Nah. i. 2—6; Zeph. i. 14—18, &c., &c.), is represented in the visible manifestations of His majesty, as on the Mount Sinai. But the picture here is so extraordinarily vivid, that it may well have been more than mere metaphor. Perhaps David's remembrances of his career of victory may have brought back some days on which, as in the victories of Joshua and Barak, the powers of Nature fought by God's command for Israel. First comes, as on Sinai, the shock of earthquake, with the outburst of (volcanic?) fire (vv. 7, 8); then the darkness gathers in the heavens as "the pavilion of the Lord," and the wings of the storm wind are the cherubic chariot bearing Him on high (vv. 9—11); at last the cloud is riven asunder before the brightness of His Presence, the lightning, arrows of the Lord flash out, the hail falls, and the thunder shakes the earth, till it is seen laid open to its very foundations (vv. 12—15). Then, by a striking contrast, out of this terrible majesty comes the gentle mercy of deliverance from the sea of trouble and from the hand of the enemy, bearing up the helpless soul in the Everlasting Arms (vv. 16—19).

v. 8. *Out in His presence;* properly (here and in v. 15) "out of His nostrils," by a bold metaphor corresponding to the "out of His mouth" below.

v. 10. *The cherubim.* So in the fuller description of Ezekiel (i.,

x.) the "cherubim" or "winged creatures"—evidently the symbols of the great forces of Nature, embodied in various forms of created being, and in this view represented in the Temple—bear up the "Throne of the Lord." These forces are the servants of His will; He is enthroned in majesty above them all.

vv. 12, 13. *Hailstones and coals of fire.* With this reiterated emphasis compare the equally emphatic description in Ex. ix. 23, 24 of the "hail and fire mingled with the hail." See also the description in Job xxxvii. 1—12.

v. 15 must signify the desolation and ruin when the convulsion has passed—the very depths of the earth being laid bare, ploughed up by the torrent and the earthquake.

v. 16. Here and in the succeeding verses the past tense should be used. "He sent," "He took," &c. From His terrible majesty the Lord stooped to save His servant.

v. 18. *They prevented me* (as in v. 4, "overtook me"), i.e. were beforehand with me, too swift and subtle for my own defence of myself.

vv. 20—30 take up the beautiful contrast of perfect calmness and simplicity (begun in v. 16) with the terrible magnificence of the previous section—like the "still small voice" after the wind and the earthquake and the fire. It is in His moral attributes of righteousness that God is really known to man, calling out and dealing with righteousness in him. One who so knows God has no terror before His awful majesty.

vv. 20—24. Here (as in Psalm vii. 3—10; xvii. 1—3) David feels conscious of such righteousness in cleaving to God. In an instructive parenthesis (v. 23) he acknowledges "his own wickedness" as an inborn power to be eschewed and conquered by "keeping the ways of God," and "having an eye unto all His laws." But there is in this place no sense of the condition, in which man "knows the law as holy and just and good," and yet is so bound with the chain of sin as to be unable to obey it. For this we must look to such Psalms as xxxii. and li. Clearly the Psalm was written before David's fall; possibly this self-consciousness of righteousness may have been in part the secret of that fall.

v. 25. *Holy* should be "gracious" or "merciful." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

vv. 25, 26 declare the truth that God shews Himself towards men according to their spiritual condition—simply because no man can know God or have communion with Him without the spiritual preparation of some imperfect likeness to Him. So (as the petition "Forgive us our trespasses" teaches us) only the merciful can receive His mercy; only they who do His will in righteousness can discern His righteousness; only the "pure in heart" can "see God" in His holiness. So, on the other hand, the self-willed and perverse make His will to be to them what the Tempter represented it—hard, arbitrary, impracticable.

vv. 28—30 describe the twofold gift of God—light to see and strength to fight—for all who keep His word, proved to them by the fire of trial, and still trust in Him.

vv. 31—46. In this section of the Psalm there is again a change to a more enthusiastic consciousness of strength and victory, sensible of its own courage and skill, although as given by God, and even exulting over the vain struggles and prayers of the enemies.

v. 31. *Who hath any strength*—properly, "who is the Rock?" with probable reference to the Song of Moses, through which this Name of God runs like a recurring keynote. (See Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31.)

vv. 32—34 draw the picture of the ideal warrior, strong, agile, skilful in arms, such as David was in his early days.

v. 32. *Maketh my way perfect*—not in righteousness, but in unerring resolution.

v. 34. *A bow of steel*—properly, of "brass," the hardened bronze used before iron. Note in 2 Sam. i. 18, "David bade them teach Judah the use of the bow."

v. 35. *Loving correction* should be "graciousness." The idea in our version, though of profound spiritual truth, is alien from the genius of the passage. The warlike metaphor continues. God spreads the

shield of salvation over the warrior, sustains him in weariness, stoops to him graciously, so as to raise him up to greatness, and makes a way for him through the battle.

vv. 37—46 describe vividly the proud career of the conqueror—pursuing, smiting, destroying, trampling down the enemies; exulting in their vain cries for help, and prayers to God; finally becoming a head over the nations, and drawing the heathen trembling out of their strongholds. It is a grand picture, but hardly the grandest, because it seems to want (as war generally must want) the touch of pity. See the examples of fierceness in David's character before and after this time (1 Sam. xxv. 13—22; 2 Sam. xii. 26—31).

vv. 45, 46 should probably be rendered "the children of the stranger shall make (or feign) submission to me; they shall fade away, and come trembling out of their strongholds." The picture is of a pretended allegiance, turned by chastisement to real abjectness of submission. Note, in 2 Sam. x., xii. 26—31, the rebellion of the Ammonites with the aid of Syria, its complete overthrow and cruel punishment.

vv. 47—51 end the Psalm by a recurrence to the opening thanksgiving; but—in evident connection with the victory over the "strangers" described in the previous section—lay stress on the proclamation of the glory of the Lord to the heathen through the greatness of His Anointed. How this was fulfilled in David, and still more in Solomon, the history tells us. (See 1 Kings v. 3—9; viii. 41—43; x. 24.) But the application of the verse by St. Paul (Rom. xv. 9) shews that in this point, as in others, they were but the types of the true Messiah and of His universal Kingdom over the Gentiles.

v. 51. *Unto David His Anointed and to his seed for evermore.* This verse has been thought by some to be a liturgical addition to the Psalm. Certainly mention by David of his own name is most unusual. But it may be explained by the manifest reference to the great promise of Nathan, "the sure mercies of David" (2 Sam. vii. 12—17),



This Psalm—by tradition a “Psalm of David,” and consigned to “the Chief Musician” for the worship of the Tabernacle or Temple, is apparently, by the allusion in *vv.* 5, 6, a Morning Hymn, as *Ps.* viii. an Evening Hymn, suggested by the contemplation of the heavens. It contains not only a magnificent meditation on the glory of God, the Creator of the universe, as witnessed to by them, but a significant contrast between the vague though sublime manifestation of His majesty, and the clear revelation, through the Law, of the Will, and so of the moral Nature, of Jehovah, as God in covenant with man. The abruptness of the transition from the one to the other (in *v.* 7) has given rise to the idea that we have here two distinct utterances included in one Psalm. But it is in itself full of spiritual significance; the Psalmist seems to lose himself before God’s Infinity in Nature (exactly as in *Ps.* viii. 3, 4), and so turns eagerly to that in which he finds God as his own God, and therefore finds himself again. The Psalm is accordingly used for celebrating on CHRISTMAS DAY the manifestation of “God with us” in the humanity which we can know and love.

The divisions are clear; (*a*) in *vv.* 1–6, a meditation on the physical glory of the heavens; (*b*) in *vv.* 7–11, a meditation on the moral glory of the Law; (*c*) finally (in *vv.* 12–15), a prayer to be kept from sin, and made acceptable to God.

*vv.* 1–4. The idea of this meditation, with all its fervour, has yet a philosophic accuracy of thought. The heavens declare, not God’s Will or His Nature, but simply the Omnipotence and the Wisdom of Design of the great First Cause. It is of these, and these only, that “day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge.” For in this witness “there is no definite speech or language;” nay (for so apparently should verse 3 be rendered), “their very voices are not heard,” clearly and unmistakably, except by those who are otherwise taught to hear. Yet “their music is gone out unto all lands, and their witness to the ends of the world.” It would be impossible to express more clearly what the witness of Nature can, and what it cannot, teach. It is real, continuous, universal; but inarticulate and indefinite—needing, and receiving, confirmation from God’s Word. So, in an often quoted passage, Bacon says, “Thy creatures have been my book, but Thy Word much more. I have sought Thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; I have found Thee in Thy temple.”

*v.* 3. *But their voices, &c.* Our version, which is that of the LXX. and Vulgate, is almost certainly inaccurate. The most probable rendering is (as in R.V.) “Their voice cannot be heard”—well paraphrased by Addison,

“In solemn silence all  
“Roll round the dark terrestrial  
ball.”

*v.* 4. *Their sound*—properly, “their line,” and this may be either “their appointed sphere” of influence (as in *Jer.* xxxi. 39) or “their string” or music. The latter gives far the more poetic sense. In their silence there is not only music, but a “word” of message to men’s ear.

St. Paul (in *Rom.* x. 18) applies this universality of message to the spiritual universality of the Gospel.

*vv.* 5, 6. This emphatic stress on the Sun, and the Sun only, seems to shew that the Psalm was written in the early morning, when the Eastern Sun was just rising; first, in the bright joyousness of morning, then in the growth of gigantic and terrible power, up to the unsparring and ubiquitous heat of noonday. The Sun, as the centre of force and the fosterer of all life, is to all idolatry the great visible God, to true religion the emblem and minister of the “Sun of Righteousness.”

*vv.* 7–9. This meditation on the revealed Will of Jehovah has, in brief, almost the exhaustive completeness of Psalm cxix. It is first (*a*) described by the general name of “the Law,” and stress is laid on its “perfection,” as able to “restore” the soul, bringing it back from error and wandering; then (*b*) it is called (as the Decalogue in *Ex.* xxv. 16) “the testimony of Jehovah,” the witness of what He is, which gives to the simple “wisdom”—that is, the key to the meaning of life; thirdly (*c*), passing from this generality, its special “statutes” and

hand also shall hold me up, and thy loving correction shall make me great.

36 Thou shalt make room enough under me for to go: that my footsteps shall not slide.

37 I will follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them: neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them.

38 I will smite them, that they shall not be able to stand: but fall under my feet.

39 Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou shalt throw down mine enemies under me.

40 Thou hast made mine enemies also to turn their backs upon me: and I shall destroy them that hate me.

41 They shall cry, but there shall be none to help them: yea, even unto the Lord shall they cry, but he shall not hear them.

42 I will beat them as small as the dust before the wind: I will cast them out as the clay in the streets.

43 Thou shalt deliver me from the strivings of the people: and

thou shalt make me the head of the heathen.

44 A people whom I have not known: shall serve me.

45 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: but the strange children shall dissemble with me.

46 The strange children shall fail: and be afraid out of their prisons.

47 The Lord liveth, and blessed be my strong helper: and praised be the God of my salvation.

48 Even the God that seeth that I be avenged: and subdueth the people unto me.

49 It is he that delivereth me from my cruel enemies, and setteth me up above mine adversaries: thou shalt rid me from the wicked man.

50 For this cause will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles: and sing praises unto thy Name.

51 Great prosperity giveth he unto his King: and sheweth loving-kindness unto David his Anointed, and unto his seed for evermore.

## DAY 4.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 19.

*Cœli enarrant.*

THE heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.

2 One day telleth another: and one night certifieth another.

3 There is neither speech nor language: but their voices are heard among them.

4 Their sound is gone out into all lands: and their words into the ends of the world.

5 In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun: which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.

6 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.

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.

8 The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.

11 Moreover, by them is thy servant taught: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can tell how oft he offendeth: O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

commandments are described, as in their concrete form, "right and rejoicing the heart," which leaps up to receive in them the clear definitions of its indefinite sense of right; and in their essential principles as "pure," and therefore, because they reflect God's Nature, able to enlighten the eyes to "see God;" next (*d*) the fear of God thus revealed to man, the godly fear of reverence, is "clean"—a power able to cleanse the soul, and that "for ever;" lastly (*e*) the "judgments" of God, fulfilling His Law and justifying this godly fear, are "righteous altogether," bringing that perfect retribution on good and evil, in the foresight of which alone our souls can have rest.

v. 10. In this verse the Psalmist dwells (as again in Ps. cxix. 72) on the preciousness and sweetness of God's commandments in themselves,

before passing on to the recognition of their warning, and the hope of reward for their observance.

vv. 12, 13. In these verses there is the mark of a deep and humble self-knowledge. The contemplation of God awakens the consciousness of imperfection and sin (comp. Job xlii. 5, 6)—wrought out far more fully than in the previous Psalm (v. 23), into the twofold prayer to be cleansed from unconscious sins of frailty and to be kept from the pre-sumptuous sins of wilfulness.

v. 15. *My Strength* (properly "Rock") and *my Redeemer*. This sense of sin adds to the grace of God, as "the Rock" on which to rest, the thought of him as "the Redeemer" delivering man out of the self-chosen bondage of sin, as He delivered Israel out of the bondage of Egypt (see Ex. xv. 13; Ps. lxxvii. 15; Is. lxiii. 9).

## PSALM XX.

This Psalm, called in the heading "A Psalm of David," belongs in all probability to David's time, though it seems doubtful whether it was composed by him or for him. It is a prayer for victory on the eve of a war, as Ps. xxi. is a thanksgiving for victory granted. The Syriac version, in the heading, expressly refers it to the war with the Ammonites and Syrians, with which the marked reference in v. 7 to "the chariots and horses" of the enemy well corresponds (see 2 Sam. viii. 4; x. 18).

The Psalm is evidently liturgical. In vv. 1—5 we have (*a*) the prayer of the people for their King before the sanctuary at the moment of sacrifice; to which (*b*) succeeds the utterance of confidence in the answer to that prayer by the King himself or by the High Priest (v. 6); and the whole ends (vv. 7—9) with an acceptance of that confidence by the people and a reiteration of their first prayer.

Both Psalms have been considered Messianic by Jewish and Christian interpreters; but they are evidently Messianic only so far as the victorious royalty of David was typical of the triumphant kingdom of the true Messiah.

v. 1. The juxtaposition of the names "Jehovah" and "God of Jacob" (as in Ex. iii. 6, 14; 1 Kings xviii. 36) is significant. Jehovah—the Eternal Absolute Being—is yet in His special covenant the God of Israel.

v. 2. This verse corresponds well to the time of David when the "sanctuary" was in "Zion." The King is evidently offering his sacrifice there; the prayer is that from that sanctuary the blessing of "Him that

dwelleth between the cherubim" may follow him and his army. Compare the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings viii. 44, 45).

v. 3. *Thy offerings*—properly, the "meat offering," especially called "a memorial" (Lev. ii. 1, 2), which accompanied the burnt sacrifice.

v. 4. *Thy heart's desire*. Evidently the King after sacrifice is engaged in silent prayer. The people ask that, whatever his petition is, it may be granted.

v. 5. *Thy salvation*—probably, "the salvation granted to thee" (the king); *triumph* is in the original (as in A.V. and R.V.) "set up our banners."

v. 6 is the utterance of a single voice after the chorus of prayer, in all probability of the King himself. He lifts his head from prayer, and the certainty that the Lord hears him, as His anointed servant, and will save him, flashes upon his mind. It is characteristic that, while the people pray for help "out of the sanctuary" on earth, he raises his thought to the "holy heaven" God's true dwelling place, as Solomon does again and again in his prayer (1 Kings viii.). (The *wholesome strength* should be the *saving strength*.)

vv. 7, 8 may be assigned also to

the King. But the change from "I" to "we" rather suggests that here the people, catching the enthusiasm of his faith, already anticipate the victory they had prayed for; they see the chariots and horses overthrown in ruin, while those who "make mention of the Name of the Lord" tower over them in triumph.

v. 9. *Save, Lord, &c.* Probably the correct rendering is that of the LXX. and Vulgate, "O Lord, save the king! May He hear us, when we cry unto Him;" used as the second Versicle after the Lord's Prayer in our Morning Service, and the original of our "God save the King!" The words "of heaven" in our version are not in the original. The verse is the repetition in broad generality of the special prayers for the King already uttered.

## PSALM XXI.

This Psalm is closely connected with the preceding in date and authorship—a hymn of triumph over the victory there prayed for. The phrase in v. 2, "Thou hast given him his heart's desire" obviously corresponds to the "Grant thee thy heart's desire" of Ps. xx. 4. The allusions more-over in vv. 3, 9 suit well with the history of the same Ammonitish war. But this glorious exaltation of David is but a type of the perfect victory over all enemies of the royalty of the Son of David. The Psalm is, therefore, naturally used as one of the Proper Psalms of ASCENSION DAY.

Like Ps. xx. it shews clearly its liturgical form. It opens (*a*) with a triumphant thanksgiving of the people for their King (vv. 1—8); it then (*b*) addresses to the King himself the expression of confidence in the continuance of his victory (vv. 9—12); and ends (*c*) with a reiteration of prayer and praise to the Lord Jehovah (v. 13).

v. 1. *Shall rejoice*. In this verse, perhaps, and certainly in vv. 3, 5, 6, 7, the verbs are better rendered in the present tense. It is for present joy that the people thank God.

v. 3. *Prevent him, i.e.*, anticipate his prayer, giving "more than he desires or deserves."

*Thou shalt set a crown, &c.* The phrase itself is simply an expression of the gift of God's "crowning mercy." But there may well be a literal reference to the conquest of Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 30), when the splendid crown of the king of Ammon was solemnly "set on David's head."

v. 4. *For ever and ever*. The expression itself is simply hyperbolic, like the "O King, live for ever," of Eastern courtiership. But in the case of David it is natural to trace

reference to the great promise through Nathan that "his throne should be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii. 16) so that he should live for ever in his posterity; and, we know, moreover, that the earthly perpetuity was but a type and earnest of the kingdom which is literally for ever and ever (see Daniel vii. 14); in which alone is literally "everlasting felicity," because in it alone is the joy of God's countenance unveiled and full.

v. 7. In this verse is expressed (as so often in prophecy) the true characteristic of Jewish royalty, as distinguished from the ordinary Eastern despotism—that the King is but the minister and vicegerent of Jehovah, great in majesty and power, precisely in proportion to his trust in Him. To forget this was idolatry.

vv. 9—12. In the address to the King (as in David's own words in Ps. xviii.) there is a certain fierceness of exultation in the foresight of the utter destruction of the enemy; and in v. 9 we seem to see a literal allusion to the cruel penalty, "in the brick-kiln," or furnace, inflicted upon the conquered inhabitants of Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 31);

excused perhaps, and in the eyes of the people justified, by some special obstinacy and treachery in rebellion, referred to in v. 11.

v. 13. *In Thine own strength.* The words are emphatic. All power is of the Lord alone; He therefore alone can be absolutely exalted in praise.

## PSALM XXII.

In the heading this also is "A Psalm of David" "upon *Aijeleth Shahar*," i.e. "the hind of the dawn." This latter phrase probably denotes the tune to which it was to be sung, although some interpreters have traced in it metaphorical allusion to the substance of the Psalm.

The beauty of style and pathetic force of idea thoroughly accord with the ascription to David; the only reason against accepting this ascription is the difficulty of discovering any time in David's life to which the imagery of the Psalm can be with any degree of probability referred—a difficulty which cannot be met by the supposition that the Psalmist describes no experience of his own (although he professes to do so in every line), and simply projects his thought unto a prophetic picture of One to come. The prophecy of the Psalms (see *Introduction*, sect. v.) is in its nature typical. No one who reads the Psalm—even without consideration of Our Lord's own utterance of the first verse in the central agony of the Passion (Matt. xxvii. 46), and of the express references of verse 18 to Him in Matt. xxvii. 35; John xix. 24—can fail to see in it an extraordinarily vivid and detailed prefiguring of the Crucifixion, which was realized in it and in it alone; while of the triumphant close it is even more clear that it can be adequately fulfilled only in the eternal and universal kingdom of the Messiah. But to suppose that the language is not in some way expressive of the anguish and hope of the Psalmist is to misunderstand its whole character, and to explain away its intense reality. Yet he must have felt that the words transcended his own experience. He was, and possibly he felt himself to be, the imperfect type of the great future Suffering and Triumph, which were to "bless all the families of the earth."

Hence the difficulty of ascribing the Psalm to David must remain acknowledged. Some, accordingly, have referred it to later authors, to Jeremiah, to some unknown sufferer in the Captivity. But in our ignorance of every part of the life of David it may be doubted whether this difficulty is insuperable.

By whomsoever written, the Psalm—corresponding from within to the picture of the great Sufferer drawn in Isaiah liii. from without—is, indeed, most rightly used on GOOD FRIDAY as the great Psalm of the Passion. Its prophetic representation of Calvary cannot be ignored, and cannot, except by the foresight of supernatural inspiration, be accounted for.

It is (a) a complaint of agonized suffering and desolation before God—a sorrow like no other sorrow (vv. 1—8); (b) a prayer of intense supplication for God's deliverance in the sense of overwhelming cruelty and absolute helplessness (vv. 9—21); (c) a sudden burst of thanksgiving, in anticipation of that deliverance, and of the drawing through it of all nations to God (vv. 22—32).

13 Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me: so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart: be always acceptable in thy sight,

15 O Lord: my strength, and my redeemer.

## PSALM 20.

*Exaudiat te Dominus.*

THE Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee;

2 Send thee help from the sanctuary: and strengthen thee out of Sion;

3 Remember all thy offerings: and accept thy burnt-sacrifice;

4 Grant thee thy heart's desire: and fulfil all thy mind.

5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph in the Name of the Lord our God: the Lord perform all thy petitions.

6 Now know I, that the Lord helpeth his Anointed, and will hear him from his holy heaven: even with the wholesome strength of his right hand.

7 Some put their trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.

8 They are brought down, and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.

9 Save, Lord, and hear us, O King of heaven: when we call upon thee.

## PSALM 21.

*Domine, in virtute tua.*

THE King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord: exceed-

ing glad shall he be of thy salvation.

2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire: and hast not denied him the request of his lips.

3 For thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness: and shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

4 He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him a long life: even for ever and ever.

5 His honour is great in thy salvation: glory and great worship shalt thou lay upon him.

6 For thou shalt give him everlasting felicity: and make him glad with the joy of thy countenance.

7 And why? because the King putteth his trust in the Lord: and in the mercy of the most Highest he shall not miscarry.

8 All thine enemies shall feel thy hand: thy right hand shall find out them that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them like a fiery oven in time of thy wrath: the Lord shall destroy them in his displeasure, and the fire shall consume them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou root out of the earth: and their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended mischief against thee: and imagined such a device as they are not able to perform.

12 Therefore shalt thou put them to flight: and the strings of thy bow shalt thou make ready against the face of them.

13 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing, and praise thy power.

## DAY 4.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 22.

*Deus, Deus meus.*

MY God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me: and art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint?

2 O my God, I cry in the day-

time, but thou hearest not: and in the night-season also I take no rest.

3 And thou continuest holy: O thou worship of Israel.

4 Our fathers hoped in thee: they trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They called upon thee, and

v. 1. *My God, why hast Thou forsaken me.* In this cry there is a deep spiritual beauty of self-contradiction. He who seems to have "forsaken me" is "my God" still. Such is the experience in measure even of the dark hour of the struggling saint. So far as he is in sin, he is forsaken; so far as he clings to the Divine righteousness, God is his God still. When Our Lord Himself chose these words, as the expression of the mysterious agony of spiritual darkness, in which He "was made sin for us," He must surely have entered into the fullness of that twofold experience; nor can the cry of desolation, which opens the Psalm, have been even for a moment dissociated in thought from its triumphant close.

v. 3. *O thou worship, &c.*—properly, "O thou that dwellest in the praises of Israel," i.e. art enthroned in the hearts of Thy people. The Psalmist draws a pathetic contrast between the deliverance of the fathers in days gone by, and his own abject and desolate condition; but he still clings to the same belief in the holiness and righteousness of God as eternal and unchangeable.

v. 6. *A worm, to be trampled upon* by every careless foot (see Job xxv. 6; Is. xli. 14). Compare the description in Is. liii. 2, 3, 7 of the "despised and rejected of men."

v. 8. *He trusted in God.* This is the reading of the LXX. and Vulgate, quoted in Matt. xxvii. 43. The original seems to be, "Cast it" (literally "roll it") "upon the Lord" (comp. Ps. xxxvii. 5), a taunting quotation of the sufferer's own pious wish, in ironical recommendation to try its efficacy now. There is something terribly striking in the infatuation, by which the chief priests fell into the use of these familiar words of taunt—thus indirectly confessing the Sufferer on Calvary to be the righteous Sufferer of this Messianic Psalm.

v. 9, 10. The Psalmist here takes up this taunt of his enemies, pleading how, from his mother's womb, he had cast himself on the Lord as indeed his God, and found rest in Him; and praying that now, in the crisis of agony and helplessness, as in quieter times, God will not be far

from him. Already the terrible idea that God had forsaken him is passing away.

vv. 12, 13, 16. Each image in these verses is distinct. The brutal cruelty of his enemies is likened now to the fierce violence of the bulls of Bashan, now to the ravening thirst of the lion for blood, now to the greedy ferocity of the dog.

vv. 14, 15 describe with all the vividness of eyewitness the pangs of such a death, as the death of the Cross—the faintness, in which the blood seems turned to water; the straining, even to dislocation, of the limbs; the failure of the heart; the parching thirst of the "strength dried up" by fever and exposure; and the gradual sinking into the "dust of death." It must have passed beyond any literal experience of the Psalmist.

vv. 17, 18. Still more striking, if possible, is the coincidence in these verses. The rendering "they pierced my hands and my feet," which is that of almost all the ancient versions, and of some Hebrew MSS., varying from the present Masoretic text, is infinitely the best. In fact it, or the variant renderings, "they bound," "they wounded," alone can be said to suit the passage. For the Masoretic text as now read, "they surrounded, like a lion, my hands and feet," is forced and incongruous, and could have been suggested only by a desire to evade the force of this passage. Certainly that force is great. It depicts the piercing of the limbs, the exposure of the strained body, the cruel gaze of men, the dividing the garments, as of a malefactor, and even the detail—as it would have seemed the chance detail—of the casting lots for the seamless vesture (John xix. 23, 24).

vv. 19—21 are the final cry of the intensest suffering, agonized with pain, but now unvexed by doubt. In the words "Thou hast heard me," or rather "answered me" (comp. v. 2), which should probably be separated from the rest, is marked the instantaneous change to thankful confidence and peace—like the transition on the Cross to the "It is finished," and "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

were holpen: they put their trust in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But as for me, I am a worm, and no man: a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying,

8 He trusted in God, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he will have him.

9 But thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb: thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts.

10 I have been left unto thee ever since I was born: thou art my God even from my mother's womb.

11 O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand: and there is none to help me.

12 Many oxen are come about me: fat bulls of Basan close me in on every side.

13 They gape upon me with their mouths: as it were a ramping and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart also in the midst of my body is even like melting wax.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my gums: and thou shalt bring me into the dust of death.

16 For many dogs are come about me: and the council of the wicked layeth siege against me.

17 They pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones: they stand staring and looking upon me.

18 They part my garments among them: and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But be not thou far from me, O Lord: thou art my succour, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword: my darling from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: thou hast heard me also from among the horns of the unicorns.

22 I will declare thy Name unto

my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23 O praise the Lord, ye that fear him: magnify him, all ye of the seed of Jacob, and fear him, all ye seed of Israel;

24 For he hath not despised, nor abhorred, the low estate of the poor: he hath not hid his face from him, but when he called unto him he heard him.

25 My praise is of thee in the great congregation: my vows will I perform in the sight of them that fear him.

26 The poor shall eat, and be satisfied: they that seek after the Lord shall praise him; your heart shall live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.

28 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the Governour among the people.

29 All such as be fat upon earth: have eaten, and worshipped.

30 All they that go down into the dust shall kneel before him: and no man hath quickened his own soul.

31 My seed shall serve him: they shall be counted unto the Lord for a generation.

32 They shall come, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness: unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made.

## PSALM 23.

*Domineus regit me.*

THE Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.

2 He shall feed me in a green pasture: and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

3 He shall convert my soul: and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake:

4 Yea, 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.

5 Thou shalt prepare a table

v. 20. *My darling*—literally, “my only one”—is here (as in Ps. xxxv. 17) applied to the soul, man’s “eternal jewel.”

v. 21. *Unicorns*. Here, as in Job xxxix. 9, the “bisons” or “buffalos,” corresponding to “the bulls of Basan” of v. 12.

vv. 22—31. In the triumphant close of this Psalm it is especially notable, as bearing on its ultimate application, that the Sufferer dwells on his triumph and deliverance, not as touching himself, but as bringing knowledge of God and salvation from generation to generation, first to the “great congregation” of Israel, then to “all the ends of the earth.” To One alone can this be applied in any fulness of meaning: to Him it is expressly applied in Heb. ii. 12.

v. 25. *Of Thee*—properly, “from Thee,” by Thy inspiration; as in Ps. li. 15. “Thou shalt open my lips. O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise.”

*My vows will I perform*, that is, I will offer the thank offering vowed in the time of trouble (comp. lxxvi. 13—15). The flesh of this offering was, by the “law of the peace offering,” to be eaten by all who were clean (see Lev. vii. 11—21). Hence it is added the poor (that is, as in A. V., “the meek”) shall “eat and be satisfied” and praise the Lord, and “their heart shall live for ever.”

PSALM XXIII.

This, the simplest and loveliest of Psalms, is by most probable tradition a “Psalm of David”—full certainly of the recollections of his old shepherd-days, whether written then, or (as is more generally thought) in later times, perhaps when the flight from Absalom had brought him back to the old scenes and old associations of the wilderness of Judah. To this latter time “the preparation of the table against them that trouble me” (comp. 2 Sam. vii. 27—29), the passing “through the valley of the shadow of death” (2 Sam. xvii. 1—22), and the yearning for “the House of the Lord,” would more appropriately belong. The Jewish Targums interpret it of God’s care for His people, as the “Shepherd of Israel” (comp. lxxx. 1). But the whole tone of the Psalm is intensely personal; and of all Psalms none comes home with more depth of spiritual meaning to the Christian, who knows even better than David the Good Shepherd, as the Shepherd of his soul.

v. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd*. The image is most common in the Old Testament (see Ps. lxxviii. 52; lxxx. 1; Is. xl. 11; lxxiii. 11; Jer. xxii. 3, 4; Ezek. xxxiv. 11—16), generally, however, with a collective applica-

tion to Israel, instead of the tender personal application of this passage. In the New Testament the same image is taken up of “God in Christ,” but with the all-important addition, “The Good Shepherd

Again, it is impossible not to look from the type to the Antitype—to our own Eucharistic feast on the great Sacrifice once offered, which he that eateth shall indeed “live for ever” (John vi. 53—58).

vv. 27—29. This knowledge of the Lord, and this partaking of the spiritual feast, are to be open to “all the ends of the world”—alike to “all the fat ones” of earthly prosperity, and to all who are “going down into the dust,” in weakness—even to him “who cannot keep his soul alive” (see R. V.), but in death itself rests on the true life in God.

vv. 31, 32. These last verses should be rendered (as in R. V.)

“A seed shall serve Him;  
It shall be told of the Lord to  
the (next) generation:  
They shall come and declare His  
righteousness  
To the people yet to be born,  
that He hath done it.”

They speak of “a seed” not only faithful in service, but delighting to tell of the Lord, and of the salvation which He has wrought from generation to generation (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 3—6). The connection shows that this seed is not Israel only, but those who are gathered from all the ends of the earth in the universal kingdom promised to the Son of David.

tion to Israel, instead of the tender personal application of this passage. In the New Testament the same image is taken up of “God in Christ,” but with the all-important addition, “The Good Shepherd

giveth His life for the Sheep” (John x. 1—16; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25; v. 4).

*Can I lack nothing*. This is the first blessing of the Divine Shepherding—fulness both of the “strengthening” of the green pasture, and the “refreshing” of the “waters of rest” from fatigue and noonday heat. God gives not only life and strength, but peace and joy.

v. 3. *He shall convert*—properly, “He restoreth.” This is the second blessing, restoration either from weakness or wandering (Luke xv. 4—6), and guidance in the right way. He not only quickens, but sustains and edifies.

v. 4. *I will fear no evil*. This is the third and crowning blessing—an assured salvation in “the valley of the shadow of death,” alike from fear and danger, by the nearer presence of God with us (comp. 2 Cor. v. 6—8; Phil. i. 23), by “His rod” to guide and chasten, by “His staff” to protect against the last enemy. The dangers surrounding the pastoral

life in Palestine—so familiar to David himself (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35)—give vividness and appropriateness to this part of the picture.

v. 5. *Thou shalt prepare, &c.* Here the pastoral metaphor is broken; and this break is the strongest argument for referring the Psalm to the time when, by unexpected gift of God through His servants, corn, oil, and wine refreshed David and his servants fainting in the wilderness (see 2 Sam. xvii. 27—29). To us, here as in Ps. xxii. 26, the application to the Eucharistic feast, given us by our Good Shepherd in the wilderness of life, is irresistible.

v. 6. *Thy lovingkindness, &c.*—properly, “Only goodness and mercy.” In spite of trouble and enmity, and the sense of God’s chastisement, the Psalmist refuses to recognise anything in His life but God’s goodness and mercy; and, recognising these, desires in thankfulness to “dwell in the house of the Lord”—in thankful communion with Him—all “the length of days” (comp. 1 Thess. v. 16—18; Phil. iv. 6, 7).

PSALM XXIV.

This glorious “Psalm of David” is most clearly referred by its own character and subject to the solemn day when David, in the fulness of joy and triumph, brought the Ark to its place on Mount Zion, towering over the city so recently conquered from the Jebusites in the Name of the Lord (2 Sam. vi. ; 1 Chr. xv.). The former portion (a), vv. 1—6, may have been sung on the way, describing the glorious majesty of Jehovah, as the Creator of the world and the God of Israel, and next (as in Ps. xv.) the moral conditions of “ascending into the hill” of His Presence; the latter (b), vv. 7—10—separated from this by the musical interlude (“Selah”)—marks the time when the procession stood before the door of the new tabernacle erected for the Ark, demanding entrance for the Lord, and answered by the Priests from within. In fact the antiphonal character of the Psalm is marked throughout.

(Note the arrangement of the seven choirs of Levites recorded in 1 Chron. xv. 16—24).

By a natural application this has become one of the Psalms of ASCENSION DAY, commemorating the entrance of the King of Glory—His humiliation now having been laid aside—through the everlasting doors of Heaven to the Throne of His glorified Humanity at the right hand of God (Phil. ii. 9—11; Eph. i. 20—23.)

vv. 1, 2 (sung probably in full chorus) exalt the majesty of Jehovah as the Almighty Creator, first, of “the earth and its fulness,” the realm of inanimate and animate Nature: then of “the world”—the

words “compass of” are not in the Hebrew—and the men “who dwell in it,” the realm of His rational creatures. As always in the Old Testament the Lord is no mere tutelary God, but, while He makes



special covenant with Israel, is yet the God of the whole earth.

v. 2. *He hath prepared, &c.* See Gen. i. 9, 10; Ps. cxxxvi. 6.

vv. 3, 4 (clearly antiphonal in character). The question is asked by one voice (or chorus), "Who shall ascend?" &c. The answer given (exactly as in Ps. xv.) expresses the moral conditions of communion with God—purity of outward life and purity of heart, with no unreality of faith before God, and no deceit towards man. (See notes on Ps. xv.)

vv. 5, 6 (again in full chorus) declare that he shall receive not only blessing, but the gift of righteousness—the righteousness for which he has been described as striving. By the well-known spiritual paradox purity is at once the condition and the effect of "seeing God" (comp. Matt. v. 8 with 1 John iii. 2).

v. 6. *Seek Thy face, O Jacob.* This rendering is certainly erroneous. As the text stands it must be translated, "These are they that seek Thy face—(these are) Jacob," the true Israel. But this is very harsh; and probably the true reading (as in R.V.) is that of all the ancient versions, "O God of Jacob."

vv. 7, 9. *Lift up, &c.* The gates are too low to admit "the High and

Holy One," they must be lifted up above themselves.

*Everlasting doors.* In respect of the type, the "everlasting" is but a hyperbole, whether it looks back to the past or forward to the future. In the antitype only it has its literal meaning.

*The King of Glory* (like "the Lord of Glory" in 1 Cor. ii. 8; James ii. 1) seems clearly to allude to the manifestation of the *Shekinah*—the cloud of the glory of the Lord, which had rested on the Ark of God at the inauguration of the ancient Tabernacle.

vv. 8, 10. *The Lord strong and mighty; the Lord of Hosts.* These titles are not identical. In both there lingers the idea of martial triumph over the sanctuary wrested from the heathen. But in the former God is viewed as alone the Conqueror, "the Man of War" (as in the song at the Red Sea in Ex. xv. 3); in the latter—the higher title, first found in 1 Sam. i. 11, and expressly noted in 2 Sam. vi. 2, as the Name of the God of Israel, and constantly used in the Psalms and the Prophetic Books—He is hailed as the King over "the hosts" or armies of all His rational creatures, both on earth and in heaven, working out His almighty will through their hands.

## PSALM XXV.

This Psalm bears evident marks of connection with Ps. xxxiv. Not only is there much similarity in tone and substance between them; but both are acrostic, and, moreover, acrostic with the very same variations from strict acrosticism, in omitting the Hebrew letter *Vau* and adding a concluding verse beginning with *Pe*; although in this Psalm there is an additional irregularity in the omission of *Koph* and the repetition of *Resch*. Both are in the headings referred to David, and Ps. xxiv. to a particular time in his early life. But the ascription is doubted by many; partly on account of the acrosticism, which, however, especially in irregular form, can be no conclusive argument (see notes on Ps. ix., x.), partly because of the calm, didactic beauty of the Psalm, and its deep spiritual consciousness of the soul itself and of God, which do not accord well with the style of the Psalms of David, especially those of his early life.

Its various parts, by the effect of the alphabetical arrangement, naturally run into one another. It is a prayer throughout; but we may trace (a), in vv. 1, 2, a simple prayer of faith that they who trust in the Lord "may not be ashamed;" next (b), in vv. 3–6, a more detailed prayer for the grace of righteousness and the gift of pardon; thirdly (c), in vv. 7–10, an expression of the Psalmist's trust in God's willingness to grant these gifts, with prayer that they may be his; then (d), in vv. 11–14, a similar

before me against them that trouble me : thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

6 But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## DAY 5.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 24.

*Domini est terra.*

THE earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is : the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas : and prepared it upon the floods.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord : or who shall rise up in his holy place ?

4 Even he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart : and that hath not lift up his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord : and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him : even of them that seek thy face, O Jacob.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors : and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is the King of glory : it is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.

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 Who is the King of glory : even the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

## PSALM 25.

*Ad te, Domine, levavi.*

UNTO thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul ; my God, I have put my trust in thee : O let me not be confounded, neither let mine enemies triumph over me.

2 For all they that hope in thee shall not be ashamed : but such as transgress without a cause shall be put to confusion.

3 Shew me thy ways, O Lord : and teach me thy paths.

4 Lead me forth in thy truth, and learn me : for thou art the God of my salvation ; in thee hath been my hope all the day long.

5 Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies : and thy loving-kindnesses, which have been ever of old.

6 O remember not the sins and offences of my youth : but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.

7 Gracious and righteous is the Lord : therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

8 Them that are meek shall he guide in judgment : and such as are gentle, them shall he learn his way.

9 All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth : unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies.

10 For thy Name's sake, O Lord : be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

11 What man is he, that feareth the Lord : him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

12 His soul shall dwell at ease : and his seed shall inherit the land.

13 The secret of the Lord is among them that fear him : and he will shew them his covenant.

14 Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord : for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

15 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me : for I am desolate, and in misery.

16 The sorrows of my heart are enlarged : O bring thou me out, of my troubles.

17 Look upon my adversity, and misery : and forgive me all my sin.

18 Consider mine enemies, how



expression of trust in God's protection and blessing of the righteous; finally (e), in vv. 15—22, an entreaty that God will look on his own personal affliction and danger from the enemies, and will also send deliverance to Israel.

v. 1. *I lift up*—out of the confusion and troubles of earth, up to the calmness and peace of God's Presence.

v. 2. *Transgress*—properly "are faithless" or "revolt" from God. The sense is that they who wait in trust shall not "be ashamed" (by disappointment); while they who faithlessly refuse to wait shall be brought to shame (comp. Is. xxviii. 16, quoted in Rom. ix. 33; 1 Pet. ii. 8). (Compare the closing verse of the *Te Deum*.)

vv. 3—6. In these verses there is a profound sense that the knowledge and love of righteousness are God's gifts, not to be won by our own merit, but to be claimed from Him only through "His mercy and loving-kindness," which have been sure from the beginning. With this is naturally associated the sense of our own frailty, expressing itself in prayer for forgiveness both of the past and the present. We ask that God will forget our sins (even "the sins of our youth," which we must not forget), but that He will always remember us in His goodness.

## PSALM XXVI.

This Psalm, also traditionally ascribed to David, has many points of similarity with the preceding, although its tone shews a greater incisiveness and simplicity, and a stronger sense of antagonism to the ungodly. It is clearly written in prospect of speedy approach to God in the Sanctuary, dwelling on the purification of heart, which is the only true preparation.

It is first (a), in vv. 1—5, an appeal of the Psalmist to the all-seeing eye of God, to test and judge his innocence; next (b) in vv. 6—8, a declaration of his resolution to purify his soul in preparation for approach to the altar; thirdly (c), in vv. 9—11, a prayer for separation from the wicked; and lastly (d), v. 12, a thankful sense of deliverance and acceptance with God.

vv. 1—3. In this protestation of innocence—i.e. singleheartedness before God—there is a constant undercurrent of "trust in the Lord," looking to His "mercy," as well as His "truth," which emphatically distinguishes it from Pharisaic self-righteousness. The Psalmist lays his soul before God, to be tried through the very "reins and heart,"

vv. 7—11 express exactly what is implied in the preceding prayer—the faith that God will teach His ways even to sinners, who are "meek and humble," and that all "His ways are mercy and truth" to them, if only they cling to His Covenant of mercy; and then clench this by short ejaculatory prayer.

vv. 12—16 similarly express faith in the gift of knowledge, blessing, secret communion with God, to those who fear Him, even in the midst of trouble; and end with a fuller and more pathetic prayer, uttered out of the midst of affliction.

vv. 17—20. This prayer is taken up in the concluding section, evidently referring to some time of special trouble and persecution, through which the Psalmist trusts and waits.

v. 21 (like the corresponding verse of Ps. xxxiv.) is a kind of postscript, after the completion of the alphabetical arrangement—possibly a liturgical addition—of prayer for the "redemption of Israel out of all his troubles" (comp. Ps. iii. 8; xiv. 11).

not because he is conscious of freedom from sin and frailty, but because he knows that he has given himself to God, and so can trust to acceptance in His mercy. So in v. 11, immediately after the declaration, "I will walk in my integrity," follows the prayer, "O deliver me, and be merciful unto me."

many they are : and they bear a tyrannous hate against me.

19 O keep my soul, and deliver me : let me not be confounded, for I have put my trust in thee.

20 Let perfectness and righteousness dealing wait upon me : for my hope hath been in thee.

21 Deliver Israel, O God : out of all his troubles.

## PSALM 26.

*Judica me, Domine.*

BE thou my Judge, O Lord, for I have walked innocently : my trust hath been also in the Lord, therefore shall I not fall.

2 Examine me, O Lord, and prove me : try out my reins and my heart.

3 For thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes : and I will walk in thy truth.

4 I have not dwelt with vain persons : neither will I have fellowship with the deceitful.

## DAY 5.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 27.

*Dominus illuminatio.*

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 When the wicked, even mine enemies, and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh : they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid : and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.

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, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle : yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me, and set me up upon a rock of stone.

6 And now shall he lift up mine

5 I have hated the congregation of the wicked : and will not sit among the ungodly.

6 I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord : and so will I go to thine altar ;

7 That I may shew the voice of thanksgiving : and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house : and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

9 O shut not up my soul with the sinners : nor my life with the blood-thirsty ;

10 In whose hands is wickedness : and their right hand is full of gifts.

11 But as for me, I will walk innocently : O deliver me, and be merciful unto me.

12 My foot standeth right : I will praise the Lord in the congregations.

head : above mine enemies round about me.

7 Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness : I will sing, and speak praises unto the Lord.

8 Hearken unto my voice, O Lord, when I cry unto thee : have mercy upon me, and hear me.

9 My heart hath talked of thee, Seek ye my face : Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

10 O hide not thou thy face from me : nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

11 Thou hast been my succour : leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

12 When my father and my mother forsake me : the Lord taketh me up.

13 Teach me thy way, O Lord : and lead me in the right way, because of mine enemies.

14 Deliver me not over into the will of mine adversaries : for there are false witnesses risen up against me, and such as speak wrong.

15 I should utterly have faint-

v. 4, 5. There is a climax in this description of sin, singularly true to experience—first, unreality and self-deception; then the deceit of dissimulation towards others; next, deliberate combination for evil doing; lastly, authoritative leadership in wickedness. Comp. Ps. i. 1.

v. 6. *I will wash*, &c. This verse and the next are full of allusions to the ritual of sacrifice as carried out by the priests. First, we have the washing of the hands for purification, as ordered in Ex. xxx. 17—21; then the “compassing” (for so it should be rendered) “the altar,” evidently as a part of the sacrifice, perhaps for “the sprinkling of the blood round about the altar” described in Lev. iii. 2, 8, 13; then the song of thanksgiving and praise of the wondrous works of God, so often noticed as a part of the service of the priests and Levites. The Psalmist, in virtue of the true priesthood

of each believer, takes up all these in their spiritual sense. He will wash his hands in innocence by repentance; he will compass the altar in faith in God’s mercy; he will “sing and make melody in his heart unto the Lord.”

v. 9. *Shut not up*—properly (as in A.V.), “Gather”—that is, number me not with the transgressors in the gathering of judgment (see Matt. xiii. 20). These transgressors are branded, as usual, with the double mark of bloodthirsty violence and fraud open to the bribes of corruption (“gifts”). They form a congregation of evil, in contrast with the congregation of the servants of the Lord.

v. 12. *Standeth right*—properly, “on level ground,” without fear of stumbling, either from frailty within or enmity without. For this the Psalmist praises, not himself, but the Lord.

## PSALM XXVII.

This Psalm—also in the heading “A Psalm of David”—has many points of similarity to the preceding Psalm. By its allusions (in vv. 3, 11, 12), it may be probably assigned to the time of the rebellion of Absalom; although the note in the LXX. “before he was anointed” refers it to his earlier life.

The Psalmist is exiled from the House of the Lord, which he loves, yet he trusts soon to see it again in joy and triumph; a host is gathered against him, and false witnesses slander him; yet he patiently waits upon the Lord’s leisure.

It has two distinct parts, passing into each other (as in Ps. xix., xxiv.) by an abrupt transition. (a) In vv. 1—7, there is a confident utterance of faith in the time of struggle, and hope of speedy victory; (b), in vv. 8—14, a change to earnest prayer, under the sense of desertion and enmity of men, clinging more closely to God. The conclusion (c), in vv. 15, 16, partakes of the character of both these elements. It is a cry of one almost fainting in trouble, yet sustained by “waiting upon the Lord.”

v. 1. *My light and my salvation*. In many Psalms the twofold blessing of light and salvation is acknowledged from God. But here the Lord is Himself the Light (comp. Mic. vii. 8; Ps. lxxxiv. 12) and the Salvation (comp. Ex. xv. 2); just as in the New Testament God in Christ is “the Light” (John i. 7—9; 1 John i. 5), and is to us “wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. i. 30).

v. 2, 3. The antagonism is twofold—that of a band of bitter enemies, ready to devour, and that of a greater host, which they gather against him for war. Nothing could

more accurately describe the position of David in the rebellion of Absalom.

v. 4. *Beauty*—probably “graciousness” and “favour.”

*To visit His temple*. This should probably be (as in R.V.), *to enquire in His Temple* (see 2 Sam. xxii. 2, 4, 10, 11). The “Temple” referred to is clearly (see v. 6) the “tent” or “tabernacle” of the Lord; which is said to be to the Psalmist not only a sanctuary to hide in, but a “high rock” of refuge, possibly with some reference to its lofty position upon Mount Zion.

v. 7. *An oblation*, &c. The true rendering is more striking, “sacrifices of joy” or “shouting” (as in A.V. and R.V.)—the thank-offerings given with songs of praise.

v. 9. This verse should be (as in R.V.),

“When Thou saidst, Seek ye My Face,  
My heart said unto Thee,  
Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”

v. 10. *When my father*, &c. Comp. Is. xlix. 15, “Can a woman forget her sucking child... yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee.” See also Is. lxiii. 16. There is no need to seek in the actual condition of the Psalmist any explanation of a phrase obviously proverbial. The love of the Lord to His people is constantly compared to the love of a father for his children (comp. Ps. ciii. 13). Here it is declared how much the natural type falls short of the Antitype.

v. 11. *Right way*—properly, as in Ps. xxvi. 12, the “even way,” with no occasion of stumbling in it.

v. 12. *Speak wrong*—rather (as in

A.V.), “breathe out cruelty.” Such men were Shimei and Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8; xvii. 1—3).

v. 13. *I should utterly have fainted*. These words are not in the Hebrew, which breaks off with striking abruptness, “O, if I did not believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!” and then adds, “Tarry thou,” &c.

*In the land of the living* (see Ps. cxvi. 9), as opposed to the “pit,” (*Sheól*). The Psalmist is threatened with death; but he believes that God will save him from it, and bless him in this life—to which, as so often in the Old Testament, he clings as the known familiar place of God’s blessing (comp. Ps. lxxxviii. 10—12; Is. xxxviii. 18, 19).

v. 14. Our translation loses the emphatic repetition of the original, which (as in A.V.) runs thus, “Wait upon the Lord, be of good courage... Wait, I say, upon the Lord.” The stress is on the “wait”; “Though it tarry, wait for it” (Hab. ii. 3). The lesson is the lesson of patience, which experience and age had taught the Psalmist well.

## PSALM XXVIII.

This Psalm—called in the heading “A Psalm of David”—is singularly like Ps. xxvi. in its mingled supplication and confidence, in its sense of the antagonism of the evil and their coming destruction, and in its love of the Sanctuary of the Lord. But, whereas Ps. xxvi. clearly implies a temporary separation from that Sanctuary, this seems in v. 2 rather to indicate an actual approach to it, and in v. 7 an answer to prayer, which fills the soul with joy.

It contains three parts; (a), in vv. 1, 2, a cry to the Lord from one who lifts up his hands towards the Sanctuary; (b), in vv. 3—6, a prayer for separation from the wicked and from the ruin soon to fall upon them; (c), in vv. 7—10, a burst of thanksgiving in certainty of prayer heard, and further prayer for God’s people and His Anointed.

v. 1. *Strength*—properly “Rock” (as in Ps. xviii. 4; xix. 15; xxxi. 3, 4).

*Think no scorn*—properly, “be not silent (or “deaf”) from me,” i.e. “turn not from me in silence.”

*The pit*. The *Sheól* or *Hades* of the unseen world.

v. 2. *Mercy seat*—properly the innermost part or “oracle,” (see 1

Kings vi. 5, 16, 19, &c., &c.). The phrase might be applicable to one far away, worshipping (like Daniel) “towards Jerusalem,” as, indeed, it is used again and again in Solomon’s prayer (1 Kings viii. 22—61). But it rather seems to denote one present in the Tabernacle, and looking towards the veiled Presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

vv. 3—6. The scope of the prayer is mainly for distinction from the ungodly and from their fate. The longing for righteous retribution has here no touch of personal feeling; it is rather prophetic than maledictory.

v. 7. The sudden change to thankful and almost exulting confidence accumulates metaphors to describe the goodness of God. (Comp. Ps. xviii. 1.) He is to the Psalmist himself "the Strength" of energy, and the "shield" of protection, the

"stronghold of Salvation" to His anointed and His people, and the Good Shepherd feeding His sheep. It is difficult not to suppose it uttered after a pause on some manifestation of acceptance of prayer.

v. 10. It is to be noted that the Psalmist at once turns the sense of acceptance to an occasion of prayer, not for himself individually, but for the people (with the king, the Lord's anointed), as being God's inheritance, His sheep, whom He feeds and bears up for ever.

PSALM XXIX.

This "Psalm of David" seems to belong in composition or recollection to his early shepherd days. It is a magnificent description of God's voice heard in the storm, in which every detail and every locality are vividly marked. From the sevenfold repetition of the "Voice of the Lord" it has been finely called the "Psalm of the Seven Thunders." The heading in the LXX. seems to indicate its use at the close of the Feast of Tabernacles; but it is now used by the Jews as a Psalm of the Feast of Pentecost, on which they commemorate the giving of the Law in the thunders of Sinai. Like Ps. viii., xix., it contemplates God in Nature, but here in Nature's convulsions, not its silent majesty.

It opens (a), in vv. 1, 2, with an invitation to the worship of the God of Heaven; it passes on (b), in vv. 3—8, to depict the storm, its roar, its fury, its passing away; (c) it ends with an ascription of praise to Him, who is enthroned above the waterflood, a King for ever.

v. 1. This verse, in which our versions follows the LXX. and the Vulgate, should be rendered—

"Ascribe unto the Lord, ye sons of God (or 'of the mighty'),  
Ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength."

Comp. Ps. xcvi. 7; 1 Chron. xvi. 28, 29.

*Sons of God.* This phrase probably denotes the angels, as in Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7; the other interpretation, "sons of the mighty ones," the princes of earth, is not unlike "the kindreds of the nations" in the parallel Ps. xcvi. 7. But the former interpretation infinitely better suits the context. The Psalmist looks up to the calmness of heaven, above the storm, and calls on the inhabitants of that heaven to worship the Lord.

v. 2. *Holy worship*—properly (as in A.V.), "in the beauty of holiness" (comp. Ps. xcvi. 9; 2 Chron. xx. 21); that is, in the beautiful vestments of the Sanctuary, in which the angels are conceived as arrayed—signifying, like the wedding garment of Our

Lord's Parable, the vesture of holiness, in which the soul must clothe itself before God by His own gift.

vv. 3, 4 describe the gathering of the storm. Our version misses the sense. It should be (much as in A.V.)—

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;  
The God of glory thundereth;  
The Lord is upon many waters;  
The voice of the Lord in power;  
The voice of the Lord in majesty."

The "waters," "the many waters," are clearly the thunderclouds, the waters above the firmament (comp. Ps. xviii. 9—11; civ. 3, 4). The Lord is enthroned upon the clouds; the voice of His thunder breathes power and majesty.

vv. 5, 6. In these is grandly painted the burst of the full fury of the storm; shivering the cedars of Lebanon; making the great Lebanon itself and Sirion—the snowy Hermon, the highest peak of the Anti-Lebanon (see Deut. iii. 9)—to "leap like a young

ed : but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

16 O tarry thou the Lord's leisure : be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

PSALM 28.

*Ad te, Domine.*

UNTO thee will I cry, O Lord my strength : I think no scorn of me; lest, if thou make as though thou hearest not, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my humble petitions, when I cry unto thee : when I hold up my hands towards the mercy-seat of thy holy temple.

3 O pluck me not away, neither destroy me with the ungodly and wicked doers : which speak friendly to their neighbours, but imagine mischief in their hearts.

4 Reward them according to their deeds : and according to the wickedness of their own inventions.

5 Recompense them after the work of their hands : pay them that they have deserved.

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.

7 Praise be the Lord : for he hath heard the voice of my humble petitions.

8 The Lord is my strength, and my shield; my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped : therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him.

9 The Lord is my strength : and

he is the wholesome defence of his Anointed.

10 O save thy people, and give thy blessing unto thine inheritance : feed them, and set them up for ever.

PSALM 29.

*Afferte Domino.*

BRING unto the Lord, O ye mighty, bring young rams unto the Lord : ascribe unto the Lord worship and strength.

2 Give the Lord the honour due unto his Name : worship the Lord with holy worship.

3 It is the Lord, that commandeth the waters : it is the glorious God, that maketh the thunder.

4 It is the Lord, that ruleth the sea ; the voice of the Lord is mighty in operation : the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.

5 The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar-trees : yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Libanus.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf : Libanus also, and Sirion, like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness : yea, the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Cades.

8 The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to bring forth young, and discovereth the thick bushes : in his temple doth every man speak of his honour.

9 The Lord sitteth above the water-flood : and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.

10 The Lord shall give strength unto his people : the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

DAY 6.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 30.

*Exaltabo te, Domine.*

I WILL magnify thee, O Lord, for thou hast set me up : and not made my foes to triumph over me.

2 O Lord my God, I cried unto thee : and thou hast healed me.

3 Thou, Lord, hast brought my

soul out of hell : thou hast kept my life from them that go down to the pit.

4 Sing praises unto the Lord, O ye saints of his : and give thanks unto him for a remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in his

unicorn" ("antelope" or "bison," comp. Ps. cxiv. 4, 6); dividing properly "hewing out") the forked lightning.

vv. 8, 9 shew the storm passing to the south to "the wilderness of Kadesh" (see Num. xiii. 26), there shaking the forest, making the hinds cast their young, and stripping the trees of their leaves ("discovering the thick bushes"). The simplicity and homeliness of description, compared with the grandeur of the preceding verses, seem to indicate a description of what was before the eyes.

v. 8. *In His temple, &c.* The true rendering is, "In His Temple everything shouts His glory." The "Temple" may be the Temple of the Universe, in which the echoes of the storm are the answering confession from all Nature of the majesty of

God; or, according to more common usage, the Temple of Heaven, where above the storms of earth the angelic song rises for ever (comp. Is. vi. 3).

v. 9. The first clause is, "The Lord hath sat above the Flood," a word only used of the Deluge (in Gen. vi. —xi.). It is best taken as a natural and striking reference, suggested by the storm, to the God who once destroyed the earth by the Flood, and promised never so to destroy it again. As then, so now, "He sitteth above the waters a King for ever."

v. 10. There is an exquisite beauty in the calmness of this promise of strength and peace, like the serene brightness of the evening, when the tempest has passed away. They who are "His people" need not fear, even in the wildest storm (comp. Ps. xlv. 1—4).

## PSALM XXX.

This Psalm is described as "a Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House; of David." If this means "at the Dedication of the house of David," the reference may be either to his own house on Mount Zion (2 Sam. v. 11, 12; vii. 1), or to "the House" of the Lord, commonly supposed to be the site of the future Temple on Mount Moriah, of which David on dedicating it after the cessation of the plague said (1 Chron. xxii. 1), "This is the House of the Lord." In favour of the former is the allusion to triumph over his enemies (v. 1); in favour of the latter—which seems on the whole more probable—the allusions to a proud prosperity rebuked, to a danger bringing him near to the gates of death, and to the change of the sackcloth of mourning (see 1 Chron. xxi. 16) into gladness. Some interpreters indeed supply (as in R.V.) "a Psalm" before "of David," and suppose this to have been a "Psalm of David" applied and used at the Dedication of the Temple, either after the Captivity or in the time of Judas Maccabeus. But this interpretation does not exclude the other.

The Psalm falls into two parts; (a) the thanksgiving for deliverance and life (vv. 1—5); (b) the recital of his past self-confidence, its chastisement, and forgiveness (vv. 6—12).

v. 1. *Set me up*—properly (as in A.V.), "lifted me up," implying deliverance out of trouble or danger.

*My foes, &c.* If the Psalm be referred to the time after the numbering of the people, it is hard, in our ignorance of its exact date in David's reign, to know what foes are referred to. But in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13 it is implied that there were still enemies unconquered, before whom David might flee.

v. 2. *Healed me.* The words are best taken literally of recovery from sickness. May David have been himself smitten by the pestilence, though "not to death"?

v. 3. *From them, &c.*—that is, from being numbered with them who go

down to the grave; such as David saw, with so much anguish, dying in thousands around him (2 Sam. xxiv. 17).

v. 4. *For a remembrance*—properly "to the memorial of His Holiness," i.e. to the Name of the Lord (see Ex. iii. 15; Is. xxvi. 8).

v. 5. *Heaviness, &c.* This verse should be rendered—

"Weeping may sojourn with us for a night,  
But with the morning comes a shout of joy."

The metaphor is drawn from the weary nights of sickness, and the infinite relief of the dawn. Weeping is not man's true inheritance; it is a

stranger tarrying only a night; with the appearance of the morning it is swallowed up in the shout of the joy "which no man taketh from us."

v. 6. *In my prosperity, &c.* Nothing can describe better than these words the state of mind which tempted David to number the people. Pride cloaked itself in the guise of a thankfulness—not perhaps insincere—to the Lord who "made his hill—the hill of Zion—so strong"; but it was the pride of over-security still, taking for granted the continuance of God's favour, almost as a right.

v. 8. *Right humbly.* The original is simply "made supplication to the Lord"; our version is a kind of gloss, drawing out the true moral implied.

vv. 9—11 are the words of the prayer spoken of in v. 8, against the dreary

shadow of death, and for help and mercy in the present life.

v. 10. *Shall the dust, &c.* There is an almost exact parallel in Ps. lxxxviii. 10—12. Comp. also Ps. xxvii. 15; Is. xxxviii. 18, 19. The future life is not ignored or doubted, but it is too vague and shadowy to be what it is, or should be, to us—a place of even fuller manifestation of God's goodness and man's thanksgiving.

vv. 12, 13. In these there is the same rapid transition from agony of prayer to confident joy, as in xxviii. 6, 7.

v. 13. *Every good man.* This is a plain mistranslation. It should be, "That my glory might sing praise to Thee," &c. "My glory" (as in Ps. xvi. 9; lvii. 8) is "my soul."

## PSALM XXXI.

This Psalm—the plaintive utterance of a sorrowful, though unshaken, faith—is traditionally ascribed to David; and, if written by him, must belong to one of the troubled periods of his life—the days of his early persecution or the rebellion of Absalom. The depth of sorrow and strong sense of sin and weakness pervading it would refer it rather to the latter time. The style, moreover, is less terse and incisive than in his earlier Psalms. Some critics have ascribed it to Jeremiah, on the ground of certain resemblances of tone and expression, which, however, are far from conclusive, and which may simply indicate the use by the Prophet of older words familiar to him through the Temple worship.

It begins (a) in vv. 1—9 with the utterance of faith, commending the spirit in confidence to the God of Truth. Then (b) the tone suddenly changes to a plaintive key, dwelling (in vv. 10—15) with sorrowful emphasis on the greatness of his distress—passing, however, (c) into a prayer of "sorrow not without hope" (vv. 16—20). Finally (d) this again clears up into a still stronger expression of faith and love of Him who loveth us (vv. 21—27).

vv. 3, 4 are a singularly beautiful example of the apparent self-contradiction of prayer, "Be thou to me a rock of refuge . . . For thou art my rock." We pray that God will shew Himself what yet we believe that He is; that we may feel what in some sense we already know. The cry of faith in trial is mostly, "Lord, I believe: help Thou my unbelief." We "know in part," but would "know even as we are known."

v. 6. *Into Thy hands, &c.* The Psalmist's words are originally a commendation of his "spirit"—not his life, but his soul—to God in the struggle of life; appealing to Him as a "Redeemer" from sin and sorrow (see Ps. xix. 15), and as a "God of Truth" who has promised to bless, and therefore "is faithful and just" to fulfil His promise; "committing

the keeping of the soul to Him, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. iv. 19). When Our Lord took them up on the Cross (Luke xxiii. 46) He consecrated them to a higher sense, in which thousands of His followers have since used them—only, as in the case of St. Stephen (Acts vii. 59), through Him—commending the spirit to the Father, as in life, so in the awful crisis of death, and in face of the unseen world which it opens to us.

v. 7. *Superstitious vanities*, the false gods of the heathen, often called "vanities" or unrealities (comp. Jon. ii. 8; Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Kings xvi. 13, 26; Jer. ii. 5, &c.).

v. 9. *In a large room.* See Ps. iv. 1; xviii. 19.

vv. 10—15 describe a condition of bodily sickness and deep mental

depression—assailed by enmity and slander, and conspiracy from without, and by consciousness of iniquity within—suing well with the time of David's flight from Absalom.

v. 13. *Among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours.* This rendering, which appears rightly to represent the existing text, is certainly strange. Various corrections have been proposed to avoid it. But the text is probably correct. The words "to my neighbours exceedingly" are a bitter afterthought of the Psalmist, implying that his neighbours—those who had been his familiar intimates—had become his worst enemies. So it was with Ahithophel; so probably with many others. The whole is a vivid description of the desertion of what seemed a falling cause—by his open enemies, by his treacherous friends, and by strangers from without, who feared to recognise him. By Absalom's usurpation David seemed already "dead and out of mind," a vessel once precious and now "broken."

v. 17. In this verse hope breaks through the cloud, and encourages the prayer to Him in whom he trusts.

*My time.* It should be "my times." The plural is significant of the appointed seasons of life's changes—"a time to weep and a time to laugh"—as all in God's hand, portioned out to us as we need them, and in each case to be patiently lived through in faith.

vv. 21—23. The change of tone is

here sudden and complete; when the dark hour passes, the concluding expression of faith is fuller and brighter than in the beginning.

v. 21. *Prepared.* It should be "wrought out." God's goodness is always laid up in secret: in due time it is wrought out before the eyes of men.

v. 22. *Comp. Ps. xxvii. 5.* The *provokings* should be "the plottings" of secret treachery, as the "strife of tongues" is the onset of open slander.

v. 23. *In a strong city.* The expression is clearly metaphorical—whether suggested by any actual experience in the crisis of Absalom's rebellion we cannot tell.

v. 24. *When I made haste, or (as in A.V.) "in my haste" (comp. Ps. cxvi. 11).* David's character was clearly, even in old age, impressive and impulsive. The thrill of momentary despair from such a soul as his was not a bar to the acceptance of its prayer.

vv. 26, 27. There is something specially beautiful in this turning of his own experience into a general lesson to the saints of love, strength, and hope (comp. 2 Cor. i. 4, where St. Paul uses the comfort which he had needed and felt to enable him to comfort others). Love is to come first; then, "rooted and grounded in love," we shall be "strong and established in heart;" lastly, out of present comfort will grow "hope in the Lord" for the future.

## PSALM XXXII.

This Psalm—the second of the Penitential Psalms, used accordingly on ASH WEDNESDAY, as by the Jews on the great Day of Atonement—is clearly to be ascribed to David, and referred to the time of mingled penitence and thanksgiving, after he had received the assurance of forgiveness for his great sin, and of restoration to communion with God. (It thus represents a later phase of experience than Psalm li.) It is called *Maschil*—that is, either a Psalm of instruction (see v. 9), or a Psalm of high musical execution.

It is divided into four sections by the interposed *Selah*. (a) In vv. 1—4 is the thanksgiving for forgiveness, contrasted with the description of the previous hopelessness of misery; (b), in vv. 5, 6, the record of his confession of sin and its acceptance; (c), in vv. 7, 8, the acknowledgment in this of the ground of confidence and even joy; (d), in vv. 9—12, the warning of the voice of God against further wandering, and the willing acceptance of it by the penitent soul.

pleasure is life : heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be removed : thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong.

7 Thou didst turn thy face from me : and I was troubled.

8 Then cried I unto thee, O Lord : and gat me to my Lord right humbly.

9 What profit is there in my blood : when I go down to the pit ?

10 Shall the dust give thanks unto thee : or shall it declare thy truth ?

11 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me : Lord, be thou my helper.

12 Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy : thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

13 Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing : O my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

### PSALM 31.

*In te, Domine, speravi.*

**I**N thee, O Lord, have I put my trust : let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me : make haste to deliver me.

3 And be thou my strong rock, and house of defence : that thou mayest save me.

4 For thou art my strong rock, and my castle : be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy Name's sake.

5 Draw me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me : for thou art my strength.

6 Into thy hands I commend my spirit : for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

7 I have hated them that hold of superstitious vanities : and my trust hath been in the Lord.

8 I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy : for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities.

9 Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy : but hast set my feet in a large room.

10 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble : and mine eye is consumed for very heaviness ; yea, my soul and my body.

11 For my life is waxen old with heaviness : and my years with mourning.

12 My strength faileth me, because of mine iniquity : and my bones are consumed.

13 I became a reproof among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours : and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me ; and they that did see me without conveyed themselves from me.

14 I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind : I am become like a broken vessel.

15 For 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.

16 But my hope hath been in thee, O Lord : I have said, Thou art my God.

17 My time is in thy hand ; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies : and from them that persecute me.

18 Shew thy servant the light of thy countenance : and save me for thy mercy's sake.

19 Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee : let the ungodly be put to confusion, and be put to silence in the grave.

20 Let the lying lips be put to silence : which cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully, speak against the righteous.

21 O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee : and that thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in thee, even before the sons of men !

22 Thou shalt hide them privily by thine own presence from the



vv. 1, 2. In these verses are described three distinct aspects of sin and of its forgiveness. First, it is "transgression" of some definite commandment, and this is "forgiven," or properly "lifted up," and "taken away;" then it is "sin," the general habit of wrong doing, and this is "covered" or "atoned for;" lastly, it is "iniquity" or inward defilement of soul, and this is "not imputed," but forgiven by God's mercy. Under each of these it is God's free pardon of sin (or "justification") which is to be grasped by penitent faith; and in this sense the passage is quoted by St. Paul in Rom. iv. 6—8.

v. 3. *While I held my tongue*, that is, refused the confession of sin. "Complaining" (or literally "roaring") is not penitence; suffering, even if under it we waste away, is not atonement.

vv. 4, 5 should be in the past tense; describing the former state of impenitent misery.

v. 5, *I will*, &c. It should be, "I acknowledged." David is describing his past confession, followed (as in 2 Sam. xiii. 13) by the immediate gift of pardon, but evidently in itself the outcome of long internal anguish and struggle.

v. 7. *For this*, &c. The Psalmist (as in vv. 11, 12) makes his own experience the warning and encouragement of all God's people. Godly thought, though face to face with God, does not ignore our brethren.

*In a time*, &c.—literally, in "a time of finding;" that is, either a time in which we find God, "a time of

acceptance," or a time in which God finds us out, "a time of visitation."

*In the great waterfloods*, that is, the "sea of troubles," the floods of danger and sorrow. Comp. Is. xliii. 2, "When thou walkest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

vv. 9, 10 most probably represent the warning utterance of God; some take them to be the words of the Psalmist, but this seems forced and abrupt. They evidently convey the warning to the forgiven penitent, "Thy sins are forgiven, go and sin no more."

v. 10. *Lest they fall upon thee*—probably "else they will not come nigh thee." The penitent is to be guided simply by God's eye; he is not to need the coercion fit only for brute beasts, without which they will refuse all service. As St. Paul expresses it, he is "not to be under law but under grace," freely accepting God's service through love of Him who hath so loved us.

v. 11. There is an instructive boldness in this exhortation to the righteous—evidently those who are justified by God—not only to put away hopeless sorrow, but to rejoice and shout for joy. It is not said that they shall be kept from "the sorrows which remain for the wicked," but that even in sorrow, perhaps through sorrow, "mercy shall compass them about." Note St. Paul's distinction (2 Cor. vii. 9—11) between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of this world."

PSALM XXXIII.

This Psalm has no superscription, and contains no distinct evidence of authorship or date. Its regularity of construction and sustained unity of tone may perhaps be taken as indications of a late date. Probably it was subjoined to the previous Psalm (with which it is united in some MSS.) as a specimen of the "songs of deliverance" alluded to in v. 7. It was evidently intended for liturgical use, and accordingly its parallelism is very strongly marked.

It opens (a) with a call to praise God (vv. 1—3); then (b) it bases that call on the sense of His moral attributes of truth and mercy (vv. 4, 5), as manifested (c) in the creation of the universe (vv. 6—9), (d) and in the government of humanity, and especially of His own people (vv. 10—18); it ends (e) with a prayer for His blessing on those who wait for and hope in Him (vv. 19—21).

v. 2. *Lute and instrument*, &c. It should be "a ten-stringed lute" (see Ps. xcii. 3; cxliv. 9). The two instruments—the harp and lute—(both stringed and played with the

hand or quill) are always distinguished and placed in connection.

v. 3. *A new song* for blessings "new every morning," out of ever-renewed thankfulness—the earnest

provoking of all men: thou shalt keep them secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues.

23 Thanks be to the Lord: for he hath shewed me marvellous great kindness in a strong city.

24 And when I made haste, I said: I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes.

25 Nevertheless, thou heardest

the voice of my prayer: when I cried unto thee.

26 O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth them that are faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

27 Be strong, and he shall establish your heart: all ye that put your trust in the Lord.

DAY 6.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 32.

*Beati, quorum.*

BLESSED is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven: and whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin: and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 For while I held my tongue: my bones consumed away through my daily complaining.

4 For thy hand is heavy upon me day and night: and my moisture is like the drought in summer.

5 I will acknowledge my sin unto thee: and mine unrighteousness have I not hid.

6 I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord: and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.

7 For this shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found: but in the great waterfloods they shall not come nigh him.

8 Thou art a place to hide me in, thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

9 I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go: and I will guide thee with mine eye.

10 Be ye not like to horse and mule, which have no understanding: whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle, lest they fall upon thee.

11 Great plagues remain for the ungodly: but whose putteth his trust in the Lord, mercy embraceth him on every side.

12 Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord: and be joyful, all ye that are true of heart.

PSALM 33.

*Exultate, justi.*

REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous: for it becometh well the just to be thankful.

2 Praise the Lord with harp: sing praises unto him with the lute, and instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing praises lustily unto him with a good courage.

4 For the word of the Lord is true: and all his works are faithful.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as it were upon an heap: and layeth up the deep, as in a treasure-house.

8 Let all the earth fear the Lord: stand in awe of him, all ye that dwell in the world.

9 For he spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: and maketh the devices of the people to be of none effect, and casteth out the counsels of princes.

11 The counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever: and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation.

12 Blessed are the people, whose



of the "new song" of Heaven (Rev. v. 9).

v. 4. God's "Word" and "Works" are distinguished. By v. 6 we see that in Nature the "Word" is the expression of His creative law and purpose; and the "Works" are the carrying out of that purpose in detail. In relation to man, the Word is the direct revelation of Him who is indirectly revealed in His works—a revelation, moreover, of His moral Nature, true and faithful, loving righteousness and abundant in goodness. It is to be noted that, as usual in Holy Scripture, the praise of man is claimed for God, not simply because of His Infinite Being or Almighty Power, but because of His moral relations to us, of truth and faithfulness, righteousness and goodness. The former we can fear or adore; through the latter only can we love Him.

v. 6. The allusion to Gen. i. is evident, even in the successive references to the heaven, the sea, and the earth. There we read again and again, "God said" and it was done; and we also read that "the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters." The immediate purpose of this verse (as still more emphatically of v. 9) is to dwell on the speedy and facile creation of all by the Almighty. To us there is seen, latent beneath this, the foreshadowing of "the Word" and "the Spirit" as engaged in the Creative work.

v. 7. *As an heap.* (So in Ex. xv. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 13.) The metaphor is suggested by the appearance of the sea from the shore, seeming to overhang the land; *as in a treasure house*—the reservoir of His waters for the fertilization of the world (comp. Job xxxviii. 22).

vv. 10, 11. The "counsel brought to nought" (like the wisdom of the world in 1 Cor. i. 21—28) is the self-

choosing and self-reliant thought of the goddess; it stands here in contrast with "the counsel of the Lord, which endures for ever," and which gives something of its own unchangeableness to all such wisdom as rests upon it. Hence the Psalmist alludes in v. 12 to the people who know and obey "the Lord Jehovah" as their God, before returning, in vv. 13—17, to His universal kingdom over the world. (The words "and casteth out the counsels of princes," which break the parallelism, are not in the Hebrew, but are added here from the LXX. and Vulgate.)

v. 14. *He fashioneth, &c.* He made the heart; therefore He, and He alone, understands all its works.

v. 16. The horse and the chariot are looked upon as the emblems of invasion and conquest (comp. Ps. xx. 7; cxlvii. 10; Prov. xxi. 31; and note the exclamation of 2 Kings ii. 12; xiii. 14). Hence the use of them was forbidden to Israel (Deut. xvii. 16), and not adopted till the days of Solomon. Hence the disclaiming here of all confidence in them.

v. 18. The sudden introduction of the ideas of famine and danger of death probably indicates the prevalence of such famine in the days of the Psalmist. May the Psalm have been written for the revival of Jehoshaphat, about the time of the great famine in the days of Elijah?

vv. 19—21. In this application of the truth of the Psalm the emphasis is evidently on patience—the patience which "tarries for the Lord," "trusts in His Name" for the present, and therefore "hopes" for the future. In proportion to our idea of what should be under God's all righteous Will is the trial of patience under that which is. Job felt this trial, which his friends felt not, because he thought and spoke of the Lord the thing that was right.

## PSALM XXXIV.

The style of this Psalm, especially in the acrostic arrangement, with its curious imperfections, obviously implies a common authorship with Ps. xxv. (see notes on Ps. xxv.). The heading here is remarkable, "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away and he departed." It is not lightly to be set aside; for it must have been derived from tradition, because there is nothing in the Psalm

God is the Lord Jehovah: and blessed are the folk, that he hath chosen to him to be his inheritance.

13 The Lord looked down from heaven, and beheld all the children of men: from the habitation of his dwelling he considereth all them that dwell on the earth.

14 He fashioneth all the hearts of them: and understandeth all their works.

15 There is no king that can be saved by the multitude of an host: neither is any mighty man delivered by much strength.

16 A horse is counted but a vain thing to save a man: neither shall he deliver any man by his great strength.

17 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him: and upon them that put their trust in his mercy;

18 To deliver their soul from death: and to feed them in the time of dearth.

19 Our soul hath patiently tarried for the Lord: for he is our help, and our shield.

20 For our heart shall rejoice in him: because we have hoped in his holy Name.

21 Let thy merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us: like as we do put our trust in thee.

### PSALM 34.

#### *Benedicam Domino.*

**I** WILL always give thanks unto the Lord: his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O praise the Lord with me: and let us magnify his Name together.

4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me: yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.

5 They had an eye unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him: yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him: and delivereth them.

8 O taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

9 O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints: for they that fear him lack nothing.

10 The lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.

11 Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 What man is he that lusteth to live: and would fain see good days?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil: and thy lips, that they speak no guile.

14 Eschew evil, and do good: seek peace, and ensue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous: and his ears are open unto their prayers.

16 The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil: to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them: and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and will save such as be of an humble spirit.

19 Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: so that not one of them is broken.

21 But misfortune shall slay the ungodly: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants: and all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitute.

to suggest it as a conjecture; and the use of the title "Abimelech"—which is evidently a title—(see Gen. xx., xxvi.), instead of the proper name "Achish," seems to argue acrosticism and independence of 1 Sam. xxi. Against it are to be set the acrosticism (which is not conclusive) and the sustained and didactic tone.

In it we have (a), in vv. 1—4, the Psalmist's own spiritual experience of God's deliverance granted to faith; (b), in vv. 5—10, an extension of this personal experience generally to all the "poor," who are the "Saints of the Lord;" (c), in vv. 11—16, an admonition to "the children" to seek God's blessing, and to prepare the heart for it; (d), in vv. 17—22, a renewed declaration of the experience of salvation, especially by the contrite and sorrowful.

vv. 2, 3. The salvation of the individual is an encouragement to all "the humble," and, therefore, a ground for inviting them to a common thanksgiving. Personal knowledge of God cannot be separated from the Communion of Saints.

v. 6 (like v. 5) should be in the past tense. The Psalmist dwells on the experience of the afflicted in the past—heard and "brightened," and not confounded by failure. The allusion of v. 7 may perhaps indicate that he had specially in his mind the cry of Jacob in his agony of fear and distress, and the signal answer of blessing vouchsafed (see Gen. xxxii. 7—12, 24—30).

v. 7. *The Angel of the Lord.* The use of the singular number is remarkable, especially in connection with the "encamping round about" (comp. 2 Kin. vi. 17). As in Gen. xlviii. 16; Ex. xiv. 19; xxiii. 20; xxxii. 34; Josh. v. 14, 15; Dan. vi. 22, it implies a special visible manifestation of the presence and power of God (comp. Ex. iii. 2 with 4). In Gen. xxxii. the word *Mahanaim* signifies "the two camps," yet the vision to Jacob is of one in whom he saw "the face of God." The "Angel of the Lord" is the leader of the angelic host.

v. 8. To "taste" (see Heb. vi. 4) is a thing of practical experience; to "see" of the understanding. To do is, as our Lord teaches, the way to know (John vii. 17); faith and love (says St. Paul in Eph. iii. 17—19) precede comprehension. St. Bernard's well-known words are often quoted, *Nisi gustaveris, non videbis*. The words are applied in 1 Pet. ii. 3 to our own relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 11. *Come, ye children.* This ad-

dress, unique in the Psalms, is frequent in the Proverbs. The Psalmist, in turning to those who are children in age or character, naturally assumes a more didactic tone; appeals to the lower motive of desire for happiness; dwells on the plainer righteousness of act and word rather than the subtler righteousness of thought; and sustains faith by the promise of God's care of the righteous and answer to their prayer, and by the threat of retribution of the wicked. This is not the highest teaching, the "strong meat" for the full grown, but it is the appropriate "milk" for "children." (See the quotation, 1 Pet. iii. 10—12, and comp. 1 Pet. ii. 2.)

v. 17. *The righteous cry.* The original is simply, "They cried." The insertion is unfortunate, for the emphasis, as is seen in the next verse, is on the cry itself—the cry of the sorrowful and contrite; and the whole idea is distinct from that of vv. 19, 20, which refer distinctly to "the righteous." The penitent cries in fancied desolation, and is delivered; the righteous is conscious of the Divine protection always about him.

v. 20. *Not one of them is broken.* The celebrated passage, John xix. 33—36, may perhaps refer to this promise (as it certainly refers to Ex. xii. 46)—fulfilled in Him, who is indeed "the Righteous One," even on the Cross.

v. 22. As in Ps. xxv. 21 this verse is a conclusion, independent of the acrostic arrangement. It lays final stress on the consciousness, not merely of God's protection and blessing, but of His redemption, that is, deliverance from evil—sorrow, sin, and death.

This Psalm is called in the heading a "Psalm of David." By some critics it has been referred to Jeremiah, on account of some remarkable resemblances to Jer. xviii. 19—23; Lam. ii. 16. But these are not improbably due to reminiscence of the Psalm; and the tone and character of the Psalm—with its martial images, its forcible abruptness, and its fierceness against enemies—suit far better with the vehement and warlike spirit of David in the early days of his persecution, than with the gentler and more plaintive sadness of the suffering prophet. It is to be classed with Ps. lxi. and cix., as "Imprecatory Psalms" (on which see *Introduction*, section v.); in its indignation against cruelty and treachery it is accordant with eternal righteousness—in its personal wrath against enemies it belongs to the Old Testament rather than the New.

It falls into three divisions. (a), in vv. 1—10, a cry for God's protection and vengeance on his enemies; (b), in vv. 11—17, a justification of that cry by a vivid picture of their ingratitude and treachery; (c), in vv. 18—28, a return to prayer for such deliverance, as may be a rebuke to the evil and a comfort to the good.

v. 1. *Plead Thou my cause.* The mixture of metaphor is eminently natural, if David be the author. It is first drawn from the law-court; for David was really accused before Saul (see vv. 11, 12). But his actual condition, attacked and defended by the sword, suggests an immediate change to the images of the battlefield. God is his shield and buckler of defence (as in Ps. xviii. 2, 30, 35, &c.), and his spear of aggressive warfare; in both aspects his "salvation." Similarly verses 4—8 begin in simple desire of shame and failure for his enemies, and then pass at once into metaphor—first a metaphor drawn from the wars of the Lord, then a metaphor suggested by that hunting of his soul as a prey, of which he so pathetically complains in 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 14; xxvi. 20.

vv. 5, 6. *The Angel of the Lord* (see Ps. xxxiv. 7). The picture drawn in these verses is of a rout of the enemies of the Lord's people, which the unseen Angel of the Lord leads. But there may, perhaps, be a reference to the awful day of the vengeance of the Angel of the Lord upon the Egyptians—when their way was "dark and slippery" in the Red Sea, and when their strength was scattered like chaff before the "strong wind" of the Lord (see Ex. xv. 7—10).

vv. 7, 8. The metaphor here suddenly changes to that of the chase—the pitfall for the beast of prey and the net for the feeble game. The prayer is that the cruel hunter may fall into the one, and be entangled in the other.

v. 10. *All my bones, &c.* The bones are looked upon as the seat of bodily

pain (see Ps. vi. 2); by a bold metaphor they are here joined with "the soul" in the cry of rejoicing over relief.

*Who is like unto Thee?* This exclamation of adoring wonder (comp. Ex. xv. 11; Ps. lxxi. 19; lxxxvi. 8, &c.) is especially called out, not simply by God's Almighty Power, or even His Righteousness, but by that condescension to the weak and exaltation of the lowly, which forms the theme of the Song of Hannah and of the *Magnificat*.

vv. 11—16. The description here is of a kind of conspiracy of false witness, treachery, ingratitude, mean triumph, and ribald scoffing over the fall of one who had been envied. Of this the history in 1 Sam. xviii., xix., shews little trace, dwelling only on the jealousy of Saul. But experience of the world, especially in courts, shews too plainly how ready such conspiracy is to take advantage of the first signs of royal jealousy. It is interesting to compare David's unrestrained denunciation of these baser enemies with the enduring loyalty and tenderness, which, though sorely tried, he still cherished for Saul.

vv. 13, 14. The contrast in these verses is singularly striking—almost anticipating the "Love ye your enemies," &c. of the Gospel teaching, and remarkably opposed to the fierceness of denunciation, notable in the close of this Psalm and in many others:

v. 13. *Shall turn* (or perhaps "may it turn") *into mine own bosom.* The sense has been variously interpreted; but it seems clearly to be that the prayer, defeated by the unworthi-

ness of its objects, shall return to bless him who uttered it (comp. Matt. x. 13).

v. 15. *Unawares*—properly, “men whom I know not,” whom (that is) I had disdained to know.

*Making mouths, &c.* It should be (as in A.V. and R.V.), “They rend me and cease not.”

v. 16. *With the flatterers, &c.* The true rendering seems to be (much as in A.V.), “like ribald jesters at feasts”—the parasites, hangers on at the royal table.

v. 17. *My darling* (i.e. my soul). See Ps. xxii. 20.

v. 18. *So will I give Thee thanks, &c.* Here the idea is suggested, which is more fully worked out in vv. 27, 28—that the deliverance of God’s servant is a cause of thankfulness and infinite rejoicing, not to him only,

but to the great congregation itself. Whatever shows God’s goodness and righteousness is the highest blessing of all men.

v. 21. *Fie on thee*—rather (as in A.V.), “Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it,” a cry of scornful rejoicing, much like the “There, there” of v. 25.

v. 24. *Judge me, &c.* The prayer returns to the idea of v. 1, but in a nobler strain. There it was simply a desire of God’s favourable judgment; here it is the higher desire that the judgment may be “according to righteousness,” in trust that, if it be so, his enemies will not triumph over him. There the deliverance was asked for the sake of the Psalmist himself; here for the sake of all God’s servants, that they may “shout with joy,” and say, “Blessed be the Lord.”

## PSALM XXXVI.

The calm reflectiveness of this singularly beautiful Psalm stands in striking contrast with the vehemence of Ps. xxxv. If, according to the heading, it be ascribed to David, “the servant of the Lord,” of whom it is well worthy, it must belong to the maturity of his later days.

It opens (a), in vv. 1–4, with a terrible picture of the heart of the ungodly, ignoring God and resting only on self; (b), thence, by an abrupt transition, it rises (in vv. 5–9) to an enthusiastic description of God’s goodness, manifested in all its infinity to man; and so (c) ends, in vv. 10–12, with prayer for the enjoyment of that goodness and the defeat of the ungodly.

v. 1. *My heart, &c.* In accordance with most ancient versions, we should probably read “his heart,” and render thus,—

“The oracle of transgression in the wicked speaks in his own heart;

There is no fear of God before his eyes.”

The wicked listens only to his own heart; it becomes his oracle, an oracle of sin; of the reverence and fear of God he knows nothing. Self-worship and ignoring of God are to each other both cause and effect; out of these comes the “strong delusion” of an unnatural voice, urging to sin. The description is like that of the “reprobate mind,” as described in Rom. i. 18–32; vii. 8–24.

v. 2. The rendering of this very difficult verse should probably be, “He flattereth himself,” or “it (the voice of evil) flatters him” in his own sight. Probably the last clause should be (as in R.V.), “That his sin shall not be found out and be hated.”

v. 3. *He hath left off.* He has the

special guilt of having known the path of good, and deliberately left it.

v. 4. In this verse the stages of downward progress are terribly marked—the secret plotting of mischief, the “setting himself” deliberately in the way of sin, and the loss of all natural “abhorrence of evil,” which is the final sign of the hardened reprobate heart.

vv. 5–9. The abrupt transition marks the glad eagerness with which the Psalmist turns for relief from the horror of the godless soul to the glory of the God whom it disowns, and from whose light it is hidden in self-chosen darkness.

vv. 5, 6. In these the greatness of the moral attributes of God is symbolized by the greatness of Nature. His mercy and faithfulness to His covenant are unbounded as the sphere of heaven (“The glorious sky, embracing all, is like the Maker’s love”). His righteousness is unshaken and changeless as the “mountains of God.” His judgments are inscrutable as the great deep.

## DAY 7.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 35.

*Judica, Domine.*

**P**LEAD thou my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me : and fight thou against them that fight against me.

2 Lay hand upon the shield and buckler : and stand up to help me.

3 Bring forth the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me : say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul : let them be turned back, and brought to confusion, that imagine mischief for me.

5 Let them be as the dust before the wind : and the angel of the Lord scatter them.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery : and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.

7 For they have privily laid their net to destroy me without a cause : yea, even without a cause have they made a pit for my soul.

8 Let a sudden destruction come upon him unawares, and his net, that he hath laid privily, catch himself : that he may fall into his own mischief.

9 And, my soul, be joyful in the Lord : it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him : yea, the poor, and him that is in misery, from him that spoileth him ?

11 False witnesses did rise up : they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good : to the great discomfort of my soul.

13 Nevertheless, when they were sick, I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting : and my prayer shall turn into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though it had been my friend, or my brother : I went heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together : yea, the very objects came together against me unawares, making mouths at me, and ceased not.

16 With the flatterers were busy mockers : who gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long wilt thou look upon this : O deliver my soul from the calamities which they bring on me, and my darling from the lions.

18 So will I give thee thanks in the great congregation : I will praise thee among much people.

19 O let not them that are mine enemies triumph over me ungodly : neither let them wink with their eyes that hate me without a cause.

20 And why ? their communing is not for peace : but they imagine deceitful words against them that are quiet in the land.

21 They gaped upon me with their mouths, and said : Fie on thee, fie on thee, we saw it with our eyes.

22 This thou hast seen, O Lord : hold not thy tongue then, go not far from me, O Lord.

23 Awake, and stand up to judge my quarrel : avenge thou my cause, my God, and my Lord.

24 Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness : and let them not triumph over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, There, there, so would we have it : neither let them say, We have devoured him.

26 Let them be put to confusion and shame together, that rejoice at my trouble : let them be clothed with rebuke and dishonour, that boast themselves against me.

v. 7. In this verse, as usual, the Psalmist turns from the infinite greatness of God to His individual salvation of "man and beast." Men need not shrink from Him as an Unknown Creative Power, but may gather "under the wings" of a known and loving God.

v. 8. Here he goes a step further, to recognise the closer Presence of God as revealed to His chosen people in His house, there welcoming them to the "plenteousness" of His Table, and "giving them drink of the river of His pleasures" (like the river of living water in Ezek. xlvi. 1—12; Rev. xxii. 1). They are admitted to the privileges of the true priesthood of God.

v. 9. The union here of life and

light exactly corresponds to the fullness of the perfect Revelation of God in the Lord Jesus Christ (John i. 4). "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The Lord Jehovah is the "well" or living source of all life, bodily and spiritual; and while the wicked walks in self-chosen darkness, the servant of God sees light in the Light of God's countenance (comp. John i. 4—9; 1 John i. 5—7).

vv. 10—12, by a striking transition, pass from the general prayer for the continuance of God's favour, as already given, to the upright in heart, and the more special prayer for the Psalmist himself against the proud recklessness of his enemies, to a sudden vision of its fulfilment. "There are they fallen," &c.

PSALM XXXVII.

This Psalm—asccribed in the heading to David—has little to indicate date or authorship, except perhaps the remarkable coincidences with the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Job (comp. v. 1 with Prov. xxiv. 19; v. 16 with Prov. xv. 16; v. 4 with Job xxvii. 10; v. 6 with Job xi. 17, &c.). In spirit it approaches closely to the didactic tone of these books, and even to their proverbial terseness and antithesis; it is the utterance of mature wisdom, dealing with the perplexity which so vexed the soul of Job and the Psalmist of Ps. lxxiii.—the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous—and, after long experience of the perplexities of life, returning to the instinctive belief in a righteous retribution. Its answer is simply, "Look to the end;" it urges on us that faith in the perfect retribution of the Divine Righteousness, without which we can hardly believe in God. As in the Old Testament generally, this is looked for largely in this world, and declared to be the experience of a long life. We have been taught to look for it mainly, though not exclusively, in the world to come. In form the Psalm is an acrostic Psalm of singular beauty, more perfect than Ps. ix., x., xxv., xxxiv., but still slightly irregular, in assigning to most letters two verses, to some only one.

The acrostic form and the antithetical style of the Psalm make it difficult to divide it into sections. But (a) in vv. 1—11, we have the simple counsel of patience and trust as against fretfulness and envy; (b) in vv. 12—20 a picture of the virulent antagonism of the evil against good, and their certain defeat; (c) in vv. 21—32, the experience of a long life, showing the ultimate victory of mercy and graciousness over selfishness and wrong; and (d) in vv. 33—41, the final declaration of the transitoriness of the prosperity of evil, and the present peace and ultimate triumph of the servants of God.

v. 1. *Fret not* (as in vv. 7, 8) forbids all repining or faithlessness towards God, as *be not envious* forbids all jealousy towards man. The former is the subtler temptation of a righteous soul; its remedy is clearly, "Leave it to the Lord;" "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

v. 3. *Verily thou shalt be fed*—properly, "feed on faithfulness" or "security." The sense is either "rest on security," or (as the parallelism

would rather suggest) "delight in faithfulness." The idea is, "Do good and trust in God," "Dwell in the land (of His Covenant) and keep that covenant faithfully." The work is ours; the issues are His.

v. 6. *He will make*, &c. It is implied that there may be a time of darkness, but it shall pass, first, into the dawn, then into the noontide of an eternal day (comp. Ps. xxx. 5). So in vv. 7, 8, the lesson is of patience,

27 Let them be glad and rejoice, that favour my righteous dealing: yea, let them say always, Blessed be the Lord, who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And as for my tongue, it shall be talking of thy righteousness: and of thy praise all the day long.

PSALM 36.

*Dixit injustus.*

**M**Y heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly: that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

2 For he flattereth himself in his own sight: until his abominable sin be found out.

3 The words of his mouth are unrighteous, and full of deceit: he hath left off to behave himself wisely, and to do good.

4 He imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way: neither doth he abhor any thing that is evil.

5 Thy mercy, O Lord, reach-

eth unto the heavens: and thy faithfulness unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep.

7 Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast; How excellent is thy mercy, O God: and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house: and thou shalt give them drink of thy pleasures, as out of the river.

9 For with thee is the well of life: and in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue forth thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee: and thy righteousness unto them that are true of heart.

11 O let not the foot of pride come against me: and let not the hand of the ungodly cast me down.

12 There are they fallen, all that work wickedness: they are cast down, and shall not be able to stand.

DAY 7.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 37.

*Noli emulari.*

**F**RET not thyself because of the ungodly: neither be thou envious against the evil doers.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass: and be withered even as the green herb.

3 Put thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good: dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thou in the Lord: and he shall give thee thy heart's desire.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in him: and he shall bring it to pass.

6 He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light: and thy just dealing as the noon-day.

7 Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him: but grieve not thyself at him, whose way doth prosper, against

the man that doeth after evil counsels.

8 Leave off from wrath, and let go displeasure: fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil.

9 Wicked doers shall be rooted out: and they that patiently abide the Lord, those shall inherit the land.

10 Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall be clean gone: thou shalt look after his place, and he shall be away.

11 But the meek-spirited shall possess the earth: and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace.

12 The ungodly seeketh counsel against the just: and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh him to scorn: for he hath seen that his day is coming.

14 The ungodly have drawn

checking and putting away natural indignation, which (as experience has shown too plainly) will move "only to do evil," taking God's judgment into our own hands. The secret of such patience is, "Hold thee still upon the Lord" (comp. Ps. lxii. 1, 5, 8). What can outward prosperity matter to a soul which (see Ps. xvii. 14—16) "beholds God's Presence in righteousness, and shall be satisfied with it?"

v. 10. *Yet a little while.* Whether as men reckon in this life, or as all this life is in comparison with the hereafter.

v. 11. *The meek-spirited shall possess the earth.* This promise is repeated by Our Lord (Matt. v. 5). Its meaning is explained by the following words: The meek—that is, the gentle placid spirit—shall have under all circumstances here "the abundance of peace," extracting the gold of true happiness from what to others would be ugly and worthless. The restless has, but enjoys not; the gentle and contented seems to have not, yet enjoys.

vv. 14—17. In these verses is introduced a new idea. The prosperity of the wicked is not only an offence, but, by the natural enmity of evil to good, a danger to the just. Faith in God, as it is our comfort in the one, so is our ground of confidence against the other. The one shall vanish; the other defeat itself.

v. 16. Comp. Prov. xv. 16; xvi. 8. Here, again, it is implied that inequality of external prosperity is redressed by internal capacity of enjoyment. (The context would suggest that we should understand this in respect of power rather than of wealth.)

v. 20. *As the fat of lambs.* The image is taken from the burnt offering, ascending wholly in the smoke to God; but it would be strange to represent the destruction of the wicked as a sacrifice of worship. The true rendering is (as in R.V.) "the excellency of the pastures"—that is "the glory of the meadows"—"the grass which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven" (comp. v. 2).

v. 21. *Is merciful and liberal*—properly, "sheweth mercy and giveth," bringing out more strikingly the antithesis, between dishonesty towards the confiding on the one

hand, and free gift out of pure mercy on the other. Comp. Eph. iv. 28. It goes beyond v. 26 and Ps. cxii. 5.

v. 26. *And his seed, &c.* What he has lent freely or given is lent to the Lord, and it shall be repaid to his seed after him. As the sin, so the goodness, of the fathers is, in its effect, "visited on their children."

vv. 31—34. Here once more there is a fresh image—not of the open violence, but of the slanderous accusation of the wicked against the just. The promise is that, where the law of God in the heart teaches wisdom and righteousness, false accusation shall be silenced, and unrighteous judgment redressed. It may be, as it most often is, in this world; it will be at the perfect Judgment of the Great Day.

v. 35. *Thou shalt see it*—not for exultation, but for satisfaction of that sense of righteous retribution, without which there can be no faith in God. So it is now in measure (as one who saw the fall of Robespierre cried out, "Yes! there is a God"); so must it be perfectly in the end. The Saviour is Himself to be the Judge.

v. 36. *A green bay-tree*—properly, "a green tree in its own native soil," therefore "striking root downward and bearing fruit upward."

v. 37. Comp. Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

v. 38. *Peace at the last.* In this phrase we have the double keynote of the whole Psalms—"peace" as distinct from external prosperity—"at the last," as distinct from the appearance of the moment. The better rendering is, perhaps (as in A.V. and R.V.), "Mark the perfect man, behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." So in v. 39, "the end of the wicked shall be cut off." The interpretation which makes "the end" to signify simply "the posterity" (as in v. 29), seems quite inadequate to the spirit of the passage.

v. 40. *In the time of trouble.* It is promised, not that they shall have no trouble, but that, in it and through it, they shall be saved. There are very different degrees of struggle to equally true servants of God; according to these are the degrees also of comfort and strength.

out the sword, and have bent their bow: to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of a right conversation.

15 Their sword shall go through their own heart: and their bow shall be broken.

16 A small thing that the righteous hath: is better than great riches of the ungodly.

17 For the arms of the ungodly shall be broken: and the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

18 The Lord knoweth the days of the godly: and their inheritance shall endure for ever.

19 They shall not be confounded in the perilous time: and in the days of dearth they shall have enough.

20 As for the ungodly, they shall perish: and the enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs: yea, even as the smoke, shall they consume away.

21 The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous is merciful, and liberal.

22 Such as are blessed of God shall possess the land: and they that are cursed of him shall be rooted out.

23 The Lord ordereth a good man's going: and maketh his way acceptable to himself.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be cast away: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old: and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.

26 The righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth: and his seed is blessed.

27 Flee from evil, and do the thing that is good: and dwell for evermore.

28 For the Lord loveth the

thing that is right: he forsaketh not his that be godly, but they are preserved for ever.

29 The unrighteous shall be punished: as for the seed of the ungodly, it shall be rooted out.

30 The righteous shall inherit the land: and dwell therein for ever.

31 The mouth of the righteous is exercised in wisdom: and his tongue will be talking of judgment.

32 The law of his God is in his heart: and his goings shall not slide.

33 The ungodly seeth the righteous: and seeketh occasion to slay him.

34 The Lord will not leave him in his hand: nor condemn him when he is judged.

35 Hope thou in the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall promote thee, that thou shalt possess the land: when the ungodly shall perish, thou shalt see it.

36 I myself have seen the ungodly in great power: and flourishing like a green bay-tree.

37 I went by, and lo, he was gone: I sought him, but his place could no where be found.

38 Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last.

39 As for the transgressors, they shall perish together: and the end of the ungodly is, they shall be rooted out at the last.

40 But the salvation of the righteous cometh of the Lord: who is also their strength in the time of trouble.

41 And the Lord shall stand by them, and save them: he shall deliver them from the ungodly, and shall save them, because they put their trust in him.

## DAY 8.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 38.

*Domine, ne in furore.*

PUT me not to rebuke, O Lord, in thine anger: neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me: and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 There is no health in my flesh, because of thy displeasure:



This Psalm—the third of the Penitential Psalms, used by us on **WEDNESDAY**, as by the Jews on the great Day of Atonement—is headed (like Ps. lxx.) “A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance,” or “to make memorial.” The most natural sense is to refer it to the Psalmist himself, laying his suffering and penitence as “a memorial” before God (like the offering of Lev. ii. 2; comp. Acts x. 4). But it is also taken as simply marking a liturgical use of the Psalm, in connection with the “memorial” of the meat offering or incense. The Psalm evidently (like Ps. vi., xxxii.) belongs to the time of bitter suffering, bodily and mental, after David’s great sin, which gave occasion to the rebellious intrigues of Absalom, and the growth of disloyalty and disaffection. But in tone it is even fuller of sorrow and agony of penitent prayer, though still looking to the “Lord his Salvation;” and it bears striking resemblance to some of the most sorrowful passages in the book of Job.

It contains (a), in vv. 1–10, a complaint of bitter suffering of body and soul under God’s righteous punishment; (b), in vv. 11–14, a similar complaint of enmity and treachery at the hands of men; (c), in vv. 15–22, a prayer of humble confidence for the salvation of the Lord to one who repents and confesses his sin.

v. 1 coincides exactly with Ps. vi. 1 (see note there).

v. 2. Comp. Job vi. 4, “The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison of which drinketh up my spirit.”

vv. 3–8. The description is obviously of some severe bodily sickness, over and above the anguish of soul with which it was connected. It speaks (in v. 3) of disease, corrupting the flesh and racking the bones; in vv. 5–7 of festering sores and disease in the loins; in vv. 7, 8 of the alternate heats and chills of fever. Yet while the Psalmist cries out in complaint, he acknowledges in it all the rebuke and chastening of God for iniquity—now regarded as a flood “going over the head”—now as “a heavy burden” weighing down both soul and body. Of such sickness in David the history gives no record; but indicates before the rebellion of Absalom a time of feebleness and failure. It was appropriate that sensual sin should bring its corporal penalty.

v. 5. *Through my foolishness*—that is my sin, regarded (as in the Proverbs) as essentially folly.

v. 6. *I am brought*, &c. This verse should be “I am bent” (or “convulsed”); “I am bowed down; I go mourning all the day.”

v. 7. *Disease* should be “burning,” as in v. 8 *feeble* should be “benumbed with cold.” There is evident allusion to the alternate heat and chill of fever.

v. 9 comes in like a gleam of re-

freshment before the Psalmist turns to complain of the second burden of man’s cruelty. In the confidence that God knows our desire and hears our cry, even if He will not yet grant relief, there is security against despair. His rebuke is not vengeance, but chastening (see Prov. iii. 11, 12; Heb. xii. 5–13).

vv. 11–14 draw a vivid picture of the desertion or apathy of friends, of the treachery and slander of enemies—all borne silently, as though unheard, in a patience, partly of dignity, partly of conscious sin (as in David before Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 10). Evidently describing the Psalmist’s own bitter experience, as aggravating bodily by mental suffering, it is impossible not to regard them, in all points except the last, as a type of the great suffering and majestic silence of Calvary.

vv. 15, 16 give two diverse reasons for his silence. One is of confident faith, “Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God,” committing his way to the Lord (see Ps. xxxvii. 5–7). In this is the sense of dignity and strength. In the other is the cautious humility of conscious weakness; for v. 16 rightly rendered is, “For I said, Lest they rejoice over me; lest, when my foot slippeth, they vaunt themselves against me.” He will not speak (see Ps. xxxix. 1–3) lest some rash utterance of his agony should give occasion to his enemies.

vv. 17–20 once more dwell on his double suffering from within and

neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin.

4 For my wickednesses are gone over my head : and are like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear.

5 My wounds stink, and are corrupt : through my foolishness.

6 I am brought into so great trouble and misery : that I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a sore disease : and there is no whole part in my body.

8 I am feeble, and sore smitten : I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart.

9 Lord, thou knowest all my desire : and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength hath failed me : and the sight of mine eyes is gone from me.

11 My lovers and my neighbours did stand looking upon my trouble : and my kinsmen stood afar off.

12 They also that sought after my life laid snares for me : and they that went about to do me evil talked of wickedness, and imagined deceit all the day long.

13 As for me, I was like a deaf man, and heard not : and as one that is dumb, who doth not open his mouth.

14 I became even as a man that heareth not : and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

15 For in thee, O Lord, have I put my trust : thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God.

16 I have required that they, even mine enemies, should not triumph over me : for when my foot slipped, they rejoiced greatly against me.

17 And I, truly, am set in the plague : and my heaviness is ever in my sight.

18 For I will confess my wickedness : and be sorry for my sin.

19 But mine enemies live, and are mighty : and they that hate me wrongfully are many in number.

20 They also that reward evil for good are against me : because I follow the thing that good is.

21 Forsake me not, O Lord my God : be not thou far from me.

22 Haste thee to help me : O Lord God of my salvation.

## PSALM 39.

*Dixi, custodiam.*

I SAID, I will take heed to my ways : that I offend not in my tongue.

2 I will keep my mouth as it were with a bridle : while the ungodly is in my sight.

3 I held my tongue, and spake nothing : I kept silence, yea, even from good words ; but it was pain and grief to me.

4 My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled : and at the last I spake with my tongue ;

5 Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days : that I may be certified how long I have to live.

6 Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long : and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee ; and verily every man living is altogether vanity.

7 For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain : he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

8 And now, Lord, what is my hope : truly my hope is even in thee.

9 Deliver me from all mine offences : and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

10 I became dumb, and opened not my mouth : for it was thy doing.

11 Take thy plague away from me : I am even consumed by the means of thy heavy hand.

12 When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment : every man therefore is but vanity.

13 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling : hold not thy peace at my tears.



from without. It is profoundly significant of the difference between true and false humility, that, while before God he confesses his iniquity without reserve, yet, before men, he asserts his integrity of purpose—"I follow the thing that good is." Whatever he himself may be, his cause is that of right against wrong, good against evil; and on that conscious-

ness, even in his humblest penitence, he knows that he can rest.

v. 21, 22. In this prayer there is, as usual, the mingling of confidence and intense supplication. He knows that Jehovah is "my God," "my salvation;" yet he cries out, "Be not far from me," "haste Thee to help me." It is the prayer that God may be felt to be what we know that He is.

## PSALM XXXIX.

This Psalm of David clearly belongs to the same period of his life as the preceding, for in vv. 1-3 there is a plain allusion to the resolute silence under persecution recorded in Ps. xxxviii. 13, 14. But it represents a very different phase of his spiritual experience. The agony of suffering has given way to thoughtful meditation; the trial of the present forces him to look in earnestness of hope into the future; the sense of the burden of life suggests prayer for rest before death. Again we trace singular resemblances to the more meditative and solemn chapters of the Book of Job. Naturally and appropriately this Psalm, speaking to the soul in exquisite beauty and pathetic calmness, has been used as the Proper Psalm of our BURIAL SERVICE.

It is headed (as also Ps. lxii., lxxvii.) "for the Chief Musician for Jeduthun," called in 2 Chron. xxxv. 15 "the king's seer," apparently the same as Ethan (1 Chron. xv. 17-19), the head of the Levites, the sons of Merari, to whom Ps. lxxviii. is ascribed.

It opens (a), in vv. 1-4, with an introduction, telling of his former silence and the utterance which broke it; then follows that utterance, broken by the *Selah* into three parts; a prayer (b), in vv. 5, 6, to know the length of the short span of life; a meditation (c), in vv. 7-12, on the vanity of life, made occasion for an entreaty that God will spare; (d), in vv. 13-15, a cry for rest and refreshment before death closes his pilgrimage.

vv. 1-4 obviously refer to the silence of Ps. xxxviii. 13-16—half of faith, half of humility—kept till it became intolerable, and so (though still kept before man) giving way to the outpouring of prayer to God.

v. 3. *Yea, even from good words.* The original is simply "from good;" and must be interpreted either as in our version, or as "so as to receive no good" or "comfort." The former conveys the far more striking idea—that silence in such case is golden, beyond all speech, whether bad or good.

v. 4. *The fire kindled.* Comp. Jer. xx. 9. "His word was in my heart as a burning fire, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay."

v. 5. *How long I have to live*—properly (as in A.V. and R.V.), "how frail I am," i.e. when I shall reach

the limit of endurance and break down. During his silence the keen anguish of suffering has passed into the calmer sadness of the thought, What and when shall the end be? Then the feeling that it cannot be far off merges the sense of bitterness in the sense of the vanity and shortness of life—a mere span, as nothing before the Eternal. The last clause should be (as in A.V.), "Every man at his best state is but vanity" (properly "a breath").

v. 7 may be better rendered—

"Man walketh as a vain shadow;  
They make much ado about nothing;

He heapeth up and cannot tell  
who shall gather."

The thought of the previous verse is here wrought out. Life is a shadow; its joy and grief are but vain ado; its

possessions are but held on brief uncertain tenure, to pass away we know not whither.

v. 8. *My hope is even in thee.* It is impossible, in such a contrast as this, to limit the Psalmist's hope to this life. How can the life, which "is but a breath," have room for a hope in God worthy of the name? As in the Book of Job, the conception of the future life may be vague, but it is real, and is invariably connected with firm belief in a true relation of man to God.

vv. 9-12 imply the same condition and utter the same prayer as Ps. xxxviii.; but the calmer and sadder conclusion to which they come is peculiar to this Psalm. "Every man is but vanity"; therefore may God spare his frailty, and be not extreme to mark what is done amiss.

v. 10 is emphatic. "It was Thy doing." Therefore it could be borne in silent patience; therefore it must be well. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

v. 12. *As it were... garment.* The original is simply "as by the moth" (see Job xiii. 28)—the decay from what seems but a slight cause, unseen but complete.

v. 14. *A stranger and a sojourner,* &c. (comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Ps. cxix. 9; Heb. xi. 13; Eph. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 11). The two ideas are distinct. The "stranger" is simply the absolute foreigner, pilgrim to a distant home; the "sojourner" is one who has ties and duties for a time in a land where yet he has no rights or citizenship. The former suggests the idea of man's future; the latter gives the true conditions of his present.

v. 15. *Recover strength*—properly, "that I may shine" (or "smile") "again," that "I may have a gleam of comfort"—like the smile in the hour of death—at once the sunset after a cloudy day, and the anticipation of the Eternal morning (comp. Job vii. 8, 9, 21; x. 20, 21; xiv. 6).

## PSALM XL.

The earlier part of this Psalm is again closely connected with the preceding. The Psalmist's cry has been heard. (a) Raised up, alike out of the agony of suffering depicted in Ps. xxxviii., and the sense of transitoriness and unreality of Ps. xxxix., he pours out his resolution of self-sacrifice and witness for God, as in thankful enquiry, What shall I render to the Lord? (vv. 1-13). In the latter section (substantially repeated in Ps. lxx) there is a change of tone, so complete that the Psalm, as it stands, has been thought to be a compilation, uniting two Psalms for Liturgical use; or, if of one authorship, to represent two different periods of life's experience. Certainly it renews (b) the sense of danger and trouble still round him, lightened but not removed, and calls out (vv. 14-21) renewed prayer, in a far less agonized and more confident tone than in Ps. xxxviii.

The Psalm, applied in Heb. x. 5-10 to Our Lord's perfect sacrifice of self-devotion, is naturally used as a GOOD FRIDAY Psalm, following appropriately on the intenser consciousness of suffering, and triumph through suffering, in Psalm xxii. It is one of the instances (see *Introduction*, sect. v.) of the typical foreshadowing (conscious or unconscious) of the true Son of Man, through the spiritual experience of the Psalmist. What is real, but imperfect, in the type, is perfect in the Antype. Only in Him there could not be, except so far as He bore it for us, the consciousness (as in v. 15) of the burden of sin.

vv. 1-7 are simply the outpouring of wonder and praise over his deliverance, as being not only salvation to himself, but also a lesson of instruction and encouragement to the servants of God.

v. 2. *Horrible pit*—properly either (as in the margin) "a pit of noise," that is, a "pit of roaring waters" or "a pit of destruction." The latter sense suits better the connection with the following words. The meta-

phor is of one struggling out of the dangerous pit or swamp to the solid rock. (The idea that there is a literal reference to the circumstances of Jeremiah's imprisonment (Jer. xxxviii. 6) which has led to the ascription of this Psalm to Jeremiah, appears to be quite groundless.)

v. 3. *A new song* (comp. Ps. xxxiii. 3), the old song of faith, made ever new by renewed and special mercies.

vv. 5, 6 are perhaps the words of the "new song"; first of "thanks be to the Lord"; then of rejoicing that in this deliverance is set forth, for the conversion of many, the blessedness of one who loves God and truth; last, of wondering adoration of a goodness beyond all human conception.

v. 6. *And yet . . . Thee.* "This version is strangely erroneous. It should be (as in A.V. and R.V.) "they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee." The exclamation is of one lost in the attempt to estimate and describe God's goodness—shewn, not only in His works, but in "the thoughts towards us," which even those works can but imperfectly embody.

vv. 8—10. The general meaning of these verses is perfectly clear. The Psalmist enumerates the legal sacrifices, first, in their material division of bloody and unbloody sacrifice ("sacrifice and meat offering"); next, in their two main ideas, the "burnt offering" of self-dedication, and the "sin offering" of atonement; and then (exactly in the spirit of 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. 1. 8—15; li. 16, 17; Isa. i. 10—19; Mic. vi. 6—8) declares their utter worthlessness in themselves, without the two-fold sacrifice of self, in the open ear of submission and the active self-devotion of glad and willing obedience. His words express the essence of all vital religion, and are accordingly taken up again and again by the servants of God. But they have their highest and only perfect application (as in Heb. x. 2—10) in Him, of whose all-perfect sacrifice all outward sacrifices were but types.

But in the details there is some difficulty. Thus, in (a) *mine ears hast thou opened* (properly "digged"), it has been thought that there is allusion to the boring of the ear of one who made himself a slave for ever (Exod. xxi. 6; Deut. xv. 17). But in all probability the meaning is simply "hast opened the ear," clearing away all obstruction to hearing.

## PSALM XLI.

This "Psalm of David" seems again to belong to the time of weakness and decay preceding the rebellion of Absalom, when his enemies had hoped for his death, and finding their hopes frustrated were ready to conspire against him. In v. 9 it is almost impossible not to think that Abithophel is alluded to.

The LXX. has the translation "a body hast thou prepared (perfected) for me"—possibly by variation of reading or error of transcription—more probably as an explanatory paraphrase; and this reading is adopted, as suiting his argument, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (b) *In the volume it is written of me* should be "it is prescribed to me," or it may be by a more striking rendering, "with the volume in my hand written for me"—appealing to the written Law of God in its true spiritual sense.

v. 10. *I am content* should be "I delight" (comp. Rom. vii. 22).

*Thy law is within my heart*, written there by the Spirit (comp. Jer. xxxi. 31—34, quoted in Heb. viii. 8—12).

vv. 11—13 add to the silent witness of example the open witness of word, not content to enjoy the inner sense of God's righteousness and mercy, but refusing to keep back the declaration of it from the whole congregation (either through timidity or through natural reserve).

vv. 14—21. In these verses, to the burst of thanksgiving there succeeds a deep though momentary consciousness of evil, passing, however, almost immediately into a quiet confidence in the Redeemer of the "poor and needy"—the afflicted (that is) and helpless.

v. 15. The first and deepest consciousness is of sin finding him out (comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11); it is evidently this which adds an extremest bitterness to the exulting taunts of his enemies (see vv. 17, 18, and comp. Ps. xxxv. 24—26); and we note that, while he prays that deliverance may put these to shame, it is not so much for his own relief as for the joy and encouragement of those who "love the Lord's salvation."

v. 21. *Helper and redeemer.* God's "help" is sought by man as man; His "redemption" (or "deliverance") (comp. Ps. xix. 14) from sin and sorrow by man, as sinful.

14 For I am a stranger with thee : and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

15 O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength : before I go hence, and be no more seen.

## PSALM 40.

*Expectans expectavi.*

I WAITED patiently for the Lord : and he inclined unto me, and heard my calling.

2 He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay : and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth : even a thanksgiving unto our God.

4 Many shall see it, and fear : and shall put their trust in the Lord.

5 Blessed is the man that hath set his hope in the Lord : and turned not unto the proud, and to such as go about with lies.

6 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.

7 If I should declare them, and speak of them : they should be more than I am able to express.

8 Sacrifice, and meat-offering, thou wouldst not : but mine ears hast thou opened.

9 Burnt-offerings, and sacrifice for sin, hast thou not required : then said I, Lo, I come,

10 In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I should fulfil thy will, O my God : I am

content to do it ; yea, thy law is within my heart.

11 I have declared thy righteousness in the great congregation : lo, I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, and that thou knowest.

12 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart : my talk hath been of thy truth, and of thy salvation.

13 I have not kept back thy loving mercy and truth : from the great congregation.

14 Withdraw not thou thy mercy from me, O Lord : let thy loving-kindness and thy truth always preserve me.

15 For innumerable troubles are come about me ; my sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up : yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.

16 O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me : make haste, O Lord, to help me.

17 Let them be ashamed, and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it : let them be driven backward, and put to rebuke, that wish me evil.

18 Let them be desolate, and rewarded with shame : that say unto me, Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.

19 Let all those that seek thee be joyful and glad in thee : and let such as love thy salvation say always, The Lord be praised.

20 As for me, I am poor and needy : but the Lord careth for me.

21 Thou art my helper and redeemer : make no long tarrying, O my God.

## DAY 8.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 41.

*Beatus qui intelligit.*

BLESSED is he that considereth the poor and needy : the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.

2 The Lord preserve him, and keep him alive, that he may be

blessed upon earth : and deliver not thou him into the will of his enemies.

3 The Lord comfort him, when he lieth sick upon his bed : make thou all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, Lord, be merciful unto me : heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.

It contains (a), in vv. 1—3, a blessing on those who shew compassion and sympathy to the distressed; (b), in vv. 4—9, a complaint, in contrast with this, of the cruelty and treachery pursuing the Psalmist in the hour of his suffering; (c), in vv. 10—12, a prayer of faith, that by God's mercy he may be raised up again.

v. 1. *The poor and needy*—properly, the "afflicted" or "sick." The verses following should probably be (as in A. V. and R. V.) not a prayer, but a description of the blessedness of the helper of the afflicted—"The Lord will deliver him." They exactly express the Beatitude in the Sermon of the Mount, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." They promise preservation and deliverance (v. 2), comfort and relief in sickness (v. 3). In the desertion of the faithless the Psalmist has in grateful thought those who were faithful still.

v. 3. *Make thou all his bed*—properly, "thou changest," &c. The sense is probably not (as in our version) the smoothing the uneasy bed of sickness, but the changing it completely from the bed of sickness to the bed of recovery.

vv. 4—9 place in striking contrast the humble prayer of the penitent sufferer, and the malignant longing of his enemies for his death; and then go on to describe graphically the treacherous visit of some one leader of this malignity, "speaking the vanity" (or falsehood) of pretended condolence, whispering malice by the bedside, and telling it out plainly outside the door. Finally, in the bitterness of his soul, the sufferer cries out, "Even my... against me."

v. 8. *Let the sentence, &c.*—properly, "An evil thing (literally "a thing of Belial," that is, perhaps, "a judgment on wickedness") cleaveth to him" (comp. 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8).

v. 9. *Mine own familiar friend.* Every word seems to suit Ahithophel. The privy counsellor was called the "king's friend" (2 Sam. xv. 37; xvi. 16; 1 Kin. iv. 5); the counsel of Ahithophel was "trusted" like the oracles of God (2 Sam. xvi. 23); he had the special honour and pledge to allegiance of eating at the

king's table. The application by Our Lord Himself of this verse to Judas (John xiii. 18) is simply an application of that which is typically suitable. In almost all points what the false counsellor was to David, the false Apostle was to the Son of David; but it has been noted that the words "in whom I trusted" are not used by Him, who "knew what was in man."

v. 10. *I shall reward them.* This is one instance among many of a desire of vengeance upon enemies. So far as it implies simply indignation against treachery and malignity, it is absolutely right; so far as David speaks as a king, charged to maintain his authority and execute judgment, it is again right; but so far as it involves personal anger and wish for personal vengeance, it belongs to the old imperfection of "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," in contradistinction from the higher teaching of the perfect law of Love in the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 12. *I am in my health.* This is a wrong rendering. It should be (as in A. V.), "As for me thou upholdest me in mine integrity." The words stand in instructive contrast with the humble prayer for pardon of sin in v. 4. David "knows" that this prayer has been heard; and feels, in spite of the sin which he confesses, that his heart is still given to God, and that his cause is the cause of righteousness and of God. Therefore he hesitates not to use the words "in mine integrity," and to express the most absolute confidence in God's favour and deliverance for ever.

v. 13. This verse is the doxology appended to the First Book of the Psalter, closing with this Psalm (see *Introduction*, sect. 1). In this case it suits well the triumphant tone of the close of the Psalm, though it does not properly belong to it.