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HEBREW LYRICAL HISTORY;

OR

SELECT PSALMS,

ARRANGED IN THE ORDER OF THE EVENTS TO
WHICH THEY RELATE.

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES,

BY

THOMAS BULFINCH.

Bible of the Psalms in English

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also;
I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”—
1 Cor. xiv. 15.

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TO

MY RELATIVE AND FRIEND,

JOSEPH COOLIDGE,

I DEDICATE

THIS VOLUME.

T. B.

331660

P R E F A C E .

THE perusal of the Sacred Scriptures for intellectual gratification cannot be inconsistent with the higher and nobler use of them for religious improvement. While admitting their supreme importance in the latter point of view, the man of taste and feeling finds also in them attraction and delight, and the antiquarian and philosopher treasures of information respecting the early history of our race.

It is the purpose of this little work to present one of the choicest portions of the sacred volume in a form more attractive than it usually wears, by removing the embarrassment arising from the confused arrangement of its parts, and the obscurities of its language, — chargeable, not on the prophets and sages who indited its several compositions, but upon the imperfect instruments by which it has been handed down to us.

The Psalms are lyric poems; that is, they are poems designed to be rehearsed with the aid of instrumental music. They are religious and devotional hymns; yet nearly all having distinct reference to events in the history of the Jewish nation, or of the individual composer. The government of the Hebrews was so decidedly *theocratic*, that is, they regarded in so literal a sense Jehovah as the king and ruler of the nation, that all events assumed of course a religious character, and were recognized as direct works of the Divine hand. Consequently, in joy and sorrow, the thoughts of the Psalmist turned to Jehovah, not with the languid movement with which our cold philosophy allows us to acknowledge the Ruler of the universe, but with the intimate and exclusive feeling with which one claims the protection of his own and his country's sovereign.

The opinion that David was the sole author of the Psalms is refuted by the pages of the Bible itself, where seventy-one only are inscribed with the name of David, twenty-eight bear the names of other composers, and fifty-one have no author's name attached. The inscriptions, however, are not considered by the learned as worthy of implicit confidence, for many of the psalms ascribed by them to David bear in their contents incontestable marks of a later origin. The pious and learned Dr. Adam Clarke, who

has, in his Bible, examined the subject with great care, assigns to David not more than fifty psalms. Of the inscriptions he says, "They are of slender authority; several of them do not agree with the subject of the psalm to which they are prefixed, and not a few of them appear to be out of their places." The same authority will justify us in not regarding as conclusive the citation of a psalm as David's by the New Testament writers. In his remarks on Psalm xcv. he says: "This psalm is attributed to David by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Calmet and other eminent critics believe that it was composed in the time of the captivity, and that the Apostle only follows the common opinion in quoting it as the production of David, because in general the Psalter was attributed to him."

The *arrangement* of the Psalms in our Bibles is the result of the union in one body of five successive collections. The boundaries of these several portions are marked by doxologies, placed at the ends of Psalms xli., lxxii., lxxxix., cvi., and the last. The first, second, and third books end with "Amen and Amen!" the fourth with "Amen and Hallelujah!" the fifth with "Hallelujah!"

"The person," says Professor Noyes, "who began the collection, put together the psalms of

The numerous notes marked N. are taken from Dr. Noyes's version, to which the reader is referred, and where he will find the fullest information, on the whole subject, in the most attractive form. Those marked A. are from the translation lately published by Professor J. A. Alexander, of Princeton, N. J.; those marked A. C. are from Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary; and those marked H. are from the Bible of Rev. John Hewlett, B. D., London. Use has also been made of the annotations of the German commentators.

The want of some such aid to the ready apprehension of the Psalms has been freely acknowledged by writers whose veneration for the Sacred Scriptures cannot be doubted. It is thus expressed by a late writer, the Rev. James Hamilton of London, in an essay on the "Literary Attractions of the Bible," published as a Tract by the American Tract Society: "For practical and devotional purposes, we could desire no better version than our own truthful and time-hallowed translation. But for the sake of its intelligent literary perusal, we have sometimes wished that some judicious editor would give us, each in a separate fasciculus, the several contributions of each sacred penman. One volume might contain all the psalms of David; another, those psalms — nearly as numerous —

which were indited by Moses and Asaph and others." Dr. Adam Clarke also, in his Commentary, freely gives his sanction to a similar measure. He proposes a chronological arrangement of the Psalms, assigning to each, according to his judgment, the occasion on which it was composed. And in his Introduction to the Book of Jeremiah he expresses his approbation of the attempts of Blayney and others to bind up its chapters in a new arrangement.

The plan adopted in this volume appears to the compiler to have the effect of making the Psalms more readily intelligible, and of placing their beauties in a clearer light. The Psalms thus arranged constitute one whole, a grand narrative poem, on the subject of God's dealings with that remarkable people to whom he saw fit to intrust the great doctrines relating to his being and attributes. No theme can surpass in interest the one thus presented, — the noblest spiritual truths committed in the infancy of the race to a people in an early stage of civilization, to be kept safe for succeeding ages. That people passes through various fortunes. It emerges from obscurity and becomes a powerful nation. It degenerates, is subdued, and reduced to vassalage by its neighbors. After a considerable lapse of time, not long enough, however, to remove by death all the generation which witnessed the

catastrophe, it is restored, and commences a new career of prosperity and glory.

The time embraced in the epic is a thousand years; the varieties of fortune are most striking; the characters of the actors, marked by the noblest virtues and the darkest crimes; the scenery is most picturesque; and, above all, the story is told in the words of the actors themselves, in poetry which has been the source and model of much of that of succeeding ages, and which, in its particular province, has never been surpassed or equalled.

If it shall appear that the compiler has been successful in either of his objects, — to make the Psalms more interesting by linking them in a chain of narrative, — to give a clearer perception of their beauties by the critical illustrations, — or to soften any repulsive features which they may have worn in the imperfect translation in which they are usually read, — it will be to him a source of great satisfaction.

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ACCORDING TO THE CLASSIFICATION OF DR. ADAM CLARKE.

Psalms composed by David when persecuted by Saul. — XI., XVII., XXII., XXXIV., XXXV., LII., LIV., LVIII., CIX., CXL.

Psalms composed after the Commencement of the Reign of David. — XXXVIII., XXXIX., XL.

Psalms composed during the Rebellion of Absalom. — III., IV., V., LV., LXX.

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Psalms composed after the Jews were permitted to return to their own Land. — LIX., LXI., LXIII., LXVI., LXXXVII., CV., CVI., CVIII., CXVII., CXXXV., CXXXVI.



SELECT PSALMS.

PSALM XC.

A PRAYER OF MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD.

IN arranging the Psalms in the order of time, and of the events to which they relate, the first place is due to the ninetieth Psalm, entitled, "A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God."

It is supposed to have been uttered by Moses, when, at the close of the sad sojourn of forty years in the wilderness, he saw the generation which he had led out of Egypt wasted by death, and felt his own end approaching, and began to realize the fulfilment of the Divine decree, that neither he nor they should ever attain the object of their labors, the possession of the Promised Land.

This sublime composition is almost the oldest poem in existence. Its date precedes that of David by five hundred years, and that of Homer, the most ancient of the classical poets, by a still longer interval.

It deals with the sublimest and most momentous truths, the being of God, his eternity and power, and the responsibility, weakness, and dependence of man.

In attributing the brevity of mortal life to the displeasure of God, in verse 9, allusion is made to the particular case of the Hebrew people at that time, and the sentiment is not to be applied to all men, in all conditions. The continuance of life, as of all temporal blessings, is not of itself a mark of God's favor, or the reverse, but is ordered as God sees fit for his own wise purposes.

PSALM XC.

- 1 LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place
In all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.
- 3 Thou turnest man to dust,
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
- 4 For a thousand years, in thy sight,
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.
- 5 Thou carriest them away, as with a flood ;
They are as a sleep,
And fade away suddenly, like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up ;

Ver. 3. "Return, ye children of men," i. e. Return to dust. But the Prayer-Book version renders it differently, "Come again, ye children of men." If so understood, the sentiment would be like that of Psalm civ. 29, 30, referring to the renewing of the race by successive generations. But the subject of the psalm seems to be better suited by the former reading ; and, thus, the second clause of the verse is simply a parallel of the first.

- In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
- 7 For we are consumed by thine anger,
And by thy wrath are we destroyed.
- 8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
- 9 By reason of thine anger, all our days vanish away ;
We bring our years to an end like a tale that is told.
- 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,
Yet is their strength labor and sorrow ;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
- 11 Yet who regardeth the power of thine anger ?
Or feareth thy displeasure as he ought ?
- 12 So teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
- 13 Desist, O Lord ! How long —— ?
Let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
- 14 O, satisfy us early with thy mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou
hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen adversity.
- 16 Let thy deeds appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
- 17 And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
And establish thou the work of our hands for us ;
Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.

Ver. 13. "Desist, O Lord ! How long —— ?" i. e. wilt thou be angry ? The incompleteness of the sentence was designed to be expressive of emotion. Noyes.

PSALMS VIII. AND XIX.

CONTEMPLATIONS OF DAVID'S SHEPHERD LIFE.

AN interval of five hundred years occurs between Psalm xc. and the following psalms. After the death of Moses, the Israelites entered the Promised Land, under the guidance of Joshua, and partially conquered it. They did not, however, so completely subdue the ancient inhabitants as to hold undisturbed possession. On the contrary, they were at times themselves under subjection to one or other of the nations among whom they had planted themselves. From time to time valiant leaders were raised up for them, who repulsed their enemies, and gradually gained them a predominance over the neighboring nations; but those nations were still formidable, and unsubdued at the time of David's appearance on the scene. He is first introduced to us as a youth, "ruddy and of a fair countenance," the youngest son of Jesse, and keeping his father's sheep. The occupation of a shepherd is that which the ancestors of the Israelites had followed from the earliest times. It is a pursuit favorable to contemplation and reflection. The science of astronomy is thought to have had its birth in those countries where shepherds, keeping their flocks by night, had abundant opportunity to watch the motions of the heavenly bodies, in the clear and dry atmosphere of the East. The cultivation of the musical art is also favored by the abundant leisure of the shepherd's life, and has

always been considered characteristic of his calling. We may conceive, then, David, the young shepherd, as expressing the meditations of his nightly watches in the two following psalms.

PSALM VIII.

- 1 O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth !
Thou hast set thy glory above the heavens !
- 2 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou
ordained praise,
To put thine adversaries to shame,
And to still the enemy and the revengeful.
- 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy
fingers,
The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained ;
- 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him,
And the son of man, that thou visitest him !
- 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor.
- 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works
of thy hands ;
Thou hast put all things under his feet ;
- 7 All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field ;

Ver. 2. The meaning of this verse seems to be this: "Thou hast made thy glory so conspicuously evident in the heavenly bodies, that the feeblest minds are capable of appreciating it, and the most depraved minds cannot be insensible to it, nor argue it away."

- 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
 9 O Lord, our Lord,
 How excellent is thy name in all the earth !

PSALM XIX.

- 1 THE heavens declare the glory of God ;
 And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
 2 Day unto day uttereth speech,
 And night unto night showeth knowledge.
 3 There is no speech nor language
 Where their voice is not heard.
 4 Their sound is gone out through all the earth,
 And their words to the ends of the world.
 In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
 And rejoiceth, as a strong man, to run his course.
 6 His going forth is from the uttermost part of the
 heaven,
 And his circuit unto the ends of it ;
 And there is nothing hid from his heat.
- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ;
 The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the
 simple ;
 8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ;
 The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening
 the eyes ;

Ver. 4. "In them," i. e. the ends of the world, or the remotest part of the visible heavens. — "tabernacle," i. e. a tent or dwelling.

- 9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever ;
The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous
altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold ; yea, than
much fine gold ;
Sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned ;
And in keeping of them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can understand his errors ?
Cleanse thou me from secret faults.
- 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ;
Let them not have dominion over me :
Then shall I be upright,
And I shall be innocent from great transgression.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of
my heart
Be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.
-

PSALM XVI.

DAVID'S EARLY LIFE AND GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

THIS psalm exhibits to us David before he had left the tranquil occupation of his early days, but probably after prospects of a more public career had opened to him, by his being summoned by Saul to reside with him, and employ his musical powers for his relief. He

expresses a resolution to seek the society of the virtuous, and to abstain from intercourse with idolaters. He expresses satisfaction with his lot, and gives thanks to God, who gave it. He avows his confidence in God, in life and in death. Whether the last verses imply a belief in a future state is doubtful; but they are among the strongest passages to that effect to be found in the Old Testament.

PSALM XVI.

1 PRESERVE me, O God! for in thee do I put my trust.

2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord;

I have no happiness beyond thee!

3 The saints that are in the earth, and the excellent, In them is all my delight.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after other gods;

Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, Nor take their names upon my lips.

5 The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup;

Thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; Yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Ver. 6. "The lines are fallen," &c. David's native place was Bethlehem, about six miles south of Jerusalem. It lay in a very fertile district, on the declivity of a considerable ridge of hills. To its fertility it was indebted for its name, "bread city." Even now, though uncultivated for fear of the Bedouins, its environs

- 7 I will bless the Lord, who careth for me ;
 My heart so instructeth me in the night seasons.
- 8 I set the Lord always before me ;
 Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoiceth ;
 My flesh also shall rest in hope.
- 10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave ;
 Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corrup-
 tion.
- 11 Thou wilt show me the path of life ;
 In thy presence is fulness of joy,
 At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

are beautiful, — the hills covered to a considerable distance with figs, olives, pomegranates, and vineyards. Of Hebron, the neighboring city, a modern traveller says : “ When that ancient city burst on the view, we entered a romantic and well-cultivated region, the valleys covered with wheat, and the mountain-sides terraced, and planted with figs, vines, and olives.” — Olin. Another thus describes the feelings awakened by the approach to this region : “ I should see to-morrow the fields where Ruth gleaned among the maidens of Boaz, and the pastures where a shepherd-boy once tended his father’s flocks, now seeking smooth stones for his sling, among the brooks, and now delighting himself with that young song which was to grow divine, and to become the worship of future ages and nations, in the islands of the Southern Ocean, and the cathedrals of Europe, and among the forests of the Western world.” — Martineau.

Ver. 9. “ My heart,” — “ my spirit,” — “ my flesh.” These three terms are only an emphatic way of denoting the whole person. Comp. Ps. lxxxiv. 2. This and the succeeding verses are quoted by Peter, Acts ii. 25 et seq., and applied to Christ. See Dr. Noyes’s notes on this Psalm.

PSALMS LXII. AND LXIV.

PERSECUTION BY SAUL AND HIS COURTIERS.

WE assign these Psalms to the time when David had left the pastures and valleys of Bethlehem, to be an attendant on Saul, the king. He soon found that his quiet pastoral life was exchanged for one of incessant peril and perplexity, from the waywardness of Saul and the treachery of the courtiers. When it was seen that Saul was jealous of him, doubtless the envious and crafty courtiers tried to supplant him, or, as he says, Ps. lxii. 4, "cast him down from his eminence." And the fickle multitude, who had hailed him with songs and dances when he returned from the victory over Goliath, seeing that he was out of favor with the powerful, fell off from him; so that he exclaimed, "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie." The reflections in the tenth and following verses of Psalm lxii. are addressed to his adversaries, warning them that, if they should succeed in depriving him of his honors, they could not enjoy them long; for "power belongeth unto God," and he will render to every man according to his deserts.

PSALM LXII.

- 1 TRULY my soul waiteth upon God ;
From him cometh my deliverance.
- 2 He only is my rock and my salvation ;
He is my defence, I shall not wholly fall.

- 3 How long will ye continue to assault a single man ?
How long will ye all seek to destroy me,
Like a bending wall, or a tottering fence ?
- 4 They consult to cast me down from my eminence ;
They delight in lies ;
They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.
- 5 My soul, wait thou only upon God ;
For my expectation is from him.
- 6 He only is my rock and my salvation ;
He is my defence, I shall not fall.
- 7 In God is my help and my glory ;
The rock of my strength and my refuge is God.
- 8 Trust in him at all times, ye people ;
Pour out your heart before him :
God is a refuge for us.
- 9 Surely men of low degree are vanity,
And men of high degree are a lie ;
To be laid in the balance,
They are altogether lighter than vanity.
- 10 Trust not in oppression,
Place no vain hopes in robbery ;
If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.
- 11 God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this ;
That power belongeth unto God.
- 12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy ;
For thou renderest to every man according to his work.

Ver. 12. The word rendered "mercy" in this verse is by some translated "favor," and the sentiment seems to be the same as that expressed in Ps. lxxv. 6, 7.

PSALM LXIV.

IN the third verse the enemies are said to “sharpen their tongues like a sword,” and in the eighth we are told, “Their own tongues shall make them fall.” So in the fourth verse we read, “They shoot in secret at the upright,” and in the seventh, “God shall shoot at them with an arrow.” These contrasts are evidently intentional. We do not know to what particular incidents they refer; but they plainly signify that the machinations of David’s enemies should recoil on themselves.

- 1 HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer ;
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret council of the wicked ;
From the brawling crowd of evil-doers ;
- 3 Who sharpen their tongues like a sword,
And aim their poisoned words like arrows,
- 4 That they may shoot in secret at the upright ;
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
- 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter ;
They commune of laying snares privily ;
They say, Who shall see them ?
- 6 They meditate crimes. “We have finished,” say
they, “our plans.”
The inward thought of every one of them, and the
heart, is deep.
- 7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow ;
Suddenly shall they be wounded.
- 8 Thus their own tongues shall make them fall ;

- All that see them shall flee away.
 9 And all men shall fear,
 And shall declare the work of God ;
 For they shall perceive that it is his doing.
 10 The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall
 trust in him ;
 And all the upright in heart shall glory.

PSALMS CXLII. AND CXLIII.

WHEN HE WAS IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

DAVID'S first resort, after leaving Saul, was to the cave of Adullam. Here he was joined by many, who, for various reasons, were dissatisfied with Saul's government, and soon found himself at the head of four hundred men.

Caves both natural and artificial are very numerous in Palestine ; the chalk and limestone which prevail affording both such as are produced by running water, wearing away and enlarging natural fissures and chasms, and such as are excavated by the hand of man. Some of them are capable of containing fifteen hundred men ; and there is one near Damascus which will even afford shelter to four thousand. The following is from the description by Irby and Mangles of one called "the Labyrinth," and which has been by some supposed to be the cave which afforded shelter to David. "On the southern side of a deep and picturesque ravine

was the mouth of the cave, which is entered by a long, winding, narrow passage, with small natural chambers or cavities on either side. We soon came to a large chamber, with natural arches of a great height. From this chamber there were numerous passages leading in all directions, which our guides assured us had never been thoroughly explored, the people being afraid of losing themselves."

The use of caves as burial-places is well known. The cave of Machpelah was the family tomb of Abraham. To this use of such abodes David seems to refer in Ps. cxliii. 3.

PSALM CXLII.

- 1 I cry unto the Lord with my voice ;
With my voice unto the Lord do I make my supplication.
- 2 I pour out my complaint before him ;
I show before him my trouble.
- 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then thou knewest my path.
In the way wherein I walk have they privily laid a
snare for me.
- 4 I look on my right hand, and behold,
But no man will know me ;
Refuge faileth me ;
No man careth for me.
- 5 I cry unto thee, O Lord !
I say, Thou art my refuge,

Ver. 4. Compare Ps. xxxi. 11, page 18.

- And my portion in the land of the living.
 6 Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low ;
 Deliver me from my persecutors,
 For they are stronger than I.
 7 Bring me out of prison,
 That I may praise thy name ;
 The righteous shall compass me about,
 When thou shalt show me thy favor.

PSALM CXLIII.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O Lord ! give ear to my sup-
 plications ;
 In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteous-
 ness.
 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant,
 For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
 3 For the enemy hath persecuted me,
 He hath smitten my life down to the ground ;
 He hath made me to dwell in darkness,
 As those that have been long dead.
 4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me ;
 My heart within me is desolate.
 5 I remember the days of old,

Ps. cxlii. ver. 7. "Bring me out of prison," &c.; i. e. deliver me from the necessity of lurking in caves, &c.

Ps. cxliii. ver. 3. "To dwell in darkness," &c. This is an allusion to his forced residence in caves, the usual depositories of the dead.

Ps. cxliii. ver. 5. "I remember," &c. Perhaps this verse alludes to those meditations of his early and peaceful life which form the subject of Psalms viii. and xix. See pages 5 and 6.

- I meditate on all thy works ;
I muse on the work of thy hands.
- 6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee ;
My soul gaspeth after thee, as a thirsty land.
- 7 Hear me speedily, O Lord !
My spirit faileth ;
Hide not thy face from me,
Lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.
- 8 Cause me to see thy loving-kindness speedily,
For in thee do I trust ;
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk,
For I lift up my soul unto thee.
- 9 Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies ;
I fly unto thee to hide me.
- 10 Teach me to do thy will,
For thou art my God ;
Let thy good spirit lead me in the right way.
- 11 Revive me, O Lord, for thy name's sake ;
For thy righteousness' sake bring me out of trouble.
- 12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict me ;
For I am thy servant.

PSALM XXXI.

WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS OF MAON.

THE incidents particularly referred to in this psalm are those related in 1 Sam. xxiii. David, learning that

the Philistines were attacking Keilah, determined to attempt the rescue of that city. He succeeded, and repulsed the Philistines, and took up his abode in Keilah. Saul, hearing of it, said, "God hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in" (see ver. 8) "by entering into a town that hath gates and bars." But David sought counsel of God, and became satisfied that the people of Keilah, notwithstanding his late service to them, would deliver him up if Saul should demand him. He therefore left Keilah (the "strong city" alluded to in ver. 21), and betook himself to the wilderness. In the eighth verse he alludes to his escape, and in the eleventh and thirteenth verses, to the fear which his presence caused to the people of Keilah.

Saul pursued him to his retreat in the wilderness of Maon, and on one occasion almost succeeded in taking him. But Saul passed on one side of a mountain, while David and his men passed on the other, and escaped. Saul immediately after was called away by hearing of the approach of the Philistines, and David "went up from thence, and dwelt in the strongholds of Engedi."

PSALM XXXI.

- 1 IN thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never
be put to shame;
Deliver me in thy righteousness.
- 2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily;
Be thou my strong rock, a house of defence to save
me.
- 3 For thou art my rock and my fortress;

- Therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
 4 Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily
 for me,
 For thou art my strength.
 5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit ;
 Thou wilt deliver me, O Lord God of truth !
 6 I hate them that regard lying vanities ;
 But I trust in the Lord.
 7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy ;
 For thou hast looked upon my trouble,
 Thou hast had regard to my distress,
 8 And hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy ;
 Thou hast set my feet in ample room.
- 9 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble ;
 Mine eye is consumed with grief ;
 Yea, my soul and my body.
 10 My life is spent with grief,
 And my years with sighing ;
 My strength faileth because of mine affliction,
 And my bones are consumed.
 11 I have become the scorn of my neighbors,
 And a fear to mine acquaintance ;

Ver. 7 and 8. "I will be glad," &c. These verses express thankfulness and joy, and seem inconsistent with the ninth verse and the rest, which are in a tone of extreme distress. The most probable explanation seems to be, that in the seventh and eighth verses David refers to his escape from Saul on two recent occasions ; but after the momentary exhilaration, recollection of his fugitive and outlawed condition recurs, and brings with it despondency and complaint.

Ver. 11. Compare Ps. cxlii. 4, p. 14.

- They that see me abroad flee from me.
- 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind ;
I am like a broken vessel.
- 13 I hear the slander of many ; fear is on every side ;
For they take counsel together against me ;
They devise to take away my life.
- 14 But I trust in thee, O Lord ;
I say, "Thou art my God."
- 15 My fate is in thy hand ;
Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies,
And from them that persecute me.
- 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ;
Save me for thy mercies' sake.
- 17 Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have
called upon thee ;
Let the wicked be ashamed,
And let them be silent in the grave.
- 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which speak grievous things proudly and contempt-
uously against the righteous.
- 19 O, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid
up for them that fear thee ;
Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee,
before the sons of men !
- 20 Thou wilt hide them in the secret place of thy pres-
ence from the machinations of men ;
Thou wilt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the
strife of tongues.

Ver. 20. "Secret place of thy presence," "a pavilion," &c. The metaphor is taken from a shepherd, who drives his sheep to a shelter from the sun or the storm.

- 21 Blessed be the Lord !
 For he showed me his marvellous kindness in the
 strong city.
- 22 I said in my haste,
 I am cut off from before thine eyes ;
 Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplica-
 tions,
 When I cried unto thee.
- 23 O, love the Lord, all ye his saints ;
 For the Lord preserveth the faithful,
 And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
- 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your
 heart,
 All ye that hope in the Lord.

PSALMS LVI. AND LVII.

AFTER HE HAD SPARED SAUL'S LIFE.

To these two psalms certain Hebrew words are prefixed, which have much exercised the sagacity of commentators. They are, to the fifty-sixth, "The dumb dove among strangers," and to the fifty-seventh, "Destroy not." Some have supposed the former to allude

Ver. 22. "I said in my haste," &c. The Hebrew word denotes the hurried flight of one escaping panic-struck from his pursuers. It is the word used in the narrative of these events in 1 Sam. xxiii. 26. A.

to the condition of David, when he dwelt as an exile with Achish, king of Gath; and the latter to refer to David's command to his men, when Saul was in his power (1 Sam. xxvi. 9), "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" The prevalent opinion seems to be, that they are merely directions to the musicians; as we, at the present day, should use the words "Old Hundred," or "From Greenland's icy mountains."

The two psalms are similar in sentiment and structure. There is nothing in them particularly appropriate to the occasions alluded to above, but their general tenor is in harmony with the circumstances of David during his persecution by Saul. They complain of the malice of his enemies, and pray for relief, closing with expressions of confidence in God. In structure they consist of strophes and refrains, the latter occurring in Psalm lvi. at the fourth and tenth verses, and in Ps. lvii. at the fifth and eleventh verses.

After David's escape from Saul, in the wilderness of Maon, he retired to Engedi, and afterwards to Ziph. In both these places he had it in his power to take Saul's life, but refrained from doing so; and on both occasions Saul, struck with his magnanimity, confessed himself in the wrong, and solemnly promised to persecute him no more. This promise, after making it a second time, he seems to have kept; for we hear of no further attempt of his against David, though the latter kept himself at a distance, and for a time sought shelter with his old enemies, the Philistines, in Gath.

PSALM LVI.

- 1 Be merciful unto me, O God, for man panteth for
my life ;
My adversary presseth on me ;
- 2 Mine enemies daily pant for my life ;
For they be many that fight against me, O thou Most
High.
- 3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.
- 4 I will glory in the promise of God ;
In God I have put my trust ;
I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
- 5 Every day they wrest my words ;
All their thoughts are against me for evil.
- 6 They gather themselves together, they hide them-
selves, they mark my steps,
Lying in wait for my life.
- 7 Shall they escape by iniquity ?
Thou, O God, in thy displeasure shalt cast them
down.
- 8 Thou notest my wanderings ;
Put thou my tears into thy bottle :

Ver. 1. "Man panteth for my life." This image is drawn from the chase. David describes his enemies as pursuing him as the hounds pursue the game, or as a beast of prey a feebler animal, pressing on its footsteps, and with open jaws, ready to seize.

Ver. 8. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." In the sepulchres of the ancients have been found small earthen or glass vessels, to which the name of "Lachrymatories" has been given, from the supposed use of them to hold the tears of the mourn-

Are they not recorded in thy book ?

9 When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn
back ;

This I know, for God is for me.

10 I will glory in the promise of God ;

I will glory in the promise of Jehovah.

11 In God have I put my trust ;

I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Unto thee, O God, I will pay my vows ;

I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered me from death ;

Yea, my feet from falling ;

That I may walk before God in the light of the living.

PSALM LVII.

1 BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto
me,

For my soul trusteth in thee ;

Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my
refuge,

Until these calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most high ;

Unto God that performeth all things for me.

3 He shall send from heaven, and save me

From the reproach of him that panteth for my life.

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

ers. Possibly David may have intended to allude to something of the same kind in use among the Hebrews ; or it may be only a strong expression of the prayer, "Let not my tears flow unheeded."

- 4 My soul is among lions ;
 I dwell among them that breathe out fire ;
 Men whose teeth are spears and arrows,
 And their tongue a sharp sword.
- 5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ;
 Let thy glory be above all the earth.
- 6 They have prepared a net for my steps ;
 My soul is bowed down ;
 They have digged a pit before me,
 Into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.
- 7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed ;
 I will sing and give praise.
- 8 Awake up, my glory ; awake, psaltery and harp ;
 I myself will awake early.
- 9 I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people ;
 I will sing unto thee among the nations.

Ver. 6. "My soul is bowed down." Allusion is here made to an animal caught in a trap, whose head is held fast to the ground.

"They have digged a pit," &c. This allusion to one of the ancient methods of hunting occurs so frequently in the Psalms, that we may consider it almost in the light of a proverb. See vii. 15 and ix. 15. The process is thus described by Dr. A. Clarke: "They dig a pit, and cover it over with weak sticks and turf. The beasts, not suspecting danger where none appears, in attempting to walk over it, fall through and are taken." So Saul and his people had fallen unawares into the power of one whom they were plotting to destroy.

Ver. 8. "I myself will awake early." It is literally, "I will awaken the morning." This is a highly poetical expression, which Milton and others have borrowed:

"Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn." — *L' Allegro*.

— H.

- 10 For thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens,
And thy truth unto the clouds.
- 11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ;
Let thy glory be above all the earth.
-

PSALM CXLI.

WHEN HE WAS ABOUT RETIRING TO THE PHILISTINES
AT GATH.

DAVID alludes in the second verse to "incense" and the "evening sacrifice," as to things which he was about to be deprived of in his voluntary exile among the Philistines. In the third verse he prays for caution in speech, a thing most necessary for one dwelling as a fugitive and dependent among the enemies of his country and his religion. In the fourth, he prays that he may be saved from idolatrous compliances and eating forbidden meats, a point of much importance under the Jewish system. In the fifth, he intimates his willingness to bear reproof when deserved, but appeals to God against the false accusations of his enemies. In the sixth, he alludes to his magnanimous treatment of Saul and his followers, when they were in his power, in the "stony places," that is, in the rocky defiles, in the caves of which he was securely posted, when Saul came unawares into his power. In the seventh, he represents the opposite conduct of Saul to Ahimelech, the priest, and his family, whom Saul had caused to be put

to death, to punish them for an act of kindness rendered to David. 1 Sam. xxii. 17.

PSALM CXLI.

- 1 LORD, I cry unto thee ; make haste unto me ;
Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.
- 2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense,
And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
- 3 Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ;
Keep the door of my lips.
- 4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To practise wicked works with men that work iniquity ;
And let me not eat of their dainties.
- 5 Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ;
And let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil,
Which my head shall not refuse.
But now I appeal to thee
Against their unjust charges.
- 6 When their judges were dismissed in the rocky
places,
They heard my words, that they were sweet.

Ver. 4. "Incline not my heart to any evil thing," &c. In 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, David complains that his enemies have "driven him out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'"

Ver. 6. "Rocky places." In 1 Sam. xxiv. 2 we are told, "Then Saul took three thousand chosen men and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats."

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth,
 As when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the
 earth.

8 But mine eyes look unto thee, O God the Lord!
 In thee is my trust; let not my life be poured out.
 Keep me from the snare which they have laid for
 me,
 And the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
 And let me still escape them.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM IN JERUSALEM.

AN interval of about eight years elapsed between the date of the last psalm (cxli.) and this. In that time Saul and his sons had fallen in battle with the Philistines; David had been crowned king of Judah, at Hebron; and Ishbosheth, Saul's son, made king over Israel. Wars ensued between the two sections of the Israelitish people; till, by the defection of Abner, Ishbosheth's general, and principal supporter, the sovereignty

Ver. 7. "Our bones are scattered," &c.; i. e. the bones of our friends and followers, viz. the priest Ahimelech and his family.

An ingenious suggestion with respect to this verse is the following: "The Hebrew letters for 'Sheol,' the grave, and 'Saul,' are the same, and therefore we may read, 'at the command of Saul,' instead of 'at the grave's mouth,' without any alteration of the text." — H.

was transferred to David, and he was acknowledged king over the whole country. David soon after wrested Jerusalem from the hands of the Jebusites, and made it the capital of his kingdom.

In this psalm David renders thanks to God for having rescued him from all perils, and finally raised him to the station to which, by the agency of Samuel, he had distinctly appointed him, and authorized him to aspire.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

- 1 I WILL praise thee with my whole heart ;
 Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee ;
- 2 I will worship towards thy holy temple,
 And praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for
 thy truth ;
 For thou hast magnified thy promise above all thy
 praise.
- 3 In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me ;
 And strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,

Ver. 1. "Before the gods"; i. e. before the kings of the earth.
 See ver. 4.

Ver. 2. "Thy holy temple." This term was applied to the tabernacle as well as to the true temple. See 1 Sam. i. 9; also iii. 3. — "Towards," because the worshippers did not go into the sanctuary, but worshipped in the court, looking towards the place of God's manifested presence. A. — "Thy promise above all thy praise"; i. e. thou hast fulfilled thy promise, and more than fulfilled it, and hast done more than has ever been said or conceived of thee. N.

- When they hear the words of thy mouth.
- 5 Yea, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
For great is the glory of the Lord.
- 6 Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto
the lowly ;
But the proud he knoweth afar off.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt re-
vive me ;
Thou wilt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of
mine enemies ;
And thy right hand shall save me.
- 8 The Lord will perform all things for me ;
Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever ;
Forsake not the work of thine own hands.

JERUSALEM.

“BEAUTIFUL for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, the city of the great king.” Such is the language in which the Hebrew poets delight to celebrate Jerusalem ; called also by its ancient name, Salem, and from its great conqueror and beautifier, “the

Ver. 4. “When they hear the words of thy mouth” ; i. e. when they hear of thy promises to David, and see how faithfully they have been performed.

Ver. 8. “Forsake not the work,” &c. ; i. e. complete what thy hands have begun. The work begun and yet to be completed was the whole series of gracious dispensations towards David and his race. A.

city of David," and from one of its inclosed eminences, "Zion." The city was near the centre of the Promised Land, and was so favored in local situation, that even modern travellers who have seen it in its decay have confirmed the praises which its native bards expressed so fervently in the days of its glory. The following extract is from the Narrative of the United States Expedition to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea : —

"There is no city in the world which can compare with it in position. It does not, like other cities, present an indefinite mass of buildings, which must be viewed in detail before the eye can be gratified ; but with only its dome-roofs swelling above the time-stained and lofty walls, Jerusalem sits, enthroned, a queen in the midst of an empire of desolation. Apart from its associations, we look upon it with admiration ; but connected with them, the mind is filled with reverential awe, as it recalls the wondrous events that have occurred within and around it."

Another says : —

"It is still a noble city. The Jebusites certainly chose for their fort one of the finest sites in the world ; and when David took it from them, he might well glory in his beautiful Zion. From this day forward, how dead seemed to me all my former impressions of Jerusalem ! Not of its sacredness, but of its *beauty* and nobleness. I can scarcely remember the time when I did not know familiarly all its hills, and its gates, and its temple-courts, so as to read the New Testament as with a plan in my head. But I never had the slightest con-

ception of that *beauty*, which now at once enabled me to enter into the exultation of David, and the mourning of Nehemiah, and the generous concern of Titus, and the pride of the Saracen, and the enthusiasm of the Crusader." — Martineau's *Eastern Life*, p. 404.

PSALM II.

VAIN ATTEMPTS OF THE NATIONS AGAINST THE KING
ANOINTED BY GOD.

No doubt the conquered tribes submitted very reluctantly to the loss of their capital, and to the subjection imposed upon them by the Jewish conqueror. They doubtless made frequent attempts to cast off his yoke. After some such attempt, which had been put down by King David, he indicted this psalm of triumph. The word "son," in the seventh and twelfth verses, and "anointed," in the second verse, have led some commentators to think that prophetic allusion is made to Christ. However this may be, the direct application of these terms was, it is generally admitted, to King David. (See A. Clarke.) He is repeatedly styled the "anointed" in the Psalms and elsewhere; and the term "son" is a common appellation of the Jewish kings, who were represented as the special agents and vicegerents of Jehovah. For this reason, rebellion against their sway was considered as rebellion against God.

PSALM II.

- 1 WHY do the heathen rage,
And the people imagine a vain thing ?
- 2 The kings of the earth rise up,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 " Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us."
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh ;
The Lord shall have them in derision.
- 5 Yea, he shall speak unto them in his wrath,
And confound them in his sore displeasure.
- 6 " I myself have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion."
- 7 I will declare the decree ;
The Lord hath said unto me, — " Thou art my
son ;
This day have I begotten thee.
- 8 Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine
inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
- 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's
vessel."

Ver. 6. Here Jehovah speaks, but in the seventh verse David resumes.

- 10 Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings!
 Be instructed, ye judges of the earth!
- 11 Serve the Lord with fear,
 And rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from
 the way,
 When his wrath is kindled but a little.
 Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.
-

PSALM CX.

THE GLORIES OF DAVID'S REIGN ANTICIPATED.

CHRISTIAN interpreters generally agree in considering this psalm as intended to apply prophetically to Christ. But its application in the primary sense to David is sanctioned by most of the critics, one of whom, Herder, says: "This beautiful ode says to David, on his triumphal entry upon Mount Zion, that he may now be at rest, by the dwelling-place of Jehovah; and, though encompassed with enemies, reign securely, for God is now at his side, as his covenanted ally, who stretches forth for him a sceptre, which all must obey."

PSALM CX.

- 1 THE Lord said unto my Lord,
 "Sit thou at my right hand,

Ver. 1. "Sit thou at my right hand," i. e. be associated with

- Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”
- 2 The Lord shall extend the sceptre of thy power out
of Zion ;
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
- 3 Thy people shall be ready in the day of thy power,
in holy splendor ;
Thy youth shall come forth like dew from the womb
of the morning.
- 4 The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent :
“Thou art a priest for ever,
After the order of Melchizedek.”
- 5 The Lord is at thy right hand,
He shall strike through kings in the day of his
wrath.
- 6 He shall execute justice among the nations ;
He shall fill them with dead bodies ;
He shall wound the heads of his enemies over many
countries ;

me in the government of my people. Jehovah was regarded as the supreme King of the Jewish nation, and Mount Zion as the seat of his government.

Ver. 3. The meaning of this verse is, “Thy people shall be ready to follow thee to war, when thou musterest thy forces in military array; thy youth, i. e. thy young men, shall come forth,” &c.

Ver. 4. “Thou art a priest,” &c. In these words David is declared to be appointed by God the successor of that ancient and venerated priest and king, Melchizedek, the contemporary and friend of Abraham, who reigned in Salem, now called Jerusalem, which David had wrested from the Jebusites, and established the future metropolis of the Israelitish nation.

Ver. 5 and 6. This description of the triumphs of Jehovah, in images drawn from human battle-fields, is in accordance with David's character and that of his age.

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way ;
Therefore shall he lift up the head.

PSALM CI.

RESOLUTION TO GOVERN WITH EQUITY

- 1 I WILL sing of mercy and judgment ;
Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.
- 2 I will have regard to the way of uprightness ;
O, when wilt thou come unto me ?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
- 3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes ;
I hate the work of transgressors ;
It shall not cleave to me.
- 4 A froward heart shall depart from me ;
I will not favor a wicked person.
- 5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I
cut off ;
Him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not
I suffer.
- 6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that
they may dwell with me ;

Ver. 7. Here there is a change of person, and the pronoun "He" refers, not to "the Lord," as in the preceding verse, but to David. The image of drinking from the brook is frequently used as one of refreshment and delight, and in the arid and sultry region of Palestine must have been most forcible and expressive.

Ver. 2. "O, when wilt thou come unto me?" i. e. to bless me.

He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my
house.

He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land,
Till I cut off all wicked doers from the city of the
Lord.

PSALM LXVIII.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK TO MOUNT ZION.

THE Ark of the Covenant was a chest of acacia-wood, about three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches high, and two feet three inches broad. It was overlaid with gold within and without. There was a ring of gold at each of the four corners, into which staves were put for bearing the ark. In Numb. x. 35 et seq. we are told that, when the people marched through the wilderness, the ark was carried before them; and “when the ark set forward, Moses said, ‘Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.’” The sixty-eighth Psalm begins with these words, and is a triumphal ode on the occasion of the removal of the ark to Mount Zion. In 1 Chron. xv. 16 we are told that “David spake to the chief of the Levites, to appoint their brethren to be the singers, with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals sounding, and lifting up

the voice with joy." David himself danced before the ark ; and when reproached, by his wife Michal, for so humbling himself in the eyes of the people, he answered, " It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel ; therefore will I play before the Lord."

PSALM LXVIII.

- 1 LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered ;
Let them also that hate him flee before him.
- 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away ;
As wax melteth before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad : let them rejoice before
God,
Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
- 4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name ;
Extol him that rideth through the desert.
Jehovah is his name, rejoice before him.
- 5 A father of the fatherless, and a protector of the
widows,
Is God in his holy habitation.
- 6 God setteth the solitary in families ;

Ver. 4. " Through the desert." See Isaiah xl. 3 : " Make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Ver. 6. " God setteth the solitary in families," &c. An allusion to the change of conditions, by which the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian bondage, and brought into a land abound-

He bringeth out those which are bound with chains,
But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

- 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,
When thou didst march through the wilderness,
8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the
presence of God ;
Yea, Sinai itself trembled at the presence of God,
the God of Israel.
9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,

ing in all good things ; while the idolatrous inhabitants were cast out, and driven into the wilderness.

Ver. 8. "The heavens dropped," &c. This refers to the rain which, we may suppose, accompanied the thunder and other phenomena at the giving of the Law at Sinai. Exodus xix. 16 - 18.

Ver. 9. "Didst send a plentiful rain," &c. This is generally supposed to refer to the manna, which fell like rain ; or as a figurative expression, to include all those miraculous interpositions which attended the march of the Israelites. But if the words be understood literally, it need not surprise us that the gift of rain should have been regarded as worthy to be named among the other signal proofs of God's favor, when we remember that it was to the Israelites a rare phenomenon, and as welcome as it was rare, especially during their sojourn in the wilderness. The supply of moisture for the soil by means of rain, instead of by irrigation from the river, which they had been accustomed to in Egypt, is mentioned by Moses as among the chief of the advantages which the Promised Land should possess. See Deut. xi. 10, 11 : "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot ; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." The expression "with thy foot" refers to the manner in which, in the process of irrigation, the water is directed over the field by embankments and channels made by the foot.

- Whereby thou didst strengthen thine inheritance,
when it was weary.
- 10 Thy people established themselves in the land ;
Thou, O God, in thy goodness, didst provide for the
needy.
- 11 The Lord gave the song of victory ;
Great was the company of those that published it.
- 12 “ Kings with their armies did flee apace ;
And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.
- 13 Ye may repose yourselves in the folds,
And ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with
silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold.”
- 14 When the Almighty scattered the kings in the land,
It was white as snow in Salmon.
- 15 Ye lofty hills, ye hills of Bashan !
Ye many-topped hills, ye hills of Bashan !
- 16 Why frown ye, ye many-topped hills,
At the hill in which God is pleased to dwell,
In which the Lord will dwell for ever !
- 17 The chariots of God are numberless, even thousands
of thousands ;
The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the sanctuary.

Ver. 13. “Ye may repose yourselves in the folds,” &c. The meaning is, that those who had been engaged in war might now enjoy peaceful repose, among their flocks and herds, having enriched themselves with spoils of gold and silver. Comp. Judges v. 16. N.

Ver. 14. “It was white,” &c., i. e. with the bones of the slain.

Ver. 16. “Why frown ye,” &c., i. e. through envy of Mount Zion.

Ver. 17. “The chariots of God,” &c. A figurative description of the majesty and power of God. The same mode of representation occurs in the history of Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 17.

- 18 Thou hast ascended on high,
Thou hast led captive the vanquished ;
Thou hast received gifts among men ;
Yea, among the rebellious also the Lord God will
dwell.
- 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with
benefits,
Even the God of our salvation.
- 20 Our God is a God of salvation ;
And from God the Lord cometh deliverance from
death.
- 21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies ;
And the hairy crown of such a one as goeth on still
in his trespasses.
- 22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan,
I will bring my people again from the depths of the
sea ;
- 23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine
enemies,
And the tongue of thy dogs in the same.
- 24 We have seen thy procession, O God,
Even the procession of my God, my King, to his
sanctuary.

Ver. 18. "Thou hast ascended on high," &c. The procession bearing the ark now ascends Mount Zion, and God, whose presence was always supposed to accompany the ark, is here addressed, in language similar to that used in Ps. xlvii. 5: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." The other expressions are used poetically, not literally, and are meant to represent the triumph of Jehovah, by images drawn from those of earthly kings. — "Will dwell among them," i. e. among his people, though so often rebellious.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments
followed after ;

Amongst them were the damsels playing on timbrels.

26 “ Bless ye God, in the congregations ;

Even the Lord, all ye from the fountain of Israel.”

27 Here is Benjamin, the youngest, and his leaders ;

The princes of Judah and their band ;

The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.

28 Thy God hath ordained thy strength, O Israel !

Show forth thy might, O God, who hast wrought
for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem

Shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds ;

The multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the
nations,

Till every one submit himself with masses of silver ;

Scatter thou the nations that delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt ;

Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

Ver. 29. “ Because of thy temple,” &c. The history informs us that David devoted the spoils of his conquered enemies to the service of the sanctuary, and in preparations for building the temple. 2 Sam. viii. 6 - 11.

Ver. 30. “ Rebuke,” &c. These expressions denote the various hostile nations, from which David had wrested such ample spoils, to adorn Jerusalem. The “ wild beast of the reeds” is probably the crocodile, the emblem of Egypt, or the lion, the emblem of Syria. The “ bulls” and the “ calves,” commanders and soldiers.

Ver. 31. “ Princes shall come,” &c. Either in supplication, or with presents to the temple.

- 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth ! O, sing
praises unto the Lord ;
- 33 To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens,
which were of old :
- Lo, he doth utter his voice, and that a mighty voice.
- 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God ;
His excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in
the clouds.
- 35 O God, thou art terrible from thy sanctuary ;
The God of Israel giveth strength and power unto
his people ;
Blessed be God.

PSALMS XV. AND XXIV.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ACCEPTABLE WORSHIPPER.

“THEY brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it.” 2 Sam. vi. 17. The tabernacle was a slight structure, capable of being taken down and re-erected at pleasure, its sides composed of boards standing upright, held in their places by bars of wood, which were passed horizontally through rings fastened to the boards. The roof was formed by curtains of linen, which hung down over the sides. Over the linen was a covering of goat’s-hair cloth, which was protected

Ver. 33 and 34. “He doth utter his voice,” “his strength is in the clouds.” These are allusions to thunder.

from the weather by another covering of skins of animals. The entrance was closed by curtains.

PSALM XV.

THIS psalm shows that, even under the Jewish dispensation, where so much stress was laid upon mere ritual observances, the essential characteristics of the true servant of Jehovah were felt to be uprightness of heart and life.

- 1 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
- 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh the truth from his heart;
- 3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his neighbor,
Nor uttereth a reproach against his neighbor;
- 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned,
But he honoreth them that fear the Lord;
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
- 5 He that putteth not out his money to usury,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent:
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

PSALM XXIV.

IN this psalm it is set forth that Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth, has yet a chosen dwelling-place

Ver. 4. "A vile person," i. e. the unworthy, the morally vile.

Ver. 5. The lending of money to the poor, on interest, is alluded to; not the lending for commercial purposes, a practice then unknown.

upon the earth, where he is to be worshipped by the pure and righteous. This glorious Heavenly King of the Jewish nation is represented as entering the sanctuary, which is personified and exhorted to receive him worthily. The method of question and answer, pursued in this psalm, indicates that it is one of those which were sung responsively by several choirs of singers.

It is cited by Herder as a specimen of the most perfect kind of ode, that in which, by change of person, question and answer, and sudden appeals to inanimate and absent objects, a sort of lyrical representation and action are introduced. The topic is the same as that of Psalm lxxviii. (p. 37), but it is differently treated. By comparing it with that psalm, we may understand the difference between two songs, the one of which is a picture full of living action, and the other, history, lyrically narrated.

- 1 THE earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ;
The world, and they that dwell therein. ,
- 2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.

- 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ?
And who shall stand in his holy place ?

- 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart ;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,

And favor from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him ;
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob !

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ;
And the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory ?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors ;
And the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory ?
The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Ver. 7. "Lift up," &c. These words evidently apply to an edifice of a different kind from the tabernacle above described. We should suppose the temple gates to be meant, but the temple was not erected till after David's time. Some have hence inferred that the psalm was not written by David, but at a later date. Others think that the gates of the citadel or walled town of Zion are those addressed. A third solution appears to us more probable ; viz. that the words are an expression of an ardent wish for the building of the temple, represented by its gates, by a figure familiar to Hebrew poetry.

PSALM XCVI.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ARK TO MOUNT ZION.

BISHOP LOWTH says of this psalm: "Nothing can excel in sublimity that noble exultation of universal nature, where the whole animated and inanimate creation unite in the praises of their Maker. Poetry here seems to assume the highest tone of triumph and exultation, and to revel, if I may so express myself, in all the extravagance of joy."

This psalm is certified by comparison with 1 Chron. xvi. 23 et seq.

PSALM XCVI.

- 1 O, SING unto the Lord a new song !
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth !
- 2 Sing unto the Lord ; bless his name ;
Show forth his salvation from day to day !
- 3 Declare his glory among the heathen,
His wonders among all people !
- 4 For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised ;
He is to be feared above all gods.
- 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols ;
But the Lord made the heavens.
- 6 Honor and majesty are before him,
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people,
Ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength.
- 8 Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto his name ;
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.

- 9 O, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness !
Fear before him, all the earth !
- 10 Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth ;
The world shall stand firm ; it shall not be moved ;
He shall judge the people righteously.
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
- 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein ;
Let all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord ;
- 13 For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth ;
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the people with his truth.
-

PSALM LX.

BEFORE AND DURING THE WAR WITH THE EDMITES.

THIS psalm was probably composed after some temporary reverse in the fortunes of the war, for the beginning is in a despondent tone, and sets forth in bold figures the alarm that prevailed. Then comes a prayer for aid ; and then, by a beautiful transition, as if the psalmist already felt sure that his prayer was heard, he breaks forth into joyful exultation : “ God hath spoken in his holiness ; I will rejoice,” &c. In ver. 6 Shechem and Succoth are used to denote the two great divisions of the country east and west of the Jordan, and in ver. 7 Gilead and Manasseh designate the eastern, and Judah and Ephraim the western territories. Having

named the regions of his own country, and expressed his confidence of peacefully possessing them, he next turns to the enemies' country. Moab is to be reduced to the lowest subjection. The "wash-pot" is an emblem of extreme abasement; only less so than that which denotes the lot of Edom, "the place whereon to cast the shoe." It must be remembered that the Eastern people do not wear their shoes in the house, but put them off at the entrance, when about to come into the presence of those they respect. Consequently the shoe is considered as an unclean thing, and the unbinding of the ties and removal of the shoe is the business of slaves. Thus John, speaking of Jesus (Matt. iii. 11), says, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." In ver. 9, "the strong city" is supposed to allude to the ancient city of Bozrah, the capital of Edom, or Idu-mæa, called in later times Petra, one of the most remarkable remains of antiquity. About forty years ago, the attention of the civilized world was roused by the announcement by the traveller Burckhardt, that he had discovered in the Arabian desert the remains of an ancient city, evidently at one time of great magnificence and power. It was soon recognized to be Petra, a city which was once the seat of a rich commerce, and the emporium of the trade of India; for it lay on a chief caravan road, which united the merchants and customers of the East and of the West. In the reign of Trajan it came under the sway of the Romans. In the sixth century it was the see of a bishop. From that time Petra suddenly vanished from the pages of history, and was no more mentioned or thought of, till rediscovered by Burckhardt in 1811.

PSALM LX.

- 1 O GOD, thou hast cast us off ; thou hast scattered us ;
 Thou hast been displeased ! O, turn thyself to us again !
- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble ; thou hast
 broken it :
 Heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.
- 3 Thou hast showed thy people hard things ;
 Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
- 4 Lift up a banner for them that fear thee,
 That it may be displayed because of thy truth.
- 5 That thy beloved may be delivered,
 Save with thy right hand, and hear me.
- 6 God hath spoken in his holiness ; I will rejoice ;
 I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of
 Succoth.
- 7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine ;
 Ephraim shall be my helmet,
 And Judah my sceptre ;
- 8 Moab shall be my wash-pot ;
 Upon Edom will I cast my shoe ;
 I shall triumph over Philistia.
- 9 Who will bring me into the strong city ?
 Who will lead me into Edom ?
- 10 Wilt not thou, O God, who didst forsake us ?
 Thou, O God, who didst not go forth with our armies ?

Ver. 4. "Because of thy truth" ; i. e. that the truth of thy promises may be preserved.

Ver. 9. 2 Sam. viii. 14.

- 11 Give us help in our distress,
For vain is the help of man.
- 12 Through God we shall do valiantly ;
For he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM LXXXII.

A REBUKE TO UNJUST MAGISTRATES.

THIS psalm is ascribed to Asaph ; and there are coincidences in it with some others, which bear the same inscription. The first verse reminds us of Psalm l. 1, and the fifth verse of Ps. lxxv. 3. These coincidences are very interesting, and the expressions throw light on one another. The theme of all the three compositions is the same : God recognized as the judge of men, and as judging his children impartially, according to the uprightness of their lives, not their ritual observances, nor artificial distinctions. There is a tone of stern authority to the high, and of sympathy with the humble, that is quite remarkable. Each of the three psalms is concluded by a sentence which stands apart from the rest, and seems to express in brief the moral of the psalm.

On assuming the government, it may be supposed David found abundant occasion for rebuking injustice, and correcting disorders, which had sprung up in the troubled time that embraced the conclusion of Saul's reign and the interval that followed before his own.

Asaph, his chief musician, and doubtless admitted to his friendship and sharing his counsels, may be supposed, in this psalm, to speak in the name of the king, and with authority.

PSALM LXXXII.

- 1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty ;
He judgeth among the gods.
- 2 " How long will ye judge unjustly,
And accept the persons of the wicked ?
- 3 Defend the poor and fatherless ;
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Deliver the poor and needy ;
Save them out of the hand of the wicked."
- 5 They know not, neither will they understand ;
They walk on in darkness ;
Therefore all the foundations of the land are shaken.
- 6 I have said, Ye are gods ;
And all of you are children of the Most High ;
- 7 But ye shall die like men,
And fall like the rest of the princes.
- 8 Arise, O God ! judge the earth ;
For all nations are thy possession.

Ver. 1. The word "gods" means the great ones of the earth. This interpretation is expressly sanctioned by Christ himself, in reference to this psalm. John x. 35.

Ver. 5. The expression "the foundations of the land" is equivalent to "the pillars of it" in Psalm lxxv. It may be paraphrased, "The vital interests of the state are threatened with ruin."

Ver. 7. "Ye shall die," &c. It is not merely a statement of the fact that they shall meet the common lot of mortality, but that

PSALM XX.

BEFORE THE WAR WITH THE AMMONITES.

THIS was a war most needlessly provoked by the people of Ammon, and it was formidable to David, because it involved numerous other enemies, who took part with the Ammonites. It was the last serious conflict in which David was engaged before attaining the height of his prosperity; and his victory in this contest extended his power to, and even beyond, the Euphrates.

In this psalm the prayers of the people for the success of their king, going to war, are expressed in the first five verses. Then follows the response of David: "Now know I that the Lord helpeth his anointed," &c. Then, in the seventh verse, the chorus continues the psalm.

PSALM XX.

- 1 THE Lord hear thee in the day of trouble!
The name of the God of Jacob defend thee!
- 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen thee out of Zion!
- 3 Remember all thy offerings,

they shall receive condign punishment, as in Psalm 1. 22. — "Like the rest of the princes." It seems needless to say that these princes should fall like the rest of the princes. Bishop Hare, therefore, proposed to read HARASHIM, "the poor," instead of HASARIM, "princes." So also Archbishop Secker. H.

- And accept thy burnt sacrifice !
4 Grant thee according to thine own heart
And fulfil all thy counsel !
5 We will rejoice in thy protection,
And in the name of our God we will set up our
banners ;
The Lord fulfil all thy petitions !
- 6 Now know I that the Lord helpeth his anointed ;
He will hear him from his holy heaven,
With the saving strength of his right hand.
7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses ;
But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.
8 They stumble and fall ;
But we rise and stand upright.
9 Lord, save the king ! and hear us when we call.
-

PSALM XXI.

AFTER THE WAR WITH THE AMMONITES.

THIS is the triumphal song of the people for the victories of their king. In the third verse, the mention of the crown set upon David's head may allude to the incident mentioned in 2 Sam. xii. 30 : " He took their king's crown from off his head (the weight whereof was a talent of gold, with the precious stones), and it was set on David's head ; and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance." Compare also ver. 9 with 2 Sam. xii. 31.

PSALM XXI.

- 1 THE king rejoiceth in thy strength, O Lord !
And in thy protection he doth greatly exult.
- 2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
And hast not withholden the request of his lips.
- 3 Thou hast met him with rich blessings ;
Thou hast set a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him,
Even length of days for ever and ever.
- 5 His glory is great in thy aid ;
Honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
- 6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever ;
Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.
- 7 For the king trusteth in the Lord,
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not fall.

- 8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies,
Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
- 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of
thine anger ;
The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
- 10 Their offspring shalt thou destroy from the earth,

Ver. 4. "For ever and ever." This expression is frequently used in the Hebrew writings to express merely *a long time*. In 1 Sam. xxviii. 2, Achish says to David, "I will make thee keeper of mine head for ever."

Ver. 8. "Thine hand," &c. Here the king is addressed by another choir.

- And their seed from among the children of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against thee ;
They imagined a mischievous device, which they
were not able to perform.
- 12 Therefore wilt thou make them turn their back,
Thou wilt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings
against them.
- 13 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength !
So will we sing, and praise thy power.

PSALM LI.

AFTER HIS SIN IN THE MATTER OF UURIAH.

DAVID had now attained the summit of prosperity. But the virtues of his calm and thoughtful youth and of his adventurous manhood were not proof against the temptations of unlimited power. He committed an atrocious crime, or rather a series of crimes. We ask, How could he, whose poems express so fervently and eloquently the sentiments of devotion and of reverence for God's law, act so inconsistently with his professed feelings ? The answer is, his character was changed, for the time, by other influences. It is not necessary to suppose, as some have done, that his religion was all a pretence ; nor need we resort to the conclusion, that the purest and noblest sentiments, though sincerely felt, are without power to restrain the conduct from evil.

Our characters are formed by various influences, those of religion being but one class among many. David's character, for the time, yielded to influences which hurried him into sin, and which his better feelings were not powerful enough to resist. But we shall not judge fairly of David's conduct unless we weigh all the circumstances of the case. He was an Eastern monarch, the uncontrolled master of the lives and fortunes of his subjects. Polygamy was the established custom of the country ; and where polygamy prevails, the virtues which relate to the female sex can hardly have an existence. Uriah was a soldier, and was slain by the enemy ; so it was easy for David to represent it to his own mind, and it required but little skill in the art of self-deception to enable him to see it in that light. Thus we account for the fact that David remained insensible to his own guilt till aroused by the representations of the prophet Nathan. This view, without palliating his crime, tends to show us how it was possible for such a nature as David's, generous and tender and devout as it was, to plunge into such a depth of guilt.

PSALM LI.

- 1 HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness ;
According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies,
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions ;

And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in thy sight ;
So that thou art just in thy sentence,
And upright in thy judgment.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts ;
So teach me wisdom in my inmost soul.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God !
And renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence,
And take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy protection,
And uphold me with a free spirit.

Ver. 4. David had deeply injured his fellow-man. But he felt his guilt most deeply in relation to God, to whom, as being king, he was alone accountable. He had been guilty of ingratitude to his Infinite Benefactor, who had raised him from obscurity to a throne ; so that his feeling of ill-desert in relation to man was, as it were, swallowed up by his sense of guilt in relation to God. In the hyperbolic language of strong emotion he therefore says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." N.

Ver. 5. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity," &c. This also is the expression of a poet using the hyperbolic language of strong emotion.

- 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways,
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
- 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God
of my salvation !
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
- 15 O Lord, open thou my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise.
- 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it ;
Thou delightest not in burnt-offering.
- 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not
despise.
-

PSALM VI.

THERE is reason to suppose that David, after his transgression, was afflicted with sickness. Under the combined influence of bodily and mental distress, he poured out this prayer to God. Herder says, " Though unsuitable for a general prayer of penitence, its tone and current of feeling is still strikingly beautiful, considered in relation to David as an individual. The languishing, and now aged and feeble king, who feels his misfortunes as the chastisement of God, indulges in

Ver. 17. There are two more verses to this psalm in the Bible ; but on account of their entire inconsistency with the sentiment of the 16th and 17th verses, and their allusion to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, Dr. Clarke and other critics conclude that they do not belong to the psalm.

grief, till he sinks to the brink of the grave ; but when the word ‘ enemies ’ is uttered from his lips, his emotions change, his courage and hope return.”

PSALM VI.

- 1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger,
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure !
- 2 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak !
O Lord, heal me, for my bones tremble !
- 3 My soul is also sore troubled ; but thou, O Lord,
how long —— ?
- 4 Return, O Lord, deliver my soul !
O, save me, for thy mercies’ sake !
- 5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee ;
In the grave who shall give thee thanks ?
- 6 I am weary with my groaning,
All the night make I my bed to swim ;
I water my couch with my tears.
- 7 Mine eye is wasted with grief ;
It waxeth old because of all mine enemies.
- 8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ;
For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.
- 9 The Lord hath heard my supplication ;
The Lord will receive my prayer.
- 10 All mine enemies shall be ashamed and confounded ;
They shall be turned back and put to shame suddenly.

PSALM XXXII.

AFTER HIS REPENTANCE.

DAVID'S sense of justice and humanity, and of the obligations of God's law, had been for a time overpowered by other impulses, but they were not extinct. The appeal of the prophet Nathan, in the beautiful and touching parable of the ewe lamb, was successful. 2 Sam. xii. David pronounced his own condemnation in passing sentence in the supposed case. The prophet enforced the application with great plainness of speech, and drew from him the confession, "I have sinned against the Lord," which is the theme of the last psalm but one (Psalm li.). Those that follow express a calmer state of feeling, after the first agonies of self-reproach had subsided; and in the loss of his child he felt that he had in some sort paid the penalty of his crime. The psalm divides itself into two portions. In the first, David speaks in his own person; at the eighth verse, in that of the Deity.

PSALM XXXII.

- 1 BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is pardoned.
- 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not
iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
- 3 When I kept silence, my bones were wasted,

PSALM CIII.

AFTER RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

THERE are plain allusions here to recovery from sickness, and to the cheerfulness and hope which restored health produces. The allusion to old age in the fifth verse leads us to inquire what was David's age at this time. It was between fifty and sixty years. The eighth and ninth verses contain allusions to his sin and forgiveness. The fourteenth and fifteenth verses, which speak of the frailness of mortal life, may allude to the death of the child, which event, we are told in the history, David felt so keenly.

PSALM CIII.

- 1 BLESS the Lord, O my soul !
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
- 2 BLESS the Lord, O my soul !
And forget not all his benefits ;
- 3 WHo forgiveth all thine iniquities ;
Who healeth all thy diseases ;
- 4 WHo redeemeth thy life from destruction ;
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ;
- 5 WHo satisfieth thy old age with good,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Ver. 5. "Thy youth is renewed," &c. It has been a popular opinion, that the eagle moults in its old age, renews its feathers, and is restored to youthful strength again. Harris in Noyes.

- 6 The Lord executeth righteousness
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the children of Israel.
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
- 9 He doth not always chide,
Neither will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He hath not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor requited us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
- 13 Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.
- 14 For he knoweth our frame,
He remembereth that we are dust.
- 15 As for man, his days are as grass ;
As a flower of the field so he flourisheth.
- 16 The wind passeth over it, and it is gone ;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
- 17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to
everlasting upon them that fear him,
And his goodness unto children's children,
- 18 To such as keep his covenant,
And to those that remember his commandments to do
them.
- 19 The Lord hath established his throne in the
heavens,
And his kingdom ruleth over all.

- 20 Bless the Lord, ye his angels,
That excel in strength, that do his command,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless the Lord, all ye his hosts ;
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless the Lord, all his works,
In all places of his dominion ;
Bless the Lord, O my soul !
-

PSALM LXXXVI.

FLIGHT FROM ABSALOM.

THE flight of David before his rebellious son is an exceedingly interesting episode in his life. Adversity seemed at once to revive in him those qualities which, more than all his glories, form the basis of the admiration and reverence of posterity. The attachment of his personal attendants, who followed him across the brook Kidron, "weeping as they went"; of Ittai the Gittite, a fugitive from the country of the Philistines, who, when remonstrated with by David for exposing himself in a contest in which he as a stranger had no interest, replied, "As the Lord liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in life or death, even there also will thy servant be"; of Hushai, the Archite, another stranger, who "came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head," — all these are evidences of the strong hold he had taken of their

affections. His forbearance at the insults of Shimei, and his paternal tenderness for his guilty son, show that those gentler traits of character that appeared in his early life, but for a time seemed extinguished by other influences, had regained their sway. "The psalms composed in his old age, when he fled from Absalom, not only equal the fruits of his early years, but even surpass them. I think David seems to excel in that species of ode whose characteristic is tenderness." — Michaelis in Lowth.

Ver. 14 is the index verse of this psalm.

PSALM LXXXVI.

- 1 Bow down thine ear, O Lord ! hear me,
For I am poor and distressed.
- 2 Preserve my life, for I am devoted to thee ;
O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.
- 3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord,
For I cry unto thee daily.
- 4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant,
For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
- 5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive,
And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
- 6 Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer,
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
- 7 In the day of my trouble I call upon thee,
For thou wilt answer me.
- 8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O
Lord !

- Neither are there any works like unto thy works.
9 All nations which thou hast made must come and
 worship before thee, O Lord,
 And glorify thy name.
- 10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things ;
 Thou art God alone.
- 11 Teach me thy way, O Lord,
 I will walk in thy truth ;
 Unite my heart to fear thy name.
- 12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
 And I will glorify thy name for evermore.
- 13 For great is thy mercy toward me ;
 And thou hast delivered me from the depths of the
 grave.
- 14 O God, the proud are risen against me ;
 Bands of cruel men seek my life ;
 For thee they have no regard.
- 15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and
 gracious,
 Long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
- 16 O, turn unto me, and have mercy upon me !
 Give thy strength unto thy servant,
 And save the son of thine handmaid.
- 17 Show me a token of thy favor,
 That they which hate me may see it and be ashamed ;
 Because thou, Lord, hast holpen me and comforted
 me.

Ver. 11. "Unite my heart," &c. The idea of a united heart is the opposite of a double heart. See Ps. xii. 2.

PSALM VII.

THE REPROACHES OF SHIMEI.

THOUGH the title of this psalm refers it to Cush the Benjamite, yet as there is no person of that name mentioned in the history, it is supposed that the incident to which the psalm refers is that told in 2 Sam. xvi. 5, where Shimei, a person of the family of Saul, took occasion of David's low condition to insult him, as he passed on in his retreat. We may suppose him to have secured a safe position, beyond the reach of the weapons of David's friends, and pretty secure against their stopping in their retreat to pursue him, and, so situated, to have poured out all the hatred and malice which a kinsman and adherent of Saul may be supposed to have felt towards his successful rival, but which, till now, it had not been prudent to express. David's magnanimity is shown in his reply to Abishai, who asked permission to "go over and take off his head." "Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse."

In the fourth verse there is a plain allusion to David's forbearing treatment of Saul when he had him in his power; in the sixth and seventh, a magnificent appeal to Jehovah to ascend the throne of judgment, and award success to the righteous cause.

The strong assertions of innocence in this psalm seem inconsistent with the supposition that it was com-

posed after David had stained himself with the blood of Uriah; and this has led some to suppose that it belongs to the period of Saul's persecution rather than of Absalom's. But, on the other hand, it may be urged that David, in replying to Shimei's revilings, which related to his having supplanted Saul in the kingdom, naturally confined his protestations of innocence to the same part of his history, during which, though most unjustly persecuted, we do not read that he was guilty of any act inconsistent with the declarations of this psalm.

PSALM VII.

- 1 O LORD, my God, in thee do I put my trust ;
Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me ;
- 2 Lest mine enemy tear my soul like a lion,
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
- 3 O Lord, my God, if I have done this ;
If there be iniquity in my hands ;
- 4 If I have rendered evil unto him that was at peace
with me ;
(Yea, I have delivered him that without cause was
mine enemy ;)
- 5 Let my enemy persecute my soul, and take it,
Yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth,
And lay mine honor in the dust.
- 6 Arise, O Lord, in thine anger ;
Lift up thyself against the rage of mine enemies,
And awake for me. Ordain judgment !

- 7 Let the assembly of the nations compass thee about,
And over all ascend thy throne.
- 8 The Lord judgeth the nations.
Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness,
And according to mine integrity that is in me.
- 9 O, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an
end,
But establish the just ;
For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.
- 10 My defence is of God,
Who saveth the upright in heart.
- 11 God is a righteous judge,
And God is angry with the wicked every day.
- 12 If he do not desist, he will whet his sword ;
He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
- 13 He hath prepared for him the instruments of death ;
He shooteth his arrows against the persecutors.
- 14 Behold, he travailed with iniquity,
And conceived mischief, and brought forth disap-
pointment.
- 15 He made a pit and digged it,
And is fallen into the ditch which he made.
- 16 His mischief returneth upon his own head,

Ver. 12. The change of person in this and the 14th verse is to be noticed. "If he (the wicked) do not desist, he (God) will whet his sword," &c. In the 14th verse, "*he*" is again "the wicked." — "He hath bent his bow," &c. The bow, when not in use, was unstrung and straight. To bend the bow is therefore to string it and make it ready for use.

And his violent dealing cometh down upon his own
pate.

17 I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness,
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord most
high.

PSALM XXIII.

IN THE VALLEY OF JORDAN, HAVING FLED FROM
ABSALOM.

THIS beautiful psalm scarcely needs illustration, yet every sentence in it is worthy to be dwelt upon. It relates to the time when, having retreated before Absalom, David pitched his camp beyond Jordan, and was in danger of seeing his little army perish for want of provisions in that uncultivated region. Affairs, however, turned out quite differently; for the veteran soldiers flocked in to him from every quarter; and his camp was so liberally supplied with provisions, by the good and opulent citizens, that he was able to collect an army, and risk the event of a battle. 2 Sam. xvii. He therefore compares himself to a sheep, and the Almighty to a shepherd, a very obvious figure, and which every day occurred to his sight during his stay in those desert parts. The sheep, timid, defenceless, exposed to all the beasts of prey, are indebted for life, safety, and every thing to the care of the shepherd. In the mountainous region, cataracts from the melted

snow flow down the ravines. These are dangerous for sheep to approach, and the water is unwholesome. He therefore adds, that he is led to waters gently flowing, and guided in the right way. The scene before his eyes consisted of rude hills, and valleys deep and dark. There is no safety for the sheep, in these valleys, but in the care of the shepherd.

In the fifth verse he descends from figurative to plain language, and celebrates the bounty of God in providing him a banquet in the presence of his enemies. Michaelis in Lowth.

PSALM XXIII.

- 1 THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He reviveth my spirit ;
He leadeth me in the right paths,
For his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,
I will fear no evil, for thou art with me ;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me,
In the presence of mine enemies ;

Ver. 4. "The valley of the shadow of death." This is a Hebraism for "the darkest valley." The meaning is, that, when led through straits and difficulties, like the flock through some gloomy valley, the poet would fear no evil, trusting in the support of Jehovah, as the flock does to its shepherd.

Thou anointest my head with oil ;
 My cup runneth over.
 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
 days of my life,
 And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALMS XLII. AND XLIII.

IN THE VALLEY OF JORDAN, HAVING FLED FROM
 ABSALOM.

THESE two psalms undoubtedly form but one composition. In numerous Hebrew manuscripts there is no separation between them. For beauty of imagery, depth and naturalness of religious feeling, and the very striking manner in which the voice of religion in the poet's inmost soul is heard in the refrains, stilling the tempest of anxiety and grief, this psalm probably has no superior in any language. N.

PSALM XLII.

1 As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God !

Ver. 5. "Thou anointest my head with oil," &c. This is a reference to the Eastern custom of anointing the heads of distinguished guests, at feasts, with fragrant oil. Our Saviour seems to have rebuked the Pharisee, who had invited him to dine with him, for omitting this mark of hospitality. Luke vii. 46.

Ver. 1. "As the hart," &c. In the East, where streams are not

- 2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God :
When shall I come and appear before God ?
- 3 My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say unto me, " Where is thy
God ? "
- 4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul
in grief ;
How I once walked with the multitude to the house
of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude
that kept holy day !
- 5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
And why art thou disquieted in me ?
Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the
help of his countenance.
- 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me,
While I remember thee from the land of Jordan and
of the Hermonites,
From the hill Mizar.

common, the deer are often chased by savage beasts from their favorite haunts to the parched ground. Then their thirst becomes excessive, but they dare not return to the water, lest they should again meet the enemy.

Ver. 2. " Appear before God," i. e. in his house of worship.

Ver. 6. " The land of Jordan," &c. The author of the Report of the United States Exploring Expedition to the Dead Sea thus speaks of the first view of Hermon : " Mount Hermon now came into view, its brow seamed with lines of snow, which were fast disappearing beneath the sun of a Syrian summer." In this wild

7 Deep calleth unto deep in the noise of thy waterfalls ;

All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.

8 Once the Lord commanded his loving-kindness in the daytime,

And in the night his praise was with me,

Thanksgiving unto the God of my life.

9 Now I say unto God, my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me ?

Why go I mourning, because of the oppression of the enemy ?

10 As a sword in my bones are my enemies' reproaches,

While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God ?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?

And why art thou disquieted within me ?

and desolate region David pitched his camp, and the scene suggested many of the ideas in this poem. The melting snow forms torrents and waterfalls, to which allusion is made in ver. 7 : "Deep calleth unto deep," &c. These words remind us of Byron's description of a thunder-storm in the Alps :—

" Every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers from her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, that call to her aloud."

The last part of the verse is figurative ; as if he had said, "Like these swelling and roaring waters is the flood of my afflictions."

Ver. 7. "Deep calleth unto deep," i. e. the deep hollows of the mountain resound, &c.

Ver. 8 and 9. These two verses present a striking contrast of situation, which is lost in the common version.

Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM XLIII.

1 JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an
ungodly nation ;

O, deliver me from deceitful and unjust men !

2 For thou art the God of my strength ; why dost
thou cast me off ?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the
enemy ?

3 O, send out thy light and thy truth ! let them lead
me,

Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy
tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God,

Unto God my exceeding joy ;

Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my
God !

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?

And why art thou disquieted within me ?

Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him,

Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

PSALM LXXI.

IN THE VALLEY OF JORDAN, HAVING FLED FROM
ABSALOM.

THIS psalm evidently relates to the same occasion as the two last.

The charge of his enemies, ver. 11, "God hath forsaken him," reminds us of the taunting question put by the same, in the preceding psalm (xlii.), ver. 3, "Where is now thy God?"

- 1 IN thee, O Lord, do I put my trust ;
Let me never be put to confusion.
- 2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to
escape ;
Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
- 3 Be thou my stronghold, whereunto I may continu-
ally resort ;
Thou hast given commandment to save me,
For thou art my rock and my fortress.
- 4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the
wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
- 5 For thou art my hope, O Lord God !
Thou hast been my trust from my youth.
- 6 By thee have I been holden up ever since I was
born ;
Thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb ;
My praise shall be continually of thee.

- 7 I am a wonder unto many,
But thou art my strong refuge.
- 8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise,
And with thy honor all the day.
- 9 Cast me not off in the time of old age ;
Forsake me not when my strength faileth.
- 10 For mine enemies speak against me ;
And they that lay wait for my life take counsel together,
- 11 Saying, " God hath forsaken him,
Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him."
- 12 O God, be not far from me !
O my God, make haste for my help !
- 13 Let them be confounded and consumed who are
my enemies ;
Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor,
that seek my hurt.
- 14 But I will hope continually,
And will yet praise thee more and more.
- 15 My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness,
And thy salvation all the day ;
For I know no end thereof.
- 16 I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God ;

Ver. 9. " Cast me not off in the time of old age " ; and ver. 18, " Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not." These verses seem to confirm the application of this psalm to the particular epoch of David's life to which we have assigned it.

Ver. 16. " I will go forth," &c. This is the Prayer-book version. Professor Alexander renders it, " I will come, with the mighty deeds of the Lord, Jehovah," i. e. I will come into thy house, &c. Professor Noyes's version is, " I will celebrate thy mighty deeds, O Lord, Jehovah ! "

- I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of
thine only.
- 17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth,
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
- 18 Now also, when I am old and gray-headed,
O God, forsake me not,
Until I have showed thy strength unto this generation,
And thy power to every one that is to come.
- 19 For thy righteousness, O God, is very high ;
Thou hast done great things.
O God, who is like unto thee ?
- 20 Thou who hast showed me great and sore troubles
Wilt revive me again,
And wilt bring me up again from the depths of the
earth.
- 21 Thou wilt increase my greatness,
And comfort me on every side.
- 22 Then will I praise thee with the psaltery,
Even thy truth, O my God !
Unto thee will I sing with the harp,
O thou Holy One of Israel !
- 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee,
And my soul, which thou hast redeemed from death.
- 24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all
the day long ;
For they are confounded, for they are brought unto
shame, that seek my hurt.

Ver. 20. "Wilt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." This appears to be an allusion to men who have fallen into one of those deep pits that were intended as a snare for wild beasts, &c. H.

PSALM XXVII.

A PRAYER FOR RESTORATION TO THE PRIVILEGES OF
RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

THIS psalm would seem to have been composed near the crisis of the contest, but before it was finally decided. Hence we see in it confident anticipations of triumph (ver. 6), followed by prayers for help (ver. 9).

In Ps. xxiii. 6 the words in which he anticipates restoration to the place of worship are the same as those in the fourth verse of this psalm, "dwell in the house of the Lord." It is worthy of notice that the words which follow in the twenty-third psalm are "for ever"; but in this, "all the days of my life." The former expression is shown by numerous passages to mean no more than a long, but limited time.

PSALM XXVII.

- 1 THE Lord is my light and my salvation ;
Whom shall I fear ?
The Lord is the strength of my life ;
Of whom shall I be afraid ?
- 2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my persecutors, came upon me to devour me,
They stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear ;
Though war should rise against me, yet will I be confident.

4 One thing have I desired of the Lord ; that do I yet seek ;

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

To behold the glory of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion ;

In the secret place of his tabernacle shall he hide me ;
He shall set me up upon a rock.

6 Yea, already doth he lift my head above mine enemies round about me ;

Therefore I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ;

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice ;

Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When thou saidst, " Seek ye my face,"

My heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face from me ;

Put not thy servant away in anger ;

Thou hast been my help, leave me not,

Neither forsake me, O God, my helper !

10 When my father and my mother forsake me,

Then the Lord will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O Lord,

And lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies ;

For false witnesses are risen up against me,

And such as breathe out cruelty.

13 I trust to see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living.

14 Wait on the Lord ;

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine
heart ;

Wait, I say, on the Lord.

PSALM XXX.

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S INTERPOSITIONS IN HIS
FAVOR.

THIS psalm seems to have been uttered after the suppression of the rebellion, and the restoration of David to his kingdom. The first verse expresses thanks for support against his enemies ; the second and third, for restoration from sickness. The fourth and fifth express very beautifully the happy change from danger to safety, and from sickness to health. "Sorrow may be a guest for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The remainder of the psalm recounts the change of his fortunes from prosperity to adversity, his appeals to God for relief, the favorable change granted in answer to his prayers, concluding with an expression of his determination to "sing praise and not be silent," and "to give thanks for ever," a phrase which has the same meaning here as was indicated in the remarks upon it in the previous psalm (the twenty-seventh).

PSALM XXX.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, O God, for thou hast lifted me up,
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
- 2 O Lord, my God,
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
- 3 O Lord, thou hast raised me up from the grave ;
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down
to the pit.
- 4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his,
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
- 5 For his anger endureth but a moment,
But his favor for life ;
Sorrow may be a guest for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning.
- 6 In my prosperity I said, " I shall never be moved.
- 7 Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to
stand strong."
Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.
- 8 I cried to thee, O Lord,
And unto the Lord I made my supplication :
- 9 " What will my blood profit thee, that I should go
down to the pit ?
Shall the dust praise thee ? Shall it declare thy
truth ?
- 10 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me !
Lord, be thou my helper ! "
- 11 Thou didst turn for me my mourning into dancing ;
Thou didst loose my sackcloth, and gird me with
gladness ;

12 Therefore I will sing praise to thee, and not be silent ;
 O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

PSALM XVIII.

CONCLUSION OF DAVID'S WARS, AND RETROSPECT OF HIS LIFE.

THIS psalm contains passages which in sublimity equal, if they do not surpass, any thing of the kind in the whole range of literature ; the sacred writings affording nothing more excellent, and classical literature nothing equal to them. The appearance of the Deity visibly taking part with David in his conflict with his enemies (ver. 7-15) is described in language adequate, if human language can be so, to the subject. The imagery is thought by Dr. Lowth to be drawn from the awful scene at the giving of the law from Sinai, and the description, in the fifteenth verse, of the withdrawal of the waters from their channels, and laying bare the foundations of the earth, is no less plainly an allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea. It is a remarkable fact that this most sublime of descriptions should have been rendered with great success by the tamest and most inelegant of all the versifiers who have attempted to transfer the Psalms to English metre, Sternhold and Hopkins. It is indeed the only pas-

sage of their version which is likely to be saved from oblivion.

“The Lord descended from above, and bowed the heavens most high,
 And underneath his feet he cast the darkness of the sky.
 On cherubim and seraphim full royally he rode,
 And on the wings of mighty winds came flying all abroad.”

It is doubtful, says Professor Noyes, whether any thing of an historical nature is intimated by the psalmist, except that God gave remarkable success to David's arms in the battle. It is possible that a storm of thunder and lightning, opportunely occurring, may have been the immediate suggestion of the theme. But it is equally probable that the imagery is introduced only to heighten the grandeur and impressiveness of the theophany.

PSALM XVIII.

- 1 I WILL love thee, O Lord, my strength !
- 2 The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ;
 My God, my strength, in whom I will trust ;
 My buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.
- 3 I called upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
 And was saved from my enemies.
- 4 The snares of death compassed me,
 And the floods of destruction made me afraid.
- 5 The bands of the grave compassed me about ;
 The snares of death seized upon me.
- 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord,
 And cried unto my God ;

- He heard my voice from his palace,
And my cry came before him, even into his ears.
- 7 Then the earth shook and trembled ;
The foundations also of the hills moved and were
shaken,
Because he was wroth.
- 8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured ;
Coals were kindled by it.
- 9 He bowed the heavens, and came down ;
And darkness was under his feet.
- 10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly ;
Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his covering ;
His pavilion round about him was dark waters and
thick clouds of the skies.
- 12 At the brightness before him his thick clouds passed
away ;
Then came hailstones and coals of fire.
- 13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,
And the Highest gave his voice,
Amid hailstones and coals of fire.
- 14 He sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;
And he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
- 15 Then the channels of waters were seen,
And the foundations of the world were laid bare,
At thy rebuke, O Lord,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils !
- 16 He stretched forth his hand from above ;
He took me ; he drew me out of many waters.

- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from them which hated me ; for they were too
strong for me.
- 18 They fell upon me in the day of my calamity ;
But the Lord was my stay.
- 19 He brought me forth also into a large place ;
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 The Lord rewarded me according to my righteous-
ness ;
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he rec-
ompensed me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 22 For all his judgments were before me,
And I did not put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright before him,
And I kept myself from iniquity.
- 24 Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according
to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.
- 25 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful ;
With an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.
- 26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,
And with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.
- 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people,
But wilt bring down high looks.
- 28 Thou causest my lamp to shine ;
The Lord my God enligteneth my darkness.
- 29 For by thee I have broken through troops ;
And by my God have I leaped over walls.

- 30 The ways of God are just and true ;
The word of the Lord is pure, tried in the fire ;
He is a buckler to all those that trust in him.
- 31 Who, then, is God, save the Lord ?
Or who is a rock, save our God ?
- 32 It is God that girded me with strength,
And made my way plain.
- 33 He made my feet like hinds' feet,
And set me in my high places.
- 34 He taught my hands to war,
So that my arm bent the bow of brass.
- 35 Thou gavest me the shield of thy protection ;
Thy right hand held me up,
And thy goodness made me great.
- 36 Thou didst make a wide path for me,
So that my feet did not slip.
- 37 I pursued mine enemies, and overtook them,
Neither did I turn again till they were destroyed.
- 38 I smote them, that they were not able to rise ;
They fell under my feet.
- 39 Thou didst gird me with strength unto the battle ;
Thou didst subdue under me those that rose up
against me.
- 40 Thou didst cause my enemies to turn their backs,
So that I destroyed them that hated me.
- 41 They cried, but there was none to save them ;
Even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.
- 42 I beat them small as the dust before the wind ;
I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.
- 43 Thou hast delivered me from the assaults of the
nations,

- And thou hast made me the head of the kingdoms ;
Nations whom I know not serve me ;
44 They who have only heard of me obey me ;
Yea, strangers submit themselves unto me.
45 Men of a strange land fade away like a leaf,
And come trembling from their strongholds.
- 46 The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock ;
And let the God of my salvation be exalted.
47 It is God that avengeth me,
And subdueth the people under me.
48 He delivered me from mine enemies ;
Yea, thou hast lifted me up above my adversaries ;
Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.
49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord,
among the nations,
And sing praises unto thy name.
50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king,
And showeth mercy to his anointed,
To David, and to his seed for evermore.
-

PSALM XCI.

DAVID'S LAST ADVICE TO SOLOMON.

THE parting advice of David to Solomon is given in 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 10, as follows :—“And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and

serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts ; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary ; be strong, and do it." These words illustrate the first verse of the psalm, "He that dwelleth," &c. The expression "to dwell in the house of the Lord" has occurred repeatedly in the preceding psalms, (see Psalm xxvii. 4, p. 80,) and in all cases seems to imply the habitual and constant fulfilment of the services of religion.* The verse, then, may be understood as a maxim, that "he who renders due service to God shall be sustained by him," which is the purport of the first of the two verses quoted above from Chronicles. In the second verse of the psalm, David acknowledges God as his own refuge and support, in all his trials. In the third and following verses, he assures Solomon of the same protection, if he will, in like manner, make Jehovah his reliance. In the ninth verse, "because" implies that Solomon has followed the advice of the first verse, and the example set him ; and made his father's "refuge" his own. The word "shelter" is translated indifferently by the words "refuge," "habitation," and "house of defence" ; it may be taken as synonymous with "refuge" in the first clause of the verse. In the fourteenth and following verses, Jehovah speaks.

* Those who were actually engaged in sacred duties dwelt in the capital, in chambers connected with the temple. 1 Maccab. iv. 38. Milman.

Herder says of this psalm, "Can the providence of God be taught with a sense of more cordial trust, or with more tenderness of feeling? It is a fatherly lesson, advancing and rising higher to the end, where the Supreme Father speaks and confirms its truth."

PSALM XCI.

- 1 HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge, and my fortress ;
My God, in him will I trust."
- 3 Surely he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
And from the noisome pestilence.
- 4 He will cover thee with his feathers,
And under his wings shalt thou trust ;
His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
- 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ;
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;
- 6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness ;
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand ;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
- 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold,
And see the reward of the wicked.

Ver. 1. For the meaning of "secret place" see Psalm xxxi. 20 (page 19).

- 9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my
refuge,
Even the Most High, thy shelter,
10 There shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11 For he will give his angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
12 They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder ;
The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample
under feet.
- 14 “ Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore
will I deliver him ;
I will set him on high, because he hath known my
name.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him ;
I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and
honor him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my salvation.”

Ver. 9. David had stated in ver. 2 that the Lord was his refuge. He here repeats the appellation.

PSALM LXXII.

THE INAUGURATION OF SOLOMON.

BISHOP LOWTH compares this psalm with Psalm ii. which we have supposed to relate to the establishment of David's kingdom in Jerusalem (page 31). "This," he says, "may not improperly be called the 'Inauguration of Solomon.' The style is somewhat different from the former, on account of the disparity of the subject. In the one, the pomp and splendor of victory are displayed, in the other, the placid image of peace and felicity. The style of the latter is therefore more calm and temperate, more ornamented, more figurative; not abounding in the same boldness of personification as the former, but rather touched with the gay and cheerful coloring of nature, in its most flourishing and delightful state."

Herder says of it, "With this the first Psalms of David close, and they could close with none better. In it the blessings of Abraham, Judah, and David are brought together, and the ideal conceptions of the Prophets respecting a future reign like that of Solomon proceeded from this as their model."

PSALM LXXII.

- 1 GIVE the king thy justice, O God!
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
- 2 Then he shall judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with justice.

- 3 The mountains shall bring forth peace to the people,
And the little hills, through righteousness.
- 4 He shall defend the poor of the people,
He shall save the needy,
And shall break in pieces the oppressor.
- 5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon
endure,
Throughout all generations.
- 6 He shall be like rain coming down upon the mown
grass ;
As showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his days shall the righteous flourish ;
And abundance of peace so long as the moon en-
dureth.
- 8 He shall have dominion from sea to sea,
And from the river unto the ends of the earth.
- 9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before
him,
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring
presents ;
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Ver. 8. "From sea to sea," i. e. from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.— "The river," i. e. the Euphrates.— "The ends of the earth," the sea-coast.

Ver. 9. "They that dwell in the wilderness." This refers to the wandering tribes of the Arabian desert.

Ver. 10. Tarshish in Spain is probably mentioned as the most distant place in the West, and Sheba in Arabia and Seba in Ethiopia as the most distant places in the East and South. "The

- 11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him ;
All nations shall serve him.
- 12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ;
The poor also, and him that hath no helper.
- 13 He shall spare the weak and needy,
And shall save the lives of the poor.
- 14 He shall redeem them from deceit and violence ;
And precious shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 He shall prosper, and to him shall be given of the
gold of Sheba ;
Prayer also shall be made for him continually,
And daily shall he be praised.
- 16 There shall be abundance of corn in the land
Upon the top of the mountains ;
The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon,
And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the
earth.

isles," agreeably to Hebrew usage, include all distant sea-coasts, but particularly those of the Mediterranean.

Ver. 16. "On the tops of the mountains." The following passage from Dr. Richardson's travels, quoted in the *Modern Traveller*, Vol. I. p. 57, will throw light on this expression: "The mountains are not susceptible of cultivation, except on the very summit, where we saw the plough going in several places." He adds, "The rock crops out in many places, but never in precipitous cliffs. The strata are horizontal." These facts seem to explain a text which has puzzled the commentators. The word translated "a handful" in the common version means, not a small quantity, but abundance, as in Gen. xli. 47: "In the seven plentiful years, the earth brought forth by handfuls"; and "the top of the mountains" is not mentioned as the most unlikely place for corn to grow in, but the reverse. See Ps. cxlvii. 8.

- 17 His name shall endure for ever ;
His name shall be continued as long as the sun ;
By him shall men bless themselves ;
All nations shall call him blessed.
- 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who only doth wondrous things.
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever ;
And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The psalms of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.

PSALMS OF DAVID'S SUCCESSORS.

PSALM XLV.

SOLOMON'S MARRIAGE.

THE prevalent opinion is that this psalm was composed on the marriage of Solomon with a daughter of the king of Egypt, as recorded in 1 Kings iii. 1.

The ode begins with a sort of proœmium, having some resemblance to a poet's address to his Muse. The king is then praised for his personal beauty and graceful speech, ver. 2 ; for his military qualifications, ver. 3-5, and the stability and rectitude of his government, ver. 6, 7 ; for the splendor of his dress and the magnificence of his establishment, especially for the

beauty and high birth of the members of his harem, among whom the queen is preëminent, ver. 8, 9. Then follows an appropriate apostrophe to the queen, ver. 10–12; and a description of her splendid dress and retinue, ver. 13–15, and of her future happiness, as the mother of a long line of kings and princes, ver. 16. Finally, the poet expresses his conviction that he, by his poem, shall preserve her name and fame to all coming generations. N.

PSALM XLV.

- 1 My heart is full of a pleasant theme ;
 I will address my song to the king ;
 My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.
- 2 Thou art the fairest of the children of men ;
 Grace is poured upon thy lips ;
 For God hath blessed thee for ever.
- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty !
 Thy glory and thy ornament.
- 4 And in thy glorious array ride forth victoriously,
 In the cause of truth and meekness, and righteousness ;
 And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp ;
 They shall pierce the heart of the king's enemies ;
 Nations shall fall before thee.
- 6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;

Ver. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The Hebrew, literally rendered, is, "Thy throne God ever and ever."

- The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of equity.
- 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness ;
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- 8 All thy garments are myrrh, aloes, and cassia ;
Out of the ivory palaces stringed instruments delight
thee.
- 9 Kings' daughters are among thy honorable women ;
Upon thy right hand stands the queen in gold of
Ophir.
- 10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine
ear ;
Forget thine own people and thy father's house.
- 11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty ;
For he is thy lord, and honor thou him.
- 12 So shall the daughter of Tyre seek thy favor with a gift,
Even the rich among the people.

The copula *is*, being omitted, may be as properly supplied before the word *God* as after it. It would then read, "Thy throne is God." The verse cannot relate to the Supreme Being, as is evident from the connection, in verse seventh. Some interpreters suppose it may refer to Christ ; but whatever it may do in a secondary sense, there must have been a primary sense, in which it formed part of a poem relating to events then passing or recent. The primary sense, then, of this verse, as of all the rest, we think, relates to Solomon ; and we may either understand the word *God* as applied to him, as we know that word was applied by the Hebrews to distinguished men, or we may read it, "Thy throne is of God," meaning that it is sustained by God, and is the throne of God's chosen people, whose prince is God's vicegerent upon earth. See 1 Chron. xxix. 23, "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord."

- 13 The king's daughter is all glorious in her apartment ;
Her clothing is embroidered with gold.
- 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work ;
The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee.
- 15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought ;
They shall enter the king's palace.
- 16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou mayest make princes through all the land.
- 17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations ;
So shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.
-

PSALM CXXXII.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER AT THE DEDICATION OF THE
TEMPLE.

IN 2 Chron. v. and vi. we have an account of the dedication of the temple, and of the prayer of Solomon on that occasion ; at the conclusion of which we read the words here given in the eighth, ninth, and tenth verses.

PSALM CXXXII.

- 1 LORD, remember David, and all his trouble.
2 How he sware unto the Lord,
And vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob:
3 "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
Nor go up into my bed;
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Or slumber to mine eyelids,
5 Until I find out a place for the Lord,
A habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."
6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephrata;
We found it in the fields of the wood.
7 Let us go into his tabernacles;
Let us worship at his footstool.
8 Arise, O Lord, into thy rest,
Thou, and the ark of thy strength.

Ver. 1. The "trouble" of David refers to his anxiety to build a temple, and his exertions to that effect. See 1 Chron. xxii. 14. The word is borrowed from the Prayer-book version.

Ver. 6. "We heard of it at Ephrata." Ephrata here probably denotes the country of Ephraim, in which was Shiloh, where the ark of God remained many years. "The fields of the wood," or, in other words, "the fields of Jair," probably refer to Kirjath-jearim, where the ark was kept twenty years. The meaning in connection with what follows seems to be, that, having heard of the ark in different and distant places, and as removed from place to place, they might now rejoice that it had a settled abode. N.

Ver. 8. See 2 Chron. vi. 40. At these words we may suppose the ark to be set in its place.

- 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let thy saints shout for joy.
- 10 For thy servant David's sake,
Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
- 11 The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David,
And he will not turn from it:
"Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
- 12 If thy children keep my covenant,
And my testimony, that I shall teach them,
Their children also shall sit upon thy throne for ever-
more."
- 13 For the Lord hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his habitation.
- 14 "This is my rest for ever;
Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.
- 15 I will abundantly bless her provision;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
- 16 I will clothe her priests with salvation,
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
- 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud;
I have prepared a lamp for mine anointed.
- 18 His enemies will I clothe with shame,
But upon himself shall his crown flourish."

Ver. 10. "Turn not away the face," &c.; i. e. do not refuse access to one coming as a petitioner; do not reject his petition.

Ver. 17. "Make the horn of David to bud." Dr. Noyes translates it by the equivalent expression, "exalt the power of David." The horn is the emblem of strength and power. — "I have prepared a lamp," &c. In Ps. xviii. 28, David says, "Thou causest my lamp to shine." An allusion to the ever-burning lamp of the temple. H.

PSALMS XCVII. — C.

TEMPLE PSALMS.

THE building of the temple was the establishment of a national sanctuary, a centre of union to all the tribes, and the consolidation of the religious and civil institutions of the nation.

David, in his last words to Solomon, enjoined it upon him "to build a house for the sanctuary," an object for which he himself had made extensive preparations, and amassed treasures, the fruits of his numerous victories. A hundred and eighty-three thousand men were employed on the work, and in seven years and a half it was finished. It stood on Mount Moriah, one of the eminences inclosed within the walls of the city, and was conspicuous from every part of the city, and from the surrounding country. The edifice itself was not large, but the most costly materials, gold and marble and cedar and precious stones, were most lavishly expended on its decoration, and the most elaborate workmanship employed to set off the materials to advantage. Thus it was well fitted to be an object of national pride and patriotic attachment; and we find, in fact, that the two passions which most strongly actuate masses of men, love of country and religious zeal, combined in all their ardor to attach the Jewish people to their temple.

PSALM XCVII.

- 1 THE Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice !
Let the multitude of isles be glad thereof !
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him,
Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of
his throne.
- 3 A fire goeth before him,
And burneth up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His lightnings enlighten the world ;
The earth beholdeth and trembleth.
- 5 The hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness,
And all nations behold his glory.
- 7 Confounded be they that serve graven images,
That boast themselves of idols ;
Worship him, all ye gods.
- 8 Zion hath heard, and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of thy judgments, O Lord !
- 9 For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth ;
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
- 10 Ye that love the Lord, hate evil ;
He preserveth the souls of his saints ;
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.
- 12 Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous,
And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

PSALM XCVIII.

- 1 O, SING unto the Lord a new song !
For he hath done marvellous things ;
His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him the
victory.
- 2 The Lord hath made known his salvation ;
His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight
of the heathen.
- 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward
the house of Israel ;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of
our God.
- 4 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth !
Break forth into joy, and exult, and sing praise !
- 5 Sing unto the Lord with the harp,
With the harp and the voice of a psalm !
- 6 With trumpets, and sound of cornet,
Make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King !
- 7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof,
The world, and they that dwell therein ;
- 8 Let the floods clap their hands ;
- 9 Let the hills be joyful together before the Lord !
For he cometh to judge the earth.
With righteousness shall he judge the world,
And the people with equity.

PSALM XCIX.

- 1 THE Lord reigneth, let the nations tremble !
He sitteth between the cherubim, let the earth be
moved !

- 2 The Lord is great in Zion,
And he is high above all the nations.
- 3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name !
For it is holy.
- 4 Let them declare the glory of the king who loveth
justice !
Thou dost establish equity ; thou executest judgment
and righteousness in Jacob.
- 5 Exalt ye the Lord our God,
And worship at his footstool !
For he is holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that call upon his name,
They called upon the Lord, and he answered them.
- 7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar ;
They kept his testimonies,
And the ordinance that he gave them.
- 8 Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God !
Thou wast to them a forgiving God,
Though thou tookest vengeance of their transgressions.
- 9 Exalt the Lord our God,
And worship at his holy hill !
For the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM C.

- 1 Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands !
- 2 Serve the Lord with gladness ;
Come before his presence with singing.

- 3 Know ye that the Lord he is God ;
It is he that hath made us, and we are his ;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise ;
Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
- 5 For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting ;
And his truth endureth to all generations.
-

PSALM XLIX.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

THIS psalm may be considered a specimen of the philosophy and poetry of Solomon's age, if not his production. "Its purpose is to meet the doubts which arise in the mind on the contemplation of the manner in which good and evil are distributed in the world ; the wicked often enjoying prosperity, and the righteous suffering adversity. Spiritual good, internal peace, a sense of the friendship of God, and confidence in his protection, are set forth as more than a balance for all the advantages of prosperous wickedness." N.

Parts of this psalm will remind the reader of other writings attributed to Solomon, namely, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. See Proverbs xi. 4 ; Eccles. ii. 16 ; iii. 19.

PSALM XLIX.

- 1 HEAR this, all ye people !
 Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world !
- 2 Both low and high, rich and poor together.
- 3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,
 And the meditation of my heart shall be understand-
 ing.
- 4 I will incline mine ear to a parable ;
 I will utter my song upon the harp.
- 5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,
 When the iniquity of my oppressors compasseth me
 about ?
- 6 They that trust in their wealth,
 And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches,
- 7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother
 from death,
 Nor give to God a ransom for him,
- 8 That he should live for ever,
 And not see corruption.
- 9 Too costly is the redemption of his life ;
 And he giveth it up for ever.
- 10 For we see that wise men die,

Ver. 1. "Hear this," &c. The poet begins with the solemn dignity of a prophet, summoning the whole world to listen to a lesson of religious wisdom, which concerns every class of men. N.

Ver. 4. "Incline mine ear." The classical poets often represent themselves as hearing what they are uttering, as if it was dictated to them. So Milton: "That strain I heard was of a higher mood." — *Lycidas*, ver. 87.

- As the fool, and the brutish person ;
 They perish, and leave their wealth to others.
- 11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever,
 And their dwelling-places to all generations ;
 They call their lands after their own names.
- 12 Nevertheless man in honor abideth not ;
 He is like the beasts that perish.
- 13 This their way is their folly ;
 Yet their posterity approve their sayings.
- 14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ;
 Death shall feed on them ;
 The upright shall soon trample upon them ;
 Their beauty shall consume in the grave,
 And they shall no more have a dwelling-place.
- 15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave ;
 Yea, he will receive me under his protection.
- 16 Be not thou afraid when one becomes rich,
 When the glory of his house is increased.
- 17 For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away ;
 His glory shall not descend after him.
- 18 Though while he lived he thought himself happy, —
 Though men praised thee while thou wast in prosperity,
- 19 Yet shalt thou go to the dwelling-place of thy fathers,

Ver. 14. "Like sheep," i. e. huddled together into the lower world, as sheep into a fold. — "Death shall feed upon them," i. e. consume them. — "Trample upon them"; i. e. on the graves of those whom they feared when alive. N.

Who never more shall see the light.
20 Man that is in honor, but without understanding,
Is like the beasts that perish.

PSALM LXXVIII.

THE TRANSFER OF GOD'S FAVOR FROM EPHRAIM TO
JUDAH.

THE Hebrew nation attained the height of prosperity under David and Solomon. Yet even during their reigns, there are indications of a jealousy existing between the people of the northern tribes, who are called the "men of Israel" (2 Sam. xix. 41 and foll.), and those of the southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Immediately on the accession of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, the schism broke out, and a separation ensued, which divided the dominions of David and Solomon into two unequal portions, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The former, Israel, possessed the larger portion both of men and territory; but Judah retained the capital city and the temple, and the royal race of David, to which the promises were made, so often repeated. See 2 Sam. vii. ; also Ps. cxxxii. 11 and 12, page 100.

The kingdom of Israel lasted two hundred and fifty years, through a succession of stormy and blood-stained reigns; and was in the end overthrown by the Assyrians, who carried the inhabitants into captivity, from which they never returned. The kingdom of Judah

lasted above a century and a half longer, under the dynasty of the house of David; until Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, after repeated invasions, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried its inhabitants into captivity. From this captivity, which lasted seventy years, Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, allowed the Jews to return to their own country. They did return, and reëstablished their nation in its former seats, and passed through various fortunes of prosperity and adversity, till, after a lapse of five hundred years from their return, Christ appeared, a lineal descendant of David, in whom the promises made to David's line are held by all Christians to have been accomplished.

This psalm is supposed to belong to the time of Asa, who began his reign over the kingdom of Judah twenty years after Solomon. Its design is to show why the preëminence had been transferred from the tribe of Ephraim, which was the leading tribe of the Israelitish faction, to Judah. It traces the history of the nation from the departure from Egypt to the time of David; and in the sins and misfortunes of the nation under the ascendancy of Ephraim finds cause for the rejection of that tribe, and the preference given to the tribe of Judah; which is distinctly stated in the sixty-seventh and following verses. "Joseph," as the father of Ephraim, signifies the same tribe, and both may be understood as representing the Israelitish kingdom.

The name Israel is, to the time of the separation of the ten tribes, the national designation, including all the descendants of Abraham. After the revolt of the northern tribes, they retained the national name; perhaps

because they were the greater number, and covered the greater part of the land ; perhaps because the southern portions, being chiefly held by Judah, soon came to be called by that name. Still the name of Israel is not abandoned by the writers of the kingdom of Judah, as applicable to the people of that section ; but is used in each of the three senses, occasionally, so that its meaning in each particular case must be judged of by the connection.

PSALM LXXVIII.

- 1 GIVE ear, O my people, to my law !
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth !
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable ;
I will utter dark sayings of old.
- 3 What we have heard, and known,
And our fathers have told us,
- 4 We will not hide from their children,
Showing to the generation to come the praises of the
Lord,
And his strength, and his wonderful works that he
hath done.
- 5 For he established statutes in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which he commanded our fathers
That they should make them known to their children ;
- 6 That the generation to come might know them,
Even the children which should be born,
Who should arise and declare them to their children ;
- 7 That they might set their hope in God,

- And not forget the works of God,
But keep his commandments ;
- 8 And might not be as their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation that set not their heart aright,
And whose spirit was not steadfast with God.
- 9 The children of Ephraim were like armed bow-
men,
Who turn their backs in the day of battle.
- 10 They kept not the covenant of God,
And refused to walk in his law ;
- 11 And forgot his works,
And his wonders that he had showed them.
- 12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
- 13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through ;
And he made the waters to stand as a heap.
- 14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
- 15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave them drink as out of the great deep.
- 16 He brought streams also out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.
- 17 Yet still they sinned against him,
And provoked the Most High in the wilderness.
- 18 And they tempted God in their heart,
By asking food for their indulgence.
- 19 Yea, they spake against God ; they said,
“ Can God spread a table in the wilderness ?

- 20 Behold, he smote the rock, and the waters gushed
out,
And the streams flowed ;
Can he give bread also ?
Can he provide flesh for his people ? ”
- 21 When the Lord heard this, he was wroth ;
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger arose against Israel,
22 Because they believed not in God,
And trusted not in his aid.
- 23 Yet he had commanded the clouds from above,
And opened the doors of heaven ;
24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat,
And had given them of the corn of heaven.
- 25 Man did eat angel’s food ;
He sent them meat to the full.
- 26 Then he caused an east wind to blow in the
heaven,
And by his power he brought in the south wind.
- 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust,
And feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.
- 28 And he let them fall in the midst of their camp,
Round about their habitations.
- 29 So they did eat, and were well filled ;
For he gave them their own desire.
- 30 Their desire was not yet satisfied ;
But while their meat was yet in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came upon them,
And slew their strong men,
And smote down the chosen men of Israel.

- 32 For all this they sinned still,
And believed not for his wondrous works.
- 33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
And their years in trouble.
- 34 When he slew them, then they sought him ;
And they returned, and sought earnestly for God ;
- 35 And they remembered that God was their rock,
And the high God their redeemer.
- 36 But they only did flatter him with their mouths,
And lied unto him with their tongues.
- 37 For their heart was not right with him ;
Neither were they steadfast in his covenant.
- 38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their in-
iquity,
And destroyed them not ;
Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,
And did not stir up all his wrath.
- 39 For he remembered that they were but flesh ;
A breath that passeth away, and cometh not again.
- 40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,
And grieve him in the desert !
- 41 Again and again they tempted God,
And offended the Holy One of Israel.
- 42 They remembered not his hand,
Nor the day when he delivered them from the en-
emy ;
- 43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt,
And his wonders in the field of Zoan ;

- 44 And had turned their rivers into blood,
So that they could not drink of their streams.
- 45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them,
Which devoured them, and frogs, which destroyed
them.
- 46 He gave also their fruits unto the caterpillar,
And their labor unto the locust.
- 47 He destroyed their vines with hail,
And their sycamore-trees with frost.
- 48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail,
And their flocks to hot thunder-bolts.
- 49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,
Wrath, and indignation, and trouble,
A host of angels of evil.
- 50 He made a way for his anger ;
He spared them not from death,
But gave their life over to the pestilence,
- 51 And smote all the first-born in Egypt,
The chief of their strength in the tents of Ham.
- 52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
- 53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not,
But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
- 54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,
Even to this mountain which his right hand had pur-
chased.
- 55 He cast out the heathen also before them,

Ver. 49. "A host of angels of evil." Either the plagues of Egypt are here personified as messengers of evil, or personal angels are represented as the agents of God in producing those plagues. N.

And divided their land as an inheritance, by line,
And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

- 56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high
God,
And kept not his statutes ;
57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fa-
thers ;
They turned aside, like a deceitful bow.
58 They provoked him to anger with their high places,
And moved him to jealousy with their graven im-
ages.
59 When God saw this, he was wroth,
And greatly abhorred Israel ;
60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent where he dwelt among men,
61 And delivered his strength into captivity,
And his glory into the enemy's hand.
62 He gave his people over also unto the sword,
And was wroth with his inheritance.
63 Fire consumed their young men,
And their maidens were not given to marriage.

Ver. 57. "Like a deceitful bow"; i. e. which sends the arrow in a false direction, so that it does not hit the mark. N.

Ver. 58. "High places," i. e. places of worship for idols. N.

Ver. 60. This passage refers to the disastrous period at the close of Eli's priesthood, when the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, the ark of God, which had been carried by the Israelites into the battle, taken by the enemy, and Hophni and Phinehas, the priests, the sons of Eli, slain. See 1 Sam. iv.

Ver. 61. "His strength," — "his glory"; i. e. the ark of the covenant. N.

- 64 Their priests fell by the sword,
And their widows made no lamentation.
- 65 But at length the Lord awaked as one out of sleep,
And like a mighty man refreshed with wine.
- 66 And he smote his enemies, and drove them back,
And put them to a perpetual reproach.
- 67 Yet he rejected the tabernacle of Joseph,
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;
- 68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
The Mount Zion which he loved ;
- 69 Where he built his sanctuary like the heavens ;
Like the earth, which he hath established for ever.
- 70 He chose David, also, his servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds ;
- 71 From tending the suckling ewes, he brought him
To feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
- 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his
heart,
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Ver. 64. "Made no lamentation"; i. e. in the midst of the general terror and calamity, they had no time to give to the customary lamentations for the dead. N.

PSALM LXXXIII.

COMBINATION AGAINST JUDAH IN THE REIGN OF
JEHOSHAPHAT.

IT appears from 2 Chron. xx. that in the reign of Jehoshaphat the little kingdom of Judah was in great peril. The neighboring nations combined to overthrow it. If we look on the map, we see that the powers enumerated in the sixth and following verses very nearly encompass the territory of Judah. Edom is on the south, Moab on the southeast, Ammon on the east, the Hagarrenes, or descendants of Hagar, on the northeast, the Philistines and people of Tyre on the west, while the Ishmaelites and Amalek are the wandering tribes of the Arabian desert, the children of Lot being Moab and Ammon. The very multiplicity of her enemies saved Judah; for discord broke out among them, and they turned their arms against one another. But while the event was in suspense, the patriotic song of Asaph may well be excused, if it deals in maledictions, which, even in our own day, would not be thought unpardonable in the poet of an invaded people, trembling before an enemy of overwhelming power. The enumeration, in the ninth and following verses, of the former triumphs of their nation, and of the enemies subdued by their ancestors, was admirably adapted to inspire courage and hope.

PSALM LXXXIII.

- 1 O God, keep not thou silence !
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God !

- 2 For lo, thine enemies begin to rage,
And they that hate thee lift up the head.
- 3 They take crafty counsel against thy people,
And consult against thy chosen ones.
- 4 They say, "Come, let us cut them off from being a
nation,
That the name of Israel may be no more in remem-
brance."
- 5 They consult together with one consent ;
They are confederate against thee,
- 6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Of Moab and the Hagarenes,
- 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek,
The Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.
- 8 The Assyrians also are joined with them ;
They lend their strength to the children of Lot.
- 9 Do unto them as unto the Midianites,
As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook Kison,
- 10 Who perished at Endor ;
They were trampled as dung to the earth.
- 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb ;
Yea, all their princes as Zebah and as Zalmunna ;
- 12 Who say, "Let us seize on God's habitations !"
- 13 O my God, make them like whirling chaff,
As the stubble before the wind !
- 14 As fire burneth a wood,

Ver. 9. For "Midianites," "Sisera," and "Jabin," see Judges iv. and vii. N.

Ver. 11. For "Oreb," and "Zeeb," &c., see Judges vii. and viii. N.

And as the flame setteth the mountains on fire,
15 So pursue them with thy tempest,
And terrify them with thy storm.
16 Cover their faces with shame,
That they may seek thy name, O Lord !
17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ;
Yea, let them be put to shame, and perish ;
18 That they may know that thou, whose name alone is
Jehovah,
Art the Most High over all the earth.

PSALM XLVII.

SONG OF VICTORY ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

AFTER the confederate army of the invaders had fallen asunder, and the several parts of which it was composed had destroyed each other, the army of Jehoshaphat spent three days in gathering the spoil. On the fourth day, as we are told in 2 Chron. xx. 26, they assembled in a valley which they called Berachah (Blessing), because "there they blessed the Lord." There is something in the simple, animated, flowing style of the psalm before us, which agrees very well with the supposition of its having been composed and sung upon that occasion. The last verse, which may have been subsequently added, seems to allude to a fact mentioned in the twenty-ninth verse of the same chapter, that "the fear of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of those

countries, when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.”

PSALM XLVII.

- 1 O, CLAP your hands, all ye people !
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph !
- 2 For the Lord most high is terrible ;
He is a great king over all the earth.
- 3 He hath subdued the people under us,
And the nations under our feet.
- 4 He hath chosen an inheritance for us,
The excellency of Jacob whom he loved.

- 5 God goeth up with a shout ;
The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
- 6 Sing praises to our God, sing praises !
Sing praises unto our king, sing praises !
- 7 For God is the king of all the earth ;
Sing ye praises with understanding !
- 8 God reigneth over the nations ;
God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
- 9 The princes of the nations gather themselves together
Unto the people of the God of Abraham ;
For the mighty of the earth belong unto God ;
He is greatly exalted.

Ver. 5. “God goeth up with a shout,” &c. This alludes, probably, to the carrying of the ark in solemn procession to Mount Zion, on its return from the war, to which it may have been carried. Comp. 1 Sam. iv. 3-5; 2 Sam. vi. 15. N.

PSALM XLVIII.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING IN THE TEMPLE.

THE narrative goes on to state that "they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of them, to Jerusalem. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord." The psalm before us was probably composed for that occasion.

PSALM XLVIII.

- 1 GREAT is the Lord, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
- 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is
Mount Zion,
The joy of the farthest North is the city of the great
king.
- 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- 4 For lo, kings were assembled against it ;
They passed away together.
- 5 As soon as they saw, they were astonished ;
They were confounded, and hasted away.
- 6 Fear took hold upon them there,
And pain, as of a woman in travail.
- 7 They were scattered, as by the east wind,
That breaketh in pieces the ships of Tarshish.

Ver. 7. "Ships of Tarshish." It is an interesting coinci-

- 8 As we have heard, so have we seen
In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our
God ;
God will establish it for ever.
- 9 We think of thy loving-kindness, O God,
In the midst of thy temple.
- 10 As thy name, O God, so thy praise extendeth unto
the ends of the earth ;
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Mount Zion rejoiceth,
The daughters of Judah exult,
Because of thy righteous judgments.
- 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her ;
Tell the towers thereof ;
- 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks ; consider her palaces ;
That ye may tell it to the generation following.
- 14 For this God is our God for ever and ever ;
He will be our guide unto death.

dence, that such a disaster did befall the navy of Jehoshaphat himself. See 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37.

Ver. 8. "As we have heard," &c. This alludes to the deliverance promised by the prophet Jehaziel. See 2 Chron. xx. 14 and foll.

Ver. 10. "Of righteousness." Manifested in the punishment of the enemies of thy people, equivalent to "righteous judgments" in the next verse. N.

PSALM XLIV.

INVASION OF THE ASSYRIANS UNDER SENNACHERIB.

FROM the time of Jehoshaphat to that of Hezekiah is two hundred years. During that time the kingdom of Judah had had several able and worthy kings, but Israel, on the contrary, a succession of weak and wicked ones ; so that the more powerful of the two kingdoms in territory and population had become, through misgovernment, decidedly the weaker. Finally, Samaria, the capital, was taken by the Assyrians, the people were carried away captive, and the kingdom of Israel was brought to an end.

This event happened a few years after Hezekiah succeeded his father, Ahaz, on the throne of Judah. The Assyrians, having subdued Israel, now threatened Judah, and took several of her frontier towns. Hezekiah bought off the invaders with tribute. But the peace was not of long duration. Sennacherib sent messengers charged with an insulting message, to summon Jerusalem to surrender ; and this message, proclaimed aloud under the walls of the city, filled the people with dismay, and caused the pious king to "cover himself with sackcloth, and go into the house of the Lord." Ver. 15 and 16 allude to it. The psalm that follows may be supposed to be the utterance of his feelings upon that occasion.

PSALM XLIV.

- 1 WE have heard with our ears, O God !
Our fathers have told us
What thou didst in their days,
In the times of old :
- 2 How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand,
And plantedst our fathers ;
How thou didst destroy the nations,
And cause them to flourish.
- 3 For they got not the land in possession by their own
sword,
Neither did their own arm save them ;
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of
thy countenance ;
Because thou hadst a favor unto them.
- 4 Thou also art my king, O God !
O, send deliverance to Jacob !
- 5 Through thee will we push down our enemies ;
Through thy name will we tread them under that
rise up against us.
- 6 I will not trust in my bow,
Neither shall my sword save me.
- 7 For it is thou only that savest us from our enemies,
And puttest them to shame that hate us.
- 8 In God will we boast all the day long,
And praise thy name for ever.

- 9 But now thou hast cast off and put us to shame,
And goest not forth with our armies.
- 10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy,

- And they which hate us make our goods their prey.
11 Thou makest us like sheep, appointed for meat,
And scatterest us among the heathen.
12 Thou sellest thy people for naught,
And dost not increase thy wealth by their price.
13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbors,
A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen,
A shaking of the head among the people.
15 My confusion is continually before me,
And the shame of my face hath covered me,
16 For the voice of him that scoffeth and revileth,
On account of the enemy and avenger.
17 All this is come upon us ;
Yet have we not forgotten thee,
Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
18 Our heart is not turned back,
Neither have our steps declined from thy way ;
19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of
dragons,
And covered us with the shadow of death.

Ver. 11. "Thou scatterest us among the heathen." These words have led some commentators to conclude that the psalm was composed after the captivity. But ver. 17 and 18 seem to show that the state still subsisted, and the national worship was still maintained. The words may allude to the captives of the sister kingdom of Israel, or of some of the frontier cities of Judah, which doubtless had fallen into the enemies' hands before they invested Jerusalem itself.

Ver. 19. "The place of dragons." "Dragons" is a term that conveys no particular idea, because there are no creatures properly so called. The original word here used means those nox-

- 20 If we had forgotten the name of our God,
Or stretched out our hands to a strange God,
21 Surely God would search it out ;
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
22 But for thy sake are we killed all the day long ;
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
23 Awake ! why sleepest thou, O Lord ?
Arise ! cast us not off for ever.
24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And forgettest our affliction and our oppression ?
25 Our soul is bowed down to the dust ;
Our body cleaveth unto the earth.
26 Arise, for our help,
And redeem us, for thy mercies' sake !
-

PSALMS XLVI. AND LXXVI.

REJOICINGS AT THE RETREAT OF THE ASSYRIANS.

SENNACHERIB was alarmed by the news that the king of Ethiopia was advancing to attack him. We are also told (2 Chron. xxxii. 21) that "the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the

ious and disagreeable animals which generally hide themselves in dark, inaccessible coverts. H.

In these words the Psalmist describes the countries into which his brethren, the exiled tribes of Israel, had been carried. The desert country between Judea and Assyria might not unfairly be so represented.

leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria ; so he returned, with shame of face, to his own land." It was probably a pestilential disorder ; and from the account in 2 Kings xix. we should infer that not only the leaders, but a great part of the soldiers, fell victims to it. Thus was Judah, with her pious king, saved from their insolent foe ; and the psalms which follow are the expression of their gratitude and joy.

PSALM XLVI.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength ;
An ever present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ;
- 3 Though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled ;
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
- 4 Her river with its streams shall make glad the city of God,
The holy dwelling-place of the Most High.

Ver. 3. The invasion of the Assyrians is described by Isaiah (viii. 7) under the figure of a swelling river, which "shall come up over all his channels and over all his banks."

Ver. 4. On the approach of the Assyrians, Hezekiah "took counsel with his princes to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city, and the brook, that ran through the midst of the land, saying, 'Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water ?'" 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4. One topic of

- 5 God is in the midst of her,
 She shall not be moved ;
 God shall help her, and that right early.
- 6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved ;
 But God uttered his voice, and the earth melted away.
- 7 The Lord of hosts is with us ;
 The God of Jacob is our refuge.
- 8 Come, behold the doings of the Lord ;
 What desolations he hath made in the earth.
- 9 He maketh wars to cease throughout our land ;
 He hath broken the bow, and snapped the spear in
 sunder,
 And burned the chariots in the fire.
- 10 " Be still, and know that I am God ;
 I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted
 in the earth."
- 11 The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is
 our refuge. Selah.

PSALM LXXVI.

- 1 IN Judah is God known ;
 His name is great in Israel.
- 2 In Salem is his tabernacle,
 And his dwelling-place in Zion.
- 3 There brake he the arrows of the bow,

congratulation on the retreat of the enemy was that " the river with its streams " should be restored to them. See 2 Kings xx. 20.

Ver. 8. " What desolations," &c. This remark is applied to the deserted camp of the Assyrians.

The shield, and the sword, and the battle.

4 Thou art more glorious and excellent, O Zion,
Than the mountains of prey.

5 The stout-hearted are spoiled ;
They sank into sleep ;
And none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both the rider and horse are cast into the sleep of
death.

7 Thou, even thou art to be feared ;
And who may stand in thy sight when thou art angry ?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven ;
The earth feared and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment,
To save the oppressed of the earth.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee ;
The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

11 Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God.

Ver. 4. "Thou art more glorious," &c. This resembles the sentiment of Isaiah ii. 2: "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of [above—N.] the mountains," &c. These coincidences have led some critics to suppose that these two psalms were written by Isaiah. — "The mountains of prey," i. e. the mountains occupied by their enemies. Zion was the place where God dwells ; the other mountains were the abode of wild beasts. A. C.

Ver. 6. From 2 Kings xix. 35 we learn that the destruction of Sennacherib's army occurred in the night, and when the survivors woke, in the morning, they saw on all sides the dying and the dead.

Let all that be round about him bring presents unto
 him that ought to be feared ;
 12 Who casteth down the spirit of princes ;
 Who is terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM CXVI.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.

THE story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery is told in Isaiah xxxviii.

There are several coincidences between this psalm and the prayer of Hezekiah, as related by Isaiah. The narrative form, "I said," "I found," &c., is similar in both ; the ninth verse of the psalm is the reverse of the eleventh of the prayer, the one being uttered after recovery, and the other during the sickness.

PSALM CXVI.

1 I LOVE the Lord, because he hath heard my voice,
 And my supplications ;
 2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me ;
 Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
 3 The snares of death compassed me,
 And the pains of the grave seized upon me ;
 I found trouble and sorrow.
 4 Then called I upon the name of the Lord :
 " O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver me !"
 5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous ;

Yea, our God is merciful.

6 The Lord preserveth the simple ;

I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul !

For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death,

Mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

10 I believed, although I said,

“ I am greatly afflicted.”

11 I said in my haste, “ All men are liars.”

12 What shall I render unto the Lord,

For all his benefits towards me ?

13 I will take the cup of salvation,

And call upon the name of the Lord.

14 I will pay my vows unto the Lord,

Now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord

Is the life of his pious worshippers.

Ver. 10. “ I believed,” &c., i. e. I did not cease to place confidence in God. — “ I am greatly afflicted.” This is the substance of the first five verses of Hezekiah’s prayer in Isaiah.

Ver. 11. “ All men are liars,” i. e. disappoint the hopes that are placed in them. All reliance on human aid is vain. N.

Ver. 15. “ Precious in the sight of the Lord,” &c. In the common version follows, “ is the death of his saints ”; i. e. God counts the death of his people too costly to be lightly or gratuitously suffered. In this interpretation of the verse, both Professors Noyes and Alexander agree. The former substitutes the word “ life ” in his version, as better adapted to convey the meaning of the passage.

- 16 O Lord, truly I am thy servant ;
I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid ;
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
- 17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the Lord.
- 18 I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
Now in the presence of all his people ;
- 19 In the courts of the Lord's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem !
Praise ye the Lord !
-

PSALM LXIX.

PERSECUTION AND IMPRISONMENT OF JEREMIAH.

ABOUT one hundred years after the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib's army, the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar, invaded the country, took Jerusalem, stripped the temple of its treasures, and carried the king and many of the chief people into captivity. Eleven years after this, Zedekiah, the king, drew on himself another invasion ; and at this time the prophet Jeremiah, foreseeing the ruin that would follow a hopeless resistance, recommended submission. This led his enemies to impeach his patriotism ; and he had many enemies among the rich and powerful, one cause of which

Ver. 16. "The son of thy handmaid," i. e. thy servant or slave, as in the parallel line. The children of a female slave belonged of right to her master. N.

we learn from the thirty-fourth chapter of his prophecy, ver. 8 and foll., as follows.

The law of Moses commanded that all Hebrew slaves should go free after six years' service; but the masters had evaded the merciful provision of the law, and held their slaves in permanent bondage. The earnest rebukes of Jeremiah, and the approach of the Chaldean army, had induced them to comply with the law, and let their slaves go free. But when the army of the invaders was withdrawn for a time, under an alarm that the Egyptians were advancing against them, the masters, thinking all danger from the enemy over, reduced their freed-men to servitude again (Jer. xxxiv. 11). Jeremiah remonstrating, he was cast into a loathsome dungeon, the floor of which was wet earth, affording no resting-place for his body, nor firm standing for his feet. See Jer. xxxviii. To this circumstance he seems to allude in ver. 2 and 14 of the Psalm.

The easy conquest of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans may be accounted for, in part, by the fact that the poorer part of the people were in a state of slavery, and, having nothing of their own to defend, cared little about repelling the enemy; feeling that it was to them only a question of a change of masters. In fact, they were better off after the capture of the city, for we read (Jer. xxxix. 10), that "Nebuzaradan left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields."

There are passages in this psalm, as in Jeremiah's prophecy, of vindictive imprecation against his enemies. We are not called upon to justify these, but must re-

gard them as proofs of the weakness of a good man under persecution.

PSALM LXIX.

- 1 SAVE me, O God,
For the waters are come in unto my soul.
- 2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing ;
I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.
- 3 I am weary with crying ; my throat is dried ;
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.
- 4 They that hate me without a cause are more than
the hairs of mine head ;
They that would destroy me, being mine enemies
wrongfully, are mighty ;
I must restore that which I took not away.
- 5 O God, thou knowest my offences,
And my sins are not hid from thee.
- 6 Let not them that trust in thee, O Lord God of hosts,
through me be put to shame !
Let not those that seek thee be confounded through
me, O God of Israel !

Ver. 4. "I must restore," &c. This seems to be a proverbial expression, denoting the infliction of a penalty on the innocent. N.

Ver. 5. "Thou knowest my offences," &c., i. e. that I am not an offender. This verse is not a confession of sin, but a protestation of innocence. The writer maintains that he is a sufferer, not for his sins, but for his piety. See ver. 7. N.

Ver. 6. "Through me," i. e. when I, thy pious worshipper, am seen to be a prey to my enemies. N.

- 7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach ;
Shame hath covered my face.
- 8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren,
And an alien unto my mother's children.
- 9 For zeal for thine house hath consumed me,
And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are
fallen upon me.
- 10 When I weep and fast, that is made my reproach.
- 11 When I make sackcloth my garment,
I become a byword to them.
- 12 They that sit in the gate speak against me,
And I am become the song of the drunkards.
- 13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in
an acceptable time ;
O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, and
afford me thy sure help.
- 14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink ;
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out
of the deep waters.
- 15 Let not the water-flood overflow me,
Neither let the deep swallow me up,
And let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
- 16 Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is great ;
Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy ten-
der mercies ;
- 17 And hide not thy face from thy servant ;
I am in trouble ; hear me speedily.
- 18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it ;
Deliver me because of mine enemies.
- 19 Thou knowest my reproach and my shame and my
dishonor ;

- Mine adversaries are all before thee.
20 Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of
 heaviness ;
 I look for some to take pity, but there is none ;
 And for comforters, but find none.
21 They give me gall for my meat,
 And in my thirst they give me vinegar to drink.
22 Let their table become a snare to them,
 And that which should have been for their welfare,
 let it become a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened that they see not ;
 And make their loins continually to shake.
24 Pour out thine indignation upon them,
 And let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.
25 Let their habitation be desolate,
 And let none dwell in their tents.
26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten,
 And they talk to add to the grief of those whom thou
 hast wounded.
27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity,
 And let them not come into thy favor.
28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,
 And not be written with the righteous.
29 But I am poor, and sorrowful ;

Ver. 21. "They give me gall," &c. Gall and vinegar are here put together, to denote the most unpalatable forms of food and drink. A.

Ver. 27. "Add iniquity unto their iniquity," &c. Professor Alexander thinks the words will admit of a rendering, conveying no more than a wish that sin may be followed by the natural consequences of sin, i. e. punishment.

- Let thy help, O God, lift me up !
 30 Then will I praise the name of God with a song,
 And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
 31 This also shall please the Lord
 Better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and
 hoofs.
 32 The humble shall see this, and be glad ;
 The hearts of them that seek God shall be revived.
 33 For the Lord heareth the poor,
 And despiseth not his people in their bonds.
 34 Let the heaven and earth praise him,
 The seas, and every thing that moveth therein.
 35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of
 Judah,
 That men may dwell there, and have it in possession.
 36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it ;
 And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

Ver. 32 and 33. These verses seem to allude to the poor and enslaved Hebrews, for whose cause Jeremiah had brought on himself his present persecution.

Ver. 35. This verse does not show a later date for the psalm, but rather the contrary ; for Zion is not spoken of as destroyed, and the ninth verse speaks of the temple as still standing.

P. S. I have ventured to assign this psalm to Jeremiah, on the ground of the general applicability of its language to the circumstances of his case, and the coincidences of expression with his Prophecy and Lamentations.

Compare verse 2 with Jerem. xxxviii. 22.

Compare verse 3 with Lamén. iv. 17.

Compare verse 12 with Jerem. xx. 2 and 7.

Compare verses 19 and 20 with Jerem. xx. 8 and 10.

Compare verse 25 with Jerem. xviii. 19 and foll.

Compare verse 33 with Jerem. xx. 13.

PSALM XCIV.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE POOR.

THIS psalm also seems to be the production of Jeremiah, and to allude to the topics of the sixty-ninth psalm, p. 132; namely, Jeremiah's own wrongs, and those of the poorer class of his countrymen, held in illegal servitude by powerful oppressors.

PSALM XCIV.

- 1 O LORD GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth !
O God to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself !
- 2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth !
Render a recompense to the proud.
- 3 Lord, how long shall the wicked,
How long shall the wicked triumph ?
- 4 How long shall they speak so disdainfully ?
And all the workers of iniquity boast themselves ?
- 5 They smite down thy people, O Lord,
And afflict thine heritage.
- 6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
- 7 Yet they say, "The Lord doth not see ;
Neither doth the God of Jacob regard it."
- 8 Take heed, ye most stupid of men ;
Ye fools, when will ye be wise ?
- 9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see ?
- 10 He that chastiseth nations, shall not he punish ?
He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know ?

- 11 The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man,
That they are vanity.
- 12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord ;
Whom by thy teaching thou makest wise ;
- 13 To give him peace in the days of adversity,
Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
- 14 For the Lord will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
- 15 But judgment shall return unto justice,
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers ?
Or who will stand up for me against the workers of
iniquity ?
- 17 Unless the Lord had been my help,
I had wellnigh dwelt in the land of silence.
- 18 When I said, " My foot slippeth,"
Thy mercy, O Lord, help me up.
- 19 In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart,
Thy comforts revived my soul.
- 20 Wilt thou have fellowship with the throne of iniquity,
Which frameth mischief by a law ?

Ver. 15. " Judgment shall return to justice," &c. ; i. e. however much the judgments of God may seem to depart from justice, while the wicked prosper and the righteous are afflicted, they shall at last return to a strict conformity to it, so that all the upright shall approve of them. N.

Ver. 20. " Wilt thou have fellowship," &c. S. Street's translation of this verse is, " Shall Jehovah bless the throne of wickedness, that compelleth labor beyond the term prescribed ?" He adds, that the Hebrew words for the last clause mean " beyond

- 21 They gather themselves together against the life of
the righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood.
- 22 But the Lord is my defence,
And my God is the rock of my refuge.
- 23 He will bring upon them their own iniquity,
And will cut them off through their own wickedness ;
Yea, the Lord our God will cut them off.
-

PSALM LXXIV.

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

THE capture of the city and destruction of the temple followed close after the events just commemorated. In the last chapter of Jeremiah we are told that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, came "into Jerusalem, and burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house ; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about." The pillars of brass, and various ornaments and utensils for public worship, were broken or carried away to Babylon. In short, a scene of destruction and profanation ensued, such as the following psalm

the statute." The statute is Exodus xxi. 2: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing." See remarks on Psalm lxix., page 132.

feelingly depicts. Thus the kingdom of Judah came to an end four hundred and sixty-eight years after David began to reign over it, three hundred and eighty-eight years after the falling off of the ten tribes, and a hundred and thirty-four years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel.

PSALM LXXIV.

- 1 O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever ?
Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of
thy pasture ?
- 2 Remember the people which thou didst purchase of
old ;
Thine inheritance, which thou didst redeem ;
This Mount Zion, wherein thou didst dwell.
- 3 Hasten thy steps unto the utter desolations ;
Every thing in the sanctuary the enemy hath abused ;
- 4 Thine enemies roar in the place of thine assemblies ;
They set up their own symbols for signs.
- 5 They appeared like those who raise the axe against
the thicket ;
- 6 They have broken down the carved work of thy
temple with axes and hammers ;
- 7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary ;
They have profaned and cast to the ground the
dwelling-place of thy name.

Ver. 4. "Their own symbols," &c. ; i. e. the symbols of their own religion, in place of the "signs" of the covenant between God and his chosen people. N.

Ver. 5. "They appeared," &c. The same illustration is used by Jeremiah (xlv. 22, 23).

8 They said in their hearts, "Let us destroy them all together."

They have burned up all the houses of God in the land.

9 We no longer see our signs ;

There is no more any prophet,

Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long this desolation shall endure.

10 O God, how long shall the adversary revile ?

Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?

11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand ?

Pluck it out of thy bosom, and destroy !

12 Yet God was our king of old,

Working salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy power ;

Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the head of leviathan in pieces,

Ver. 9. "Signs." See the note on ver. 4. — "There is no more any prophet," &c. These words have been thought to prove that Jeremiah, who was not only a prophet, but who prophesied most distinctly on this very topic, the duration of the captivity, could not have written the psalm. But we think he may have used the words in reference to the pretended prophets around him, who did not know how long the desolation should endure, but, on the contrary, predicted an early termination of it. See Jer. xxviii.

Ver. 11. "Of thy bosom," &c. In the folds of the garment in front of the body the Orientals keep their little valuables ; and there, when at rest, they place their hands. N.

Ver. 13. "The dragons," i. e. Pharaoh and his host. N.

Ver. 14. "Leviathan," i. e. the crocodile, the emblem of

And gavest him to be food to the inhabitants of the wilderness.

15 Thou didst cleave forth the fountain and the flood ;

Thou driedst up mighty rivers.

16 The day is thine, the night also is thine ;

Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth ;

Thou hast made summer and winter.

18 O, remember that the enemy hath reviled Jehovah,

And that an impious people hath blasphemed thy name !

19 O, deliver not the life of thy turtle-dove unto the wild

beast !

Forget not for ever thine afflicted people !

20 Have respect unto thy covenant ;

For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

21 O, let not the oppressed go away ashamed !

Let the poor and needy praise thy name !

22 Arise, O God ! maintain thine own cause ;

Remember how the impious revileth thee daily ;

23 Forget not the clamor of thine enemies ;

The tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

Egypt. N. — "Food to the inhabitants of the wilderness." Probably meaning the birds and beasts of prey. These were the inhabitants of the wilderness, who fed on the dead bodies of the Egyptians which the tides had cast ashore. A. C.

Ver. 20. "Thy covenant," i. e. by which thou didst promise the land of Canaan to thy people. — "Dark places," i. e. caverns probably, which abounded in Palestine. N.

PSALM LXXIX.

DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM.

THIS psalm is attributed to Jeremiah. The fact that the sixth and seventh verses are the same as Jer. x. 25 seems strong evidence of the correctness of the supposition.

PSALM LXXIX.

- 1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance,
Thy holy temple have they defiled,
They have made Jerusalem a heap of ruins!
- 2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to
be food unto the fowls of the heaven ;
The flesh of thy worshippers unto the beasts of the
earth.
- 3 Their blood have they shed like water round about
Jerusalem,
And there was none to bury them.
- 4 We are become a reproach to our neighbors,
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
- 5 How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry ?
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire for ever ?
- 6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee
not,
And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name ;

- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his dwelling-place.
- 8 O, remember not against us former iniquities ;
Let thy tender mercies speedily succor us,
For we are brought very low.
- 9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy
name ;
And deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy
name's sake.
- 10 Why should the heathen say, "Where is their
God?"
Let him be known among the heathen in our sight,
By the revenging of the blood of thy servants which
hath been shed.
- 11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee ;
According to the greatness of thy power preserve
thou those that are appointed to die ;
- 12 And render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their
bosom
Their reproach wherewith they have reproached
thee, O Lord !
- 13 So we, thy people, and sheep of thy pasture,
Will give thee thanks for ever ;
We will show forth thy praise to all generations.

Ver. 12. "Render unto our neighbors," &c. This seems to refer to the Edomites and other neighboring and tributary nations, which stood aloof, or took sides against Judah, in the last struggle, and thereby drew upon themselves the reproaches of the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Obadiah. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, and therefore allied by blood to the Jews. Obadiah says, "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever."

PSALMS OF THE CAPTIVITY.

PSALM CXXXVII.

THE SADNESS OF THE CAPTIVITY AT BABYLON.

“NOTHING could present a more striking contrast to their native country than the region into which the Hebrews were transplanted. Instead of their irregular and picturesque mountain city, crowning its unequal heights, and looking down into its deep and precipitous ravines, through one of which a scanty stream wound along, they entered the vast, square, and level city of Babylon, occupying both sides of the broad Euphrates ; while all around spread immense plains, which were intersected by long, straight canals, bordered by rows of willows.” Thus Milman (History of the Jews, Book IX.) describes the contrast of localities which met the eyes of the Hebrews when they arrived at the place of their banishment. The contrast of artificial scenery was no less striking. “The palace of the Babylonian kings was more than twice the size of their whole city. It covered eight miles, with its *hanging gardens*, built on arched terraces, one rising above the other, and rich in all the luxuriance of artificial cultivation. How different from the sunny cliffs of their own land, where the olive and the vine grew spontaneously, and the cool, shady, and secluded valleys, where they could always find shelter from the heat of the burning noon !”

This beautiful psalm was probably written very soon

after the captivity commenced, while the memory of the sufferings and indignities connected with it was fresh in the mind of the author. N.

PSALM CXXXVII.

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows that are
there.
- 3 For they that carried us away captive required of us
a song,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth,
Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
- 4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning!
- 6 If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!
- 7 Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom,
In the day of the calamity of Jerusalem,

Ver. 5. "Her cunning." Skill in playing on the harp seems to be referred to, "cunning" being taken in the old English sense.

Ver. 6. "My tongue cleave," &c.; i. e. refuse its office in singing. N.

Ver. 7. "Children of Edom," who had shown great hostility to the Israelites, and joined with the Chaldeans, in effecting the destruction of Jerusalem. See note on Ps. lxxix. p. 145. The spirit of the imprecation cannot be justified, yet much may be forgiven to the patriotic poet under such circumstances. N., altered.

Who said, " Raze it, raze it,
 Even to the foundation thereof !"
 8 O daughter of Babylon, thou destroyer,
 Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee
 As thou hast served us !
 9 Happy shall he be that taketh thy little ones
 And dasheth them against the stones !

PSALMS LXXVII. AND LXXX.

GOD'S FORMER MERCIES A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION
 AND HOPE.

PSALM LXXVII.

" THIS psalm rises from a calm and temperate exordium to a high degree of sublimity. The poet, oppressed with a heavy weight of affliction, displays the extreme dejection of his soul, and pathetically describes the internal conflicts to which he is subjected, before he is enabled to rise to any degree of hope. He first pours forth his earnest prayer to the God of his hope : ' I cry unto God,' &c. But prayers afford him no relief. He next endeavors to mitigate his sorrow, by the remembrance of former times ; but this only tends to aggravate his grief, by the contrast it presents, and extorts from him the pathetic expostulation, ' Will the Lord cast off for ever ? ' &c. Again, recollecting the favor of Jehovah to his chosen people in former days, the wonders he had wrought for them, in a word, the

goodness, the holiness, the power of God, he bursts forth into a strain of praise and exultation: 'Thy ways, O God, are holy!' &c. We are at a loss which to admire most; the ease and grace with which the digression is made, the choice of the incidents, the magnificence of the imagery, or the force and elegance of the diction." Lowth, abridged.

- 1 I CRY unto God with my voice ;
Even unto God with my voice, that he would give
ear unto me.
- 2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord ;
I stretch out my hands to him all the night long ;
My soul refuseth to be comforted.
- 3 I remember God, and am troubled ;
I think of him, and my spirit is overwhelmed.
- 4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking ;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5 I think of the days of old,
The years of ancient times.
- 6 I call to remembrance my song in the night ;
I commune with mine own heart,
And my spirit maketh diligent search.
- 7 Will the Lord cast off for ever ?
And will he be favorable no more ?
- 8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever ?
Doth his promise fail for evermore ?
- 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious ?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ?
- 10 Then I say, This is my affliction,
A change in the right hand of the Most High.

- 11 I will remember the works of the Lord ;
Surely I will call to mind thy wonders of old.
- 12 I will meditate of all thy work,
And talk of thy doings.
- 13 Thy ways, O God, are holy !
Who is so great a god as our God ?
- 14 Thou art the God that doest wonders ;
Thou hast manifested thy power among the nations.
- 15 Thou didst with thine arm redeem thy people.
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.
- 16 The waters saw thee, O God !
The waters saw thee ; they were afraid ;
The depths also were troubled.
- 17 The clouds poured out water,
The skies sent out a sound ;
Thine arrows went abroad.
- 18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven ;
Thy lightnings lightened the world ;
The earth trembled and shook.
- 19 Thy way was in the sea,
And thy path in the great waters,
And thy footsteps could not be found.
- 20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM LXXX.

THE structure of this psalm is very regular, and the recurrence of the refrain, in the third, seventh, and

Ver. 16-19. In these verses the passage through the Red Sea is poetically described. N.

last verses, has a pleasing effect. The address to the Deity, in the first verse, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel!" is a fitting sequel to the closing verse of Psalm lxxvii., "Thou leddest thy people like a flock," &c. The allegory of the vine is extremely beautiful, and embellished with an interesting variety of particulars.

- 1 GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock,
Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth!
- 2 Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir
up thy strength,
And come and save us.
- 3 Restore us, O God!
Show us the light of thy countenance, and we shall
be saved.
- 4 O Lord God of hosts,
How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of
thy people?
- 5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears,
And givest them plenteousness of tears to drink.
- 6 Thou hast made us the object of strife unto our neigh-
bors;
And our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Ver. 2. "Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh," &c. This alludes to the march through the wilderness, in which these three tribes always went together, as the descendants of one mother. Num. ii. 18-24. A. These three tribes represent the whole; Benjamin being incorporated with Judah, Manasseh comprehending the country beyond Jordan, and Ephraim all the rest. A. C.

- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts !
Show us the light of thy countenance, and we shall
be saved.
- 8 Thou didst bring a vine out of Egypt ;
Thou didst cast out the heathen, and plant it.
- 9 Thou preparedst a place for it ;
It took deep root, and filled the land.
- 10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it,
And the tall cedars with its branches.
- 11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea,
And her branches unto the river.
- 12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges,
So that all they which pass by do pluck off her
grapes ?
- 13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it,
And the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
- 14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts !
Look down from heaven,
And behold, and visit this vine,
- 15 And the vineyard which thy right hand planted,
And the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.
- 16 It is burnt with fire, it is cut down ;
They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
- 17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand ;
Upon the man whom thou madest strong for thyself.
- 18 So will we not go back from thee ;
Revive us, and we will call upon thy name.

Ver. 17. "The man of thy right hand," i. e. the people of Israel collectively, or perhaps the prince of David's race, who was living with his countrymen in captivity.

19 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts !

Show us the light of thy countenance, and we shall
be saved.

PSALMS CXXIII. AND CXXX.

SEEKING REFUGE IN PRAYER.

OF the general treatment of the Hebrew captives we know little. There is bitterness enough in exile and captivity alone to account for all the sadness of their compositions of this era, without supposing any unnecessary aggravations of their lot. Some facts seem to show that they were not oppressively treated. "In general they were allowed to dwell together in considerable bodies, not sold as household or personal slaves ; at least, not those of the higher order, of whom the captivity chiefly consisted. They were colonists, rather than captives, and became by degrees possessed of considerable property. There was one large settlement of them on the river Chebar, considerably to the north of Babylon, among whom dwelt the prophet Ezekiel, and uttered his splendid visions. Daniel, another distinguished exile, attained great distinction at the courts of successive monarchs who ruled in Babylon. It was probably through his influence that Cyrus at length issued the welcome decree commanding the restoration of the exiles to their native land." — Milman, abridged.

PSALM CXXIII.

- 1 UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes,
 O Thou that dwellest in the heavens !
- 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand
 of their masters,
 And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her
 mistress,
 So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,
 Until that he have mercy upon us.
- 3 Have mercy upon us, O Lord ! have mercy upon us,
 For we are utterly despised.
- 4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of
 those that are at ease,
 And with the contempt of the proud.

PSALM CXXX.

- 1 OUT of the depths do I cry unto thee, O Lord !
- 2 Lord, hear my voice !
 Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my sup-
 plications !
- 3 If thou, Lord, shouldest be extreme to mark iniquities,
 O Lord, who could stand ?
- 4 But there is forgiveness with thee,
 That thou mayest be feared.

Ps. cxxx. ver. 4. "That thou mayest be feared." Hope of mercy leads to the reverence and love of God. Despair would engage one for ever in a course of sin. Before the prodigal son can return to his father, he must feel sure that he has a father to whom he can return. N. See the use of the word in 2 Kings xvii. 28, 33, as synonymous with *worshipped, honored*.

- 5 I wait for the Lord ; my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
- 6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that
watch for the morning ;
I say, more than they that watch for the morning.
- 7 Let Israel hope in the Lord,
For with the Lord there is mercy,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
- 8 And he will redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.
-

PSALM CII.

ANTICIPATION OF RETURN.

THE seventy years of the captivity are reckoned from the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, and it was not till eighteen years after that event that Zedekiah was taken captive, and the city and temple destroyed. At the expiration of the seventy years, therefore, many of the captives were still living, and not at a very advanced age, who, at the time of their exile, were old enough to have a clear idea of the city and temple. The psalm before us seems to have been written by one of these. He alludes in the eleventh and twenty-third verses to his own advancing age, and expresses a fear that he

Ver. 8. "From all his iniquities," i. e. from the consequences or punishment of them. N.

may not live to see the restoration, which he confidently expects, and hopes to be not far distant, as appears from the thirteenth verse. "The set time" is probably the termination of seventy years, which had been assigned for the duration of the captivity by Jeremiah (xxv. 11).

"Never can I read," says Herder, "without emotion, the psalm of that suppliant, who, on account of his great age, could not hope to witness the fulfilment of his wishes respecting Jerusalem and his people. See ver. 23. He fails and sinks in the midst of the way, with his eye directed to the promise; but God, the promiser, fails not, and another generation will live to witness its accomplishment, for God is Jehovah."

PSALM CII.

- 1 HEAR my prayer, O Lord !
 And let my cry come unto thee.
- 2 Hide not thy face from me in the time of my
 trouble ;
 Incline thine ear unto me when I call ;
 Answer me speedily.
- 3 For my life is consumed like smoke,
 And my bones are burned like stubble.
- 4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass ;
 So that I forget to eat my bread.
- 5 By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones
 cleave to my skin.

Ver. 5. "My bones cleave to my skin." These words describe an extreme degree of emaciation.

- 6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness ;
I am like an owl of the desert.
- 7 I am sleepless, and am as a solitary bird upon the
house-top.
- 8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day,
And they that are mad against me curse by me.
- 9 For I eat ashes like bread,
And mingle my drink with weeping,
- 10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath ;
For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
- 11 My life is like a shadow that declineth,
And I am withered like grass.
- 12 But thou, O Lord, endurest for ever,
And thy remembrance unto all generations.
- 13 Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion ;
For the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is
come.
- 14 For thy servants love the very stones thereof,
And it pitieth them to see her in the dust.
- 15 Then shall the nations fear the name of the Lord ;
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
- 16 For Jehovah will build up Zion ;
He will appear in his glory.

Ver. 6. "Like a pelican," i. e. I take no delight in society, but seek for solitary places, like the pelican. N.

Ver. 8. "Curse by me"; i. e. in imprecating curses, they refer to me as an example of extreme misery. N.

Ver. 9. "Eat ashes like bread." "To eat ashes" seems to have been a strong proverbial expression to denote the lowest state of affliction and misery. H.

Ver. 11. "A shadow that declineth," which continually becomes fainter and fainter, and soon vanishes away. N.

- 17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
And not despise their supplication.
- 18 This shall be written for the generation to come ;
And the people which shall be born shall praise the
Lord.
- 19 For he looketh down from the height of his sanctu-
ary ;
From heaven doth the Lord behold the earth ;
- 20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner ;
To loose those that are appointed to death ;
- 21 That they may declare the name of the Lord in Zion,
And his praise in Jerusalem,
- 22 When the nations are gathered together,
And the kingdoms to serve the Lord.
- 23 He weakeneth my strength by the way ;
He shorteneth my days.
- 24 I say, O my God, take me not away in the midst of
my days ;
Thy years endure throughout all generations.
- 25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
- 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ;

Ver. 17. "The destitute," i. e. the Israelites as a people. N.

Ver. 22. "When the nations are gathered together," &c. When the Jewish nation, after the return from exile, shall have extended its dominion and its religion over the nations of the world. N.

Ver. 24. "Thy years endure," &c. The unchangeableness and eternity of God seem to be introduced with reference to the thought expressed in ver. 28, that Israel should yet abide before God, in the promised land. N.

- Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;
 As a vesture shalt thou change them,
 And they shall be changed.
- 27 But thou art the same ;
 And thy years shall have no end.
- 28 The children of thy servants shall continue ;
 And their seed shall be established before thee.

PSALMS OF THE RETURN.

PSALMS LXXXV., CXXV., AND CXXVI.

RETURN OF THOSE UNDER ZERUBBABEL.

THE interesting story of the return of the exiles to their native land is told in "Ezra." Zerubbabel, their leader, was a descendant of their ancient kings, of the house of David. The numbers which returned were about fifty thousand. The joyful caravan set forth, bearing the sacred vessels of the temple, which Cyrus had restored. Of the events of their journey we have no accounts. It seems to have been unimpeded by any untoward occurrence. Yet the way was long, and lay through a desert country. We can hardly suppose the whole of the exiles to have moved in a body. They were probably arriving from time to time, leaving ground for anxiety in the mind of their psalmist, which accounts for the change of tone, in Ps. lxxxv. at the fourth verse, from exultation to earnest intercession, and a similar change in Ps. cxxvi. ver. 4.

PSALM LXXXV.

- 1 LORD, thou hast been favorable unto thy land ;
Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
- 2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people ;
Thou hast covered all their sin.
- 3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath ;
Thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine
anger.
- 4 Restore us, O God of our salvation !
And cause thine anger towards us to cease.
- 5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever ?
Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ?
- 6 Wilt thou not revive us again,
That thy people may rejoice in thee ?
- 7 Show us thy mercy, O Lord !
And grant us thy salvation.
- 8 I will hear what God the Lord will speak,
For he will speak peace unto his people and to his
saints ;
Only let them not turn again to folly.
- 9 Yea, his aid is nigh them that fear him,
That glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth shall meet together ;
Righteousness and peace shall kiss each other.
- 11 Truth shall spring out of the earth,
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- 12 Yea, the Lord will give prosperity,
And our land shall yield her increase.

- 13 Righteousness shall go before him,
And shall set us in the way of his steps

PSALM CXXV.

- 1 THEY that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion,
Which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So the Lord is round about his people,
From henceforth even for ever.
3 For the sceptre of the wicked shall not remain over
the inheritance of the righteous,
Lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.
4 Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good,
And to them that are upright in their hearts.
5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,
The Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of
iniquity ;
But peace shall be upon Israel.

PSALM CXXVI.

- 1 WHEN the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion,
We were like them that dream.

Ps. lxxxv. — Ver. 13. "Righteousness," &c. "Righteousness shall walk before every one, and direct his steps in the right way." Such is the version of Symmachus. H.

Ps. cxxv. — Ver. 3. "For the sceptre," &c.; i. e. foreign dominion shall not continue over the land of Palestine, lest the true believers be tempted to imitate the idolatrous practices of their heathen rulers.

Ver. 5. "Crooked ways," i. e. of the heathen oppressors. N.

- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing ;
Then said they among the heathen,
“ The Lord hath done great things for them.”
- 3 Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad.
- 4 Bring back our captives, O Lord !
As the streams in the South.
- 5 They that sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
- 6 He that goeth forth weeping, and beareth precious
seed,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing
his sheaves with him.

Ver. 4. “As the streams in the South.” The streams in hot countries dry up in the summer months, but return after the periodical rains. The land of Palestine, deprived of its inhabitants during the captivity, might be compared to one of the Southern deserts, forsaken by its streams ; and the return of the exiles in crowds to their native land might be compared to torrents of water returning in the season of rain. N.— It may also be an allusion to the annual overflow of the Nile ; or to the tides of the Red Sea. The latter would naturally be more impressive to the Hebrews, from the fact that the Red Sea was the only tide-water known to them, the Mediterranean having no tides.

Ver. 5 and 6. “They that sow in tears,” &c. This beautiful allegory represents the small band of returning exiles in the character of husbandmen, going forth in an unpropitious season, to scatter the grain they can ill spare from their present needs ; but who shall return again, when harvest comes, and gather in an abundant crop.

PSALMS CXXVII., CXXVIII., AND CXLIV.

FOUNDATION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

THESE psalms have a common character. The first two begin with the lesson that without the blessing of God nothing prospers, but with it every thing; and the third, with several verses, expressive of gratitude and exultation, which seem to have been borrowed from earlier psalms, particularly the eighteenth, and adapted to this occasion. After these several prefaces, all three psalms make a sudden transition to a subject which is peculiar to them, the happiness of a well-ordered family, with its one wife and mother, and circle of children round the table. Here nothing savors of polygamy, that institution of early Hebrew times, but which seems to have fallen gradually into disuse, so that in the New Testament there is no indication of its being common among the Jews at the time of our Saviour's coming. To show that this subject, and others connected with the family relation, occupied the minds of the leaders of the people, at the time of the return, the language of the contemporary prophets Zechariah and Malachi may be cited. See Zech. viii. 4 and 5; Mal. ii. 14 and 15.

“On the arrival of the exiles in their native land,” says Milman, “the first object was to restore the worship of God. The altar was set up, the feasts reëstablished, and the first stone of the new temple laid, among the joyful acclamations of the multitude, but the tears of the ‘ancient men, that had seen the first house,’ who,

‘ when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.’ Ezra iii. 12. For how different was the condition of the Hebrew people, from that splendid period when their kings ruled without rival from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean ! ”

PSALM CXXVII.

- 1 EXCEPT the Lord build the house,
 They labor in vain that build it ;
 Except the Lord guard the city,
 The watchman waketh but in vain.
- 2 It is vain for you to rise up early,
 To sit up late, to eat the bread of care ;
 For so he giveth his beloved sleep.
- 3 Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord,
 And the fruit of the womb is his gift.
- 4 As arrows are in the hand of a warrior,
 So are the children of youth ;
- 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.
 They shall not be put to shame
 When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Ver. 2. Professor Noyes translates the last clause of this verse, “ The same giveth he his beloved in sleep,” i. e. the same good things which others spend so much toil to acquire, he giveth, &c. Others read, instead of “ so,” *when*, omitting “ for ” ; i. e. when others sleep.

Ver. 4. See Ps. cxliv. 12, and the note, pp. 166, 167.

Ver. 5. “ The gate.” The gate meant is that of the city, in which place the Oriental courts and markets were held. The word “ Forum ” literally means gate.

PSALM CXXVIII.

- 1 BLESSED is every one that feareth the Lord,
That walketh in his ways.
- 2 For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands ;
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
- 3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of
thine house,
Thy children like olive-plants round about thy table.
- 4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the
Lord.
- 5 The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion,
And thou shalt see the prosperity of Jerusalem, all
the days of thy life ;
- 6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,
And peace upon Israel.

PSALM CXLIV.

- 1 BLESSED be the Lord, my strength,
Which teacheth my hands to war,
And my fingers to fight !
- 2 My benefactor and my fortress ;
My high tower, and my deliverer ;
My shield, and he in whom I trust ;
Who subdueth the nations under me.
- 3 Lord, what is man that thou takest knowledge of
him ?
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him ?
- 4 Man is like a vapor ;
His days are as a shadow that passeth away.

- 5 Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down ;
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke !
- 6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them ;
Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them !
- 7 Send thine hand from above,
Rescue and deliver me out of great waters,
From the hand of aliens,
- 8 Whose mouth speaketh deceit,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood !
- 9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God !
Upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will
I sing praises unto thee ;
- 10 Who givest salvation unto kings ;
Who didst deliver David thy servant from the hurtful
sword.
- 11 Rescue me, and deliver me from the hand of aliens,
Whose mouth speaketh deceit,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood !
- 12 That our sons may be as plants,

Ver. 7. "From the hand of aliens." The poet, having followed the train of thought of David in Psalm xviii. to this point, here substitutes "aliens" for "strong enemy." This confirms our assignment of the psalm to this period, when the particular hostility to be feared was that of the alien neighbors, whose opposition gave the returned exiles so much trouble. The allusion to David in ver. 10 was naturally suggested by the psalm (xviii.) which the poet had just been contemplating. The "hurtful sword" may be that of Goliath, or that of Ishbi-benob. 2 Sam. xxi. 16.

Ver. 12. "That our sons," &c. The transition from the preceding verse to this seems abrupt, and there is no perceptible

- Grown up in their youth ;
 That our daughters may be as corner-stones,
 Polished like those of the temple ;
- 13 That our garners may be full,
 Affording all manner of store ;
 That our sheep may bring forth thousands
 And ten thousands in our streets ;
- 14 That our oxen may be strong to labor ;
 That there be no breaking in, nor going out ;
 That there be no complaining in our streets.
- 15 Happy is that people that is in such a case ;
 Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord !

PSALMS CXXIV. AND CXXIX.

OPPOSITION OF THE SAMARITANS.

UNEXPECTED difficulties impeded the progress of the work of rebuilding. The people called Samaritans made overtures to assist in it, but their proposal was

connection of idea, such as seems to be required by the form of expression. But the whole psalm is evidently a "cento," or fabric composed of parts of other psalms; and the connection of ideas between the second verse and the third, and the fourth and the fifth, is equally obscure, to readers of this day, as that of the twelfth with the eleventh. — "Grown up in their youth." Compare this with Ps. cxxvii. 4 (p. 164). It may mean "born and brought up during the youth of their parents." — "Corner-stones." Noyes translates it "corner-pillars"; the Prayer-book version, "polished corners."

Ver. 14. "Breaking in," i. e. of enemies. — "Going out," i. e. into captivity. N.

peremptorily and contemptuously rejected. These people were the remnants of the ancient Israelitish nation (left by their Assyrian conqueror) and the mixed race whom the Assyrians had introduced. Their proposition of uniting with the Jews, in common worship, evinces the prevalence of Israelitish feelings and opinions among them. They preserved the Book of the Mosaic Law, which they retain to this day, for the tribe still exists, and retains its ancient dwelling-place. Their country, which, as well as their chief city, was called Samaria, is the region of Middle Palestine, which in the times of the New Testament constituted a separate province.

When these people are first named in the history (Ezra iv. 1), they are called "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin." It is added, "They weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." It was owing to their influence at the court of Cyrus and his successors, that the work of rebuilding was suspended for fourteen years. The following psalms may be assigned to the close of that period, when, under the reign of King Darius, the work was resumed.

PSALM CXXIV.

- 1 If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
Now may Israel say,
- 2 If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
When men rose up against us,
- 3 Then they had swallowed us up alive,
When their wrath was kindled against us ;
- 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us ;

- The stream had gone over our soul ;
 5 The proud waters had gone over our soul.
 6 Blessed be the Lord,
 Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth !
 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the
 fowler ;
 The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
 8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
 Who made heaven and earth.

PSALM CXXIX.

- 1 MUCH have they afflicted me from my youth,
 May Israel now say ;
 2 Much have they afflicted me from my youth,
 Yet they have not prevailed against me.
 3 The ploughers ploughed upon my back ;
 They made long their furrows ;
 4 But the Lord was righteous ;
 He cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
 5 Let them all be confounded and turned back
 That hate Zion !
 6 Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops,
 Which withereth afore it be grown up ;
 7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand,

Ps. cxxix. — Ver. 2. "From my youth"; i. e. from the time of the bondage in Egypt. N.

Ver. 3. "The ploughers," &c. A figurative expression to denote scourging, and this to denote oppression in general. N.

Ver. 4. "Cut asunder the cords"; i. e. delivered from servitude. N.

Ver. 6. "Grass upon the house-tops." The roofs of the houses being flat, and often covered with earth, grass would spring up on them, but would soon perish with the heat of the sun. N.

Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom !
 8 Neither do they which go by say,
 “The blessing of the Lord be upon you!
 We bless you in the name of the Lord !”

PSALM CXLVI.

RESUMPTION OF THE WORK AFTER INTERRUPTION.

THIS is a psalm of solemn praise to God, designed probably for use in public worship. It is a very ancient opinion that it belongs to the date of the return from captivity, being ascribed in the Septuagint version to Haggai and Zechariah. The subject is the contrast between the weakness of man and the power of God.

PSALM CXLVI.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
 Praise the Lord, O my soul !
 2 While I live will I praise the Lord ;
 I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any
 being.
 3 Put not your trust in princes,

Ver. 8. “The blessing,” &c. This verse affords an interesting glimpse of ancient harvest usages, confirmed by Ruth ii. 4 : “And behold Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, ‘The Lord be with you’; and they answered him, ‘The Lord bless thee.’” A.

Ver. 3 and 4. “Put not your trust in princes,” &c. This may allude to the disappointment experienced by the returned exiles, at finding their work of rebuilding hindered by the arts of the Sa-

- Nor in any son of man, in whom there is no help.
 4 His breath goeth forth ; he returneth to the dust ;
 In that very day his designs perish.
 5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
 Whose hope is in the Lord, his God !
 6 Who made heaven and earth,
 The sea, and all that therein is ;
 Who keepeth truth for ever ;
 7 Who executeth judgment for the oppressed ;
 Who giveth food to the hungry.
 The Lord setteth free the prisoners ;
 8 The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind ;
 The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down ;
 The Lord loveth the righteous.
 9 The Lord preserveth the strangers ;
 He relieveth the fatherless and widow ;
 But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.
 10 The Lord shall reign for ever,
 Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations !
 Praise ye the Lord !

maritan adversaries and by the death of King Cyrus, and finally arrested by positive command of his successor, Artaxerxes. Ezra iv.

Ver. 8. "Openeth the eyes of the blind." This is probably a figurative expression, denoting that the Lord restores from distress to prosperity, when there are no hopes from human aid. N.

Ver. 9. "Strangers," "fatherless," "widow." By these terms the Israelites themselves, in their state of captivity, are meant. — "He turneth upside down"; i. e. turneth aside, perverteth. As in the preceding verses the restoration of the captives seems to be alluded to, under figures similar to those of the hundred and seventh psalm (p. 182), so here the same idea may be intended to be conveyed as in the fortieth verse of that psalm: "Thou causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way."

PSALMS LXXXIV. AND CXVIII.

THE TEMPLE REBUILT.

THE work of rebuilding the temple was resumed by Zerubbabel, at the earnest persuasion of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, but without the express sanction of their Persian sovereign, Darius, who, however, when he was informed of it, and had ascertained by search into the records of the kingdom that Cyrus, his predecessor, had permitted it, not only gave his consent, but ordered that supplies out of the king's treasure should be given in aid of the work. Under such encouragement, the building went on prosperously, and in four years from the resumption of the work it was finished.

PSALM LXXXIV.

THIS psalm expresses the joy of the returning exiles as they pursue their journey to Jerusalem. As they approach the sacred spot, the emotion and interest increase; they pursue their march through the parched valleys with delight, till at length they reach the sanctuary, and present themselves before God in Zion.

- 1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of
 the Lord;
 My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found a house,

Ver. 3. "The sparrow hath found a house," &c. It is not necessary to suppose that the birds actually nested in the temple,

- And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may
 lay her young,
 Even thine 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 the ways to Zion.
- 6 Passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a
 well ;
 The rain also filleth the pools.
- 7 They go on from strength to strength,
 Until they appear before God in Zion.
- 8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer !
 Give ear, O God of Jacob !
- 9 Behold, O God, our shield,
 And look upon the face of thine anointed !
- 10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand
 elsewhere.

but that the poet compares the returning worshippers, flocking to their temple, to wandering birds which at last have found a nest.

Ver. 5. "The ways to Zion"; i. e. the public roads to Jerusalem. — "In whose heart," &c.; i. e. who delights in them, goes in them gladly.

Ver. 6. "The valley of Baca," &c. Baca was probably a dry, barren, desolate valley, a "vale of weeping," according to the primary meaning of the term. But they who had their hearts set on Jerusalem and the temple would pass through it as joyfully as if it were filled with streams. N.

Ver. 7. "Appear before God." See Exod. xxiii. 17.

Ver. 9. "Thine anointed." This may mean Zerubbabel, the prince of the house of David, or the whole Israelitish people.

I had rather stand at the threshold of the house of
my God,

Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield ;

The Lord will give grace and glory ;

No good thing will he withhold from them that walk
uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts,

Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee !

PSALM CXVIII.

THIS psalm may perhaps be placed later in our series than its proper place. It may belong to the time of laying the foundation of the temple, on which occasion, we are told (Ezra iii. 10), "the Levites, the sons of Asaph, sung, giving thanks to the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever"; which words appear in the first and last verses of this psalm. But in the nineteenth and following verses there is a plain indication that the temple was already built, and it is thought by some that those verses were sung by responsive choirs, the one demanding, the other conceding, entrance thereto. Perhaps the psalm as it now exists may embrace the original portion, with a later addition, adapted to the occasion of the completion of the edifice.

1 O, GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for he is good,
Because his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let Israel now confess
That his mercy endureth for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now confess
That his mercy endureth for ever.

- 4 Let them now that fear the Lord confess
That his mercy endureth for ever.
- 5 I called upon the Lord in distress ;
The Lord heard and delivered me.
- 6 The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear.
What can man do unto me ?
- 7 The Lord taketh my part with them that help me ;
Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate
me.
- 8 It is better to trust in the Lord,
Than to put confidence in man.
- 9 It is better to trust in the Lord,
Than to put confidence in princes.
- 10 All nations compassed me about,
But in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.
- 11 They compassed me about on every side ;
But in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.
- 12 They compassed me about like bees ;
They are quenched as the fire of thorns ;
For in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.
- 13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall ;
But the Lord helped me.
- 14 The Lord is my strength and song,
And is become my salvation.
- 15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the habita-
tions of the righteous ;
The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.
- 16 The right hand of the Lord is exalted ;
The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.
- 17 I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the Lord.
- 18 The Lord hath chastened me sore,

- But he hath not given me over unto death.
- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness ;
That I may go into them, and praise the Lord.
- 20 This is the gate of the Lord,
Through which the righteous shall enter.
- 21 I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me,
And art become my salvation.
- 22 The stone which the builders refused
Is become the head-stone of the corner.
- 23 This is the Lord's doing ;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day which the Lord hath made ;
We will rejoice, and be glad in it.
- 25 Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord !
O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity !
- 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the
Lord !
We bless you out of the house of the Lord.
- 27 God is the Lord, who hath showed us light ;
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of
the altar.
- 28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee ;
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
- 29 O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ;
For his mercy endureth for ever.

Ver. 19. "The gates of righteousness," — the doors of the temple. A. C.

Ver. 22. "The stone which the builders refused." This seems to be a figurative expression for the prince of the nation, or for the nation itself.

PSALMS CXLVIII. AND CL.

DEDICATION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

THE dedication of the temple, completed after so many disappointments and interruptions, was celebrated with great joy. The edifice was built on the same plan as the former temple, erected by Solomon, five hundred years before; of larger dimensions, but with greatly diminished splendor. It became, what the former had been, the centre of the political and religious interests of the people.

The dedication took place in the early spring. The exhilaration of the occasion was aided by that of the opening year, and the poet's heart seems to leap forth to embrace all nature, and claim the fellowship of every creature of God, to partake in his joy and gratitude. The invitation is addressed first to the angelic hosts, then to the material heavens, and the luminaries placed in them, then to the ocean and its inhabitants, the earth and its productions; lastly, to the human race, of every degree, and especially to the nation chosen by God, and now enjoying his renewed favor.

PSALM CXLVIII.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord!
 Praise ye the Lord from the heavens!
 Praise him in the heights!
- 2 Praise ye him, all his angels!
 Praise ye him, all his hosts!

- 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon !
Praise him, all ye stars of light !
- 4 Praise him, ye highest heavens,
And ye waters that be above the heavens !
- 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord ;
For he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He hath established them for ever and ever ;
He hath given them a law which they do not transgress.
- 7 Praise the Lord upon the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps !
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and vapor ;
Stormy wind fulfilling his word ;
- 9 Mountains, and all hills ;
Fruitful trees, and all cedars ;
- 10 Beasts, and all cattle ;
Creeping things, and flying fowl ;
- 11 Kings of the earth, and all people ;
Princes, and all judges of the earth ;
- 12 Both young men and maidens,
Old men and children ;
- 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For his name alone is excellent ;
His glory is above the earth and heaven.
- 14 He exalteth the horn of his people,
The glory of all his servants,
Even of the children of Israel,
A people near unto him.
Praise ye the Lord !

PSALM CL.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
Praise God in his sanctuary !
Praise him in the firmament of his power !
- 2 Praise him for his mighty acts !
Praise him according to his excellent greatness !
- 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet !
Praise him with the psaltery and harp !
- 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance !
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs !
- 5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals !
Praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals !
- 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord !
Praise ye the Lord !
-

PSALM CXIV.

THE PASSOVER.

A MONTH after the Feast of Dedication, the Passover was celebrated. That festival was designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt ; and this psalm, which is supposed to have been intended for use on such occasions, is full of allusions to the great events which accompanied their

Ver. 1. "In his sanctuary," i. e. in the temple. — "In the firmament of his power," i. e. in heaven, referring to the angels. N.

departure, the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, the scene at Sinai, and the supply of water from the rock. "It is," says Herder, "one of the finest odes in any language. The abrupt brevity with which each particular is expressed; the astonished admiration ascribed to the sea, to the Jordan, to the mountains and hills, and repeated in the interrogative form; the sublime explanation that it all proceeded from a single glance of Jehovah, — all these give us, in the compass of this little ode, the substance of a long description."

Dante, in his great poem, represents the angels in heaven as singing this psalm.

PSALM CXIV.

- 1 WHEN Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
- 2 Judah was his sanctuary,
And Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea saw it, and fled;
Jordan was driven back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams,
And the little hills like lambs.

- 5 What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?
Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?
- 6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams,

Ver. 2. "Judah was his sanctuary," &c.; i. e. the people set apart, and, as it were, consecrated, to be God's peculiar people. N.

And ye little hills like lambs ?
7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord ;
At the presence of the God of Jacob ;
8 Which turned the rock into a standing water,
The flint into a fountain of waters !

EZRA.

FIFTY-EIGHT years after the completion of the temple, Ezra led a body of his fellow-captives from Babylon to reinforce the feeble colony. Ezra is regarded by his countrymen as a second Moses. He was of a distinguished family of the priesthood, born in Babylon, during the exile, where he was educated in all the learning of his Hebrew progenitors, together with whatever the place of his exile could supply. On his arrival he devoted himself to the task of restoring the Mosaic institutions, which had fallen into disuse during the captivity, owing to the scattered state of the exiles. For this purpose (Neh. viii.) " he brought the Law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding ; and he read therein, from the morning until mid-day ; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law." The result was a deep impression on the minds of the people, and a firm resolution to conform, in all things, to the Mosaic institutions, which are what is meant by " the Law." It is thought that Ezra caused to be collected the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch,

and the writings of David and Solomon, and such other of the books of the Old Testament as existed in his day, and himself compiled the books of Chronicles and Ezra. On the whole, we must admit that, for the services which he rendered to his country, and the influence which he exerted, at a critical time of Jewish history, he deserves to be compared to Moses, to whose character and labors his own exhibit many traits of resemblance.

PSALM CVII.

RETURN UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

THIS psalm is remarkable for the regularity of its structure, being composed of distinct portions or strophes, of equal length, each ending with the chorus or refrain, "O that men," &c. These strophes celebrate the goodness of God, in delivering his people, and bringing them back from their dispersions, under the various figures of safe-conduct through a desert, release from imprisonment, recovery from sickness, and deliverance from the dangers of the sea; then describing, in more direct terms, the fall of the oppressor, and the restoration of Israel, the psalm ends as it began, with an exhortation to remember and commemorate Jehovah's goodness.

Dr. Lowth says of this psalm: "The composition is admirable throughout, and the descriptive part of it adds at least its share of beauty to the rest. But what

is most to be admired is its conciseness, and, withal, the expressiveness of the diction, which strikes the imagination with inimitable elegance. The weary and bewildered traveller; the miserable captive in the hideous dungeon; the sick and dying man; the seaman, foundering in a storm,—are described in so affecting a manner, that they far exceed any thing of the kind elsewhere to be found, though never so much labored.”

PSALM CVII.

- 1 O, GIVE thanks unto the Lord! for he is good;
For his mercy endureth for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
- 3 And gathered them out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.
- 4 They wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way;
They found no city to dwell in.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them.
- 6 Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distress.
- 7 And he led them forth by the right way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
- 8 O that men would praise the Lord, for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
- 9 For he satisfieth the thirsty,
And filleth the hungry with good.

- 10 They dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being bound in affliction and iron ;
- 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And contemned the counsel of the Most High,
- 12 He brought down their heart with trouble ;
They fell down, and there was none to help.
- 13 Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them out of their distresses.
- 14 He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of
death,
And brake their bands in sunder.
- 15 O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 16 For he hath broken the gates of brass,
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.
- 17 Foolish men, because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
- 18 Their soul abhorred all manner of meat ;
And they drew near unto the gates of death.
- 19 Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses.
- 20 He sent his word, and healed them,
And delivered them from their destruction.
- 21 O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 22 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with rejoicing.
- 23 They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters,

- 24 These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.
- 25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
- 26 They mount up to the heaven ;
They go down again to the depths ;
Their soul is melted because of trouble.
- 27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken
man,
And are at their wit's end.
- 28 Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
- 29 He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves are still.
- 30 The mariners are glad, because they be quiet ;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
- 31 O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
- 32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the
people,
And praise him in the assembly of the elders.
- 33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And the water-springs into dry ground ;
- 34 A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
- 35 Again, he turneth the wilderness into a standing wa-
ter,
And dry ground into water-springs ;
- 36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
And they build a city for habitation,

- 37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
Which may yield fruits of increase.
- 38 He blesseth them, so that they are multiplied greatly,
And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
- 39 When they are minished and brought low through
oppression,
Affliction, and sorrow,
- 40 He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where
there is no way.
- 41 Yet raiseth he the poor from their affliction,
And increaseth their families like a flock.
- 42 The righteous see it, and rejoice,
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
- 43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things,
Even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the
Lord.

Ver. 40. "Contempt upon princes," &c. The princes of the land were especially selected by the conquerors to be carried into captivity. See 2 Kings xxiv. 14; Lam. iv. 20; v. 12. — "Where there is no way." The shifting sands of the desert obliterate the track of the pilgrim, so that there is no trodden path or way.

Ver. 42. "All iniquity shall stop her mouth." This refers to the insolent and malignant neighbors of the Israelites, who triumphed in their calamity, the Edomites, Philistines, &c. See Ps. lxxix. 12, and note.

NEHEMIAH.

As we have compared Ezra to Moses, we may find a parallel for Nehemiah in Joseph. Like Joseph, he was an exile, at the court of a foreign king, and like him, he enjoyed the favor of his sovereign, and used his power for the benefit of his countrymen.

Thirteen years after Ezra had joined the colony, intelligence reached Nehemiah that the returned exiles were not prosperous. The colony had not strength enough to command the respect of its neighbors. Deeply impressed with this sad news, he sought and obtained permission from the king to go to Jerusalem, and rebuild it. He carried letters to the royal governors to render him needed assistance, and supply him with timber from the king's forests. By his energy and perseverance the walls were rebuilt, in spite of the open and disguised hostility of the neighboring tribes. But he rendered another service to his countrymen more important still.

The law of Moses enjoined that all debtors should be released every seventh year. See Deut. xv. It appears that this merciful provision had been evaded by the creditors, and the people groaned under the burden of debt. Nehemiah appealed to the patriotism and the religious fidelity of the creditors, and induced them to consent to the discharge of the debtors, waiving the rights which they probably had under the laws of the Persian empire, of which they formed a part; but rendering only the due obedience to the law of Moses,

which debtors and creditors alike professed to regard as of supreme authority. This measure of Nehemiah restored harmony between the different classes of the community, and united all in efforts for the general good. Neh. v.

PSALMS CXI. AND CXV.

RETURN UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

PSALM CXI.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
I will praise the Lord with my whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.
- 2 The works of the Lord are great,
Sought out by all that have pleasure therein.
- 3 His deeds are honorable and glorious,
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
- 4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered ;
The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.
- 5 He giveth meat unto them that fear him ;
He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
- 6 He showed his people the power of his works,
When he gave them the heritage of the heathen.
- 7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment ;
All his commandments are sure.
- 8 They stand fast for ever and ever,
Being founded in truth and uprightness.
- 9 He sent redemption unto his people,

And established his covenant for ever ;
 Holy and reverend is his name.

- 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;
 A good understanding have all they that do his com-
 mandments ;
 His praise endureth for ever.

PSALM CXV.

- 1 NOT unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
 But unto thy name give glory,
 For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.
- 2 Wherefore should the heathen say,
 " Where is now their God ? "
- 3 Our God is in the heavens ;
 He doeth whatsoever he pleaseth.
- 4 Their idols are silver and gold,
 The work of men's hands.
- 5 They have mouths, but they speak not ;
 Eyes have they, but they see not ;
- 6 They have ears, but they hear not ;
 Noses have they, but they smell not ;
- 7 They have hands, but they handle not ;
 Feet have they, but they walk not ;
 Neither speak they through their throat.
- 8 They that make them are like unto them ;
 So is every one that trusteth in them.
- 9 O Israel, trust thou in the Lord !
 He is our help and our shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord !
 He is our help and our shield.

- 11 Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord !
He is our help and our shield.
- 12 The Lord hath been mindful of us ; he will bless us ;
He will bless the house of Israel ;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
- 13 He will bless them that fear the Lord,
Both small and great.
- 14 The Lord will increase you more and more,
You and your children.
- 15 You are the blessed of the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.
- 16 The highest heaven is the Lord's ;
But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
- 17 The dead praise not the Lord,
Neither any that go down into silence.
- 18 But we will bless the Lord
From this time forth, and for evermore.
Praise the Lord !

PSALM CXII.

THE PRAISE OF BENEFICENCE.

NEHEMIAH had succeeded in effecting a great reformation. He had induced the noble and wealthy Jews to release their poorer brethren from the burden of debt (Neh. v. ; also x. 31). This they were expressly required to do, by the law of Moses, but that law was not armed with power to compel obedience.

This psalm declares the blessedness of the man who feareth the Lord, and delighteth in his commandments, and goes on to describe the blessings that shall be the consequence of liberality to the poor. Worldly prosperity, good repute, and security from enemies are promised as the rewards of such obedience.

PSALM CXII.

1 PRAISE ye the Lord !

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,
That delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 His posterity shall be mighty upon earth ;
The generation of the upright shall be blest.

3 Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house,
And his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness ;
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man showeth favor, and lendeth,
And will guide his affairs with justice.

6 Surely he shall never be moved ;
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings ;
His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is established ; he shall not be afraid,
Until he see his desire upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed ; he hath given to the poor ;
His righteousness endureth for ever ;
His horn shall be exalted with honor.

10 The wicked shall see it, and be grieved ;
He shall gnash with his teeth and melt away ;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

PSALM CXIII.

GOD'S FAVOR TO THE POOR AND DESERTED.

THIS psalm is of similar tenor with the preceding. It reminds the hearers that God, great as he is, stoopeth to behold what takes place on earth. It also celebrates his goodness in raising the poor from their depressed condition, and setting them with the princes of his people. The concluding verse refers to another topic. The Jews were permitted by the law of Moses to put away their wives ; but the practice was not approved of, but only permitted "for the hardness of their hearts." Matt. xix. 8. On the return from captivity, it was particularly desirable that this practice should cease ; for it led, almost of necessity, to marriages with the heathen women of the country, against which Ezra and Nehemiah struggled most earnestly. The prophet Malachi alludes to this subject (chap. ii. 11 and foll.) : "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord hath been witness between thee, and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously ; yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. The Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away." It is probable that these remonstrances, like those of Nehemiah on the subject of forgiveness of debts, produced their effect ; to which we find allusion in the ninth verse ; the deserted wife was recalled to her home, and the happiness promised in Ps. cxxvii., cxxviii., and cxliv. (p. 163) was the reward.

This and the five following psalms (in numerical order) form the great Hallel, — so called from the opening word, “Hallelujah!” which means, “Praise ye the Lord!” — and were sung by the Jews on their most solemn festivals, and particularly at the Passover. They are, therefore, the “hymn” which Jesus and his disciples sung on the night before his crucifixion, as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 30 and Mark xiv. 26.

PSALM CXIII.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
Praise, O ye servants of the Lord !
Praise the name of the Lord.
- 2 Blessed be the name of the Lord
From this time forth and for evermore.
- 3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of
the same,
The Lord's name is to be praised.
- 4 The Lord is high above all nations,
And his glory above the heavens.
- 5 Who is like unto the Lord our God,
Who dwelleth on high ;
- 6 Who yet humbleth himself to behold
The things that are in heaven and in the earth ?
- 7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth the needy out of the mire,
- 8 That he may set him with princes,

Ver. 7. “He raiseth up the poor,” &c. This and the following verses are nearly in the language of Hannah's prayer, 1 Sam. ii. 5, 8.

Even with the princes of his people.
 9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
 To be a joyful mother of children.
 Praise ye the Lord !

PSALM LXXXI.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

WHEN Ezra had awakened the attention of the people to the enactments of their Law, the first feelings that took possession of them were those of remorse for their past neglect of its requirements. "All the people wept when they heard the words of the Law." But Ezra and Nehemiah encouraged them, and gave notice that the season of one of the greatest of the appointed festivals was approaching. "They found written in the Law, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month" (the seventh month was part of September and October, the season of harvest); "and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, 'Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches and pine-branches and myrtle-branches and palm-branches and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.' So the people went forth, and brought them; and all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths. And there was very great gladness." Neh. viii. 14-17.

The object of this religious festival was to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in tents, during their sojourn in the wilderness. It was called the Feast of Tabernacles, or tents, and was a season of universal rejoicing, the Hebrew harvest-home. It was one of the three great festivals, at which every male Israelite was required to be present in Jerusalem.

PSALM LXXXI.

- 1 SING aloud unto God, our strength !
 Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob !
- 2 Raise a song, and strike the timbrel ;
 The pleasant harp, with the psaltery !
- 3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
 At the time appointed on our solemn feast day !
- 4 For this is a statute for Israel,
 And a law of the God of Jacob.
- 5 This he ordained in Joseph for a memorial,
 When he went out of the land of Egypt,
 Where he heard a language that he understood not.
- 6 " I removed," said he, " thy shoulder from the
 burden ;
 Thy hands were relieved from the hod.
- 7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ;
 I answered thee in the secret place of thunder ;

Ver. 5. " A language that he understood not."—Comp. Ps. exiv. 1.

Ver. 7. " In the secret place of thunder," i. e. enveloped in the dark thunder-cloud. Comp. Ps. xviii. 11. N.

- I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.
8 Hear, O my people, and I will admonish thee ;
O Israel, that thou wouldst hearken unto me !
9 Let there be no strange god within thee ;
Neither worship thou any strange god.
10 I am the Lord thy God,
Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt ;
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 But my people would not hearken to my voice,
And Israel would not obey me.
12 So I gave them up to the obstinacy of their hearts,
And they walked in their own counsels.
13 O that my people had hearkened unto me,
And Israel had walked in my ways !
14 I would soon have subdued their enemies,
And turned my hand against their adversaries.
15 The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto them,
And their prosperity should have endured for ever.
16 I would have fed them with the finest of the wheat,
And with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied them."

Ver. 10! "Open thy mouth," &c. This is a metaphorical expression, taken from the readiness with which young birds instinctively open their mouths, when they want food. H.

PSALMS CXLVII. AND CXLIX.

CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE WALLS.

THE completion of the walls of the city was an event of the highest importance. It at once gave a degree of independence to the colony, and enabled them to set at defiance the meddlesome and unfriendly tribes in their immediate neighborhood. These neighbors had placed every obstacle in the way that they could; but the energy and sagacity of Nehemiah triumphed over all. The condition of alarm and watchfulness in which they were kept, while carrying on the work, is well represented by what we are told in Neh. iv. 16, 17: "From that time forth, half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half held the spears, the shields, and the bows," &c. "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." This state of things is alluded to in Ps. cxlix. 6: "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand." Also in Ps. cxlvii. 13 there is an allusion to the work: "He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates," &c.; also in ver. 2.

The completion of the walls was celebrated with great parade. See Neh. xii. 27 and foll. The account concludes with these words: "They offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the wives also and the children rejoiced; so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."

Herder remarks, "It is the method of many psalms to place side by side the wonders of God in nature and his ordinances among his people, which they regard as alike marvellous." In Psalm cxlvii. the early verses relate to Jerusalem, the fourth to the works of nature ; the sixth alludes to national blessings, the eighth to providential ones ; the thirteenth returns to the former subject, the sixteenth to the latter ; and the nineteenth closes the psalm as it began, with a commemoration of the privileges of God's people.

PSALM CXLVII.

- 1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
For it is good to sing praises unto our God ;
For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.
- 2 The Lord doth build up Jerusalem ;
He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
- 4 He telleth the number of the stars ;
He calleth them all by their names.
- 5 Great is our Lord, and of great power ;
His understanding is infinite.
- 6 The Lord lifteth up the meek ;
He casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Ver. 4. "He telleth," &c. ; i. e. he counteth. This verse is borrowed from Isaiah xl. 26, where, as here, God's knowledge and control of nature are presented as a source of consolation to his people.

- 7 Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving ;
Sing praise upon the harp unto our God !
- 8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds ;
Who prepareth rain for the earth ;
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
- 9 He giveth to the beast his food,
And to the young ravens which cry.
- 10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse ;
He taketh not pleasure in the feet of men.
- 11 The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
In those that hope in his mercy.
- 12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem !
Praise thy God, O Zion !
- 13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates ;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
- 14 He maketh peace in thy borders,
And filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
- 15 He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth ;
His word runneth very swiftly.
- 16 He giveth snow like wool ;
He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.
- 17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels ;
Who can stand before his cold ?
- 18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them ;

Ver. 8. "Maketh grass to grow upon the mountains." See note to Ps. lxxii. 16 (p. 94).

Ver. 10. "He delighteth not," &c. ; i. e. not in infantry more than in cavalry. He needs neither the one nor the other. Otherwise, "feet of men" may denote swiftness of foot, which was considered a great accomplishment in an ancient warrior. N.

He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.
 19 He showeth his word unto Jacob,
 His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.
 20 He hath not dealt so with any other nation,
 And as for his statutes they have not known them.
 Praise ye the Lord !

PSALM CXLIX.

1 PRAISE ye the Lord !
 Sing unto the Lord a new song,
 And his praise in the assembly of worshippers !
 2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him ;
 Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king !
 3 Let them praise his name in the dance ;
 Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and
 harp !
 4 For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people ;
 He will beautify the meek with salvation.
 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory ;
 Let them sing aloud upon their beds !
 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,
 And a two-edged sword in their hand,
 7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen,
 And punishments upon the nations !
 8 To bind their kings with chains,
 And their nobles with fetters of iron ;

Ver. 2. "In him that made him"; i. e. as a nation. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 6. N.

Ver. 5. "Their beds." Some understand these words as meaning their couches, whereon they reclined at meals; others as meaning private, in distinction from public rejoicings.

9 To execute upon them the judgment written ;
This honor have all his saints.
Praise ye the Lord!

PSALMS CXXI., CXXII., CXXXIII., CXXXIV.

SONGS OF WORSHIPPERS GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

THESE are entitled "Songs of Degrees," which Dr. Lowth understands to mean songs of the ascent, or going up to Jerusalem, as was the practice on occasion of the great festivals. This usage was enjoined upon all males of the Hebrew nation, by the law of Moses, Deut. xvi. 16, and appears to have been generally observed. See Ps. cxxii. 4. In that most touching elegy upon the destruction of Jerusalem, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, i. 4, one of the topics of grief is the cessation of this practice: "The ways of Zion mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts," &c. After the return of the exiles, and reestablishment of the nation, this custom was revived. We find our Saviour observing it, John ii. 13; v. 1. We can easily imagine it to have been an occasion of a joyous and cordial nature, when we consider that every feeling that attached the Hebrew to his country and to his religion was called forth on his approach to the metropolis and the temple. The tone of these hymns is of a peculiarly pleasing character, in which piety, brotherly love, and patriotism mingle, without any alloy of fear or hatred,

which too often mar the sweetest strains of the Hebrew Muse.

It is probable that these are among those psalms which were sung by responsive choirs. Thus in Ps. cxxi. the first two verses form the portion sung by the first choir, responded to by the other singers, in the third and remaining verses. So in Ps. cxxxiv. the first two verses are addressed to the priests by the worshippers approaching the temple, and the third verse is the response.

PSALM CXXI.

- 1 I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
- 2 My help cometh from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer thy foot to stumble ;
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
- 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Doth neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord is thy keeper ;
The Lord is thy shade, upon thy right hand.
- 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil ;

Ver. 1. "The hills, from whence cometh my help." The worshippers approaching Jerusalem greet with joy the first sight of the neighboring mountains. Mount Zion is repeatedly spoken of in the Psalms as the spot whence help and salvation flow. See Ps. xiv. 7 ; l. 2.

- He shall preserve thy soul.
8 The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in,
From this time forth and even for evermore.

PSALM CXXII.

- 1 I WAS glad when they said unto me,
Let us go up to the house of the Lord.
2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!
3 Jerusalem, the rebuilt city!
The city that is joined together!
4 Whither the tribes go up,
The tribes of the Lord, according to the law of Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
5 There stand the thrones of judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.
6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May they prosper that love thee!
7 Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy palaces!
8 For my brethren and companions' sakes,
I will say, Peace be within thee!
9 Because of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek thy good.

Ver. 3. "The city that is joined together." See the same expression in Neh. iv. 6: "So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof."

PSALM CXXXIII.

- 1 BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity !
- 2 It is like the precious perfume upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard,
That went down to the border of his garments ;
- 3 As the dew of Hermon,
And as the dew that descendeth upon the mountains
of Zion.
For there the Lord commandeth the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

PSALM CXXXIV.

- 1 BEHOLD, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the
Lord,
Which by night stand in the house of the Lord !
- 2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary,
And bless the Lord.
- 3 The Lord that made heaven and earth
Bless thee out of Zion !

DIDACTIC AND DESCRIPTIVE PSALMS.

PSALM I.

INTRODUCTORY PSALM.

THIS psalm may be looked upon as a preface or introduction to the rest. It is a picture of the truly happy man, as seen in the light of the old dispensation; and contains a summary of the doctrine taught in the Psalms, and in the Jewish Scriptures generally, of the connection between happiness and virtue. Temporal reward and punishment are the sanctions held out by Moses and the prophets for obedience and disobedience. That these consequences do generally follow is quite true; but Christians know that they are not authorized to expect worldly success and prosperity as an invariable consequence of a virtuous career; and it not unfrequently happens that the wicked are seen to enjoy a short-lived triumph in this world. Christ has taught us that a complete retribution is reserved for a future life. Therefore we may still say, with the psalmist, of the virtuous man, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," and "the way of the ungodly leadeth to ruin."

PSALM I.

- 1 BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners.

- Nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers ;
 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 And in his law doth he meditate day and night.
 3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
 That bringeth forth his fruit in his season ;
 His leaf also shall not wither,
 And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
 4 The ungodly are not so ;
 But are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away.
 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
 Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
 6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,
 But the way of the ungodly leadeth to ruin.

PSALM XXIX.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

THIS psalm is well illustrated in the following extract from an address by Rev. James Hamilton, of London, on the "Literary Attractions of the Bible" :— "There

Ver. 3. "He shall be like a tree," &c. The elegance and beauty of this allusion to a tree will be felt by every reader of taste. — "The rivers of water" in this verse are the sluices or trenches through which water was conveyed in rivulets over the gardens of the East, as a substitute for rain, which seldom falls. H. Or it may allude to those green spots in the desert, called *oases*, in which palm-trees spring up wherever there is water.

is no phenomenon in nature so awful as a thunder-storm ; and almost every poet, from Homer and Virgil to Dante and Milton, has described it. In the Bible, too, we have a thunder-storm described, which, arising from the Mediterranean, and travelling by Lebanon, and along the inland mountains, reaches Jerusalem, and sends the people into the temple porticos for refuge. And besides those touches of terror, in which the geographical progress of the tornado is described, it derives a sacred vitality and power from the presence of Jehovah, in each successive peal : ‘The voice of the Lord is upon the waters ; the God of glory thundereth,’” &c. He adds : “It certainly enhances the meaning of this majestic ode, when we conceive the spectator-psalmist as standing with the awe-struck multitude in the temple-porch, and watching the march of the thunder-storm as it advances from the Mediterranean, or ‘great waters,’ and at last bursts in a water-flood around themselves.”

PSALM XXIX

- 1 GIVE unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
Give unto the Lord glory and strength !
- 2 Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name ;
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness !
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters ;
The God of glory thundereth,
The Lord is above the great waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is powerful ;

- The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
5 The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
7 The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.
8 The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness;
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
9 The voice of the Lord rendeth the oaks,
And layeth bare the forests,
And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.
10 The Lord sitteth upon the flood;
Yea, the Lord sitteth king for ever.
11 The Lord will give strength unto his people;
The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Ver. 7. "Divideth the flames of fire"; i. e. sendeth the forked lightning.

Ver. 10. "The Lord sitteth upon the flood." The district round Jerusalem is a country of hills and valleys. At a time of abundant rain, the waters pour down from the mountain-sides, and form roaring torrents, in places which perhaps a few hours before were totally dry. Such torrents often do vast damage to property and life, swelling so suddenly as to elude precaution, and having such force that nothing can withstand them. Such "water-floods" are often alluded to in the Psalms. See Ps. xxxii. 6; lxi. 15.

PSALM XXXIII.

HYMN TO JEHOVAH.

THIS is a hymn to Jehovah, as the creator and governor of the world, and the special protector of the Jewish nation. In the sixth and seventh verses the psalmist celebrates the power of the Almighty, as exhibited in the work of creation. In the ninth verse he expresses the result in language which in its sublime conciseness resembles that of Genesis, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light": "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." The words "stood fast" mean that what he commanded came to pass. This is a frequent use of those words in the sacred writers, as in Ps. cxi. 8: "Thy commandments stand fast for ever and ever," &c.

PSALM XXXIII.

- 1 REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous!
For praise is comely for the upright.
- 2 Praise the Lord with harp;
Sing unto him with the psaltery,
And an instrument of ten strings.
- 3 Sing unto him a new song;
Play skilfully with a loud noise.
- 4 For the word of the Lord is right,
And all his works are done in truth.
- 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment;
The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

- 6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
- 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as a
heap ;
He layeth up the deep in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord ;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of
him.
- 9 For he spake, and it was done ;
He commanded, and it stood fast.
- 10 The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to
naught ;
He maketh the devices of the nations of none effect.
- 11 The purposes of the Lord stand for ever ;
The thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
And the people whom he hath chosen for his own
inheritance.
- 13 The Lord looketh from heaven ;
He beholdeth all the sons of men.
- 14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all
the inhabitants of the earth.
- 15 He fashioneth the hearts of all ;
He considereth all their works.
- 16 There is no king saved by the multitude of a host ;
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- 17 A horse is a vain thing for safety,

Ver. 17. "A horse is a vain thing for safety," &c. The use of horses was not common among the Israelites in David's time. It

- Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.
18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear
him ;
Upon them that hope in his mercy ;
19 To deliver them from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.
20 Our soul waiteth for the Lord ;
He is our help and our shield.
21 For our heart shall rejoice in him,
Because we have trusted in his holy name.
22 Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
According as we hope in thee !
-

PSALM XXXVII.

THE REWARDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND PUNISHMENT
OF THE WICKED.

THE poet, in this psalm, wishes to console his countrymen under the oppression of foreigners, and to en-

was discouraged by the Mosaic law (Deut. xvii. 16), as being likely to lead to intercourse with Egypt. David, when on a certain occasion he took as part of the spoils of victory a thousand horses, destroyed all but a hundred of them, which he reserved for his chariots. But in Solomon's time the use of horses for the king and persons of distinction had become common (1 Kings iv. 26). The allusions to them in the Psalms seem to show that they were regarded with much interest, as a novelty, and some fear, together with admiration, for their remarkable qualities, swiftness and strength.

courage them with this hope, that the ownership and perpetual possession of the land, and of all the good things the earth produces to its inhabitants, shall at last be the lot of the truly pious, and of those who persevere in well-doing, as a reward of their fidelity. Wherefore, although the wicked do for a time possess the land and enjoy its fruits, the good need not despair, for it must be that a change will soon come. The possession of the wicked shall be short-lived, but that of the pious without end.

Dr. Adam Clarke says: "In the title this psalm is attributed to David; but it is more likely it was intended as an instructive and consoling ode for the captives in Babylon, who might feel themselves severely tempted when they saw those idolaters in prosperity, and themselves, who worshipped the true God, in affliction and slavery. They are comforted with the prospect of speedy deliverance; and their return to their own land is predicted in not less than *ten* different places in this psalm."

PSALM XXXVII.

- 1 FRET not thyself because of evil-doers,
Neither be thou envious against the workers of in-
iquity.
- 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good;
So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt
be fed.

- 4 Delight thyself also in the Lord,
And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
- 5 Commit thy way unto the Lord ;
Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.
- 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the
light,
And thy judgment as the noon-day.
- 7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him ;
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in
his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to
pass.
- 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath ;
Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
- 9 For evil-doers shall be cut off ;
But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit
the land.
- 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no
more ;
Yea, thou shalt diligently look for his place,
And it shall not be found.
- 11 But the meek shall inherit the land,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of
peace.
- 12 The wicked plotteth against the just,
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
- 13 The Lord shall laugh at him ;
For he seeth that his day is coming.

Ver. 13. "His day is coming," i. e. of punishment. Compare Job xviii. 20.

- 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword,
And have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
And to slay such as be of upright conversation.
- 15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.
- 16 A little that a righteous man hath
Is better than great riches of the wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken ;
But the Lord upholdeth the righteous.
- 18 The Lord careth for the life of the upright,
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
- 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine they shall have enough.
- 20 But the wicked shall perish,
And the enemies of the Lord shall be consumed as
the fat of lambs ;
Into smoke shall they consume away.
- 21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again ;
But the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth.
- 22 For such as be blessed of God shall inherit the land,
And they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.
- 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord ;
And he delighteth in his way.
- 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down,
For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.
- 25 I have been young, and now am old ;
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his seed begging bread.
- 26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth,
And his seed is blessed.

- 27 Depart from evil, and do good ;
So shalt thou dwell in the land for ever.
- 28 For the Lord loveth righteousness,
And forsaketh not his saints ;
They are preserved for ever ;
But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
- 29 The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell therein for ever.
- 30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
And his tongue talketh of judgment.
- 31 The law of his God is in his heart ;
His footsteps shall not slip.
- 32 The wicked watcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him.
- 33 The Lord will not leave him in his hand,
Nor suffer him to be condemned when he is judged.
- 34 Trust in the Lord, and keep his way,
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land,
Whilst thou shalt see the destruction of the wicked.
- 35 I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green bay-tree.
- 36 Yet he passed away, and lo ! he was not ;
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
- 37 Mark the righteous man, and behold the upright,
For the end of that man is peace.
- 38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together ;
The wicked shall be cut off at the last.
- 39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord ;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
- 40 And the Lord will help them and deliver them ;
He will deliver them from the wicked,
And save them because they trust in him.

PSALM L.

THE TRUE WAY OF SERVING GOD.

THE argument of this psalm is in the highest degree grave and momentous. It teaches that God is by no means satisfied with external rites of worship, but prefers sincere piety, and thanks proceeding from a grateful heart. Yet neither will these be acceptable, if unaccompanied with justice and other virtues. Thus, besides its grand exordium, it consists of two parts. In the former, the pious but ignorant and superstitious worshipper is instructed; in the latter, the unrighteous pretender is rebuked. In a brief conclusion, it gives the sum of the teachings and reproofs of the whole psalm.

Under the figure of a great judicial process, God tries his worshippers. The august tribunal is established in Zion; the heavens and the earth are invoked as witnesses, and the Deity himself pronounces sentence. Every part of the subject is treated with variety and elegance, and the effect of the whole is strikingly sublime.

PSALM L.

- 1 THE mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken,
And called the earth,
From the rising of the sun unto the going down
thereof.
- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God hath shined.

- 3 Our God cometh, and will not keep silence ;
 Before him is a devouring fire,
 And around him a raging tempest.
- 4 He calleth to the heavens above,
 And to the earth, while he judgeth his people :
- 5 “ Gather my worshippers together unto me ;
 Those that have made a covenant with me, by sacrifice ! ”
- 6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness,
 For God is judge himself.
- 7 “ Hear, O my people, and I will speak ;
 O Israel, and I will testify against thee.
 I am God, even thy God.
- 8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices,
 Or thy burnt-offerings which are continually before me.
- 9 I will take no bullock out of thy house,
 Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
- 10 For every beast of the forest is mine,
 And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
- 11 I know all the fowls of the mountains,

Ver. 5. “ Those that have made a covenant with me, by sacrifice.” The covenant alluded to is that by which the Hebrew people were constituted the peculiar people of God, by solemn consecration at Sinai. See Exod. xxiv. 1-8.

Ver. 6. “ The heavens shall declare his righteousness,” &c. ; i. e. it shall be made known and clear to all men. In Scripture language, that which it is intended to represent as universally promulgated, the heavens are said to declare. See Ps. xcvi. 6.

Ver. 8. “ I will not reprove thee,” &c. ; i. e. I do not put you upon trial with regard to external offerings ; of these you bring me enough. Herder.

- And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
- 12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ;
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
- 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats ?
- 14 Offer unto God thanksgiving,
And pay thy vows unto the Most High.
- 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble ;
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”
- 16 But unto the wicked God saith,
“To what purpose dost thou declare my statutes,
Or take my covenant in thy mouth ?
- 17 Seeing thou hatest instruction,
And castest my words behind thee.
- 18 When thou seest a thief, thou consentest unto him,
And hast been partaker with adulterers.
- 19 Thou lettest thy mouth speak wickedness,
And thy tongue frameth deceit.
- 20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother ;
Thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.
- 21 These things hast thou done, and because I was silent
Thou thoughtest that I was even such a one as thy-
self ;
But I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things
that thou hast done.
- 22 O, consider this, ye who forget God,
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to de-
liver you !
- 23 Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoreth
me ;

And to him who ordereth his conversation aright
Will I show the salvation of God.

PSALM LXV.

TRUST IN THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

THIS is a song of praise to God for his mercy and his power, and in particular for his goodness, as the giver of fruitful seasons and abundance. It has been thought to have been composed as a song of public thanksgiving for the blessing of rain after a time of drought ; but it is so clear and true, and universally applicable, that no supposition of the kind is necessary for its explanation.

The characteristic of this psalm, according to Dr. Lowth, is sweetness. "The sweetness of the Hebrew ode," he says, "consists in the gentle and tender passions which it excites, in the gay and florid imagery, and the chaste and unostentatious diction which it employs. How graceful and animated is that rich and flourishing picture of nature, when the prophet, with a fertility of expression correspondent to the subject, praises the beneficence of the Deity in watering the earth and making it fruitful !" The ninth verse represents the Deity himself as visiting the earth, and bestowing the needful supplies of moisture ; while, in the eleventh verse, the expression "thy paths drop fatness" implies that the fruits of the earth spring up after his footsteps.

PSALM LXV.

- 1 PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion,
And unto thee shall the vow be performed.
- 2 O Thou that hearest prayer,
Unto thee shall all flesh come.
- 3 My iniquities are heavy upon me ;
But thou wilt forgive our transgressions.
- 4 Blessed is the people that thou choosest,
And causest to approach unto thee,
To dwell in thy courts.
May we be satisfied with the blessings of thy house,
Even of thy holy temple.
- 5 By wonderful deeds in righteousness wilt thou answer us,
O God of our salvation,
Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of them that are afar off upon the sea.
- 6 Thou makest fast the mountains by thy power,
Being girded with strength.
- 7 Thou stillest the noise of the seas,
The roar of their waves,
And the tumult of the people.
- 8 They that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth
are awed at thy tokens ;
Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

Ver. 8. "The outgoings of the morning and evening." These words may mean either the utmost bounds of the east and the west, or the different natural objects that come into view by day,

- 9 Thou visitest the earth and waterest it ;
Thou greatly enrichest it
From the river of God, which is full of water.
Thou providest them corn when thou hast so prepared the earth.
- 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly ;
Thou settlest the furrows thereof ;
Thou makest it soft with showers ;
Thou blessest the springing thereof.
- 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,
And thy paths drop fatness.
- 12 They drop it upon the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
- 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks ;
The valleys are covered over with corn ;
They shout, yea, they sing for joy.

and by night, as the sun by day, the moon and the stars by night; man and the domestic animals by day, wild beasts by night, &c. ; or simply the morning and evening hours, which are fit times for meditation and thankfulness.

Ver. 9. "The river of God," &c. The source whence God supplies the rain. Among the Arabs, at this day, the rain is called "God's river."

PSALMS LXVII., XCIII., AND XCV.

HYMNS OF PRAISE.

PSALM LXVII.

“WHEN or by whom this psalm was written cannot be ascertained. It seems to be simply a prophecy concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the diffusion of the true religion through the world. It is a fine piece of devotion, and it would be nearly impossible to read or repeat it, attentively, with a cold and unaffected heart.” A. C.

- 1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us!
- 2 That thy way may be known upon the earth,
Thy saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the people praise thee, O God!
Let all the people praise thee.
- 4 O, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy!
For thou shalt judge the people righteously,
And govern the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the people praise thee, O God!
Let all the people praise thee.
- 6 Then shall the earth yield her increase,
And God, even our own God, shall bless us.
- 7 God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

PSALM XCIII.

THE MAJESTY AND POWER OF GOD.

THE first verse of this psalm is rendered in the Prayer-book version, "The Lord is king, and hath put on glorious apparel; the Lord hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength." The allusion is explained by Dr. Lowth as follows:—"The magnificence of the priestly attire, especially that of the high-priest, was so adapted to the expression of 'glory and beauty' (Exod. xxviii. 2), that to the Hebrew mind nothing could appear more venerable and sublime. To this, therefore, we find frequent allusions in the Hebrew poets, when they would describe extraordinary beauty or comeliness, or delineate the perfect form of supreme majesty. Jehovah is therefore introduced by the psalmist, as 'clothed with glory and with strength'; he is 'girded with power,' which are the very terms appropriated to describing the dress and ornaments of the priests."

- 1 THE Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty;
The Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath
girded himself;
Therefore the earth standeth firm, and cannot be
moved.
- 2 Thy throne is established of old;
Thou art from everlasting.
- 3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord!
The floods have lifted up their voice;

The floods lift up their waves.

4 The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,

Yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Thy promises are most sure ;

Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.

PSALM XCV.

1 O, COME, let us sing unto the Lord !

Let us raise a voice of joy to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the Lord is a great God,
And a great king above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth ;
The strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it,
And his hands formed the dry land.

6 O, come, let us worship and bow down !
Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.

7 For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture and the sheep
of his hand.

O that ye would now hear his voice !

Ps. xciii. ver. 5. "Holiness becometh thine house," &c. The sentiment may be, "thou art worthy of reverence"; or "holiness" may mean *sacredness*, immunity from profanation or intrusion of enemies.

- 8 "Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah,
 And as in the day of temptation in the wilderness,
 9 When your fathers tempted me,
 And tried me, although they had seen my works.
 10 Forty years long was I grieved with that generation,
 And said, It is a people that do err in their heart;
 And they regard not my ways.
 11 Therefore I swear, in my wrath,
 That they should not enter into my rest."

PSALM LXXIII.

A MEDITATION ON THE WAYS OF PROVIDENCE.

THIS psalm sets forth the perplexities of a pious mind, in view of the manner in which happiness and misery are distributed in this world. Notwithstanding all the difficulties which the subject presents to the poet's mind, he begins with confidence in God, and ends with it. Spiritual good, fellowship with God, a sense of his favor and confidence in his guidance and blessing, are to him more than a compensation for all the outward prosperity of the wicked, which is of short duration and ends in destruction. Noyes.

Ps. xcvi. ver. 8. — The Supreme Being is now introduced as speaking. — "Meribah." Exod. xvii. 7. N.

Ver. 9. "My works"; i. e. wonders in Egypt and in the desert.

PSALM LXXIII.

- 1 TRULY God is good to Israel,
Even to such as are pure in heart.
- 2 But as for me, my feet almost gave way ;
My steps had wellnigh slipped.
- 3 For I was envious of the proud,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For they have no pains to the day of their death ;
But their strength is firm.
- 5 They are not in trouble as other men,
Neither are they smitten like other men.
- 6 Therefore pride encircleth their neck as a collar ;
Violence covereth them as a garment.
- 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness ;
They have more than heart could wish.
- 8 They mock, and speak of malicious oppression ;
They speak loftily.
- 9 They set their mouth against the heavens,
And their tongue goeth through the earth.

Ver. 1. "Israel." This term seems to be used here for the true Israel, the "pure in heart," mentioned in the parallel line. N.

Ver. 2. "Gave way"; i. e. I began to doubt respecting the goodness and justice of God. N.

Ver. 6. "As a collar," or neck ornament. A lifted-up or stiff neck was with the Hebrews a sign of pride. Hence pride is said to encompass their necks. N.

Ver. 7. "Their eyes," &c. Herder translates it, "Their eyes look out from amidst fatness."

Ver. 9. "Against the heavens." A strong, hyperbolical ex-

- 10 Therefore his people walk in their ways,
And therein drink from full fountains.
- 11 And they say, How doth God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most High?
- 12 Behold, these are the ungodly;
They prosper in the world, they increase in riches.
- 13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain,
And washed my hands in innocency.
- 14 For every day have I been smitten,
And chastened every morning.
- 15 If I say, I will speak like them,
Behold, I should be treacherous to the generation of
thy children.
- 16 When I tried to understand this,
It was too hard for me,
- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then understood I their end.
- 18 Surely thou dost set them in slippery places;
Thou castest them down into destruction.

pression to denote proud speaking. A similar one is found in the parallel line. N.

Ver. 10. "His people"; i. e. the people of God. — "Drink from full fountains"; i. e. become corrupted by the evil ways of the prosperous wicked. N.

Ver. 15. "Speak like them." This refers to ver. 11. — "The generation of thy children"; i. e. the true Israel, the devoted worshippers of God, ver. 1. N. He would be treacherous to the virtuous, inasmuch as he would seem to admit that God did not know or regard the conduct of men.

Ver. 17. "The sanctuary of God"; i. e. the temple, where he sought the will and purposes of God, and learned them. N. See ver. 24.

- 19 How are they brought into desolation in a moment !
They perish and come to a fearful end.
- 20 As a dream when one awaketh,
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou wilt make their
vain show a derision.
- 21 When my heart was vexed,
And I was pierced in my reins,
22 Then was I foolish and ignorant ;
I was as a beast before thee.
- 23 Yet I am continually with thee ;
Thou dost hold me by my right hand.
- 24 Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.
- 25 Whom have I in heaven but thee ?
And there is none upon earth that I desire in compar-
ison with thee.
- 26 My flesh and my heart fail ;
But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion
for ever.
- 27 For lo ! they that are far from thee shall perish ;
Thou destroyest all them that estrange themselves
from thee.
- 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God ;
I put my trust in the Lord God,
That I may declare all thy works.

Ver. 21. "Pierced in my reins"; i. e. pained and vexed, as in the parallel line, with the prosperity of the wicked. N.

PSALM CIV.

THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF GOD, AS DISPLAYED IN
HIS WORKS.

THIS psalm demonstrates the glory of the Infinite Creator from the wisdom, beauty, and variety of his works. The poet embellishes this noble subject with the clearest and most splendid coloring of language, and with imagery the most magnificent, lively, diversified, and pleasing, at the same time select, and happily adapted to the subject. Miraculous exertions of the Divine power have something in them, which at first strikes the inattentive mind with a strong sentiment of sublimity and awe ; but the true subject of praise, the most worthy of God, and the best adapted to impress upon the heart of man a fervent and permanent sense of piety, is drawn from the contemplation of his power in the creation of this infinite All, his wisdom in arranging and adorning it, his providence in sustaining, and his mercy in the regulation of its minutest parts, and in ordering and directing the affairs of men. Lowth.

Herder exclaims: " With what a joyful expression this poet surveys the earth ! It is a green mountain of Jehovah, which he has raised up from the waters ; an Elysian field, which he has established above the seas for the habitation of his living multitudes. The series of images which the poet has made use of contain exactly the natural history of the earth. At first, the waters stand above the mountains ; at the command of God, they sink beneath. Now the mountains rise up,

the valleys sink, as the waters rush through and deepen them. Finally, God sets bounds to the floods, and makes fast the earth. Then the fountains break forth in the valleys, the streams run between the mountains, where their beds are already hollowed out; to them the beasts resort, and above them the birds sing, for the banks of streams were first covered with trees. Images of this kind give to poetry a community of feeling and sympathy between brute animals, men, plants, and all that has life; the Supreme and Eternal Father is the father of all." Herder remarks that Milton and Thomson have both imitated this psalm, the former in the morning hymn of Adam, in the fifth book of *Paradise Lost*, the latter in his hymn at the close of *The Seasons*.

PSALM CIV.

- 1 BLESS the Lord, O my soul!
 O Lord, my God, thou art very great;
 Thou art clothed with honor and majesty!
- 2 Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment,
 Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.
- 3 He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;
 He maketh the clouds his chariot;
 He walketh upon the wings of the wind.
- 4 He maketh the winds his messengers,

Ver. 3. "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters"; i. e. the waters above the firmament. See Gen. i. 7. N.

Ver. 4. "The winds his messengers," &c. He makes the winds and lightnings, which bid defiance to human control, to obey and serve him. See Ps. cxlviii. 8 (p. 178). N.

- The flaming lightnings his ministers.
 5 He laid the foundations of the earth,
 That it should not be removed for ever.
 6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment ;
 The waters stood above the mountains.
 7 At thy rebuke they fled ;
 At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.
 8 They go up by the mountains ;
 They go down by the valleys,
 Unto the place which thou hast appointed for them.
 9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass,
 That they turn not again to cover the earth.
 10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys ;
 They run among the hills ;
 11 They give drink to every beast of the field ;
 The wild asses quench their thirst.
 12 About them the fowls of the air have their habitation,
 Which sing among the branches.
 13 He watereth the hills from his chambers ;
 The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
 14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
 And herb for the service of man ;

Ver. 6. "Thou coveredst it," &c. This may allude to the scene of the creation, or the flood.

Ver. 8. "They go up," &c. When the waters, after a heavy fall of rain, swell, and rise in the valleys, they partially submerge the hills, and appear to "go up the mountains." Dr. Noyes translates this verse, "The mountains rise, the valleys sink"; and so Herder seems to have understood the passage; but the ninth verse seems rather to favor the common version.

Ver. 13. "The fruit of thy works." "Thy works," the clouds; "the fruit" of them, the rain. N.

He bringeth forth food out of the earth,
15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make him a cheerful countenance,
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the Lord are full of sap,
The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted ;
17 Where the birds make their nests.
As for the stork, the fir-trees are his abode.
18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats,
And the rocks for the conies.

19 He appointed the moon to mark seasons ;
The sun knoweth his going down.
20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night,
Wherein all the beasts of the forest go forth.
21 The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.
22 The sun ariseth, they get them away,
And lay them down in their dens.
23 Man goeth forth unto his work,
And to his labor, 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 this great and wide sea,

Ver. 19. "To mark seasons." See Gen. i. 14. Ecclesiasticus xliii. 6 and foll. N. The revolutions and changes of the moon have served, from the remotest antiquity, to designate the divisions of time, months and weeks.

Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships ;

There is that leviathan, which thou hast made to play
therein.

27 These wait all upon thee,

That thou mayest give them their food in due season.

28 That thou givest them, they gather ;

Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ;

Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created,

And thou renewest the face of the earth.

31 The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever ;

The Lord shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth ;

He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live ;

I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet ;

I will be glad in the Lord.

35 As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the
earth,

And the wicked be no more ;

Bless thou the Lord, O my soul !

Praise ye the Lord !

PSALM CXXXIX.

THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

OF all the psalms, this, by common consent, is the most admirable. It is attributed to David in the inscription, but certain Chaldee words which occur in it seem to show a later date; for it was not till more than three hundred years after David, that the intercourse of the Jewish people with the Chaldeans, or people of Babylon, began. Yet we would fain believe this psalm to be David's, and its style affords strong grounds to sustain the opinion. If his, it may be attributed to that period of his life when he was yet unspoiled by prosperity, and, in the peaceful and contemplative life of a shepherd, often turned his thoughts inward upon his own being, and outward, upon the works of nature, and upward, to God. The concluding verses, from the nineteenth, are so without visible connection with the rest, that Dr. A. Clarke thinks they are a part of some other psalm, wrongly annexed to this. Yet the same course of thought is found in the psalm most worthy of comparison with this, the hundred and fourth (p. 229), where the concluding verse leaves the contemplation of God and his works, to animadvert with severity on the wicked. In other respects, the two psalms have a degree of resemblance, and seem like sister compositions. The hundred and fourth contemplates the attributes of God as displayed in the outward world; this, the same, as shown in our relations to God, and his to us. The hundred and fourth seems to have

been composed in the midst of a blooming sylvan scene, alive with sights and sounds, indicative of the happiness of every living thing ; this, in the silence and solitude of night, when no outward object drew off the thoughts of its author from the mystery of his own nature, and the awful majesty of God.

If it should be thought, as seems to be the general opinion of critics, that the psalm is the production of a later age than David's, the following coincidences of expression seem to point to Jeremiah as the author. Compare ver. 1 and 23 with Jer. xii. 3 ; ver. 7 with Jer. xxiii. 24 ; ver. 24 with Jer. vi. 16.

PSALM CXXXIX.

- 1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.
- 2 Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising ;
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
- 3 Thou compassest my path, and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 For there is not a word in my tongue,
But lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Thou besettest me behind and before,
And layest thine hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
- 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit ?
Or whither shall I fly from thy presence ?
- 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ;
If I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there.

Ver. 8. "Make my bed in the grave." Professor Alexander sanctions this interpretation.

- 9 If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ;
Even the night shall be light about me.
12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day ;
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
13 For thou didst form my reins ;
Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.
14 I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully
made ;
Marvellous are thy works,
And that my soul knoweth right well.
15 My substance was not hid from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the
earth.

Ver. 9. "The wings of the morning." This expression is variously interpreted: by Noyes, to allude to the swiftness of the rays of the sun, which, in an instant, go from one end of heaven to the other; by Lowth, as used to designate the East, as the next clause, "the uttermost parts of the sea," means the extreme West. Professor Alexander inclines to the former opinion.

Ver. 15. "Curiously wrought," &c. This expression is thought by Lowth to refer to the curious needle-work, which, among the Jews, was wholly dedicated to the work of the sanctuary. Thus the poet compares the work of the Divine Artificer with the art which was held in such high esteem as to be consecrated altogether to the use of religion. — "The lowest parts of the earth." This expression is considered as equivalent to that in ver. 13, or the words "in secret" in the clause immediately preceding.

- 16 Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect,
And in thy book all my members were written,
Which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet
there was none of them.
- 17 How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God !
How great is the sum of them !
- 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than
the sand ;
When I awake, I am still with thee.
- 19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God !
Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men.
- 20 For they speak against thee wickedly,
And thine enemies take thy name in vain.
- 21 Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ?
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against
thee ?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred ;
I count them mine enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart ;
Try me, and know my thoughts ;
- 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Ver. 24. "The way everlasting." Professor Noyes renders it "the ancient way," i. e. the good old way of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

PSALM CXLV.

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS GREATNESS, MERCY, AND
PROVIDENCE.

THE psalmist celebrates the glory and power of God, which shine forth in all his works ; but above all, his goodness, which he shows to the whole human race, and especially to those who fear him and call upon his name ; these he sustains, feeds, hears, and preserves.

“ It is,” says Dr. Adam Clarke, “ an incomparable psalm of praise ; and the Rabbins have it in such high estimation, that they assert, if a man will, with sincerity of heart, repeat it three times a day, he shall infallibly enjoy the blessings of the world to come.”

PSALM CXLV.

- 1 I WILL extol thee, my God, my King !
And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless thee ;
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised ;
And his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall praise thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty,
And of thy wondrous works.
- 6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible
acts,
And I will declare thy greatness.

- 7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great
goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion ;
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.
- 9 The Lord is good to all ;
And his tender mercies are over all his works.
- 10 All thy works praise thee, O Lord !
And thy saints bless thee.
- 11 They speak of the glory of thy kingdom,
And talk of thy power ;
- 12 To make known to the sons of men thy mighty
acts,
And the glorious majesty of thy kingdom.
- 13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And thy dominion endureth throughout all genera-
tions.
- 14 The Lord upholdeth all that fall,
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all wait upon thee,
And thou givest them their food in due season.
- 16 Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
- 17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways,
And holy in all his works.
- 18 The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
To all that call upon him in truth.
- 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ;
He also will hear their cry, and will help them.
- 20 The Lord preserveth all them that love him,
But all the wicked will he destroy.

- 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord ;
 And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and
 ever.
-

PSALM XCII.

A PSALM FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

THE psalmist exhorts the pious to celebrate the wisdom of Divine Providence, in governing the lives and fortunes of men ; which does not permit the happiness of the wicked to be lasting ; and, after their destruction, bestows durable and constant felicity on those who trust in God, and live uprightly ; so that their old age retains the vigor of youth. He presents a contrast of the fate of the righteous and the wicked, promising to himself and to the virtuous a flourishing state, while the wicked shall wither and decay.

PSALM XCII.

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
 And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High !
 2 To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning,
 And thy faithfulness every night,
 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psal-
 tery ;
 Upon the harp with a solemn sound.
 4 For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work ;
 I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

- 5 O Lord, how great are thy works !
 And thy thoughts are very deep.
- 6 A brutish man knoweth not,
 Neither doth a fool understand this.
- 7 When the wicked spring up as the grass,
 And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish,
 It is but to be destroyed for ever.
- 8 But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.
- 9 For lo, thine enemies, O Lord !
 For lo, thine enemies shall perish ;
 All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
- 10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of a uni-
 corn ;
 I shall be anointed with fresh oil.
- 11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies ;
 And mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked
 that rise up against me.
- 12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree ;
 He shall grow up like a cedar of Lebanon.

Ver. 10. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil." A metaphor alluding to the general use of unguents and perfumes among the Orientals, and denoting great comfort and refreshment. H.

Ver. 11. "My desire." As these words are not in the text, but supplied by the translators, it would be better, perhaps, to read "the fate of mine enemies," &c. H.

Ver. 12. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree," &c. The prosperity of the wicked is compared, in ver. 7, to the germination of grass, an emblem of all that is short-lived and transient ; but the righteous are said to flourish like the palm and the cedar, the one the emblem of productiveness and plenty, the other, of durableness and majesty.

- 13 Planted in the house of the Lord,
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
- 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ;
They shall be full of sap, and flourishing ;
- 15 To show that the Lord is upright ;
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in
him.

THE END.



