

This book (Ps. xlii.—lxxii.) contains eight Psalms (xlii.—xlix.) ascribed to the sons of Korah, one (Ps. l.) ascribed to Asaph, eighteen to David (Ps. li.—lxv., lxviii., lxix., lxx.), one (Ps. lxxii.) to Solomon; three only (Ps. lxvi., lxvii., lxxi.) are anonymous. The whole section is "Elohistic"—using the name *Elohim* instead of *Jehovah*—even in the Psalms ascribed to David. This peculiarity is probably due to the compiler (see *Introduction*, sect. 1). The Book is closely connected in style and character with Book III., and was probably formed at a date considerably later than the first Book (see *Introduction*, sect. 1).

PSALM XLII.

This Psalm is closely connected with Ps. xliii., as is evident both by the style and by the recurrence of the burden, "Why art thou," &c. The "sons of Korah," to whom it is ascribed, were the company of Levites descended from Kohath, the son of Levi, named—strangely as it seems to us—from Korah, grandson of Kohath, the leader of the great rebellion against Moses (see Num. xvi. 1; 1 Chr. vi. 22; 2 Chr. xx. 19). They were the doorkeepers of the Temple (1 Chr. ix. 17; xxvi. 1; Neh. xi. 19), and were also, under the direction of Heman (1 Chr. vi. 33), appointed for "the service of song."

The name will, of course, cover much variety of date and authorship. Unlike, however, many of the Psalms bearing this inscription, Ps. xlii. is one of strong individuality, as of singular beauty—the utterance of a man banished from the sanctuary of God which he loves, at once "thirsting for the living God," and yet feeling, even in despondency, His support and comfort. Its divisions are clearly marked by the burden: (a), in vv. 1—7, we have simply the cry of longing and mournful remembrance of the glad worship of days gone by; (b), in vv. 8—15, a more vivid picture of the storm of trouble and enmity, under which faith in God is still unconquered.

v. 1. *Desireth*. . . *longeth*—properly (as in A.V.), "panteth after." The marginal reading "brayeth after," though it will suit the passage, is less likely and less beautiful. The deepest longing of the soul for God is silent; for no "cry" can fully express it.

v. 2. *Athirst for God*. The Hebrew word for "living God" is rare, found in the Psalter only here and in lxxxiv. 2. But the thirst for a "Living God"—a Divine Person, a true Father—as distinct from the vague consciousness of a Supreme Power, is the secret of all vital religion. It is of the satisfaction of this longing that Our Lord declares that they who come to Him shall "never thirst." In the Psalmist, as in all true servants of God, the longing implies evidently the immediate desire of "appearing before God" in the worship of His visible sanctuary.

so lovingly remembered in v. 4; but it is in essence the deeper desire for that inner spiritual communion with Him, which underlies all visible worship and gives it meaning, and which in turn is sustained and further deepened through such worship. Yet perhaps in those who knew but one place of the manifestation of God's presence, the immediate desire must have occupied a larger place than in us, who have known of the worship everywhere "in spirit and in truth," and who see God face to face in the revelation of the Lord JÉSUS CHRIST.

v. 3. In this verse (as in v. 13) the Psalmist describes his exile as embittered by the scorn of those who are not only his enemies, but who (as in xxii. 8) delight in taunts over God's apparent desertion of His servant.

v. 4. *For I went*, &c.—properly, "how I went," &c. The words are

the expression of the memories, in which he "pours out his heart"—the memories of the pilgrim procession which he (as a priest or Levite) had led to the Temple in such festal song as is represented by the "Songs of Degrees." The contrast is bitter, between the solitude of exile and the communion of worship, between the tears of sorrow and the shout of praise.

v. 6, 7. The cry is of "the spirit which is willing" to "the flesh which is weak"—half rebuke, half comfort—expressing at once a present confidence in the help of God, and a hope of the future day, when all sorrow shall be lost in praise. It is the constant cry of this our state of imperfection, though it belongs especially to the hours of special trouble.

v. 8. *Concerning the land, &c.* It should be "from the land of Jordan, from the Hermons, from the hill of Mizar." The verse describes the scene of banishment as on the other side of Jordan; "the Hermons" are apparently the far-off mountains of Anti-Libanus, of which the snowy peak of Hermon is the highest; the mountain Mizar ("little") is some nearer hill, to us unknown, perhaps contrasted in its littleness with the lofty Hermon. From some point in

## PSALM XLIII.

In this last utterance—virtually a conclusion of Ps. xlii.—we find a more distinct prayer for judgment between himself and his enemies, and a far brighter confidence of hope.

v. 1. *Judge me, O God* (as in Ps. xxvi. 1; xxxv. 1, 24), is the appeal, not to God's mercy only, but to His righteousness, against both ungodliness and evil-doing. He is to the righteous by promise "the God of their strength"; why does His support seem, even for a moment, to fail?

v. 3. *Thy light and thy truth.* In this phrase, peculiar to this Psalm, it has been thought that there is an allusion, natural in a priestly writer, to the *Urim* and *Thummim* (Ex. xxviii. 30; commonly rendered "Light and truth"), so well remembered among the glories of the

this mountain country the exile looks back, and "weeps, when he remembers Zion."

v. 9. *One deep calleth another.* "Deep calleth to deep," as if calling and answering each other in combination to overwhelm. The "water-pipes" are the "waterspouts" or cataracts down the mountains. (The word is used only here and in 2 Sam. v. 8.) There seems to be a mixture of the ordinary metaphor of a deep sea of troubles (see Ps. lxxxviii. 7) with the image of the swollen torrents, sweeping all before them, which the Psalmist had before his eyes—the one the emblem of the depth and multitude of afflictions, the other of their sudden fierceness.

v. 10—15 express more vividly both elements of the soul's experience. There is the deep sense of sorrow—God apparently forgetting and man taunting with taunts which "smite the bones like a sword"—but there is also the underlying faith in God's "lovingkindness" as the light of "the daytime" and the "song" of the night. It is hardly accidental that for the call on God for the "help of His countenance" (in v. 7) is now substituted the still more child-like cry to Him, as "the help of my countenance and my God."

Temple. Similarly in the plural "tabernacles"—peculiar to this Psalm with two others of the same authorship (xvi. 4; lxxxiv. 1), and one of the "Songs of Degrees" (cxxxii. 7)—we trace the technical and familiar name of the sanctuary in its two parts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy. The prayer of the Psalmist is for the reality, of which the *Urim* and *Thummim* were the symbols—that it may be his comfort now, and may bring him back hereafter to the special dwelling-place of the "God of his joy and gladness," there to hymn in the sacred music the God who is "his God."

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me : When shall he die, and his name perish ?

6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity : and his heart conceiveth falsehood within himself, and when he cometh forth he telleth it.

7 All mine enemies whisper together against me : even against me do they imagine this evil.

8 Let the sentence of guiltiness proceed against him : and now that he lieth, let him rise up no more.

9 Yea, even mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted : who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great wait for me.

10 But be thou merciful unto me, O Lord : raise thou me up again, and I shall reward them.

11 By this I know thou favour-est me : that mine enemy doth not triumph against me.

12 And when I am in my health, thou upholdest me : and shalt set me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel : world without end. Amen.

## PSALM 42.

*Quemadmodum.*

LIKE as the hart desireth the water-brooks : so longeth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God : when shall I come to appear before the presence of God ?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night : while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God ?

4 Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself : for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into the house of God ;

5 In the voice of praise and thanksgiving : among such as keep holy-day.

6 Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul : and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

7 Put thy trust in God : for I

will yet give him thanks for the help of his countenance.

8 My God, my soul is vexed within me : therefore will I remember thee concerning the land of Jordan, and the little hill of Hermon.

9 One deep calleth another, because of the noise of the water-pipes : all thy waves and storms are gone over me.

10 The Lord hath granted his loving-kindness in the day-time : and in the night-season did I sing of him, and made my prayer unto the God of my life.

11 I will say unto the God of my strength, Why hast thou forgotten me : why go I thus heavily, while the enemy oppresseth me ?

12 My bones are smitten asunder as with a sword : while mine enemies that trouble me cast me in the teeth ;

13 Namely, while they say daily unto me : Where is now thy God ?

14 Why art thou so vexed, O my soul : and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

15 O put thy trust in God : for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

## PSALM 43.

*Judica me, Deus.*

GIVE sentence with me, O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly people : O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man.

2 For thou art the God of my strength, why hast thou put me from thee : and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresseth me ?

3 O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me : and bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling.

4 And that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness : and upon the harp will I give thanks unto thee, O God, my God.

5 Why art thou so heavy, O

In regard to this Psalm—asccribed to “the sons of Korah”—the occasion and meaning are perfectly clear, but the date of its composition is very difficult of determination. It is certainly written at a time of great disaster—defeat, captivity, and humiliation in the sight of the heathen—yet a disaster under which the Psalmist can plead faithfulness in the people, and call with humble earnestness for the help of the Lord. It is difficult to refer this to any special period in the history of the monarchy, although indeed the difficulty may well arise from our almost complete ignorance of many portions of that history. By many critics the Psalm is referred to the time of the great Maccabean struggle; but—to say nothing of the ancient tradition that the Canon was closed long before this—the position of the Psalm in the Psalter, the reference to the sons of Korah, the style of the Hebrew, and some even of the circumstances described, are against this. The use of the call in v. 23, “Awake, Lord,” &c., in the days of John Hyrcanus (recorded in the Talmud), rather points to the previous existence of the Psalm long enough to have become familiar. It would suit better the time of return from Captivity; yet even to this some of the same objections apply. Probably it is of earlier date, referring to some invasion and captivity and disgrace, unrecorded in the fragmentary Scriptural record.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—9, with a remembrance of the old blessing and victorious confidence of Israel, ending in a prayer that they might be renewed now to the afflicted people of God; to this succeeds (b), in vv. 10—17, a vivid picture of present ruin and humiliation; and the Psalm closes (c), in vv. 18—26, with a protestation of faithfulness, and a cry to the Lord to awaken and help His people.

vv. 1—4. The recital of the ancient blessings of God to His people is not only a natural sadness of remembrance, but an implied pleading with Him—much as in Solomon’s prayer (1 Kin. viii. 53)—that these His blessings should not prove to be in vain. This idea is brought out explicitly in Ps. lxxix. 9, and thence added to verse 1 of this Psalm when used as an Antiphon in our Litany.

v. 2. *And cast them out.* It should be “and spread them” (the Israelites) “abroad”; so corresponding to the antithesis of the previous clause, and carrying out the metaphor of the “planting.” Compare the fuller description of Ps. lxxx. 8—11.

In vv. 5—9 the Psalmist calls to remembrance the thankful and confident declarations of Israel in the old and happy times of victory. He would gladly take them up now, but is driven to the mournful contrast of the complaint of vv. 10—17.

v. 5. *Send help,* properly (as in A.V.), “command deliverances.” It needs but God’s Word of authority; under this Israel is ready to fight. Their bow and sword are not their ultimate trust; yet (as of old) they are to be used.

vv. 10—17 describe a condition of more than temporary defeat or disaster. (Comp. lxxix. 1—4; lxxx. 5, 6.) The forebodings of Solomon’s prayer (1 Kin. viii. 33, 34, 44—50) are more than fulfilled; as the supplication of that prayer is afterwards taken up. The armies of Israel have been defeated; the people are devoured, scattered in a captivity so numerous that each is sold “for nought”; the very name of Israel is a scorn to the neighbouring nations (the old enemies of the people in Philistia and Edom, Moab and Ammon), and a by-word in the more distant lands of the heathen (Egypt or Syria or Assyria); the triumph of the slanderer and blasphemer of God is to His servants both a shame and a perplexity. We cannot point to any period in the history of the monarchy, in which we know of any condition of things corresponding to this terrible description. But in the prophets, even before the Captivity, we have similar pictures of national disaster (see, for example, Joel iii. 2—6; Micah i. 6—18; Isa. lxiii. 17, 18; lxiv. 10—12).

vv. 18—21. The peculiarity of this passage—in which it stands contrasted with the frequent confessions of

my soul : and why art thou so disquieted within me ?

6 O put thy trust in God : for

I will yet give him thanks, which is the help of my countenance, and my God.

DAY 9.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 44.  
*Deus, auribus.*

WE have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us : what thou hast done in their time of old ;

2 How thou hast driven out the heathen with thy hand, and planted them in : how thou hast destroyed the nations, and cast them out.

3 For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword : neither was it their own arm that helped them ;

4 But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance : because thou hadst a favour unto them.

5 Thou art my King, O God : send help unto Jacob.

6 Through thee will we overthrow our enemies : and in thy Name will we tread them under, that rise up against us.

7 For I will not trust in my bow : it is not my sword that shall help me ;

8 But it is thou that savest us from our enemies : and puttest them to confusion that hate us.

9 We make our boast of God all day long : and will praise thy Name for ever.

10 But now thou art far off, and puttest us to confusion : and goest not forth with our armies.

11 Thou makest us to turn our backs upon our enemies : so that they which hate us spoil our goods.

12 Thou lettest us be eaten up like sheep : and hast scattered us among the heathen.

13 Thou sellest thy people for nought : and takest no money for them.

14 Thou makest us to be rebuked of our neighbours : to be laughed at scorn, and had in derision of them that are round about us.

15 Thou makest us to be a by-word among the heathen : and that the people shake their heads at us.

16 My confusion is daily before me : and the shame of my face hath covered me ;

17 For the voice of the slanderer and blasphemer : for the enemy and avenger.

18 And though all this be come upon us, yet do we not forget thee : nor behave ourselves proudly in thy covenant.

19 Our heart is not turned back : neither our steps gone out of thy way ;

20 No, not when thou hast smitten us into the place of dragons : and covered us with the shadow of death.

21 If we have forgotten the Name of our God, and holden up our hands to any strange god : shall not God search it out ? for he knoweth the very secrets of the heart.

22 For thy sake also are we killed all the day long : and are counted as sheep appointed to be slain.

23 Up, Lord, why sleepest thou : awake, and be not absent from us for ever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face : and forgettest our misery and trouble ?

25 For our soul is brought low, even unto the dust : our belly cleaveth unto the ground.

26 Arise, and help us : and deliver us for thy mercy’s sake.

PSALM 45.

*Eructavit cor meum.*

MY heart is inditing of a good matter : I speak of the things which I have made unto the King.

2 My tongue is the pen : of a ready writer.

3 Thou art fairer than the children of men : full of grace are

the prophetic books, especially in the era of the Captivity (see Is. lxiv. 5, 6, 7; Dan. ix. 5—14; Neh. i. 6, 7; ix. 33, 34)—is that, while they acknowledge disaster as a righteous judgment on sin, the Psalmist here protests before the Searcher of hearts that under all and through all God's people are faithful to His covenant, and that it is indeed as His people that they suffer (see v. 22). This would undoubtedly suit well the Maccabean time, but it need not belong to that time only.

v. 20. *The place of dragons*—really “the place of jackals” (comp. Jer. ix. 11; x. 22), the dreary desolation of the wilderness.

v. 23. *Up, Lord* (comp. vii. 7; xxxv. 23; lix. 4, 5), *why sleepest thou!* It is recorded that the use of this fervent

call on God in the Maccabean times was protested against, on the ground that “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” It is but the transient utterance of natural complaint in the dark hour, when it seemed for a moment that God “made as though He heard not,” like the Baal whom Elijah scorned (1 Kings xviii. 27), or like the impassive gods of heathen philosophy, who cared not for human things. Out of this the Psalmist emerges in v. 26 into confidence in God's salvation; but we note that he no longer claims reward for faithfulness as above (vv. 18—20); he throws himself wholly on His “mercy.” (v. 22 is quoted in Rom. viii. 36, and applied to the persecutions, which cannot “separate us from the love of Christ.”)

## PSALM XLV.

This Psalm—emphatically noted as at once *Maschil*, a “meditation,” and “a song of loves”—is evidently a song at the marriage of a king. That it is Messianic, prefiguring the kingdom of the true Son of David and His marriage with His Church, must be concluded from the superhuman grandeur of its imagery, from some features of its details, and even from its admission into the Psalter; and this conclusion is drawn accordingly in ancient Jewish interpretation, and sanctioned by the authority of the New Testament (see Heb. i. 8, 9). To that kingdom alone can its utterances apply in anything like perfection. Hence the Psalm is naturally used as one of the Proper Psalms for CHRISTMAS DAY—to celebrate the manifestation of the Divine King in human flesh. But it seems equally clear that, as usual in the Psalms, this Antitype is foreshadowed by an immediate and visible type in the marriage of a prince of the house of David, inheriting his promise (see v. 6), with some foreign royal bride. The traditional interpretation refers this to Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. In spite of much recent criticism, this is far the most probable. Certainly the royalty of Solomon alone could even approach to the greatness and majesty here described. The only objection worth notice is that the king is painted as a warrior, while Solomon was a man of peace; but yet he had his great army, his wars, and even his conquests (2 Chr. viii. 3, 4), and this especially at the beginning of his reign, when his marriage took place (see 1 Kings xi. 14—25); and the war of the king in the Psalm is simply one of easy triumph in the cause of righteousness and peace. Of the other occasions conjectured, the assignment of it to the marriage of Ahab with Jezebel is monstrous. Ahab was no son of David, and no faithful servant of God would have celebrated his ill-omened marriage. The marriage of Jehoram with Athaliah labours under the latter difficulty, and the kingdom of his day could hardly have been described in imagery of such grandeur. Clearly Solomon, the immediate son of David and heir of the promise, would most naturally be the type of the true Son of David to come. The heading describes it as on *Shoshannim*, “the Lilies,” probably the name of the tune to which it was to be sung.

The Psalm (after the first two introductory verses) consists of (a), in vv. 3—10, an address of praise and welcome to the king, blessed of God for ever, victorious in righteousness, and glorious in beauty; (b) in vv. 11—13, an address to the bride, calling her to forget her own people and worship her royal spouse; (c), in vv. 14—18, a concluding picture of the entrance of the bride into the palace, and a prediction of blessing on the marriage.

v. 1 is, perhaps, best rendered with R.V. (marg.)—

“My heart is overflowing with a goodly matter;

I speak—my work is for the king.”

v. 3. The first glory ascribed to the king is that of beauty and “grace shed upon his lips”—both specially appropriate to Solomon—both to be perfected in the Messiah (comp. Isa. xxxiii. 17; Luke iv. 22).

Because, &c., should be “therefore” (as in A.V. and R.V.).

vv. 4—6. The second glory is of victory over his enemies. The king is to gird on the sword of his glory and majesty (“worship and renown”); he is to ride on in the cause of “truth and meekness and righteousness”; the prowess of his right hand is to “teach him terrible deeds”; his enemies are to be pierced and subdued by his arrows. It is to be noted that the description is of an almost unresisted triumph in the cause, not of fresh conquest and warlike strength, but of “truth and righteous gentleness.” This favours the application to Solomon; it paints still better the kingdom of the true “Prince of Peace.”

v. 6. *Even in the midst*, &c.—properly, “They are in the hearts of the king's enemies.”

v. 7. *Thy seat, O God*. Of this verse three renderings are possible, (a) that of our version, (b) that which translates “God is thy Throne for ever,” much as we read “God is our Rock” or “our Shield”; and (c) (as in R.V. margin), “Thy throne is the throne of God.” The Septuagint version (followed in Heb. i. 8) might lend itself to either (a) or (b), though better to the former, which other ancient versions contain explicitly. (a) The startling application of the name “God” (*Elohim*) to the human type is supported by Ex. vii. 1; xxi. 6; xxii. 7; Ps. lxxxii. 6; and perhaps 1 Sam. xxviii. 13; the application to the Antitype contains the perfect truth, which this usage imperfectly foreshadows (comp. John x. 34—36). Against it, however, is the emphatic use of “God, thy God” in v. 8. (b) The second rendering is somewhat harsh and unexampled, although, indeed, a magnificent embodiment of the great promise to David. It would express substantially, though not explicitly, the

superhuman character of the royalty of the true Son of David. (c) The third reading avoids all difficulty. It embodies the promise to David; it corresponds admirably with the fulfilment in the Antitype. But it is far less striking and poetical than either of the other renderings, and has no support in the Ancient Versions.

vv. 6, 7. The third glory of the Divine royalty is the eternity foreshadowed in the promise to David (2 Sam. vii. 12—16), foretold again and again in completeness of the Messianic kingdom (see e.g. Dan. vii. 14); and the perfect righteousness, which is even more characteristic of that kingdom.

vv. 8, 9. *The oil of gladness* (comp. Ps. civ. 15). The anointing with oil is the symbol of blessing, suggested, like the *myrrh, aloes, and cassia*, by the actual custom of bridal ceremony (comp. Esther ii. 12). We may note the abundance of spices in the days of Solomon (1 Kings x. 2, 10), and the importation and use of ivory (1 Kings x. 18, 22). If our translation stand, the “ivory palaces” must mean “ivory caskets”; but the best rendering is (as in R.V.), “Out of the ivory palaces strung instruments have made thee glad.”

v. 10. The verse implies (as in the case of Solomon) many wives of various races (see 1 Kings xi. 3), but one supreme above all, like “the daughter of Pharaoh.”

*In a vesture of gold, wrought about*, &c. This is evidently taken from the LXX. version. It should be simply “in vesture of gold of Ophir”—again characteristic of the time of Solomon (see 1 Kings ix. 23; xii. 21; Job xxviii. 16).

v. 11. It is notable, as illustrating this exhortation, that, while Solomon's marriage with “strange women” is branded as a sin (see 1 Kings xi. 1—4) and the cause of his idolatry, no censure is pronounced on the union with the daughter of Pharaoh, as though she actually adopted the worship and the faith of Israel.

v. 12. *Thy Lord God*. The word “God” is not in the original. It is simply “thy Lord” (comp. Gen. xviii. 12); and the “worship” is that of mere reverence. Our version (taken from the Vulgate) was probably suggested by the Messianic interpretation.

v. 13. *The daughter of Tyre.* We note in Solomon's days the half-dependent position of Tyre, the type of "the rich among the people" (see 1 Kings v. 1—12; ix. 10—14, 27, 28; 2 Chr. ii. 3—16). The words *shall be there* are not in the Hebrew, and one rendering of the passage is "O daughter of Tyre, with a gift, the rich, &c."—thus making the bride herself a daughter of Tyre, but this breaks the parallelism, and is otherwise improbable.

v. 14. *All glorious within.* Whatever mystic meanings of this phrase naturally suggest themselves in the application to the Antitype, it seems clear that in the literal sense the meaning is "in the inner chamber." The Psalmist draws a graphic picture of the bride, first, in the splendour of her golden robe in the inner chamber; then as brought in procession to the king in the embroidered

mantle, or on the embroidered tapestry laid down for her to walk on; lastly, as entering with music and shout of gladness into the king's palace.

v. 17. The address seems to be to the bride, carrying on the exhortation to forget her father's house. She is to exchange the glory of her royal ancestors for the greater glory of her royal children, who shall rule the world. Again the application to the Church, as the spouse of Christ, comes out irresistibly; the "fathers" are but the inheritors of the old Covenant; the children, literally ruling in all lands, are the trophies of the New.

v. 18, on the other hand, is evidently addressed to the King—marking, as in all the promises to David, the two characteristics of universality and eternity in His Kingdom.

## PSALM XLVI.

There can be little doubt that this Psalm, with Ps. xlvii., xlviii.—all ascribed to "the sons of Korah"—form a triplet of songs of triumph and thanksgiving on some signal triumph by the special favour of "the Lord of Hosts," over a gathering of enemies, which had threatened to overwhelm the city of God. Two occasions of such triumph suggest themselves—the destruction of the host of Sennacherib, and the great victory of Jehoshaphat (recorded in 2 Chr. xx. 1—30) over the host of Moab, Ammon, and their allies. In favour of the former have been noted several similarities between this Psalm and the prophecies of Isaiah—the "Immanuel" of vii. 14, viii. 8, 10; the inviolable strength of Zion in xxxvii. 22, &c. But the earlier occasion is supported by some curious coincidences. The victory was promised by the Levite Jahaziel as the salvation of the Lord, with the word, "The Lord is with you" (2 Chr. xx. 15—17); the promise was hailed and repeated on the eve of battle in music by the Levites "of the sons of Korah," and the victory hymned "with psalteries and harps and trumpets in the house of the Lord" (vv. 19, 21, 28); and the rather abrupt allusion to the shattering of the ships of Tarshish in xlviii. 6 irresistibly suggests the time when the memory of the disaster to the ships of Jehoshaphat recorded in 1 Kings xxii. 48; 2 Chr. xx. 37 was fresh. On the whole, it seems more probable that in these Psalms we have a magnificent thanksgiving over this earlier victory.

This Psalm—the original of Luther's famous hymn (*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*)—is divided by the musical interlude (*Selah*) into three parts: (a) the proclamation of "God our strength" through the earthquakes and storms of trouble (vv. 1—3); (b) a glorying in the indwelling Presence of God, as the source of gladness and peace (vv. 4—7); (c) a picture of the mighty work of God, shattering enmity and reducing the enemies to silence (vv. 8—11). Strength, peace, victory, are the blessings of "God with us."

It is ordered to be sung on *Alamoth*, that is, "by women's voices," like the triumph song of Miriam (in Exod. xv. 20, 21), or the songs over the victories of Saul and David (1 Sam. xviii. 6).

thy lips, because God hath blessed thee for ever.

4 Gird thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most Mighty : according to thy worship and renown.

5 Good luck have thou with thine honour : ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

6 Thy arrows are very sharp, and the people shall be subdued unto thee : even in the midst among the King's enemies.

7 Thy seat, O God, endureth for ever : the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

8 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity : wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

9 All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloe, and cassia : out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

10 Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women : upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colours.

11 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, incline thine ear : forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.

12 So shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty : for he is thy Lord God, and worship thou him.

13 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift : like as the rich also among the people shall make their supplication before thee.

14 The King's daughter is all glorious within : her clothing is of wrought gold.

15 She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework : the virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company, and shall be brought unto thee.

16 With joy and gladness shall they be brought : and shall enter into the King's palace.

17 Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children : whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.

18 I will remember thy Name from one generation to another : therefore shall the people give thanks unto thee, world without end.

## PSALM 46.

*Deus noster refugium.*

GOD is our hope and strength : a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved : and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.

3 Though the waters thereof rage and swell : and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.

4 The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God : the holy place of the tabernacle of the most Highest.

5 God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed : God shall help her, and that right early.

6 The heathen make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved : but God hath shewed his voice, and the earth shall melt away.

7 The Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge.

8 O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord : what destruction he hath brought upon the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease in all the world : he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire.

10 Be still then, and know that I am God : I will be exalted among the heathen, and I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge.

v. 1. *Hope and strength*—properly, (as in A.V.), “refuge and stronghold.” The metaphor is taken, as usual, from a mountain stronghold, remaining unshaken on its deep foundations through the double convulsion of the earthquake, which at once casts “the hills into the midst of the sea” (comp. Matt. xxi. 21), and raises its waters—the great “tidal wave”—to engulf all that is not overthrown.

v. 4. *Of the flood thereof.* This version obscures the meaning. It should be, “There is a river, of which the streams,” &c.; drawing a striking contrast between the surging waves of the troubled world and the quiet fertilizing waters of the city of God—“the waters of Shiloah, which go softly” (Isa. viii. 6)—so wonderfully described in Ezek. xlvi. 1—12 and Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

v. 5. *In the midst of her.* The Psalmist passes from the thought of “God our strength” to trace that strength to His indwelling Presence in the midst of the city of God, and in “His holy dwelling” “between the cherubim.” Hence the help granted “right early”—literally, “when the morning dawns”—after the night of trouble; and the voice of command uttered, before

which the earth melteth (comp. Mic. i. 4; Amos ix. 5; Isa. lxiv. 1—3).

v. 7. *The Lord of hosts... the God of Jacob* (comp. Ps. lxxxiv. 8). The union of these titles represents the two-fold character in which God is revealed—in His Eternal majesty, as Jehovah, Lord “of hosts”—that is (see note on xxiv. 10), God of all the multitudes of earth and heaven—and in His special covenanted relation to His people as the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” From the one aspect comes the sense of awe and adoration; from the other of trust and love. “God with us” was the watchword, alike in the victory of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. xx. 17) and in the deliverance in the days of Ahaz (Isa. vii. 14).

vv. 8—10. In this section the Psalmist, after the storm of trouble had ceased, looks down upon the destruction wrought by the Divine Judgment. The weapons of war are to be shattered, before the final utterance of victory, which bids the nations be still before His majesty. So even Our Lord declared of His own Kingdom, “I came not to send peace, but a sword.” But in any experience the secret of faith is “God with us.”

## PSALM XLVII.

The position of this Psalm, between Ps. xlvi. and xlvi. 18, suggests its being referred to the same occasion. In itself it is only evident that it is a Temple Psalm of triumph and thanksgiving to God, as having shewn forth His glory by deliverance of His people before all the nations of the earth. Nothing, however, could better suit the procession of thanksgiving “with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the House of the Lord” after the victory of Jehoshaphat, when “the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries” (2 Chr. xx. 26, 27). From the words “God is gone up,” it is naturally used as a Psalm for ASCENSION-DAY, hymning the triumph of Him who ascended, when he had won his victory by “descending first to the lower parts of the earth.”

It is divided by the *Selah* into two parts: (a), in vv. 1—4, the call to praise and thanksgiving; and (b), in vv. 5—9, the glad response to that call.

v. 1. *Ye people* should be, “ye peoples.” The idea throughout is of God’s manifestation of His glory to all the nations.

v. 2. *For the Lord is... to be feared.* By a striking paradox the awful greatness of the Lord and His wrath on His enemies are made to furnish the ground for joy and trust (comp.

the opposite idea in Ps. cxxx. 4, “There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared”). Till “perfect love casts out fear,” the same consciousness of God as a living God, really guiding the world, must breathe the fear through the sense of our unlikeness, love through the consciousness of our likeness, to Him.

v. 3. *He shall, &c.* The verbs should be in the present tense, as in R.V. (*marg.*). It is in the present sense of God’s subdual of his enemies, and His choice of the inheritance for His people—“the excellency” (see A.V. and R.V.), that is, the pride, “of Jacob, whom He loveth”—that the thanksgiving is uttered.

v. 5. *God is gone up.* From this phrase some of the older interpreters refer this Psalm (like xv. and xxiv.) to the carrying up of the ark in the days of David and Solomon. It may perhaps have been suggested by the triumphal procession after the victory up to the Temple. But in itself it simply conveys the metaphorical idea that God’s visible interposition for His people, so often called His “coming down” (comp. Gen. xi. 5; xviii. 21; Exod. iii. 8; Isa. lxiv. 1), is now over, and He is “gone up” to the rest and glory of Heaven, amidst the music of praise. Naturally it is taken as foreshadowing the actual ascension of God Incarnate from earth to Heaven after His vic-

tory won (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 18, and St. Paul’s comment in Eph. iv. 8—10), and sung accordingly on Ascension-Day

v. 7. *With understanding.* The word is the technical word *Maschil*, a “psalm of instruction,” or a “strain of skill.”

v. 9. This verse should be rendered (as in R.V.)—

“The princes of the peoples gather themselves together

(To be) a people of the God of Abraham.

For to God belong the shields of the earth;

Very highly exalted is He.”

The “shields of the earth” are its princes, considered as warriors and defenders of their people (see Hos. iv. 18). They bow before the great Conqueror, and count it honour to be numbered with His people (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 29—31). Probably it is not so much the conversion of the nations, which was to be the promise of the hereafter, but rather the homage of their fear in the present, which is here referred to.

## PSALM XLVIII.

This Psalm, the last of the group, apparently follows Ps. xlvii. as the Psalm sung after the procession has entered the Temple. The Psalmist rejoices in the material strength and beauty of the city of God, telling her bulwarks and marking her palaces, and delighting in the terrified confusion of her enemies. But throughout he sees the type of her higher spiritual glories in God as “our God for ever and ever.” The Psalm is appointed as a Psalm for WHIT-SUNDAY—looking on the Church of Christ as the holy city of God.

The Psalm falls readily into four sections: (a), in vv. 1, 2, a burst of exultation over the glory of the city of God; (b), in vv. 3—7, a picture of the discomfiture of the enemy by the breath of the Lord; (c), in vv. 8—10, an utterance of praise to Him for His judgments of mercy and righteousness; (d), in vv. 11—13, a call to the people to mark and to glory in the greatness of Zion.

v. 2 is more literally, “Fair in elevation, the joy of the earth is the Mount Zion, the angle” (“sides”) “of the north, the city of the great King.” The phrase “the sides of the north” (apparently topographical and not metaphorical) seems to refer to the temple hill, the north-eastern angle of the city. The traditional position of Zion is on the south-west. Perhaps, therefore, the simplest idea is to suppose the Psalmist to include in one view Mount Zion on the south, the temple hill on the north, and the city of the great King, the city of Jerusalem itself, lying below both. To him in his exulta-

tion, as to Jeremiah in his sorrow (Lam. ii. 15), it is “the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.” But his delight is not in its material strength or its historic glory; it is because “God in her palaces is a sure refuge.”

v. 4. *To see such things*—properly, “to see it” (Jerusalem). The very sight of its glory to the kings gathered against it, and yet “passing it by,” as impregnable, was an astonishment and an abject terror.

vv. 5, 6. The latter verse should be rendered, “Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish by the east wind.” The

“ship of Tarshish” (see 1 Kings x. 22; xxii. 48) was the name for a great merchant ship (like our “East Indiaman”), the type (as in Isa. ii. 16) of proud stateliness. The metaphor is therefore twofold: the destruction is sudden as the pangs of travail, utter as the wreck of the proudest ships before the storm wind. But the abrupt introduction of the naval metaphor is probably due to the recent remembrance of the actual wreck described in 1 Kings xxii. 48; 2 Chr. xx. 36, 37.

v. 7. *As we have heard, &c.* In this verse are united the past, of which “we have heard,” from our fathers (see Ps. xlv. 1), the present, which “we have seen,” and the future, which is to be “established for ever.”

v. 8. *We wait, &c.* It should be, “we have thought of Thy loving-kindness,” &c. The two chosen manifestations of God, “according to His Name” (comp. the revelation to Moses in Exod. xxxiv. 5—7) are His “lovingkindness” and His “righteousness.” Both are shewn in “His

judgments”; both are remembered in His Temple with joy.

v. 11, 12 dwell with patriotic affection on the glories of Zion; bidding Israel “count her towers,” “mark the bulwarks” of her strength, “consider” (“set up”) “the palaces” of her beauty. But, as before, the Psalmist turns at once from these to the indwelling Presence of God, her God for ever and ever.

v. 13. *Unto death.* If these words are part of the Psalm itself, the rendering “over” or “beyond death” is probably right. It introduces, indeed, a new idea, belonging rather to the individual communion with God than to the corporate existence of the holy city. But it brings out the parallelism with the preceding clause, and is not alien from the idea of the covenant with the God, who is not “the God of the dead, but of the living.” It is, however, doubtful whether the original word (*Al muth*) is not one of the frequent notes of musical direction for this Psalm or for Ps. xlix.

## PSALM XLIX.

This noble Psalm, ascribed to “the sons of Korah,” is one of a singularly thoughtful and didactic character—a Psalm of wisdom rather than of devotion—breathing the spirit of the more meditative parts of the Book of Proverbs, and dealing, though in a different tone, with the same great problem which occupies the Book of Job. It is notable that Ps. lxxxviii., similarly reflective, though having a far deeper tinge of perplexity and even despondency, is attributed to Heman, the head of the Korahite company. Unlike that Psalm, however, this has a clear view of a future retribution and redemption of the righteous, as vividly contrasted with the vain transitoriness of earthly wealth and power. In this the pensiveness of deeper thought finds its rest.

After the emphatic exordium (*a*) of vv. 1—4, calling on all to hear the utterance of Wisdom, it (*b*) states (in v. 5) the great question, “What should the believer feel in the face of prosperous worldliness?” then goes on to dwell on the contrast between the transitoriness and vanity of worldly self-confidence, and the certainty of future blessing to the righteous; and finally (*c*) gives the answer (in vv. 16—20) that the righteous should not fear or be perplexed before the pretentious glory which passeth away.

v. 1—4. With this exordium compare the similar opening of Ps. lxxxviii. 1, 2, which there, however, introduces a recital of Israel’s history. Like many found in the “Books of Wisdom” (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes), it is the dignified

utterance of one who feels that God has given him the knowledge of the secret of life, and that he is charged to proclaim it to a listening world.

v. 4. *Incline mine ear to the parable.* The word (*Mashal*) here rendered “parable”—having as its root the

## DAY 9.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 47.

*Omnes gentes, plaudite.*

**O** CLAP your hands together, all ye people : O sing unto God with the voice of melody.

2 For the Lord is high, and to be feared : he is the great King upon all the earth.

3 He shall subdue the people under us : and the nations under our feet.

4 He shall choose out an heritage for us : even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.

5 God is gone up with a merry noise : and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.

6 O sing praises, sing praises unto our God : O sing praises, sing praises unto our King.

7 For God is the King of all the earth : sing ye praises with understanding.

8 God reigneth over the heathen : God sitteth upon his holy seat.

9 The princes of the people are joined unto the people of the God of Abraham : for God, which is very high exalted, doth defend the earth, as it were with a shield.

## PSALM 48.

*Magnus Dominus.*

**G**REAT is the Lord, and highly to be praised : in the city of our God, even upon his holy hill.

2 The hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the whole earth : upon the north-side lieth the city of the great King ; God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge.

3 For lo, the kings of the earth : are gathered, and gone by together.

4 They marvelled to see such things : they were astonished, and suddenly cast down.

5 Fear came there upon them, and sorrow : as upon a woman in her travail.

6 Thou shalt break the ships of the sea : through the east-wind.

7 Like as we have heard, so

have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God : God upholdeth the same for ever.

8 We wait for thy loving-kindness, O God : in the midst of thy temple.

9 O God, according to thy Name, so is thy praise unto the world’s end : thy right hand is full of righteousness.

10 Let the mount Sion rejoice, and the daughter of Judah be glad : because of thy judgments.

11 Walk about Sion, and go round about her : and tell the towers thereof.

12 Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses : that ye may tell them that come after.

13 For this God is our God for ever and ever : he shall be our guide unto death.

## PSALM 49.

*Audite hæc, omnes.*

**O** HEAR ye this, all ye people : ponder it with your ears, all ye that dwell in the world ;

2 High and low, rich and poor : one with another.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom : and my heart shall muse of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to the parable : and shew my dark speech upon the harp.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of wickedness : and when the wickedness of my heels compasseth me round about ?

6 There be some that put their trust in their goods : and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.

7 But no man may deliver his brother : nor make agreement unto God for him ;

8 For it cost more to redeem their souls : so that he must let that alone for ever ;

9 Yea, though he live long : and see not the grave.

10 For he seeth that wise men also die, and perish together : ag

idea of comparison—is used in various senses: (1) a parable, as we understand the word; (2) a proverb; (3) an abstruse saying or riddle; (4) a figurative antithetic poem, like those of Balaam (Num. xxiii., xxiv.) and Job (Job xxvii.—xxx.). It is in the third sense that it is here used, of the declaration of the secret of life, to others unknown, and is accordingly paralleled with “dark speech”—the word used elsewhere for a riddle or enigma (Judg. xiv. 12; 1 Kings x. 1). The phrase, “I will incline mine ear,” seems to convey the idea of first listening for the divinely-taught strain, which is hereafter to be “shewn forth upon the harp.”

v. 5. *The iniquity of my heels* must, from the evident sense of the passage, clearly signify, not the iniquity of the Psalmist himself, but the iniquity (as in R. V.) “at his heels” ready to trip up and overthrow him. The great question is, “How shall he stand fearless in the face of prosperous evil?” Like the author of Ps. lxxiii. in similar experience, he feels that “his feet were almost gone, his treadings had well nigh slipt”; but he finds the answer, which is given in the following verses.

vv. 7—9 should be thus rendered (much as in R. V.)—

“No man can redeem his brother,  
Nor give to God a ransom for him  
(For too costly is the ransom of their soul,  
And he must give that up for ever),  
So that he may live on continually,  
And see not the pit.”

It is difficult at first sight to understand how this idea of man's inability to redeem another from death, as he might redeem him from slavery or from the penalty of the law (Exod. xxi. 30), fits in with the general drift of the Psalm, which would be satisfied simply by the sense of the inability of earthly wealth and power to defy decay and death. But consideration will shew that the opposition is between God, who can and will save, and the earthly might, which can save others still less than it can save itself.

vv. 10—13. Here a new thought is introduced, very similar to that which runs through the mournful Book of Ecclesiastes. Not even wisdom can

give permanence. The wise and the fool die alike, and leave their wealth to others (comp. Eccles. ii. 15, 16). Nay, even the “inward thought” (see A. V.) with which they console themselves—that their houses shall continue for ever, and their names be made to live by calling the lands after them—is vain. Man, whether the individual or the family, has no abiding in his prosperity. So far he is like “the beasts that perish” (comp. Eccles. iii. 18—21). To this mournful picture v. 13 adds a touch of irony. Folly as their thought is, it is handed down for praise to a posterity as foolish as themselves. What words could paint better the insufficiency of the “immortality of the race” or “the posthumous life of fame”?

v. 14 should be rendered—

“Like sheep they are gathered into Hades;  
Death shall be their shepherd,  
And the righteous shall triumph over them in the morning;  
Their beauty (‘form’) shall Hades consume,  
So that it finds no dwelling-place.”

The idea is that so often dwelt upon (see Ps. ix. 17), that the trusters in earthly prosperity shall be swallowed up in the dark nothingness of Hades, as sheep fall into a pit—destitute of the permanent dwelling-place which they had seemed to hope for on earth. The phrase “in the morning” is strikingly significant; it might, indeed, mean the morning of deliverance here from the night of trouble (see Ps. xxx. 5); but the whole context obviously suggests the reference to the morning after the night of Hades, when the righteous shall triumph over those who despised them. See the striking passages in Wisdom (iii. 1—8; v. 1—15).

v. 15 carries on the thought implied in the previous verse, but explicitly, and with that personal application which makes it a living truth, “God will deliver” (not “hath delivered”) “my soul from the abode of Hades”; “He shall receive me to Himself” (comp. Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46; Acts vii. 59). As in Ps. xvi. 10, 11, the hope of immortality is certainly implied, resting securely on a communion with God, begun here, to be perfected hereafter.

vv. 16—20 accordingly give the final answer to the question of the

Psalm, “Be just and fear not.” The prosperity of the wicked is hollow as well as transitory. He may “count himself happy” or (as in the more emphatic original) “bless his soul” in life, and (as is added with the ironical knowledge of human nature characteristic of this Psalm) men will speak good of one who does well to himself (“faring sumptuously” and splendidly, like the rich man in the parable). But he shall go down to his fathers in the darkness of Hades. “What shall it profit, if he

gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

v. 20. The burden, repeated from v. 12, brings out explicitly the condition there implied, “Man that is in honour, and *understandeth not*,” &c. The phrase is the characteristic phrase of the Book of Proverbs. Godlessness is viewed (as in Ps. xiv. 1) as want of “wisdom” or “understanding”—ignorance, wilful ignorance, of the great secret of life—and so looked upon, not with hatred, but with a half-contemptuous pity.

## PSALM L.

This magnificent Psalm is the first ascribed to Asaph (see *Introduction*, sect. II.), the head of the Gershomite company of Levites (1 Chr. vi. 39), specially described as “Asaph the seer” in 2 Chr. xxix. 30. The tone is, indeed, solemnly prophetic, enforcing precisely the same lesson as to true spiritual sacrifice which is still more strikingly taught in Isa. i. 11—20; Amos. v. 21—24; Micah vi. 6—8. To infer, however, from this that the Psalm is of a later date than that of “Asaph the seer,” argues a strange ignorance of the ever-recurring temptations of the times of strong religious observance. Even Samuel had to teach that “to obey is better than sacrifice,” and in Ps. xl.—probably a Psalm of David—the same truth is emphatically urged. The teaching would come with special weight from one whose home was in the Temple, and who lived of the sacrifice; and certainly it would not be unsuitable to the time of splendid Temple worship in the days of David and Solomon. Grand as the Psalm is, its sequence of idea is exceedingly simple; and in style it is less terse and incisive than the Psalms of David.

It has (a) a grand exordium, in vv. 1—6, describing the manifestation of God; followed (b) by His warning (in vv. 7—15) of the nullity of all sacrifice, except the true sacrifice of devotion; and (c) rebuke to flagrant wickedness, cloaked under the pretence of obedience to the law (vv. 16—21); the whole ending (d) (in vv. 22, 23) with a brief emphatic declaration of God's judgment on His false and true servants.

v. 1. *The Lord, even the most mighty God*. The original expression is striking and nearly unique (found only in Josh. xxii. 22)—*El, Elohim, Jehovah*, accumulating the names of God—*El* denoting the unity of God, *Elohim* the majesty of Godhead in the fulness of His attributes, *Jehovah* His eternal self-existent being.

v. 2 should be, “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.” The “perfection of beauty” is (as in Lam. ii. 15) an epithet of Zion, naturally familiar to Asaph, specially appointed (1 Chr. xvi. 5) to minister in Zion before the ark of the Lord.

v. 3. The images are clearly suggested by the vision of Sinai, and the manifestation of God by the cloud and fire in the Tabernacle (Exod. xl. 34, 35; Lev. ix. 24). So in Ps. xviii. 7—15; xcvi. 2—5. Yet it is clear enough that the Psalmist knew, as well as

Elijah himself (1 Kings xix. 11, 12), that “the Lord was not in the whirlwind or the fire.”

v. 4. *He shall call*, &c. All Nature in heaven and earth is called to be witness of God's judgment of His people. This call is made again and again even by God's servants. (See Deut. iv. 26; xxxi. 28; Isa. i. 2, &c.)

v. 5 is the summons of the great Judge. His angel messengers are to gather the Israelites, who (like the Church of the New Testament) are “saints” in calling, and blessed by a “covenant ratified by sacrifice.” It is evident that this notice of the true function of sacrifice, as sealing the Covenant (see Exod. xxiv. 6—8), is emphatic, leading on to the succeeding contrast of the pretence of sacrifice with its reality (comp. li. vv. 16, 17, 19).



v. 7. For I am God, even thy God. The very blessing of covenant with God constitutes His people's special responsibility. They cannot (see Ezek. xx. 32-38) be as the heathen are; they must be infinitely more or less.

v. 8. This verse should be rendered (as in R.V.)—

“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices;  
And thy burnt offerings are continually before Me.”

vv. 9-13. The superstition rebuked is the common heathen superstition that “God is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed something.” It is here put in its naked grossness, as imagining the gods actually to feed on the sacrifices: but probably in Israel it was found in some more covert form, as, for example, in the supposition that sacrifices were acceptable in proportion to their costliness and their multitude—such as may have lurked even under the magnificence of Solomon's offerings at the consecration of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 63, 64). It recurs always, whenever we forget that God “seeks not ours, but us.”

v. 14. The true sacrifice is always that of self-devotion; but its phases vary with the occasion. Here it is the devotion of thanksgiving, the vow of homage and prayer; in Ps. xi. 8-11 (as here in v. 23) it is the devotion of obedience and witness for God; in Ps. li. 16, 17 it is the self-surrender of the penitent heart. All must be harmonized in the true and living sacrifice of soul and body to God (Rom. xii. 1), which He accepts

and answers by blessing in the day of trouble.

vv. 16-20 turn from mere formalism to a grosser evil, which may underlie it—flagrant wickedness, cloaked under boasting of the Law and the Covenant, such as that so often rebuked by the Prophets and by Our Lord Himself in His denunciation of the Pharisees. As usual in Holy Scripture, sins against man—*theft, adultery, falsehood, slander, malice*—are condemned at least as severely as sins against God. For “he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?” Throughout it is not only the commission of sin, but the encouragement of it in others, which is characteristic of the utterly hardened (comp. Rom. i. 32).

v. 21. The ungodly are represented as “despising the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance” (Rom. ii. 4). The mysterious permission of evil in that long-suffering often makes even His servants cry out, “Lord, how long?” (Ps. vi. 3; xiii. 1, 2); and the sinner abuses it in the cry, “Tush, how should God perceive it?” “Thou, God, carest not for it” (Ps. x. 12, 14; lxxiii. 11)—thinking that God is as careless of righteousness as he himself. The one key to it is the truth implied in Rom. ix. 22, 23, that without it good cannot be perfected.

vv. 22, 23 sum up the judgment of God—destruction to the godless, acceptance of that true devotion of thanksgiving and obedience, which shall not only have, but know that it has, salvation.

## PSALM LI.

With this Psalm begins a second series of Psalms ascribed to David, closing the Second Book. The heading calls it with marked particularity “A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba” (2 Sam. xii. 1); and there seems no adequate reason for setting aside this ancient tradition, which makes this Psalm—the deepest and most fervent of the Penitential Psalms, which has guided for centuries the expression of repentance—to be the utterance of that intense sorrow and penitence of David after his great sin, so pathetically described in 2 Sam. xii. Every word seems to suit his case; and the notion that the subtle consciousness of sin and the sense of the nullity of sacrifice could not belong to the time and character of David, is purely arbitrary. Nor do certain similarities of expression in the Psalm to various passages of the Prophetic books necessarily imply dependence of the one upon the other.

well as the ignorant and foolish, and leave their riches for other.

11 And yet they think that their houses shall continue for ever: and that their dwelling-places shall endure from one generation to another; and call the lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless, man will not abide in honour: seeing he may be compared unto the beasts that perish; this is the way of them.

13 This is their foolishness: and their posterity praise their saying.

14 They lie in the hell like sheep, death gnaweth upon them, and the righteous shall have domination over them in the morning: their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre out of their dwelling.

15 But God hath delivered my soul from the place of hell: for he shall receive me.

16 Be not thou afraid, though one be made rich: or if the glory of his house be increased;

17 For he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth: neither shall his pomp follow him.

18 For while he lived, he counted himself an happy man: and so long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee.

19 He shall follow the generation of his fathers: and shall never see light.

20 Man being in honour hath no understanding: but is compared unto the beasts that perish.

## DAY 10.

### Morning Prayer.

#### PSALM 50.

##### *Deus deorum.*

THE Lord, even the most mighty God, hath spoken: and called the world, from the rising up of the sun, unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Sion hath God appeared: in perfect beauty.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: there shall go before him a consuming fire, and a mighty tempest shall be stirred up round about him.

4 He shall call the heaven from above: and the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me: those that have made a covenant with me with sacrifice.

6 And the heaven shall declare his righteousness: for God is Judge himself.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak: I myself will testify against thee, O Israel; for I am God, even thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee because of thy sacrifices, or for thy burnt-offerings: because they were not alway before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of

thyne house: nor he-goat out of thy folds.

10 For all the beasts of the forest are mine: and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I know all the fowls upon the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are in my sight.

12 If I be hungry, I will not tell thee: for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein.

13 Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh: and drink the blood of goats?

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving: and pay thy vows unto the most Highest.

15 And call upon me in the time of trouble: so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise me.

16 But unto the ungodly said God: Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth;

17 Whereas thou hatest to be reformed: and hast cast my words behind thee?

18 When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him: and hast been partaker with the adulterers.

19 Thou hast let thy mouth

The only real difficulty lies in the words of *vv.* 18, 19, on which see note. It is deeply interesting to compare it with Ps. xxxiii., the simpler utterance of a later period in his repentance. The promise of pardon ("The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die"), while it keeps repentance from being remorse, deepens the sense of utter unworthiness in the penitent. The Psalm is naturally used by the Church on **ASH-WEDNESDAY**, in the *Commination Service*.

By whomsoever written, the Psalm sets forth with infinite pathos and completeness the gradations of the spiritual experience of the true penitent; (*a*), in *vv.* 1—4, the simple cry for pardon and purification, in the utter humiliation of conscious sin before God; next (*b*), in *vv.* 5—8, the deeper sense of a contrast within, between the power of inborn sinfulness, and the promise and earnest of the higher life; thence (*c*), in *vv.* 9—12, in natural sequence, the prayer for renewal of soul in the gift of the free Spirit; lastly (*d*), in *vv.* 13—19, the vow of praise, of witness of God's goodness, and of the acceptable sacrifice of a contrite heart, and (*e*) the acknowledgment that through it alone the altar of God can be approached for burnt offering and oblation of thankfulness.

*vv.* 1, 2. The prayer, trusting only in the "multitude of God's mercies," is twofold—for the pardon which "does away" ("blots out") the guilt of transgressions (comp. Exod. xxxii. 32; Isa. xlv. 22; Col. ii. 13, 14), and the renewal, which washes and cleanses the soul from the pollution of sin (comp. Isa. i. 16; Jer. iv. 14; Heb. ix. 13, 14; Rev. i. 5; vii. 14). The two gifts, though distinct, are inseparable parts of the Divine forgiveness.

*v.* 4. *Against Thee only, &c.* It argues strange ignorance of true repentance to raise difficulty, because David's crime was gross against man. In the view of evil, as sin—sin against God's righteousness and love—all other thoughts must be absorbed, as the finite, however great, in the infinite (comp. 2 Sam. xii. 13). In the deepest spiritual experience "we are conscious of but two existences—God and our own soul."

*That thou mightest, &c.* (comp. St. Paul's use of this verse in Rom. iii. 4). The Psalmist expresses the profound conviction so frequent in the prophetic utterances, that even sin is overruled to the revelation of the Divine Righteousness. It is not, of course, the commission of sin, but the inward conviction and the outward punishment of sin, which make clear the righteousness of God, when He judges (not "when He is judged," as in our version). It is only when sin is known and branded as sinful that it brings out by contrast the righteousness of God.

*vv.* 5—8. It is profoundly true to nature, that the penitent conscious-

ness of actual sin should produce on the one hand the painful sense of an inborn sinfulness, and yet, on the other, the certainty of a higher humanity, delighting in the law of God after the inner man (see Rom. vii. 14—25). Out of this necessarily arises the confidence that, in some way, God will purge sin, and by the very purification kindle joy and gladness. What that way is David might guess, but we know.

*v.* 7. *Purge me with hyssop.* The allusion is clearly to such ordinances as Exod. xxiv. 5—8; Lev. xiv. 4—7; Num. xix. 6, 18 (on which see the comment in Heb. ix. 18—23). David sees in them the symbols, not the substitutes, of true purification of heart (comp. Isa. i. 18).

*v.* 8. *The bones which Thou hast broken, &c.* The bones, as usual (see Ps. vi. 2, &c.), are looked upon as the seat of pain, racking and crushing both body and soul. The Psalmist feels by anticipation, not only the relief, but the actual joy, of accepted penitence.

*vv.* 9—12 describe the renewal, thus hopefully prayed for, with singular vividness, in phases rising to a glorious climax—from "cleanness of heart" to "rightness" (properly "constancy") of the renewed soul; then to consciousness of a Divine "spirit of holiness" still within us, and through it a royal "freedom of spirit" ("the princely heart of innocence"), defying the bondage both of sin and of fear (compare the contrast of Rom. vii. 21—24 with viii. 1, 2, 14—17, 33—39).

speak wickedness : and with thy tongue thou hast set forth deceit.

20 Thou satest, and spakest against thy brother : yea, and hast slandered thine own mother's son.

21 These things hast thou done, and I held my tongue, and thou thoughtest wickedly, that I am even such a one as thyself : but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done.

22 O consider this, ye that forget God : lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

23 Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me : and to him that ordereth his conversation right will I shew the salvation of God.

## PSALM 51.

*Miserere mei, Deus.*

**H**Ave mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness : according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness : and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my faults : and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight : that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged.

5 Behold, I was shapen in wickedness : and in sin hath my mother conceived me.

6 But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts : and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

7 Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness : that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Turn thy face from my sins : and put out all my misdeeds.

10 Make me a clean heart, O God : and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence : and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

12 O give me the comfort of thy help again : and stablish me with thy free Spirit.

13 Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked : and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health : and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

15 Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord : and my mouth shall shew thy praise.

16 For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee : but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.

17 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit : a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.

18 O be favourable and gracious unto Sion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations : then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

## PSALM 52.

*Quid gloriaris ?*

**W**HY boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant : that thou canst do mischief ;

2 Whereas the goodness of God : endureth yet daily ?

3 Thy tongue imagineth wickedness : and with lies thou cuttest like a sharp razor.

4 Thou hast loved unrighteousness more than goodness : and to talk of lies more than righteousness.

5 Thou hast loved to speak all words that may do hurt : O thou false tongue.

6 Therefore shall God destroy thee for ever : he shall take thee, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling, and root thee out of the land of the living.

vv. 13—17 contain the answer to the question, "What shall I render to the Lord?" The first offering is the proclaiming in his own example God's mercy to sinners. As David's sin "made the enemies of God to blaspheme," his penitence and pardon are the comfort of the penitent (comp. St. Paul's frequent use of his own example, 1 Cor. xv. 8—11; Eph. iii. 7—9; 1 Tim. i. 13—16). The next is praise and thanksgiving, not only of God's goodness, but of His righteousness, in which "He is faithful and just to forgive sins." Lastly, the absolute self-surrender of the "broken and contrite heart," which (unlike man) God "will not despise." Such self-devotion St. Paul, in the great Epistle which teaches most fully man's sin and God's forgiveness, urges "by the mercies of God" (Rom. xii. 1).

vv. 18, 19. These verses are generally thought to be a liturgical addition of later date, and the phrase "build thou the walls of Jerusalem,"

is taken as indicating the era of the Captivity. It is, indeed, quite possible to refer the prayer for Zion and the building up of Jerusalem to the time of David, when the walls of the Holy City were rising, and we note in 2 Sam. xii. 20 that, after his fasting and weeping before God, David came into the house of the Lord and worshipped, of course, with "sacrifice and oblation." But there is certainly a break in style and tone between these verses and the main body of the Psalm; and the very abruptness of termination with v. 17 is not unnatural in its simple intensity of penitence. In some Jewish rituals the Psalm is still used on the great Day of Atonement. If such use was ancient, the liturgical addition would be natural—the whole congregation taking up for themselves the utterance of individual penitence and faith, and applying it to the whole condition of Zion and Jerusalem, punished by God's righteous judgment and restored by His mercy.

## PSALM LIII.

This Psalm—a *Maschil* of David—is in the inscription referred to the time "when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech" (see 1 Sam. xxii. 9—23). It is thus made the utterance of David, perhaps in the anticipation of the malice of Doeg, which he felt (see 2 Sam. xxii. 2), even before the arrival of the fugitive Abiathar, and his narration of the cruel massacre at Nob through the report of Doeg. There seems no reason to reject this tradition, or to doubt that the Psalm is aimed at Doeg himself. From the history we may well suppose that his report was malignant, for he suppressed all that might exculpate Ahimelech; certainly he was a man of blood, for he executed the cruel decree, from which Saul's own soldiers shrank. The Psalm has all the characteristics of David's early Psalms.

It is broken by the *Selah* into three divisions: (a), in vv. 1—4, the indignant description of the treacherous foe; (b), in vv. 5, 6, the denunciation of God's wrath against him; (c), in vv. 7—10, the exultation of the righteous over his fall, and their sure confidence in God.

v. 1. *Thou tyrant*—properly, "O mighty one." Doeg's headship over the royal herds implied power; his slaughter at Nob clearly indicates a great following, probably of his Edomite countrymen.

vv. 2, 3. This description of mingled delight in cruelty and treacherous slander is frequent, both in the Psalms and in the Prophets—perhaps especially typical of Oriental

character of the worst sort. It is curious that in the prophecy of Obadiah stress is laid on the "wisdom" and "understanding" of the Edomites as well as on their warlike fierceness (vv. 8, 10).

v. 6. *Out of thy dwelling*—properly, "out of thy tent." The reference may be literal to the tent which the master of the herds would naturally occupy.

vv. 7—10 describe the succession of feeling with which the fall of the wicked is contemplated: first, awe of God's judgment; next, triumph over the destruction of evil; lastly, joy and confidence in the All-righteous and Merciful God.

v. 9. The description of the "green olive tree" may simply be a general metaphor like that of Ps. i. 3, 4. But it has been noted that Nob was on the northern slope of the Mount of Olives, and that the figure of this verse, as of v. 6, may have

been suggested by the actual growth of trees round the Tabernacle itself (comp. Ps. lxxxiv. 3).

v. 10 should probably be rendered, "I will wait upon Thy Name—for it is good—before Thy saints." The description exactly suits the attitude of mingled confidence and expectation belonging to David's condition at that time; and it falls in with that delight in fellowship with the servants of God, which is so constantly expressed in his Psalms.

## PSALM LIIII.

This Psalm—called a *Maschil* of David—is obviously an adaptation in later time of Ps. xiv. The differences are (1) the substitution throughout of the name *Elohim* for *Jahovah*; (2) the remarkable alteration of v. 6, as compared with xiv. 9, 10. In the earlier Psalm we have, "There were they brought in great fear; for God is in the generation of the righteous. As for you, ye have made a mock at the counsel of the poor, because he putteth his trust in the Lord"—a description at once of momentary fear and reaction of hardened mockery in the wicked. Here there is a picture of signal overthrow of some open enemy of Israel. "They were afraid where no fear was; for God hath broken the bones of him who besieged thee; thou hast put them to confusion, because God hath despised them." The words have been referred to the great overthrow of the Assyrian army in the days of Hezekiah.

It may also be observed that the concluding verse suits this Psalm far better than Ps. xiv. to which it seems to have been a liturgical addition. If it is an original part of this Psalm, the "salvation out of Zion" would be the great deliverance of Judah, and the "captivity of the people" would be the captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel.

This Psalm (like lxxxviii.) is to be sung "on *Mahalath*," which seems to mean "to a sombre, mournful strain."

## PSALM LIV.

This Psalm is (like Ps. lii.) referred by the inscription to a particular time in the days of David's early persecution by Saul, "when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, 'Doth not David hide himself with us?'" (see 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20). This was a time of great distress, coming just after the ungrateful treachery of the men of Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 1—13); and David was saved only by an invasion of the Philistines, which forced Saul to give up the pursuit. The Psalm suits well the occasion; and there is no reason why the tradition should not be accepted as correct.

As a cry of innocence, suffering from the cruelty of man, and resting in trust upon God, it is naturally used as a Proper Psalm for GOOD FRIDAY.

The Psalm is divided by the *Selah* into two parts: (a), in vv. 1—3, a cry to God in helplessness; (b), in vv. 4—7, a thankful conviction that the cry is heard.

v. 1. *For thy Name's sake*—properly (as in A.V.), "by thy Name." The Name of God is His manifestation of Himself; which is (see Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6) emphatically a manifestation of His mercy, as "the Lord God, merciful and gracious" (see vv. 6, 7). Hence the prayer is,

"Save me by Thy mercy; judge me in Thy strength."

v. 3. *Strangers*—evidently the Ziphites, or the men of Keilah, within the territory of Judah, but possibly alien in race, as they were certainly worse than aliens in their dealings with David. The tyrants

(or "mighty men"), which have not God before their eyes, are probably the warriors of Saul, and Saul himself, from whom the Lord was departed, and who, knowing God's promise to David (see 1 Sam. xxiv. 20; xxvi. 25), sought to falsify it by his death.

v. 5. *In thy truth*—that is, "in fulfilment of Thy promise to me."

v. 6, 7. These verses probably mark David's thankful reception of the news of his deliverance by the sudden withdrawal of Saul. In this he recognises an answer to his prayer, and an earnest of the future

triumph, which in v. 7 he anticipates as already granted.

v. 6. *An offering, &c.*—properly, "with a free heart will I sacrifice unto Thee." The reference is clearly to some actual sacrifice—offered probably by Abiathar—as a thank-offering, which perhaps David had (see Ps. lxxvi. 12) "promised with his lips and spoken with his mouth, when he was in trouble."

*Because it is, &c.*—properly, "because it is good"—good in all senses, but especially in the goodness of the deliverance described in the next verse.

PSALM LV.

This singularly touching Psalm, of which the earlier part has been so vividly embodied in the music of Mendelssohn—another *Maschil* of David—indicates by its marked difference of tone that it belongs to a wholly different period of his experience. The whole circumstances and colouring of the Psalm, and especially the manifest likeness to Ps. xli., irresistibly suggest the time of the rebellion of Absalom, and the discovery of the treason of Ahithophel. The tone is one of infinite disquietude and sadness; the painful sense of the ingratitude and treachery of his own familiar friend pours itself out, now in sorrow, now in indignant bitterness; yet underlying all is a confidence in God's protecting and avenging hand. What could suit better the hour of David's flight and sojourn in the wilderness? The difficulties which have induced some critics to set aside the ascription, and refer the Psalm to a later writer (Jeremiah or some other of his age), appear to be insufficient if not unreal.

The Psalm opens (a), in vv. 1—8, with the sad utterance of one overwhelmed with disquiet, and longing in vain to flee away and be at rest; (b) next follows, in vv. 9—16, the description of the enmity and guile which fill the holy city, and the special treachery of one who had seemed to be as the Psalmist's own soul; (c) lastly, in vv. 17—25, we have the conclusion of faith, broken in upon by a recurrence of the bitter memory of treachery, but ending finally in the conviction that God's hand must be against the bloodthirsty and deceitful man, and that under His protection we may rest.

v. 2. *How I mourn, &c.*—properly, "how I toss to and fro in my pain, and moan."

v. 3 should be rendered—

"Because of the cry of the enemy, Because of the oppression of the wicked.

For they cast iniquity upon me; In their wrath they persecute me."

The phrase "cast iniquity upon me," seems to refer to taunts like those of Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8),

that David's iniquities were falling upon his own head. The rest of the imagery is of the pursuit which he fears or fancies from his triumphant enemies.

v. 5. *Horrible dread*—properly (as in Job xxi. 6), the "horror" of death. "Disquiet" passes into "fear and trembling"; "fear of death" into the "horror" of its near approach.

v. 6—8. This exquisite image is obviously suggested by the occasion. Fleeing in haste and difficulty

7 The righteous also shall see this, and fear : and shall laugh him to scorn ;

8 Lo, this is the man that took not God for his strength : but trusted unto the multitude of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

DAY 10.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 53.

*Dixit insipiens.*

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

2 Corrupt are they, and become abominable in their wickedness : there is none that doeth good.

3 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men : 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 also none that doeth good, no not one.

5 Are not they without understanding that work wickedness : eating up my people as if they would eat bread ? they have not called upon God.

6 They were afraid where no fear was : for God hath broken the bones of him that besieged thee ; thou hast put them to confusion, because God hath despised them.

7 Oh, that the salvation were given unto Israel out of Ston : Oh, that the Lord would deliver his people out of captivity !

8 Then should Jacob rejoice : and Israel should be right glad.

PSALM 54.

*Deus, in nomine.*

SAVE me, O God, for thy Name's sake : and avenge me in thy strength.

2 Hear my prayer, O God : and hearken unto the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers are risen up against me : and tyrants, which have not God before their eyes, seek after my soul.

9 As for me, I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God : my trust is in the tender mercy of God for ever and ever.

10 I will always give thanks unto thee for that thou hast done : and I will hope in thy Name, for thy saints like it well.

4 Behold, God is my helper : the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies : destroy thou them in thy truth.

6 An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praise thy Name, O Lord : because it is so comfortable.

7 For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble : and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

PSALM 55.

*Exaudi, Deus.*

HEAR my prayer, O God : and hide not thyself from my petition.

2 Take heed unto me, and hear me : how I mourn in my prayer, and am vexed.

3 The enemy crieth so, and the ungodly cometh on so fast : for they are minded to do me some mischief ; so maliciously are they set against me.

4 My heart is disquieted within me : and the fear of death is fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me : and an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, O that I had wings like a dove : for then would I flee away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, then would I get me away far off : and remain in the wilderness.

8 I would make haste to escape : because of the stormy wind and tempest.

9 Destroy their tongues, O Lord, and divide them : for I have spied unrighteousness and strife in the city.

through the wilderness, the Psalmist watches some wild dove winging its way easily and safely to a height, where it can shelter itself from the storm and from the birds of prey; and longs for the wings which might carry him in an instant far away from the tempest of wrath and trouble. "To be at rest" is the very climax of the longing of the old king, weary of life and of its disappointments.

In vv. 9—11 there comes a sudden change of tone. Verse 9 (like v. 16) is a flash of fierce righteous indignation out of this cloud of sadness. Then, by a singularly striking figure the Psalmist looks back in thought on the city which he loved so well, and sees it peopled with dreadful forms. Violence and Strife walk its streets and man its walls; Evil, Sorrow, and Wickedness establish themselves in the central stronghold; Deceit and Guile quit not the market place (the "street"), where Justice should have sat.

vv. 12—15. In this section we have another rapid change to the infinite sadness of a heart wounded by special treachery—the one thing which it could not bear, and from which it could not flee. There is a plaintive tenderness in the address to one who had been his equal ("companion"), his guide in counsel, and his familiar friend; and a still deeper pathos in the remembrance of the companionship, as sealed in the House of the Lord. Every word suits well the condition of Ahithophel. Like David's other great counsellor (Hushai) he might be called "David's friend" (2 Sam. ix. 37). Naturally out of this bursts forth—since "to be wroth with one we love, Doth work like madness in the brain"—a yet bitterer vehemence of indignation, praying that death may fall on the foes, and the unseen world ("hell") swallow them up in darkness. Like v. 9, it breathes the spirit of the Old Testament, not of the New. Ahithophel was (see note on Ps. xli. 9) the type of Judas, but how different the tone—stern, yet sad and gentle—of the true Son of David!

v. 17. In this turning to God, by which the fierce wrath of v. 16 is calmed in a moment, it is characteristic that the name Jehovah is first used. (The word "Lord" in

v. 9 is not "Jehovah.") Earnestness of repeated prayer goes, as usual, with confidence in His willingness to hear and deliver.

v. 19. *With me.* Probably the sense is "fighting with me," and therefore "against me." The idea that this is the declaration of the solitary servant of God, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings vi. 16)—beautiful in itself—is alien from the whole spirit of the Psalm.

v. 20. This difficult verse is perhaps best rendered (with R. V.)—

"God shall hear and answer them—

Even He that abideth of old (Selah)—

The men who have no changes (of fortune),

Who fear not God."

There is something striking in this interposition of the praise of the Eternal, emphasized by the musical interlude, in the midst of the declaration that He will in His own good time answer the vaunts of those who in the flush of unbroken prosperity fear not God. He is changeless; they only fancy themselves above change.

vv. 21, 22 are pathetically true to nature in the recurrence to the one treason so deeply felt, now in a tone of indignation rather than sadness. The emphasis is on the breaking of a covenant of peace, and on the smoothness of plausible words, which yet are as daggers of assassination. Both again apply to Ahithophel above all others, especially if, as grandfather of Bathsheba, he had condoned, or even gloried in, the wrong which raised her to the throne.

vv. 23—25 are the calm yet pathetic ending of the many changes of thought alternating in this Psalm. The burden is still felt, but "cast on the Lord, who will sustain" ("nourish") his servant. The righteous may "fall," but "not for ever." The "bloodthirsty and deceitful men" triumphant now (comp. Ps. v. 6), will be cut off; "taking the sword, they shall perish with the sword" (comp. Prov. x. 27; Eccles. vii. 17). (Singularly were the words fulfilled of Ahithophel.) The one final refuge is, "But I will trust in Thee."

10 Day and night they go about within the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness is therein: deceit and guile go not out of their streets.

12 For it is not an open enemy, that hath done me this dishonour: for then I could have borne it.

13 Neither was it mine adversary, that did magnify himself against me: for then peradventure I would have hid myself from him.

14 But it was even thou, my companion: my guide, and mine own familiar friend.

15 We took sweet counsel together: and walked in the house of God as friends.

16 Let death come hastily upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

17 As for me, I will call upon God: and the Lord shall save me.

18 In the evening, and morning, and at noon-day will I pray,

and that instantly: and he shall hear my voice.

19 It is he that hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.

20 Yea, even God, that endureth for ever, shall hear me, and bring them down: for they will not turn, nor fear God.

21 He laid his hands upon such as be at peace with him: and he brake his covenant.

22 The words of his mouth were softer than butter, having war in his heart: his words were smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords.

23 O cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall nourish thee: and shall not suffer the righteous to fall for ever.

24 And as for them: thou, O God, shalt bring them into the pit of destruction.

25 The blood-thirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days: nevertheless, my trust shall be in thee, O Lord.

## DAY 11.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 56.

*Miserere mei, Deus.*

**B**E merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me: he is daily fighting, and troubling me.

2 Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most Highest.

3 Nevertheless, though I am sometime afraid: yet put I my trust in thee.

4 I will praise God, because of his word: I have put my trust in God, and will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5 They daily mistake my words: all that they imagine is to do me evil.

6 They hold all together, and keep themselves close: and mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul.

7 Shall they escape for their wickedness: thou, O God, in thy displeasure shalt cast them down.

8 Thou tellest my fittings; put my tears into thy bottle: are not these things noted in thy book?

9 Whosoever I call upon thee, then shall mine enemies be put to flight: this I know; for God is on my side.

10 In God's word will I rejoice: in the Lord's word will I comfort me.

11 Yea, in God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Unto thee, O God, will I pay my vows: unto thee will I give thanks.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling: that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

This Psalm—a *Michtam* of David—is referred by the inscription to the time “when the Philistines took him in Gath.” In this reference to a capture and imprisonment, not recorded in 1 Sam. xxi. 10—15 (though clearly alluded to in v. 13 and xxii. 1), there is an indication of genuineness. The visit was David’s first visit to Gath when he was a solitary fugitive—perhaps suspected to be a spy—and was in the imminent danger, from which he only escaped by feigning madness. Ps. xxxiv. (on his escape) is therefore a sequel to this Psalm.

It is to be sung on *Jonath-elem-rechokim* (“the silent dove of them that are afar off”) probably the name of the tune to which it is set.

The recurrence of the burden in vv. 4, 11 breaks the Psalm into three parts; (a), in vv. 1—4, a brief description of his danger and prayer for deliverance; and (b), in vv. 5—11, a more emphatic picture of the watchful enmity of the foes, and an expression of unshaken confidence in God’s love. To these succeeds (c), in vv. 12, 13, the offering of vow and thanksgiving over an assured deliverance.

v. 1. *Daily* (here and in v. 2) is “all day long.”

v. 2. *O thou most Highest.* This rendering of the Hebrew is found in the ancient versions; but the probable meaning is “from on high”—connected with the previous words, and signifying “in their pride” or “disdain.”

v. 3. *Sometime afraid.* This version softens the intentional paradox of the original. It is, “What time I fear, I put my trust in Thee,” and fear not. “The flesh is weak,” in this he fears; but there is “a strength made perfect in weakness,” and in this he fears not.

v. 4 should be (as in R.V.)—

“In God will I praise His word;  
In God have I put my trust;  
I will not be afraid;  
What can flesh do unto me?”

The word “flesh” lays emphasis on man’s frailty and transitoriness (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 39).

vv. 5, 6. In v. 2 the “enemies” are literally “watchers.” Here this idea is fully worked out. It is notable that his Philistine enemies are said to use guile, to “wrest his words,” to “watch his steps,” to “lay wait for his life.” Perhaps, now as afterwards, Achish was inclined to trust and favour him, and therefore such guile was needed.

v. 7. *Thou, O God, &c.* It should be, “In Thine anger cast down the peoples,” that is, “the Gentiles”—an indirect allusion to the heathen character of the enemies, which is another indication of the correctness of the historical reference given to this Psalm.

v. 8. *Put my tears into thy bottle*—that is, by a striking metaphor, treasure up my tears, like choice wine or water for the desert. *Lacrymæ penitentium vinum angelorum* (St. Bernard, quoted by Dr. Kay on this passage). Every wandering, every tear, is noted as precious in God’s book.

v. 10 is more forcible in the original—

“In God will I praise His word;  
In JEHOVAH will I praise His word.”

The emphatic repetition with the name Jehovah marks an appeal to the special Covenant, added to the natural trust in God. The use of the phrase “in God” implies a communion in soul with Him, on which the trust is built.

v. 11. The opposition of God’s love to man’s enmity runs through the Psalm (vv. 1, 4, 11), as though by reiteration the Psalmist would impress it upon his own soul. Man is little, but near; God’s greatness seems far off, and it needs an effort to bring it home, not only to the mind, but to the heart.

v. 12 should be (as in R.V.)—

“Thy vows are upon me, O God;  
I will render thank-offerings to Thee.”

The Psalmist (it seems) had made a vow, trusting in God’s protection. Now it has come, or is confidently anticipated; and he pays the vow gladly.

v. 13. *The light of the living.* It should be “the Light of Life” (comp. John viii. 12)—the light which is not only the guide, but the necessary condition of life, coming from Him, who is the Life itself.

The heading describes this Psalm as a “Psalm of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave”—evidently the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1), or the cave of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 1—3). The close connection with the preceding Psalm, belonging to the sojourn in Gath immediately before the flight to Adullam, suggests the former. The whole character of the Psalm—the freshness and vigour of style, the buoyancy of tone and the vivid abruptness of transition from one point to another—accord well with the occasion and with the general tenour of David’s early Psalms. It is a Psalm of almost exuberant confidence in God out of the very jaws of danger, applied accordingly as a Psalm of EASTER-DAY to the great triumph of the Righteous One over the powers of Hell and Death.

The burden, “Set up Thyself,” &c., divides the Psalm into two equal parts—the first (a), in vv. 1—6, a cry of confident faith against the devouring enmity of man; next (b), in vv. 7—12, a burst of thanksgiving over the anticipated deliverance.

Like Ps. lviii., lix., lxxv., it is headed “Destroy not”—probably the name of the air to which the Psalm was to be sung (see Isa. lxxv. 8).

v. 1. *Under the shadow of thy wings.* Comp. Deut. xxxii. 11; Ps. xvii. 8; lxiii. 7.

*This tyranny*—properly “destruction”—is evidently the persecution of Saul, of which David knew well, from God’s promise to him, that it would pass away.

v. 2. *The most high God.* This special name is emphatic and unusual—found only here and in Ps. lxxviii. 56. It appeals to Him in His exalted Majesty of power; and leads on to the application of that power to the deliverance of His servant (“God who performeth all things for me”).

v. 3. *Save me from the reproof*—properly, “Save me, when he that would swallow me up reproacheth” (comp. lvi. 1). God from heaven blesses with salvation; man reviles and rages in vain.

vv. 4, 5 (with some difficulties of exact translation) draw a vivid picture of his enemies in rapid variation of metaphor. Now they are devouring “lions” in cruelty; now “fire-brands” in wrath; now they openly threaten with “the spears and arrows” of violence; now they pierce with the “sharp sword” of a false tongue (comp. lii. 3). The vividness of this consciousness of man’s en-

mity is evidently contrasted with the Psalmist’s confidence in the supreme strength of God.

v. 6 pleads with God for “His Name’s sake.” The salvation of His servants from the wicked is the highest exaltation of His glory before men and angels (comp. Eph. i. 6, 12; iii. 10).

v. 8. *My heart is fixed*—“stedfast, unmoveable” amidst all the storms of danger and trouble.

v. 9 evidently implies that this is a Morning Psalm. The probable rendering of the last clause is striking, “I myself will awake the morning”—anticipate the dawn by my hymn of praise. *My glory*, as in Ps. xvi. 9 and xxx. 12, is “my soul.” The soul wakes first: next wakes the music of its praise.

v. 10. *Among the people, &c.* The idea of this proclamation of God’s glory among the heathen is probably suggested by the circumstances of the time—the late sojourn in Gath, and the restless wanderings on the debateable frontier ground. The Divine glory is (as always) the manifestation of the infinite greatness of His mercy and truth in salvation (see v. 6).

This Psalm—terrible in its denunciation of hardened sinners, prayer for their destruction, and rejoicing over their doom—is ascribed to David; the force and abruptness of the imagery, and the intensity of wrath against evil, suit the ascription well. There is nothing to fix its period (see, however, note on v. 1), but the characteristics are those of David’s earlier Psalms.

It evidently contains (a), in vv. 1—5, a description, half sarcastic, half denunciatory, of hardened wickedness; (b), in vv. 6—8, a vehement cry to God against it; (c), in vv. 9, 10, an exultant anticipation of the vindication of God's justice by its fall.

v. 1. *O ye congregation.* This rendering (unsupported by ancient versions) is probably wrong. As the text stands it must be, "Do ye utter the silence of righteousness?" i.e. the righteousness which hath hitherto been silent. This has been supposed to allude to Absalom's pretence (2 Sam. xv. 3, 4) of rectifying the miscarriage of David's justice. But the expression is harsh and artificial; and it is probably best (by a slight correction) to read (as in R. V. marg.)—

"Do ye utter righteousness, O ye gods?"

Do ye judge uprightly the children of men?"

*Gods* (as in Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6) are the great ones of the earth, with perhaps an allusion to their haughty self-exaltation above mere "children of men."

v. 2. *Fea* is "Nay rather."

*Deal with wickedness*—properly, "deal" or "weigh out wickedness," in the scales of mis-called justice.

vv. 3—5. To the sarcasm of the previous verses succeeds abruptly vehemence of denunciation on the hardened persistence in evil—perverseness, falsehood, malignity—and on the utter refusal to listen to all charms of persuasion to good.

v. 5 is perhaps literally—

"Which refuseth to hear the voice of the whisperer,

Of the skilful weaver of charms."

The allusion is to the hissing whisper of the charmer, and to the magic ceremonies of incantation.

vv. 6—8, with still more forcible abruptness, accumulate metaphors of prayer against the wicked—that the teeth of their ravening cruelty may be broken; their strength flow

away like a stream; that their arrows may be cut off or snapped ("rooted out" in our version); that they may waste like the snail (as it leaves its trail behind); that their evil may be abortive in its very birth; that the fire of their mischief may be swept away by the whirlwind of God.

v. 8. The Prayer Book version of this difficult verse is certainly wrong, and hardly intelligible. We should probably render—

"Before your pots feel the (fire of) thorns,

Whether green or burning, he shall whirl (their brands) away."

The metaphor is from the fire kindled in the wilderness, and the brands whirled away, still half green, half burning, by the blast. The thorn fire, rapidly kindled and extinguished, is the threatening and abortive mischief of the wicked (comp. Ps. cxviii. 12, Eccl. vii. 6). Another rendering refers the latter verse to the food, "whether raw or boiling hot," &c. But this is less natural and striking.

vv. 9, 10 express in terrible vividness the stern judicial rejoicing over the blood of the wicked. Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 23, "That thy foot," &c. The rejoicing is, indeed, not over their death in itself, but over the manifestation through it of a "God who judgeth the earth," and the consequent certainty that "there is a reward for the righteous." Yet even so this passage (like many others in the Psalms) breathes the righteous indignation of "the spirit of Elias," rather than the higher and diviner spirit of Him who wept over Jerusalem.

## PSALM LIX.

In the heading this Psalm is called a Psalm "of David, when Saul sent and they watched the house to kill him." It is difficult to decide for or against this ascription. The general style and character of the Psalm, in its bold imagery and intensity of wrath, and many special allusions, suit well with the ascription. Against it, however, we have to set the emphatic reference (in vv. 5, 8, 11) to the heathen—hardly explained by comparison with liv. 3, or by the supposition (in itself apparently probable) that Saul

## PSALM 57.

*Miserere mei, Deus.*

**B**E merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: and under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be over-past.

2 I will call unto the most high God: even unto the God that shall perform the cause which I have in hand.

3 He shall send from heaven: and save me from the reproof of him that would eat me up.

4 God shall send forth his mercy and truth: my soul is among lions.

5 And I lie even among the children of men, that are set on fire: whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

6 Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.

7 They have laid a net for my feet, and pressed down my soul: they have digged a pit before me, and are fallen into the midst of it themselves.

8 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing, and give praise.

9 Awake up, my glory; awake, lute and harp: I myself will awake right early.

10 I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing unto thee among the nations.

11 For the greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens: and thy truth unto the clouds.

DAY 11.

Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 59.

*Erripe me de inimicis.*

**D**ELIVER me from mine enemies, O God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 O deliver me from the wicked doers: and save me from the blood-thirsty men.

3 For lo, they lie waiting for

12 Set up thyself, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth.

## PSALM 58.

*Si vere utique.*

**A**RE your minds set upon righteousness, O ye congregation: and do ye judge the thing that is right, O ye sons of men?

2 Yea, ye imagine mischief in your heart upon the earth: and your hands deal with wickedness.

3 The ungodly are froward, even from their mother's womb: as soon as they are born, they go astray, and speak lies.

4 They are as venomous as the poison of a serpent: even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears;

5 Which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer: charm he never so wisely.

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths; smite the jaw-bones of the lions, O Lord: let them fall away like water that runneth apace; and when they shoot their arrows let them be rooted out.

7 Let them consume away like a snail, and be like the untimely fruit of a woman: and let them not see the sun.

8 Or ever your pots be made hot with thorns: so let indignation vex him, even as a thing that is raw.

9 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.

10 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth.

my soul: the mighty men are gathered against me, without any offence or fault of me, O Lord.

4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault: arise thou therefore to help me, and behold.

5 Stand up, O Lord God of hosts, thou God of Israel, to visit all the heathen: and be not mer-

employed aliens, such as Doeg and "Cush, the Edomite," against David. It has been noted also that the phrase "my people" could hardly be used by any but a king of Israel. The Psalm, by whosoever written, is striking in its force, occasionally obscure in its concentration of meaning, and alternating between fierce wrath against the enemy and exulting confidence in God.

It falls into two divisions, each again subdivided. The former contains (a), in vv. 1—5, a prayer for deliverance of the innocent from the men of blood, and for righteous visitation of the heathen; and (b), in vv. 6—9, a picture of them, the enemies, ravaging like dogs for prey, and scorned by the righteous Lord. The latter contains (c), in vv. 10—13, a vehement prayer, first for signal chastisement, and then for final destruction of the enemies; and (d), in vv. 14—17, an ironical repetition of the metaphor of (b), and a concluding burst of praise to the Deliverer.

vv. 1—4 agree well enough with the descriptions elsewhere given of the enemies of David in the time of Saul, in respect of treachery, unscrupulousness, and thirst for blood. The metaphors are naturally drawn from warfare—the ambush, the muster, the running to station themselves ("prepare themselves") against their prey. Moreover, the vehement protestations of innocence are characteristic of the Psalms of this period.

v. 5. Here, however, difficulty begins. The invocation to "Jehovah," the Eternal One—the "God of hosts" (see xxiv. 10), the Lord of all rational beings—the "God of Israel," the God of covenant with His own people—is emphatic, and the prayer that He will "visit the heathen," can hardly refer to individual aliens in the service of Saul. It is just possible that "heathen" may be used as a synonym with the "wicked transgressors," aliens in heart from God and traitors to Israel. But there is no indication in the Psalm of such metaphorical use.

vv. 6, 7 again refer with striking appropriateness to the bloodhounds of Saul, compared to the wild famished dogs of Eastern cities, prowling in the dusk for prey.

*They grin*—properly "snarl like a dog."

*They speak* should be, "they belch forth" or "foam" "at the mouth."

*Swords in their lips* (comp. lv. 22; lvii. 5). The metaphor is here dropped, as also in the next clause, "For who (they say) doth hear?" (comp. x. 12, 14).

v. 9. *My strength*, &c. It should

probably be, "O my strength, I will wait upon Thee" (comp. v. 17).

v. 10. *God sheweth*, &c. The true meaning (as in A.V. and R.V.) here and in v. 4, is far more beautiful. "God shall prevent me"—anticipate my needs and my prayers (comp. Ps. xxi. 3) in the freedom of His mercy.

vv. 11—13 form an awful prayer of imprecation against the enemies, First, that they may not be speedily swept away, lest "my people" forget it, but remain in slow destruction as a warning to God's servants; then that they may be taken in the snare, because of the sin of their lips, their utterance (oddly rendered "their preaching") of cursing and falsehood; lastly, that after this long-suffering they may be consumed in wrath, and in their destruction be a monument of the wrath of God as the Judge of all the earth. Here, again, there is the same reference to heathen as heathen, difficult to explain on the traditional hypothesis.

vv. 14, 15 appear to be a sarcastic and defiant repetition of the metaphor of vv. 6, 7. ("They will return" should be "Let them return.") Then let the hungry pack return (he says) after their wont, and raven for food in the evening; "unsatisfied let them prowl all night in vain" (as in the marginal reading of A.V.).

vv. 16, 17 are similarly a fuller and more emphatic repetition of v. 9, as a morning song of thanksgiving. The "refuge" (here and in v. 9) is the "high fortress" of safety, from which the Psalmist looks down on the vain fury and persistency of his enemies. God is the "God of his strength and the God of his mercy."

ciful unto them that offend of malicious wickedness.

6 They go to and fro in the evening: they grin like a dog, and run about through the city.

7 Behold, they speak with their mouth, and swords are in their lips: for who doth hear?

8 But thou, O Lord, shalt have them in derision: and thou shalt laugh all the heathen to scorn.

9 My strength will I ascribe unto thee: for thou art the God of my refuge.

10 God sheweth me his goodness plenteously: and God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget it: but scatter them abroad among the people, and put them down, O Lord, our defence.

12 For the sin of their mouth, and for the words of their lips, they shall be taken in their pride: and why? their preaching is of cursing and lies.

13 Consume them in thy wrath, consume them, that they may perish: and know that it is God that ruleth in Jacob, and unto the ends of the world.

14 And in the evening they will return: grin like a dog, and will go about the city.

15 They will run here and there for meat: and grudge if they be not satisfied.

16 As for me, I will sing of thy power, and will praise thy mercy betimes in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for thou, O God, art my refuge, and my merciful God.

## PSALM 60.

*Deus, repulisti nos.*

**O** GOD, thou hast cast us out, and scattered us abroad: thou hast also been displeased: O turn thee unto us again.

2 Thou hast moved the land, and divided it: heal the sores thereof, for it shaketh.

3 Thou hast shewed thy people heavy things: thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine.

4 Thou hast given a token for such as fear thee: that they may triumph because of the truth.

5 Therefore were thy beloved delivered: help me with thy right hand, and hear me.

6 God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice, and divide Sichem: and mete out the valley of Succoth.

7 Gilead is mine, and Manasses is mine: Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my law-giver;

8 Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, be thou glad of me.

9 Who will lead me into the strong city: who will bring me into Edom?

10 Hast not thou cast us out, O God: wilt not thou, O God, go out with our hosts?

11 O be thou our help in trouble: for vain is the help of man.

12 Through God will we do great acts: for it is he that shall tread down our enemies.

## PSALM 61.

*Exaudi, Deus.*

**H**EAR my crying, O God: give ear unto my prayer.

2 From the ends of the earth will I call upon thee: when my heart is in heaviness.

3 O set me up upon the rock that is higher than I: for thou hast been my hope, and a strong tower for me against the enemy.

4 I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever: and my trust shall be under the covering of thy wings.

5 For thou, O Lord, hast heard my desires: and hast given an heritage unto those that fear thy Name.

6 Thou shalt grant the King a long life: that his years may endure throughout all generations.

7 He shall dwell before God for ever: O prepare thy loving mercy and faithfulness, that they may preserve him.

8 So will I alway sing praise unto thy Name: that I may daily perform my vows.



The heading of this Psalm makes it a Psalm "of David, when he strove with Aram-naharaim" ("Syria of the two rivers," i.e. Mesopotamia) "and Aram-zobah" (Syria of Zobah), "when Joab returned and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand." The war referred to is noticed in 2 Sam. x. 7-19; 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13; xix. 6-19; and (by allusion) in 1 Kings xi. 15, 16; but the inscription can be taken from none of these, and is obviously of independent authority. It would appear that Joab was sent back from Syria to quell a rebellion in Edom, which he did (through Abishai, according to 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13), and punished the rebels with merciless severity (1 Kings xi. 15, 16). The Psalm itself shows that after this David had suffered a critical reverse (unrecorded in the history) before the final victory, which brought him to the zenith of his power. Between the defeat and the victory the Psalm is clearly written.

It is said to be on *Shushan-eduth* ("the Lily of Testimony"), probably the tune to which the Psalm was sung.

The Psalm, thoroughly suiting its occasion, has three parts: (a), in vv. 1-5, mingled lamentation and hope under defeat; (b), in vv. 6-8, the proclamation of God's answering promise of triumph; (c), in vv. 9-12, the confident acceptance of that answer in prayer and thanksgiving.

vv. 1-3 are the complaints of defeat and disaster, described under two figures—the earthquake, which "moves the earth and divides it," makes "breaches" (in our version strangely rendered "sores") in it and "shakes it"—the "drink of bewilderment as wine" ("deadly wine"), under which the hearts of the people "stagger like a drunken man" (comp. Ps. lvii. 27).

v. 4. If the translation of our Prayer Book and Bible Versions be adopted, this verse marks a change of idea—to the remembrance that even in defeat "God gave His people a banner" (in our version "token") round which to rally for deliverance. But many Ancient Versions render—

"Thou hast given a banner to those that fear Thee  
(Only) that they may flee before the bow;"

and, as the verse is, by the *Selah* following it, apparently connected with the previous verses, this interpretation may be the true one.

v. 5. *Therefore, &c.*, should be (as in R. V.)—

"That thy beloved may be delivered,

Save with Thy right hand." &c. It marks the turning from the sad confession of the previous verses to a prayer for deliverance, answered in v. 6.

v. 6. *In His holiness* (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 36), that is, in the sanctity of His promise; or perhaps, as in the LXX., "in His sanctuary" by some oracle solemnly given.

vv. 6-8 enumerate the sources of

David's strength. First, "Shechem and Succoth"—apparently representing the west and east of Jordan—possibly referring here to the subject races still left. These are "divided and meted out" in unquestioned away. Then "Gilead and Manasseh," the Israelite regions of the east, Ephraim and Judah, the great tribes of the west—Ephraim "the strength" (or defence) "of the head," as the most powerful, Judah the "Law-giver" or "Sceptre" (see Gen. xlix. 10), as the royal tribe. (This description marks the early date of the Psalm.) Then the subject peoples, described in scornful triumph—"Moab, the wash-pot" (for washing the feet); "Edom," the slave to whom "the shoe," taken off for washing, "is cast"; Philistia bidden to "cry aloud" ("be thou glad") in forced homage, or in terror. (Note the repetition, with variation, of this section in Ps. cviii. 6-13).

v. 9. *The strong city*, the central fortress of the unconquered foe. *Who will lead me, &c.*, should be, "Who hath led me into Edom?" The conquest of Edom, already achieved, is the earnest of future triumph.

v. 10. *Hast not Thou, &c.* This mistranslation mars the sense. It should be, "Wilt not Thou, O God, who hadst cast us out," &c. David speaks in hope of the return of God's help after His temporary displeasure; for this he prays in v. 11; through this he anticipates triumph in v. 12, with an anticipation gloriously fulfilled,

This Psalm is clearly the Psalm of an exile "in the ends of the earth," longing for the sanctuary of God; and it dwells with special emphasis of faith on the promise to "the king" for all generations. Ascribed to David, it suits well in both these points the time, to which so many Psalms belong, of the flight from Absalom, when he would naturally fall back in the hour of desolation on the great promise of the "sure mercies of David." Both in special expressions and in the general tone, passing from distress into confidence, it much resembles other Psalms known to belong to that time.

In the first portion (a), in vv. 1-4, it is a cry of prayer; in the second (b), in vv. 5-8, it is an expression of faith and praise.

v. 2. *From the ends of the earth*—the natural exaggeration of the sorrow of the exile in the desolation of the wilderness.

v. 3. *Higher than I*—properly, "the rock too high for me" to climb unaided—the Presence of God, which is, as usual, described as the "refuge" and the "strong tower" of safety.

v. 4. *I will dwell, &c.* This is properly the expression of a wish, "Let me dwell," or "I would dwell" in *Thy tabernacle* (tent). The allusion may be only to rest under the tent of God's protection, as under "the covering of His wings." But it most probably refers to the Tabernacle on Mount Zion, from which he is far away, though God is with him still. The very metaphor, "under the shadow of Thy wings" (see Ps. xvii. 8; lvii. 1; lxiii. 7; xci. 4), may be suggested here by the thought of the outstretched wings of the cherubim in the Sanctuary.

v. 5. *Thou hast given, &c.* The best

rendering is probably that of the A. V. and R. V., "thou hast given me the heritage of those who fear Thy Name" that is, the heritage of Israel, which David knows to be his by promise, though now it seems to be lost.

v. 6. *The king, &c.* It seems strange at first sight that David should thus speak of himself in the third person. But the explanation lies in the interpretation of the Jewish Targums "the King Messiah." David speaks of himself, not personally, but as the recipient of the great promise to his seed, so often quoted (2 Sam. vii. 12-16), as is obvious by the reference to never-ending life and blessing of God's mercy and truth, never to be taken away. So far the Psalm is Messianic in its ultimate meaning, but its immediate idea is the security to himself for triumph and restoration which the great promise implies.

v. 8. *Perform my vows, &c.* As in Ps. lvi. 12, the Psalmist's vows, made in exile and trouble, are to be performed on joyful return to Jerusalem.

## PSALM LXII.

This Psalm—again described as a Psalm of David—is connected with the name of Jeduthun (or Ethan), head of the Levitical companies. In this it is like Ps. xxxix., with which it has many resemblances in expression. But the heading here is not "for," but "after the manner of," "Jeduthun"—perhaps as set to some music composed by him. There is little of internal evidence of authorship or date, except the indications of rising enmity against the Psalmist and of oppression and disorder in Israel. If the Psalm be David's, this points to the same period as that of the preceding Psalm.

It is broken by the *Selah* into three sections: (a), in vv. 1-4, an indignant remonstrance against the enemies; (b), in vv. 5-8, an outpouring of confidence in God; (c), in vv. 9-12, a defiance in His strength of all earthly power.

v. 1. *Truly*. The word is used emphatically six times in this Psalm, in vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 (as three times in Ps. xxxix. 6, 7). "Only" would be the best rendering ("Only upon

God," &c.). *Still* (here and in v. 5) is "in silence." Amidst all the din of enmity his soul keeps silence and is at peace in God.

v. 3. *Ye shall be slain, &c.* This is

an erroneous rendering. The verse should be—

“How long will ye set upon a man,  
That ye may slay him, all of you,  
Like a bowing wall, like a tottering fence?”

It is the Psalmist who feels his state precarious, so that a touch may break him down. So it certainly was with David at the outbreak of the rebellion.

v. 4. This verse is also mistranslated. It should run—

“Only from his excellency they consult to thrust him down,  
They who delight in lies,” &c.

The picture, as in many similar Psalms, is both of violence and of treachery—the two chief weapons of rebellion.

vv. 5, 6 repeat vv. 1, 2 with certain characteristic changes, turning assertion of faith into self-exhortation, under the sense of pressure and trouble; accumulating in v. 7 the expressions of confidence in God's goodness (as our “salvation,” “glory,” “strength,” “refuge”); adding, in v. 8, a call to the people of God to join in the confidence that He is a refuge for them all.

### PSALM LXIII.

This most beautiful Psalm is ascribed to “David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah”—“the barren and dry land,” which suggested the image of spiritual thirst. As usual, it combines the longing for the worship of the Sanctuary with the sense of a presence of God still with the exile. Like the preceding Psalms, it evidently belongs to the time of weariness, distress, and thirst—such as were so painfully felt (see 2 Sam. xvii. 2, 29) on the flight from the rebellion of Absalom. It is a Morning Psalm, and as such it has been used daily from early times in the Eastern Church.

It falls into two unequal parts: the first (a) and most beautiful, in vv. 1—9, being an outpouring of aspiration for God and confidence in Him; the latter (b) a brief expression of defiance to those who would assail the king (vv. 10—12).

v. 2. The cry, like xlii. 2, “My soul is athirst for God,” is the universal cry of men, in sense of helplessness and weariness, to the God of comfort; yet in both cases it is probably suggested and stimulated by the physical conditions under which the Psalm was written. Both “soul” and “flesh” (comp. lxxiv. 2) feel the intense craving for God's blessing, by which both must be sustained.

v. 3. “In holiness”—properly, “in the Sanctuary.” The word “thus”

v. 9 again misses the sense of the original, the words rendered “men” in the two clauses being different (see A.V.).

vv. 9, 10 should be—

“Only a breath are men of low degree,  
And men of high degree a lie;  
In the balance they mount upward,  
They are altogether lighter than a breath;  
O trust not in wrong, rely not vainly on robbery,” &c.

Men of all degrees are referred to as powerless; but the reference seems especially to the great men (“the princes”), who were prominent in the rebellions both of Absalom and Adonijah.

vv. 11, 12. *God spake once*, &c. (comp. Job xxxiii. 14; xl. 5). The phrase describes truth emphasized by reiteration. The claim is not only of sole power, but of a power discriminating between men, in justice and yet in mercy—judging according to works, yet not “extreme to mark what is done amiss.” In this faith is the essence of all vital religion.

should be repeated at the beginning of v. 5. The repetition is suggestive, “So have I beheld thee” (in happier days) “in the Sanctuary”; “so will I magnify thee as long as I live.” While the Psalmist fondly regrets the worship in which he beheld (see Ps. lxxvii. 13) the power and glory of God manifested in His Sanctuary, and felt His “loving kindness as better than life itself,” yet he knows that everywhere he may enjoy the same worship, and receive the mercy of the same God.

### DAY 12.

### Morning Prayer.

#### PSALM 62.

*Nonne Deo?*

**M**Y soul truly waiteth still upon God: for of him cometh my salvation.

2 He verily is my strength and my salvation: he is my defence, so that I shall not greatly fall.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against every man: ye shall be slain all the sort of you; yea, as a tottering wall shall ye be, and like a broken hedge.

4 Their device is only how to put him out whom God will exalt: their delight is in lies; they give good words with their mouth, but curse with their heart.

5 Nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon God: for my hope is in him.

6 He truly is my strength and my salvation: he is my defence, so that I shall not fall.

7 In God is my health, and my glory: the rock of my might, and in God is my trust.

8 O put your trust in him always, ye people: pour out your hearts before him, for God is our hope.

9 As for the children of men, they are but vanity: the children of men are deceitful upon the weights, they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.

10 O trust not in wrong and robbery, give not yourselves unto vanity: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

11 God spake once, and twice I have also heard the same: that power belongeth unto God;

12 And that thou, Lord, art merciful: for thou rewardest every man according to his work.

#### PSALM 63.

*Deus, Deus meus.*

**O** GOD, thou art my God: early will I seek thee.

2 My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh also longeth after thee: in a barren and dry land where no water is.

3 Thus have I looked for thee in holiness: that I might behold thy power and glory.

4 For thy loving-kindness is better than the life itself: my lips shall praise thee.

5 As long as I live will I magnify thee on this manner: and lift up my hands in thy Name.

6 My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness: when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips.

7 Have I not remembered thee in my bed: and thought upon thee when I was waking?

8 Because thou hast been my helper: therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

9 My soul hangeth upon thee: thy right hand hath upholden me.

10 These also that seek the hurt of my soul: they shall go under the earth.

11 Let them fall upon the edge of the sword: that they may be a portion for foxes.

12 But the King shall rejoice in God; all they also that swear by him shall be commended: for the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

#### PSALM 64.

*Exaudi, Deus.*

**H**EAR my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

2 Hide me from the gathering together of the froward: and from the insurrection of wicked doers;

3 Who have whet their tongue like a sword: and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words;

4 That they may privily shoot at him that is perfect: suddenly do they hit him, and fear not.

5 They encourage themselves in mischief: and commune among themselves how they may lay snares, and say, that no man shall see them.

6 They imagine wickedness, and practise it: that they keep secret among themselves, every man in the deep of his heart.

v. 6. *Marrow and fatness.* The metaphor again suggested by the weariness and hunger of the writer. The longing for God's presence is the soul's thirst; the finding of it is the soul's satisfaction and the spring of joyful praise (comp. John vi. 35).

v. 7. The allusion is one of special beauty and truth—to the last thought of God at night, which is the most peaceful, and the first consciousness in the returning freshness of the morning, which is the most vivid (comp. Ps. xlii. 8).

v. 8. *Under the shadow of Thy wings* (comp. Ps. xvii. 8; lvii. 1; xci. 4).

vv. 10—12 turn, in sudden change of tone, against the enemy, emphatically described as the enemies of "the King," seeking his soul to destroy it (comp. 2 Sam. xvii. 1—4).

v. 10. *Under the earth*—to the nothingness of *Sheól* (or *Hades*). See Ps. ix. 17.

v. 11 should be—

"Men shall give him over to the sword;  
They shall be a portion for jackals."

The leader is perhaps distinguished from his followers; he shall fall, and they shall be slaughtered and left to the wild beasts. The "foxes" (as in Judg. xv. 4) are the jackals.

v. 12. *Shall be commended*—properly, "shall glory" or "triumph." The Name of God, invoked in faith, shall be victory; the utterance of falsehood against Him shall bring disgrace.

PSALM LXIV.

The marked resemblance between this Psalm and Psalm vii. tends to confirm the traditional ascription to David. But there is little in the Psalm itself to refer it with certainty to any special time or circumstance of his life. It is simply a prayer for, and anticipation of, God's judgment on crafty and bitter enemies.

In vv. 1—6 we have (a) the picture of malignity and falsehood; in vv. 7—10, the glad foresight of God's vengeance upon it.

v. 3. Comp. Ps. xi. 2; lvii. 4; lviii. 7. The chief weapon of the conspiracy is slanderous falsehood—the sharpened sword and deadly arrows of the tongue—such as David experienced, both in the days of his early persecution and in the later conspiracy of Absalom. But the idea of a subtle conspiracy is prominent, encouraging the enemies both in open mischief and in secret treachery.

v. 6. This difficult verse should be rendered (if the present text may stand)—

"They devise wickedness;  
We have accomplished (say they)  
a skilful device,  
And their inward thought and  
their heart is deep."

It is the malignant and self-complacent subtlety of the enmity which most impresses the Psalmist. This would suit especially with the evil counsel of Ahithophel, on which so

many of the later Psalms of David dwell.

vv. 7, 8 should probably be—

"God shall shoot at them with an arrow;  
Suddenly their wound comes;  
They (or "He") shall cause them to stumble;  
Their own tongue is against them;  
All who see them shake their heads."

The picture is vivid. As they are aiming their shafts (see v. 3), the shaft of God strikes them (comp. Ps. vii. 13); wounded before they know it, they stumble; their own treachery works out their ruin (comp. Ps. vii. 17), and all who see it "shake their heads" (comp. xxii. 7) in derision.

vv. 9, 10. The fall of the wicked wakes only derision; the sense of God's righteous judgment manifested in it adds the higher element of satisfaction and confidence in Him (comp. lviii. 10).

PSALM LXV.

This singularly beautiful Psalm of Thanksgiving evidently belongs to a time when God had blessed His people by signal deliverance before the heathen, and when a bountiful harvest was springing up under His blessing. Although ascribed traditionally to David, it is generally thought to be of later date, and by many referred especially to the time after the defeat of the invasion of Sennacherib (see Isa. xxxvii. 30, "in the third year, sow ye and reap, and plant vineyards"). It is "for the chief musician," to be used in the solemn worship of the Sanctuary—clearly at some great festival of thanksgiving.

It divides itself into three parts: (a), in vv. 1—4, the expression of thankful worship in God's Temple; (b) followed, in vv. 5—8, by a commemoration of His deliverance, manifesting Him to all nations; (c) concluding, in vv. 9—14, with a singularly vivid and lovely picture of His blessing the land with fruitfulness.

v. 1. The original is, "Praise waiteth for Thee," or "is hushed before Thee." The latter rendering is one of singular beauty; the first awe of worship breathes silence (comp. Isa. xli. 1; Hab. ii. 20); then follows the thank-offering already vowed; and after this comes the utterance of prayer.

v. 2. *Thou that hearest prayer* is the special epithet of a living and loving God, who has really relations of covenant with His people. To such a God as this, and to Him alone, will "all flesh come." The universal instinct of prayer is, indeed, a witness to Him; but only when "we know that He hears us" can that instinct grow into the fulness of religious life.

vv. 3, 4 are the utterance of prayer: first, the confession of sin, and the confidence of pardon for all. "As for our sins, Thou shalt cover them," or "purge them" (here rendered, "O be Thou merciful," &c.); next, thankful sense of the blessing of the man whom God receives as His own; lastly, the prayer (for so it should be translated), "Let us be satisfied with the blessings of Thy house"—the desire of perfection being kindled by the earnest already granted.

v. 5. *Thou shalt shew us, &c.*, should be, "Thou dost answer us by terrible things in Thy righteousness"—evidently referring to some manifestation of God's judgment before the whole world (such as the destruction of Sennacherib's host). It is notable that this judgment, terrible as it is, makes Him not the fear, but "the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of the sea of the distant ones."

vv. 6—8. On this remembrance naturally follows the thought of

God as the God of all—in the physical world, the founder of the stability of the everlasting hills, and the curber of the restless motion of the great deep—in the world of men, the stiller of the surging madness of the people, and the awe of all who dwell in the utmost parts of the earth—in both the God of the whole universe, in whom the outgoings of morning and evening alike rejoice.

vv. 9—14. From this grand conception the Psalmist turns to the nearer and more gracious manifestation of God in blessing to His land—the blessing at once of abundance and joy—alike on the cultivated valleys waving with corn, and the "pastures of the wilderness" (see Joel ii. 22) full of sheep.

v. 10. *The river of God*—probably "the water above the firmament," the treasure-house of the rain (comp. Job xxxviii. 25—28), which is the "preparation for the corn" and "the provision for the earth."

v. 11. The original is singularly graphic—

"Thou waterest her furrows, thou  
prestress down her ridges;  
Thou makest it soft with the  
showers of rain;  
Thou bleasest the springing  
thereof."

v. 12. *Thy clouds.* It should be, "Thy paths"—the footsteps of God's Providence, round which fruitfulness springs up.

vv. 13, 14. The original (see R.V.) is more striking—

"They drop on the pastures of the  
wilderness,  
And the hills are girded with  
joy;  
The pastures are clothed with  
flocks;  
The valleys are thick with corn."

v. 14. *They shall laugh, &c.* They—the folds of the wilderness and the cornfields of the valley alike—“shout for joy; yea, they sing.” From the

earth itself, as from its inhabitants, go up first the impulsive cry of joy, and then the deeper utterance of praise.

## PSALM LXVI.

This Psalm has in the heading no ascription, possibly because it is to be referred to the same time and authorship as Ps. ltv. In style it seems like that Psalm; its substance well suits the same occasion of the deliverance from Sennacherib; and from the change in v. 12 from the plural to the singular, it has been with much probability referred to Hezekiah himself. The historical allusion in v. 5 is thought to mark it as a Passover Psalm; and this would certainly bring it to the time of the early growth of the harvest, referred to in Ps. ltv. It only differs from that Psalm in making no reference to physical blessing, but dwelling exclusively on national deliverance.

Its divisions are clearly marked by the interposition of the *Selah*: (a), in vv. 1—3, the call of homage to God from all the earth; (b), in vv. 4—6, the special commemoration of the deliverance of His people; (c), in vv. 7—11, the vivid remembrance of the trial from which they were delivered; (d), in vv. 12, 13, the personal promise by the Psalmist himself of the sacrifice of thank-offering; and (e), in vv. 14—18, the recital of God's blessing on his prayer uttered in the hour of trouble.

v. 1. *Make his praise glorious*, properly, “Ascribe glory to Him in praise”—as in the *Gloria in Excelsis* “give thanks to Him for His great glory”—the essential glory, of which all glories of earth are but the reflection.

v. 2. *Be found liars, &c.* The phrase (as in xviii. 45) properly means “yield obedience”—perhaps here only the feigned obedience of terror. In any case the next verse describes this as passing into a true worship from all the earth.

v. 5 should run, “He turned the sea into dry land; through the river men passed on foot”—a double allusion, to the passage of the Red Sea and the passage through the Jordan, as the beginning and the close of the wanderings in the wilderness. “There”—in the land which God gave them by these His mercies—they “will rejoice in Him.” The allusion, however, would be somewhat abrupt, except in connection with use at the Passover.

v. 6. *Such as will not, &c.* It should be, “As for the rebellious, let them not vaunt themselves.” The eyes of God's majesty “behold the people,” the nations of the earth; under those eyes the vaunts of the rebellious must come to nothing (comp. Isa. xxxvii. 23—the remonstrance with Sennacherib). The history shews us how the deliverance of Israel impressed even the heathen nations around.

v. 9. The past suffering is viewed as in the true sense a discipline of trial—purifying the silver from dross (comp. Isa. i. 25; Zech. xiii. 9; Mal. iii. 3). But it is vividly described under various images, which shew how bitter it had been—now as danger, “a snare” to the feet—now as a weight of suffering, “laid on the loins” of those made as beasts of burden—now as humiliation, in the insolent trampling of the foe over their heads—now as passage through “the fire and water” of opposite kinds of trial (comp. Isa. xliii. 2).

v. 11. *A wealthy place*—literally “a place of abundance,” or “a place of liberty” (as in Ps. xviii. 19).

vv. 12, 13. The change to the singular is striking; the Psalmist speaks with dignity—as a king might well speak—in the name of the whole people. He promises the two only offerings which man in himself can offer—the thank-offering of homage, “the incense of rams” (see Exod. xxix. 18), and the “burnt offering” of willing self-dedication, soul and body, to God.

vv. 14—18. In these verses the Psalmist, speaking still in a tone of authority, turns from God to man, from worship to exhortation; making his own spiritual experience a lesson to others. As in other Psalms, we note the strong protestation of integrity and of consequent confidence in God's favour to his prayer (comp. Hezekiah's words in 2 Kings xx. 3)—in itself earnest and right,

7 But God shall suddenly shoot at them with a swift arrow: that they shall be wounded.

8 Yea, their own tongues shall make them fall: insomuch that whoso seeth them shall laugh them to scorn.

9 And all men that see it shall say, This hath God done: for they shall perceive that it is his work.

10 The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and put his trust in him: and all they that are true of heart shall be glad.

## DAY 12.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 65.

*Te decet hymnus.*

THOU, O God, art praised in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.

2 Thou that hearest the prayer: unto thee shall all flesh come.

3 My misdeeds prevail against me: O be thou merciful unto our sins.

4 Blessed is the man, whom thou choosest, and receivest unto thee: he shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

5 Thou shalt shew us wonderful things in thy righteousness, O God of our salvation: thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea.

6 Who in his strength setteth fast the mountains: and is girded about with power.

7 Who stilleth the raging of the sea: and the noise of his waves, and the madness of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth shall be afraid at thy tokens: thou that makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise thee.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and blessest it: thou makest it very plenteous.

10 The river of God is full of water: thou preparest their corn, for so thou providest for the earth.

11 Thou waterest her furrows, thou sendest rain into the little valleys thereof: thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it.

12 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness: and thy clouds drop fatness.

13 They shall drop upon the dwellings of the wilderness: and the little hills shall rejoice on every side.

14 The folds shall be full of sheep: the valleys also shall stand so thick with corn, that they shall laugh and sing.

## PSALM 66.

*Jubilate Deo.*

BE joyful in God, all ye lands: sing praises unto the honour of his Name, make his praise to be glorious.

2 Say unto God, O how wonderful art thou in thy works: through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies be found liars unto thee.

3 For all the world shall worship thee: sing of thee, and praise thy Name.

4 O come hither, and behold the works of God: how wonderful he is in his doing toward the children of men.

5 He turned the sea into dry land: so that they went through the water on foot; there did we rejoice thereof.

6 He ruleth with his power for ever; his eyes behold the people: and such as will not believe shall not be able to exalt themselves.

7 O praise our God, ye people: and make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holdeth our soul in life: and suffereth not our feet to slip.

9 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou also hast tried us, like as silver is tried.

10 Thou broughtest us into the

yet hardly to be taken up by the deeper self-knowledge of the Christian. Even here it passes into absolute trust in God's mercy as the ultimate stay of the soul. The em-

phatic reference to a personal deliverance suits exactly with the case of Hezekiah's recovery from sickness and the tone of his prayer (Isa. xxxviii. 3).

## PSALM LXVII.

This Psalm—also anonymous, and noted as for Liturgical use—probably belongs to the same group as Ps. lxxv. and lxxvi. We find in it the same allusions to manifestation of God's glory through Israel to the heathen, and the same reference to His blessing upon the harvest. Its Liturgical character, so strongly marked in the heading, has led to its adoption as a Canticle of our own Evening Service, celebrating, as already come, that universal kingdom to which the Psalmist looked forward.

It may be divided into three sections: (a), in vv. 1, 2, the introductory prayer for God's blessing to Israel, as a manifestation of Him to the heathen; (b), in vv. 3—5, a call to the nations to accept that manifestation in worship; (c), the thanksgiving for blessings granted, and confidence in fresh blessings to come (vv. 6, 7).

v. 1. The reference to the priestly blessing of Num. vi. 26 is obvious (comp. Ps. iv. 7; xxxi. 18; lxxx. 3, 7, 19). But for the *Jehovah* of that blessing we have here the more general name God (*Elohim*), as in the whole of this group—possibly in direct relation to the sovereignty of God, not over Israel, but over all the nations of the earth.

v. 2. The "way" is God's law of righteousness; the "saving health," i.e., "salvation," is the yet better gift of His grace and mercy. Both are "to be known upon earth" through God's blessing to His people. The partial fulfilment of this anticipation was apparently immediate in the days of Hezekiah (comp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 23); but the complete fulfilment can only be in the kingdom of the Messiah.

vv. 3—5 form an enthusiastic call

to all the nations, not only to praise God for His glory, but to exult in the knowledge that He will both judge righteously (by His law) and guide ("govern") them (by His Spirit). The blessing, given especially to Israel, is here prophetically extended to all nations.

v. 6. *Shall the earth, &c.* It should be, "the land hath given her increase" (see Lev. xxvi. 4). As in Ps. lxxv., the blessing of the harvest has been granted: it is an earnest from God—emphatically called "their own God"—of greater blessing to Israel in the future, through which "all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." The special blessing to God's chosen people is not lost, but extended to the nations gathered round them (comp. Isa. ii. 23; Mic. iv. 1, 2), "The glory of Israel" is "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

## PSALM LXVIII.

This magnificent Psalm, in its general tenour clear enough as a triumphal procession of the Ark into the Holy Place, and accordingly (as its first words shew) a grand expansion of the idea of the words used (Num. x. 35) at the setting forth of the Ark on its journey in the wilderness, is yet encompassed with singular difficulty, both as to interpretation in detail, and as to the date and occasion of its composition. The heading ascribes it to David; and, after examining the various dates assigned to it by conjecture—ranging from the days of Solomon down to the return from Exile—we find that the preponderance of evidence decidedly supports the traditional view. The rugged grandeur and obscurity of style, the allusions to Benjamin as the royal tribe, and to Zabulon and Nephthali as the chief Northern tribes (v. 27), the reference to Egypt and Ethiopia as the representatives of heathendom, and to their tribute to the Temple (or Tabernacle)—all point to an early date; and no allusions whatever can be found to the later history. If it be a Psalm of David, we should be at first sight tempted to refer it to the bringing up of the Ark recorded in 2 Sam. vi.; but against this are the martial character of the Psalm, and the signs

snare: and laidest trouble upon our loins.

11 Thou sufferedst men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and water, and thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

12 I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings: and will pay thee my vows, which I promised with my lips, and spake with my mouth, when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer unto thee fat burnt-sacrifices, with the incense of goats: I will offer bullocks and rams.

14 O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God: and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.

15 I called unto him with my mouth: and gave him praises with my tongue.

16 If I incline unto wickedness with mine heart: the Lord will not hear me.

17 But God hath heard me: and considered the voice of my prayer.

18 Praised be God who hath

not cast out my prayer: nor turned his mercy from me.

## PSALM 67.

*Deus misereatur.*

**G**OD be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us;

2 That thy way may be known upon earth: thy saving health among all nations.

3 Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.

4 O let the nations rejoice and be glad: for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee.

6 Then shall the earth bring forth her increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing.

7 God shall bless us: and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

## DAY 13.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 68.

*Exurgat Deus.*

**L**ET God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God: let them also be merry and joyful.

4 O sing unto God, and sing praises unto his Name: magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse; praise him in his Name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows: even God in his holy habitation.

6 He is the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and bringeth the prisoners out of captivity: but letteth the runagates continue in scarceness.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before the people: when thou wentest through the wilderness,

8 The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at the presence of God: even as Sinai also was moved at the presence of God, who is the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance: and refreshedst it when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation shall dwell therein: for thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.

of an already dominant and victorious power. On the whole, the most likely conjecture connects it with the crowning victory over the Ammonites and Syrians—the zenith of David's glory—when (as we see from 2 Sam. xi. 11) the Ark had, for some reason, been taken into the field, and would naturally be brought back with triumphant solemnity.

The Messianic application of the Psalm, marked in the New Testament (Eph. iv. 8—12), clearly belongs to it simply as a grand picture of the victorious royalty of the Kingdom of David, which was the germ and earnest of the greater future. Naturally it applies, not to Our Lord's humiliation or suffering, but to the glory on which He entered at the Ascension, and which is to be manifested in perfection in the awful majesty of the Last Day.

By the Jews the Psalm was used at Pentecost, possibly on account of the special references to the manifestation of God on Sinai, which was associated with that Festival. Hence it has passed into use as a Psalm of WHIT-SUNDAY, for which the allusion to the spiritual gifts coming through the Ascended Lord, makes it singularly appropriate.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—6, with an introduction of exulting confidence in the victorious and protecting power of the Lord Jehovah; then follows (b), in vv. 7—14, a thankful commemoration of God's care of His people in the wilderness, and of His gift of victory over Canaan; to this succeeds (c), in vv. 15—23, a hymn of thanksgiving over the triumphant establishment of God's holy hill, and His royalty enthroned therein; this suggests (d), in vv. 24—31, a picture of the festal procession of the princes and people of Israel following the Ark to its resting-place, and of the homage of the kings of the Gentiles paid to the Lord; and the Psalm ends (e), in vv. 32—35, with a burst of praise to the God of heaven and earth, who is especially the God of Israel.

v. 1. *Let God arise, &c.* In Num. x. 35 the words are, "Arise, O Jehovah," &c. Here, as throughout the Psalm, the more general word "God" (*Elohim*) is used, signifying His relation to the world and to man; and the name JAH is emphasized as the covenant name of this Almighty God in verse 4. It is to be noted that the destruction of the enemies, melting like wax in the breath of the Lord, is touched briefly and incisively, and that the passage then gladly expands in dwelling on His goodness and mercy to His people.

v. 4 should be rendered thus—

"Sing unto God, sing praises unto His Name;  
Cast up a highway for Him that rideth through the wilderness;  
JAH is His Name; rejoice before Him."

The idea is that of Isa. xl. 3, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the deserts a highway for our God." In our version "on the heavens" is taken from the LXX.; "as it were upon an horse" is a mere gloss.

v. 6. *That maketh, &c.*, should be (as in A.V. and R.V.), "that setteth the solitary in families, that bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity" (comp. Ps. lxxvi. 11). God

is set forth as the Father of the helpless, the gatherer of the lonely, the deliverer of the captives; leaving none but the rebellious ("the runagates") to the "land of drought" ("scarceness"). There is a peculiar beauty in the picture of this tender personal goodness of the great and terrible God.

vv. 7—10. The Psalm goes back, as the moving of the Ark suggests, to the old days of the manifestation on Sinai. The passage is all but identical with Judg. v. 4, 5—the opening of the Song of Deborah. God is seen in the terror of the thunder; the earth shakes, the clouds drop water. Sinai ("yon Sinai") itself trembles. But (the Psalmist adds) God's coming is for mercy; the rain of blessing—literal and metaphorical—falls on the congregation (properly the "flock" or "herd") of God, giving rest to the weary, and safety to the afflicted ("the poor").

v. 11. *Of the preachers* is a curious misunderstanding of the sense, which is really, "Great was the host of the women who proclaimed" His triumph—as Miriam at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 20), Deborah in the grand song (Judg. v.), to which this Psalm contains so many allusions, or the women of Israel in the days of vic-

tory over the Philistines (1 Sam. xviii. 6).

v. 12 should be—

"Kings of armies did flee, did flee;  
She, who tarrieth at home, divideth the spoils."

Even the weak women of Israel are strong enough to divide the spoil of the mighty (comp. Judg. v. 30).

vv. 13, 14 form a passage of extraordinary difficulty, both of word and of meaning. It is thought that much of this difficulty is due to abrupt quotation of some older battle song. Our version, although it yields a good coherent sense, is certainly wide of the meaning. The translation in R.V. is—

"Will ye lie among the sheepfolds?"

As the wings of a dove covered with silver,  
And her pinions with yellow gold—

When the Almighty scatters kings therein;

It was as when it snoweth in Salomon."

This is perhaps as good as any that can be found. But both translation and interpretation are only conjectural. The first line seems a reproach, like Judg. v. 16, "Why abodest thou in the sheepfolds, to hear the bleating of the flocks?" The lines which follow are generally supposed to be a half-sarcastic allusion to the beauty and the wealth of the summer days of peace of which the dove was the emblem, and to which the lingerers clung; but the connection and the comparison to the dove in the beauty of its plumage are somewhat forced. The last line, "the snow on Salomon" ("the dark mountain"), may be proverbial for light amidst darkness, or it may refer to the hosts of the enemy driven like snowflakes before the wind on the mountain side.

vv. 15, 16 are again misunderstood. They should be rendered—

"A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan;

A mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan;

Why look ye askance, ye high mountain,

At the mountain which God hath desired for His abode?"

The high range of Bashan (in which some would include even the snowy Hermon)—in the majesty of its high

peaks a "mountain of God," possibly having also its ancient sanctuaries—is the type of physical greatness, disdaining the lowlier sacredness of the Lord's hill, the hill of Zion, and rebuked for its disdain.

v. 17. *Twenty thousand*—that is (as Dr. Kay has it), "myriads twice told"; of *angels* is an error; it should be "and thousands of thousands."

As in the holy place of Sinai is a gloss on the true reading, "Sinai is in the Sanctuary." The idea conveyed is that the Sinai of God's Presence is now in Zion; there is implied a contrast of the terror of awful majesty of the one with the graciousness of God's covenanted Presence in the other, not wholly unlike the greater contrast of Heb. xii. 18—24.

v. 18. *Thou art gone up on high*—perhaps to the Sanctuary on Zion, perhaps to heaven (comp. Ps. xlvii. 5), after conquest of His enemies.

*Led captive captive.* The phrase (evidently taken from Judg. v. 12) has not the deeper meaning suggested by the English. It is simply "led captive a band of captives."

*Gifts for men*, properly "gifts among men"—the homage of willing or unwilling submission.

The whole picture shews us how the Conqueror ascends after His victory; the long train of captives follows; the homage of gifts waits upon him, even from the rebellious, that he may consent to dwell among them.

St. Paul (in Eph. iv. 8—10), applying this passage to Our Lord, takes it in part from the LXX., but varies from the original by altering "receivedst gifts" into "gavest gifts to men," probably to convey the idea that He receives the fruits of His triumph only to give them to His people. He sees in the victory of the Ascension, after the visible manifestation of the Godhead on earth, the perfect Antitype, of which the earthly victory is but the type.

v. 19. *Who helpeth us, &c.*—properly (in a more striking figure), "who beareth our burdens, and who is our salvation."

v. 20 should be (as in R.V.)—

"God is unto us a God of deliverance;

And unto Jehovah the Lord belong the issues from death."

v. 21. *The hairy scalp* is the emblem of youthful vigour and pride.

v. 22. *My people.* These words are not in the Hebrew, and are probably a mistaken gloss. The reference is to the enemies, whom God will bring forth to vengeance from the height of Bashan in the east, or from the depths of the great sea of the west (comp. Amos ix. 1—3).

v. 23. *That thy foot, &c.* The reference is here to the people of God, who shall triumph in the overthrow of the wicked (comp. Ps. lviii. 9). The whole passage is a terrible picture of that stern exultation over righteous vengeance, which belongs to the Old Testament rather than the New.

vv. 24—31 picture the triumphal procession to the Sanctuary, accompanied by the homage of the Gentiles, and heralded by music and songs of praise.

v. 26 appears to be the song of the "maidens playing with the timbrels" on the festal day.

From the ground of the heart is a mistranslation. It should be, ("ye who are) from the fountain of Israel"—the covenanted spring of God's blessing.

v. 27. The tribes here named are clearly the representatives of the South and the North, before the days of the mutilation of Israel by defeat and captivity. Benjamin is called "the ruler," not (as has been suggested) because Jerusalem was in its territory, but because it gave Israel its first king. The "princes of Judah" are a strong company ("their council"), in the contrast of their number and greatness with the littleness of Benjamin.

v. 29. The "Temple," as in other passages, is simply the Sanctuary,

already in David's time set up in splendour, and honoured with rich offerings. To it naturally subject kings would bring tribute, as Hiram appears to have done.

v. 30 is wholly mistranslated. It should probably be (nearly as in R.V.)—

"Rebuke the beast of the reeds,  
The company of bulls with the  
calves of the peoples,—

Each prostrates himself with  
pieces of silver;

He hath scattered." &c.

The "beast of the reeds" (the crocodile or hippopotamus) is the emblem of Egypt. The bulls (as in Ps. xxii. 12; Amos iv. 1) are the princes, and the calves their followers.

God rebukes the pride of the heathen; they who submit are accepted, they who delight still in war are scattered.

v. 31. *The Morians' land* is *Cush* or *Ethiopia*, the usual name for Upper Egypt. In all the earlier days of Israel Egypt is the great impersonation of heathendom, as not wholly hostile to Israel and its God.

vv. 32—35 are the final burst of praise to God from all the kingdoms of the earth. There is in it a marked similarity to a passage in the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 26). As the Almighty God He is enthroned in the "heaven of heavens, which were of old, and his strength is in the skies," whence His voice of judgment sounds; as the God of Israel "His excellence is over Israel"; He is "terrible out of the Sanctuary" ("wonderful in the holy places"), giving strength and power to His people.

## PSALM LXIX.

This Psalm is a cry of anguish under persecution, with a burning sense of injustice and cruelty, breaking out into imprecation on the enemies, yet cherishing still a sure and certain hope of deliverance by God's mercy. It is traditionally ascribed to David; and it is possible, though with some difficulty, to refer it to one or other of the two periods of suffering and persecution in his life. But it is not easy to apply to him all the description of the condition of the writer, or to understand how in either period he was a sufferer for the sake of the Lord and of His house; and there is much, both in substance and in language, to recommend the conjecture, which ascribes the Psalm to Jeremiah in the hour of his cruel imprisonment (to which vv. 15, 16 would literally apply), when men were daily seeking his life, simply because he delivered the message of God, and protested against the profanation of hypocritical service in the very house of the Lord (see Jer. xi. 21—23; xv. 15—18; xxxvii. 15, 16; xxxviii. 1—9). The Psalm (by whomsoever written) has (like Ps. xxii.) been from time immemorial regarded as Messianic in its picture of the cruel and undeserved persecution

12 Kings with their armies did flee, and were discomfited: and they of the household divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove: that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake: then were they as white as snow in Salmon.

15 As the hill of Basan, so is God's hill: even an high hill, as the hill of Basan.

16 Why hop ye so, ye high hills? this is God's hill, in the which it pleaseth him to dwell: yea, the Lord will abide in it for ever.

17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai.

18 Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men: yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

19 Praised be the Lord daily: even the God who helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us.

20 He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation: God is the Lord, by whom we escape death.

21 God shall wound the head of his enemies: and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness.

22 The Lord hath said, I will bring my people again, as I did from Basan: mine own will I bring again, as I did sometime from the deep of the sea.

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine ene-

mies: and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same.

24 It is well seen, O God, how thou goest: how thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary.

25 The singers go before, the minstrels follow after: in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels.

26 Give thanks, O Israel, unto God the Lord in the congregations: from the ground of the heart.

27 There is little Benjamin their ruler, and the princes of Judah their counsel: the princes of Zabulon, and the princes of Nephthali.

28 Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee: stablish the thing, O God, that thou hast wrought in us,

29 For thy temple's sake at Jerusalem: so shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 When the company of the spear-men, and multitude of the mighty are scattered abroad among the beasts of the people, so that they humbly bring pieces of silver: and when he hath scattered the people that delight in war;

31 Then shall the princes come out of Egypt: the Morians' land shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

32 Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord;

33 Who sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning: lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye the power to God over Israel: his worship, and strength is in the clouds.

35 O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places: even the God of Israel; he will give strength and power unto his people; blessed be God.

## DAY 13.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 69.

*Salvum me fac.*

SAVE me, O God: for the waters are come in, even unto my soul.

2 I stick fast in the deep mire, where no ground is: I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me.

3 I am weary of crying; my

of the Great Sufferer. Hence its use as a Psalm of GOOD FRIDAY. Thus in John ii. 17, v. 9 is applied to Our Lord's zeal for the cleansing of the Temple; in John xv. 25, v. 4 is apparently quoted as descriptive of the causeless hatred of the Jews; in Matt. xxvii. 34 there seems clearly an allusion to the gall and vinegar of v. 22; in Acts i. 20 the curse of v. 26 is declared to have fallen upon Judas; in Rom. xv. 3, v. 9 is expressly quoted as applicable to the self-sacrifice for God of the Lord Jesus Christ. The general principle, however, of typical interpretation applies very forcibly here. The Psalmist is clearly describing his own bitter experience; he may not even have known that it foreshadowed any bitterer suffering of a greater Sufferer; the confession of personal sin (in v. 5), and the imprecations of vv. 23—29, can have, of course, no counterpart in the majestic innocence and the boundless forgiveness of Calvary. The type is certainly an imperfect, perhaps an unconscious, representation of the Antitype. (On the imprecatory character of the Psalm, see note on Ps. xxxv., and *Introduction*, sect. v.)

It falls into six sections: (a), in vv. 1—6, a simple cry of complaint before God; (b), in vv. 7—12, a protestation that the suffering complained of is a suffering for God's sake; (c), in vv. 13—19, a still more earnest, and yet hopeful, cry for deliverance; (d) followed, in vv. 20—29, by a vivid picture of the cruelty of the enemies, and imprecation of vengeance upon them; clearing up at last (f), in vv. 30—37, into a sure and thankful confidence in a speedy salvation.

(Like Ps. xlv. and lxxx., it is said to be upon *Shoshannim*, or "the Lilies," probably the name of the air to which it was to be sung.)

vv. 1, 2. The metaphor of the treacherous quagmire and the sweeping flood is, no doubt, general. But here, and in v. 15, it is difficult not to see some allusion to the actual conditions of Jeremiah's imprisonment (Jer. xxxviii. 6).

v. 5. *I paid them* (i.e. restored), &c. This clause belongs to the previous verse; it comes in, somewhat abruptly, as a climax to the description of the causeless fury of the enemies. Not only had the Psalmist done them no wrong, but he had willingly atoned for even fancied wrong for the sake of peace.

vv. 5, 6 form a remarkable contrast with the preceding verses. Before man the Psalmist protests his injured innocence, before God, he confesses both foolishness ("simplicity") and actual sin—only praying as God's avowed servant that, for His Name's sake, he may be delivered, lest his suffering and apparent failure be an offence to God's people.

vv. 7—12 certainly apply with striking force to the condition of such a prophet as Jeremiah—deserted and hated by his kindred (Jer. xi. 21—23): zealous for the true sacredness of the house and the honour of the Lord (Jer. vii. 2, 3, 11); a mourner for the coming judgment in a grief derived by incredulity (Jer. v. 12, 13; ix. 1, 2); gravely rebuked by those who sat in the place

of authority (Jer. xxvi. 8, 9, 11), and made the ribald jest of the drunkard. To David it is hard to apply the description; to the Prophet of prophets, the Son of David, the typical application is obvious.

vv. 13—19, while still more impassioned in the cry for help against the overwhelming sea of troubles, in which the Psalmist can find no firm ground, yet strike a note of growing confidence. The time of his prayer is (he believes) acceptable (comp. Ps. xxxii. 7); the "loving-kindness of the Lord is comfortable," and in "the multitude of His mercies" He will not linger, but "haste" to save.

v. 21, *Thy rebuke*, &c. The word "thy" is an error. It is simply, "Reproach" (the reproach of the enemy) "hath broken my heart." See the description of the anguish of the tender heart of Jeremiah under the burden of his message, and of the hatred which it provoked (Jer. xx. 7—18).

v. 22. The gall and vinegar, in the case of the Psalmist, may have been metaphorical; although if he is identified with Jeremiah, they may in the persecution and insult described in Jer. xx., have been literally real. But in any case the singular correspondence to the actual sufferings of Calvary, whether a conscious or unconscious prophecy, is, in the witness of the Holy Spirit, a prophecy still.

throat is dry : my sight falleth me for waiting so long upon my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head : they that are mine enemies, and would destroy me guiltless, are mighty.

5 I paid them the things that I never took : God, thou knowest my simpleness, and my faults are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that trust in thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my cause : let not those that seek thee be confounded through me, O Lord God of Israel.

7 And why ? for thy sake have I suffered reproof : shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren : even an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath even eaten me : and the rebukes of them that rebuked thee are fallen upon me.

10 I wept, and chastened myself with fasting : and that was turned to my reproof.

11 I put on sackcloth also : and they jested upon me.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me : and the drunkards make songs upon me.

13 But, Lord, I make my prayer unto thee : in an acceptable time.

14 Hear me, O God, in the multitude of thy mercy : even in the truth of thy salvation.

15 Take me out of the mire, that I sink not : O let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

16 Let not the water-flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up : and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

17 Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is comfortable : turn thee unto me according to the multitude of thy mercies.

18 And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble : O haste thee, and hear me.

19 Draw nigh unto my soul,

and save it : O deliver me, because of mine enemies.

20 Thou hast known my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour : mine adversaries are all in thy sight.

21 Thy rebuke hath broken my heart ; I am full of heaviness : I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me.

22 They gave me gall to eat : and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

23 Let their table be made a snare to take themselves withal : and let the things that should have been for their wealth be unto them an occasion of falling.

24 Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not : and ever bow thou down their backs.

25 Pour out thine indignation upon them : and let thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them.

26 Let their habitation be void : and no man to dwell in their tents.

27 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten : and they talk how they may vex them whom thou hast wounded.

28 Let them fall from one wickedness to another : and not come into thy righteousness.

29 Let them be wiped out of the book of the living : and not be written among the righteous.

30 As for me, when I am poor and in heaviness : thy help, O God, shall lift me up.

31 I will praise the Name of God with a song : and magnify it with thanksgiving.

32 This also shall please the Lord : better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

33 The humble shall consider this, and be glad : seek ye after God, and your soul shall live.

34 For the Lord heareth the poor : and despiseth not his prisoners.

35 Let heaven and earth praise him : the sea, and all that moveth therein.

36 For God will save Sion, and



v. 23. *Their table*—the table of their luxury (perhaps spread with a feast professing to be sacred)—is introduced in contrast with the hunger and parching thirst, which they derided. The latter clause, “and let the things,” &c., is a mere paraphrase. It should be simply, “and, when they are at peace, let it be a trap.” Compare the free citation of this passage in Rom. xi. 9, as an illustration of the judicial blindness and condemnation of the Israel of the days of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

vv. 23—29 have a terrible completeness of imprecation against the enemies, who persecute the innocent and helpless: first, that they may fall in the full rest of their prosperity, their eyes blinded, and “their loins made to shake” (“bow down their backs”) like Belshazzar in his impious revelry (Dan. v. 6, 9); then that their habitation be desolated, root and branch; and—last and worst—that they may go on more and more hardened in their wickedness, and finally be blotted out of the book of life. Whatever be the fierceness of righteous indignation, no Christian, after the teaching of Our Lord’s Word and life, can literally use such words.

## PSALM LXX.

(ascribed to David) is a repetition, with several minute variations, of Ps. xi. 16—21. As in the earlier Psalm these verses form a natural conclusion, without which the whole would be plainly incomplete, it seems likely that they were subsequently detached from that Psalm for liturgical use, and so included, with some variations, as Psalm lxx. in the Second Book. It may be noted that the heading describes this Psalm as connected with a “memorial”—that is, with the laying before God of the meat-offering or the incense for “a memorial” to call the offerer to His remembrance.

## PSALM LXXI.

This Psalm has no heading in the Hebrew. In the LXX. it is entitled, “A Psalm of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those first led captive.” In this title, which, as it stands, is self-contradictory, the ascription to David is negated by the style and by the repeated borrowing from earlier Psalms (Ps. xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xl.). The other portion may contain some historic truth, referring the Psalm to the early days of the Captivity, when the Rechabites emerge in the history (Jer. xxxv.), and perhaps (like Ps. lxi.) to the hand of Jeremiah in the later days of his life. In itself the Psalm is the Psalm of old age—a singularly calm and trustful utterance of an aged servant to God, to whom long experience of God’s goodness gives perfect confidence in the sunset of life, in spite of some clouds of adversity gathering round his last days. The very quotation of older Psalms, blended in memory, and the occasional repetitions are characteristic of such old age.

v. 27. There is a peculiar touch of malignity in this persecution of one already smitten by the hand of God, who (as the beautiful Eastern custom especially holds) should be by that very fact sacred from any human hand.

vv. 30—35 pass (as is not unusual in the Psalms) at once from anguish and wrath to an almost exulting confidence, praising God, not only for the Psalmist’s own sake, but for the comfort, which the manifestation of God’s mercy to him gives to all the servants and prisoners of the Lord.

v. 32. Comp. Ps. xl. 8—10; l. 9—15; li. 16—19. The sacrifice of devotion, though it may not supersede the material sacrifice—the “bullock having horns and hoofs”—alone can give it efficacy and sacredness.

vv. 36, 37 may possibly be a liturgical addition (as in Ps. xiv. 11). But if the Psalm be an utterance of Jeremiah—the prophet who looked indeed to the coming Captivity, but looked beyond it to a foreordained restoration—the confidence in his own deliverance may have suggested the larger hope of a salvation of Zion, and a rebuilding of the ruined cities of Judah, to be a lasting habitation of those who not only serve, but love the Name of the Lord.

build the cities of Judah: that men may dwell there, and have it in possession.

37 The posterity also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his Name shall dwell therein.

## PSALM 70.

*Deus in adiutorium.*

**H**ASTE thee, O God, to deliver me: make haste to help me, O Lord.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned back-

ward and put to confusion that wish me evil.

3 Let them for their reward be soon brought to shame: that cry over me, There, there.

4 But let all those that seek thee be joyful and glad in thee: and let all such as delight in thy salvation say always, The Lord be praised.

5 As for me, I am poor and in misery: haste thee unto me, O God.

6 Thou art my helper, and my redeemer: O Lord, make no long tarrying.

## DAY 14.

## Morning Prayer.

## PSALM 71.

*In te, Domine, speravi.*

**I**N thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion: but rid me, and deliver me, in thy righteousness; incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

2 Be thou my strong hold, whereunto I may always resort: thou hast promised to help me, for thou art my house of defence, and my castle.

3 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ungodly: out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

4 For thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for: thou art my hope, even from my youth.

5 Through thee have I been holden up ever since I was born: thou art he that took me out of my mother’s womb; my praise shall be always of thee.

6 I am become as it were a monster unto many: but my sure trust is in thee.

7 O let my mouth be filled with thy praise: that I may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long.

8 Cast me not away in the time of age: forsake me not when my strength falleth me.

9 For mine enemies speak against me, and they that lay wait for my soul take their counsel together, saying: God hath forsaken him; persecute him, and

take him, for there is none to deliver him.

10 Go not far from me, O God: my God, haste thee to help me.

11 Let them be confounded and perish that are against my soul: let them be covered with shame and dishonour that seek to do me evil.

12 As for me, I will patiently abide away: and will praise thee more and more.

13 My mouth shall daily speak of thy righteousness and salvation: for I know no end thereof.

14 I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God: and will make mention of thy righteousness only.

15 Thou, O God, hast taught me from my youth up until now: therefore will I tell of thy wondrous works.

16 Forsake me not, O God, in mine old age, when I am gray-headed: until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to all them that are yet for to come.

17 Thy righteousness, O God, is very high: and great things are they that thou hast done; O God, who is like unto thee?

18 O what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me! and yet didst thou turn and refresh me: yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again.

It falls, after a brief introduction (vv. 1, 2), into two sections: one (a), in vv. 3—11, a prayer for God's protection, full of the faith bred by a life-long experience of His service; the other (b), in vv. 12—22, an expression of trust in God's answer to that prayer, partly of quiet confidence, partly of an exulting thanksgiving.

vv. 1, 2 are an almost literal repetition of Ps. xxxi. 1—4, looking to God as a "stronghold" of refuge from the dangers of life.

vv. 4, 5 are taken with slight alteration from xxii. 9, 10.

v. 4. *The thing that I long for*—properly, "my hope," whereas in the next clause "hope" should be "trust." The two words are not synonymous: we trust in that which we know by present experience, and out of this trust arises necessarily the hope of yet larger blessing in the future. Wherever the communion with God is real, the knowledge of it must be progressive.

v. 6. *A monster*, that is, a "wonder," probably because, like Job, after long and faithful service of God, he seemed to be given over to trouble. The phrase seems to imply some prominence, as of a prophet of God. It would suit especially the solitary mission and witness of Jeremiah.

v. 8. *When my strength faileth*. There is a touching pathos in this appeal, made in the name of growing weakness. Such weakness might loosen his grasp of God, and take away ability to do Him service; he prays that God will not relax His care for him, but make His "strength perfect in weakness."

vv. 9—11 seem made up of passages from older Psalms (xxii. 8, 11, 19; xxxviii. 21, 22; xl. 13), not elaborately pieced together, but blending naturally in memory.

v. 13. Here, and in vv. 14, 17, 20, 22, emphasis is laid with special earnestness on God's righteousness, in which He is "faithful and just to forgive sin," and keep His covenant with those who trust in Him. On it, and on "it only," the soul rests for the "salvation," with which it is joined here (as in Isa. xvi. 13; li. 6, 8; lvi. 1, &c., &c.). Even in trouble the utterance of faith is, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (comp. Hab. iii. 17, 18).

v. 14. *I will go forth* should be, "I will come" (to the House of God to

worship) "in the strength of the Lord," finding in it the stay of weakness and comfort of faith.

v. 16. One last duty the old servant of God can still do; he can teach and comfort by his experience of God's power and goodness those to whom he has to leave the burden of life. (Comp. Ps. xxxvii. 25, 36—38; Josh. xxiii. 2, 3, 14.)

vv. 18, 19. The true rendering is, "Thou wilt turn and refresh me; Thou wilt bring me," &c. The retrospect is of vicissitude and trial overcome; it is in prospect that hope sees honour and rest.

v. 20. *Instrument of music*—properly "the lute," constantly joined with "the harp," but distinguished from it. (Comp. Ps. xxxiii. 2; lvii. 9; lxxxi. 2; cl. 3.)

*Thou Holy One of Israel*—a name of God rare in the Psalms (only found here and in lxxviii. 42; lxxxix. 18), used in two passages of Jeremiah (l. 29; li. 5), but exceedingly common in Isaiah (see, for example, Isa. i. 4; v. 19, 24; x. 20; xii. 6; xvii. 7; &c., &c.). "Holiness" is the essential attribute of God in His own Nature, irrespective of His relation to His creatures (whence the address, "Holy, Holy, Holy," of the angelic song in Isa. vi. 3 and Rev. iv. 8); holiness in man is likeness to God in purity of heart, consecrated through communion with Him. It is significant that the thought of the old servant of God rests not chiefly on God's dealings with man, but on God in Himself, as He is seen in heaven.

vv. 21, 22. There is a striking outpouring of feeling here—not only praise, but joy in praise—not only witness, but unceasing witness. As other faculties fail, the spiritual faculty of communion with God deepens; and therefore as other springs of thought dry up, the remembrance of God overflows and fills the whole heart. Such is the Apostolic experience, "The outward man perisheth, the inward is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16).

v. 22. Comp. Ps. xl. 14.

19 Thou hast brought me to great honour: and comforted me on every side.

20 Therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God, playing upon an instrument of musick: unto thee will I sing upon the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

21 My lips will be fain when I sing unto thee: and so will my soul whom thou hast delivered.

22 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded and brought unto shame that seek to do me evil.

## PSALM 72.

*Deus, judicium.*

**G**IVE the King thy judgments, O God: and thy righteousness unto the King's son.

2 Then shall he judge thy people according unto right: and defend the poor.

3 The mountains also shall bring peace: and the little hills righteousness unto the people.

4 He shall keep the simple folk by their right: defend the children of the poor, and punish the wrong doer.

5 They shall fear thee, as long as the sun and moon endureth: from one generation to another.

6 He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool: even as the drops that water the earth.

7 In his time shall the righteous flourish: yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

8 His dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other:

and from the flood unto the world's end.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him: his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give presents: the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts.

11 All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall do him service.

12 For he shall deliver the poor when he crieth: the needy also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall be favourable to the simple and needy: and shall preserve the souls of the poor.

14 He shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong: and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

15 He shall live, and unto him shall be given of the gold of Arabia: prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be an heap of corn in the earth, high upon the hills: his fruit shall shake like Libanus, and shall be green in the city like grass upon the earth.

17 His Name shall endure for ever; his Name shall remain under the sun among the posterities: which shall be blessed through him; and all the heathen shall praise him.

18 Blessed be the Lord God, even the God of Israel: which only doeth wondrous things;

19 And blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever: and all the earth shall be filled with his Majesty. Amen, Amen.

## DAY 14.

## Evening Prayer.

## PSALM 73.

*Quam bonus Israel!*

**T**RULY God is loving unto Israel: even unto such as are of a clean heart.

2 Nevertheless, my feet were almost gone: my treadings had well-nigh slipped.

3 And why? I was grieved at the wicked: I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity.

4 For they are in no peril of death: but are lusty and strong.

5 They come in no misfortune like other folk: neither are they plagued like other men.

6 And this is the cause that

The heading of this Psalm should be (as in R.V. and the ancient versions generally) a *Psalm of Solomon*. It is one of the only two Psalms—out of the many “Songs,” referred to in 1 Kings iv. 32—ascribed traditionally to him; and the internal evidence throughout strongly supports this tradition. There is evident reminiscence of David’s last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4), and of Solomon’s own prayer; the allusions to tribute from Tarshish and the isles, from Sheba and Seba, suit this time, and this only, of the history; the whole Psalm has a richness and harmony of style, characteristic of the golden age of Solomon’s reign; the emphasis laid on a government of righteousness and peace is equally characteristic of Solomon’s own nature and position. The subject of the Psalm is clearly the king himself. Yet by a true insight the Targums refer its prophecies to the “King Messiah,” the true “Son of David” and “Prince of Peace.” The glory of Solomon’s royalty was earthly, though of the highest order of earthly things; it was transitory, both in itself and through his failure to realize his own ideal. In One alone was glory perfect, universal, eternal; in Him therefore alone are the grand words of this Psalm fully realized.

The Psalm is at once a prayer and an implied prophecy of hope for (a), in vv. 1–7, a rule of righteousness, mercy, and peace over Israel; (b), in vv. 8–14, an extension of that rule over tributary nations by the simple force of its moral beauty and strength; (c), in vv. 15–17, a blessing on it of wealth, fruitfulness, and glory.

vv. 18, 19 are the appended doxology, marking the close of the Second Book of the Psalter.

v. 1. *Judgments* are the special applications of the general attribute of *righteousness*. In Solomon’s own prayer (1 Kings iii. 6–9), of which this verse is an obvious reminiscence, he asks for “a wise and understanding heart to discern between good and bad,” and in the comment on his judgment (in v. 28) it is said that “the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.” Wisdom is the perception of what is good and right; righteousness is the embodiment of that conception in practice.

*The king’s son* is emphatic. Solomon was the first who inherited royalty in Israel.

vv. 2–7. The prayer is threefold: first (in vv. 2, 3), for a rule of impartial righteousness, which shall draw down over all Israel the gentle waters of peace, like the streams from the mountains and hills; next (in vv. 4, 5), that this righteous rule may be especially distinguished by tender care of the weak and overthrow of the oppressor, so that it may continue for ever in the fear of God; lastly (in vv. 6, 7), that it may bring the refreshment of an overflowing peace, in which the righteous shall not only live, but flourish for ever.

v. 5. *They shall fear thee*. The change of person here is abrupt. But (if the text be correct) the word “thee” must refer to God Himself. The fear of God, in king and people alike, is the secret of this merciful and gracious rule.

*As long as the sun and moon, &c.* Comp. Ps lxxxix. 36, 37; Jer. xxxi. 35, 36; xxxiii. 20, 21.

v. 6. *A fleece of wool*. The idea in this version is probably of allusion to Judg. vi. 36–40. But the rendering should be (as in A.V. and R.V.). “the rain upon the mown grass” (comp. Amos vii. 1), just when the new and tender shoots require the refreshing moisture. There seems a manifest allusion to David’s last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 4), where the rule of righteousness is compared to “the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”

v. 8. *From the one sea, &c.* The description is not general, but particular—from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, from the Euphrates to the “end of the world” in the desert. There is an exact coincidence, which cannot be accidental, with Exod. xxiii. 31, “I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea to the Sea

of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river.” Comp. the description of Solomon’s kingdom in 1 Kings iv. 21, 24.

v. 10. *Tarshish* is clearly Tartessus, the Phœnician settlement in Spain, and *the isles* are the dimly known islands of the Mediterranean. With Tarshish (see 1 Kings x. 22) Solomon had commerce, and drew wealth, which is here described as tribute.

*Arabia*—properly *Sheba*—is a Joktanite settlement (Gen. x. 28) in Arabia, whence came the “Queen of Sheba” in Solomon’s days, bringing gold and precious stones and spices (1 Kings x. 1–10).

*Saba* or *Seba* is a wholly different word, the name of an Egyptian kingdom (which Josephus identifies with Meroë; see Gen. x. 7), constantly connected with Cush or Ethiopia.

vv. 12–14. It is especially notable, and singularly accordant with historic fact in the case of Solomon, that the world-wide dominion is to be won by the arms of peace, the moral strength of righteousness and wisdom and mercy. In this description we have a special foreshadowing of the kingdom of the true Son of David, which “is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

v. 15. It is somewhat difficult to interpret the pronouns of this verse. The R.V. supposes the reference to be to the poor, spoken of in the previous verse, “They (or he) shall live, and offer (to the king) gold of Sheba, pray for him continually, and bless him every day.” But the reference to the king (as here and in A.V.) is on the whole simpler.

The phrase *to him* is an error—clearly suggested by the Messianic character of the Psalm. It should be “for him.”

v. 16 should be rendered—

“There shall be abundance of corn in the land,  
Even to the top of the hills;  
Its fruit shall rustle like Lebanon;  
They shall blossom out of the cities,  
Like grass upon the earth.”

The picture is of a fruitfulness spreading over valley and hill, strong as the foliage of Lebanon; and of a growth of people, thick as the grass itself.

v. 17. This attribute of universality and eternity is, as usual, ascribed to the kingdom of David—to Solomon only in imperfect type, to the true Son of David in perfect antitype.

“Which shall be blessed” (or bless themselves) “in him.” There is an obvious allusion to the great promise to the “seed of Abraham” (Gen. xii. 3), which emphasizes the ultimate reference to the Messiah.

vv. 18, 19 (like xli. 13) form the doxology appended to this Psalm, as closing the Second Book. It dwells emphatically on the Name of *Jehovah Elohim* (as is natural in a book of Psalms mainly Elohistic), and on His glory, as filling not only Israel, but the whole earth (comp. Isa. vi. 3).

In the Hebrew a note is here appended, “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended”—which must be anterior to the compilation of the later Books III. to V., since these include Psalms ascribed to David. The name “Prayers” is simply the alternative title (instead of “the Praises”) of the whole Psalter. The words “of David” may refer either to the series Ps. li.—lxxi. which are in the headings ascribed to David, or to the whole Book, as called generally, like the earlier Book, the “Psalms of David” (see *Introduction*, sect. 1.).