

It includes seventeen Psalms (lxxiii.—lxxxix.), of which eleven (lxxiii.—lxxxiii.) are ascribed to Asaph, four (lxxxiv., lxxxv., lxxxvii., lxxxviii.) to the sons of Korah, one (lxxxvi.) to David, and one (lxxxix.) to Ethan the Ezrahite. On the general character of the Psalms of Asaph and of the sons of Korah, see *Introduction*, sect. II. The book is closely connected, in character and traditional authorship, with Book II., but is probably of somewhat later formation.

PSALM LXXIII.

This Psalm, ascribed to Asaph, deals with the great moral problem which is the subject of the Book of Job, and shews evident knowledge of that wonderful book itself. The question how, if God be the All-righteous Governor of the world, the wicked prosper and the good suffer, belongs to all times and places. But the time of Solomon, to which the composition of the Book of Job (perhaps out of older materials) is commonly referred, was one of much searching into the meaning of human life and the secret of God's Providence, and so was naturally brought face to face with these deep moral problems. Therefore, although the ascription to Asaph may mean no more than that the Psalm belonged to a collection bearing his name, yet the Asaph of the days of David and Solomon—"Asaph the Seer"—may well have been the author. Even the notice in the Syriac Version that the Psalm was composed "on the death of Absalom" may have some truth in it, for no better exemplification of the ideas of the Psalmist could be found than the insolent triumph and sudden fall of the great rebel. The spirit of the treatment of the subject is, however, widely different from that of the Book of Job. In that book the appeal is simply to faith in the righteousness and the inscrutable wisdom of God; in the Psalm the mind is bidden to look to the certain redress of all wrong in the end, perhaps in this world, perhaps in the next, and to rest on the eternal communion with God, who is all in all.

The Psalmist, after a brief expression of the final issue of faith (v. 1), describes (a), in vv. 2-14, the mental conflict produced by contemplating the insolent prosperity of the wicked, and listening to the comments of the world upon it; then passes (b), in vv. 15-19, to the solution of the difficulty, suggested by meditation in the Sanctuary on the final retribution of God; and ends (c), in vv. 20-27, with a confession of the brutish folly of his former doubts, and a declaration that the communion of the soul with God is the one secret of peace, in this world and the next.

v. 1. *Truly*, or "surely" (as in R.V., vv. 13, 18). The word expresses the final conclusion after hesitation and doubt, like our "after all." Whatever seems, this *is*. The parallelism in this verse is notable; the true "Israel" are the "pure in heart," who "see God," and therefore see through the clouds and delusions of life.

v. 4. *In no peril of death*—literally, "There are no bands in their death,"—a phrase which apparently means

"no fetters" (of sickness or suffering) binding them to the power of death or no pangs of anguish in their last hour (comp. Job xxi. 13, 23).

v. 6 should be rendered (much as in R.V.)—

"Pride is as a chain about their neck;

Violence covereth them as a garment."

Pride is their ornament; violence the habit of their life.

they are so holden with pride : and overwhelmed with cruelty.

7 Their eyes swell with fatness : and they do even what they lust.

8 They corrupt other, and speak of wicked blasphemy : their talking is against the most High.

9 For they stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven : and their tongue goeth through the world.

10 Therefore fall the people unto them : and thereout suck they no small advantage.

11 Tush, say they, how should God perceive it : is there knowledge in the most High ?

12 Lo, these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession : and I said, Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.

13 All the day long have I been punished : and chastened every morning.

14 Yea, and I had almost said even as they : but lo, then I should have condemned the generation of thy children.

15 Then thought I to understand this : but it was too hard for me,

16 Until I went into the sanctuary of God : then understood I the end of these men ;

17 Namely, how thou dost set them in slippery places : and castest them down, and destroyest them.

18 Oh, how suddenly do they consume : perish, and come to a fearful end !

19 Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh : so shalt thou make their image to vanish out of the city.

20 Thus my heart was grieved : and it went even through my reins.

21 So foolish was I, and ignorant : even as it were a beast before thee.

22 Nevertheless, I am alway by thee : for thou hast holden me by my right hand.

23 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel : and after that receive me with glory.

24 Whom have I in heaven but thee : and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee.

25 My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

26 For lo, they that forsake thee shall perish : thou hast destroyed all them that commit fornication against thee.

27 But it is good for me to hold me fast by God, to put my trust in the Lord God : and to speak of all thy works in the gates of the daughter of Sion.

PSALM 74.

Ut quid, Deus ?

O GOD, wherefore art thou absent from us so long : why is thy wrath so hot against the sheep of thy pasture ?

2 O think upon thy congregation : whom thou hast purchased, and redeemed of old.

3 Think upon the tribe of thine inheritance : and mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

4 Lift up thy feet, that thou mayest utterly destroy every enemy : which hath done evil in thy sanctuary.

5 Thine adversaries roar in the midst of thy congregations : and set up their banners for tokens.

6 He that hewed timber afore out of the thick trees : was known to bring it to an excellent work.

7 But now they break down all the carved work thereof : with axes and hammers.

8 They have set fire upon thy holy places : and have defiled the dwelling-place of thy Name, even unto the ground.

9 Yea, they said in their hearts, Let us make havock of them altogether : thus have they burnt up all the houses of God in the land.

10 We see not our tokens, there is not one prophet more : no, not one is there among us, that understandeth any more.

11 O God, how long shall the adversary do this dishonour ; how

v. 8 is mistranslated. It should be—

“They scoff and speak of wickedness;
Of oppression from the height
(of disdain) do they speak.”

Wickedness is to them a jest; at pleas against oppression they smile disdainfully.

v. 10. *Suck they no small advantage*—literally, “waters of a full cup are wrung out to them,” which may be explained as in our version, but perhaps better as meaning that the people drink deep of their cup of wickedness.

vv. 11—13. In this section vv. 12, 13 seem to be the reflections of the Psalmist in the hour of his bewilderment; but v. 11 should be taken (as in our version) to be the utterances of the ordinary looker-on, inferring that the “Most High” is too high to care for our good and evil.

v. 14. *Yea, and I had*, &c.—properly, “If I had said, I will speak words like these, I should have been faithless to the generation of Thy children.” It is notable that the first restraining influence was found in loyalty to the brotherhood of the faithful, and to their witness for God.

vv. 15, 16 are deeply instructive. They tell how, first, he had recourse to thought, striving to pierce into the secrets of God’s Providence; and then, failing in this, went to the Sanctuary, and there found a higher insight in prayer.

vv. 17—19 describe rest on a final retribution, swallowing up in a moment the prosperity which seemed substantial. It is clear that this might be in this world, or in that future life, to which those must look

onward who deeply realize the communion with God.

v. 19. *So shalt thou*, &c. This clause is wrongly rendered. It should be, “So, when Thou arisest” (as from slumber), “Thou wilt despise their image.”

vv. 20, 21 are the confession of folly. That his heart was soured (“grieved”) and “his reins pierced” (with the pang of envy), shewed that he was brutish (“foolish”) in ignorance, because, “like a beast,” he regarded only the visible world and the things of sense.

vv. 22—27. This conclusion is deeply suggestive as well as beautiful. The ultimate refuge from doubt and from the bewilderments of the world, is not in any foresight of retribution, still less in any theories of its time or method, but in the conscious communion with the Eternal. They who know themselves to be His are sure of present guidance and of future glory; they who desire Him infinitely can feel no other desire painfully; they who rest on Him care not if their “flesh and their heart fail,” for they hold fast to Him themselves, and tell of His goodness to others. What is true of questions of retribution here is equally true of all speculations as to the laws of retribution hereafter. The only answer is rest on the perfect righteousness and mercy of God.

v. 23. *Receive me with glory* or *to glory*. How far this involves the conscious looking forward to another world has been doubted. But the whole context expresses a consciousness of God as “our portion for ever”; it looks to heaven as well as earth; and therefore it is hard not to think that, however dimly, it must have extended its vision beyond the grave.

PSALM LXXIV.

This Psalm—like Ps. lxxix., to which it has much similarity—though again ascribed to Asaph, appears almost unquestionably to belong to a far later period. It is a cry of anguish from one who sees the land of Israel trampled under foot, the Temple and other sanctuaries destroyed, and finds no prophetic word of hope or comfort. It is commonly referred either to the Chaldean invasion or to the Maccabean times, although it might, of course, belong to the time of one of the earlier invasions, briefly noticed in the sacred history. Considering its style, its resemblance to passages in Jeremiah, and its position in the Psalter, the time of the Chaldean conquest is the most probable. By whomsoever written, it is a Psalm of infinite pathos, and an impassioned pleading with God by His ancient mercies and for His Name’s sake.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—10, with a terrible picture of the cruel and insolent triumph of the enemy, especially over the Temple of God; from this it passes (b), in vv. 11—18, to plead with God by his former mercies to Israel, and by His Almighty power over the world; and ends (c), in vv. 19—24, with an earnest prayer that He will “look upon the Covenant,” and assert His glory before the heathen.

v. 1. *Absent from us*, &c. The true rendering (as in A.V. and R.V.) is stronger, “Why hast Thou cast us off for ever?” So in Ps. xliii. 2; xliiv. 9; lxxvii. 7, &c.)

v. 4. *Lift up*, &c.—properly, “lift up Thy feet,” i.e. hasten (as an avenger) “unto the perpetual desolations”—the ruin upon ruin heaped unceasingly on the land.

v. 5. *Congregations* should be “assembly”—the place of Thy meeting with Thy people, probably the Temple.

Their banners as tokens. The original is, “their signs as signs.” Probably the reference is to the emblems of idolatry (like “the abomination of desolation” in Dan. ix. 27) set up as if they were really “signs” of a Divine power with them, giving them victory.

v. 6 is wholly misunderstood. It should be—

“They seemed as men that lifted
on high
Axes against the thickets of the
wood;
And so they break down,” &c.

The picture is graphic: first, the roar of fury and victory on the exaltation of the signs of idolatry; then the wanton havoc, hewing down, like the trees of the forest, the carved work of the Temple (so elaborately described in 1 Kings vii. 18—35), beautiful in itself, and halloved by its sacred emblems; at last the fire set to the building, and the razing to the ground the Sanctuary itself (comp. Lam. ii. 2—7). There rings through the whole description the anguish of an eye-witness. In the pregnant phrase, “defiled even to the ground” (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 38), is summed up the two-fold idea of pollution and ruin.

v. 9. *The houses of God*—properly, “the places of assembly”—rendered in R.V. as in the LXX. “the synagogues.” The establishment of synagogues, as a regular institution, belongs to the period after the Exile. But the existence of some places of assembly in earlier times is in the

highest degree probable. For it is hard to conceive of no worship in the cities of Israel intermediate between the worship of the family and the infrequent worship in the Temple; especially when every Sabbath and festival was a time of “solemn assembly.” It is thoroughly accordant with the conservative spirit of the days of Ezra to suppose that the regular institution of the synagogues after the Captivity was rather a revival and fuller organization of the old, than a thing absolutely new. But it is most probable that the true meaning here is “destroyed all times of assembly, i.e., the solemn feasts,” as the LXX. translation renders the passage (comp. Lam. i. 4; ii. 6; Hos. ii. 11).

v. 10. *Tokens* or “signs”—contrasted with the heathen signs of v. 5. Our signs (he says) of the true God are gone; their signs of idolatry flaunt in triumph.

There is not one prophet more. There may be here some of the natural exaggeration of sorrow. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both still lived in the days of the Chaldean invasion. But Ezekiel was far away in Babylon; Jeremiah’s promise of restoration might well be lost in his constant message of woe, and he was actually accused of favouring the Chaldean triumph. There is very similar language in Lam. ii. 9; Ezek. vii. 26.

That understandeth, &c. This should be joined with the first words of the next verse, “that knoweth how long.”

v. 11. *How long*. Comp. vi. 3; xiii. 1, 2. The chastisement is accepted; but the prayer is that it may pass in God’s good time.

vv. 13—16 rapidly survey the great deeds of God’s ancient deliverance, “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (see A.V. and R.V.)—the dividing the Red Sea, the destruction of the Egyptians, the bringing the stream out of the rock, the drying up of the waters of Jordan. In many cases there is even verbal coincidence with the historic record.

v. 14. *Dragons*—that is, “sea monsters,” the emblems of the Egyptian powers (comp. the application to Pharaoh in Isa. li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3; xxxii. 2).

v. 15. *Leviathan*, as in Job xli., the crocodile—“the beast of the reeds” (Ps. lxxviii. 30, *marg.*)—still more emphatically the emblem of Egypt.

Gavest him, &c. Unless the phrase be metaphorical, we should read, “the race of the wilderness”—the beasts of the desert shore feeding on the corpses of the Egyptians.

vv. 17, 18 in rapid transition pass from God’s manifestations to Israel to His rule over all Nature in its forces and its changes, in which, even before the heathen, “He left not Himself without a witness.” The sun, the great object of all

idolatry, especially the Chaldean, is but the servant of that rule.

vv. 19—24. Here (see vv. 11, 19, 23) God is prayed to deliver Israel for His own Name’s sake. (To pray for the glory of His Name is to pray for the good of all His creatures; for the knowledge of His being and glory is the highest blessing of man.) To “look upon the covenant” is to vindicate His glory before the heathen—the “foolish people”—who cannot or will not know Him. To let it be overthrown is to give occasion to the enemy “to blaspheme” “in evergrowing presumption,” and to send “the simple and helpless away ashamed.” With the tenderness of pleading for His “turtle-dove” and for the poor of His congregation, there mingles this tone of remonstrance in the name both of the Covenant and of the glory of God.

PSALM LXXV.

This Psalm and Ps. lxxvi., both bearing the name of Asaph, seem to be closely connected. They stand in marked contrast with the anguish of the last Psalm, and breathe the spirit of a firm confidence in the all-righteous judgment of God against the strength of the enemy—as already shewn in part, and as destined to be perfected hereafter.

It has been conjectured that they belong to the time of Sennacherib’s war and overthrow (see note on v. 7), and the LXX. actually adds to the heading the words “with reference to the Assyrians.”

This Psalm, like Ps. lvii., has the title *Attaschith*, “destroy not”—probably the name of the tune to which it was sung.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—4, with an expression of thankful trust, answered by the utterance of judgment by the voice of God; this is taken up (b), in vv. 5—10, by an admonition of rebuke in the Name of the Lord, to the pride of the ungodly; and the whole concludes (c), in vv. 11, 12, with the renewed expression of trust in the God of Jacob for victory.

v. 2. *Thy Name*. The “Name of God” is any revelation of Him; here clearly the revelation of His Presence in the midst of Israel, witnessed to by His wondrous works.

v. 3. *When I receive, &c.* These words, opening the utterance of the voice of God, should be rendered, “When I find the set time.” They are, as it were, a solemn answer to the cry, “How long?” When God wills, and not till then, the judgment is to come.

v. 4. *Is weak*—properly, “is dissolved,” melting with fear (comp. Exod. xv. 15; Josh. ii. 9, 24).

I bear up the pillars. Compare the passage in the Song of Hannah, also used as a rebuke of earthly pride

(1 Sam. ii. 8), “The pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He hath set the world upon them.” Amidst all change and confusion, one thing is changeless and certain—the judgment of God.

vv. 5, 6, 8 have also plain reminiscences of the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 3, 7), in rebuke of the arrogance and obstinacy of the godless.

v. 5. *I said unto the fools, &c.*—properly “to the arrogant, Deal not arrogantly”—an allusion perhaps to the blasphemous boastfulness of the Assyrians (Isa. xxxvi. 18—20; xxxvii. 23—25).

v. 7. *Promotion* should be “lifting up” (comp. v. 8)—the lifting up of deliverance. That deliverance comes

long shall the enemy blaspheme thy Name, for ever?

12 Why withdrawest thou thy hand : why pluckest thou not thy right hand out of thy bosom to consume the enemy?

13 For God is my King of old : the help that is done upon earth he doeth it himself.

14 Thou didst divide the sea through thy power : thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

15 Thou smotest the heads of Leviathan in pieces : and gavest him to be meat for the people in the wilderness.

16 Thou broughtest out fountains and waters out of the hard rocks : thou driedst up mighty waters.

17 The day is thine, and the night is thine : thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

18 Thou hast set all the borders

of the earth : thou hast made summer and winter.

19 Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy hath rebuked : and how the foolish people hath blasphemed thy Name.

20 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the enemies : and forget not the congregation of the poor for ever.

21 Look upon the covenant : for all the earth is full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

22 O let not the simple go away ashamed : but let the poor and needy give praise unto thy Name.

23 Arise, O God, maintain thine own cause : remember how the foolish man blasphemeth thee daily.

24 Forget not the voice of thine enemies : the presumption of them that hate thee increaseth ever more and more.

DAY 15.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 75.

Confitebimur tibi.

UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks : yea, unto thee do we give thanks.

2 Thy Name also is so nigh : and that do thy wondrous works declare.

3 When I receive the congregation : I shall judge according unto right.

4 The earth is weak, and all the inhabitants thereof : I bear up the pillars of it.

5 I said unto the fools, Deal not so madly : and to the ungodly, Set not up your horn.

6 Set not up your horn on high : and speak not with a stiff neck.

7 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west : nor yet from the south.

8 And why? God is the Judge : he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

9 For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red : it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the same.

10 As for the dregs thereof : all the ungodly of the earth shall drink them, and suck them out.

11 But I will talk of the God of Jacob : and praise him for ever.

12 All the horns of the ungodly also will I break : and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

PSALM 76.

Notus in Judæa.

IN Jewry is God known : his Name is great in Israel.

2 At Salem is his tabernacle : and his dwelling in Sion.

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow : the shield, the sword, and the battle.

4 Thou art of more honour and might : than the hills of the robbers.

5 The proud are robbed, they have slept their sleep : and all the men whose hands were mighty have found nothing.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob : both the chariot and horse are fallen.

7 Thou, even thou art to be

"not from the sunrise nor the sunset, nor from the desert" of the South. From the omission of the North it has been gathered, not improbably, that the danger came from that quarter, viz., from Assyria, and that Israel was looking eagerly in all other quarters for help.

v. 9. *There is a cup, &c.* This metaphor, in the sense of the cup of wrath or judgment, is frequent in Jeremiah (see xxv. 15, 17, 28; li. 7; Lam. iv. 21; and comp. Isa. li. 17;

Ezek. xxiii. 31, 32). In the Psalms the cup is more usually the ordained portion of blessing (see xvi. 5; xxiii. 5; cxvi. 13).

Full mixed—that is, with the spice, put in to make it stronger (like the "wine mingled with myrrh").

v. 12 may be the final sentence of the Lord Jehovah, or it may express the confidence of the Psalmist, that as His instrument, he will be strengthened to do His work.

PSALM LXXVI.

This splendid Psalm, even more plainly than Ps. lxxv., is marked out by some ancient tradition, and by the strongest internal evidence, as a Psalm of triumph over the destruction of the army of Sennacherib. It bears token of reminiscence both of the Song of Deborah and the Song of Hannah, and has some points of likeness to the contemporary prophecy. It breathes a spirit, mingled of exaltation and awe, in the overwhelming sense of the greatness of the deliverance.

It is headed on *Neginoth*, that is, "on stringed instruments."

The structure is singularly symmetrical, in four divisions of three verses: (a), in vv. 1—3, we hear the trumpet blast of victory; (b), in vv. 4—6, the exaltation of God over all human pride and strength; (c), in vv. 7—9, an awe-struck recital of God's coming forth to judgment; (d), in vv. 10—12, a more reflective declaration of His over-ruling and restraining power over the kings of the earth.

v. 1. *In Israel.* This Psalm was written at a time when the independent kingdom of Israel had fallen, and the relics of the tribes were invited, as at the great pass-over of Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxx. 1), to rally round the kingdom of Judah, which had now become the sole representative of the covenant of Israel. Hence with singular truth to fact, His Presence is described as "known in Judah" and His Name recognised as great in Israel.

v. 2. *Salem*—apparently used as the old name of Jerusalem (Gen. xiv. 18), and with an allusion to its significance to Peace (see Heb. vii. 1, 2).

Tabernacle . . . dwelling, &c., has been rendered "lair" and "covert," whence (like "the lion of Judah") He goes forth suddenly to destroy. Compare the reference in v. 4 to "The mountains of prey."

v. 3. Comp. Isa. xxxvii. 33, "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it."

v. 4 is more literally (see A.V.),

"Glorious art Thou, and excellent from" (or "more than") "the mountains of prey." Taking the former rendering—which is perhaps the better—the idea is still of God as coming down in His wrath from the mountain lair; taking the latter (as in our version), "the mountains of prey" are the strongholds already conquered, from which the Assyrian host gathered round the devoted city of Jerusalem.

vv. 5, 6 should be rendered—

"The valiant are spoiled;
They have slept their sleep;
None of the mighty have found
their hands.

At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both chariot and horseman are
cast into a deep sleep."

It is almost impossible to mistake the allusion to the deeper sleep of death, falling on the sleeping Assyrian army, before the valiant men could "find their hands" (as we use the phrase, "find their tongue"), to grasp their weapons. The idea is worked out strikingly in Byron's well-known lines.

vv. 7—9, in the midst of exultation, have in them a certain tone of awe before the terrible judgment of God; the very earth trembles and is hushed in the silence of expectation, even when the judgment is for salvation to the afflicted and the meek.

v. 10. The latter clause, as it now stands, must be rendered, "And with the residue of wrath Thou shalt gird Thyself"—that is (it would seem), the wrath of the enemy, after being overruled to God's glory, shall be used as the sword of His judgment.

But the LXX., by a slight variation of the text, read, "shall keep festival to Thee," giving a simpler sense, and preserving the parallelism far better.

vv. 11, 12. Comp. 2 Chr. xxxii. 23, "Many brought gifts unto the Lord, and presents unto Hezekiah the king so that he was magnified in the sight of the nations." The Psalmist evidently delights to anticipate or contemplate, as a result of God's signal judgment, this universal homage to the God of Israel, as the King of kings, from all the earth.

PSALM LXXVII.

This beautiful Psalm carries with it no certain indication of date. It bears some strong similarities to the Psalm of Hab. iii., but it is hard to say which is the original. It is called a Psalm of Asaph—addressed (like Ps. xxxix., lxii.) "to Jeduthun" or Ethan, head of one of the Levitical companies—and has strongly marked upon it the peculiarities of the Psalms bearing that title; such as the allusion to "Joseph" (v. 15), the delight in historical reference, and the meditative cast of the whole. It is the utterance of one deeply sorrowing over the apparent withdrawal of God's favour from Israel, who comforts himself with hope from the remembrance of His ancient mercies.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—3, with a description of the perplexity and sorrow under which the Psalmist had cried, and would still cry, to God; passing (b), in vv. 4—10, into a recital of the conflict in his soul between the two voices of despondency and faith; and at last (c), in vv. 11—20, breaking out into a triumphant and hopeful commemoration of God's former mercies to Israel.

v. 1. Should perhaps be, "Let me cry" . . . "May He hearken," &c. Not till the end of the Psalm does anxiety pass into confidence.

v. 2. *My sore ran, &c.* This is a mistranslation. The original is, "my hand in the night-season was stretched out" (literally, "poured out") "and ceased not." The idea is of the hand stretched out in prayer till it was unnerved by weariness, and yet refused to rest.

vv. 3, 4 again fail of the true sense. They should be—

"I thought upon God and was in heaviness;
I complained, and my spirit sank."

Even the thought of God brought for a time nothing but weariness and despondency.

vv. 4—6 describe the Psalmist's transition from despondency to meditation in the restless watches of the

night. In these he tells how he went back in memory, calling to remembrance his old song of praise over past mercies, and how his spirit made search in thought ("search out my spirits"); but at first only with the despondent result of vv. 7—9, through the painful sense of contrast with the present (comp. lxxxix. 37—48).

v. 10. The original is, "It is my weakness (or sorrow) as to the years of the right hand of the Most Highest!" or (as some read), "the changing of the right hand," &c. In the latter case the meaning is simply, "It is my sorrow that the right hand of the Most Highest is changed." But this meaning would be at variance with the tone of the whole context; and it is better to take the former reading, and adopt substantially the sense of our version, as marking the point of transition of feeling, in the sense that despondency

is but human weakness, and a willingness to wait for the appointed years of God's salvation. To this the following verses are the natural sequel; for they dwell, first, on the greatness (in *vv.* 11, 12), then the holiness (*v.* 13), and, lastly, the redeeming mercy of the Lord (*v.* 15), as the things that cannot fail.

v. 15. *And Joseph.* The allusion to Joseph may be justified by the prominence of Joseph in the Egyptian period of the history; but it would seem to argue that the Psalmist was a native or a citizen of Northern Israel (comp. Ps. lxxx. 1, 2 and lxxxi. 5).

vv. 16—18 are obviously the description of the passage of the Red Sea,

amidst the terrors of the storm, which marked the overwhelming of the Egyptian host (comp. Hab. iii. 9—13).

v. 18. *Round about*—literally, “in the wheel,” that is, probably, “in the whirlwind.”

vv. 19, 20 express the sense of mystery of the manner of God's judgment, of which the waves of the sea hid all traces. Only one thing was clear, that His people were led safely, like sheep, through the abyss of danger (comp. lxxviii. 53, 54), and that it was He who went before them as their Shepherd. The end of the Psalm is abrupt—almost as if to mark connection with the great Psalm which follows.

PSALM LXXVIII.

This is the first and greatest of the historical Psalms—an inspired comment on the sacred history, with an avowed didactic purpose of warning, by a recital of God's repeated mercies and of Israel's repeated sins. Such comments we find in the Prophecies (see, for example, Ezek. xx. 3—28); but the Psalmist dwells on the past with far greater historic detail, and, moreover, identifies himself more fully in sympathy with the people whose sin he so candidly records. Under the shadow of this main idea there runs also through the Psalm a secondary purpose, to emphasize for some special reason the transference of the spiritual and temporal leadership from Ephraim to Judah, from Shiloh to Zion. These historical Psalms have a double value. They illustrate and confirm the historic record, always giving it vividness, and occasionally adding fresh touches of detail. But their real importance lies in the light which they throw on the religious conception of that history, which, indeed, alone makes it a continual lesson on the eternal will of God and the unchanging characteristics of humanity.

The Psalm is ascribed to Asaph; and although, as usual, many various dates have been found for it by critical conjecture, there is much to support the ancient ascription, not only in the singular beauty and perfection of the poem, and the imposing tone of authority, resembling the tone of Ps. 1., and well suiting “Asaph the Seer,” but, perhaps even more, in the abrupt pause at the accession of David, and the absence of all reference to the glories of his reign, which would be inconceivable in a later Psalmist. Why Asaph should have dwelt so emphatically on the primacy of Judah as against the tribe of Ephraim (with which the “Psalms of Asaph” usually shew special sympathy), we cannot tell. But this warning may have been called for by some crisis in the history of David's later years; when we see traces (as, for example, in 2 Sam. xix. 41—43; xx. 1—22) of the jealousy against Judah, which was to break out hereafter in the revolt of Israel under the leadership of Ephraim.

After (*a*) the introduction (in *vv.* 1—9) of general warning to Israel, the Psalm dwells at length (*b*), in *vv.* 10—40, on the wonders of God's hand in the wilderness and the rebellions of the people; then (*c*), in *vv.* 41—56, it goes back from this to the deliverance from Egypt, and on to the settlement in Canaan; (*d*), lastly and briefly, in *vv.* 57—73, it touches on the rebellions in the days of the Judges, the fall of Shiloh and the establishment of the Sanctuary in Zion, and of the royalty of David.

feared : and who may stand in thy sight when thou art angry ?

8 Thou didst cause thy judgment to be heard from heaven : the earth trembled, and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment : and to help all the meek upon earth.

10 The fierceness of man shall turn to thy praise : and the fierceness of them shalt thou refrain.

11 Promise unto the Lord your God, and keep it, all ye that are round about him : bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall refrain the spirit of princes : and is wonderful among the kings of the earth.

PSALM 77.

Voce mea ad Dominum.

I WILL cry unto God with my voice : even unto God will I cry with my voice, and he shall hearken unto me.

2 In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord : my sore ran, and ceased not in the night-season ; my soul refused comfort.

3 When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God : when my heart is vexed, I will complain.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking : I am so feeble, that I cannot speak.

5 I have considered the days of old : and the years that are past.

6 I call to remembrance my song : and in the night I commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirits.

7 Will the Lord absent himself

for ever : and will he be no more intreated ?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever : and is his promise come utterly to an end for evermore ?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious : and will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure ?

10 And I said, It is mine own infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most Highest.

11 I will remember the works of the Lord : and call to mind thy wonders of old time.

12 I will think also of all thy works : and my talking shall be of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, is holy : who is so great a God as our God ?

14 Thou art the God that doest wonders : and hast declared thy power among the people.

15 Thou hast mightily delivered thy people : even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid : the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water, the air thundered : and thine arrows went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder heard round about : the lightnings shone upon the ground ; the earth was moved, and shook withal.

19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters : and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like sheep : by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

DAY 15.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 78.

Attendite, popule.

HEAR my law, O my people : I incline your ears unto the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable : I will declare hard sentences of old ;

3 Which we have heard and known : and such as our fathers have told us :

4 That we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come : but to shew the honour of the Lord, his mighty and wonderful works that he hath done.

5 He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law : which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children ;

6 That their posterity might

The whole style of the Psalm is singularly beautiful and perfect, shewing no touch of ruggedness or obscurity, and preserving throughout a tone of calm and dignified authority. Comp. Matt. xiii. 35 ("spoken by the prophet"). It is a *Maschil*—a Psalm of reflection and instruction—in the very highest degree.

v. 2. *Parable . . . hard sentences* ("dark sayings"). Comp. xlix. 4 and note there. The names seem more applicable there than here. But the reference here appears to be simply to a teaching of deep spiritual truths, which the multitude neglect, through historical facts, which they all know. In Matt. xiii. 34 the verse is accordingly applied to the teaching of Our Lord by parables.

v. 5. The "Covenant" or "testimony" (see xix. 7) and the Law, which was to guard it, were to be orally taught from fathers to children, and so to be a living power, treasured in memory from generation to generation (comp. Deut. iv. 9; vi. 7—9, 20—25). The "Song of Moses" (Deut. xxxii. 28; xxxii. 47) is the grandest example of such teaching; the Passover question and answer (Exod. xii. 26, 27) the most formal and permanent. Yet the object was not to chronicle the glory and greatness of the forefathers, but rather to take warning by their sins and chastisements. Note the fulfilment of this command after the Exile in Neh. ix. 7—34; Dan. ix. 4—19.

v. 10. *Like as, &c.* There is no "like as" in the original. The verse abruptly states what may be (as has been suggested) a metaphorical description of faithlessness (like "the broken bow" of v. 58), but certainly looks like a historical (although perhaps a typical) fact. The children of Ephraim are purposely singled out as representatives of faithless Israel, in accordance with a general purpose in the Psalm; but it is to be remembered that, on the entrance into Canaan under Joshua (himself an Ephraimite), they were the leading tribe, having both the sanctuary of Shiloh and the assembling place of Shechem. Of the failure of complete conquest (see Judg. i. 21—35; ii. 2, 3; iii. 1—4), they, therefore, bore the chief responsibility. It is to their failure through indolence or cowardice—perhaps to some conspicuous instance of it—that the Psalm alludes. The "bows" may best be taken lite-

rally; the Ephraimites were (it seems) the archers of Israel (contrast 2 Sam. i. 18.)

v. 13. *Zaan* (Tanis), mentioned in Num. xiii. 22, is a chief city of Lower Egypt, the region in which Israel was settled, and probably the chief scene of the plagues.

vv. 14—17 cover the first period of the wanderings in the wilderness during the approach to Sinai (Exod. xiv.—xvii).

vv. 19—31 dwell in detail on the first murmurings of Israel—blending together (it would seem) the records of Exod. xvi. and Num. xi. 18—35—in the craving, not only for food, but for savoury food, such as they had enjoyed in Egypt.

v. 24. *So he commanded.* It should be (as in R.V.) "Yet He commanded"—referring to the wonders already wrought for Israel.

v. 26. *Angels' food*—literally, "bread of the mighty"; but our version is probably a right explanation. The gift of the manna ("which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know") was called the "bread from heaven" (comp. John vi. 81), and the spiritual lesson to be learnt by so regarding it, is enforced in Deut. viii. 3.

vv. 28—31. Comp. Num. xi. 31—35. The event is typical of man's discontent with God's provision (spiritual or temporal), and of prayer for self-chosen luxuries, which should not have been uttered, granted for chastisement through the evil unconsciously desired. Many ruined lives are *Kibroth-hattaavah* ("graves of lust").

v. 32. Comp. Num. xiv., xvi.

vv. 34—40 cover in general description the life in the wilderness—God's blessings showered on Israel in vain, then His chastisement, for a time, doing what blessing could not do; soon the passing away of the brief impression, and, in spite of all, the constant forgiveness and forbearance of God.

vv. 42—52, breaking the narrative order, go back to bring out in detail the plagues of Egypt, which should have been to Israel at once a monu-

know it : and the children which were yet unborn ;

7 To the intent that when they came up : they might shew their children the same ;

8 That they might put their trust in God : and not to forget the works of God, but to keep his commandments ;

9 And not to be as their forefathers, a faithless and stubborn generation : a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not stedfastly unto God ;

10 Like as the children of Ephraim : who being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle.

11 They kept not the covenant of God : and would not walk in his law ;

12 But forgot what he had done : and the wonderful works that he had shewed for them.

13 Marvellous things did he in the sight of our forefathers, in the land of Egypt : even in the field of Zoan.

14 He divided the sea, and let them go through : he made the waters to stand on an heap.

15 In the day-time also he led them with a cloud : and all the night through with a light of fire.

16 He clave the hard rocks in the wilderness : and gave them drink thereof, as it had been out of the great depth.

17 He brought waters out of the stony rock : so that it gushed out like the rivers.

18 Yet for all this they sinned more against him : and provoked the most Highest in the wilderness.

19 They tempted God in their hearts : and required meat for their lust.

20 They spake against God also, saying : Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness ?

21 He smote the stony rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and the streams flowed withal : but can he give bread also, or provide flesh for his people ?

22 When the Lord heard this, he was wroth : so the fire was kindled in Jacob, and there came up heavy displeasure against Israel ;

23 Because they believed not in God : and put not their trust in his help.

24 So he commanded the clouds above : and opened the doors of heaven.

25 He rained down manna also upon them for to eat : and gave them food from heaven.

26 So man did eat angels' food : for he sent them meat enough.

27 He caused the east-wind to blow under heaven : and through his power he brought in the south-west-wind.

28 He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust : and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.

29 He let it fall among their tents : even round about their habitation.

30 So they did eat, and were well filled ; for he gave them their own desire : they were not disappointed of their lust.

31 But while the meat was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them : yea, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel.

32 But for all this they sinned yet more : and believed not his wondrous works.

33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity : and their years in trouble.

34 When he slew them, they sought him : and turned them early, and enquired after God.

35 And they remembered that God was their strength : and that the high God was their redeemer.

36 Nevertheless, they did but flatter him with their mouth : and dissembled with him in their tongue.

37 For their heart was not whole with him : neither continued they stedfast in his covenant.

38 But he was so merciful, that he forgave their misdeeds : and destroyed them not.

ment of God's mercy to them, and a warning of His judgment on rebellion against His will. The description touches briefly the first, second, fourth, and eighth plagues (Exod. vii., viii., ix.), and then dwells with great emphasis on the plague of hail (Exod. ix.), probably as the most unprecedented, and the slaying of the first-born (Exod. xii.) as at once the most terrible and the last decisive plague.

v. 42. *The Holy One of Israel*—a name frequently used by Isaiah; but in the Psalter it found here and in Ps. lxxi. 22; lxxxix. 18.

v. 46. *Lice* is an error for "flies" (see A.V. and R.V.).

v. 50. *Evil angels*—probably, "angels of woe," "destroying angels," directing physical powers for the execution of the wrath of the Lord.

v. 51. *Pestilence*—making clear what in the narrative of Exodus is not explicitly stated—that the destruction of the first-born was by pestilence (comp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16).

vv. 52—56, changing from the stern tone of the preceding verses to a tone of exquisite sweetness, sum up in a few words the whole deliverance of the flock of the Lord, and their settlement in the holy land of their rest.

vv. 57—59 evidently describe the rebellions and apostasies of the time of the Judges, ending at last in the overthrow of Shiloh, which had been throughout, since the last days of Joshua, the Sanctuary of God. The destruction of Shiloh, unrecorded in the history, but plainly referred to here and in Jer. vii. 12, 14; xxvi. 6, must have been after the great defeat in the days of Eli. The Ark, when restored, never returned thither.

PSALM LXXIX.

The close connection of this most touching "Psalm of Asaph" with Ps. lxxiv. is obvious. It is clearly the same desolation of the land which is contemplated, with the same cry of anguish and prayer. Only in Ps. lxxiv. the defilement and desolation of the Sanctuary are most dwelt upon; in this Psalm the overthrow and the slaughter of the people of God. Here also there is singular resemblance to the Book of Jeremiah; vv. 6, 7 are almost verbally identical with Jer. x. 25. The Psalm (which is quoted as Scripture in 1 Macc. vii. 15) seems evidently to belong to his time, possibly to his hand. The whole tenour of it is much like the Lamentations, but simpler and less detailed in its description of the ruin and suffering.

It consists of (a), in vv. 1—4, a complaint of the bloodshed and desolation of Israel; and (b), in vv. 5—14, a prayer for help, pleading emphatically God's love for His people, but pleading also "for His Name's sake" and "His glory"—to be vindicated by righteous judgment upon godlessness or idolatry.

v. 64. *Given in marriage*—properly, "praised in the marriage song."

v. 65. *There were, &c.* It should be, "their widows made no lamentation." There was no heart, either for joy or mourning. When Hophni and Phinehas fell, the heart of Phinehas' widow (like that of Eli) broke, not at their death, but at the loss of the Ark (1 Sam. iv. 19—22). Comp. the experience of Ezekiel in later days (Ezek. xxiv. 15—27).

vv. 66—67—describing with a striking boldness of metaphor, characteristic of an early age, the awaking of the Lord to vengeance, and the smiting of the flying enemy—may allude to the various deliverances by the hand of the Judges, but evidently refer mainly to the victories of the days of Saul and David, which established Israel permanently as a victorious and dominant empire.

vv. 67—72. The transference of the leadership from Ephraim to Judah, and of the Sanctuary from Shiloh to Zion, is marked with great emphasis, but the exaltation and the greatness of David is touched with singular modesty, and even slightness of treatment. Stress is laid only (see R.V.) on "the integrity of his heart," and "the skilfulness of his hands." No word, again, is found on the royalty of Solomon or on the building of the Temple, which would have been so apposite to the subject. The "Sanctuary," as in the days of David, is still on Mount Zion (see v. 69). This might be intelligible in the days of the ancient Asaph, for such reticence as to David might well be dictated by the king himself, and Solomon had not yet succeeded; in a Psalm of later date it would be almost impossible.

39 Yea, many a time turned he his wrath away : and would not suffer his whole displeasure to arise.

40 For he considered that they were but flesh : and that they were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

41 Many a time did they provoke him in the wilderness : and grieved him in the desert.

42 They turned back, and tempted God : and moved the Holy One in Israel.

43 They thought not of his hand : and of the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy ;

44 How he had wrought his miracles in Egypt : and his wonders in the field of Zoan.

45 He turned their waters into blood : so that they might not drink of the rivers.

46 He sent lice among them, and devoured them up : and frogs to destroy them.

47 He gave their fruit unto the caterpillar : and their labour unto the grasshopper.

48 He destroyed their vines with hail-stones : and their mulberry-trees with the frost.

49 He smote their cattle also with hail-stones : and their flocks with hot thunder-bolts.

50 He cast upon them the furiousness of his wrath, anger, displeasure, and trouble : and sent evil angels among them.

51 He made a way to his indignation, and spared not their soul from death : but gave their life over to the pestilence ;

52 And smote all the first-born in Egypt : the most principal and mightiest in the dwellings of Ham.

53 But as for his own people, he led them forth like sheep : and carried them in the wilderness like a flock.

54 He brought them out safely, that they should not fear : and overwhelmed their enemies with the sea.

55 And brought them within

the borders of his sanctuary : even to his mountain which he purchased with his right hand.

56 He cast out the heathen also before them : caused their land to be divided among them for an heritage, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

57 So they tempted, and displeased the most high God : and kept not his testimonies ;

58 But turned their backs, and fell away like their forefathers : starting aside like a broken bow.

59 For they grieved him with their hill-altars : and provoked him to displeasure with their images.

60 When God heard this, he was wroth : and took sore displeasure at Israel.

61 So that he forsook the tabernacle in Silo : even the tent that he had pitched among men.

62 He delivered their power into captivity : and their beauty into the enemy's hand.

63 He gave his people over also unto the sword : and was wroth with his inheritance.

64 The fire consumed their young men : and their maidens were not given to marriage.

65 Their priests were slain with the sword : and there were no widows to make lamentation.

66 So the Lord awaked as one out of sleep : and like a giant refreshed with wine.

67 He smote his enemies in the hinder parts : and put them to a perpetual shame.

68 He refused the tabernacle of Joseph : and chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;

69 But chose the tribe of Judah : even the hill of Sion which he loved.

70 And there he built his temple on high : and laid the foundation of it like the ground which he hath made continually.

71 He chose David also his servant : and took him away from the sheep-folds.

72 As he was following the ewes great with young ones he

v. 1 touches briefly what is the chief subject in Ps. lxxiv., the pollution of the Temple; and then goes on to dwell on the blood shed like water, the dead bodies left unburied to the birds and beasts of prey, the Holy City a heap of stones, and the covenanted people of God a scorn and derision. The picture is the same, which is drawn out in far greater detail in the Book of the Lamentations. Not one of these woes had been unforecast (see Deut. xxviii. 26; 1 Kings ix. 6—9; Mic. iii. 2; Jer. vii. 33; viii. 2, &c., &c.). Not one failed of even more terrible repetition in the final destruction of Jerusalem.

v. 4 is almost identical with Ps. xlv. 14 (comp. lxxx. 6).

vv. 6, 7 are identical with Jer. x. 25; but the passage, both here and there, grows so naturally out of the context, that neither seems taken for the other. The appearance is of contemporaneousness and natural coincidence of thought.

v. 8 implies the confession so often made (as in Lam. i. 8, 18; iii. 42—44; Dan. ix. 5—14) of the deserving of all by the old sins of Israel—"the ini-

quities of our forefathers" (see R.V.). But the prayer is that the well-merited chastisement may have done its work, and may accordingly pass away.

vv. 9, 10. Here, as in v. 13, the prayer is for the sake of the Name of the Lord. Naturally, as we see in the case of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 33—35; xix. 11—13), victory over those who were called the people of Jehovah, led to scorn of Him and blasphemy against Him. The sin of God's servants, as in itself, so also in the shame and chastisement it brings, "gives occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme."

v. 12. *Those appointed to die*—perhaps the prisoners sent to the Chaldean army or to Babylon to be slaughtered there (see 2 Kings xxv. 7, 21).

v. 14 is a gleam of hope and confidence at the end of the long cry of anguish. In spite of all they are God's people, and (as so often in the Asaphic Psalms) "the sheep of His pasture"; the time of relief and of thanksgiving must come, and, when it does come, shall go on from generation to generation.

PSALM LXXX.

This Psalm of Asaph, by its unusual emphasis on Israel, as "Joseph" or "Ephraim," appears to belong to the Northern Kingdom of Israel at some time of suffering and disaster, and prays that it may not become a final ruin. It may belong to the time of the Exile, but, if the allusion in v. 1 may be held to imply that the Temple was still standing, it must be referred to the period—a long agony of decline and fall—which is depicted to us in the sad and terrible prophecy of Hosea.

It is divided by the refrain "Turn us," &c., into three parts: (a), in vv. 1—3, a cry to the good Shepherd of Israel, who still dwells between the Cherubim; (b), in vv. 4—7, a complaint of sorrow and unanswered prayer; (c), in vv. 8—19, a plea for the vineyard of the Lord, which He had Himself planted, and which man laid waste, and for the covenant of His promise.

It is headed (like Ps. xlv., lxix.) on *Shoshannim-Eduth*—"on the Lilies—a Testimony."

vv. 1, 2. There is, after the characteristic appeal, as in all Asaphic Psalms, to God as "the Shepherd of Israel," a manifest reference to His ancient leading of the people in the wilderness. Hence the allusion to the cherubim (comp. the grand description of Ezek. i. x.); hence the naming of the tribes "Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses"—the descendants of Rachel—which formed

together the "camp of Ephraim" on the west side of the Tabernacle (Num. ii. 18—24). It is notable that the Levites of the family of Gershon, of which Asaph was the head in the days of David, encamped on the west side of the Tabernacle, close to this "camp of Ephraim" (Num. iii. 23), and may have had thus a traditional connection with these three tribes. The same tribes

took him: that he might feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

73 So he fed them with a faithful and true heart: and ruled them prudently with all his power.

DAY 16.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 79.

Deus, venerunt.

O GOD, the heathen are come into thine inheritance: thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones.

2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air: and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the land.

3 Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem: and there was no man to bury them.

4 We are become an open shame to our enemies: a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us.

5 Lord, how long wilt thou be angry: shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever?

6 Pour out thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known thee: and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy Name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob: and laid waste his dwelling-place.

8 O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon: for we are come to great misery.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name: O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins, for thy Name's sake.

10 Wherefore do the heathen say: Where is now their God?

11 O let the vengeance of thy servants' blood that is shed: be openly shewed upon the heathen in our sight.

12 O let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before thee: according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die.

13 And for the blasphemy

wherewith our neighbours have blasphemed thee: reward thou them, O Lord, seven-fold into their bosom.

14 So we, that are thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, shall give thee thanks for ever: and will always be shewing forth thy praise from generation to generation.

PSALM 80.

Qui regis Israel.

HEAR, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep: shew thyself also, thou that sittest upon the cherubim.

2 Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses: stir up thy strength, and come, and help us.

3 Turn us again, O God: shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

4 O Lord God of hosts: how long wilt thou be angry with thy people that prayeth?

5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears: and givest them pleteousness of tears to drink.

6 Thou hast made us a very strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7 Turn us again, thou God of hosts: shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9 Thou madest room for it: and when it had taken root it filled the land.

10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it: and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees.

11 She stretched out her branches unto the sea: and her boughs unto the river.

12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedge: that all they that go by pluck off her grapes?

were settled close together in the centre of Palestine; and though Benjamin, as a whole, followed the fortunes of Judah at the disruption of the kingdom, yet some portion of it on the North may have been associated with the kindred tribes of the house of Joseph.

v. 4-6 evidently indicate a time of repentance, perhaps coming too late, in the kingdom of Israel. We find it noted that its last king, Hoshea (2 Kings xvii. 2), though "he did evil in the sight of the Lord," yet was "not as the kings that went before him."

v. 5. Comp. Ps. xlii. 2, 3; cii. 9; Isa. xxx. 20.

v. 6. *A strife*—the helpless prize of contention; as, for example, between the great emperors of Assyria and Egypt.

v. 8. In Gen. xlix. 22, Joseph is compared to "a fruitful bough" (apparently of a vine). The metaphor applied to Israel is frequent (see Isa. v. 1-7; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xv. 6; xvii. 6-8). Hence the great golden vine afterwards sculptured on the gate of the Temple. We may note Our Lord's application of the figure to Himself, as the true life of Israel (John xv. 1-8).

v. 11. *The sea . . . the river* (Euphrates)—the eastern and western bounds of the grant to Israel (Josh.

i. 4), realized for a time in the days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 21).

v. 13. *The wild boar* (here only mentioned in Holy Scripture) is evidently the great enemy, although the lion is the more especial emblem of Assyria (see Nah. ii. 11-13). The vine first loses its protecting fence (v. 12), then the beasts make havoc of it (v. 13), at last, ruined by their ravages, it is burnt and cut down as worthless (v. 16). Comp. John xv. 6.

v. 17. *Let thy hand be, &c.*—that is, for guidance and protection; *the man of thy right hand*—the man whom thou delightest to honour; *the son of man . . . self*—the representative of humanity, weak in itself, made strong in God. The primary reference is to Israel, as a nation, impersonated perhaps in David; but the old Jewish commentators recognised the title as properly belonging in perfection only to the Messiah. We note how constantly Our Lord (and He alone) applies the title "Son of Man" to Himself, as sharing and exalting our humanity.

v. 19. *Turn us again, &c.* This refrain (with which comp. Ps. lxxxv. 4; Lam. v. 21) strikes a deeper note than the prayer, "Turn unto us, O Lord," or the exhortation, "Turn ye to the Lord," which are so frequent. It recognises the repentance of the contrite heart itself as the gift of God's grace, as in the profounder utterances of the Old Testament, and in the constant teaching of the New.

PSALM LXXXI.

This Psalm (ascribed to Asaph) is clearly a Psalm of Festival. It has no indication of date; the Temple and the Kingdom are still standing; but there are signs of danger and of some falling away. It might well belong to the religious restoration of Josiah. From v. 3, which apparently should be rendered, "Blow the trumpet in the new moon, and at the full moon on our solemn feast day," it is thought to have had a double use; first at the Feast of Trumpets (Num. xxix. 1), the new moon of the month *Tisri* (on which day it is still used by the Jews); and next at the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the same month—the most joyous of all the Festivals—the gladness of which was at once justified and enhanced by the solemn reconciliation of the great day of Atonement, which intervened between the two festivals. The only argument against this view—hardly a sufficient one—is the emphatic notice of the Exodus from Egypt, which would certainly suit better with the full moon of the Passover, but which would be clearly appropriate at any Festival. Like Ps. viii., lxxxiv., it is said to be *on Githith*, i.e. on the lyre, or after the measure, of Gath.

The Psalm falls into two parts: (a), in vv. 1-5, the invitation to joy and thanksgiving; then (b), in vv. 6-17, the voice of the Lord Jehovah in pleading and exhortation, rebuke and promise.

13 The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up : and the wild beasts of the field devour it.

14 Turn thee again, thou God of hosts, look down from heaven : behold, and visit this vine ;

15 And the place of the vineyard that thy right hand hath planted : and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself.

16 It is burnt with fire, and cut down : and they shall perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand : and upon the son of man, whom thou madest so strong for thine own self.

18 And so will not we go back from thee : O let us live, and we shall call upon thy Name.

19 Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts : shew the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

PSALM 81.

Exultate Deo.

SING we merrily unto God our strength : make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob.

2 Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret : the merry harp with the lute.

3 Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon : even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast-day.

4 For this was made a statute for Israel : and a law of the God of Jacob.

5 This he ordained in Joseph

for a testimony : when he came out of the land of Egypt, and had heard a strange language.

6 I eased his shoulder from the burden : and his hands were delivered from making the pots.

7 Thou calledst upon me in troubles, and I delivered thee : and heard thee what time as the storm fell upon thee.

8 I proved thee also : at the waters of strife.

9 Hear, O my people, and I will assure thee, O Israel : if thou wilt hearken unto me,

10 There shall no strange god be in thee : neither shalt thou worship any other god.

11 I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it.

12 But my people would not hear my voice : and Israel would not obey me.

13 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts : and let them follow their own imaginations.

14 O that my people would have hearkened unto me : for if Israel had walked in my ways,

15 I should soon have put down their enemies : and turned my hand against their adversaries.

16 The haters of the Lord should have been found liars : but their time should have endured for ever.

17 He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour : and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied thee.

DAY 16.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 82.

Deus stetit.

GOD standeth in the congregation of princes : he is a Judge among gods.

2 How long will ye give wrong judgment : and accept the persons of the ungodly ?

3 Defend the poor and fatherless : see that such as are in need and necessity have right.

4 Deliver the out-cast and poor:

save them from the hand of the ungodly.

5 They will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

6 I have said, Ye are gods : and ye are all the children of the most Highest.

7 But ye shall die like men : and fall like one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, and judge thou

v. 2. *Take a Psalm, i.e.* "raise a Psalm" with voices and music joined—the festive music of the timbrel (see lxviii. 25), the regular Psalmic music of the harp and lute, and the special blast of the trumpet or "cornet" of ram's horn, still used in the services of the synagogue.

v. 3. *In the new moon*, on every new moon (Num. x. 10), but especially at the Feast of Trumpets (Num. xxix. 1).

At the time appointed—properly "at the full moon" (of the Feast of Tabernacles).

v. 5. *Joseph* here, as in the other Asaphic Psalms, is the name of the whole people—possibly in this case with some special allusion to the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus.

Out of the land of Egypt is a mistranslation, following the LXX. It should be, "against the land," when the Lord (see Exod. xi. 4) "went forth" in judgment against the Egyptians.

And had heard, &c. The sense is difficult, and our version (following the LXX. and the Vulgate) possibly implies some conjectural emendation. As it stands, the original is abrupt, "The language" (or "lip") "unknown to me"—perhaps "of one unknown to me"—"did I hear." Immediately follows the utterance of the Lord Himself. It is probable that the "I" here refers to the Psalmist himself, and to his breaking off to listen to the mysterious Voice from heaven which follows. Others interpret the "I" of Israel, and make the unknown Voice the utterance of Sinai.

vv. 6—8. The recital of past manifestations of God—in the deliverance from Egypt, the cry of Israel an-

swered at the Red Sea, out of "the cloudy pillar, the secret place of thunder" ("what time as the storm fell upon thee"), and the proving at the waters of Meribah (Exod. xvii. 6, 7)—is much like the pleading of God with His people in Mic. vi. 3—5.

v. 6. *From making the pots.* It should be, "from the basket," used for carrying the burdens of bricks or clay, and often so represented on the Egyptian monuments.

vv. 9—11 contain the substance of His appeal to Israel made again and again (see, for example, Deut. xi., xxviii.). It is an appeal both by His past mercies and by the sanction of future promises—an appeal, therefore, at once to the higher motive of grateful love, and the lower motives of hope and fear.

v. 13. God's heaviest punishment of the sinner is to leave him to the blindness and misery of his own sin. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17).

vv. 14—17 are the utterance of the loving sorrow of God over His erring children, of which the first example is in Gen. vi. 5, 6, "it repented the Lord God, and grieved Him at the heart," and the fullest manifestation is in the tears of God incarnate shed over Jerusalem.

v. 16. *Should have been found liars,* properly (as in R.V.) "should submit themselves" (or "yield feigned obedience") unto Him.

v. 17 seems taken from the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 13, 14), the wheat being the emblem of the strength, and the honey of the sweetness, of food.

PSALM LXXXII.

This bold and striking "Psalm of Asaph" may belong to any time in the history. The nearest parallel to it is in the address of Jehoshaphat to his subordinate judges (2 Chr. xix. 6, 7). Well worthy of Asaph the Seer, it breathes the very spirit of the Old Testament prophecy (comp. e.g. Isa. iii. 13, 14); regarding all earthly authority from that of the king downwards as at once a sacred, and yet a limited and delegated authority, and accordingly boldly rebuking God's vicegerents in the name of God Himself.

It opens (a), in v. 1, with the vision of God on His Throne, uttering (b), in vv. 2—4, His solemn rebuke and charge to the judges of Israel; but (c) the Psalmist (in v. 5) sees despairingly how wilfully deaf they are to the Divine appeal. Then (d) comes from the Throne (in vv. 6, 7) the sentence of condemnation, and the Psalmist cries out to the Great Judge to arise and take the judgment into His own hand.

v. 1. *Princes.* It should be, "the congregation of God"—that is, Israel, as "the congregation of the Lord Jehovah" (see Num. xxvii. 17); although, perhaps, in accordance with the general tenour of the Psalm, the nations of the world are looked upon as in the outer circles of that congregation.

Gods here, and in v. 6, are the princes of Israel; so called, as Our Lord expressly declares (John x. 34, 35), because "the word of the Lord came to them" to give them authority in His Name (comp. Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9; and also Exod. iv. 6; vii. 1). In Ps. viii. 5 man is but "a little lower than God." They who are exalted by Him above their fellows catch by that exaltation some brighter reflection of the Divine majesty.

v. 2. *Accept the persons.* Comp. Deut. i. 16, 17; 2 Chr. xix. 6, 7. The "person" is strictly the "face"—that is (as in this phrase generally), the outward circumstance, appearance, or rank, which is not the real man. It is the essential characteristic of God's judgment that it "respecteth or accepteth no man's person" (2 Sam. xiv. 14; Acts x. 34; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6). By the confession even of enemies, it was the perfection of this characteristic which marked out visibly the true Son of God (Matt. xxii. 16). In measure it must be the glory of all the judgments of those who are children and servants of God.

vv. 3, 4. The voice of God, speaking as here directly, or through the voices of the Prophets, is always the champion of the rights of all, but especially of the friendless and the

distressed; oppression and injustice are denounced at least as often and as vehemently as sin directly against God Himself (see Isa. i. 17; iii. 13—15; Jer. xxi. 12; Amos v. 11, 12, 15, &c.). Note also the protestation of Job (Job xxix. 11—17; xxxi. 16—21).

v. 5 may be still the utterance of the Great Judge, but it is more probably the despondent comment of the Psalmist; he waits to see obedience to the Word of God, but waits in vain.

All the foundations, &c. (comp. Ps. xi. 3). That which should have been our rest and strength fails under us, and what hope is left?

v. 6. *Ye are gods, &c.* This utterance of God declares in man—and especially in the leaders of men—the existence of the Divine image, and accordingly of sonship of the Infinite God. Of One alone was the saying true in perfection; but even the imperfect manifestations of it should have been a preparation for that perfect revelation of God in man. In this sense Our Lord argues from the passage in John x. 34, 35.

v. 7. There is a striking antithesis between this verse and the preceding—"men" as opposed to "gods," "princes" of earth to "children of the Most Highest." They who treat their authority and greatness as their own shall be taken at their word, and accordingly feel all the littleness and transitoriness of mere humanity.

v. 8. The appeal to God is to make His judgment not only visible and direct, but universal, over all the world. If it be the one, it must needs be the other; for limitation belongs only to delegated authority.

PSALM LXXXIII.

This striking and martial "Psalm of Asaph" is an impassioned cry to God in the crisis of struggle against some overwhelming confederacy of enemies. It has been referred by conjecture to the period of distress after the return from the Exile, and even to the Maccabean times. But neither its substance nor its position in the Psalter accord with these later periods. Of all occasions known to us in history none seems so well to suit the language of the Psalm as the great confederacy against Israel in the days of Jehoshaphat of Moab and Ammon, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and "others besides" (2 Chr. xx. 1—29); and it is notable that on that occasion the inspired message of victory came through "Jahaziel . . . a Levite of the sons of Asaph" (v. 14).

The Psalm opens (a), in vv. 1—4, with a cry to God to interpose at the crisis of danger to the very existence of Israel; next (b), in vv. 5—8, it recounts the roll of the enemies confederate against the people of God:

then (c), in *vv.* 9—12, cries to God to give victory, like that of Gideon over the motley host of Midian; and (d) at last, in *vv.* 13—18, prays that their rout may be so utter as at once to put them to shame, and reduce them to homage to the Lord Jehovah.

v. 2. *A murmuring.* It should be "roaring," like the waves of the sea. The confederacy is at once violent and crafty; its design nothing less than extermination.

v. 3. *Secret ones*—God's people hidden, as under His wings over His Sanctuary, from all enmity of man. Comp. Ps. xvii. 8; xxvii. 5; xxxi. 20.

vv. 6—8. The enumeration, although fuller than the list of enemies in 2 Chr. xx., agrees with it exactly in making "the children of Lot," Moab and Ammon, the soul of the confederacy. It begins by surveying the three chief enemies, each with its neighbouring auxiliaries. First comes Edom, with the Ishmaelite nomad tribes spread (see Gen. xxv. 18) over the north of Arabia; next Moab, with the Hagarenes, dwelling on the east of Gilead, driven out by the Reubenites (1 Chr. v. 10, 18, 19, 20); thirdly, Ammon, with Gebal, the tract south of the Dead Sea; and Amalek, the remnant of the great mass of tribes once dominant in the desert of the south. After these chief foes, the Psalmist glances at more distant auxiliaries—Philistia and Tyre on the west, Assyria far away to the north-east. It is a mark of the antiquity of the Psalm that Assyria thus holds but a secondary place, not having yet begun to interfere with predominant power in the affairs of Israel.

vv. 9—12. The victories here referred to are evidently chosen as

being deliverances from two great confederacies of old times—the victory over Jabin and Sisera, and the great confederacy of the northern Canaanites (Judg. iv.), and the victory of Gideon over the great host of the Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the East, with Oreb and Zeeb as their leaders, Zebah and Zalmunna as their kings (Judg. vii., viii.).

v. 10. *Endor* (not mentioned in the Book of Judges) is an old Canaanitish town (Josh. xvii. 11) about four miles south of Mount Tabor, from which Barak came down.

As dung. Comp. 2 Kings ix. 37.

v. 12. *Houses* should be "pastures" or "homesteads."

v. 13. *A wheel*—properly, "a rolling thing," that is, probably, a globular mass of weeds driven before the wind in the desert. The whirlwind of judgment is doubly described as sweeping the foe away like chaff, or spreading destruction as it drives fire through the forest.

vv. 16—18. The Psalmist prays for a two-fold effect on the enemies—first, the lower effect of utter confusion and shame, then the higher effect of awe and homage to the God of Israel, "whose Name is Jehovah," as "Most Highest over all the earth." The corresponding two-fold view of the heathen, as foes of the Lord and as capable of knowledge and fear of Him, is traceable again and again in the Prophets.

PSALM LXXXIV.

This lovely Psalm—the first in this book ascribed to "the sons of Korah"—has marked similarity of thought and expression to the Korahite Psalms (xlii., xlv.), but a brighter and happier tone. It seems clearly a true Pilgrim's Song—the utterance of one far from the Sanctuary, but journeying to it, and hoping soon to reach it. From *v.* 9 it has been supposed to be the work of a king, but this inference is not necessary, and is at variance both with the traditional inscription and the whole tone, which implies familiar service in the Temple. To what date it belongs it is hard to determine, except that *v.* 9 may be taken to indicate that it should be assigned to the time of the monarchy.

Like Ps. viii., lxxxi., it is "upon *Gittith*."

It is divided by the *Selah* into three sections: (a), in *vv.* 1—4, the cry of affectionate longing, envying those who dwell in the Sanctuary of God; (b), in *vv.* 5—8, the description of the blessings and comforts even of the pilgrimage towards it; (c), in *vv.* 9—13, a prayer for the light and defence of God from that Sanctuary to king and people alike.

the earth: for thou shalt take all heathen to thine inheritance.

PSALM 83.

Deus, quis similis?

HOLD not thy tongue, O God, keep not still silence: refrain not thyself, O God.

2 For lo, thine enemies make a murmuring: and they that hate thee have lift up their head.

3 They have imagined craftily against thy people: and taken counsel against thy secret ones.

4 They have said, Come, and let us root them out, that they be no more a people: and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

5 For they have cast their heads together with one consent: and are confederate against thee;

6 The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ismaelites: the Moabites, and Hagarens;

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek: the Philistines, with them that dwell at Tyre.

8 Assur also is joined with them: and have holpen the children of Lot.

9 But do thou to them as unto the Madianites: unto Sisera, and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison;

10 Who perished at Endor: and became as the dung of the earth.

11 Make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeb: yea, make all their princes like as Zeba and Salmuna;

12 Who say, Let us take to ourselves: the houses of God in possession.

13 O my God, make them like unto a wheel: and as the stubble before the wind;

14 Like as the fire that burneth up the wood: and as the flame that consumeth the mountains.

15 Persecute them even so with thy tempest: and make them afraid with thy storm.

16 Make their faces ashamed, O Lord: that they may seek thy Name.

17 Let them be confounded and vexed ever more and more: let them be put to shame, and perish.

18 And they shall know that thou, whose Name is Jehovah: art only the most Highest over all the earth.

PSALM 84.

Quam dilecta!

OHOW amiable are thy dwellings: thou Lord of hosts!

2 My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be always praising thee.

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee: in whose heart are thy ways.

6 Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well: and the pools are filled with water.

7 They will go from strength to strength: and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion.

8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: hearken, O God of Jacob.

9 Behold, O God our defender: and look upon the face of thine Anointed.

10 For one day in thy courts: is better than a thousand.

11 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God: than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

12 For the Lord God is a light and defence: the Lord will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live a godly life.

13 O Lord God of hosts: blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.

PSALM 85.

Benedixisti, Domine.

LORD, thou art become glorious unto thy land: thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast forgiven the offence of thy people: and covered all their sins.

vv. 1, 2. Dwellings (tabernacles) . . . courts. The plural simply denotes the various divisions of the Temple (comp. Isa. i. 12). But perhaps the use of it unconsciously indicates that the writer was one familiar (as a Levite) with all the chambers and courts of the Temple.

v. 2. Hath a desire, &c. The original is stronger, "My soul longeth, yea it fainteth, for the courts of the Lord." Here, as in Ps. xlii., we note that the deepest thirst of the soul is for God's Presence, as felt everywhere, and yet that with this is joined an earnest desire for the revelation of that Presence in the Sanctuary. (The very phrase, "the living God," is found nowhere in the Psalter except here and in xlii. 2.)

v. 3. Our version is probably correct, though some would separate the last clause, "O for Thy altars," &c. The outer courts of the Tabernacle, and (as Josephus says) of the Temple, were planted with trees. It is a singularly natural and beautiful conception which makes the Psalmist think of the birds haunting there, as seeking the protection of God's altar for their young, and so enjoying a privilege which as yet he has not. "Happy they"—birds or men—"who dwell in Thy House; they will be always praising Thee"—in the dumb praise of the lower creation, or in the higher praise of human worship.

v. 5. Thy ways—in the Hebrew simply "the ways," clearly the ways of pilgrimage to the Sanctuary (comp. Isa. xxxv. 8, 10). There is a blessedness, though a less perfect blessedness, in the longing and hope of the pilgrim, whose strength for his journey is in God.

v. 6. The vale of misery. The original is a proper name, "Vale of Baca"; probably (as in all the ancient versions) the "Vale of Weep-

ing." But by some it is interpreted (as in R. V. marg.) as the "Vale of the Balsam-trees" (see 2 Sam. vii. 23), which are said to live in dry soil. Evidently what is intended is a barren, thirsty valley, along which the pilgrims go; but to them it becomes an oasis in the desert—a spring ("well") of water, where, as usual, vegetation springs up, and (for so the last clause should be rendered) "the early rain clothes it with blessing" of fresh verdure and fruit.

v. 7. From strength to strength—each day's journey and rest gives new strength for the morrow to those who "nightly pitch their moving tent, A day's march nearer home."

God of gods—inserted, probably by a variety of reading, from the LXX. The original is simply "God."

v. 9. Thine Anointed—no doubt the king, although the priest was also, and even earlier than the king, the Lord's Anointed. But the verse shews simply that the prayer is for the king; it does not shew that it is by the king; although, but for other considerations, this might be a natural inference.

v. 11. Be a doorkeeper—literally, "stand or lie on the threshold." But the gloss is probably correct. For (1 Chr. xxvi. 12—19) the sons of Korah were the porters of the gates of the Lord's House.

v. 12. God is both "sun and shield" ("light and defence")—light against darkness, and shield against danger. To those who are His, He first gives His grace, and through it the glory of the Divine Image in the soul, and then all the good things of life's happiness are "added to them" (comp. Matt. vi. 33).

v. 13. The blessedness, whether of fruition in *v. 4*, or of expectation in *v. 5*, is claimed at last for all who trust in God.

PSALM LXXXV.

This Psalm of the sons of Korah bears strong indications of having been written soon after the return from the Captivity. The expressions of *vv. 1, 2* can hardly be misunderstood; and the whole Psalm shews that union of thankfulness for restoration, of sense of present distress and weakness, and of bright Messianic hope, which is especially characteristic of the writings of this period. It is because of this vivid hope of the visible kingdom of God on earth that the Psalm is naturally used as a Psalm of CHRISTMAS DAY. Throughout this Psalm, and especially in the singularly beautiful conclusion, there are some remarkable resemblances to the latter part of the Book of Isaiah (comp. *v. 9* with Isa. xlvi. 13; *v. 11* with Isa. xlv. 8, &c.).

It falls into two chief portions, responsive to each other: (*a*), in *vv. 1—7* (perhaps the utterance of the people), a mingled thanksgiving and prayer for the completion of God's deliverance; (*b*), in *vv. 8—13* (perhaps the answer of the priest in the name of the Lord), a bright promise of the granting of that prayer by full gift of spiritual and temporal blessings.

v. 1. Turned away. It should be, "brought back the captivity" (that is, "the captives"). This is the accepted phrase of prophetic promise. Comp. Jer. xxx. 18; xxxi. 23; Ezek. xxxix. 25; and the liturgical addition (*v. 11*) to Ps. xiv.

v. 2. Comp. the fuller description of Ps. xxxii. 1, 2 (where see note). The sense of God's forgiveness is the chief blessing; the withdrawal of the chastisement of His wrath holds only a secondary place.

vv. 4, 5. The transition is abrupt, but not unsuitable to such alternations of feeling as were at this time shewn in the mingled joy and weeping at the foundation of the new Temple (Ezra iii. 11—13). The prayer is to the "God of Salvation," that as He had turned to His people (*v. 3*), so He would turn their hearts to Him—His mercy drawing out their repentance, and so quickening them to new spiritual life.

v. 6. Quicken us. Compare the grand vision of Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14.

v. 8. Concerning me is an erroneous insertion. The speaker "hearkens" on behalf of the people, the "saints" of the Lord.

That they turn not again should be a parenthetical warning, "Only let

them turn not again to folly" (presumption).

vv. 10—12 express, with singular beauty and variety of phrase, the harmony in the visible kingdom of God of the two great principles of truth and love, both in God's dealings with men, and in men's dealings with one another. Now we read of the meeting of mercy and truth; now of the mutual greeting of righteousness and peace; now of a growth of truth in man under the eye of the Divine righteousness, and with it the "shewing of loving-kindness" from above. "To be true in love" is of the essence of Godhead, and therefore of perfect humanity, as reflecting the image of God. Necessarily its complete manifestation is in the Messiah, as being both God and man (Eph. iv. 15).

v. 11. Out of the earth . . . from heaven. The antithesis must not be pressed; the idea is simply of the universal influence of truth and righteousness, manifested from their source in heaven, and calling out a reflex growth on earth.

v. 13. He shall direct, &c.—properly, "shall make His steps a way" for man to follow. The principles of goodness in the soul and in the work of man are "the footprints of God" (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 9, 15).

PSALM LXXXVI.

This Psalm (a "Prayer of David") is the only one in the Third Book ascribed to him. This exceptional ascription cannot be altogether set aside. The Psalm has some characteristics differing from those of the Psalms preceding and following it—an impress of intense personality, a strong confidence in a peculiar favour of God, and a consciousness of an opposition of evil to himself, as the servant of Jehovah—which are constantly found in David's Psalms. On the other hand, there are some similarities to earlier Psalms, and a certain liturgical formality of style, which induce a belief, that it is a later recast for Temple use of some earlier composition, which may well be by David himself. It is marked by a seven-fold repetition of the name "Lord" (*Adonai*) (*vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15*), alternating with the name of Jehovah (in *vv. 1, 6, 11, 17*).

It is throughout a prayer: (*a*), in *vv. 1—7*, appealing emphatically to God's graciousness on behalf of His afflicted and humble servants; (*b*), in *vv. 8—13*, to His almighty power, which is to be manifested to the world; (*c*), in *vv. 14—17*, to His righteous interference in the struggle of evil and good, to shame the one by saving the other.

v. 2. *Holy* or “godly” (as in R. V.). But the marginal reading in A. V., “one whom Thou favourest,” gives substantially the true sense. The word, like the word “saints,” both in the Old and New Testament, means one in covenant with God. The appeal of the Psalmist is not to his own goodness, but to God’s promise, in which he “puts his trust.”

vv. 3—7. Throughout these verses the Psalmist strikes two correspondent keynotes—the assurance of mercy from the Lord, and the sense of helplessness of the servant crying out to Him. In this conception is the secret of that union of humility and confidence which gives a singular tenderness to the passage.

vv. 8—12. In these verses the tone changes. The Psalmist turns from himself and his own need to dwell on the infinite greatness of the Lord, contrasted with the vanity of other gods, and looks on to the day, so often promised in Messianic prophecy (see e.g. Isa. ii. 1—4; Mic. iv. 1—5), when all the nations “whom He has made” shall do homage to their

Maker. In these verses, accordingly, there is less of tenderness and love, more of awe and absolute faith, expressing itself in adoration.

v. 11. *Knit my heart unto thee.* The original is “unite” (or “knit together”) “my heart”—a prayer against distraction and division of heart, of course with the desire of its being knit as a whole to God (Dent. vi. 5; x. 12; comp. Luke x. 41, 42; 1 Cor. vii. 29—35; James i. 8; iv. 8).

v. 13. *The nethermost hell*—the *Sheol* underlying the visible world, and representing the power of decay and death. The “gates of hell” prevail neither against the individual soul nor against the Church of God.

vv. 14—17 (as in so many Psalms of David) not only recognise vividly the existence of an antagonism of the proud and the ungodly to the Psalmist, but boldly assume that such antagonism is due to his being God’s servant, and therefore that his cause is the cause of God Himself, which must put to shame all the antagonism of evil.

PSALM LXXXVII.

This Psalm of the sons of Korah stands out unique in its rugged and impressive force, marked by an incisive brevity and a compression of meaning even to obscurity. Clearly it seems to be one of the most striking anticipations of the inclusion of all nations in the kingdom of God, not as dependents or subjects, but as “fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” The mention of Egypt and Babylon, with Philistia and Tyre, as the chief offerers of homage to God, suggests the time of the prophet Isaiah, after the overthrow of Sennacherib, when these nations, delivered from the terror of Assyria, brought gifts to Hezekiah and to his God (2 Chr. xxxii. 23—31).

This Psalm opens (a), in vv. 1, 2, with a burst of praise of the peculiar glory of Zion; then (b), in vv. 3, 4, it introduces a Divine utterance, including the heathen nations among those who are His; on this (c), in vv. 5—7, the Psalmist comments, seeing with joy one after another born into the people of God under His decree; and he ends with a renewed utterance of the music of thanksgiving to Him, in whom are all our “springs of gladness.”

vv. 1, 2. *Her foundations, &c.* It should certainly be “His foundation”; and possibly (as in R. V. marg.) the passage should run—

“His foundation on the holy hills the Lord loveth;
Yea, the gates of Zion, more, &c.,
Glorious things of thee are spoken, &c.”

The Psalmist touches briefly on

God’s foundation of Zion, His love to that which He has founded, and the glory before God and man which His love bestows. He looks (as in Ps. cxxii., cxxv.) on the physical position of the Holy City in its strength, and sees in it a type of its higher spiritual power.

vv. 3, 4. These verses are evidently misunderstood in our version. They

3 Thou hast taken away all thy displeasure : and turned thyself from thy wrathful indignation.

4 Turn us then, O God our Saviour : and let thine anger cease from us.

5 Wilt thou be displeased at us for ever : and wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from one generation to another ?

6 Wilt thou not turn again, and quicken us : that thy people may rejoice in thee ?

7 Shew us thy mercy, O Lord : and grant us thy salvation.

8 I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me : for

he shall speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, that they turn not again.

9 For his salvation is nigh them that fear him : that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall flourish out of the earth : and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

12 Yea, the Lord shall shew loving-kindness : and our land shall give her increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him : and he shall direct his going in the way.

DAY 17.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 86.

Inclina, Domine.

BOW down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me : for I am poor, and in misery.

2 Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy : my God, save thy servant that putteth his trust in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord : for I will call daily upon thee.

4 Comfort the soul of thy servant : for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good and gracious : and of great mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6 Give ear, Lord, unto my prayer : and ponder the voice of my humble desires.

7 In the time of my trouble I will call upon thee : for thou heardest me.

8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord : there is not one that can do as thou doest.

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship thee, O Lord : and shall glorify thy Name.

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things : thou art God alone.

11 Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth : O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name.

12 I will thank thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart : and will praise thy Name for evermore.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me : and thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.

14 O God, the proud are risen against me : and the congregations of naughty men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before their eyes.

15 But thou, O Lord God, art full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth.

16 O turn thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me : give thy strength unto thy servant, and help the son of thine handmaid.

17 Shew some token upon me for good, that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed : because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

PSALM 87.

Fundamenta ejus.

HER foundations are upon the holy hills : the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

2 Very excellent things are spoken of thee : thou city of God.

3 I will think upon Rahab and

are an utterance of the voice of the Lord Himself—

“I will name Rahab and Babylon among those who know me: Behold Philistia also and Tyre with Ethiopia! This one (of my servants) was born there.”

His eye surveys the heathen; collectively and individually He includes them in His kingdom. Such comprehensive prophecy belongs especially to the glorious age of Isaiah (comp. Mic. iv. 1–4; Isa. ii. 2–5, &c.), anticipating in unequalled clearness the Messianic hope.

Rahab (as in Isa. li. 9; Ps. lxxxix. 10) signifies Egypt. Some make its proper sense “a sea monster,” some “pride.”

The nations here named are exactly those, both far and near, likely to pay homage to the power which had overthrown the Assyrian. Egypt and Ethiopia (comp. 2 Kings xix.) were the ancestral enemies of Assyria; Babylon had revolted and sent presents, as we know (2 Kings xx. 12, 13) to Hezekiah; Tyre had stood a long siege from Assyria; Philistia (2 Kings xviii. 8) had been reconquered by Hezekiah.

vv. 5, 6 should be—

“And of Zion it shall be said,

This man and that was born in her.

The Lord shall count, in registering the peoples, This one was born there.”

It is a passage almost unique, going beyond even v. 4. The alien is registered not only as a servant of God, but as actually born in and belonging to the holy city of God. It anticipates the great declaration, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold . . . there shall be one flock and One Shepherd.”

v. 7. The insertion of “shall He rehearse” is evidently erroneous. The original is literally—

“And singers with trumpeters (or ‘dancers’);

All my springs are in Thee.”

Probably after the former line we must supply “shall sing.” The verse is even more terse and abrupt than the Psalm generally. It has been even thought to be a liturgical direction to the musicians. But it seems to picture the triumphal procession (as in 1 Kings i. 40) of the gathered children of God, gladly acknowledging that in Him are all their springs of life and gladness—“the living waters, which make glad the city of God.”

PSALM LXXXVIII.

This singularly beautiful and mournful Psalm is first ascribed “to the sons of Korah,” and then called “a Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.” Heman is named in 1 Chr. vi. 33 as the head of the Kohathites, or “sons of Korah”; hence the double ascription. In 1 Kings iv. 31; 1 Chr. ii. 6 we read of “Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman” as famous for wisdom in Solomon’s days. There seems no sufficient reason against identifying the Heman here named with the author of this Psalm. For the Psalm, in its ideas and even in its words, bears very strong resemblance to the Book of Job, probably belonging to the age of Solomon, and dwells on the darker and more mysterious side of man’s life and relation to God. It is clearly an individual utterance of the gloomiest hour of doubt and bewilderment in a servant of God at the approach of death, shewing, like the Book of Job itself, that Holy Scripture has its word of understanding and sympathy even for those dark hours. By its use on Good Friday it is obviously conceived of as a type of the spiritual darkness of Calvary, although we cannot suppose that its blank doubt as to the future could even for a moment have attached to the Divine Sufferer.

It is said to be on *Mahalath Leannothe* (see title to Ps. liii.), apparently indicating recitation to a grave sombre tune. The Psalm pours out first (a), in vv. 1–8, an agonized cry of trouble, desolation, and bewildered fear at the approach of death; then (b), in vv. 9–18, an entreaty—almost a remonstrance—pleading with God to save His servant while there is yet time, and urging that plea, with the natural reiteration of distress, by laying once more his troubles before the Lord.

Babylon : with them that know me.

4 Behold ye the Philistines also : and they of Tyre, with the Morians ; lo, there was he born.

5 And of Sion it shall be reported that he was born in her : and the most High shall stablish her.

6 The Lord shall rehearse it when he writeth up the people : that he was born there.

7 The singers also and trumpeters shall he rehearse : All my fresh springs shall be in thee.

PSALM 88.

Domine Deus.

O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee : O let my prayer enter into thy presence, incline thine ear unto my calling.

2 For my soul is full of trouble : and my life draweth nigh unto hell.

3 I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit : and I have been even as a man that hath no strength.

4 Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave : who are out of remembrance, and are cut away from thy hand.

5 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit : in a place of darkness, and in the deep.

6 Thine indignation lieth hard upon me : and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms.

DAY 17.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 89.

Misericordias Domini.

MY song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be shewing thy truth from one generation to another.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever : thy truth shall thou stablish in the heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen : I have sworn unto David my servant ;

4 Thy seed will I stablish for

7 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me : and made me to be abhorred of them.

8 I am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.

9 My sight falleth for very trouble : Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.

10 Dost thou shew wonders among the dead : or shall the dead rise up again, and praise thee ?

11 Shall thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave : or thy faithfulness in destruction ?

12 Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark : and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten ?

13 Unto thee have I cried, O Lord : and early shall my prayer come before thee.

14 Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul : and hidest thou thy face from me ?

15 I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die : even from my youth up thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.

16 Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me : and the fear of thee hath undone me.

17 They came round about me daily like water : and compassed me together on every side.

18 My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me : and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight.

ever : and set up thy throne from one generation to another.

5 O Lord, the very heavens shall praise thy wondrous works : and thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

6 For who is he among the clouds : that shall be compared unto the Lord ?

7 And what is he among the gods : that shall be like unto the Lord ?

8 God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints :

v. 1. *O Lord God of my salvation.* This invocation, adopted from two Psalms of David (Ps. xxvii. 9; li. 14), is singularly striking as opening this Psalm of complaint and misery. Like the "My God" of Ps. xxii. 1, it implies, even in the darkest hour, a trust in the salvation which seems so far away, and cries out, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." It is in the personal knowledge of a God of salvation that the soul finds the one stay, which the darkest perplexities and fears cannot shake, and which enables it to endure—what is worst of all—the weariness of apparently unanswered prayer (v. 1, 9).

v. 2. *Hell* is, as usual, *Sheól*, the unseen mysterious world on the other side of the grave. The Psalm accumulates images to describe the pressure of trial upon the frailty of human nature. There is the consciousness of hopeless weakness, sinking even before the eyes of men into the pit (v. 3); there is the sense of being cast off ("free") among the dead, the neglected corpses of the battlefield, feeling no hand of God, and therefore fancying itself forgotten by Him (v. 4); there is the terror of God's all-righteous judgment, as darkening round the sufferer, and gathering its heaviest storm of indignation over the dying hour (v. 6); there is not even the comfort (such as it is) of human sympathy, for this fails or turns to contempt and hatred (v. 7, 18). Comp. Job xix. 13, 19.

vv. 10—12 express, in more detailed and impassioned utterance, the ideas of Ps. vi. 5; xxx. 9, 10; cxv. 17. Recognising, indeed, the existence of an unseen world, yet, as in the prayer of Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19) and the complaint of Job (Job

x. 20—22), they look upon it as a shadowy land of darkness and forgetfulness, standing in strong contrast with the bright reality of this life. God must be there; but how can He be known and loved, and how can the glory of His righteousness appear? (so in Ps. cxv. 17, 18). There may be a resurrection in the remote future, but the immediate future is a blank, against which the instincts of warm life and bright energy cry out. The thought can come to any servant of God only in the dark hour, but to us Christians, except through mere faithlessness, it should not come even then. For to us "to depart" is at once "to be with Christ," "absent from the body and present with the Lord."

v. 10. *Shall the dead*—properly (as in Isa. xxvi. 14; Job xxvi. 5), the *Rephaim*, the "giant shades of old." The idea is like that of the complaint of the Homeric Achilles, that it is better to be a thrall on earth, than a kingly shade among the dead.

vv. 13—18 come back to the cry of complaint, but now especially of the burden of God's wrath and indignation, long felt in the life-long consciousness of sin and frailty, now gathering like a sea of troubles round the hour of death.

v. 18. *And hid, &c.* The true rendering is, "And mine acquaintance into darkness," or perhaps far more strikingly, "Mine acquaintance is darkness." The darkness of the grave is the only friend the sufferer has left (Job xvii. 14). In that despondent cry the Psalm ends, without one gleam of the comfort and hope we might have expected. It must be read in contrast with such Psalms as Ps. xvi., xvii.

PSALM LXXXIX.

This magnificent Psalm of mingled joy and sorrow—pleading the covenant with David in the face of apparent reversal, and yet with an underlying confidence in its irrevocable certainty—is ascribed to "Ethan the Ezrahite," probably the Ethan or Jeduthun who, with Asaph and Heman, was the third chief of the Levitical companies of song (1 Chr. vi. 44; xv. 17, 19). If it be from his hand, it must refer to the great overthrow of the glory of David's house on the invasion of Shishak, the subjugation of Rehoboam, the capture of Jerusalem, and the spoiling of the Temple (see 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26; 2 Chr. xii.). Many critics place it in one of the later captivities, but there is a fulness and vividness in the quotation of the great promise to David which accords perhaps better with the earlier date. It is a Psalm of great symmetry of style, copiousness, and simplicity of construction, full of a sustained dignity and beauty, and well worthy of a

and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him.

9 O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto thee : thy truth, most mighty Lord, is on every side.

10 Thou rulest the raging of the sea : thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise.

11 Thou hast subdued Egypt, and destroyed it : thou hast scattered thine enemies abroad with thy mighty arm.

12 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine : thou hast laid the foundation of the round world, and all that therein is.

13 Thou hast made the north and the south : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy Name.

14 Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.

15 Righteousness and equity are the habitation of thy seat : mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

16 Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in thee : they shall walk in the light of thy countenance.

17 Their delight shall be daily in thy Name : and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast.

18 For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy loving-kindness thou shalt lift up our horns.

19 For the Lord is our defence : the Holy One of Israel is our King.

20 Thou spakest sometime in visions unto thy saints, and saidst : I have laid help upon one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

21 I have found David my servant : with my holy oil have I anointed him.

22 My hand shall hold him fast : and my arm shall strengthen him.

23 The enemy shall not be able to do him violence : the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

24 I will smite down his foes before his face : and plague them that hate him.

25 My truth also and my mercy shall be with him : and in my Name shall his horn be exalted.

26 I will set his dominion also

in the sea : and his right hand in the floods.

27 He shall call me, Thou art my Father : my God, and my strong salvation.

28 And I will make him my first-born : higher than the kings of the earth.

29 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore : and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

30 His seed also will I make to endure for ever : and his throne as the days of heaven.

31 But if his children forsake my law : and walk not in my judgments ;

32 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments : I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

33 Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him : nor suffer my truth to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips : I have sworn once by my holiness, that I will not fail David.

35 His seed shall endure for ever : and his seat is like as the sun before me.

36 He shall stand fast for evermore as the moon : and as the faithful witness in heaven.

37 But thou hast abhorred and forsaken thine Anointed : and art displeased at him.

38 Thou hast broken the covenant of thy servant : and cast his crown to the ground.

39 Thou hast overthrown all his hedges : and broken down his strong holds.

40 All they that go by spoil him : and he is become a reproach to his neighbours.

41 Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies : and made all his adversaries to rejoice.

42 Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword : and givest him not victory in the battle.

43 Thou hast put out his glory : and cast his throne down to the ground.

44 The days of his youth hast

great "master of song." It is probably on account of its dwelling so emphatically on the promise to David and on the glories of the kingdom promised to his seed, it is made a Proper Psalm for CHRISTMAS DAY.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—4, with a brief reference of thanksgiving for the faithfulness of the Lord in His covenant with David; thence (b), in vv. 5—19, it passes to praise of His majesty and His wondrous works of blessing to Israel; next (c), in vv. 20—36, it dwells in detail on the great promise through Nathan to David and his seed; and lastly (d), in vv. 37—50, changes suddenly to lament over the apparent reversal of that covenant of blessing, and cries to God to vindicate His promise, and renew the glory of His Anointed.

v. 2. *Set up*—properly (as in A.V.), "built up," growing continually in fresh exhibition of mercy and righteousness.

Stablish... heavens. These words dwell on the basis in God's word, firm as the heavens themselves, on which that ever-growing superstructure rests.

vv. 3, 4 explain what is "the faithfulness of the Lord" towards Israel, by quoting in brief the promise to David (see 2 Sam. vii. 12—16).

vv. 5—19. This hymn of praise has a striking fulness and completeness of idea. In it God is seen first in Heaven itself, ruling over the angelic host, His ministers, in unapproachable majesty (vv. 5—9); then as manifested below, curbing the rage of the sea, ruling the earth, which rejoices in His might (vv. 10—14); lastly, in the higher glory of His moral attributes, specially set forth in the infinite blessing of His people Israel (vv. 15—19).

v. 5. *The saints*, or "holy ones," like the gods (*Elohim*) of v. 7, are the angels in Heaven (comp. Job v. 1; xv. 15, &c.). God is exalted amidst the adoration of the angelic host—His ministers both in the realm of nature and the history of humanity (comp. Isa. vi. 1—3; Dan. vii. 10; Rev. v. 11). It is possible that this emphasis on the unapproachable majesty of God was called out by the idolatry in Israel itself, which revered superhuman powers of nature as gods (see 1 Kings xiv. 23, 24).

v. 9 should properly be (as in R.V.)—

"Who is a mighty One like unto Thee, O Jehovah;
"And Thy faithfulness is round about Thee."

The Almighty Power is clothed and manifested in the Divine Truth.

v. 10. *The raging of the sea.* In the Old Testament generally the sea is

an emblem of power, not only irresistible, but terrible; and accordingly God's gracious Omnipotence is set forth especially in curbing its rage (comp. Ps. lxxv. 7; xciii. 3, 4; cxlviii. 6; Prov. viii. 29; Jer. v. 22; Job xxxviii. 11).

v. 11. *Egypt*—properly *Rahab*, as in Ps. lxxxvii. 3 (where see note). The allusion to the overthrow of Egypt (at the Red Sea) is clearly suggested by the mention of the sea in the previous verse (comp. Exod. xv. 6, 11, 12). Perhaps also the meaning of the name ("Pride") is glanced at as typical.

v. 13. The high table land of Tabor towards the west, and the snowy peak of Hermon on the east, correspond to "the north and the south" of the previous clause.

v. 15. Power is an attribute of God; but His essential glory is moral. Righteousness and equity are the "basis" ("habitation") of His Throne; mercy and truth the harbingers of His presence.

v. 16. *That can rejoice in thee*—properly (as in A.V. and R.V.), "that know the joyful sound" of Thy worship. The word "sound" is a technical word—used, for example, of the blowing of the trumpets of the Sanctuary.

vv. 16—19 accumulate various images of the peculiar privileges of Israel—the light of God's countenance upon them (comp. Num. vi. 26), the joyful proclamation of His Name and His righteousness, the exaltation in Him of the horn of active energy, the spreading of the shield of His "defence" over them and their king. (The last verse should be rendered, "To the Lord belongeth our shield; to the Holy One of Israel (belongeth) our king.")

v. 20. *Thy saints.* The original has two varieties of reading, "Thy holy one," or "holy ones." The former

would be most natural, as referring to David; but the latter (meaning the people of Israel) has the support of the ancient versions.

vv. 20—36 are a magnificent expansion of the great promise to David in 2 Sam. vii. 8—16.

v. 21. Three times was David anointed (see 1 Sam. xvi. 13; 2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 3.)

v. 26. *The sea—the floods* (rivers), i.e. the boundaries of the land (comp. lxxx. 11). The "rivers" usually named are "the river" (Euphrates) and "the river" on the border "of Egypt."

v. 28. *My first-born* (comp. Ps. ii. 7; Exod. iv. 22)—in type applied to David himself or (2 Sam. vii. 14) Solomon—in the Antitype to the true Anointed of the Lord, the Son of David, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

v. 30. So the perpetuity promised could belong but imperfectly to the royalty of David—even so contrasting forcibly with the rise and fall of dynasties in the Northern kingdom after the disruption. The perfection of the promise is realized by Daniel (Dan. vii. 14) in application to "one like unto the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven."

vv. 31—34 are an application to the people of Israel of the words at once of warning and of encouragement, which in 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, are applied only to David's son.

vv. 35, 36. *As the faithful witness*, or, *and faithful is the witness.* The interpretation is somewhat difficult. The "faithful witness" may be (a), (as suggested by the parallelism) the moon, on the ground that, the whole Jewish year being lunar, it was the moon, rather than the sun, which was for "signs and seasons and days and years"; or (b) God Himself (as in Job xvi. 19)—although the introduction of God's Name here would be abrupt, and out of place in parallelism with His creatures; or (c), the "covenant" of God with "the day and night"—expressly referred to in Jer. xxxi. 35, 36; xxxiii. 20, 21, as in its fixity, like the "covenant with David." Of these the third (c) seems to be far the best. Some interpret "the witness" of the rainbow, but

the parallelism seems decisive against this interpretation.

vv. 37—44 paint the present condition of things as contrasted in every point with the details of the great promise. The wonder expressed at the suddenness and completeness of the change suits better with an earlier date, such as that of the first great national disaster under Rehoboam.

v. 39. Comp. Ps. lxxx. 12; Isa. v. 5. vv. 45—50 turn to an earnest entreaty—a personal entreaty in the sense of man's frailty and transitoriness, that God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss—an entreaty for the whole nation, that He will not suffer His covenant to fail, and so allow His Name to be blasphemed.

v. 45 is identical with Ps. lxxix. 5. Comp. also Ps. xiii. 1.

v. 46. Comp. Job vii. 6; xiv. 1. The plea from man's transitoriness evidently implies the idea of a weakness which cannot long bear God's hand, and a littleness which He in His infinite greatness may well spare, before it is brought down to the grave (comp. Ps. lxxxviii. 2, 3), into which it already seems ready to sink.

vv. 48—50 exemplify the not unfrequent pleading with God, both by the irrevocable truth of His covenant and for the sake of His Name, lest it be blasphemed. In the former lies the ultimate trust of His servants (Rom. xi. 29; Heb. vi. 16—18). On the latter comp. Ps. x. 13; lxxiv. 22.

v. 49. *Of many people* should be, "of the many peoples"—the reproach (that is) cast upon Israel by the Gentiles.

v. 50. *Slandered the footsteps of thine Anointed.* The immediate sense is, of course, of the present contempt, with which the heir of the promise is pursued. But it is curious that the Targums interpret the words of the delay of the coming of the Messiah, on whom the promise ultimately rests (comp. 2 Pet. iii. 3—9).

Praised be the Lord, &c.... Amen, is the doxology closing the Third Book of the Psalter. It comes in here with singular beauty in connection with the mingled lamentation and confidence of the Psalm itself.

This book—closely connected with the next—includes seventeen Psalms (Ps. xc.—cvi.), all of which are anonymous, except Ps. xc., ascribed to Moses, and Ps. ci., ciii., to David. Throughout the Psalms are Jehovistic. Probably the formation of the book belongs to the time after the Captivity, although much of the material may be far older.

PSALM XC.

This Psalm is entitled "A Prayer of Moses the man of God" (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 1; Josh. xiv. 6). On the literal accuracy of this ascription there has been great diversity of opinion, both ancient and modern. In favour of it are the exceptionality of the ascription and the marked peculiarity of tone, almost unique in its solemnity. It certainly breathes the spirit of the Song of Moses and other parts of Deuteronomy, and suits well the saddened calmness and dignity of the old age of the great Lawgiver. (But the force of this argument depends on our conception of the date to be ascribed to Deuteronomy in its present form.) Against it there is little, except the statement of *v.* 10 (on which see note). The preponderance of evidence seems, on the whole, to be in favour of the ascription.

By whomsoever written, it is well fitted to be the great Funeral Psalm of the Church of all ages. For it is a Psalm not so much of poignant sorrow, as of meditative sadness. While it feels the weakness and transitoriness of human nature, it feels still more deeply that the true "sting of death is sin"; and, while it sounds all the depths of human thought and emotion, it never loses for a moment its grasp of the undying relation of the soul to the eternal God. Hence it sorrows not without hope, and through sorrow finds wisdom and strengthens faith.

It falls into three sections: (*a*), in *vv.* 1—6, it contrasts the eternity of God with the shortlived vanity of human life; (*b*), in *vv.* 7—12, it recognises in sin the source of death's power over man, and prays for the wisdom of repentance; (*c*), in *vv.* 13—17, it asks of God comfort after chastening, and even in sorrow a constant sense of His glory and blessing.

v. 1. *Our refuge*—literally, "our dwelling-place," our own true home in all the changes and chances of human life.

v. 2. *Before the mountains* ("the everlasting hills" of Deut. xxxiii. 15) *were brought forth*, &c.—before (that is) the framework of the world was built, and before "the earth and the world," the *Kosmos* as we see it in its completeness, "was made" upon it.

Thou art, &c. Better (as in A.V. and R.V.), "from everlasting to everlasting," through all the ages of eternity, past, present, and future.

v. 3. *Again thou sayest*, &c. It should be simply, "and sayest." The latter clause may be interpreted as a simple parallelism to the former—

"Thou turnest man to dust,
And sayest, Return (to dust) ye
children of men"—
(comp. Gen. iii. 19); or, as in our
version, of the calling out of a new

generation when the old is passed. This last interpretation is better, both as fuller of meaning (comp. Ps. civ. 29, 30) and as specially appropriate to the natural thought of the old Lawgiver, who had seen one generation die and another succeed.

v. 4. *Seeing that is past*, &c.—probably (as in A.V. and R.V.), "as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch of the night," short and mostly forgotten in sleep (comp. 2 Pet. iii. 8).

vv. 5, 6, as the text stands, may perhaps be best rendered—

"Thou sweepest them away (in a flood);
They are as a sleep in the morning;
They are as the grass which springeth forth;
In the morning it is green and shoots up,
In the evening it is cut down and withereth."

(Perhaps the best paraphrase of the

thou shortened : and covered him with dishonour.

45 Lord, how long wilt thou hide thyself, for ever : and shall thy wrath burn like fire ?

46 O remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men for nought ?

47 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death : and shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell ?

48 Lord, where are thy old loving-kindnesses : which thou swardest unto David in thy truth ?

49 Remember, Lord, the rebuke that thy servants have : and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people ;

50 Wherewith thine enemies have blasphemed thee, and slandered the footsteps of thine anointed : Praised be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

DAY 18.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 90.

Domine, refugium.

LORD, thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made : thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction : again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday : seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

5 As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep : and fade away suddenly like the grass.

6 In the morning it is green, and groweth up : but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.

7 For we consume away in thy displeasure : and are afraid at thy wrathful indignation.

8 Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee : and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For when thou art angry all our days are gone : we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.

10 The days of our age are threescore years and ten ; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years : yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow ; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

11 But who regardeth the power

of thy wrath : for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure.

12 So teach us to number our days : that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

13 Turn thee again, O Lord, at the last : and be gracious unto thy servants.

14 O satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon : so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

15 Comfort us again now after the time that thou hast plagued us : and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

16 Shew thy servants thy work : and their children thy glory.

17 And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us : prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handy-work.

PSALM 91.

Qui habitat.

WHOSO dwelleth under the defence of the most High : shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope, and my strong hold : my God, in him will I trust.

3 For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter : and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall defend thee under his wings, and thou shalt be safe under his feathers : his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for

first two lines is found in the well-known hymn, "Time, like an ever-rolling stream . . . opening day.") The mixture of metaphor will trouble no one who understands poetry, and especially the poetry of the Old Testament.

vv. 7-12. In the previous clause it is simply the perishableness of man which is dwelt upon. Now (as again would be most natural in Moses) comes in the thought of this death of a whole generation or of the whole race, as a fruit of sin and a judgment of God. What would be suggested by the special history of the sin and condemnation of the people in the wilderness is felt to belong to man as man. "Death is the wages of sin." It is this connection of death with sin which is an unbroken revelation of Holy Scripture from the opening of the Book of Genesis to the last chapters of the Apocalypse.

v. 9. A tale that is told. The words "that is told" are not in the Hebrew. Possibly the marginal rendering of R.V. (as "a sound" or "a sigh") is nearest to the original.

v. 10. Threescore years and ten. This version must be allowed to be the one difficulty of the ascription to Moses, to whom in the history 120 years are allotted (as 123 to Aaron, and 110 to Joshua). But it is not decisive. It seems likely that those were exceptional lives, prolonged for exceptional service of God. The Psalmist speaks of the average life of man; and in the generation which died before Moses' eyes in the wilderness, few could have exceeded the threescore years and ten.

The verse should be rendered—

"All the days of our years are threescore and ten,

Or, by reason of strength, four-score years;

Their pride is but labour and sorrow;

Soon it passeth, and we are gone."

The view of life is not the whole truth; for life is not wholly under sin, and therefore it has more in it

than labour and sorrow—the penalties of the Fall (Gen. iii. 16-19). But it is the view natural to the sadness of meditation over the grave, without "the sure and certain hope" of Resurrection.

v. 11. For even thereafter, &c. This is an error. It should be—

"Who knoweth the power of Thine anger

And Thy wrath, according to (due) fear?"

The Psalmist complains that though men see before them every day the signs of God's judgment, they do not so regard them as to fear Him with a godly fear.

v. 12. Wisdom. Wisdom in Holy Scripture is the knowledge of the true end and purpose of life. "To number our days"—to see what they can and what they cannot find room for—to see what is permanent in them and what is transitory—is naturally the way to the discovery of this wisdom.

vv. 13-17 strike a note of higher faith and comfort. All the sorrow and decay of life (*vv. 13, 15*) are felt as God's chastening for a time only (comp. Heb. xii. 5-12), to be swallowed up hereafter in a "satisfying" mercy (*v. 14*), which is for ever (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 16-18). Hence life itself, however transitory, has reality; it is a manifestation of God's glory to us and by us (*v. 16*); it has in it a work which God will "establish" ("prosper," *v. 17*) for His servants; because it is His work, to be manifested both to them and to their children. The truth is enforced with a transcendent power by St. Paul, because in view of the Resurrection, "Be ye steadfast . . . in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

v. 13 is more striking in the original—Return, O Lord; how long?—the cry of longing for God's mercy uttered in so many Psalms.

v. 14. And that soon. It should be "in the morning," which may have only the sense of our version, but may look on to the morning after the night of death or sorrow.

PSALM XCI.

This Psalm, of uncertain date and unknown authorship, is an utterance of the brightest and most unclouded faith in the guardianship of the Lord over His servants against all the dangers and sufferings of life. It accepts in all simplicity the belief in that which, but for sin and its consequences, would be the law of human life—that visible blessing and obedience to the Supreme Ruler of the world must always go together. To us the faith is

rather, that whatever betides us of outward fortune cannot touch the true "life which is hid in God." The Psalm shews reminiscences of earlier Psalms, and strong resemblances to some passages of the Book of Job (especially Job v. 17-23). Possibly for this reason, and perhaps also from antiphonal arrangement, there are some remarkable changes of person in successive verses. Otherwise the course of thought is simple and beautiful.

It opens (*a*), in *vv. 1, 2*, with a brief introduction of promise of God's guardianship, and acceptance of that promise; then (*b*), in *vv. 3-13*, the promise is worked out in all its details in the Name of the Lord; and lastly (*c*), in *vv. 14-16*, the voice of God Himself takes up and seals the promise so made by His servant.

vv. 1, 2. As the text of these verses stand, they seem to be promise and answer, probably sung by two voices. The promise in God's Name is, that "whoso dwelleth in the secret place ("under the defence") of the Most High, shall rest under the shadow"—shall find the refreshment and defence—"of the Almighty." The response accepts the promise, "I will say . . . trust." The LXX., however, reads "he shall say," and then the whole runs more simply—

"Whoso dwelleth in the secret place, &c.,

Whoso rests under, &c.,

Shall say," &c.

vv. 3, 4. The promise, as usual, accumulates various images, each conveying a different phase of meaning—watchful Providence in the deliverance from the snare (Ps. cxxiv. 7), and from "the pestilence of malignity," tender care in the protection of the overshadowing wings (comp. Deut. xxxii. 11, 12; Ps. xvii. 8; lvii. 1; lxi. 4), safe defence by the shield and buckler of God's faithfulness (Ps. xxxiii. 19, &c.).

vv. 5, 6. "The terror by night" and "the arrow by day" seem to refer to danger from human enmity; as "the pestilence" and "the destruction" to the dangers of physical plague. "The destruction that wasteth at noon-day" has been interpreted of the hot Simoom of the desert.

vv. 5-8 seem, by their vividness of detail, to imply some special reference—perhaps to the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, to which the phrases "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," "it shall not come nigh thee," and "the reward of the wicked" would be singularly appropriate—perhaps (as has been suggested) to the pestilence in the days of David—perhaps to some recent experience of the unknown Psalmist, which had brought out the conscious-

ness of God's unceasing and universal care over His servants.

v. 9. For thou, Lord, art my hope, is clearly a brief repetition of the response of *v. 2*; after which the other voice continues as before, "Thou hast made the Most High thy dwelling place," for so the latter clause should be rendered.

v. 11. His angels, &c. The idea is probably suggested by the reference to the pestilence—the work of "the destroying angel," who is to spare and to guard God's servants (comp. Ezek. ix. 6). (See *v. 10*, "Neither shall plague come nigh thy tent.") But it is worked out into a general promise of angelic guardianship, bearing up those who tread the steep and rugged way of life (comp. Ps. xxxiv. 7).

vv. 11, 12. These verses are made notable to us by the insidious quotation of them by the Tempter of Our Lord (Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10, 11), omitting the essential words "in all thy ways," and applying them accordingly to circumstances with which they had nothing to do. So it is that deceit "quotes Scripture to its purpose." Only in the ways of God's vocation, and with a view to progress in those ways, have we a right to the promise.

v. 13. The lion is the type of open violence; the adder (or "dragon") of crafty malignity. (The latter image is the commoner one, from Gen. iii. 15 downwards.) On both the servant of God is to tread victoriously.

vv. 14-16. In these verses God Himself suddenly speaks, taking the word out of the mouth of His servant; first, with the lower promise of deliverance and exaltation; then with the higher promise of communion with God in prayer, the gift of length of days, and the vision of salvation.

This Psalm introduces a group of Psalms (xcii., xciii., xciv.—c.), closely connected together, evidently designed for liturgical use, and generally of a joyous and festive character. All are anonymous. They are referred by some to the great revival of Temple worship in Hezekiah's days, by others to the restoration after the Captivity.

This is, according to Talmudical tradition, "the Psalm of the Sabbath day," sung at the sacrifice of the early morning, and also used on the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Except, however, its glad festal tone, the sevenfold repetition of the name Jehovah, and its special reference to the joy of worship, there is little to indicate any strictly Sabbatical idea, whether of the first Sabbath of creation, or the final Sabbath of the "restitution of all things," to which the Talmud especially refers it. (The Psalms named in the same tradition for the other days of the week in succession are Ps. xxiv., xlvi., lxxvii., xciv., lxxxi., xciii.)

It contains (a), in vv. 1—4, the outpouring of the joy of praise to God; then passes (b), in vv. 5—10, to meditation on the mysterious law of God's providence, putting down the evil in their apparent prosperity, and exalting His servants in spite of all enmity; and ends (c), in vv. 11—14, with a declaration of the special blessing and happiness of those who dwell in the Sanctuary of the Lord.

vv. 1—4 bring out not so much the duty or the solemnity, as the joy, of worship—a worship mainly of thanksgiving and praise, which ceases neither day nor night, enriched with all the wealth of music, and fixing itself on God's two great attributes of love and truth, as shewn in His works before the eyes of men—a worship, therefore, which is the earnest of the worship of heaven.

v. 2. In the morning we need freshness of hope and joy, and therefore we dwell on God's "loving-kindness." In the night-watches we need rest and protection, and so we turn to God's "faithfulness" ("truth").

v. 3. Comp. Ps. xxxiii. 2. The latter clause should be, "in solemn strain upon the harp."

v. 4 is a thanksgiving, not for any gift of God, but for the very sight of His wondrous works. (Comp. "We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory" of the *Gloria in excelsis*.)

v. 5. Comp. Isa. xxviii. 29; Jer. xxxii. 19. It is obvious to declare that God's works, even in their outward appearance which we can understand, are great; but it is a further step in the meditation of the enquiring soul to conceive the "depth" of the Divine "thought" underlying these visible works, in mysterious law and power, of which we can see the reality, but cannot grasp the perfection. A "brutish" ("unwise") man (comp. Ps. lxxiii. 21), who looks only to the visible, cannot see this at all;

the "fool" (the mere worldling), absorbed in his own wisdom, cannot understand it rightly.

vv. 7—10, in which we find reminiscences of earlier Psalms (comp. Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2, 36, 39; lxxxiii. 18; lxxxix. 18, 25; xxiii. 5), lead us through the natural course of this meditation. They first dwell on the transitoriness of the prosperity of the wicked; then trace the ground of this in their antagonism to the eternal law of the Most High; and, lastly, identifying the faithful with the cause of God, express full confidence in their prosperity and triumph. The idea is nearly that of Ps. lxxiii.

v. 9. *I am anointed*, &c. (comp. Ps. xxiii. 5). There is probably no reference to priestly or kingly anointing. Oil is to all the symbol of fruitfulness and richness (comp. Judg. ix. 8, 9; Ps. civ. 15).

vv. 12—14 seem to allude to the trees actually planted in the outer precincts of the Temple. They take as the typical trees the palm-tree in its perpetual greenness and abundant fruit, the cedar in its deep roots and immeasurable age (comp. Ps. lxxxiv. 3). They who by daily worship rest their life on the communion with God shall find the secret of unbroken freshness, fruitfulness, and unshaken stability.

v. 13 should be, "shall be full of sap and green." The metaphor is not broken, as it would seem to be in our version here.

any terror by night : nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;

6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness : nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day.

7 A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand : but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold : and see the reward of the ungodly.

9 For thou, Lord, art my hope : thou hast set thine house of defence very high.

10 There shall no evil happen unto thee : neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee : to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee in their hands : that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him up, because he hath known my Name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will hear him : yea, I am with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and bring him to honour.

16 With long life will I satisfy him : and shew him my salvation.

PSALM 92.

Bonum est confiteri.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord : and to sing praises unto thy Name, O most Highest ;

2 To tell of thy loving-kindness

DAY 18.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 93.

Dominus regnavit.

THE Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel : the Lord hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength.

early in the morning : and of thy truth in the night-season ;

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute : upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp.

4 For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works : and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands.

5 O Lord, how glorious are thy works : thy thoughts are very deep.

6 An unwise man doth not well consider this : and a fool doth not understand it.

7 When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do flourish : then shall they be destroyed for ever ; but thou, Lord, art the most Highest for evermore.

8 For lo, thine enemies, O Lord, lo, thine enemies shall perish : and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed.

9 But mine horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn : for I am anointed with fresh oil.

10 Mine eye also shall see his lust of mine enemies : and mine ear shall hear his desire of the wicked that arise up against me.

11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree : and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.

12 Such as are planted in the house of the Lord : shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

13 They also shall bring forth more fruit in their age : and shall be fat and well-liking.

14 That they may shew how true the Lord my strength is : and that there is no unrighteousness in him.

2 He hath made the round world so sure : that it cannot be moved.

3 Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared : thou art from everlasting.

4 The floods are risen, O Lord.

This Psalm, according to the heading in the LXX. (with which the Talmudical tradition agrees) is the Psalm for Friday, as being the sixth day, on which the creation was complete. Its tenour agrees well with this use. It is simply a hymn of praise to the Lord Jehovah, as (a), in *vv.* 1-3, enthroned over the earth, which He has founded; (b), in *vv.* 4, 5, curbing the raging of the floods and of the sea; (c), in *v.* 6, revealing Himself in holiness to His own people. It may probably have (as has been suggested) a metaphorical meaning of God's enthronement in the souls of all mankind, and His triumph over the floods of ungodly rebellion; but the literal sense is primary and unmistakable.

v. 1. *The Lord is King* (comp. Ps. xcvii. 1; xcix. 1). As on a day of coronation, He clothes Himself in the vesture of glory, and girds Himself with the sword of might (Ps. xlv. 3).

vv. 2, 3 at once celebrate the "establishment" of the round world in its appointed place, never to be moved from its appointed course (comp. Ps. xvi. 10), and the yet deeper "establishment" of the throne of God on earth, His from all eternity, but manifested to man in the creation of the world (see Prov. viii. 22-29). The stability of the earth ("the everlasting hills") is the natural emblem of the firm and unquestioned power of Him who made it, and whose "righteousness standeth like the strong mountains."

vv. 4, 5. The sense is clear, although *v.* 5 in the original is abrupt in expression (as in R.V.)—

"Above the voices of the many waters,

PSALM XCIV.

This Psalm is said in the LXX. heading to be "for the fourth day of the week," and it appears also to have been used specially at the Feast of Tabernacles. It is, however, unlike the other Psalms of this group, in being not a Psalm of joy and thanksgiving, but an earnest cry, of singular boldness and thoughtfulness, against wrong, done apparently by those in high places. Why it was fixed for the regular Wednesday use in the Temple we know not. It shews (as usual in this group) many reminiscences of earlier Psalms; but these are blended together with marked originality.

It contains (a), in *vv.* 1-7, a complaint before God of the insolent oppression and cruelty of the godless; (b), in *vv.* 8-15, a solemn and indignant reproof of the infatuation, which neglects or defies the judgment of God; and (c), in *vv.* 16-23, a resolution to stand up in the strength of God against the forces of deliberate wickedness, and to take resolutely a part with Him.

v. 1. *O Lord God, to whom, &c.* Comp. Deut. xxxii. 35; Heb. x. 30.

v. 2. *Judge of the world.* Comp. Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. vii. 12. It is the sterner aspect towards His creatures of the God who "is love"; but, in face of the mysterious reality of sin, it is upon this that the soul of the

The mighty breakers of the sea,
The Lord on high is mighty."

The floods are probably (as usual in the Old Testament) the "rivers"; their lesser roar leads on to the greater might and terror of the sea. As the earth is the emblem of stability, so the great rivers and the sea (as usual in the Psalms) symbolize change, violence, fury. Over all their might the Lord's might is unshaken (comp. Ps. xxix. 9; lxxv. 7; lxxxix. 10). The idea is not, as in the previous verses, of power unquestioned, but of power triumphant over all that rises up against it.

v. 6. From God in Nature (as in Ps. xix. 7) the Psalmist turns to God in Revelation, giving the sure "testimony" of His Law, and manifesting His presence in the holiness of His Sanctuary. In that knowledge Israel had the key to the inner meaning of Nature, which in itself might either reveal God or conceal Him.

righteous must rest. Man can but imperfectly judge and punish evil; yet he feels even his imperfect work to be sacred, as an earnest and type of an all-perfect judgment.

v. 3. *Lord, how long, &c.* Comp. Ps. vii. 6; xliii. 1; Rev. vi. 10. The cry is not simply of impatience, but

the floods have lift up their voice : the floods lift up their waves.

5 The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly : but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

6 Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure : holiness becometh thine house for ever.

PSALM 94.

Deus ultionum.

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth : thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2 Arise, thou Judge of the world : and reward the proud after their deserving.

3 Lord, how long shall the ungodly : how long shall the ungodly triumph ?

4 How long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully : and make such proud boasting ?

5 They smite down thy people, O Lord : and trouble thine heritage.

6 They murder the widow, and the stranger : and put the fatherless to death.

7 And yet they say, Tush, the Lord shall not see : neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

8 Take heed, ye unwise among the people : O ye fools, when will ye understand ?

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear : or he that made the eye, shall he not see ?

10 Or he that nureth the heathen : it is he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he punish ?

DAY 19.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 95.

Venite, exultemus.

O COME, let us sing unto the Lord : let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving : and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods.

11 The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man : that they are but vain.

12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord : and teachest him in thy law ;

13 That thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity : until the pit be digged up for the ungodly.

14 For the Lord will not fail his people : neither will he forsake his inheritance ;

15 Until righteousness turn again unto judgment : all such as are true in heart shall follow it.

16 Who will rise up with me against the wicked : or who will take my part against the evil-doers ?

17 If the Lord had not helped me : it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.

18 But when I said, My foot hath slept : thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

19 In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart : thy comforts have refreshed my soul.

20 Wilt thou have any thing to do with the stool of wickedness : which imagineth mischief as a law ?

21 They gather them together against the soul of the righteous : and condemn the innocent blood.

22 But the Lord is my refuge : and my God is the strength of my confidence.

23 He shall recompense them their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice : yea, the Lord our God shall destroy them.

4 In his hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

7 For he is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his

of the perplexity described in Ps. lxxiii. 3—14.

v. 7. Comp. Ps. x. 11, 13; lix. 7. There is an evident irony in this reference of the ungodly to "Jehovah," "the God of Jacob," who cannot or will not (as they think) avenge His heritage, or vindicate His broken law (comp. Ps. xxii. 7, 8).

v. 8. *Unwise*—"brutish," as in xcii. 6.

vv. 8—10. The argument is irresistible against those who recognise the intellectual and moral faculties of man, and yet ignore in the First Cause and Supreme Law of the world a mind and a moral will. Whatever is in man must be in the Power that made man—whether by evolution out of lower natures or otherwise it matters not—and whatever exists in that Power must shew itself in active energy in the direction of man's history. Hence the old saying, "Nature may conceal God; man reveals Him." Hence the perfect revelation of God in the Son of Man.

v. 10. The A. V. renders this verse—"He that chasteneth the heathen, Shall He not correct?"

He that teacheth man knowledge,

Shall not He know?

The last line, however, is not in the Hebrew text, though it completes the parallelism admirably. Accordingly the R. V. simply reads, "Even He that teacheth man knowledge." But the insertion brings out what is obviously the true sense. God is looked upon "as teaching all men knowledge," by his chastening work to the heathen, as by His revelation of Himself both in work and in word to Israel.

vv. 12—16 suggest indirectly the reason why God thus bears with evil. It is for the chastening and teach-

ing of the good, "so giving them patience" (literally "rest") under the delay of vengeance against the ungodly. This key to the mystery is but hinted at in the Book of Job (in the speech of Elihu, e.g. xxxiv. 31—37) and the Psalms generally. In the New Testament it is familiarly taught (e.g. Rom. ix. 22, 23; Heb. xii. 3—11; 1 Pet. iv. 12—19).

v. 15 should be rendered as in R. V.—

"Judgment shall return to righteousness;
And all the upright in heart shall follow it."

Judgment (that is) must ultimately issue in the manifestation of God's righteousness; and then all the upright in soul will follow it, i.e., acknowledge it and work with it. So at the fall of the oppression of the Reign of Terror men cried out, "Yes! there is a God."

v. 16 seems a summons to the righteous to rally against wrong. It is uttered in vain, and the speaker falls back on God—His help to those who stand (v. 17), His restoration of those who fall (v. 18), His comfort of those who are weary and heavy laden (v. 19).

v. 20 is properly (as in R. V.)—
"Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with thee,
Which frameth mischief by statute?"

By a bold figure Iniquity is represented as raising up a rival throne against the Judgment of God, and framing a law of evil deliberately wrought out against His Law. The Psalmist cries out against toleration of this by the Divine justice, throws himself (in vv. 22, 23) on the strength of God—his high tower and refuge—and confidently anticipates the overthrow, bringing their evil upon their own heads.

PSALM XCV.

This Psalm is still used in the Synagogue as one of the Psalms on the Friday evening, preparatory to the worship of the Sabbath, probably from the emphatic reference to the rest of God in v. 11. It has been from time immemorial the INVITATORY PSALM in the daily Christian worship of both the Eastern and the Western Church. It is applied to our Christian experience with special emphasis, both of admonition and of argument, in Heb. iii. 7—iv. 11.

It falls into two sections: (a), in vv. 1—7, it utters a glad invitation to the worship of God, both as the Almighty Creator and as the Lord God and Shepherd of Israel; then (b), in vv. 8—11, changes its tone to one of solemn warning against an unbelieving hardness of heart, enforced by the example of the people in the wilderness.

v. 1. *Heartily rejoice*, should be properly (as in A. V. and R. V.), "make a joyful noise," the music corresponding to the "song" of the previous clause. *Strength*—the "Rock," as so often in Psalms.

vv. 3—6 look up to God as the "God Almighty," and, as such, emphatically revealed to the first heirs of the Covenant (comp. Gen. xvii. 1; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; Exod. vi. 3). They praise Him as the Creator, exalted "far above all gods"—the angels or the gods of heathen worship. They express the faith of man as man; and, moreover, the faith which is the result of the study, through the intellect and the imagination, of the works of God in Nature. It is a faith which has largeness and grandeur of conception, rather than vividness, begetting awe rather than trust or love.

v. 4. *Corners* should be "depths," in antithesis to the "hills" of the next clause.

v. 7 adds to the former conception of God the necessary complement of the consciousness of a moral relation between Him and us, brought out in His covenant, which makes us His people, over whom He rules in righteousness, and "His sheep," whom He tends with loving care. In this faith lies the vitality of all true religion; on it alone can "the first and great commandment" of the love of God be based.

v. 8. *To day... voice*. Probably it

is better to join these words with those which precede—"To day (this shall be) if ye will but hear His voice," or (as in R. V.), "To day, Oh that ye would hear His voice"—and to take the rest of the Psalm (comp. Ps. lxxxi. 6—17) as the utterance of the Divine Voice itself.

Provocation... temptation. These words are the interpretation of the proper names *Massah* and *Meribah* (see Exod. xvii. 7; Num. xx. 13), where they "tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?" (comp. Deut. vi. 16).

v. 10. *Forty years long*, &c. Stress is laid first on God's long-suffering and His grief over the sins of His people (comp. Gen. vi. 6); then on the unchangeable certainty of the final retribution which He must inflict (*I swear*, &c., comp. Heb. vi. 16—18). In this lies the mystery of that union of human freedom with God's sovereignty, on which all religion must turn.

v. 11. See Num. xiv. 21—27. In Heb. iii. 7—iv. 10 the application is to that of which Canaan was the type—the rest or "Sabbath keeping" of heaven. Such application will be in some sense implied in all devotional use of the Psalm itself; for all rest in this world can only be the earnest of a truer rest to come; but it is, as usual, made explicit by the Christian revelation of immortality and heaven.

PSALM XCVI.

This magnificent Psalm is in the LXX. heading referred with great probability to the time of the restoration of the Temple after the Captivity. With some notable variations of detail, it is identical with 1 Chr. xvi. 23—33, where it is joined with portions of other Psalms (cv., cvi., &c.) to represent a Psalm of praise, sung at the bringing up of the Ark by David. It bears many striking resemblances to the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, both in substance and diction.

It opens (a), in vv. 1—6, with a call to Israel to sing a new song to Jehovah, exalting Him in the sight of all the heathen above the vanities of their idolatry; then (b), in vv. 7—10, it calls on the nations themselves to take up from Israel the worship of the Lord as the God of the whole earth; and at last (c), in vv. 11—13, bids the heavens and the earth themselves to join with humanity in the great hymn of praise.

v. 1. *A new song* (comp. Ps. xxxiii. 3; cxlix. 1). The words (not found in 1 Chr. xvi. 23) are emphatic. They refer to the "new song" of the restored exiles—the type of the new song (Rev. v. 9; xiv. 3; xv. 3) of the pilgrims arrived at the heavenly

Canaan, which "all the earth" is to take up from them. It is (see vv. 2, 3) a song rising from gladness to blessing of God's Name and proclamation of His salvation, from thanksgiving to adoration of His infinite glory.

v. 5. *Idols.* The original word (like the word "idol" itself) signifies "vanity" or "nothingness" (comp. 1 Cor. viii. 4). The thought suggested is worked out in forcible detail in Ps. cxv. 4—8; cxxxv. 15—18; as also in Isa. xl. 18—20; xlv. 9—20; xlv. 1—7. It is not so much the sin, as the gross folly, of idolatry which is denounced.

The Lord that made the heavens. It is notable that in the Captivity the title of the "God of heaven" is used with especial frequency of the Lord Jehovah, both by the Israelites and by the heathen (see 2 Chr. xxxvi. 23; Ezra v. 11, 12; vi. 9; vii. 12; Neh. i. 5; ii. 4; Dan. ii. 18, 19, 44). The heavens and their luminaries, made the gods of the heathen, are simply creatures of His hand.

vv. 7—9 are repeated with some addition from Ps. xxix. 1, 2 (where see notes); but their original application to the angels is here transferred to "the kindreds of the nations," called upon now especially to ac-

knowledge the Lord Jehovah. The Captivity and Dispersion of Israel were overruled to witness for God under the Babylonian and still more under the Persian empire, with a scope of power before unknown. Hence the special appropriateness of this invitation in a Psalm belonging to the time of restoration from that Captivity.

v. 10. The two-fold empire of God is glanced at—over Nature, "making the round world so fast that it cannot be moved" (comp. Ps. xciii. 2), and over humanity, "judging the nations righteously."

vv. 11, 12 call upon all powers of Nature—the heaven, the earth, and the sea, the fruitful field and trees of the wood—to join with humanity in the praise of God, not now as their Creator, but as soon to be manifested in the new creation at the great judgment of His righteousness (comp. Ps. xcvi. 8—10; Isa. xlv. 7, 8; xlix. 13; lii. 9; lv. 12, &c.).

PSALM XCVII.

This Psalm strikes much the same keynote as Ps. xcvi.—with perhaps something more of the sense of awe before the majesty of the Lord and of the world-wide extension of His Kingdom. It evidently belongs to the same era, the time of the overthrow of Babylon and restoration of Israel. It is full of reminiscences of earlier Psalm and prophecy, but these blended together with perfect naturalness and force.

It contains (a), in vv. 1—6, the proclamation of the manifested royalty of the Lord in mingled glory and terror, as at Sinai of old; (b), in vv. 7—9, the humiliation of idolatry before Him, and the gladness of the people of God; (c), in vv. 10—12, a singularly emphatic exhortation to true-hearted purity, with a promise to it of light and joy in the Lord.

v. 1. *The Lord is King.* The same proclamation as in Ps. xciii. 1; xcix. 1; but here, in spite of the terrors of His majesty, calling not for the submission, but for the joy of the earth, and "the multitude of the isles" of heathendom (comp. Ps. lxxii. 10; Isa. xxiv. 15; xl. 15; xli. 5, &c.). Such glad recognition, especially under the strong sympathy of the Persian monotheism, the worship of the God of Israel seems at this time to have found in many lands.

v. 2. The juxtaposition of the two clauses is striking. As at Sinai, which is clearly referred to, "the clouds and darkness" of awful power are the accompaniments of His presence; but "the pillars of His throne" ("the habitation of His seat") are laid in His moral reve-

lation of "righteousness and judgment" (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 15).

vv. 3—5 work out this idea more fully (comp. Ps. xviii. 7—14; lxxviii. 2; Isa. lxiv.; Mic. i. 4; Hab. iii. 3—6). The same images recur again and again—probably taken originally from the revelation on Mount Sinai. Yet "the Lord is not in the earthquake, or the whirlwind, or the fire"; it is (see v. 6) the glory of His righteousness which is acknowledged by the homage of heaven and earth.

v. 7. In this verse the indignation against idolatry and idolaters—characteristic of this whole group of Psalms—breaks out abruptly in a sudden flash. *Worship Him, all ye gods* seems, accordingly, to be an imperious call to the gods of that idolatry to fall down before God.

pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

8 To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ;

9 When your fathers tempted me : proved me, and saw my works.

10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said : It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways ;

11 Unto whom I swarè in my wrath : that they should not enter into my rest.

PSALM 96.

Cantate Domino.

O SING unto the Lord a new song : sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth.

2 Sing unto the Lord, and praise his Name : be telling of his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his honour unto the heathen : and his wonders unto all people.

4 For the Lord is great, and cannot worthily be praised : he is more to be feared than all gods.

5 As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols : but it is the Lord that made the heavens.

6 Glory and worship are before him : power and honour are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people : ascribe unto the Lord worship and power.

8 Ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto his Name : bring presents, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

10 Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King : and that it is he who hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved ; and how that he shall judge the people righteously.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad : let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.

13 For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth : and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.

PSALM 97.

Dominus regnavit.

THE Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof : yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat.

3 There shall go a fire before him : and burn up his enemies on every side.

4 His lightnings gave shine unto the world : the earth saw it, and was afraid.

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord : at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 The heavens have declared his righteousness : and all the people have seen his glory.

7 Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods : worship him, all ye gods.

8 Thou heard of it, and rejoiced : and the daughters of Judah were glad, because of thy judgments, O Lord.

9 For thou, Lord, art higher than all that are in the earth : thou art exalted far above all gods.

10 O ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil : the Lord preserveth the souls of his saints ; he shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

11 There is sprung up a light for the righteous : and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous : and give thanks for a remembrance of his holiness.

like Dagon before the Ark. The LXX. reads, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," which is quoted in Heb. i. 6 in reference to the visible manifestation of God on earth in the Lord Jesus Christ, and with a view to emphasize His exaltation in nature above all angels (probably in rebuke of the angel worship referred to in Col. ii. 18). This use (as so often in quotations from the Old Testament in the New) goes beyond the original sense, but accords with it. For the whole idea of the Psalm is the manifestation of God on earth, and the humbling before Him, not of man only, but of all created being and of all that receive the worship due to Him alone.

v. 8. *Thy judgments, O Lord.* The reference appears to be to some special and recent manifestation of God's judgment—as in the long-foretold vengeance on Babylon, the re-

storation of the exiles, and the frustration of all efforts against them. The shaming of idolatry and the gladness of the worshippers of the true God are emphatically blended together.

vv. 10—12 give the same warning, which is conveyed, for example, in Ps. xv. 1—5; xxiv. 3—5; xl. 8—13; Isa. i. 16—18, and which was by solemn experience engraved on the hearts of the restored exiles—that they only are the true Israel who "hate the evil," and are "true hearted" before God. For them alone light is sprung up (properly "sown," or shed abroad on the earth); for them alone there is joy in the Lord. By the well-known spiritual law, these graces are, in the germ of faith, the condition of entering into the covenant; in the full growth, perfected by love, the effect of entrance and continuance therein.

PSALM XCVIII.

This Psalm is little more than a variation of Psalm xcvi.—in substance all but identical, even in form frequently coincident. Like that Psalm it is full of resemblances to the latter portion of the Book of Isaiah. The only differences are that in this Psalm there is greater vividness of description, both of the manifestation of God's judgment and deliverance of Israel before the nations, and of the outburst of praise from the heathen to God; and that there is no denunciation of the vanity of idolatry, and the falsity of the gods of heathendom.

The same three parts are clearly traceable in it: (a), in vv. 1—4, the call to Israel; (b), in vv. 5—7, to all heathendom; (c), in vv. 8—10, to all Nature, to praise the Lord. It is used in our Evening Service as an alternative Canticle to the *Magnificat*—evidently on the ground that the grand picture of the universal kingdom of God is realized in the kingdom, present and future, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

PSALM XCIX.

This Psalm opens with the same characteristic words as Ps. xciii., xcvi., "the Lord is King." But in the general proclamation of the Divine kingdom it brings out more distinctly than the other Psalms the essential characteristic of a higher spirituality; the pervading idea is not of the might, but of the holiness of God, and in secondary degree of those who are His; and there is consequently a more constant reference to His manifestation of Himself in the Sanctuary and in the Covenant. The Psalm thus forms a noble climax of the grand series, xci.—xcix.

Its three divisions are clearly marked by the burden, "He is holy" (like the "Holy, Holy, Holy" of the angelic song). In the first (a), in vv. 1—3, it is the glory of the Lord which is dwelt upon; in the second (b), in vv. 4, 5, it is His righteousness in judgment; in the third (c), in vv. 6—9, it is His revelation of Himself in mercy and graciousness to His saints.

v. 1 should be rendered (as in R.V.)—

"The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble:

He sitteth on the cherubim; let the earth be moved."

Our version misunderstands the idea of the verse, which is not rebellion crushed, but submission of awe gladly given.

v. 3 is properly—

"Let them give thanks to Thy great and terrible Name. He is holy."

The last clause is the burden of the Psalm, perhaps a response from the congregation. After the manifestation in power and glory comes the higher element of holiness—the essential nature of God in Himself, as "the high and holy One which inhabiteth eternity."

vv. 4, 5. There is some verbal difficulty of rendering here; but the general sense is rightly given in our version. The emphasis is on the righteousness of God as the "God of Jacob" (Ps. xx. 1; xli. 7, 11, &c., &c.), the God of the covenant of Israel. For this is He to be exalted before the world, till all nations shall bow before His "footstool" (comp. Ps. cxxxii. 7)—before (that is) the very base of His altar, where He is manifested in mercy. Again follows the burden, "He is holy."

vv. 6—8 bring out the close relation of God to His saints. It is clear that Moses and Aaron and Samuel are typical representatives of the saints in communion with God. Moses and Aaron—named, as usual, together (comp. Ps. lxxvii. 20), as associated in one work—are especially described as "priests," in accordance with the

whole tone of the Psalm, which is pervaded by reference to the Sanctuary. For Moses was indeed the true priest as a "mediator" with God (Gal. iii. 19), and was accordingly the dedicator of the ministerial priesthood of Aaron and his sons (Exod. xxix. 1—37). Samuel, though himself prophet and priest, is looked upon in obvious reference to the great day of Mizpeh (1 Sam. vii. 8—10), as an example of the power of prayer—a prayer of intercession for the people. The idea is throughout of a free access to God, after sacrifice offered and through prayer.

v. 7. *He spake, &c.*—to Moses and Aaron literally, to Samuel metaphorically. The cloudy pillar (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 15) was the emblem of God's miraculous guidance as it is given us on earth, half dark in mystery, half light in revelation.

For they kept, &c. The word "for" is a mistaken insertion. The obedience spoken of is not the cause, but the effect, of God's revelation of Himself.

v. 8 should run, as in R.V., "Though Thou tookest vengeance on their doings." God is set forth, exactly as in Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, as "the Lord God, merciful and gracious . . . keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." His will is mercy; yet He must punish sin (comp. John xii. 47, 48). "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."

v. 9. Once more the burden, "He is holy," closes this glorious Psalm, realizing as it does the essential nature of God, in Himself holiness, to His people love.

PSALM C.

This Psalm—emphatically called "A Psalm of Praise"—is a concluding doxology to the splendid group of Thanksgiving Psalms (xci.—xcix.). It is pure thanksgiving and praise, unclouded by any touch of fear or doubt. It is thought to have been a Psalm, perhaps a processional Psalm, for times of special praise and rejoicing. But in its breadth and simplicity it is fit for all occasions of access of the redeemed to God, and naturally it has become (both in its original form and its metrical renderings) the regular hymn of thanksgiving in the Church of Christ.

It is (a), in vv. 1, 2, an invitation to joy, because we know that we are God's people; and (b), in vv. 3, 4, an invitation to praise God, because He is goodness and love.

v. 1. *O be joyful, &c.*, is properly, "make a joyful noise" (as in Ps. lxxxix. 1).

v. 2. *And not we ourselves.* The best rendering is (as in R. V.), "and we are His." The idea of the verse is a repetition of Ps. xc. 7; but it is singularly notable that, if it applies especially to Israel, yet by implication it is extended "to all lands," as destined to be drawn hereafter into the covenant of God. Hence, perhaps, the note in the Syriac Version, "a Psalm for (on) the conversion of the heathen to the true faith." In the sense of alienation from God is the source of fear; in the sense that He is ours and we are His, is the secret of joy (comp. Rom. xiv. 17; Phil. iv. 4).

v. 3. Thanksgiving and praise are

the higher elements of worship, and so the essence of the worship of heaven; confession and prayer belong to the imperfection of earth, and are here for the time put out of question.

v. 4. *For the Lord is gracious, &c.* These words, as we read in 2 Chr. v. 18, formed the chorus of thanksgiving at the consecration of the Temple. Naturally they recur as the keynote of many of the later Psalms of the restoration of the Temple-worship (comp. Ps. cvi. 1; cvii. 1; cxviii. 1, &c.). They dwell, moreover, not only on the goodness of God, but on the continual recurrence of His mercy in all generations. Its forms of manifestation continually change, but itself never.

PSALM CI.

This Psalm—the celebrated vow of a king seeking earnestly for righteousness, but seeking it in the fear and love of God—is ascribed to David; and though it occurs in the midst of far later Psalms, it is in all probability from his hand. In this later collection it is embedded as a fragment of antiquity. By himself it may not have been intended for public use; probably it was canonized by the reverence of succeeding generations, perhaps as the pattern for the restored government of Israel after the Captivity. Hence its comparatively prosaic and meditative form, breathing (as has been noted) much of the spirit of the Book of Proverbs. We may well compare it with Solomon's prayer (1 Kings iii. 6—9); noting that this is especially for wisdom, as David's prayer for integrity of heart.

Taking it to be a Psalm of David, we must refer it to an early period in his royalty—probably (see v. 3) at the time when he desired, yet feared, to bring up the Ark (2 Sam. vi. 9)—possibly, but less probably, when, having brought up the Ark, he felt deeply the requisite qualifications for "ascending to the hill of the Lord" (comp. Ps. xv.).

The vow is two-fold: (a), in vv. 1—4, of seeking righteousness for himself; (b), in vv. 5—11, of punishing sin and fostering righteousness in others.

v. 1. To "sing of mercy and judgment"—the union of righteousness and love—is the resolution of every true and noble ruler; to "sing of them unto the Lord," finding in His nature their original, and in His grace the power to imitate Him in them, is the distinguishing mark of the godly life.

v. 2. *O let me have, &c.* This verse is properly not a prayer, but a resolution, "I will give heed to a perfect way."

v. 3. *When wilt thou come unto me?* The cry comes out as an interjection between the Psalmist's two resolutions, in v. 2, and in the latter clause of this verse. It shews the strength, in which he trusts to fulfil them.

Certainly the most natural reference would be to the prospect, not yet realized, of the coming of the Ark to Mount Zion.

In my house. In his own private and domestic life he would make the needful beginning, before he begins the greater, yet hardly more arduous, work of righteous kingship.

v. 4. *Wicked thing is properly* (as in Ps. xlii. 8) "a thing of Belial," or "lawlessness."

Unfaithfulness is "turning aside," or transgression. What David, therefore, disclaims is the reckless self-will, acknowledging no law of right, which is the temptation of despotic royalty, and was hereafter the secret of his own great sin.

DAY 19.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 98.

Cantate Domino.

O SING unto the Lord a new song: for he hath done marvellous things.

2 With his own right hand, and with his holy arm: hath he gotten himself the victory.

3 The Lord declared his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

4 He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward the house of Israel: and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

5 Shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands: sing, rejoice, and give thanks.

6 Praise the Lord upon the harp: sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving.

7 With trumpets also, and shawms: O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King.

8 Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is: the round world, and they that dwell therein.

9 Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he is come to judge the earth.

10 With righteousness shall he judge the world: and the people with equity.

PSALM 99.

Dominus regnavit.

THE Lord is King, be the people never so impatient: he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.

2 The Lord is great in Sion: and high above all people.

3 They shall give thanks unto thy Name: which is great, wonderful, and holy.

4 The King's power loveth judgment: thou hast prepared equity: thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

5 O magnify the Lord our God: and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy.

6 Moses and Aaron among his

priests, and Samuel among such as call upon his Name: these called upon the Lord, and he heard them.

7 He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar: for they kept his testimonies, and the law that he gave them.

8 Thou heardest them, O Lord our God: thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.

9 O magnify the Lord our God, and worship him upon his holy hill: for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM 100.

Jubilare Deo.

O BE joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

2 Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

3 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

4 For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

PSALM 101.

Misericordiam et judicium.

MY song shall be of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.

2 O let me have understanding: in the way of godliness.

3 When wilt thou come unto me: I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.

4 I will take no wicked thing in hand; I hate the sins of unfaithfulness: there shall no such cleave unto me.

5 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.

6 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour: him will I destroy.

Cleave unto me. The expression is remarkable. Temptations and sins of frailty there might be; but they should not cleave to him and become a part of his nature.

vv. 5—7 pass from the resolution of the man to the vow of the king, who has the dread responsibility of power. The evils which he resolves to put down are the two, of which we find special mention in other undoubted Psalms of David—the “froward heart” of guile (opposed in Prov. xi. 20 to “the upright”), especially venting itself in malignant slander, and the “proud look and high stomach” (literally, “puffed up heart”) of arrogance.

vv. 8, 9 go on to dwell on more posi-

tive action—the vigilant support of those who have the temper of faithfulness and the instinct of perfection, “walking in a perfect way” (“leading a godly life”). The phrase “my eyes shall be on them,” is used more often of God (Ps. xxxiv. 15; lxvi. 6); here of the king as His vicegerent.

v. 11. *Soon*, literally, “morning by morning,” indicating energetic and systematic work.

The city of the Lord. In this phrase the characteristic motive of the Psalm comes out. It is because his capital is “the city of the Lord,” and he himself the anointed of the Lord, that he will not tolerate in it the existence of evil.

PSALM CII.

This Psalm is strikingly noted in the heading as “the Psalm of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.” It is a Psalm of intense pathos; but its sorrow has in it no touch of doubt or repining, and it is accordingly a sorrow cheered by hope and solemnized by rest on the eternal goodness of God. It has naturally been used in the Church on ASH-WEDNESDAY as one of the Penitential Psalms; for no Psalm brings out more clearly the “godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation,” as distinct from “the sorrow of the world, which worketh death.”

From *vv. 13, 14* it seems clearly to belong to the close of the Captivity, when the appointed hour of restoration, after the seventy years of prophecy, was known to be at hand. It breathes the spirit, and even uses the words, of the prophets of the Captivity themselves (comp. Jer. xxv. 11; xxix. 10; Dan. ix. 2).

The Psalmist (*a*), in *vv. 1—11*, pours out his own personal complaint of sorrow, sickness, decay, under the chastening hand of God; (*b*), on this, his dark hour, there rises (*vv. 12—22*) a gleam of comfort in the sure and certain hope of the approaching deliverance of the captives; he forgets his own suffering in prospect of the renewed glory of Jerusalem; only (*c*), in *vv. 23—28*, he prays that he may be spared to see that happy consummation, in virtue of the unchanging promise to His servants of the unchanging God. Like most of the Psalms of this period, the Psalm is full of the thoughts and the words of earlier Psalms; but these are made the free living expression of personal experience. Thus, for example, in *vv. 1, 2*, we trace reminiscences of Ps. lv. 1, 2; xxvii. 8; lxix. 17, 18; lxx. 1; lxxxviii. 1, 2; and similar reminiscences may be perceived throughout.

vv. 3—5 evidently describe the condition of one almost exhausted by combination of bodily sickness and mental suffering, each reacting on the other—his days passing “into smoke,” his bones (comp. Ps. vi. 2; xxxi. 10; Job xxx. 30) burnt with fever, his heart faint, as though withered like grass in the sun, his whole frame pining away under the pressure of suffering.

v. 5. *My bones will scarce*, &c. It should be (as in A. V. and R. V.), “my

bones cleave to my flesh” (or “skin”)—*i.e.* apparently the bones stand out through the emaciated body.

vv. 6, 7. The images of solitary mourning are distinct from each other, rising to a climax—the pelican of the marshy wilderness, the owl of the desolate “ruins” (“desert”), the sparrow, bereft of its mate, mourning on the housetop, alone though in a crowd.

vv. 8—10 describe the Psalmist’s condition of suffering as aggravated,

7 Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach: I will not suffer him.

8 Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land: that they may dwell with me.

9 Whoso leadeth a godly life: he shall be my servant.

10 There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

11 I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land: that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

DAY 20.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 102.

Domine, exaudi.

HEAR my prayer, O Lord: and let my crying come unto thee.

2 Hide not thy face from me in the time of my trouble: incline thine ear unto me when I call; O hear me, and that right soon.

3 For my days are consumed away like smoke: and my bones are burnt up as it were a firebrand.

4 My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.

5 For the voice of my groaning: my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.

6 I am become like a pelican in the wilderness: and like an owl that is in the desert.

7 I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow: that sitteth alone upon the house-top.

8 Mine enemies revile me all the day long: and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me.

9 For I have eaten ashes as it were bread: and mingled my drink with weeping;

10 And that because of thine indignation and wrath: for thou hast taken me up, and cast me down.

11 My days are gone like a shadow: and I am withered like grass.

12 But, thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever: and thy remembrance throughout all generations.

13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion: for it is time that thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come.

14 And why? thy servants think upon her stones: and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.

15 The heathen shall fear thy Name, O Lord: and all the kings of the earth thy Majesty;

16 When the Lord shall build up Sion: and when his glory shall appear;

17 When he turneth him unto the prayer of the poor destitute: and despiseth not their desire.

18 This shall be written for those that come after: and the people which shall be born shall praise the Lord.

19 For he hath looked down from his sanctuary: out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

20 That he might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity: and deliver the children appointed unto death;

21 That they may declare the Name of the Lord in Sion: and his worship at Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together: and the kingdoms also, to serve the Lord.

23 He brought down my strength in my journey: and shortened my days.

24 But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age: as for thy years, they endure throughout all generations.

25 Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

27 And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be

first, by the hatred and scorn of men, who "make his name a curse" (for so the last clause of v. 8 should be rendered; comp. Isa. lxxv. 15; Jer. xxix. 22); next, by the sense of the well-deserved indignation and wrath of God, lifting him up on high in order to "cast him away" (comp. Dan. ix. 4-14; Lam. iii. 39-50).

v. 9. *Ashes as it were bread* (comp. Lam. iii. 16). It is a strengthened form of a not infrequent phrase, the "bread of affliction" (comp. Ps. xlii. 3; lxxx. 5). The ashes, scattered on the head, are the emblem of mourning; to make these his bread is significant of sorrow beyond all ordinary sorrow (Lam. i. 12).

vv. 12, 13 dwell first on the unchangeableness of the Eternal God, and then on that which alone makes the unchangeableness of His will a ground of comfort—His gracious promise of deliverance of Zion, now that (see v. 13) "the set time" is come. Comp. the prayer of Daniel (Dan. ix. 2) "when he understood by the books the number of the years."

v. 14. *It pitieth them, &c.* The original is even more striking, "They delight in her" scattered "stones"; they pity her very dust—with that intense love which still hallows the "wailing-place" under the walls of Jerusalem.

vv. 15-22 plead for the manifestation of the Divine glory by the restoration, against all probability or precedent, of the people of God—both for the grateful remembrance of succeeding generations of Israel, and for the homage of all the ends of the earth. The stress laid upon the lowliness, the poverty, the destitution (literally the "nakedness") of the people, is characteristic of the era of the Captivity. Nor is the *shall be written* less characteristic; for then

it was that the written word of Holy Scripture came into a prominence and reverence before unknown. The plea in regard to the heathen had also its historical fulfilment; for the age of the Restoration was the beginning of that pervading influence of Judaism, which was a preparation for the universal kingdom of the Lord.

v. 20. *The children, &c.*, literally, "the children of death"—those doomed to die.

vv. 23, 24 mark an abrupt transition of thought. The Psalmist feels as if at the point of death. He prays to be spared to see the deliverance; then he will sing his *Nunc Dimittis*.

vv. 25-28. In these verses there is a close though subtle connection of thought with the preceding. The feeling of his own weakness and decay suggests the changeableness of all earthly things—even the great frame of nature, which is the vesture of God's majesty; from this follows naturally the contrast of the unchangeableness of the Creator Himself and of His word of promise. That promise keeps His people safe from the national decay and destruction which are the law of humanity; may it not keep from premature individual death the servant who trusts in Him?

These verses are quoted in Heb. i. 10-12 as descriptive of the eternity of the true Son of God—the manifestation of Godhead upon earth. It does not follow from this that the Psalm is consciously and directly Messianic. But in all the Psalms and Prophecies of that period, the expectation of the new manifestation of the Lord Jehovah recognises that manifestation very clearly as perfected in the kingdom of the Messiah.

PSALM CIII.

This exquisitely beautiful Psalm stands out in glorious contrast with the pensive sorrow of Ps. cii. It seems like a burst of thanksgiving over the passing away of the dark hour there described, and the grant of the twofold prayer for individual and national salvation there uttered. No Psalm—not even Ps. xxiii. or Ps. xci.—is so deep in its sense of God's undoubted and unclouded goodness; none widens out so strikingly from His personal mercies to His universal graciousness to all mankind. In the heading it is ascribed to David, and by the Syriac Version to the time of his old age. The ascription, especially as being in this book markedly exceptional, is not to be altogether neglected. But against it are the existence of certain

Aramaisms of diction, the apparent connection of thought with Ps. cii., and perhaps the sustained and thoughtful beauty of style, lacking the incisiveness and force of most of the Davidic Psalms.

It opens (a), in vv. 1-5, with a call of the Psalmist to his own soul to thanksgiving over the tender individual mercy of God; then (b), in vv. 6-13, he goes on to dwell on God's graciousness and mercy to His people, even in their sin; in this (c) he sees (vv. 14-18) an example of the tenderness of the Eternal, and the unchangeableness of His promises to men, who are but dust; and accordingly he ends (d), in vv. 19-22, with a call to all the angels of God and to all His creatures on earth to bless His Name.

v. 1. *All that is within me*—that is, as in the first and great commandment, "all the heart" of emotion, "all the mind" of thought, "all the strength" of practical resolution, "all the soul" of spiritual aspiration (Matt. xxii. 37; Deut. vi. 5). From all, perhaps in different degrees, must come the tribute of love and praise to God.

vv. 3-5. The blessings commemorated—forgiveness of sin, healing of sickness, salvation from death, and renewal of blessing, satisfaction, strength—stand in singularly striking contrast with the sad experiences of Ps. cii.—the sense of sin (v. 10), the burden of pain and disease (vv. 3, 4), the approach of death (v. 11), the desolation (vv. 6, 7), distaste for all natural desire (vv. 4, 9), exhaustion (v. 3). It is hard to think that the contrast is accidental.

v. 5. *Lusty as an eagle*. The A.V. and R.V. have "thy youth is renewed as an eagle's," evidently alluding to the legend of the renewal of youth and fresh beauty of plumage by the old eagle. The eagle is often taken in Holy Scripture as the type of strength and swiftness (comp. 2 Sam. i. 23; Isa. xl. 31; Prov. xxx. 19; Job xxxix. 27, &c.).

vv. 6-12. The sudden transition from individual to national mercies is another point of similarity to Ps. cii. The stress laid on God's deliverance of the oppressed with wrong (v. 6), on His chastisement and forgiveness of sin (vv. 9, 10), the verbal likeness of vv. 9, 10 to Isa. lvii. 16; Ezra ix. 13; Dan. ix. 9, 10, perhaps the exclusive reference to the great Lawgiver—all point to the same era of the deliverance, approaching or present, from the Captivity.

v. 7. *His ways unto Moses*. See the great vision of Exod. xxxiv. 6-10, to which v. 8 seems especially to refer. The reference to the Mosaic Revelation of God is evidently suggested by

the thought of it as the great example of the deliverance of the oppressed.

v. 10. Comp. Ezra ix. 13; Dan. ix. 9, 10.

vv. 11, 12. The comparison is unique in the perfection with which the image is worked out. The idea of v. 11 is, however, illustrated by Ps. xxxvi. 5; lvii. 11; Isa. lv. 8, 9; and that of v. 12 by Isa. xxxviii. 17; Mic. vii. 19.

v. 13. To the sense of God's Fatherhood and man's sonship—the essence of all true religion—is here added the conception of fatherly forgiveness and mercy to His children, even in sin (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 27-34), which is the needful Gospel to a fallen world, and therefore especially revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke xv. 11-32).

vv. 14-18 have again a marked likeness to Ps. cii. 11, 12, 24-28.

v. 14. Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 40; Job vii. 7; x. 8. Man in his finiteness and weakness (though not in his wilful sin) is as God made him. God cannot require of him what is beyond his strength; He must deal tenderly with the frail creature of His hand.

vv. 15, 16. Comp. Ps. xc. 5, 6; Job xiv. 2; Isa. xl. 6, and the quotations from the passages in 1 Pet. i. 24; James i. 10. The "wind" is clearly the hot wind from the desert, before which all that is green withers up. "To-day the grass is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven."

vv. 19-22, opening with the acknowledgment of the Lord enthroned in heaven, are in brief a *Benedicite* (comp. Ps. cxlviii.); calling, first, on the angels, exulting in superhuman strength, and doing His will freely, because hearing His word with direct knowledge; next, on His "hosts," that is, on all His rational creatures, whether on earth or in heaven—perhaps all His living

creatures—His ministers or servants consciously or unconsciously “doing His pleasure”; lastly, on all His works of inanimate Nature, which are simply instruments under “His dominion.”

v. 22. With a peculiar beauty, from this wide sweep of conception, the Psalm returns to the direct personality of its beginning. Whatever other beings may do, “Praise thou the Lord, O my soul.”

PSALM CIV.

This magnificent “Psalm of Creation” is apparently connected with Ps. ciii., not only by the identity of its beginning and end, “Praise thou the Lord, O my soul,” but also by its expansion of the *Benedicite*, with which Ps. ciii. closes. It is, indeed, a grand conception of all orders of creation as “the works of the Lord,” and of their silent praise of Him through manifestation of His glory. Like the glorious utterance of “the Lord out of the whirlwind” in the Book of Job (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.), it follows, as a commentary, but with some freedom of variation, the record of Gen. i., colouring with the glow of wonder and adoration the sublime simplicity of that record, and bringing out, in all the vividness of poetical insight, its three-fold lesson—of the origin of all being in the Creative Will, of the continual sustentation of the world in all its developments by God’s Providence, and of the essential supremacy of man as made in His image.

It first surveys (a) in succession the creation of light (v. 2), of the cloud-land of the firmament (vv. 3, 4), of the earth and sea (vv. 5—9), of the rivers watering the earth (vv. 10—13), of the vegetation which clothes it (vv. 14—16) of the animals which inhabit it (vv. 17—22), and of man as the lord of all (v. 23); then (b) it contrasts, in vv. 24—32 (much as in Psalms cii., ciii.), the transitoriness and dependence of the creatures with the changeless majesty of the Creator; and ends (c), in vv. 33—35, with an enthusiastic adhesion of loyalty to the One Eternal God, and the cry, “Praise the Lord, O my soul.” In this conclusion lies the secret of the sublime calmness of tone which pervades the whole. Face to face with the vastness of Creation, the Psalmist feels continual wonder, but no terror, because his soul rests on Him, who is greater than His works.

With the cognate Psalm cxlv. this Psalm is used at the Evensong of WHIT SUNDAY, evidently with reference to the *Creator Spiritus*, “the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters.”

v. 1. *Thou art become*. It should be, “Thou art.” God is what He is, from all eternity.

v. 2. The physical light—the first created thing, the first form of motion, and the first condition of life and beauty for all subsequent creation—is the “vesture” of Him who spiritually is Himself Light (1 John i. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 16), and who, as God incarnate, shews Himself to man’s spiritual nature as “the Light of the world,” and “the Light which is the life of men” (John viii. 12; i. 4, &c.).

vv. 2, 3 evidently refer to the firmament. Now it is spread out as “the curtain” of God’s pavilion (comp. Ps xviii. 11); now it is that on which He “lays the beams (the floor) of

His upper chambers” (Amos ix. 6) “in the waters”—the waters above the firmament; now it is “God’s chariot” (Isa. xix. 1), moving on “the wings of the wind” (comp. Ps. xviii. 10).

v. 4. This verse may be rendered in two ways. It may be—

“He maketh his messengers winds; His ministers the flaming fire.”

Or—

“He maketh the winds His messengers,
The flaming fire (the lightnings)
His servants.”

(Comp. Job xxxviii. 35). In the former case there must be reference to the angels as the ministers of God in the physical sphere, and this is the sense given to the passage, as

changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fall.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue: and their seed shall stand fast in thy sight.

PSALM 103.

Benedic, anima mea.

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me praise his holy Name.

2 Praise the Lord, O my soul: and forget not all his benefits;

3 Who forgiveth all thy sin: and healeth all thine infirmities;

4 Who saveth thy life from destruction: and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things: making thee young and lusty as an eagle.

6 The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment: for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

7 He shewed his ways unto Moses: his works unto the children of Israel.

8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: long-suffering, and of great goodness.

9 He will not always be chiding: neither keepeth he his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.

11 For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth: so great is his mercy also toward them that fear him.

12 Look how wide also the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us.

13 Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children: even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth whereof we are made: he remembereth that we are but dust.

15 The days of man are but as grass: for he flourisheth as a flower of the field.

16 For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the merciful goodness of the Lord endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear him: and his righteousness upon children’s children;

18 Even upon such as keep his covenant: and think upon his commandments to do them.

19 The Lord hath prepared his seat in heaven: and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20 O praise the Lord, ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength: ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words.

21 O praise the Lord, all ye his hosts: ye servants of his that do his pleasure.

22 O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion: praise thou the Lord, O my soul.

DAY 20.

Evensing Prayer.

PSALM 104.

Benedic, anima mea.

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour.

2 Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment: and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: and

maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

4 He maketh his angels spirits: and his ministers a flaming fire.

5 He laid the foundations of the earth: that it never should move at any time.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment: the waters stand in the hills.

7 At thy rebuke they flee: at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

quoted from the LXX., in Heb. i. 7. In the latter case there need be no such reference. The winds and the fire of heaven are simply His unconscious messengers of wrath or blessing (comp. Job xxxviii. 35).

vv. 6—9 describe with almost scientific accuracy the separation of the earth and sea—the solid earth surrounded by the sphere of water, then the emergence of the land and the limitation of the water by appointed bounds (contrast Job xxxviii. 8, and the common phrase, “the water under the earth”). Some slight mis-translations obscure the sense. It should be—

“Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment;
The waters stood (then) above the mountains.

At Thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away.

They climb up the hills, they rush down the valleys
To the place which Thou hast appointed for them.”

Many render parenthetically the last line but one—

“The mountains rise, the valleys sink
Unto the place,” &c.

But the other rendering is the one usually taken.

v. 9. Comp. Job xxvi. 10; xxxviii. 10, 11; Jer. v. 22; Ps. xciii. 4, 5.

vv. 10—17 interpose, in the record of the third day's Creation, the beautiful picture (there only implied) of the calling forth of the rivers and springs, to satisfy the thirst of the beasts of the field and the wild asses of the desert, and to cause all the wealth of vegetation to come forth—the trees, springing up along the watercourses, as the covert of the birds; the grass on the hills to clothe the earth, and by its produce to sustain man and beast. The peculiar vividness and exuberance of the picture belong to the experience of eastern climate and life.

v. 15. *Oil to make, &c.*—that is, to make his face to shine (comp. Judg. ix. 13; Ps. xlv. 8). Corn, wine, and oil are the three great products of the soil, and the oil was used at feasts to anoint the head (comp. Ps. xcii. 9).

v. 16. *Are full of sap.* The words

“of sap” are an erroneous insertion. It should be, “are satisfied,” drinking in the water to the full.

The trees of the Lord. The cedars of Lebanon—once covering the mountains, now shrunk to a small remnant—were the special admiration in the comparatively treeless land of Palestine, and are always made types of strength, luxuriance, and beauty. As such they are regarded beyond all others as the “trees of the Lord,” planted by His hand alone, without cultivation of man (comp. Ps. xxix. 5; lxxx. 10; cxlviii. 9; Isa. xxxvii. 24; Amos ii. 9, &c.).

v. 17. *The fir tree*, always mentioned with the cedar as growing on Lebanon (see 1 Kings v. 8, 10; ix. 11; Cant. i. 17, &c.), is properly “the cypress.”

v. 18, breaking in upon the description of the trees and other vegetation, is suggested evidently by v. 17. The same God who gives the green trees to the birds finds for the wild goats and conies their rocky homes. The verse forms a transition to vv. 21, 22.

v. 19. Comp. Gen. i. 14. The sun and moon are regarded simply in their relation to the inhabitants of the earth. The moon in ancient times determined all seasons, both of months and years (comp. Ps. lxxxix. 36); the sun, “knowing the time of his going down,” only the days and nights. But in this Psalm the idea is beautifully interwoven with the description of their relation to the life of the animal creation. For it, as well as for man, the seasons are framed.

vv. 20—23. Of the animals only the wild creatures, independent sharers of the world with man, are named. All creatures depend alike on God. But for the beasts the wilderness, for man the fruitful plain and valley; for them the darkness of night, for him the brightness of the working day.

v. 24. It is notable that, in referring to man, the Psalm breaks off from any natural mention of his superior glory (such as we find in Ps. viii. 6), to pour out the tribute of wondering adoration to God for the variety, the underlying wisdom, and the exuberant wealth of Creation.

8 They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath : even unto the place which thou hast appointed for them.

9 Thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass : neither turn again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the rivers : which run among the hills.

11 All beasts of the field drink thereof : and the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation : and sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from above : the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

14 He bringeth forth grass for the cattle : and green herb for the service of men ;

15 That he may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man : and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

16 The trees of the Lord also are full of sap : even the cedars of Libanus which he hath planted ;

17 Wherein the birds make their nests : and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats : and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

19 He appointed the moon for certain seasons : and the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness that it may be night : wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

21 The lions roaring after their prey : do seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, and they

get them away together : and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour : until the evening.

24 O Lord, how manifold are thy works : in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is the great and wide sea also : wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan : whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.

27 These wait all upon thee : that thou mayest give them meat in due season.

28 When thou givest it them they gather it : and when thou openest thy hand they are filled with good.

29 When thou hidest thy face they are troubled : when thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to their dust.

30 When thou lettest thy breath go forth they shall be made : and thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

31 The glorious Majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

32 The earth shall tremble at the look of him : if he do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.

33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will praise my God while I have my being.

34 And so shall my words please him : my joy shall be in the Lord.

35 As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end : praise thou the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord.

DAY 21.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM 105.

Confitemini Domino.

OGIVE thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his Name : tell the people what things he hath done.

2 O let your songs be of him, and praise him : and let your talking be of all his wondrous works.

3 Rejoice in his holy Name : let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

vv. 25, 26. These verses—properly, "Yonder is the sea great and wide," &c.—seem as it were an afterthought. To the Israelite the thought of the sea was associated mainly with mystery, desolation, danger; of delight in it there is no trace in Hebrew poetry: it was the land which was known and loved. But the eye of the Psalmist from some hill catches the distant view of the sea, and he thinks of it also as teeming with life, though of creatures unknown, from the same creating and sustaining Hand.

v. 26. *The ships* come in strangely in this context, and some would render the word as "the nautilus," contrasted in its delicate littleness with the huge leviathan. But it is likely that the Psalmist thinks of the ships simply as moving, like living creatures, over the sea.

Leviathan—mostly (see Job xli.; Ps. lxxiv. 15) the crocodile—is here any great sea monster.

vv. 27—30 lay stress at once on the dependence and the shortlived transitoriness of the creature. There is continuous life in creation, but it is life out of the death of each creature or species. The same law rules in humanity so far as it is physical (see Ps. xc. 3). It is our spiritual nature which rises above it, as made in the image of God.

vv. 31—35. From this grand but oppressive conception of perpetual change, decay, revival, the Psalmist takes refuge not simply in the eternal majesty of God, which in itself, and even in its physical manifestation (see v. 32), would be merely awful; but in the sense of His moral relation to man, as "our God," who takes pleasure in our words of adoration, and in whom therefore we can rejoice. In this lies, as Our Lord Himself taught (Matt. xxii. 32), the certainty of our immortality. It is only the sinner and the ungodly, as cutting themselves off from the life of God, who fall (see v. 35) under the law of destruction and death.

v. 32. The allusion is, as usual, to the manifestation on Sinai (Ex. xix. 18). Comp. Ps. xcix. 1; cxliv. 5, &c. Perhaps this suggests (in v. 35) the idea of the righteous judgment, as distinct from the goodness, of God.

v. 35. Again from this contemplation of the vastness and variety of Nature the Psalmist comes back to the individual consciousness of God—"Praise thou the Lord, O my soul." But not content with this, he calls on his brethren in the Communion of Saints to join with him, "Praise ye the Lord" (see R.V.). This is *Hallelujah*—the first Hallelujah of the Psalter.

PSALM CV.

To the Psalm of Creation succeed two Psalms (cv., cvi.) of history, following out the idea, sometimes the expressions, of Ps. lxxviii. But these later Psalms are less free and vigorous; they keep closer to the order of the sacred history; and in them the Psalmist is not so much the prophetic teacher of the people, as the spokesman of their mingled thanksgiving and confession of sin. Like Ps. civ., these are Hallelujah Psalms; and the concluding prayer of Ps. cvi. (v. 45) refers them to the same period, at the approach of the end of the Captivity. Ps. cv. dwells on the history from Abraham to the Exodus; Ps. cvi. takes it up from the Exodus to the time of the Judges, and there abruptly closes, with nothing more than allusion to the subsequent ages of the kingdom.

Psalm cv. has (a) an introduction, in vv. 1—8, of thanksgiving; then (b) it surveys, in vv. 9—22, the patriarchal history; and (c), in vv. 23—44, describes the Exodus, and alludes briefly to the settlement in Canaan.

We find vv. 1—15 quoted in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—22 (with slight variations) as a part of the song of the great day when the Ark was brought up to Mount Zion (see note on Ps. xcvi.).

v. 1. *The people* should be "the peoples." As usual in the Psalms of this time, the manifestation of God through His people to the heathen is the prominent idea. The verse coincides almost exactly with Isa. xii. 4.

vv. 1—6. Through the enthusiastic fervour of these verses runs a definite order of thought—first, thanksgiving for present mercies to us, filling the heart and inspiring the tongue (v. 1, 2); then the still higher rejoicing in the manifestation of His Name in

4 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his face evermore.

5 Remember the marvellous works that he hath done: his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth,

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant: ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the world.

8 He hath been always mindful of his covenant and promise: that he made to a thousand generations;

9 Even the covenant that he made with Abraham: and the oath that he swore unto Isaac;

10 And appointed the same unto Jacob for a law: and to Israel for an everlasting testament;

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan: the lot of your inheritance;

12 When there were yet but a few of them: and they strangers in the land;

13 What time as they went from one nation to another: from one kingdom to another people;

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: but reproveth even kings for their sakes;

15 Touch not mine Anointed: and do my prophets no harm.

16 Moreover, he called for a dearth upon the land: and destroyed all the provision of bread.

17 But he had sent a man before them: even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant;

18 Whose feet they hurt in the stocks: the iron entered into his soul;

19 Until the time came that his cause was known: the word of the Lord tried him.

20 The king sent, and delivered him: the prince of the people let him go free.

21 He made him lord also of his house: and ruler of all his substance;

22 That he might inform his princes after his will: and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt: and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people exceedingly: and made them stronger than their enemies;

25 Whose heart turned so, that they hated his people: and dealt untruly with his servants.

26 Then sent he Moses his servant: and Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 And these shewed his tokens among them: and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and it was dark: and they were not obedient unto his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood: and slew their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs: yea, even in their kings' chambers.

31 He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies: and lice in all their quarters.

32 He gave them hail-stones for rain: and flames of fire in their land.

33 He smote their vines also and fig-trees: and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts.

34 He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable: and did eat up all the grass in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

35 He smote all the first-born in their land: even the chief of all their strength.

36 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

37 Egypt was glad at their departing: for they were afraid of them.

38 He spread out a cloud to be a covering: and fire to give light in the night-season.

39 At their desire he brought quails: and he filled them with the bread of heaven.

40 He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out: so that rivers ran in the dry places.

41 For why? he remembered

itself (v. 3); next, the Psalmist leads his brethren to enquire into ("seek")—that is, to meditate upon—the strength of the Lord (v. 4); and, lastly, they are to look back in memory on the gradual evolution, through the past up to the present, of the covenant of the Lord with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (vv. 5, 6). Through faith and love the soul is to pass to thought and understanding. (Comp. the order of the Apostolic teaching in Eph. iii. 17—19.)

v. 7. *His judgments, &c.* Comp. Ps. xcvi. 3, 4. By His judgments of righteousness and mercy to Israel, the Lord is manifested to all the earth, as the God of all.

vv. 9—11. See Gen. xiii. 14—17; xv. 19—21 (to Abraham); xxvi. 2—5 (to Isaac); xxviii. 13, 14; xxxv. 12 (to Jacob).

v. 10. *For a law—first, fixed as "an everlasting covenant"—"a law eternal, which God set Himself"—and then becoming, through its implied obligations, "a statute to Israel" (Ps. lxxxii. 4, 5).*

vv. 13, 14. The allusion is clearly to the sojourns of Abraham and Isaac in Egypt and Philistia, and the interposition of God to protect them from the Pharaoh and the Abimelech of the day (Gen. xii. 10—20; xx.; xxvi. 6—11).

v. 15. The Psalmist looks upon the patriarchs through the medium of later associations. They were as kings and priests before God; therefore they are called "His Anointed." They had the word, and knew the Spirit of the Lord; therefore they are "His Prophets" (comp. Gen. xx. 7).

v. 17. *He had sent, &c.* See Gen. xlv. 5; 1. 20.

v. 18. *The iron entered into his soul.* This beautiful rendering—taken from the Vulgate—which by its pathetic truth to nature has become proverbial, must be given up. The original is, "his soul entered into iron." But the words may well imply that his soul felt the chains which bound his limbs, and so are not very far in meaning from our celebrated rendering. The allusion must be to the first severity of Joseph's captivity before he won the heart of the keeper of the prison. See Gen. xl. 15.

v. 19 should be—

"Till the time that his word came (to pass):

The word of the Lord tried him." "His word" is clearly Joseph's prophetic interpretation of dreams. The "word" ("oracle") of the Lord is probably the promise of His favour; it "tried him" by its delay till the appointed time.

v. 22. *Inform his princes, &c.* It should be, "to bind his princes at his will," to exercise the despotic authority of Pharaoh (comp. Gen. xli. 44); and then "to teach his elders wisdom," by guiding and civilizing them through the superior wisdom of inspiration (comp. Gen. xli. 39, 40; xlv. 15).

v. 23. *The land of Ham* (here and in v. 27) is emphatic—the alien land of the race on which lay the patriarchal curse (Gen. ix. 25).

v. 25. *Untruly—properly, "subtily"* (comp. Acts vii. 19).

vv. 28—35 (like Ps. lxxviii. 45—52) glance briefly, but with vivid emphasis, at the plagues of Egypt—generally in the historic order, omitting only the fifth and sixth ("the murrain" and "the boils and blains"). The exception is the placing first the ninth plague (the darkness), which may possibly be an erroneous transposition by the scribe; for it is difficult to explain it by any other reason.

v. 28. *They were not obedient.* So reads the LXX.—perhaps to get rid of a difficulty; but the Hebrew text is undoubtedly (as in A. V. and R. V.), "they rebelled not against His word." The words are sometimes explained as referring to Moses and Aaron; but this is not only artificial and weak in itself, but also alien from the whole tenour of the passage. "They" must be the Egyptians; and the only explanation, though not free from difficulty, is the mention in Ex. x. 24 of Pharaoh's apparent submission after the plague of darkness, in which we know that he only expressed for the moment what his servants had long felt far more thoroughly (see Ex. ix. 20, 21; x. 7). If this verse came in its right historic place, after v. 34, the difficulty would be much diminished.

v. 36. See Ex. xii. 35. The "borrowing" was really an open exaction

his holy promise : and Abraham his servant.

42 And he brought forth his people with joy : and his chosen with gladness ;

43 And gave them the lands of the heathen : and they took the labours of the people in possession ;
44 That they might keep his statutes : and observe his laws.

DAY 21.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM 106.

Confitemini Domino.

O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious : and his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Who can express the noble acts of the Lord : or shew forth all his praise ?

3 Blessed are they that alway keep judgment : and do righteousness.

4 Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ;

5 That I may see the felicity of thy chosen : and rejoice in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers : we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

7 Our fathers regarded not thy wonders in Egypt, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance : but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red sea.

8 Nevertheless, he helped them for his Name's sake : that he might make his power to be known.

9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up : so he led them through the deep, as through a wilderness.

10 And he saved them from the adversary's hand : and delivered them from the hand of the enemy.

11 As for those that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them : there was not one of them left.

12 Then believed they his words : and sang praise unto him.

13 But within a while they forgot his works : and would not abide his counsel.

14 But lust came upon them in the wilderness : and they tempted God in the desert.

15 And he gave them their desire : and sent leanness withal into their soul.

16 They angered Moses also in the tents : and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

17 So the earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan : and covered the congregation of Abiram.

18 And the fire was kindled in their company : the flame burnt up the ungodly.

19 They made a calf in Horeb : and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they turned their glory : into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.

21 And they forgot God their Saviour : who had done so great things in Egypt ;

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham : and fearful things by the Red sea.

23 So he said, he would have destroyed them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the gap : to turn away his wrathful indignation, lest he should destroy them.

24 Yea, they thought scorn of that pleasant land : and gave no credence unto his word ;

25 But murmured in their tents : and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.

26 Then lift he up his hand against them : to overthrow them in the wilderness ;

27 To cast out their seed among the nations : and to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves unto Baal-peor : and ate the offerings of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions :

of tribute—the retaliation for all that the Egyptians had laid upon them.

Feeble person—properly, “none that stumbled.” Their way was made smooth and plain, even to the weakest.

vv. 38—40 pass from the detailed notice of the miracles of the Exodus itself, to touch briefly on the miracles of the wilderness. They dwell especially on the three miraculous gifts of guidance, food, and water,

which, in their tender care of His people, stood in marked contrast with the severity of the plagues of Egypt (Ex. xiv. 21, 22; xvi. 12—15; xvii. 6).

vv. 41—44 glance, still more cursorily, at the settlement in Canaan as the fulfilment of the covenant with Abraham (*v. 41*), and as the entrance on the special duty of obedience to God’s law, laid on His covenanted people.

PSALM CVI.

This Psalm, although it is not exactly a continuation of Ps. cv., yet by similarity of style and close connection, both of subject and of idea, seems to indicate coincidence of time and authorship. The difference is that, as is natural in comment upon the history of Israel in the wilderness and after the settlement in Canaan, it adds to the emphatic enumeration of God’s blessings a not less emphatic declaration of the sins of the people. The whole Psalm, like the prayer of Daniel (Dan. ix. 3—19), shews, indeed, in every line, a deep patriotic enthusiasm; but its purpose is the higher purpose which pervades the Old Testament prophecy—the shewing forth the glory of God, even in the sin and chastening of Israel.

The Psalm has (*a*), in *vv. 1—5*, a short introduction of thanksgiving and prayer; then it plunges at once into a penitent recital (*b*), in *vv. 6—33*, of the trials and sins of the wilderness; and (*c*), in *vv. 34—44*, of the disobedience and corruption of the people after the entrance on Canaan, and the sufferings and deliverances of the age of the Judges; and ends (*d*), in *v. 45*, with a prayer for deliverance from captivity and restoration to the old land.

vv. 1—5. The introduction is evidently the utterance of one who (as in Ps. cii.) looks confidently to the speedy restoration of Israel, and prays that he may live to see it. Brief as it is, it is full of compressed thought. It opens with the Hallelujah, and the familiar utterance of praise to Him “whose mercy endureth for ever,” which marked the dedication of Solomon’s Temple (see 2 Chron. vii. 3, and comp. Ps. cvii. 1; cxviii. 1). It passes on, next, to dwell on the impossibility of adequate thanksgiving in word, and on the offering of the only true thanksgiving by deed in “keeping judgment and doing righteousness” (*vv. 2, 3*); and then, in perfect confidence in God’s favour and salvation to His people, prays that the Psalmist himself may have part in the supreme joy of the restoration.

v. 7. Were disobedient, i.e. unbelieving and despondent (see Ex. xiv. 10—12).

v. 8. For His Name’s sake. See Ex. xiv. 17. “I will get me honour upon

Pharaoh and upon all his host’; and Ezek. xx. 9, “I wrought for My Name’s sake . . . before the heathen . . . in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.”

v. 9. Rebuked the Red sea (comp. Ps. xviii. 15; civ. 7; cxiv. 3).

Through a wilderness, i.e. through a broad level pasture (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 53, 54).

v. 12. Sang praise unto Him—in the song of Ex. xv. 1—19, the first Psalm of the Old Testament.

v. 14. The lust of uncontrolled desire, even of things natural, becomes sin, when it “tempts God,” by clamorously demanding His miraculous interposition (see Matt. iv. 3, 4, 7).

v. 15. Sent leanness withal into their soul (comp. Ps. lxxviii. 30, 31). The comment is on Num. xi. 32—34. Instead of leanness (properly “consumption” or “wasting away”) the LXX. and Vulgate read “satiety.” But our rendering is not only better grammatically, but deeper in spiritual meaning. The gratification of

wilful and presumptuous desire begets only an intenser sense of want.

v. 16. Angered should be “envied” (see Num. xvi. 3, 12—14)—Korah and his company being jealous of the priesthood of Aaron, *the saint* (i.e. the consecrated priest) *of the Lord*, Dathan and Abiram of the lordship of Moses.

v. 17. It is notable that, while Dathan and Abiram are mentioned by name as swallowed up in the earthquake, Korah and his company, consumed by fire, are simply referred to as “the ungodly.”

v. 19 goes back historically to an earlier period of the wanderings (Ex. xxxii.). The Psalmist evidently desires to mark a climax in the sins of Israel—unbelieving despondency (*v. 12*), rebellion and jealousy against God’s servants (*v. 16*), open idolatry, dishonouring God Himself (*v. 20*), and final apostasy from the high destiny to which He called them (*v. 24*).

v. 20. Turned. The rendering of the LXX. is more striking, “bartered away their glory”—exchanged the spiritual glory of Jehovah (as the Psalmist says with righteous scorn) for the mere likeness of the calf that eateth grass.

v. 21. The idolatry of the golden calf was a breach of the second commandment, not of the first; for in inaugurating it Aaron said, “Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.” But “forgetfulness of God” was implied in the craving for visible symbols of a carnal worship. See Ex. xxxii. 1, 4; “Make us gods to go before us,” “These be thy gods, O Israel.” From this to worship of the idols, as if they were really gods, is, as all experience shews, a short inevitable step.

v. 23. See Ex. xxxii. 9—14; Deut. ix. 13, 14.

v. 24. Thought scorn—properly, “rejected.” The reference is to the great apostasy—the refusal to enter the land after the report of the spies (Num. xiv.).

v. 26. Lift He up His hand—that is, in an oath, that they should fall in the wilderness (see Deut. xxxii. 40; Ezek. xx. 23).

v. 28. Joined themselves—properly, “yoked themselves,” bound them-

selves under licentious rites to the Moabite idolatry and idolaters (Num. xxv. 3, 5).

The offerings of the dead. “The dead” is probably to be taken literally of the worship and consultation of the spirits of the dead (see Deut. xviii. 11; Isa. viii. 19; and comp. 1 Sam. xxviii. 7—11).

v. 30. And prayed. This should be (as in A.V. and R.V.), “executed judgment.” The error of our version perhaps comes from a misunderstanding of the rendering of the LXX., “appealed” (see Num. xxv. 11—13). Phinehas, himself probably a judge in authority, became the type of a righteous zeal, exercising summary vengeance, informal and unbidden, against outrage on decency and on reverence for God. To his example the “Zealots” of after days appealed.

v. 31. Was counted unto him, &c. There is evidently allusion to Gen. xv. 6. The righteous zeal for God, coming from true faith, inherited the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant.

vv. 32, 33. The Psalmist seems to dwell with a wondering sadness on the punishment of the great Lawgiver for what seemed a hasty word. But that word was the final culmination of the half-presumptuous self-reliance—the exorcence of fervent zeal—which appears again and again in the history of Moses.

v. 32. For their sakes. See Moses’ own words in Deut. i. 37; iii. 26, &c. The meaning is, “through what was primarily their fault.”

v. 33. His spirit. Some interpret of the Spirit of God. But our version is simplest and probably best.

vv. 34—44 pass abruptly to the apostasy in Canaan itself, after the death of Joshua, before glancing briefly at the troubled and bloody era of the Judges. The fault was a disobedience, probably of indolence and cowardice; the result corruption by vice and idolatry; the penalty slavery under the races which should have been their subjects, or the foreign enemies whom they might have defied.

vv. 34, 35. See Ex. xxiii. 31; Deut. vii. 2, 16; Judg. ii. 2. “The iniquity of the Amorites,” long spared, “was

full" (see Gen. xv. 16); hopeless corruption is necessarily contagious.

v. 36. *Turned to their own decay* should be (as in A.V. and R.V.), "which became a snare unto them." See Ex. xxiii. 33.

Devils—evidently taken from the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 17), "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God" (comp. 1 Cor. x. 20). The word used properly means "lords" (as in the name Baal and Molech)—"the gods many and lords many" of 1 Cor. viii. 5.

v. 37. The abomination of human sacrifice, here so indignantly denounced, is usually noted (see Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; 2 Kin. xvi. 3; xvii. 17; xxi. 6) under the form of the "passing through the fire (mainly of children) to Molech"—the god of the Phœnician idolatry, which may have pervaded Canaan. But it may well have taken other forms. It is a natural climax of false heathenish ideas of sacrifice to give "the first-born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul" (Mic. vi. 7).

v. 38. *Went a whoring* (comp. Lev. xvii. 7; Num. xv. 39; Judg. ii. 17; Ezek. xx. 30). The phrase signifies more than unfaithfulness; it implies a reckless plunge into many and inconsistent idolatries.

vv. 40—42 refer especially to the troubled history of the Book of Judges—a weary succession of sin and idolatry, of punishment and repentance, of deliverance and of subsequent falling away—a time of retrogression, social, moral, and religious, intervening between the brighter ages of Moses and Samuel. The description may, however, be extended more widely to the subsequent history, even up to the great Captivity itself.

v. 44. *He made all those, &c.* (comp. 1 Kings viii. 50). These words must certainly be suggested by the recent experiences of Israel. As Jeremiah had foretold (xlii. 12), the Persian king had shewn compassion and even reverence for the captive people (Ezra ix. 9; Neh. i. 11; Dan. i. 9).

v. 45. The historical summary ends abruptly, and leads on to the final prayer that God would hasten His deliverance—the prayer of all the exiles at that critical time of suspense and hope. As always, the prayer is not merely for Israel's happiness, but for God's glory.

v. 46 is the doxology closing the Fourth Book of the Psalter. To the forms previously used, is added (see A.V. and R.V.) the HALLELUJAH ("Praise ye the Lord").

and the plague was great among them.

30 Then stood up Phinees and prayed: and so the plague ceased.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness: among all posterities for evermore.

32 They angered him also at the waters of strife: so that he punished Moses for their sakes;

33 Because they provoked his spirit: so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

34 Neither destroyed they the heathen: as the Lord commanded them;

35 But were mingled among the heathen: and learned their works.

36 Inasmuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay: yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils;

37 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters: whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was defiled with blood.

38 Thus were they stained with their own works: and went a whoring with their own inventions.

39 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people: insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

40 And he gave them over into the hand of the heathen: and they that hated them were lords over them.

41 Their enemies oppressed them: and had them in subjection.

42 Many a time did he deliver them: but they rebelled against him with their own inventions, and were brought down in their wickedness.

43 Nevertheless, when he saw their adversity: he heard their complaint.

44 He thought upon his covenant, and pitied them, according unto the multitude of his mercies: yea, he made all those that led them away captive to pity them.

45 Deliver us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen: that we may give thanks unto thy holy Name, and make our boast of thy praise.

46 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and world without end: and let all the people say, Amen.