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Meditations

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SHORT MEDITATIONS

ON

THE PSALMS,

CHIEFLY IN THEIR

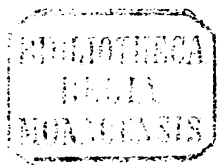
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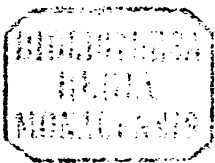
"All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."—*Luke* xxiv. 44.

"David speaketh concerning Him."—*Acts* ii. 25.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Psalms is a collection of Meditations, Prayers, and Praises, uttered by various persons under various circumstances; all, surely, under the moving of the Holy Ghost. It bears this title, "The Book of Psalms," by inspired authority. (Acts i. 20.)

The Psalms themselves are either commemorative or prophetic, or expressive of the present passage of the soul. They have all the variety of confession, supplication, and praise; of doctrine, history, and prophecy.

The Lord Jesus is seen and heard in them, either personally or mystically. Among them there are some to which we can attach a time and place in the history of the Lord, reading them, therefore, as the utterances of His heart under some given occasion. Such, for instance, is Psalm xxii. But there are others to which you cannot so distinctly attach such specific character; they are meditations or experiences more free and undefined.

And this is just what is known in the communion of the saints with God. At times it will be suggested by circumstances, at other times it will be more free and

desultory, resulting, not from present conditions, but from general knowledge of God and of His ways abroad, or of His dealings with themselves.

The life of the Lord Jesus was one of constant unbroken communion. His spirit or heart was the altar on which the fire was ever burning. (See Lev. vi.) And thus, if no peculiar circumstance directed or formed His fellowship with God, yet His soul was in the sanctuary ; still the fire was alive from its own necessary virtue.

The solitariness of our Lord in worship is much to be observed. As it is said of Him, He got up before day, or went out into a solitary place, to pray, that He might be marked as *alone* in prayer. So it is said, He withdrew Himself and prayed ; He continued all night in prayer ; He was alone praying. Nor is He once seen in prayer even with His disciples, though He owned their praying, both teaching them and encouraging them to pray.

Why, then, was this ? If He taught and encouraged them to pray, and also prayed Himself, why did He not join them in prayer ?

This may be the answer. His prayers had a character in them which none others could have had. He was heard "for His piety." (Heb. v.) He needed no mediator, but stood accepted in Himself. He pleaded no one's merit ; He used no mercy-seat with blood upon it. This was the character of His communion in prayer ; but into this there was no entrance for any worshipper but Himself. He prayed in a temple erected, as it were, for such a worshipper as the Son of God, who offered prayer at

an altar the like of which was not to be seen anywhere ; it had no pattern on the top of the mount. He was a worshipper of a peculiar order, as He was a priest of a peculiar order, or a servant of a peculiar order. He did not owe service, but He learnt it ; He did not owe worship, but He rendered it. He was the voluntary servant (Ex. xxi. 5 ; Heb. v. 8) and the personal accepted worshipper. Thus He prayed "alone."

But there is no intention of asserting that all the Psalms are utterances of the Lord Jesus. There is no necessity for such a thought as that. For instance, Psalm i. is not His language, but the divine description, God's description, of the blessed or prosperous man. Jesus is, I doubt not, in the complete and perfect sense, the happy one there described ; but the Psalm is not His utterance. And I am free to own that I do not see Him personally so much in the Psalms as I once did.

The Psalms are commonly spoken of as David's : and properly so ; because, though Moses, Ezra, and others may have been the penmen of some of them, David was principally used in them. And beside, David was more rich and varied in his experiences (through the Holy Ghost, the real "master of the Hebrew lyre,") than any of the saints of old. He knew all the sorrows of righteousness and of sin, or the trial of a martyr and a penitent. He knew, too, the varieties of humiliation and of honour. His changeful life gave the Spirit the largest occasion to exercise his soul. And from all this such a book as that of the Psalms would have come

forth. And further, the Lord seems to recognize David as the writer of them in Matt. xxii. 43.

And in connection with this, I would notice 2 Sam. xxii. and 1 Chron. xvi. as instancing something of the manner in which many Psalms were originated. Those chapters contain several of the Psalms. And from this we learn that the conditions, circumstances, or acts of David, or others of God's people, became the occasion of the Holy Ghost breathing through them utterances and revelations which were suited to the time or the circumstance, but which reached in their full import beyond it. David is delivered from Saul, the ark of God is brought into the tent prepared for it, and the Spirit uses those events as His occasion ; in the range and compass of the inspiration (knowing as He does the end from the beginning), He takes in larger and still distant scenes. So again Hannah's song may be called a Psalm of this character. The event of her becoming a mother is an occasion for the Holy Ghost to use her as His vessel or organ, and He inspires her with an utterance which, while it indulges or celebrates her present personal joy, anticipates the interests and joys of the kingdom of God in other ages. (1 Sam. ii.)

This, if I may so express it, is the parentage of many of the Psalms. This is the history of their birth, the place and time of it. And David is specially used by the Spirit in this way. And as he was closing his very memorable life, distinguished by the hand of God as well as by the Spirit of God so wondrously, he says of

himself and of his songs, "David the Son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel said, the Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.) Thus he was used,—he was the singer, but the Holy Ghost was the composer of the music. David's songs were "the songs of the Lord," and by them he prophesied according to the mind of the Spirit. His tongue was "the pen of a ready writer." The Lord, as the apostle speaks, was "saying in David." (Heb. iv. 7.)

And I would further say upon these "songs of the Lord," what has dwelt on my mind with interest before now, that there is great *moral* value in learning prophetic truths in or through the Psalms; because they are not there treated as mere doctrines, but are handled and felt there by the varied passions of the soul. Thus, St. Paul teaches us that "blindness in part is happened to Israel," or that "the branches were broken off." This is a proposition or doctrine to be understood and believed. But the same truth is conveyed in the Psalms (see lxxv.) in the words, "iniquities prevail against me;" not, however, as a mere doctrine, as it is given to us in the more didactic style of the epistles, but as that which was, as it were, breaking the heart of a poor Jew when he thought of it. So, "all Israel shall be saved," is another teaching or doctrine of St. Paul. But it is conveyed in the same Psalm in this style—"our transgressions! thou shalt purge them away"—not, therefore, simply as a proposi-

tion, but as the exulting anticipation of the same poor broken-hearted Israelite.

And thus it is, that there is *moral* value in learning truths through the Psalms. For there is a tendency in us to apprehend truth as an object or a proposition by the mind, and then just to talk about it. But in the Psalms, truth is delivered in company with the passions of the soul. The Psalms are, if I may so speak, *the heart* of the divine volume. They lie in the midst of the body; and there the pulses are felt; there the blood emanates and returns; there the affections of the renewed man find their seat and exercise. And it is safe to be there at times, yea, and to use other scriptures according to the manner learnt and practised there.

I need not say that some of the Psalms are dialogues; some of them introduce even more than two speakers; and some of them are, so to speak, soliloquies.

Again: some of them will be found to follow in order, as the chapters of a book; whilst others are to be read singly and unconnectedly.

But into a right discernment of these and of such things, the spiritual senses had need to be exercised. (Heb. v.) The mind of God can profitably and holily be known only by the Spirit of God. But still, in this world, to the end it will be with any of us but a knowing "in part." (1 Cor. xiii. 9.)

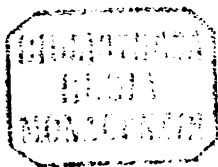
There is nothing more proposed in the following sketches, than to give a little help to the apprehending of the mind of the Spirit in these blessed utterances, in

either their prophetic or moral sense, or in both. For well the soul knows that it is but a draught or two of these fresh and living waters which it has ever reached. But one thing we may all with desire seek after, that they may at least pass our lips unmingled and undisturbed, for the refreshing of others of the flock of God. Be it so, blessed Saviour !

NOTE.—The word “Remnant” will often occur in these meditations. I would just observe, though it may not generally be needed, that this word is used both by Prophets and Apostles, and the people it expresses often intended where the word is not used. Generally this word refers to the true Israel of the last days, that faithful band of Israelites who, in those days of the nation’s complete apostasy, will adhere to the Lord, and to the truth and promises of His covenant, and who, therefore, in the time of the divine judgments upon their nation, because of the full transgression, will be preserved, like Noah, for the earthly places, and finally become the seed or centre of the accepted, blest, and worshipping nation in the days of the kingdom.

See this word “Remnant” used (among other Scriptures) in Is. i. 9 ; x. 21, 22 ; xi. 11 ; Ezek. xiv. 22 ; Joel ii. 32 ; Amos v. 15 ; Micah ii. 12 ; iv. 7 ; Zeph. iii. 12, 13 ; Zech. viii. 12 ; Rom. ix. 27 ; xi. 5.

This Remnant has had its type, or its sample, in every age of the nation’s history. They are largely spoken of by the Prophets, and described in their trials, their repentance, their faith and obedience, their discipline by the Spirit, and under the hand of God, their cries, their experiences, and their deliverance ; and with all this the Psalms have, I believe, very largely to do. See, among other Scriptures, Is. vi. 13 ; xxv.–xxvii. ; xxxiii. 15 ; l. 10 ; lix. 9–15 ; lxxv. 8, 9 ; lxxvi. 2, 5 ; Jer. xxxi. ; Ezek. vi. 8 ; vii. 16 ; Hos. ii. 14 ; Joel ii. 28 ; Zech. xii. , xiii. ; Mal. iii. 16.



MEDITATIONS

ON

THE PSALMS.

I.

JESUS, the Son of man, is here presented in His personal holiness and integrity, and then in His rewards, as "the tree planted by the rivers of water." (See Jeremiah xvii.) These rewards awaited Jesus in His resurrection, and will still await Him in His kingdom or the "judgment," and there the righteous will share His rewards and the wicked be no more.

This psalm is very soothing to the soul. It is the godly man in the care and leading of God, whom we see before us. No other intrudes to disturb the rest and security of the righteous one; but on he goes, in his proper undistracted path, to his reward.

And it is gracious to see this book, which is the great depository of the exercises of the soul, open with so tender and soothing a picture as this—the godly man's portion in the favour of the Lord, finding his happiness there. And our souls should ever move on in the like happiness. The Israel of the last days, the godly remnant, will have their place here also.

II.

Here, however, the soothing influence of the previous psalm is not felt; it is altogether broken up; for the world enters the scene. It is no longer the privacy of God and the godly man. That path is in this psalm trespassed upon by the rude and wild foot of an evil persecuting world.

It is "suffering and glory" that we get here—the rage of man against the Lord's anointed; but the Lord's triumphant exaltation of Him.

Jesus, the Christ of God, is presented in His grace and power, and consequently the vanity of resisting Him, and the blessedness of trusting in Him.

The confederacy, which is here anticipated, was formed when Jesus was crucified. (See Acts iv.) He will punish it when He returns in His kingdom. (See Luke xix.) It is still in principle existent, being the course of this world already judged, but spared through divine long-suffering. It will be fully developed in all its forms of evil in the last days—those days which the Psalms so generally belong to. It acts on the old desire, and the lie of the serpent. (Gen. iii. 5.) It would dethrone God. For the present, however, He that sits in the heavens laughs at it all; as was expressed by the angel rolling away the stone, and sitting on it, while he put the sentence of death into the hearts of its keepers. (Matt. xxviii.) What was all that but the Lord telling the confederacy which had crucified Jesus that He had them all in derision? In like spirit the Lord Jesus from the heavens challenged Saul, the persecuting zealot, in Acts ix.

But there is much more than this present laughter; for the decree of God touching the Christ is the great counter-scheme, and will of course prevail. And that decree, as here announced by the Lord Himself, gives Him Sonship and inheritance: Sonship is already His

by resurrection (Acts xiii.); inheritance will be His in glory by and by.

NOTE.—Looking at these Psalms together, it is Jesus under the law, approved of God and earning blessing by His righteousness, whom we may see in the first: Jesus in testimony or as anointed, resisted by man but exalted by God, and securing blessing or executing judgment on others, whom we see in the second.

III.

This Psalm is the devout meditation of an afflicted servant of God. It was probably the experience of David, but the Spirit of Jesus breathes in it. It is a *morning* meditation or prayer, and the afflicted one appears to take courage from his now awaking in safety; anticipating from this, as a pledge or sample, the morning of His kingdom, when all His enemies shall be taken away. This morning rising of the godly man, as the pledge of the opening of the kingdom, is sweet and striking; for the kingdom will be near at hand when those "last days" have come, and the remnant are manifested.

IV.

This meditation is the companion of the preceding one. It is an *evening* prayer of the same godly man. He appears to have passed through a trying day (as was every day to Jesus more or less), but to have been sustained and refreshed in it.

The *godly* man, as here, may go to bed and sleep (v. 8); but he warns *others* to go to bed, and there commune with their hearts, and search their spirits (v. 4). He knows His own full title to rest in God undisturbed; for "God giveth His beloved sleep." The Lord Jesus realized this, though winds and waves tossed the ship on the sea of Galilee. (See Mark iv.)

V.

This Psalm is still in connection. It is a meditation *by night*. (See verse 3.) Thus it follows the preceding. In

it the same godly man looks on the evil powers that war against Him, but anticipates His victory and deliverance. But whether it be morning, evening, or night, these Psalms show the pattern of a full faith in God. Different fruit because a different season. As Jesus could "weep" and could "rejoice in spirit." Every season found in Him its due fruit, and all was beautiful; for all was in its season. He knew in what spirit to take His journey to the holy hill in Matthew xvii., and in what spirit to set Himself on the road to Jerusalem for the last time. (See Mark x. 32.) He knew how to be abased and how to abound, and each perfectly.

VI.

This is another meditation by night. (See *v.* 6.) But it is of deeper sorrow than the fifth. It was mystically *midnight*, and in it the same one pleads to be delivered from the grave. And He pleads against the power of death on the ground that, if death close the scene, God will be forgotten; for He is not the God of the dead. (See Isa. xxxviii.)

But there is an anticipation of the same deliverance and victory as in the fifth. All these Psalms strongly intimate that the godly man who is heard in them is living in the last days of Israel's sorrow, and on the eve of deliverance and the kingdom. And in spirit Jesus was in those days.

VII.

In the progress of this mystic season, we now in this Psalm reach *the dawn*. Accordingly Jehovah is called to arise and awake (*v.* 6), as though it were time for Him to set to His hand for the deliverance of His righteous persecuted ones. It is still the breathing of the Spirit of Jesus, but (as in each of these) in company with His remnant in the latter day.

But here, as the day approaches, He still more largely

and more gloriously anticipates the destruction of the great enemy—his falling into the ditch that he made for others; which event, like the dawn, is the harbinger of the day, for it shall be followed by the gathering of the congregation around the Lord, as is here looked for.

VIII.

This Psalm closes this mystic season; for now we reach *the second morning*—the eighth or resurrection day—the opening of the kingdom or “the day of the Lord.” It needs no commentary to show or prove this. (See Heb. ii.) This is the morning anticipated by Jesus or by the godly one at His rising up from sleep in Ps. iii. It is the praise which had been just previously vowed (see vii. 17); the wicked having now come to an end, and the congregation having been gathered.

The Lord quotes it in reference to the hosannas which welcomed Him on His royal visitation to Jerusalem. (Matt. xxi. 16.) For those hosannas were, in spirit or in principle, the praises of the kingdom, as this Psalm is. And creation joins the chorus.

In Ps. ii. we saw the *royalty* of Messiah, Son of David, Son of God; here we see the *lordship* of the Son of man, His dominion over the works of God. All these His glories will be realized and displayed in millennial days.

NOTE.—According to this we might pause here, and read Psalms iii.-viii. in connection, leading the worshipper, in spirit, into the kingdom. And others have observed that our history every twenty-four hours (the period passed thus in these Psalms) is in like manner a kind of mystery. For after spending the day, at night we lay aside our clothes and enter into sleep, the emblem of death, and there abide (with visions in the spirit) till the morning wakes us; and then we are clothed again, as we shall be in the second morning, or the morning of the resurrection and glory.

NOTE.—I must add another short notice. 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, illustrates the way in which ulterior scriptures enlarge upon, without disturbing, preceding scriptures. The Apostle establishes every syllable of the Psalmist, giving Christ dominion according to Psalm viii. But then he goes onward. For the Psalmist had *left*, as well as *put*, the universal lordship or kingdom in

Christ's hand; but the Apostle, reasoning upon the force of the Psalmist's words, is instructed by the same Spirit to reveal a scene of glory which lay beyond the kingdom thus left by the Psalmist in the hand of Christ.

IX.

This Psalm manifests itself very clearly. It is Messiah leading the praise of His righteous people in the latter day for the Lord's destruction of their great enemy, and the consequent anticipated enthronement of Messiah in Zion. There is also a fine insultation over the enemy now thus fallen, kindred with that which the Spirit of Christ breathes in the prophet Isaiah over the king of Babylon (Isa. xiv.), and a recital of the cry of the afflicted ones in the day of their calamity.

The world is also declared as learning righteousness from God's judgments in the latter day (verse 16), as in Isa. xxvi. 9. And the nature of those judgments also—the taking of the wicked in their own snare, as in Psalms vii. 10, xxxv., lvii., xciv., cix., cxii. Haman's destruction is the type of this (Esther vii., x.); and the cross is gloriously the illustration of the same, for there by death he that had the power of death was destroyed.

The falling and perishing of the enemy at the presence of God (v. 5) is strikingly illustrated in scripture, in days of divine visitation or judgment. (See Psalm cxiv.; Ex. xiv. 24, 25; John xviii. 6.) Here it is anticipated in the doom and downfall of the great infidel or antichristian enemy of the last day. (See Rev. xix.) How awfully will the nations then learn themselves to be "but men" (ver. 20), though they had been drinking in and practising the old lie of the serpent, "ye shall be as gods."

X.

This Psalm must be read in connection with the ninth. The cry of the Remnant is given more largely, and the iniquity of the enemy more fully detailed.

The answer to the cry, and then the establishment of the kingdom, is beautifully anticipated at the close.

Atheistic pride—man becoming his own god—man learning no lessons of God, either in grace or judgment, and the persecution of the righteous, strongly give character to this last form of evil. And then some marks are set upon the great enemy of the last days, in all parts of scripture, wherever he is glanced at or anticipated, prophetically or typically.

NOTE.—In the Septuagint Psalms ix. x. are but one. Consequently from Psalm x. to Psalm cxlvii. the number of the Psalm in the Septuagint is one less than in the authorized English version. In Psalm cxlvii. the number became the same again, because that Psalm becomes two in the Septuagint.

XI.

This is the meditation of a soul in great outward perplexity. The natural securities of the righteous, "the foundations" of the social order, kings and judges (see Psalm lxxxii.; Rom. xiii.), are giving way. But God is still in His due place—that is the soul's relief. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

It is the utterance of the afflicted Remnant in the last days. But Jesus was their pattern and forerunner in His sorrows from the hand of man.

How different, we may observe, is the world which faith apprehends, from that which sense or sight converses with. The world seen is here declared to be all out of course—the wicked prospering, the righteous oppressed. But faith apprehends a scene where God is in all the sanctity and calmness and power of a throne and a temple, His soul loving the righteous, hating the wicked, and preparing judgments for them when the trial of the righteous is over. Such were the two scenes or worlds opened at the beginning of Job. In the seen or felt world, the adversary was doing his pleasure; in the unseen place

the God of all grace was sovereignly preparing blessing for His saint. Moses walked as "seeing Him who is invisible."

XII.

This is another meditation, together with a prayer of a righteous one set in the midst of abounding evil; and that evil is evidently the evil that is to be ripe and full in the last days, as we have just seen anticipated in the preceding Psalm. Infidel scoffing (such as that foretold as marking the last days, 2 Peter iii.) is the principal feature of it. The mourner, however, hears in spirit the Lord's answer to his prayer (verse 5); then celebrates the faithfulness of His words, that they were all tried and proved words; and finally professes his assurance that God's faithfulness will prevail even in the worst of times.

"This generation" in verse 7 is described in verse 8. This word is, therefore, used in a *moral* sense; indeed it must be so used from the force of the words "for ever." The people or generation with which both the Lord Jesus and the Remnant contend in their several days, are *morally* one and the same "generation." And from this we can interpret Matt. xxiv. 34 in a *moral* way. Perhaps there is tacit reference there to this passage.

XIII.

The cry of a soul put to sore trial of patience, but patience is having "its perfect work;" for this soul trusts in mercy, and by the anticipation of faith sings of salvation. Such was Jesus in the fullest sense; He who was daily "acquainted with grief." But the patient waiting Remnant of the same last days are heard here. It is prepared for them.

These words in the Psalms, "how long" and "for ever," frequently express this trial of patience. "His

mercy endureth for ever" will be the changed style of the worshipper when the patience is over and the kingdom is come.

XIV.

This Psalm gives us the solitary musing of a godly soul over the atheism of the world. He recites God's verdict (verses 3, 4) upon man after making a solemn inquisition (such as he made of old at Babel and at Sodom, Gen. xi. 5, xviii. 21)—then anticipates the confusion of the children of men, when God shows Himself in the midst of *His* generation (thus morally opposed to the generation of Ps. xii. 7, 8), and closes with uttering a desire for that occasion.

The "wilful king" of the last days is surely contemplated in "the fool" or atheist of this Psalm; for the confederacy which he heads is to be broken up when the salvation here anticipated comes out of Zion. But man is man. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." And thus the apostle can quote this Psalm, when describing men in Rom. iii. For all of us by nature have the mind of "the wilful one," or the atheist—alienated from the life of God. (Eph. iv.)

Thus, while this is the meditation of either Jesus or His Remnant looking on the infidel of the last days, every instructed soul may use it. (See Ps. liii.) Indeed, the language of verse 3 in the Septuagint is used by the apostle in Rom. iii. 11-18.

XV.

This little Psalm seems to present the righteous in the days of "the fool," the Remnant in the time of the last apostate faction.

Verses 2-5 may be read as the divine oracle replying to the prophet's enquiry in verse 1.

It is not the sinner's title to the kingdom which is here

discussed. That would be treated very differently. It is the Remnant, as manifesting themselves in righteousness, in contrast with the evil doers of Ps. xiv. See the same thing in Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16.

It is *character* and not *title* that is the subject. Of course it need not be said, that the title of all is one and the same—the worthy and accepted blood of Jesus.

NOTE.—This Psalm may be considered as closing a series of meditations and experiences which opened with Ps. xi. For they are all the utterances of a soul burthened with a sense of the wickedness of the day, and calling with desire on God—and as clearly and surely the last days are contemplated, and those utterances are of the Remnant then.

The challenge in ver. 1 may bring to mind similar language in Ps. xxiv. 3. But there the answer given to it, at the close of the Psalm, introduces Messiah Himself much more distinctly and personally than it does here.

By this I am also reminded of Rev. v. 2. For we have a challenge there likewise. “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” And the glorious answer there given again introduces Messiah, only in still fuller and richer and sublimer characters, as the Lamb that had been slain, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

XVI.

We know from the Holy Ghost, in Acts ii. 31, that this Psalm is the utterance of Jesus through David. It is the language of the Lord consciously dwelling in God’s house as a priest or worshipper. Accordingly He will have no other God, and take His inheritance (like a priest, Num. xviii. 20) only from God, esteeming it the best; and in constant communion find confidence and joy and praise and hope. And the very first act of this worshipper is to trust in the Lord, owning that he cannot profit the Lord, for the Lord must profit him. See the contradiction of this in Israel’s worship, Psalm ii., and in the Gentiles’ worship, Acts xvii. It is easy and natural to call to mind here the answer of the Lord to the young ruler in Luke xviii. In the moral perfectness of the place He took, the Son in flesh could talk of God as the only good one.

Though it is true, that the Lord was not *our* priest till

He rose (Heb. v. viii), nor took official services of such a character on Him, yet He was *a* priest to God, or a worshipper, all through His life on earth; showing all the personal virtues of such an one, walking always in a sanctuary, and always taking God as His portion. And what incense, what constant perfect incense, was the life of Jesus thus looked at! what sweet savour of a meat offering was all that He ever did or said!

"Thine Holy One" is the *flesh* of Jesus. (Acts ii. 27, 31.) This title for it arises from Luke i. 35, which separated the human nature of Jesus from all taint, and kept it in the fullest favour and acceptance with God.

XVII.

This, on the other hand, is the utterance of Jesus, not consciously dwelling in the house of the Lord, but as having come forth and met the oppositions of men. But as He had *within* carried Himself in the sanctity of a worshipper, so here *outside* He is keeping Himself from all evil in the midst of all; and in the confidence of this integrity, looking for vindication from God's "presence," and the rewards of righteousness in resurrection by and by, when His persecutors, who are "of the world, and have their portion in this life," shall be cast down.

The persecuted righteous Remnant may also utter this in company with Jesus: indeed they seem to be introduced very distinctly, ver. 11.

NOTE.—These two Psalms thus present the experiences of the Lord very differently. In xvi. He enters into all the present joy of being a dweller in God's house, a priest or worshipper who felt that his lines had fallen in pleasant places, because he was *inside* the house with God. In xvii. He is *outside* in the trial of the world, meeting the oppositions of men, and seeking help and deliverance, and looking only to future things as His joy. In xvi. the resurrection comes as the end of a blessed path; in xvii. as relief from a trying and dangerous one.

The experiences of His saints are according to this also. At times it is the simple joy of resurrection, and at times the hope of being relieved by

that from many a present burthen which fills their souls. To be "within the veil" and at the same time "outside the camp" is the due attitude of the believer—and full of moral beauty and dignity that is.

XVIII.

This is Messiah's praise for deliverance or resurrection, which had been expected at the close of the preceding Psalm. He celebrates Jehovah as His rock and His horn,—symbols of strength and royalty. He recites His desires in the day of His distress, and the marvellous redemption which the hand of Jehovah had wrought for Him and His Israel, when in the place of death, or amid the confederations of His enemies in the latter day. His deliverance is God's answer to His cry. The earth then shakes. As the place of assembly shook at the voice of the Church in Jerusalem. (Acts iv.) For the Judge of all the earth will avenge His own elect that cry to Him. The Spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His coming will do this. (verses 8, 12; 2 Thess. ii. 8.)

This Psalm strikingly shows Christ in two places and two very distinct characters. For He is here both the *delivered one* and the *deliverer*. He is the one who *makes* this supplication, and the one who *answers* it. All this, of course, simply and necessarily arising from His person, divine and human as it is,—from His being one with His afflicted people, and yet the Lord who rescues and blesses them : as we see Him in Is. viii., *waiting on Jehovah* who has turned His face from Israel, and in Matt. xxiii. Jehovah Himself with his face turned away.

David's deliverance from the hand of Saul was the type of this; and the deliverance of Israel (with whom Messiah here identifies Himself) in the latter day will be the real deliverance here celebrated by the prophetic spirit. The rescue of Israel from the Red Sea, where the strength of Pharaoh perished, is referred to (*vv.* 15, 16); for that was another typical resurrection or deliver-

ance. So the discomfiture of Adonizedek, who was the type of the last enemy or the wilful king in the days of Joshua, is also glanced at in verse 12. (See also Psalm cxliv., Isa. xxx. 27-33, and Isa. lxiv. 1-3.)

And the *delivered* one becomes the *conquering* and the *reigning* one at the close. The Lord strengthening Him, He seems equal to everything. The same hand of God that rescues Him, gives Him victory, and at last invests Him with dominion. It lights His candle, and makes Him run through a troop.

And thus this Psalm tells us, as Paul teaches in Rom. viii., "whom He justified, them He also glorified." For the Lord does not, cannot, stop with mere deliverance, but goes on to perfect His goodness in the kingdom. The song of Israel in Exodus xv. and that of the elders in Rev. v. utter the same truth. If He translate us into the kingdom of His dear Son, it is as putting us on the sure and ready way to the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i.) He *perfects* that which concerneth us.

But all this is in favour of the *righteous* (20-27); paying just judgment to others. That is the character of the action here. For the deliverance from "the violent man" will not be so much in *grace* as in *righteousness*. The sinner is delivered only in grace, through atonement, from the curse of the accuser, the penalty of sin, and the just judgment of the law. And so the Israel of God in the day of their repentance by and by. But in conflict with the enemy, they will be righteous as David with Saul. They will suffer as martyrs or as righteous ones, and as such they will be delivered. And this just judgment, this reward of righteousness and of evil, is the character of the action in the book of Revelation (see xxii. 11, 15), as it is of this Psalm.

2 Sam. xxii. shows us that this Psalm was the utterance of David in a fitting time; and though I have just

noticed it above, I may urge it again here, what a proof does this offer of the typical nature of certain pieces of history. For the deliverance of David from the hand of Saul is here published in such a style as tells us plainly that another and far more magnificent deliverance was looked at through it.

Hannah's Song, in like manner, looks beyond the occasion of it. (1 Sam. ii.) Nothing is more common than this. And this is judged by some to be the meaning of those words, "No prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter i.) All individual events are parts of one great system of divine government.

XIX.

This is the meditation of a true worshipper of God, honouring Him both in His *works* and His *word*. The Gentiles should (but did not, Rom. i.) have known God from His works, and Israel should (but did not, Rom ii.) have kept His word or His law. The true worshipper here, therefore, condemns both, and glorifies God in His two great ordinances or testimonies.

The works and the word of God have these two qualities—they glorify God and bless the creature, as this Psalm shows. Thus: the firmament declares the divine handywork, but it also carries the sun which gives its heat to all creation. So the law is perfect, thus glorifying its Maker like the firmament, but it also converts the soul. God's glory and His creatures' blessing are equally cared for in the great scenes of divine power and wisdom. But there is no effort, no indisposedness in the earth to receive blessing from the heavens; but man is to stir himself up, as the Psalmist here does, to get the blessing to his soul which the law or the word carries for him.

This Psalm is referred to (Rom. x. 18) by the apostle for the purpose of gloriously identifying the ministries of

the *heavens* and of the *gospel*. The service which one renders the earth is like that which the other renders the world, both so diffusing themselves everywhere that nothing may be hid from either the fertilizing or saving heat thereof. The ministry of the heavens to the earth, in its universality, is the pattern of that of the gospel to the world. And the Lord in His own divine ministry was just this also. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and that light lighteth every man in the world. (John i. 4, 9.)

Such was the competency or quality of the light or the ministry of the Son of God. In principle it reached all. Nothing in creation is hid from the heat of the sun, and no man in the world from the testimony of the gospel. (Col. i. 23.)

NOTE.—We get notices of presumptuous sins in Numbers xv. and Deut. xvii., and I believe that when we come to the scriptures of the New Testament we see them in Heb. vi. and x.

XX.

I read this Psalm as the utterance of the Jewish Remnant exercising very lively faith in their Messiah in the day when He will take their trouble upon Himself, and come forth to assert His kingdom against His and their enemy. They accordingly commend Him to the care of Jehovah, and anticipate His victory, and that they themselves shall therefore, like their fathers (Exodus xvii. 15), have a banner in Jehovah, though in conflict with the true Amalek.

The people in this spirit commended Joshua to God's care as he was going out to his battles. (Joshua i. 17, 18.) And according to the divine ordinance, when Israel went out to battle, they were to encourage themselves in God, and not be afraid of the multitudes of the enemy, or of their chariots and their horses. (See Deut. xx. 1.) Jesus,

as one fully obedient to this ordinance, here goes forth to the warfare in this spirit.

In the full power of verse 3 we see our Lord leaving His *priestly* services in heaven, now that He is about to take this other service, this duty of "the God of battles," the Redeemer of the inheritance, upon Him. And this present action, His going forth in due season against His enemies, had been pledged to Him as soon as He took His seat in heaven. (See Psalm cx. 1.) And He had been expecting it. (Heb. x. 13.)

XXI.

This is a continuation of the language of the Remnant which we had in the preceding Psalm. They first address Jehovah, owning that they have a full and glorious anticipation of the victory of their King, and of His establishment in His kingdom, because He had trusted in Him, his God. (See Psalm xviii. 2, 3; Heb. ii. 13; v. 7.) Then, in what may be called the second part, beginning with verse 8, they address Messiah as still in the heavens, but telling Him as it were of His coming victories; and they close by desiring His exaltation, owning Him Lord.

His crown is one of "pure gold" (v. 3); that is, of unsullied righteousness; and therefore His kingdom such as will last (Heb. i. 8, 9); "length of days for ever and ever" (v. 4).

David was the type of the true King thus in victory. And David's desire was fulfilled. (2 Samuel vii. 19); as here Messiah's is in verse 4.

The 110th Psalm, I may observe, is another instance of a worshipper addressing Jehovah and Christ by turns, as he sees them gloriously seated in the heavens. What characters of communion are our souls entitled to! what discoveries of heaven as it now is does scripture make to us! What sights of glories yet to come do we get there!

XXII.

This Psalm was the language of the soul of the Lord while He hung on the cross. (Matthew xxvii. 46.) He uttered, perhaps, only the first words of it, but His spirit went through the whole. He begins as though His cries for deliverance from death (Heb. v. 7) had not been heard, since He was now under the darkness of the withdrawn countenance of God. This was the death of a *victim*, not of a martyr. It was death under the judgment of sin. Nothing ever could be of like kind. See how the death of the martyr Stephen is different from that of the Lamb of God. (Acts vii.) But still the perfect sufferer entirely vindicates God—the faithful God of the fathers, and His God from the womb hitherto.

He therefore still cries, presenting all the features of His present distress from the hand of men before the eye of God. (See vv. 7, 8, 12, 16, 17, 18.) And it is strange, how the enemy, in that hour, were fulfilling the word of God against themselves to the very letter of it. (See v. 8 and Matthew xxvii. 43.) But at last the blessed sufferer seems conscious of having been heard (v. 21)—heard from the horns of the unicorns—heard, doubtless, by Him who was able to save Him from death. (Heb. v. 7.) For we may observe that the cry of Jesus on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” was after an interval followed by another, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” That second cry would naturally arise from a consciousness of the first having been heard. And it may therefore be thought that the Lord here in v. 21 expresses His sense of having been heard by His deliverer from death.

Under this He makes His vows :—1st, to declare God’s name to His brethren ; 2nd, to praise Him in the congregation (of Israel), and in the great congregation (of all

the nations). The first He began to pay immediately on His being delivered from death (John xx. 17), and is still fulfilling in all the saints (Rom. viii. 15); the second He will pay in the kingdom when Israel and the nations are gathered, the seed of Jacob glorifying God, and the kindreds of the nations worshipping before Him. For then, as Jesus here pledges, the kingdom and all its offerings shall be the Lord's.

But upon this Psalm I must further observe, that while the Lord Jesus, in the days of His life and ministry on earth was *saving* and not *judging*, stooping down and writing on the ground as though He heard not, rather than casting a stone at a guilty one, yet He did refer the world in its wickedness to the judicial eye and observance of God. In John xvii. He does this, when He says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." This same thing He seems to me to do in this very peculiar and affecting Psalm.

XXIII.

This may be read as a meditation of the Lord Jesus as He walked by faith in this world. He perfected the life of faith, the author and finisher of it, standing as chief among those who have obtained a good report by it. (See Heb. xi. xii.) So that we may read Him in this Psalm.

He addresses Himself to His journey in fullest confidence, though it may prove a long and trying one. Every character of trial is successively anticipated—want of provision—need of restoration—the shadowy vale of death—the presence of enemies. But the resources of the hand that leads Him are felt to be equal to all, till the journey blessedly end in the house of the Lord.

The Lord knew restoration from soul-trouble in John xii. 27; and then was He ready for the valley through which He went; till, in resurrection, His cup ran over,

His table was spread in the presence of His enemies, and His head was anointed, or His consecration to office was perfected. And the kingdom by and by will display this cup, this table, and this anointing, here anticipated in faith by Jesus.

It may, however, be rather used as the language or experience of any believer. We, who are weak in faith, may long to realize such precious joy and liberty more and more richly.

XXIV.

As the preceding Psalm had given us the path of the Lord Jesus (and of any saint in company, in spirit, with Him) home to the house of the Lord, so this now gives us His path up to the throne of glory. For there were in His prospect, as there are in ours, the two objects—the Father's house, and the throne of the kingdom; and these Psalms severally trace the two paths up to those happy, brilliant scenes.

In the opening of this Psalm, the Lord's title to the earth is acknowledged: it is His by creation. So in the Jubilee, the type of this same coming kingdom, the Lord asserted His title to the land. (Lev. xxv. 23.) And after His title to the earth is announced the enquiry arises, who shall retake Adam's forfeited dominion over it? in other terms, "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" for "hill" is the symbol of dominion (Isaiah ii.): and the Lord's future or millennial dominion will be from Zion, that holy hill where God's King is to hold His sceptre of universal rule. (See Psalm ii.)

This enquiry is then answered in such terms as at once point to Jesus; and His saints or generation are joined with Him; and His title to take His throne of glory and dominion in Zion being thus established, He comes as at the second advent to take possession.

He offered to take this throne when He was here. (Matt. xxi.) And it is to be observed, that ere our Lord entered the gates of Zion on that occasion, He exercised His rights as Lord of the earth and its fulness (according to the course of this Psalm), by claiming the ass from its owner upon this plea, "The Lord hath need of him." (Mark xi. 3.)

But, as we know, the citizens would not then have Him to reign over them; and now at His second advent, He will make good His title in the judgment of those who thus once refused Him. (See Luke xix. 27.)

XXV.

This is such an utterance as the soul of David might have had on the other side of Jordan; for there he was suffering under God's hand for sin, but as touching his persecutors he was blameless. Varied exercise of heart would arise from such a condition. He would at times remember his sins, and desire to know more and more of God's own way of grace; he would at times, on the other hand, plead with the confidence of integrity. And this is His varied way in this affecting Psalm—where, though the suppliant be conscious of integrity, as before men in his sufferings, yet his condition and guilt, as a sinner before God, are forcibly brought to mind; and as a soul thus quickened to the sense of sin, he desires to know God's own way in grace or mercy. And it is only the *sinner* who *fully* learns God's way. It is a mystery to every other student. And as Israel now, because of transgression, knows Him as a "consuming fire," so in the latter day, in their broken-heartedness and repentance, they shall know Him as a "merciful God." (See Deut. iv. 24-31.)

We may presume that it will be the breathing of the

Jewish saints by and by. Verse 22 indeed shows that Israel is the suppliant here.

Verses 8-10, and verses 12-14, may be read as two interruptions to the cry of the suppliant by the voice or oracle of God comforting him. And I cannot pass without noticing that "the secret" and "the covenant" of the Lord (*v.* 14) are the same, and mean the gospel or grace of God in Christ Jesus. For such is *God's* covenant and *God's* secret. One of Christ's names is "secret," as we know. (Judges xiii. 18; Isaiah ix. 6. See also Deut. xxix. 29.)

XXVI.

This seems to be of the same character as the preceding—an utterance of David on the other side of Jordan. There is, however, more expression of conscious uprightness towards men in it, and something of his longing after the house and congregation of the Lord, which we know from the history was David's fervent desire (see 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26), and which he here anticipates will be realized.

His casting of himself on the mercy and redemption of God, in the midst of these his assertions of integrity, bespeaks a very right state of soul.

In reading this as in continuance of the preceding Psalm, I deem it blessed to notice the advance in the poor believing sinner's experience; for here, though we get integrity pleaded, and at the same time mercy sought, the confession of sins is dropped, and anticipations of God's house taken up.

XXVII.

Still another utterance of the same suppliant in the same condition. But there is more desire after the house of God, longing for the ark and habitation of the Lord;

and thus an advance still in the experience and liberty of the soul may be observed in this Psalm, as in the preceding.

This Psalm may have been the breathing of our blessed Lord while He was standing silent before Caiaphas. (Matt. xxvi. 63.) False witnesses were then rising up against Him ; but those who came to eat up His flesh had already fallen. (See Matt. xxvi. 59 ; John xviii. 6.) At that moment also He anticipated His glory. (See *v.* 6 ; Matt. xxvi. 64.) And we know that in those trying sufferings He was sustained by hope. (See *v.* 13 ; Heb. xii. 2.)

The strong and abrupt change in the current of the soul at verse 7 is easily understood by the Lord's history. It is just what might be looked for, as He passed from witnessing the divine favour expressed in the garden, to become the captive of the wicked. (John xviii. 6, 12.)

But I am quite prepared to refuse the suggestion which has long been made by some who have exercised their thoughts (and that too in a spirit of reverence) over the Psalms, that if the Lord be seen or heard in one verse of a Psalm, the whole of it must be received as belonging to Him. The word of the Lord to David by Nathan in 1 Chron. xvii. would be witness against this ; for there the words "I will be His Father, and He shall be my Son" are applied to the Lord Jesus (Heb. i. 5), while at the same time we may most fully assure ourselves that the whole of that divine oracle could not be so applied to Him.

In the last verse Jesus as it were delivers a word of exhortation to His saints, as the fruit of His own experience, as I may say He does at the close of Isaiah l., and still more surely at the close of Matthew xi. ; and I may add that we see one of His saints very much with Him in the spirit that animates Him here ; for here we find *confidence*, though in the midst of the din of war and

trouble, just because the heart was set upon one thing—desire to dwell in the house of the Lord. And “the same spirit of faith” is found in St. Paul when he says, “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. v.)

And the apostle himself, under the Holy Ghost, traces another kindred mind between him and his Lord in the chapter that precedes this. (See 2 Cor. iv. 13, and Psalm cxvi. 10.)

XXVIII.

The cry of a soul that was beginning to taste the bitterness of desertion—of God’s being “silent” to him. There was something of the touch of the fear of death felt here, and the cry came forth (1-5).

The answer of God to all this is then anticipated with praise, and suited intercession, embracing all God’s people, as well as the suppliant himself (6-9).

I observe that the wicked are looked at here very much as the Lord looks at the unbelieving cities, *i.e.*, as not moved by the works of the Lord. (Matthew xi. 20. See v. 5.)

It is interesting to notice here that the Remnant, the godly election in Israel, are so differently treated by the Lord from the unbelieving nation. Jesus was “silent” to them. (Mark xiv. 60, 61.) That was judgment. Here the Lord answers the godly.

XXIX.

This is a celebration of the power of “the voice of the Lord,” who is also “the God of glory.” (See *v.* 3.) And the last verses give us to see the repose and to hear the

joys of the faithful, while this power is passing by for the destruction of the ungodly. Like Noah in the Ark while the waters were spreading, or Lot in Zoar while the fire was poured down on Sodom, or Israel within their paschal doors, while the angel went through Egypt with the sword, so in their closets by and by the Remnant will rest (Isaiah xxvi. 20), and have a song also, while the decreed vengeance takes its course (Isaiah xxx. 32), not a hair perishing.

The true Israel appear here, though in the midst of tumult, in all the calmness of a people who have made the Lord their sanctuary, unalarmed by confederated foes, because they can say, "God is with us" (Isaiah viii.), and strength and peace are promised to them.

At the opening of this glowing Psalm the mighty ones themselves are challenged to acknowledge Jehovah—as the kings of the earth are called to "kiss the Son"—ere it be too late. After this, in Psalm lxxxii., these mighty ones, now convicted in full apostasy, are summoned to hear their doom, and listen to the sentence of righteousness against them.

XXX.

This may be read as the praise of the risen Jesus celebrating Him who has now redeemed Him from death. He calls on the saints, as it were, to help Him in this praise, and He rehearses something of His experience, and of His cry, when under the fear of death (Heb. v. 7), and then resumes His praise, showing that the resurrection had unsealed His lips or awakened His glory. (See also Psalm cxvi.)

But the resurrection of the Lord is in one character of it a pledge of the coming deliverance of His Israel, and thus of the resurrection of the nation. This is to be remembered when reading this Psalm.

NOTE.—Connection may be discovered between Psalms xxviii., xxix., and xxx. Psalm xxviii.—The godly cry to be delivered from death, or the power of the pit. Psalm xxix.—The Lord answers, as with an earthquake, delivering the prisoner. (Matt. xxviii. 2, Rev. vi., xi., xvi. ; see also Psalm xviii. 7.) Psalm xxx.—The delivered one owns this with praise—that as God had now broken His silence with such a voice of power, so would His ransomed break theirs with a voice of praise. (Compare xxviii. 1, with xxx. 12.)

XXXI.

This Psalm is still the utterance of the Lord in resurrection. He recites His cry in the day when He was appointed for the slaughter, as He stood before Pilate and was borne thence to the accursed tree—when He committed His Spirit to the Father (*v.* 5 ; Luke xxiii. 46). In *v.* 10, we must read “distress” instead of “iniquity.”

He was then deserted by all: slander, fear, and reproach were on every side ; His eye, His soul, and His body were consumed, and He was treated as one already dead, cast aside as a broken vessel. As another expresses it, “I doubt whether Christ speaks *personally*” in *v.* 17, 18. For He was not dealing with His enemies in judgment, but in grace, when He was here. He did, however, commit Himself to Him who judged *righteously*. (1 Peter ii. 23.)

But in the deadeast hour of that horrible night He calls to mind how He had trusted in God and remembered His former mercies. And from *v.* 19 to the end, it is no longer the recital of His cry in the hours of Pilate and Calvary, but the utterance of joy and praise for present resurrection. He had now exchanged the grave and dust of death for the power of God in resurrection. And now also He remembers the loving-kindness of the Lord shown Him in “the strong city,” the place of the confederates, out of which He had been delivered, but into which He will by and by go again, not however as a captive, but as an avenger. (See Psalms lx. cviii.)

How suddenly and vigorously does a fresh current of

affections set in at v. 19, and continue to the end ! Is not this still oftentimes the experience of tried saints ?

And on the ground of His resurrection, He calls on all the saints to love the Lord and be of good courage, drawing a word of exhortation for them (as is common with Him) from His own experience. (See Psalms xxvii. xxxiv.) But I still would speak of the resurrection of the Lord as the pledge of that of Israel, as I have just done in the preceding Psalm, and this is to be remembered here.

XXXII.

This Psalm is one of great value to the soul. A pardoned sinner rehearses his experience ; and in this form the most precious truth is conveyed. It may be called the utterance of a sinner in present spiritual resurrection, as the preceding had been of Jesus in actual resurrection. The sinner celebrates the blessedness of his deliverance from the pit, from the guilt of sin, and from the power of an unhumbled, guileful heart. Even the temptation to be guileful is gone—the motive of secresy is removed. “Pride,” as one has said, “heretofore the guardian of the evil arcana of the soul, is expelled from his trust, and made to leave all things open to scrutiny. The time is the time of inquiry and judgment ; and the result is that peace and confidence, that stillness of the spirit, which is never enjoyed until the heart of man has dealt righteously with itself.” This is what we get here—the fruit of the spirit of confession, and the application to the conscience by faith of the value and the blood of Jesus. The joy and confidence of such a risen soul are set forth. The voice of the Lord is then heard for a moment, breaking in with a rich promise ; and at the close, this risen sinner addresses words of admonition to others, as in the preceding Psalm the risen Jesus closed by doing the same.

This is the suited experience or utterance of every pardoned soul, and was, no doubt, eminently that of David. Great value is given to it in Romans iv. Every one that is "godly" (v. 6), whose religion is according to God, finds his confidence springing from the truth or doctrine conveyed by this experience of David.

And Nathanael's "guilelessness" was the guilelessness of this Psalm, I believe, and not of mere natural disposition. (John i. 47.) He had been under the fig-tree in the spirit of this Psalm, as a convicted one, pouring out his heart, and that had freed his spirit from guile; for here we learn that a confessing spirit is a guileless spirit. The Lord, on seeing him, owns him in this character, and Nathanael does not refuse the salutation. Jesus had been in the secret of his soul while under the tree (as he was in the secret of Zaccheus's soul in the sycamore), and they meet together, as the Lord and the suppliant meet in this very blessed Psalm.

He will thus be met still. He knew this guileless Israelite without Philip's introduction; and Jesus still, in spirit, converses with the burthened soul that would pour out its convictions in the solitary place, or under the distant shade (as of yonder fig-tree) to which conscience has separated it.

XXXIII.

The closing words of the previous Psalm are here at the very beginning taken up. This in measure connects them, and invites us to read this in continuation of that.

The righteous being commanded to rejoice in the Lord, the great moral purpose of this Psalm is, to give such views of the Lord as may constrain to rejoice—to show Him as such an One, that it may be said, "Blessed is the nation whose God" He is. For it will not do merely to be commanded to love or rejoice, but the object suited to

these affections must be presented—as here. O that our hearts could entertain it willingly!

We may read the free, discursive musings of the soul in this Psalm, as a sweet sample of that moral ability which a consciously accepted sinner has, to range in thought over the words and works and counsels, the grace and glory of God, and all like things.

Prophetically, this seems to be the joy of the Jewish nation having Jehovah for their God again, after they have witnessed the discomfiture of the heathen, and the second settlement of the world. This would, therefore, lead us to see that the Remnant are “the righteous.”

But all this joy is only anticipated; for from verse 12 to the end, it appears that the nation was still only hoping for all this, and that the course of the present evil world was still going on. But they close with an expression of great confidence, that this resurrection-state of the nation would indeed be accomplished in God’s good time.

XXXIV.

This is another utterance in spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection.

He praises God for this deliverance (1, 2). He calls on His saints to join Him in this (3-7). He exhorts them to trust in God because of this; and to assure themselves, on the ground of His resurrection, that the Lord indeed is gracious. (8-10; see *v.* 8; and 1 Peter ii. 3.)

We know that verse 20 was fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus. (See John xix. 36.)

He then gathers the family around Him to read them as it were the lessons which, as in resurrection, He was by experience abundantly competent to teach them. He tells them how to walk through life so as to escape many of its sorrows; but that if troubles do come (as they will)

even because of their uprightness, they may, as by His example, being now raised from the dead, assure themselves of final deliverance, and that no real damage will ever be sustained by them; but that rather their *redeemer* shall be their *avenger* also, destroying those who hate them.

Thus Jesus by His resurrection comforts and instructs His saints or disciples. He shares with them (as everything else) the profit of His own experience. (See *vv.* 12-15, and 1 Peter iii.)

And this is His mind in Matt. xi. 29, 30—"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." By this telling them what He Himself had already proved, that the path of a meek and lowly heart led the soul unto much rest, making the yoke easy and the burden light. And who of us, beloved, do not prove this?

I might add, suggested by verse 6, how eminently was the Lord Jesus, though "rich in glory" (see Phil. iv. 19), "the poor man," as again called in Psalms xxxv. 10, and xli. 1. We know Him thus in the Evangelists, blessed be His name!

XXXV.

This Psalm may be read as a silent musing of the afflicted soul of Jesus as he stood before Pilate. He pleads with God both for His own rescue and for the judgment and confusion of His persecutors. The "false witnesses" of verse 11 are heard in Matt. xxvi. 59; the "objects" of verse 15 are seen in Luke xxiii. 1; the Lord's saying, "I knew not," in verse 15, is verified by His attitude in Luke xxii. 64; His "quietness in the land," of verse 20, is seen in Matt. xii. 19, xxii. 21; and this shows that the charge against Him in Luke xxiii. 2

was the "deceitful matter" here referred to by this blessed sufferer and witness in verse 20.

One thing especially might be observed here—that the Lord Jesus pleads for judgment upon the persecutor and the enemy. But we should be prepared for this; for in the Gospels we get the same, just heard from His lips for a moment—"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." In these words He does not utter the full request which we meet occasionally in the Psalms, but as distinctly does He leave the world in its unbelief and rejection of grace before the *righteous* judgment. So that these words in John xvii. are of the spirit of those Psalms where Messiah calls for judgment. And if in the Psalms He is heard even pronouncing judgment, that would not be beyond His language in the Gospels—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate;" or, as He again says, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida;" or still more fully, and in the solemnities of a judgment seat in Matt. xxiii. His words to Caiaphas in Matt. xxvi. 64 savour of the same. And beside, we are told that the Lord committed Himself to the *righteous Judge* (1 Peter ii. 23), without reviling or threatening. This Psalm appears to be a sample of such communion. In Psalm lxix., with the commentary we get on it in Rom. xi., we find the same. (See also Psalm xl. 14, 15.)

But the Spirit of Christ in the Remnant will be heard more distinctly crying for judgment, as the iniquity of the world is filling up its measure in their day. We find this not only in the Psalms, as here, but in Luke xviii. 1-8; Rev. vi. 10, &c.

We may notice, all the "bones" were kept in the preceding Psalm (see xxxiv. 20); here they are presented as praising and giving thanks (v. 10).

XXXVI.

The materials of this Psalm are very simple. It does not depend on any peculiar circumstances, but it is the language of any soul forced by the violence of the wicked into the greatness and excellencies of God as its refuge. But especially it is the experience of the Remnant who will have to meet the violence of the evil one in the latter day.

This experience of the saints is very blessed. It proves that out of the eater comes meat, out of the strong one sweetness; that when they are weak, as the apostle finds, then they are strong: for the violence of the wicked only makes us know still more the blessedness of the living God, and thus do we get spoil out of the strong one.

And let the strength of the enemy be as great as it may, yet the saints in spirit looking at God say, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them."

It is a beautiful, comforting meditation. The Psalmist first looks at the greatness of the wickedness of the wicked, and then at the magnificence of the goodness and glory of God. Everything is great in the eye of this worshipper, and he feels that he can leave his cause with God, anticipating the full overthrow of all the mighty in their wickedness.

The worshipper here owns the cause of all this human wickedness, which he had been contemplating to lie in having cast off God's fear; and perhaps he allows that the source, even the heart, was in himself as in any other man. (Rom. vii. 17, 18; Matt. xv. 18-20.) Indeed this Psalm helps the apostle with his divine inspired verdict against man, as an utterly corrupted creature. (See *v.* 1, Rom. iii. 18.)

XXXVII.

This is the meditation of a believer, or a worshipper, as he looks on the moral scene around him, called by the apostle "the course of this world," in the light which faith and hope afford him; and in the calmness and certainty of that light he delivers a word of rich consolation. He tells of the future and final settlement of things between the righteous and the wicked, though all may appear very different for a season.

The burthen of this Psalm is *the excision of the wicked from the earth, and the investing of the meek with the inheritance of it*. It might take for its motto the words of Isaiah—"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him."

And he gives us his experience as a kind of seal of the truth of this; for in his observation of persons and circumstances he could say that he had never seen either the righteous *finally* forsaken, or the wicked, though for a while spreading himself like an evergreen, *finally* prosperous (*vv.* 25, 35). Wherefore he would have the righteous encourage their hearts, though present griefs may be many and various. Their end shall be peace, when the wicked are cut off; their *inheritance* shall come and last for ever, when *the day* (*i.e.*, the judgment) of the ungodly shall come (*vv.* 13, 18).

Meekness, which is thus to end in the inheritance (see Matt. v. 5) appears to be that temper of soul that makes us willing to be nothing till the promised inheritance comes. The Lord Jesus (in whom was all perfectness) fully expressed it. Though Lord of all, He was content to have nothing; and the kingdom is a reward of His meekness. (Matt. xxi. 5.) The saints, in their measure, are the meek now. The Remnant will be so in their day. (Zeph. ii. 3.) This Psalm may therefore be read by us all;

for the experience of all God's chosen is in kind the same as to this; but the remnant, in fuller measure, will need the consolation of it when they come to be pressed by the successful confederacies of the wicked in the latter day. Verse 11 and Matt. v. 5 shew the disciples of the Lord Jesus and the Remnant of the last days to be in much moral identity.

Thus this Psalm would teach us not to live for any hope short of resurrection and the kingdom—and that they are divinely wise, and they only, who “consider their latter end.” A simple, serious, and holy lesson—a happy one to God's strangers and pilgrims. “For the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

XXXVIII.

The penitent in this Psalm feels both the weight of God's righteous anger, and the bitterness of man's undeserved enmity (*vv.* 4, 19, 20). It suits David's suffering from Absalom because of his sin against God in the matter of Uriah. He speaks as like a leper outside the camp. And such is the figure of a convicted sinner, or of a saint under discipline. He is separated as one defiled and defiling; but Jesus can meet us in that place, though none else can. As a poor woman convicted of her sins once said, “I am too bad for any but Jesus,” and that blessed Saviour, as we know, at once “spotless” and yet “made sin,” was led to the slaughter without opening His mouth. (*v.* 13, Matt. xxvi. 63; xxvii. 12, 14.) He did not answer the accusing of the wicked, but silently, or in the unutterable musing of His spirit, committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. This was expressed in David towards Shimei. (2 Sam. xvi.) David knew not the counsel of the sons of Zeruiah—his soul had no sympathy with it.

And this Psalm may be read as an utterance of the Remnant ; for they will call to remembrance, and take upon them the sin of their nation in shedding the righteous blood of Jesus, though personally they had no share in it. (Zech. xii. 10.) For the sin of David touching Bathsheba and Uriah may represent Israel's sin touching Jesus ; innocent blood was shed, and unclean alliances were formed. The Jewish people cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and at the same moment said, "We have no king but Cæsar." And then, we may say in a sense and measure, the subsequent sorrows of David at the hand of Absalom represent the Remnant's sorrows at the hand of their enemy, the wilful king ; and this makes the same penitential Psalms the utterance of both David and the Remnant.

It is worthy of consideration whether the *foot-slipping* in verse 16 is not *calamity* rather than *transgression*. (See Deut. xxxii. 35 ; Psalm xciv. 18.)

XXXIX.

David's conduct towards Shimei can explain this Psalm also. He was dumb while the wicked were before him. He was accepting the punishment of his sin, bowing himself under the mighty hand of God in silence. His repentance, as in 2 Sam. xv.-xix. is a very affecting sight indeed.

The path of the soul in this Psalm is very blessed, and within the range of the experience of the saints at all times. It is to be traced thus—

Under provocation, the believer is resolved in God's strength to be silent, though this at first stirred and kindled the sorrow within (1, 2). But the Spirit, in season, brought relief, and gave the fire of spiritual affections in the soul increased and lively energy. For this is His way—if nature be restrained, the new kingdom will rise in

power. So it was here. During the silence put upon nature, this warmth of the renewed heart is heated, and yields blessed fruit to this silence and mortification ; for the lips are opened, not to revile again, nor to threaten those from whom he was suffering, but to commit himself to God, owning his own unworthiness, and taking all this suffering as from the hand of his gracious God for good (3-11). His soul, by all this holy exercise, learns to see itself in heavenly companionship with God himself in this earth, and he only looks for strength to travel the rest of his pilgrim journey with increased alacrity and vigour (12, 13).

This suits us all ; and blessed is the soul of any saint thus healthfully exercised. We should know these paths of the Spirit better than we do. Thus will the repentant Israel of the latter day accept the punishment of their sin. (Lev. xxvi. 40.) So, in silence, did Jesus receive our chastisement. (Isaiah liii. 7 ; Matt. xxvi. 63 ; see Psalm xxxviii.)

Shimei did the part of that injurious multitude who surrounded the blessed Sufferer before the Governor and on Calvary, reviling Him with their lips, and gnashing on Him with their teeth. Ahithophel was the Judas of those scenes in 2 Samuel. (See Psalm cix.)

XL.

Probably this Psalm was uttered by David on the same occasion. But the Spirit who spoke through David, and in David's circumstances, soon leaves David to utter the heart of Jesus only. (*v.* 6-8 ; and Heb. x. 5-7.)

The opening verses give us the Lord's anticipation of His resurrection or deliverance ; He afterwards rehearses His self-dedication, His ministry, His sorrows, and His cry. He tells us that He patiently waited for resurrection. He might, we know, have asserted His divine power ; but

He waited till He was raised "by the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Heb. xiii.) Thus was He, as He says in this Psalm, the poor and needy one—the one who depended on God for everything—the one who waited patiently in exercise of faith.

As in other Psalms, He confesses the sins which He had taken on Him. For such confession both vindicates God, and is a gracious adoption of that which had been laid upon Him, that we may have strong consolation in knowing *the reality* of the imputation of our sins to His account; as the high priest, under the law, *confessed* Israel's sins on the head of the scape-goat.

The unnumbered multitude of God's thoughts (see also Psalm cxxxix.) beautifully expresses the diligence and delight of God over Christ and His redeemed, as though this object were all His concern, and the centre of all His counsels. Would that we knew how to enjoy this truth as we should! (See Psalm lxx. in connection with the closing verses of this.)

XLI.

This Psalm still suits David in the same affliction. In it he seems at the beginning to have respect to Barzillai, who in the day of Absalom, Ahithophel, and Shimei, considered the afflicted David. (2 Samuel xvii. 27, 29.) He then pleads against his enemies, and ends with anticipation of his own deliverance and their confusion to the praise of his God, the God of Israel.

But Jesus is surely here, as in the others. We could not, we dared not, we would not, however, see Him in verse 4; and this reminds me of what I have already observed on Psalm xxvii. The daughters of Jerusalem (Luke xxiii.) may be regarded as filling in measure the place of Barzillai, as Judas does that of Ahithophel, or the multitude that of Shimei. And they moved the Lord's

sympathy, as Barzillai did David's. They gave him as it were a cup of cold water, and it got its reward. But Barzillai is a pattern of all who now in the day of His rejection own the righteous Jesus; to whom He says, "ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations."

And blessed indeed is he who thus looks at the mystery of the preceding Psalm, and considers the poor and needy Jesus, and who by faith casts in his lot with Him. "Blessed is he," as He says Himself, "whosoever is not offended in me." And yet the pride of life and the course of this apostate world make our following of "this poor man" no easy or pleasant thing.

NOTE.—Here ends the first of the five books into which the Jews distribute the Psalms.

Psalms xlii.-xlix. constitute a little series or volume. They are all said to be "for the sons of Korah"—an intimation of their being connected with each other. They may have been indited at different times, but that is no matter; the Spirit of God has presented them to us together, and they so follow in order that one subject is duly unfolded in them.

The subject may be said to be this: "The sorrows of the Jewish remnant in the latter day, their triumphs, and then their joy and glory in Zion as head of the nations under their great king."

XLII.

This Psalm gives us the complaint of a suppliant who is in sorrow because of separation from God's house, because of the reproach of his enemies, and because of the remembrance of joy now gone by. He is, however, able to encourage himself in God, and to hope for the future.

David's sorrow at the hand of Absalom was kindred with this; for we remember how he was then driven

beyond Jordan, and how he sent back Zadok and the Ark of God to Jerusalem. All his joy was in God's habitation ; but he had sinned, and his soul owned that *joy* was not his proper portion then. (2 Sam. xv.)

But in all this, we may say, like king, like people. The people, the true Israel of God, in the latter day will come to such sorrow and desire after God. They will mourn sore like doves—like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. (Ezek. vii. 16.)

The Spirit of Christ, in full sympathy with them (for in all their afflictions He is afflicted), will lead the soul of the Remnant in these exercises, making them His own. The challenge of the enemy to the individual suppliant, "Where is *thy* God?" (verse 3) is given to us in Joel ii. 17, as said by the heathen to God's Israel, "Where is *their* God?"

But the spirit of this Psalm may be the burthen of any righteous and afflicted one. And all such sorrow gives exercise of soul towards God, and advances the discipline of the wilderness. It gives knowledge of God's resources, which had never been otherwise brought out by Him, or known by us.

XLIII.

This is very similar to the preceding. The character of the enemy is perhaps more defined, and the wilful king or the lawless one, and the apostate nation. The troubles of the righteous Remnant are no doubt looked at by the Spirit.

In the brokenness of his heart in these Psalms, the suppliant pours forth interrupted words ; sometimes addressing God, then his own soul, and then the enemy who was grieving him. The trial of any believer very naturally utters itself in the like manner ; and all of us, duly waiting for Jesus and feeling what the world is

without Him, should find our sympathies in these Psalms. We should all be conscious that we have *tears* to drink if God's *water-brooks* are not with us.

XLIV.

Here the complaint becomes the complaint of many. They stand in the consciousness of integrity, though in great sorrow; but they remember God's mercies to their fathers, and upon this they appeal to Him.

It is strikingly the cry of a *martyred* people, or of those who were suffering at the hand of man for righteousness' sake, and not for any iniquity or wrong they had done. Such was David when troubled by Saul; such will the godly Israel be when troubled by the bold infidel power of the latter day; and such, we need not say, was Jesus, the perfect witness of righteousness against the deeds of the world. (John vii. 7.) But such, in our measure, should all of us be, in refusing the course of this present evil world, and taking the separate place of Jesus.

There is an advance in the experience of the soul here. In the two earlier Psalms (xlii., xliii.) it had been rather the cry of a penitent, righteously separated from God's house, as David in Absalom's days; but here it is the cry of martyrs.

This Psalm strikingly shows that scripture, primarily or prophetically belonging to a particular people, may have moral or general application; for verse 1 plainly shows this to be a Jewish utterance, but St. Paul applies it to all saints. (Rom. viii. 36, and v. 22.) And he intimates that as it is the blessed office of the Holy Ghost to maintain the soul in the sense of God's love (Rom. v. 5), nothing shall be so strong *against* us, as is the Holy Ghost *for* us, maintaining that love. (Rom. viii. 39.)

A difference, however, between the suppliant in the

Psalm and the apostle in the Epistle is this: the Psalmist gathers present confidence in the sorrow from what the fathers had told of God's mercies in times of old; the apostle gathers his from being able, through the Holy Ghost, to trace God's counsels of love and glory towards himself and all that love God—the called according to His purpose. So, I may observe, there is a difference in the affection of the two: in the one it is *fear*, from the knowledge that God searcheth the heart; in the other it is *love*, from the knowledge of His unchangeable love.

XLV.

Messiah in His second advent is here celebrated; and this properly forms the Lord's gracious answer to the complaints of the Remnant uttered in the preceding Psalm, and to their cry there (xliv. 26) for Messiah to come as deliverer to Zion.

The heart and the tongue find ready and joyful work when the King in His beauty becomes their subject. For in such a theme, "the Ready Writer," the Holy Ghost, is at His due work. He is taking of the things of Christ to show to us. And the mind of the saint is at home also. As one of our own poets has said, speaking of the things of Jesus,

"My heart, my hand, my ear, my tongue,
Here's joyful work for you."

But in passing on to the Lord as King, the prophet's heart and tongue pause for a moment over His *person* and *ministry in the days of His flesh*. And it may be that *His present glory, as Priest in the heavens*, is intimated in the words, "Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." But quickly all is passed by to see Him, as *king David*, fighting the Lord's battle in the cause of truth, meekness, and righteousness, and clearing the land of all workers of iniquity; and then as *king Solomon*,

seated on the throne of glory. God consecrates Him to the office, owning righteousness to be His title, and all greet Him with love, like hers who once broke her alabaster box of ointment over His head (verses 8, 9). Jerusalem, the mystic queen, is also addressed ; and the nations, her companions, set off the joy and glory of the king.

But there is something striking as regards this queen. She is looked at as coming, like any sinner of the Gentiles, from some place of defilement which she is exhorted to leave behind her. (Deut. xxi. 13.) This tells us the character in which Jerusalem will be finally received, even like a returned prodigal ; and *so* the king shall greatly desire her beauty. For in such is all His delight. It is His own beauty He sees in such—the beauty He Himself hath put on them—the shoes, and the ring, and the best robe.

In this Psalm accordingly the Lord's title is owned to stand in His *righteousness* (v. 7) ; but Jerusalem's title, the queen's title, as that of every sinner, is only by *grace*. This is just and beautiful. And perhaps the Canticles give us the exercises of this daughter thus *considering*, as she is here exhorted, passing through discipline of heart in preparation for this union with the King.

Observe, the queen is the earthly, not the heavenly Jerusalem ; because, first, her marriage is with the King, not with the Lamb ; second, her marriage follows, not precedes, the victory. The Jews in their ancient writings speak of a Jerusalem *above* and a Jerusalem *below*, and of the one being like the other—of Jerusalem being built in the firmament as Jerusalem on earth.

We may read verses 16, 17 as addressed to the King—"thy" in verse 16, as well as in verse 17, being in the masculine gender.

XLVI.

Here, as necessarily consequent upon the second advent which had, as we saw, just been celebrated or anticipated, the complaint of the remnant is turned into praise and gladness. God has now become their refuge. By His arm the enemy is stilled. Peace flows like a river, and the spear is turned into a pruning-hook. The mountain, according to Matt. xxi. 21, had been cast into the sea, while the elect were in their closets, and now they rehearse all this. Nothing of terror touches them. They can talk of the waters gladdening, instead of overwhelming, them. They can triumph in the desolations, instead of perishing by them; for none less than God Himself has been their refuge. "Where is thy God?" has been the reproach of the enemy, and the answer is returned to him in the triumph of this Psalm.

The judgments on the ungodly precede the kingdom, as this Psalm and all the scripture teach us; for by and by, *righteousness* will link itself with *power*, and then evil will be judged; and afterwards the whole earth will be governed in peace. Righteousness will take the *sword* first, and then the *sceptre*.

XLVII.

The God of Jacob, who had been celebrated in the preceding Psalm in His warrior character, or as God of battles, is in this greeted in a further stage of His glorious ways. His Jewish people here speak as conscious of the place and dignity in the earth to which He has now called them; and He Himself is addressed by them as having come to Zion, and there taken His seat as King of the whole earth; and all the nations are called to worship before Him. He has "gone up." The gates have now lifted up their heads to let this King of glory

in. (Psalm xxiv.) Jehovah-Jesus, God of Israel, is now King of all the earth ; there is one Lord, and His name one. (Zechariah xiv.)

Some, competent to speak on such matters, have suggested that in the 9th verse, we should read "the princes of the people have joined themselves to the people of the God of Abraham."

XLVIII.

The same God of Jacob is looked at in a still onward stage of His glory. In the last Psalm He had just "gone up" to His throne, as after victory—here He is seated, as King and Priest, in His temple and on His throne. And because of this, Zion is the joy of the whole earth, as it has just proved itself the terror of all evil confederacies. Hope is now realized, and faith has become sight. "As we have heard, so have we seen."

The beauty of Jerusalem in the day of the glory is celebrated by the prophets, as well as the beauty of Messiah—the comeliness of the city as well as that of the Son of David—of the queen as of the King in the days of the kingdom. (See xlv.) So here we are told to walk round her and survey her wall.

Isaiah lx. sets forth her honour and praise in these days. For David and Jerusalem were by ancient decree linked in one covenant of peace and joy,—the Lord of Israel saying, "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom ; but will give one tribe for thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (1 Kings xi. 13.)

XLIX.

The dealings of the Lord with His Israel having been traced, and their course from sorrow and degradation up to settled glory and joy (xlii.-xlviii.), the Prophet of God

addresses a word of wisdom and admonition to all the world, taking these ways of God with Israel as his text. He seems to look at them as a parable, and in this Psalm gives us the moral or application of that parable. He shows that God resists the proud, but raises the lowly, and that the upright alone have an abiding portion. And this is, indeed, the great moral of the world's history, as well as of Israel's. All shows that what is done "under the sun" is vanity; and that resurrection, comprehending what leads to it in grace, and what follows it in glory, is the only reality. (See Eccles. xii. 13, 14.) All honour in the world will perish like the beasts (*v.* 12). Wise and brutish ones alike die (*v.* 10). Wealth is unequal to accomplish redemption from corruption (6-9). All beauty, short of that which the God of resurrection imparts, shall be consumed in the grave; but there is a morning to arise for the joy and glory of all who are His (14, 15).

Resurrection will interpret all. It is the Lord's witness. And Israel delivered in the latter day will be Israel as in resurrection.

L.

This magnificent Psalm presents the Lord conducting the judgment of the house of Israel in the last days. The judgment is set (*vv.* 1-6), and then the books are opened, and out of them two distinct charges are read, as we shall presently see. The remnant are separated from this judgment by one simple characteristic: "Those who had made a covenant with God by sacrifice." He does not describe them by any lengthened account of what they had either done or suffered for Him; but He speaks of them as believers, as sinners trusting in the blood and sacrifice of the Saviour. This is enough for the purpose. As Jesus, introducing the saints to the notice of the Father, tells of them in the same one

character, saying, "They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." (John xvii.)

Jehovah then prefers His charges against Israel. He indicts them for ignorance of His true worship,—in the same particulars as St. Paul charges the Gentiles in his sermon at Athens. (Acts xvii.) And it is simply this: man in his religion treats God as one who is to be ministered to and to be appeased, instead of as the blessed giver and reconciler himself. This is the grand difference between human and divine religion. God's religion is *grace*, man's religion is *works*. Israel had loaded the altar with offerings, but did not use God as a deliverer (7-15). Such is the first charge read out of the books when the judgment is set. The second is then moved against them. It concerns their practical life and conversation, as the former did their religion and worship. It condemns their conduct as astray also. Religious they were, but unrighteous also (16-21).

Upon all this the Lord addresses a word of warning, of rebuke, and of exhortation, that Israel may heed it in time, ere the judgment thus announced enters, and there be no escape. Let them learn the religion of *praise*, and the conduct of *righteousness*, and thus be duly and happily on the road to *salvation or glory* (22, 23).

It is well, we may say on this Psalm, that the heart be established with grace, not with meats. God's sanctuary is furnished with grace,—man's with meats or carnal observances. If it be God's sanctuary we enter, we shall do so with *praise*, and leave it to walk in a *well-ordered conversation* onward to *salvation* or the kingdom as here shewn us. If it be man's sanctuary we enter—the "spirit of bondage" will fill us—"meats" or religiousness will occupy us, but no real renewed devotedness to God. God's truth will free the conscience, and make us happy

in Him through boundless riches of grace, and obedient to Him in ways of righteousness. Man's lie or man's religion will keep us in fear, and leave us unrenewed.

LI.

This Psalm appears to come very expressively after the preceding one. It exhibits a soul giving heed to the doctrine and warning delivered there. It is a call on the Lord (L 15) in the day of trouble—in the day of deepest trouble too—*soul* trouble. The poor sinner here flees to *grace*, flees with his burden to God alone. And this is what the rebuke on the legal religion of Israel in the last Psalm would warrant and lead to.

It is not alone the utterance of David, penitent for his sin touching Uriah and Bathsheba, but the utterance of the repentant remnant in the latter day. (See Ps. xxxviii.) The confessor brings a broken heart to God—the only present acceptable offering. But when accepted and pardoned, then will his thanksgiving and burnt offering of praise be rendered and received.

And it is in God alone, as I have said, that the afflicted soul here seeks its relief. He repudiates other confidences. Even ordinances are not his refuge. Sacrifices and offerings which he might bring he renounces as the remedy for his guilt; but it is God's washing, God's salvation and righteousness alone he pleads for and looks to.

And this is blessed. For *ordinances* are resorted to by a convicted soul oftentimes, as a *good heart or a good life* would be trusted in by a mere moralist. But it is only another, though more subtle, form of self-righteousness.

And further we may observe this Psalm tells us that as God was all David's relief and repose, so was He all David's object: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." As he says to Nathan, "I have sinned *against the Lord*." This was the thought in the heart of the true penitent

then, and must be still. And from the history we know that the Lord did become David's object. All his behaviour after his conviction shewed this; for he would let the Lord do with him just as He pleased—bring him back to gladness as and when He pleased (2 Sam. xv. 25), and plead for him Himself with his reviler and persecutor. (2 Sam. xvi. 12.)

How does all this tell us to cultivate the habit of walking with God. "Little to be judged of *man's* judgment," says the Apostle. May we be so minded! May we desire to prove our own work in God's presence, so that we may have rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another! May we give the Lord His place in us! He had no place in Judas's heart, he had in Peter's; He had none in the heart of Saul, He had in David's. And so will He have in the affections of His Israel by and by, when they learn to own their sin against Him, as in the language of this Psalm, while the nation, with apostate heart, will be saying, "It is vain to serve God." (Malachi iii.)

LII.

This Psalm presents something quite in contrast with the preceding. There the sinner, as we saw, was broken down and turned to God in repentance; here he goes on still in wickedness and in the stubbornness and pride of his heart refusing grace. The penitent was David or the Jewish remnant, as we also saw, and this mighty boaster is as Absalom or the wilful king. This apostate is here still triumphant; but the remnant are trusting in grace, and anticipating their dominion over him.

The "taunting proverb," as Habbakuk speaks, is very fine here (v. 7). We have several of these in scripture, uttered over the fall of some proud infidel despisers of the Lord. His goodness has been scorned, His corrections

unheeded, His entreaties mocked, His warnings slighted, and then, when there is no remedy, the Lord "laughs at the calamity, and mocks when the fear cometh." (See Exod. xv., Judges v., Isaiah xiv., Ezek. xxviii., Rev. xviii., for instances of these insultations or "taunting proverbs.")

And this Psalm is interesting to us as giving us a divine interpretation of "the olive tree" and its "branches." (See Rom. xi.) It is *grace* or the covenant of promise, and *those who trust in it*, as the penitent here says, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever."

And such is the interpretation of the same symbol in Rom. xi.; for those branches there said to be cut off were such as did not *believe, i.e.*, trust in mercy; and those who are there promised an abiding place are so promised on their continuing in *goodness, i.e.*, continuing in the grace of God.

And so the olive trees and the candlesticks are connected. (Zech. iv.; Rev. xi.) For to be a *witness*, we must first live by *grace* ourselves. We must draw forth the fatness of the olive ere we can shine on the candlestick.

LIII.

The wilful king or the boaster who refuses grace or divine goodness, having been apprehended by the prophet in the preceding Psalm, in contrast too, as we saw, with the penitent remnant, the same wicked one is still, through several Psalms, kept before his eye. Here he is challenged as the fool or the infidel; for such will he be. He will shew himself to be God; he will act as though there were none above him; he will do according to his will, magnifying himself above every god, and speak marvellous things against the God of gods. Thus do

prophets and apostles forecast the likeness of this apostate of the last days. (See Dan. xi. ; 2 Thess. ii.)

And how different the mind of the righteous remnant from that of this apostate. They are humbled and broken in heart, while he is in the fulness of pride. They make God everything to them in this day of their trouble, while he is saying and acting on what he says, "There is no God." Such is the contrast. And thus the saints now distinguish themselves from the world. Jesus, Jesus, is their all in all—His fulness that treasure out of which they become complete. (See Col. ii.)

The "great fear" of this Psalm appears to be that of the penitent remnant ; on the other hand, the "great fear" of Psalm xiv. appears to be that of the boaster and his bands—the enemies of the remnant. This accounts for the difference towards the close of each of these Psalms.

LIV.

Its first and second verses express desires on the ground of the affliction rehearsed in the third. And then to the close the suppliant, assuring himself of an answer, makes promise of offering praise to God.

Of course such might be the utterance of faith in any. But prophetically it is the language of the righteous Israel under the pressure of the wilful king, who as we saw had been just manifested. (See lii., liii.) And we know that when the Lord does bring them into the wilderness of the last days, He will then speak comfortably to them, and give them hope in that valley of Achor. (Hosea ii.) In this Psalm they seem to taste this hope. God's Israel here cast themselves on His *name* (v. 1), and His *name* will at the end be their praise (v. 6) ; for we know that His *name* will deliver them. (See Rev. xix.) They call the apostate faction "strangers ;" for strangers to God

and His Israel they will be, as saints are strangers in the world and to its ways.

NOTE.—On the last verse of this Psalm it has been profitably said—"The preterite tense is used here as expressive of confidence in future mercies. In prophetic language this tense often expresses the certainty of things future."

LV.

This Psalm still like the preceding ones contemplates the lawless or wilful king and his faction. Some of it is the utterance of the Lord Jesus in contemplation of the treachery of Judas and the faction that followed him.* Ultimately it is the lawless one, or some other confederate with him, felt and pleaded against by the godly Remnant in the latter days who are deceived by him, as Jesus was by Judas. For looked at as a Jew, or one of God's nation, Jesus was the Remnant in His day. But this Psalm is also the utterance, in his measure, of David himself, under the craft and treason of Ahithophel in company with Absalom. (See 2 Sam. xv. xvi.) John xiii. 21, shows us how deeply the Lord felt the conduct of Judas, as this Psalm does; as also xli. But His relief was in prayer (verses 16, 17; see also lxix. 13).

Israel took their character from Judas then. (Acts i. 16.) He led and represented them. So will the nation be confederate with the lawless one by and by, and the godly Remnant, like Jesus, will find "violence and strife in the city" (v. 9).

We may observe that the strong thought in this Psalm is this: that *the city* is worse even than a *wilderness*. For if the afflicted one here could have done so, he would have exchanged the former for the latter. But what a view of man does this give us! He makes his place more

* NOTE.—See the observations on Psalm xxvii. as to a *part* of some Psalms, and *not the whole* being the language of Christ.

terrible than the haunts of wild beasts ! For "the city" is *man's* place. And through human strife and fraud and violence, it becomes worse than the place of the untamed creatures. In this state, man is likened by the Spirit to the fiercer beasts of the desert. (Dan. vii., Rev. xiii.) And all of us should have this sense of what man and his place is. Jesus found it to be so, and His relief was only in God. And He could say to God, though in this place of man, "thou hast shewn me marvellous kindness in a large city." But by and by, this city of man will be thrown down, (ver. 23, Rev. xvi. 19,) and place made for God's city, where all will be peace and joy.

LVI.

This is still the cry of the same sufferer, by reason of the pressure of the same enemy. He is here under the sense of being completely shut up, having no present resources, while his enemies are many, their plots against him daily, their enmity to him the subject of all their thoughts. Gatherings, hidings, and waitings of them against him are now what he sees or apprehends continually.

The word or promise of God is all his resource—not *present* strength, but the word of promise—God's remembrance of him ; God's bottling of his tears ; telling his wanderings or sorrows. This is all he has now, the *remembrance* of God, as Noah had it in the ark, (Gen. viii. 1,) and as this same afflicted people will have by and by, according to Malachi's anticipation of them. (iii. 16.) *The word* is the hope of the sufferer here, and he assures himself that the chief occasion of his praise by and by will be the word also, or the accomplishing of what he now believes and hopes. As the apostle says, "I know whom I have *believed*." It is not that there is present

deliverance, but there is promise, and faith can listen to that and receive it as the pledge of future praise.

Such should just be the state of our souls. They should rest in the promises, knowing that they will be made good, and become the theme of constant delight. We are never straitened in "the word" or the promises. They are all we want. We need only the faith to enjoy them with full ease of heart. As this poor sufferer anticipates occasions of praise and the payment of his vows, in the light of the living.

LVII.

The spirit of this Psalm is much like that of the preceding, and is another utterance, without doubt, of the same sufferers, at the same season.

There are fuller and brighter anticipations of deliverance here ; and there is, as afterwards in Psalm cxliv., expectation of that deliverance by some mission or ministry "from above," or from heaven. The scene in Rev. xix. is the answer of this expectation : there the heavens open to let down the deliverer here desired and expected.

How this collection of Psalms, contemplating strongly, as has been said, the wilful king or apostate of the last days, presents the sorrows of God's people in this world ! Indeed all Scripture does,—“we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” How could the Christ or the saints of God count but on resistance and martyrdom in a world that ever abides in full enmity against Him. “No man should be moved by these afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”—“As it were, appointed unto death.” But it is *rest* that remaineth. And so this Psalm blessedly anticipates God's exaltation, and His people's praise and songs, when the enemy is gone for ever—when the divine “mercy and truth” and the mission “from above” have

accomplished the deliverance. The saint prepares his instrument for a thankful song to the Lord—as David prepared music for the days of Solomon. (1 Chron. xxv.)

LVIII.

The rulers and judges of the earth are challenged, as again in Ps. lxxxii. But they are here called “sons of men” (see John v. 27) ; but there, “gods.”

Under their hand, the world is left in all its native wickedness. The evil state of it is awfully described ; and the Prophet calls solemnly for judgment upon them.

And there is this also set forth in the Psalm—the *ground* of the triumph of the righteous when the judgment of the world comes. We have that triumph itself, for instance, in Is. xxx. 32, and in Rev. xix. 1. But here we have the ground or principle of all that righteous joy in the judgment of God. “The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth.” The saint could not as yet, in this present dispensation, triumph in judgment, because the Lord is publishing His name and praise in grace ; but by and by he will learn to triumph in it, because the Lord will vindicate His divine glory by vengeance, and establish His government of “the world to come” by the judgment of “this present world.”

All this is perfect in its season. We now rejoice in the *redeeming grace* of our kinsman ; by and by we shall be able to triumph in the *avenging power* of the same kinsman. For both belonged to the Goel under the law, and both are the ways of our Jesus in their seasons. Rev. v. shows the saints in the first of these joys or triumphs ; Rev. xix. shows them in the second.

This judgment of the earth and its gods or rulers will not, of course, take place till the apostate or wilful one of the last days be manifested. So that this Psalm is the utterance of the Spirit of God in the Remnant, and contemplates the same time and circumstances as the preceding ones, as we have seen from Psalm lii.

LIX.

This is still the cry of the same godly, consciously innocent sufferer, against the confederacy of mighty wicked ones, who, in infidel pride, despise the judgments of God. They are called "the heathen," regarded as infidel, while God is all the hope of the poor afflicted one. The language may remind us of Psalm ii. 1, and Joel iii. 12. It is to be read as the cry of the suffering Remnant in the latter day against the confederacy. *Signal* judgment upon it is sought for (v. 11); as Jesus desires the same on His Jewish persecutors, in Ps. lxi. And as the Jewish nation are at this present time under *signal* judgment, so will this Gentile confederacy be in the coming day of vengeance. (See Is. lxvi. 24.)

The disappointment of the enemy is strikingly conceived in verses 14, 15, contrasted with their temporary advantage in verse 6. In their prosperity they belched through satiety, but now they grudge as unfed beasts.

The morning comes for the joy of the Remnant, after the evening rapine of these unclean ones has ended in their destruction (v. 16).

Messiah, to whom "the people" belong (v. 11), seems to lift up this cry for His Remnant against "all the heathen." And His confidence in God is strongly expressed in the cry He utters, and in spite of the enemy's strength and malice.

LX.

Here the Jewish Remnant desire the return of the Lord's countenance, which, as we know (Is. viii. 17), is now turned away from Israel. And they are conscious that till then, the earth will all be out of order. For Israel is the centre of the Lord's earthly arrangements ; Zion is the place of His earthly rest.

They own that they had been drinking the wine of astonishment, or gathering the bitter fruit of God's righteous displeasure. But in the midst of all that, they equally own that those who had continued in His fear had known Him, because of His truth and faithfulness, to be a banner to them.

With increased confidence they claim the hopes of beloved ones (verse 5). Then God answers from the sanctuary. Their cry awakens Him, as it were, to a sense of His glory, or inheritance in the earth. For He now surveys His earthly possessions. Shechem, Succoth, Gilead, Manasseh, and distant parts of Moab and Philistia are now owned by Him, and He triumphs in the sight of His glory. He rejoices over them all as His possession, anticipating, in the midst of this, His insultation over Edom. This may call to mind the exulting action of the mighty angel (Christ) in Rev. x. 1-3 ; He there anticipates His inheritance of the earth in a spirit of triumph.

And thus it often is. The touch of the poor woman in the crowd at once awakened Jesus, and the repentance of the prodigal opened new joys in the Father's house. And so here. The desires of the Remnant, the hopes and claims of the beloved one uttered on earth, call God's thoughts toward His possessions here, and give Him a joy and triumph over them.

Messiah, on listening to this voice in the sanctuary, in

spirit enters this scene of deep and strong affections, longing for the day of battle in the land of Edom, over which His shoe is to be cast. (See Is. lxiii. 1.) He is "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." He is zealous to meet the enemy, assured of victory through the help of the God of Israel.

LXI.

This is a beautiful and touching little Psalm. It is as an utterance of Jesus in the sense of being rejected by Israel, though He were consciously and rightfully their king. And David, hunted by Saul in the caves and deserts after he had been anointed by Samuel, was the type of Christ in such condition. (See 1 Sam.)

This rejection by Israel gives Jesus to feel Himself a stranger here. He is, as it were, at "the end of the earth;" and there He prays, and there He desires the Rock, that is, Resurrection (see xl. 2), or the Kingdom. But He trusts, with full faith, in God's present presence and shelter; and in that, as His tabernacle, He is purposed to abide "for ever," or through *the age of His rejection*. But after a pause, He anticipates more than a shelter in a time of rejection and sorrow. He assures Himself of God's favour to Him *as King*; and that, as such, He will soon abide "for ever," or through *the age of a kingdom*, when He will pay the vows of His present distressful hours, and His cries and prayers shall be changed for joy and praise.

LXII.

This same rejected King, the disowned Son of David, is here heard also. He is blessedly making God every thing to Him. He will own no other refuge, or source of strength, but God. God is His rock, His salvation, His glory. His soul waits only upon Him, and all His ex-

pectation is from Him. (See Heb. x. 12, 13, and see Ps. cx.) This is a truly excellent expression of the faith of the rejected Jesus, who was the Remnant, as we may speak, in His day ; and most acceptable must have been the incense of it before God.

In this Psalm, Jesus *enjoys* God as His Rock ; in Ps. lxi. He *desired* the Rock—and He encourages His people to have the same mind, and to cease from man ; and challenges the men of this world for their deceit and violence and false confidence.

Well indeed has He learnt the lesson, that “power belongeth unto God.” For *once* God had spoken it, but *twice* Jesus had heard it. He had heard it with a full witness of its truth ; so wide did He open His ear to divine instruction morning by morning. (Is. l. 4.) Man is a duller scholar. (See Job xxxiii. 14.)

Thus the Lord shows Himself separate from fallen man. He trusts only in God, and will take only from God. The devil would have had Him trust him, and take from him, as Adam did of old (Gen. iii.), and as the Apostate will by and by (Rev. xiii. 2), but He refused. (Matt. iv.)

And He has learnt God's mercy also. Because, though God Himself is every thing, as their utterance had owned, yet will He give every one the reward of his works. Though He works all our works in us, yet will He deal with them as ours, and reward even the cup of cold water given in the name of Jesus.

LXIII.

The same disowned King is again heard in this Psalm. But here He is making God the great source of refreshment and joy to His spirit, as in the preceding Psalm He made Him the ground of His confidence and strength in circumstances.

The whole system in Israel, as settled by the Lord, was a sanctuary. (Ex. xv. 17, Ps. cxiv. 2.) For a sanctuary is a place where God makes Himself known, and the land of Israel was such a place. Jehovah was there. But Israel had revolted, and Jesus was disowned. And thus it was "a dry and thirsty land" to the righteous.

But in this Psalm, faith is in lively exercise. As Jesus cannot *see* God's power and glory in the sanctuary, He will *remember* God Himself. He has the sense of His loving-kindness, though the sight of the sanctuary be denied Him. His meditation on Him shall fill Him with praise, and the conscious shadow of His wing with rejoicing, though He be now cast out, and the place be in itself dry and thirsty.

This is blessed exercise of the soul upon God. And refusing His soul any other present joy than this remembrance of God, He assures Himself of other joy by and by, even royal joy, joy in His kingdom, and confusion of all His enemies, when they shall be made a portion for the beasts of the earth. (Rev. xix.; Ezekiel xxxix.) Because spiritual joy and refreshment, however blessed, is not the end. Glory ought still to be the expectation. Christ having a kingdom in store for Him, nothing less than the joy of a King can satisfy Him. He is even now, though seated at God's right hand, still an expectant. (Heb. x. 13.)

This Psalm was also, to all appearance, David's utterance when separated from God's house but still encouraged by God's spiritual presence. And our souls should know these secrets. Did not Peter know them when he slept, and Paul and Silas when they sang praises in the prison? There was no sanctuary around them, but the Holy Ghost had spread within a kingdom of light and liberty and joy in God. They were citizens of a city that needed not the light of the sun. The godly Jew in the last days will find

his sympathy with this utterance also. Verse 10. "Foxes." (See Lam. v. 18; Luke xiii. 31, 34.) The fox does different work from the "hen." She gathereth under her wing,—he scatters and desolates.

LXIV.

The suffering Jesus here prays for protection from His insidious infidel persecutors, who privily plot against Him, and despise the judgments of God.

More fully, however, it is the desire of the Spirit of Christ in union with the afflicted Remnant in the latter day. For against them, as against Jesus Himself, the infidel faction, as we know both from Psalms and Prophets, will plot.

And Psalms of this character may remind us of what is said of the Lord in 1 Peter ii. 23. As we know also from John xvii. 25, that He did commit the world, in its infidelity, to the notice of the *righteous* Father.

The righteous know that God has His arrows as well as the wicked—His of judgment, theirs of deceit and mischief (verses 3, 7). And they assure themselves that they will see their enemies taken in their own evil way, and then the world around fleeing from them, and learning, by His judgments, to fear the Lord and to publish His doings. And, finally, they take knowledge of themselves, as making their boast, putting their trust, and reaping their joy, in the God of their salvation.

LXV.

This is a Psalm of peculiar beauty. The Remnant in Israel are looking at the house where their fathers praised; and they own to the Lord, as it were, that that holy and beautiful place is laid waste, that all there is silent as death now, but ready to break forth again in the glad

performance of vows, and in the gathering of all the world into His sanctuary, when He has heard His people's prayer (1, 2). In a spirit of repentance, they then own that their iniquities alone must account for their present ruins; but they have confidence in the coming divine remission of their nation's guilt (*v.* 3). They look for God's *goodness* to themselves, and for His *righteousness* upon their enemies; anticipating that the ends of the earth will be moved when they hear of these divine judgments in righteousness on Israel's enemies (4-8). And at the close, they anticipate the millennial joy and fruitfulness of the earth, when the Lord shall again become the husbandman of the land of His people, as He was in old time, when His eyes shall return to rest on that land from one end of the year to the other, when beauty and gladness and rich fertility shall attest the care and skill of the divine dresser of His loved and favoured vineyard, when days of heaven shall be on earth. (See Deut. xi. 10-21.)

Nothing can exceed this picture. The thoughts of the Remnant are rapidly carried through sorrows and judgments up to the millennial rest and prosperity. But there they indulge themselves at some length over the happy scenes around them. The wilderness and the solitary place are glad. The Lord is for the mountains and hills, the rivers and the valleys of Israel again, and they are tilled and sown. "The desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by, and they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." (Ezek. xxxvi. 35.) In poetic words—

"The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance—and the land, once lean,
Exults to see its thirsty curse repealed."

LXVI.

Here the praise anticipated and waited for in the preceding Psalm breaks forth in Zion. Jehovah has answered the prayer by terrible things in righteousness. (lxv. 5, lxvi. 3, 5.) The vows made are here paid. (lxv. 1, lxvi. 13, 14.) When they were afflicted they prayed, now being merry they sing psalms.

But this Psalm appears to have a very exact structure marked by Selahs. The Psalmist (the Spirit of Christ in the Remnant) *calls* on all lands to praise God for His judgments (1-4), and then *invites* them to look at those judgments (5-7). He then *calls* on the people to bless God for His mercies to them (leading them himself in that worship, 8-15), and then *invites* them to hearken to the story of those mercies (16-20).

Observe "come and see" in ver. 5, "come and hear" in ver. 16; for the manifested works, or works in the earth (the operations of His hand), are proposed to *sight*, the hidden works, or works in the soul (the operations of His Spirit), are proposed to *the ear*. The whole Psalm is an utterance of great liberty and joy of heart, and savours richly of the gladness of God's chosen in the days of the kingdom, remembering the judgments of the wicked and the discipline of the righteous which had ushered it in.

LXVII.

This Psalm is the utterance of the Jewish Remnant brought near the kingdom and given faith to see what the result of their salvation will be upon the world generally. (See Hosea i. ii.; Ps. lxxxv.; Is. ii. 2; xi. 9, 10.) The "Redeemer of Israel" is to be the "God of the whole earth." (Is. liv. 5.)

Two lessons the world is to be taught through Israel,—*righteousness*, from the divine judgments in behalf of

Israel on the nations (Is. xxvi. 9); *grace*, from the divine goodness towards Israel itself. (Jer. xxxiii. 9.) It is the second of these the Remnant here desires the world may learn. And at this time also, the saints, glorified together and like Jesus in heaven, will teach the world to know the love, the wondrous love, of the Father, and that it was *the Father* who sent Jesus. This will be the highest, deepest lesson, and told out by the heavenly children. (John xvii. 22, 23.)

The desire of the Remnant in this animated little Psalm is, we may just add, very fervent and happy. They, as it were, "magnify their office," like the Apostle celebrating the great results of their own God giving them His blessing. And we know that the receiving of them will be nothing less to the whole world but life from the dead. (Rom. xi. 15.)

LXVIII.

For grandeur and compass this Psalm stands, perhaps, unequalled. It was sung, most probably as the Ark was moving from the house of Obed-edom to mount Zion. It opens, therefore, with the words of Moses, as in earlier times the Ark was beginning to move through the wilderness. (Numb. x.) And we are told that at the carriage of it by David singers accompanied it. (1 Chron. xv.) Here we are as if listening to the song they sang.

And as the ark itself was a mystery, so was this journey of it. It was the expression of the return of the Lord to His Israel in the latter day. For then, through trials, they will be brought to the joy of God's presence again; as here the Ark, the symbol of that presence, is brought from its distant exile and seated in the heights of Zion.

This journey appears to be broken into several stages (1 Chron. xv. 26):—

First Stage.—As the Ark begins its journey, the singers

celebrate in a general way the different effects of the presence of God—of which, as has been said, it was the symbol—both on the wicked and the righteous. For that presence is doom to the one, but salvation to the other (1-6).

Second Stage.—After the first pause, the journey being resumed, the singers rehearse both the awful and the gracious tokens of the same divine presence, while Israel was passing the wilderness (7-10).

Third Stage.—Here they publish the power of God for Israel, when, having accomplished their passage through the wilderness, He brought them to Canaan, and there gave them the oil of joy for mourning, and beauty for ashes (11-14).

Fourth Stage.—This part of their journey appears to bring them within sight of Zion, and the singers hail that hill of God; and as they begin to ascend it, they prophesy the ascension of Christ, the true Ark, (in whom, as we know, the glory itself dwelt, for He was "God manifested in the flesh,") and the fruit to themselves and others of such ascension (15-19).

Observe, as to the angels, that they ascended at mount Sinai in their *dignity*, being able to bear the light of that fiery hill, having never lost their first estate of holiness and honour. But they attended on the ascension of Jesus in their *ministry*, being ready to serve in full subjection to Him.

Fifth Stage.—Being now in the act of bearing their sacred burthen up the hill, as they contend for the summit, the inspired singers celebrate the day of Israel's trial, when the Lord will arise to deliver them from death and their outcast condition, to display His presence again in mighty power for them, and to recompense the controversy of Zion on her enemies. For this was in season, like the prophecy in the preceding stage; the struggle up

the hill being a fit token of Israel's last trial, as the beginning to ascend it was of the ascension of Jesus (20-23.)

Sixth Stage.—Having gained the heights of the hill and the Ark having attained its rest, the singers, in like suitableness, prophesy the final glorious rest of God and His Israel, when the same presence of God shall still be known though in a new form, or as the goings of “the king.” The nations will then wait with their offerings: the spear and the sword will be rebuked; and He that rideth on the heavens will be found both in His excellency and strength for Israel, as is here announced (24-35).

The Lord of heaven will concern Himself with Israel in these latter days. (See ver. 33, Deut. xxxiii. 26.) For He will first, as the rider on the white horse, come forth *from heaven* for their rescue (Rev. xix.), and afterwards *in the opened heavens* be the great centre of glory and power in the kingdom. (John i. 51.)

Such is this most magnificent Psalm, rehearsing the virtues of the Divine Presence throughout the history of God's people. The song that was sung after the Ark had been duly set by David in the tent which he had prepared for it on mount Zion, is given in 1 Chron. xvi. That followed this. This was an interrupted song, while the Ark was on the way; that an unbroken one, when its journey was ended.

LXIX.

In this solemn and affecting Psalm, we listen to an utterance of the Son of Man. His soul passes through the sense of His sorrow, and the anticipation of the judgment of His persecutors, up to His resurrection and His kingdom in Zion in the latter day. We have the communion of the soul of Jesus with God, both as the

one who was able to save Him from death (Heb. v.), and as the one who judgeth righteously. (1 Peter ii.) For He cries to the one, and commits the keeping of Himself to the other. And thus this Psalm illustrates those two things taught us by the Apostles in those two passages: so perfectly do the lights that shine in the old and new Scriptures, whether in the Psalms or Prophets, or in the Epistles or Apostles, blend together.

We may distribute it into the following sections or parts:—

Verses 1-12. Jesus the Son of man utters his sorrows.

NOTE.—Verse 5 shows how He identified Himself with His elect (2 Cor. v. 21,) and it is comfort to us to know that our sins have been thus confessed. And God knew the secret of all Jesus' grief, though man did not. (See Is. liii. 4.) Verse 6: He desires that none may be stumbled or offended because of His shame and sorrow (Matt. xi. 6), but learn that it was borne for others. For the affliction of the righteous one will be an offence to them who do not understand and value this. His sorrows from the hand of man were for God's glory in the world; His sorrows from the hand of God were for our atonement and salvation for ever. Verse 4 is quoted by the Lord Himself in John xv.

Verses 13-18. He discloses His source of relief and support in these sorrows. As He says in another place, "for my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer." He committed Himself to God. (Ps. cix. 4.)

Verses 19-28. He arraigns His Jewish persecutors and calls for judgment.

NOTE.—This is accordingly the occasion of the present state of Israel. (See Rom. xi. 8-10.) Judgment rests on them, their souls, bodies, and estate. Their system, as God's witness, and God's nation, is in ruins.

Verses 29-31. He pleads for resurrection, making His vow of praise.

NOTE.—"He was heard in that he feared," or, "for His piety." (Heb. v. 7.) He was delivered out of the pit, in one view of the resurrection, by His own virtue and holiness. (Ps. xvi. 10.) His people are delivered through His blood. (Zech. ix. 11, Heb. xiii. 20.) But the great enemy is bound there. (Rev. xx. 1-3.)

He will pay the vows He here makes. (See cxvi.) And this praise for

resurrection is more grateful to God than sacrifices of oxen and bullocks in remembrance of sin. And it is in fellowship with Jesus *in resurrection* that the saints now worship. There they lay, as on a new altar, their sacrifices of praise. (Heb. xiii. 10, 15.)

Verses 32-36. He anticipates Israel's repentance, and then the kingdom.

NOTE.—“His prisoners” is the title for the Remnant. (Zech. ix. 11, 12.) Compare verse 32 with Ps. xxii. 26, where the Remnant are clearly intended.

The common joy of heaven and earth, as attendant on the restoration of Zion to be the dwelling-place of His once poor but now enriched people, is sweetly anticipated.

Thus, in this very blessed Psalm, the spirit of Christ muses onward from His suffering up to the full joy of His expected kingdom.

LXX.

We have here much the language of the closing verses of Psalm xl. And it is a suited utterance for the man of many, many sorrows, and might have been oft repeated. It has some connection also with the next Psalm. (See verse 2, and lxxi. 13.)

We may remember, in connection with ver. 3, the railing of the 29th verse of Mark xv.

LXXI.

David is heard distinctly in this Psalm. The Spirit of Christ also, as in company with the Remnant, whose type David in his sorrows and repentance so strikingly is. David's affliction from the hand of Absalom was the affliction of his “old age,” or when he was “grey-headed.” So the affliction of the Remnant will be in Israel's old age mystically. (Isaiah xli. 4.)

The bringing up from the grave, or the pit, or the depths of the earth (verse 20), expresses the pardon of sins, as the resurrection of Christ was the pledge of that grace. (Isaiah xxxviii. 17.)

But the most striking character in this Psalm is David's desire to have God and His righteousness magnified in him. He had already been *a wonder*, but he desired to be more so. His history had been hitherto an exhibition of marvellous grace. Taken from the sheepfolds to be anointed king; defended from the cruel enmity of Saul; brought to honour, as he had before been strengthened for victory; these were the shining ways of grace towards him. But now, to be restored after sin and backsliding, this would make him still a greater wonder. He would indeed show that "grace triumphant reigns."

On this the soul of David is here fixed. It is not the confession of sin, of which his suffering from Absalom was the fruit, but he glories in the thought of illustrating abounding grace. He looks only at being set for God's praise "more and more"—of telling of God's righteousness, and "of that only." And truly blessed is such a rich experience as this; when a poor sinner, in the sense of divine grace, does not utter confession, but triumphs in the thought of illustrating in his own person the aboundings of God's goodness. We see this in St. Paul. David can confess sin, and that heartily, on suited occasions, and bow his head under the punishment of it (see Psalm li., &c.); but here, it is not his sin that he confesses, but it is the grace of God abounding over it that he would have exalted for ever, and to which end he seeks and anticipates deliverance from present trouble, and the increase of his greatness. Thus would his history more strikingly than ever show forth God's righteousness and praise.

And we would add (though it has been hinted already) that Israel's history is remarkably similar to David's:—Election of him, though the least in his father's house—preservation from his persecutor—endowment and power—then, sin, and forfeiture of all, with captivity beyond

Jordan—and final restoration and rest. These are the common ways of God with Israel as well as with David ; and thus both of them can declare God's wondrous works, and talk only of His righteousness, all the day long. The Remnant may, therefore, in their day, well encourage themselves in the history of their beloved king in days of old. For in this way, he is set forth as a pattern to them (like Saul of Tarsus) of all divine long-suffering. (See 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.)

LXXII.

The blessed One, who called Himself "greater than Solomon," is surely "here." Christ as King of kings, clothed in all regal dignity, and reigning in righteousness, with full universal and enduring dominion, as in the millennium or times of restitution and refreshing, is presented here. (See Ps. xlv. ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-4 ; Isa. ix. xi. xxxii. ; Jer. xxiii. 5-8.) This is the time of which it is said, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth : in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.)

This king does altogether differently from the earthly gods who are found unfaithful to their royal or judicial commissions. (Ps. lxxxii.) He will rule or judge wisely, as expressed by Solomon's decree between the two harlots. (1 Kings iii.) And the sceptre of *righteousness* in His hand will secure *peace*—mountains and hills, or governments and offices, bringing the one by the other (verse 3). In this way, that kingdom will express the presence of the true Melchisedec, or the sovereignty of Him who is both King of Righteousness and King of Peace. For righteousness being in power then, peace, godly peace, must be the result all the world over : all inconsistent with this must come into judgment. Isaiah xi. beautifully exhibits this also.

To get a name has been the great effort of man, even though the devil give it. (See Gen. iii. 5, iv. 17, xi. 4; Ps. xlix. 11; Dan. iv. 30; Rev. xiii. 2.) But Jesus will receive a name from God. (ver. 17, Phil. ii. 9.) And then the old promise to Abraham shall be made good in Christ his seed, for all shall be blessed in Him. (See ver. 17, and Gen. xii. 3.)

But all this royalty and power of Jesus is to God's praise (18, 19). For in the kingdom all will own Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii.) And His throne shall then be an untransferable one, as His priesthood now is; for it is here written "he shall live"—it will be constituted in "the power of an endless life" (Heb. vii.)—and prayer and praise shall sustain and surround it, like Solomon's, for ever. All desire ends in a scene like this, in such a kingdom as is here anticipated—the prayers of David cease—for this kingdom is their answer. And surely the thought is blessed and cheering. But we know that a gloomy night is to usher in this bright and happy day. Indeed we do—and that thought is serious. The "whole world is to wonder after the Beast," ere "every tongue confess Jesus Lord."

I may just add, that this kingdom does not now bound the expectations of faith, though it answered the prayers of David. For the further light of the revelation of God has taught us to look for "new heavens and a new earth" after this kingdom. This kingdom is to be delivered up, and then God is to be all in all. (See Ps. viii.)

NOTE.—Psalm lxxi. gives us the old age of Jewish sorrow; and then, Psalm lxxiii. the morning, or spring time, of Jewish joy, or Solomon's glory. For though there is the time of "Jacob's trouble," yet "he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. xxx.)

Here the second part of the Book of Psalms, according to the Jewish division, ends.

LXXIII.

This Psalm very tenderly and exactly delineates the path of a tempted soul. The prosperity of the wicked is the temptation. In vv. 13, 14, the tempest of the soul seems at its height, and v. 15 discloses the first gracious control given to it by the Spirit. The sanctuary is then entered—that is, the mind of God about the whole scene is understood, and all is interpreted in the light of “the end” (v. 17); for that is the light which the sanctuary yields, and in which the wise walk. (Deut. xxxii. 29, Ps. xc. 12.) And then we see the further work of the restoring Spirit of God, till the poor soul reflects upon this its path as bringing shame to itself, but proving also the unchanging love of God; for the eater has yielded meat—the temptation has drawn out the still richer resources that are in God. The secret of resurrection is apprehended, and the soul rests. The worshipper had been as a beast, feeling and reasoning as though the present life was everything. But he learns (what Paul so set himself day by day to learn more perfectly, see Phil. iii.) the power of resurrection, and that casts a new and a calm light on everything in which he walks, and sees Him who is invisible. (See Ps. lxxvii.)

Observe upon this Psalm, in contrast with the xxxvii. the same object is before the mind in both—the course of the world, and the prosperity of the wicked. But there is not the calmness of faith here as there, but the passions of the soul. There the tranquillising light of faith and hope gilds the soul from first to last, but here the repose and joy of faith is reached through deep sorrows of heart which had risen from unbelief.

So also, in contrast with the preceding Psalm, we may observe, how different things are in “this present evil world” and in “the world to come.” There, we saw that

righteousness and the vindication of wrongs will mark the kingdom or world to come, and peace and prosperity will be the sure fruit of godliness then. Here, we see that the oppressor fattens on his oppressions, and a cup of tears is wrung out for the righteous.

But in this way, different lessons are learnt. The one world in which our God acts and shows Himself could never have taught the lessons of the other. In the present world we are learning that He has treasures of *grace* to meet our *need*, and in the coming world we shall learn His treasures of *glory* to meet our *joys*. Like the blessing committed to Aaron, and that committed to Melchizedek. (See Numb. vi., Gen. xiv.) Both was blessing, but different, each suiting itself to the different condition of the people of God—to their time of need, of weakness, and temptation, and then to their time of strength, victory, and honour.

LXXIV.

We have in this Psalm a sample of very tender and sorrowful pleading with God. It is evidently the utterance of the Remnant in sight of the desolation of Zion. The enemy is seen triumphing in the full pride of victory over God's house and people, and the congregation of the Lord left to reproach without sign or prophet. The desire is, that the Lord will show Himself as the kinsman-avenger of Israel. For under the law, the kinsman was to ransom, to avenge, and to build up the brother's house. And this is a cry to Him to act as an avenger. At the exodus from Egypt He had so acted, and that is pleaded here. He had then, as their kinsman, both ransomed Israel out of Egypt, and avenged Israel upon Egypt, dividing the waters for His people, and breaking the heads of leviathan. Deborah celebrates Jehovah as

an avenger in Judges v., and the heavens celebrate the Lord God as the same in Rev. xix. 2.

The prophet or suppliant is moved by the same deep and aggrieved heart as Isaiah, when he in spirit looked on the same scene of desolation. He would fain know how long the misery was to last. (*v.* 10, *Is.* vi. 11.)

The suppliant further pleads the promises which secure Israel and the earth. (See *ver.* 17, with *Gen.* viii. 22 ; and *ver.* 16 with *Jer.* xxxiii. 20.) He pleads also the covenant, and that this cause was God's cause. And this is according to their mediator Moses, in his day, who pleaded the fathers, and the covenant of promise, and the honour of the name of Him who had redeemed them from Egypt. (See *Ex.* xxxii. 12, 13.) And the Lord says Himself, that in the present preserving of Israel and their final establishment, He has respect to His own name. (*Deut.* xxxii. 27.) And in the rehearsal of His ways with Israel, in *Ezek.* xx. we have the same thought again and again.

The desolation of Zion here contemplated is either that by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, of the Romans, or of the Wilful King in the latter day. Indeed, in the judgment of God, Judea is one scene of desolation, from the days of the Chaldean till the enemy fall on the glorious holy mountain, and the kingdoms become the Lord's.

NOTE.—Verse 7 may remind us of the Chaldean invasion (2 Kings xxv. 9) ; *ver.* 4 may call the idols on the battlements, or the abomination of desolation, to our thoughts. (*Dan.* ix. 27, *Matt.* xxiv. 15.)

LXXV.

This is a very striking little Psalm, and one of easy simple interpretation.

The first verse gives us the thanksgiving of the nation now, by anticipation, saved and avenged in answer to their cry in the previous Psalm. God's works in that sal-

vation, and vengeance just executed, had shown Him to be near His people, as they here celebrate. His name had been for a long time distant from Israel. But now, as their faith anticipates, about to do His "wondrous works" for them, they know that He is returning and bringing His name near again.

The following verses, from the second to the end, are Messiah's utterance. He vows to rule in righteousness, when He receives the people as His inheritance (ver. 2 ; see 2 Sam. xxiii. 4 ; Ps. ci.). He recognizes the apostasy of all kingdoms and systems till His own sceptre arise. (Ver. 3 ; see 1 Sam. ii. 8-10, Dan. ii. 44.) He challenges the rebels or apostate powers of the world, who had erected themselves against the Lord, assuring them that God would soon visit them. (4-8 ; see Ps. lxxxii., lxxxiii. ; Hag. ii. 22 ; Heb. xii. 27.) He then, in contrast with them, pledges Himself to hold His sceptre unto God's praise, and in the righteous dispensation of reward and punishment. (9, 10 ; see Matt. xxv. 31, Rev. iii. 21.)

What holy and glorious consciousness of Himself fills the soul of Messiah in all this utterance ! He knows that when He receives the congregation He will judge uprightly. And He knows too that He alone sustains the pillars of the world.

Thus, the material of this Psalm clearly shows itself to us. The wine cup, the cup of trembling, the cup of His fury, the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, are various titles of the same cup, which is the emblem of divine judgments, like the vials of Rev. xvi. The cup of salvation, on the other hand, expresses the joy of the kingdom. (See Psalm cxvi. ; Luke xxii. 18.) Oh what a morning without clouds will the rise and waving of this righteous sceptre, here anticipated by the Lord Himself, spread over this groaning and thorny creation ! And it is a striking and beautiful point in this Psalm, that the

cup here drunk by the people of the earth does not pass on to Messiah. He takes instead of it the other cup, and at once calls on the name of the Lord. (See ver. 8, 9, and Ps. cxvi. 3.) The cup of anger is for their hand, the cup of salvation for His. He once took, indeed, the cup of sorrows, the cup of Gethsemane, for us poor sinners ; but it is the cup of praise, the joy of the kingdom, that remains for Him now, while the apostate powers of the earth are wringing out the dregs of the cup of fury.

LXXVI.

This Psalm is still in connection. For as Psalm lxxiv. was the cry of the Remnant over the desolation of Zion, and as Ps. lxxv. presented Messiah challenging the enemy and taking the kingdom as in answer to that cry, so this Psalm shows Him seated in Zion, no longer therefore a desolation, but saluted as the throne and sanctuary of the Lord, made more excellent than all the mountains of prey, or the preceding kingdoms of the Gentiles. God's *name* is "great in Israel" now, as it has previously been brought "near" by His works of judgment. (Ps. lxxv. 1, lxxvi. 1.)

Though the Spirit has larger thoughts in it, yet the occasion of this Psalm was, probably, the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. For this signal deliverance was achieved eminently on behalf of Zion. (See 2 Kings xix. 20-35.) So that it was said to the King of Assyria, "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn." As here, the Psalmist says, that *in Zion* God broke the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. Verse 7 may remind us of Ps. ii. 12.

In a fine strain the people publish this mighty achievement. And at the close, the Prophet of God, who had been anticipating all this, draws the moral, that the Lord acquires glory out of the violence and iniquity of man,

(Ex. ix. 14, 16, 29); then overrules it all, and finally spreads around Himself a happy and a worshipping people, keeping the whole earth in godly subjection to His sceptre as King of kings.

The Gentile kingdoms are fitly called "mountains of prey." Daniel says, speaking of them, "these great beasts." (vii. 17.) They were in God's esteem the haunts of wild beasts.

We may more particularly observe, that verse 10 reveals a very glorious truth. It intimates that all things, even the most unpromising—such as "the wrath of man"—shall end in God's praise; and all that cannot aid that happy result shall be cleared off the scene, forestalled, as it were, by the divine sovereign power. How truly should our souls triumph in this thought! Things may appear evil and confused, but there is not a circumstance in the "mighty maze" that shall not swell the hallelujah around the throne and in the presence of the Lord, and aid in giving them their harmony and power for ever and ever.

LXXVII.

There is something very touching, and at the same time very instructive, in the path of the soul in this Psalm. It may remind us of Ps. lxxiii. It may be read as an utterance of the Jew under his discipline in the latter day, but the soul of any saint may use it.

The first verse gives us the result, or the end of the path, as is common in the Psalms. The soul's path is then traced back to its beginning.

It was a time of trouble, and the suppliant religiously seeks the Lord. But this was not properly faith. It was the working of religious sentiment awakened in the day of trouble. It did not lead to strength or liberty. Recollections arise to aggravate the grief. The soul sees God rather in its own sorrows and exercises than in His doings

and ways. It was God, but God as in connection with present griefs; and murmurings are cast up by all this working. The Spirit of God at length, however, introduces His power and light, and at once the current of the soul is changed. He leads the suppliant to see that all this was but nature. "This is my infirmity." It had a religious character in it, but it was merely man, or the infirmity of nature, not the strength and repose of faith. And the Spirit then takes the soul off from God thus seen in the light of its own sorrows, to God seen and understood by the light of His own ways. Old things are again remembered; but they are the old things of God's salvation, and not of the suppliant's griefs (*v.* 5, 11); days of old when His people had to go through trackless deeps and untrod paths, and yet proved Him to be their leader and shepherd. And the doings of God display Himself, tell what He is, and thus they form a "sanctuary," as the Psalmist here speaks (*v.* 13).

And is it not the true Gospel comfort, to know our God in His doings *for* us? There we learn a simple tale that needs no interpreter—we get an undistracted witness of devoted everlasting love. We read a "glory" that *gladdens* us "in the face of Jesus Christ." But His dealings *with* us are in discipline, and wait to be interpreted. Job was troubled when he thought of God's dealing *with* him; but for a happy moment the Spirit led him to God's dealings and acts for him, and all was triumph. (*xix.* 23-27.) So the Psalmist here.

LXXVIII.

A certain distinguished Prophet here announces himself as having deep secrets to open. (*v.* 1, 2.) A company of Prophets then, according to divine appointment and by way of admonition, trace the history of God's ways in grace, and Israel's ways in perverseness, from the Exodus to David. (3-72.)

Thus we have "things new and old,"—the new being the secrets just hinted at by the speaker of the two first verses, the old being the well known things rehearsed by the company of Jewish prophets.

Now we know that the Lord Jesus Christ took the place of this distinguished Prophet—this Prophet of new things, and so, in measure, does every one instructed in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. xiii. 35, 52.) In such sense the least there is greater than John the Baptist. St. Paul was eminently among these instructed scribes, being conscious that he was bringing forth the new things (see 1 Cor. ii., Eph. iii., Col. i.), things kept secret, or hidden mysteries. And no scribe is duly instructed in the kingdom of heaven, or a due teacher in the present dispensation, who does not discern between the things "new and old."

But the old things as well as the new are of grace. The difference is rather in the old being Jewish or earthly, the new being of the Church or heavenly. (John iii. 12.) This is the difference. But the old or Jewish things of this Psalm very distinctly tell of *final* grace and salvation. For Israel is here recorded to have destroyed themselves, and God at the last to have arisen in the grace that could set up David, and choose Zion and Judah for their help and recovery. And so will it be in the latter day. They are now a scattered and judged people again, having again destroyed themselves; but again they will be gathered and blest under the true David, the true King of Zion, the true Lion of Judah. And in the integrity of a heart that never can swerve, and in the skilfulness of a hand that never can err, He will keep and feed His Jewish flock on their native mountains.

NOTE.—I would suggest that a full stop ought to be put to verse 2; and that verses 3 and 4 ought to be read thus: "That which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children," &c., &c.

LXXIX.

I listen to this Psalm as the expression of the sorrow of the captives after Jerusalem had fallen into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. But equally do I read it as the sorrows of the Remnant under the hand of the great enemy in the latter day.

And we might observe that the captives in Babylon would express their sorrow in language suited to the Jews till Messiah and the kingdom come, because *the age is one*. The times of the Gentiles began with the captivity, and will not end till the throne of David revive in the hand of Messiah. The mind of a righteous Jew, if I may so speak, in one sense is the same throughout this age. And we have a similar thing in the history of the church. St. Paul prophesies of certain evils in "the latter times," and in the "last days," but yet speaks about them to Timothy as though they had then come. (1 Tim. iv. ; 2 Tim. iii.) And so, in one sense, they had, inasmuch as the same spirit was working then. The whole age of Christendom, as of Israel in the discerning judgment of the Spirit of God, sustains one character from beginning to end.

More specifically this Psalm, I judge, is the cry of the Remnant in the hour of their deepest distress under the pressure of the beast (Rev. xiii.) after the slaughter of the witnesses. (Rev. xi.) It may be read as the impassioned cry of the preserved remnant after their brethren had been martyred (*v.* 3). Such two remnants, or two portions of the same remnant, the Lord contemplates in His great prophetic word in Matthew xxiv. The Revelation of St. John, I believe, proceeds upon the same distinction of preserved and martyred portions of the faithful Israel in those days.

They own their sin, trust only in mercy, plead the glory

of God's own name, present to God their reproach and grief, and the enemies' infidelity and oppressions, and make their reproach God's reproach,—their cause His cause.

I would observe a difference that has struck me. The psalmist or the prophets, rehearsing the cause of Israel's present rejection, speaks of their iniquities and sins as in this Psalm; but the apostle in the same connection speaks of Israel's not submitting themselves to God's righteousness. (Rom. ix. x.) Such difference is easily and beautifully intelligible.

LXXX.

This Psalm seems to be in connection with the preceding. Psalm lxxix. 13 suggests lxxx. 1. Accordingly the soul of the Remnant advances in liberty and confidence. There is not the same confession of sin, but a stronger appeal for deliverance, and a fuller intelligence of the divine counsels. The Man at God's right hand is pleaded,—the Son of man made strong for God's purposes. What a thought, as we utter it! to think that there is a Man, "a real Man," now glorified in the highest heavens. And such is Jesus in resurrection and ascension. (See Matt. xxviii. 18; Psalm cx. 1; Dan. vii. 13; 1 Peter iii. 22.)

Verse 2 refers to Numbers x., where, on the journeying of the camp, we learn that the Ark went immediately before the standard of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, and on the moving forward there was a cry to the Lord as here.

Verse 17 may remind us very specially of Matthew xxvi. 64.

The prophet, in pleading for Israel, is animated by tender and lofty thoughts of Israel's ancient glories, as the apostle afterwards is. (See Rom. ix. 1-5.) And very

beautiful is this. The very nature of the ruin bespeaks the grandeur of the building, and awakens the deeper sympathy.

On the burthen of this Psalm, so to call it (see verses 3, 7, 19), it may be observed that we get the person of the Lord strikingly revealed through Scripture. Thus, regarded in different lights, He is both the answerer of prayer and the suppliant. He receives the Spirit, and pours out the Spirit. (Zech. xii. 10 ; Acts ii. 33.) He is the Rock (Matt. xvi. 18), and yet He looks to God as the Rock. (Psalm lxii.) He is one of the flock (Psalm xxiii.), and yet the Shepherd of the flock. (John x.) He is on the throne praised, and yet the leader of the people's praise. (Psalm cxvi. ; Rev. v.) He is a Priest, and yet the redeemed are priests to Him. (Rev. xx. 6.) In one respect He is a Jew, desiring the divine favour for His nation, and waiting for the face of Jehovah to be turned again to His people. (Isaiah viii. 17.) In another respect He is as Jehovah Himself, the God of Israel, with His face turned away from His people (Matt. xxiii. 39), thus strikingly revealed in both His divine and human place, both as the expectant head of Israel, and yet as Israel's God. All this can be understood when the great mystery of "God manifest in the flesh" and its glorious results are understood. But who can utter it all? (See on Psalm xviii.)

LXXXI.

We are still in the same connection ; for this Psalm is the expression of the Remnant quickened, as they had desired in Ps. lxxx. It is the language of their souls now revived and repentant, or of Israel keeping the feast of trumpets, which was the type of Israel's repentance in the latter day, according to Leviticus xxiii. This is the true blowing of the trumpet in the new moon, or the

expression of Israel's revival after the present Gentile interval (verses 1-5)—the time of returning light, or when the moon shines again under the light of her lord.

But the Lord is moved by this repentance of Israel, and then rehearses both His ways and their ways in older times,—by this, vindicating His dealings with them; for He lets them understand that it was their own folly and evil which had made this revival necessary; that had they obeyed His voice, “their time should have endured for ever”—they should have known no breach or interruption at all. He has now in His grace quickened them afresh; but He desires that they may never forget this—that they themselves have made a revival or re-quickening necessary.

But He not only vindicates His dealings with them in this way; but His words are beautifully suited to deepen and strengthen the spirit of repentance in them, as the look of Jesus at Peter worked, together with the cock crowing, in restoring his soul. And this is quite natural,—so strikingly does God enter into the ways of the heart of man. The heart, in a day of softness and repentance, would powerfully feel such an appeal as this.

Verse 13 may remind us of Deut. v. 29, and of Isaiah xlviii. 18,—from all which passages we gather other witnesses to the deep tenderness and sympathies of the Lord; for before Israel sins, He is presented as longing that they may not sin, but remain a blessed people; after they have sinned, He is presented as mourning over their evil and loss of blessing.

LXXXII.

In this Psalm the Lord God, in sovereign right, stands to judge the powers and governments of the world, those Gentile powers to whom He had entrusted the sword during Israel's rejection. He calls them to render account

of their stewardship. He reminds them of what their commission had been, convicts them of unfaithfulness to it, and then pronounces the sentence. Upon this His people take comfort, and call on Him to take to Him His great power and to reign; for this judgment is to be followed by His possession of all nations; and we know that the knowledge of the Lord will be spread by His judgments. (See Isaiah xxvi. 9; Rev. xv. 4.)

How blessed it is to see Christ's faithfulness to His stewardship in contrast with the unfaithfulness here rebuked. The kingdom, therefore, is not *taken from Him*, but He *delivers it up*. (See 1 Cor. xv. 24.) This proves His faithfulness.

But we may add on this Psalm, that it helps us to see the contrast between the past and the present dispensation. Then it was that God constituted earthly gods, or judges, representatives of His power and government, among His own people, as we see in Ex. xxii. 28. But now it is the Son sent forth from heaven, full of grace and truth; not again the representative of judgment in the world, but the minister of grace to the world. A judge or earthly god was the expression of the time *then*—the Son of the Father, full of grace to sinners, is the expression of the time *now*. (See John x. 32–38.) But judges or earthly gods are still owned as of God. (Rom. xiii. 1.) This Psalm assumes that, for it exhibits their trial and removal, when the Lord takes the kingdom in the latter day. But they do not form the character of this dispensation. Grace to sinners does that.

LXXXIII.

This Psalm is still in the same connection. It is one of the cries of Israel in the latter day. They call on the Lord to break silence (Psalm xxviii. 1); they show Him the evil doings of their federated enemies, saying as it

were, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings;" they make the cause as much His as theirs; and they call for such signal judgment upon them that the inhabitants of the world may thereby learn righteousness, or that there is a God who judgeth in the earth. (Psalm lviii. 10, 11; Isaiah xxvi. 9.)

We read throughout the Scriptures of confederacies against Israel. (Isaiah vii. viii.; Ezek. xxxviii.; Joel iii.; Micah iv. 11.; Zech. xiv. 2, 3.) The destruction of them will be complete, like the driving away of the chaff from the summer threshing-floor. And the Israel of God behave themselves here as Isaiah instructs them. They do not trust in a counter-confederacy, but sanctify the Lord in their hearts, and make Him their object. (See Isaiah viii.)

The confederacy contemplated here appears to be after Israel has become a nation again (*v.* 4). Such objects the Prophets seem to look at occasionally; and no doubt the action of the latter days, on the Lord taking the kingdom and appearing in His glory, will be widely extended. God, as another has said, does not only judge the last rebellion of antichrist or the beast, but having made His power felt, the moment of His wrath being come, He judges all nations. Scripture cannot be broken; that is true and precious. We, however, may be able to follow it out in our thoughts only partially.

The judgment closes in the exaltation of the God of Israel, Jehovah, in His kingdom over all the earth.

LXXXIV.

This Psalm was a suited utterance of David when separated from God's house. (2 Samuel xv.) It may be the desire of any saint who through the Spirit thirsts for heaven. And it will be the utterance of the patient, waiting Remnant.

In the esteem of this soul there are three orders of blessing. *First*, where there is constant abiding in God's house; for then unbroken praise is the occupation. *Secondly*, where there is travelling up to that house, with occasional refreshment of spirit. *Thirdly*, where there is trust in God, though in distance from that house, and no present prospect of it (verses 4, 5, 12).

Observe, the whole earth was to Jesus distance from God's tabernacles—a dry and thirsty land. (Psalm lxiii.) His soul was parched everywhere, save when He met the faith of a poor sinner. Then He had meat to eat and water to drink even here. But God's presence was everything to Him. And to restore that presence to this apostate earth was in a sense the purpose of His visitation to it. The opening and close of His ministry expressed that. For He then cleansed the temple (John ii.; Matt. xxi.)—an action that told of His ridding this earth of defilement, that it might be God's habitation and praise again.

The saint seems to muse with divine pleasure on the thought of the sparrow and the swallow (representing as it were all His creatures) finding their rest in God's sanctuary. For so it will be in the coming kingdom. The creation, which now groans, will be delivered into liberty and glory then.

The spirit of this precious Psalm is very comprehensive. All the saints, with Jesus as their leader, may breathe the language of it. It takes in the hearts of all the people of God. Well may it be, as it has been, the enjoyed companion of the meditations of our souls at all times. Happy, when we together reach that house where praise will still or for ever be heard!

LXXXV.

Here the Jewish election rejoices in the anticipated blessing of their land and people, uttering their desire in the day of their distress, but waiting in full assurance that it will be answered in mercy.

And they recognize the great result of this mercy:—truth springing out of the earth, and righteousness from heaven approving it—the Lord giving His blessing, and the land yielding her increase. And they seem also to apprehend the way in which this kingdom shall be introduced. And we know it is the same way as that by which we poor Gentiles get blessing now (Rom. xi. 31); *i.e.*, by the cross of Christ, where indeed “mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace kiss each other.” (Rom. iii. 26.)

For “truth,” which required death (Gen. ii. 17), and “mercy,” which can think of nothing but life and blessing, are here together. Death is endured according to truth, and the culprit given life and liberty according to mercy. “Righteousness” also kisses “peace,” and “peace” kisses “righteousness.” Instead of being offended at each other’s presence, they welcome each other. For righteousness is more than honoured by that which He who makes peace offers to it on the cross; and peace is deeply satisfied, when it sees that it can publish itself to sinners on so sure a title as honoured and accomplished righteousness. And all these glories will shine in consistent beauty in that kingdom which this wondrous cross introduces. All is harmony where all was strife before.

In this present age of ours, instead of truth springing out of the earth and righteousness looking down from heaven, it is rebellion and sin here, and grace beaming from above.

LXXXVI.

This Psalm, in the spirit of it, may easily be the companion of any of the saints in the day of their trouble—as it would appear to have been the breathing of the soul of David. The “for I am holy” of verse 2 is not to be read as more than the common appeal to God of a consciously pious soul. It does not seem to assert personal perfectness.

The dear and suffering servants of Christ desired a token to be shown for good in the face of their enemies (*v.* 17, Acts iv. 29, 30). And fear afterwards came on all. (Acts v. 13.) Aaron’s budding rod came forth from the divine presence as a token to silence the adversaries, and so the resurrection is that glorious token in favour of Jesus which will abash all who withstand Him, and prove in its result that it is indeed hard for them to kick against the pricks.

“The son of thy handmaid” (*v.* 16, and cxvi. 16) has been judged to mean, “thy property, like the offspring of a female slave,” as “one born in thy house.”

But the Israel of the latter day may also take up this Psalm, the Spirit of Christ guiding their hearts—as we see so much in this book. For an infidel faction is contemplated; such as purpose the destruction of the suppliant (*v.* 14); proud ones who do not set God before them. And they seem to cast themselves entirely on mercy, pleading something of the name of the God of mercy, as He showed Himself to Moses after Israel had destroyed themselves at mount Sinai (*v.* 15, Ex. xxxiv. 6). And their soul taking this standing, the Spirit leads them with much assurance to anticipate glory. They learn that God is both *good* and *great* (verses 5, 10).

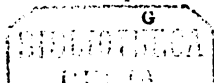
LXXXVII.

This Psalm is in praise of Zion. Zion is the witness of Israel set in grace and not under law. (See lxxviii. 65-72.) This is the distinctive character of the name. Accordingly its memorial is blessedly before God, as the name of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is before Him. (Ex. iii.) And this place is here declared to be the scene of His strength or of His enduring kingdom; (*v.* 1)—the scene of His delight; (*v.* 2)—the scene also of His glory (*v.* 3).

Encouraged as it were by this, she then appears to speak her own praise, as the mother of the family of God, giving the Lord Himself as a witness to this dignity of hers (*v.* 4-6). And this will be so when the New Covenant comes to be dispensed in and from Zion. (See Is. ii., Ezek. xlvii., Joel iii., &c.) For the New Covenant is the Sarah, or the mother. In the present dispensation, no system or place on earth can be called the mother, because the blood and the Mediator of the New Covenant are in heaven. Therefore Jerusalem the mother is still "above." (Gal. iv.) But in the coming dispensation she will be in Judea, and then the Zion of this Psalm may look on the right hand and on the left, towards Egypt and Babylon, and recognize her children everywhere.

The Lord Himself appears to sanction this, closing with an expression of Zion's joy, and of His own delight in her (*v.* 7).

But this suggests some blessed truth. Jerusalem has destroyed herself; but in God is her help. She is stained with blood; but the blood will be cleansed. (Joel iii.) She is now desolate and rejected, because she rejected Jesus; but she shall be saluted by and by, as "the habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness," and be called "the Lord is there." (Jer. xxxi. 23; Ezek. xlviii. 35.) Jesus has hitherto known her as the place of His tears and weeping



(Luke xix.) ; but here it has become the place of His fresh springs and of His singers. This change in the bearing and conditions of Zion is very blessed. "This is Zion whom no man careth after," has been her reproach ; "the joy of the whole earth," shall be her praise. And in all this Zion is a sample of the earth. For as yet it has been the occasion of divine grief and repentance (Gen. vi. 6-12), it shall be the scene of divine delight and glory. (Pss. viii., xxiv., civ. 31.)

LXXXVIII.

We hear in this Psalm one of the cries of Him who cried to Him that was able to save Him from death. (Heb. v. 7.) It was uttered, it may be, some moment between His being seized in the garden and His cross. For then all had forsaken Him, and He Himself could not go forth (v. 8, 17, 18). The sentence of death was then eminently in Him, though all through life He had been a dying one (v. 15) or "dying daily," as the Apostle speaks. But "free among the dead" He especially was during this interval. And then for three hours of darkness, closed by the shedding of His blood or life, He was sustaining the judgment of sin from the bruising hand of a righteous God. For we observe, that through life, the sorrows of Jesus came from man because He was righteous. But at last He was under the bruising of God, because He was made sin for us. And during the three hours of darkness, He was where no kindly ray of the Divine countenance could enter, for it was *sin* which occupied the place, the victim who was "made sin for us," and God could only retire and leave it all in darkness.

Jesus here pleads (see also Ps. vi. 5, xxx. 9, cxv. 17) to be delivered from death, on the ground that the dead could not praise God, nor the grave declare Him. For God is not the God of the dead but of the living. "The

living, the living, he shall praise thee," says Hezekiah, instructed of the Spirit to open his lips as one consciously in resurrection. And so Jesus cries for deliverance on this most blessed plea, that God is known not in death but in life. "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord."

LXXXIX.

This Psalm is the language of some faithful Jew, whether in Babylon of old, or among the Remnant in the latter day, who believes the promise made to David, but is grieved at its delay. Our Lord Jesus is the David, or David's seed, here spoken of. (Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 14, and Heb. i. 5; Ps. cxxxii. 11, and Acts ii. 30; Is. lv. 3, and Acts xiii. 34.) The certainty that all shall be well in the end and for ever is strongly expressed. The mercies of the Lord are "for ever"—mercy is built up "for ever"—the seed of David is established "for ever"—and the like. This is the soul's confidence and joy in all the covenanted, promised mercies to David, His throne, and His people. In spite of all appearances, it is the believer's assurance that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." And we know that the resurrection of Christ has made David's mercies "sure." (Acts xiii.)

The following may serve as a brief opening of this Psalm.

1-18. The Jewish saint rejoices in Jehovah's covenant with David, reciting it shortly in verses 3, 4.

19-37. He then recites it very fully. And very rich and blessed it is; and forms what is called in other words, "the sure mercies of David," the ground of all Israel's blessing.

38-45. But with all this promised or covenanted blessing, he contrasts the present sorrows of David's house and kingdom. And we may observe that the condition

in the covenant (see *v.* 30-32) was the ground of this sorrow; though quite in character with his present thoughts, the Jew does not allude to this.

46-51. He then expostulates and prays. "Reproached the footsteps," in verse 51, seems to be in reference to the scorers, because the Lord tarries. (See Malachi ii. 17; 2 Peter iii. 4.)

52. He closes (we may suppose after a little pause), anticipating God's grace, with praise; thus linking the end of his holy musing with the beginning.

In this Psalm we may observe the combining of *mercy* and *faithfulness*. Precious security for the poor sinner! as we read, "He is *faithful and just* to *forgive us our sins*." For our mercies are covenanted mercies—pledged, promised, undertaken, sealed, and, in a great sense, purchased mercies. Precious security! And from it we may observe that discipline is not forgetfulness, but rather the token of remembrance. David's throne is for a season in the dust because of transgression, but it has not been forgotten. The enemy reproaches because of this. They proudly talk of the footsteps (verse 51), the delays, or lingerings of the anointed. They say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The covenant is as full and fresh in God's remembrance as it was in the days of David himself. And the Lord will appear to Israel's joy, and their enemies shall be ashamed.

Let every tried believer know that discipline is not forgetfulness but remembrance. Nay, delay is not forgetfulness. "He that shall come will come" . . . "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness."

NOTE.—The third part in the Jewish division of the Psalms ends here.

XC.

At the opening of this sublime Psalm the worshipper or "man of God" utters his sense of everything failing but the Lord, and those who trust in Him. And this thought the Lord Himself in His ministry afterwards has—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

The worshipper then confesses human frailty, and traces the reason of it; and upon this utters his desire that in the full sense of this frailty he may act wisely, and wait only for the Lord's return; and he closes by desiring that return, when stability shall take the place of frailty, and beauty of ashes and dust.

The sense of all distance between the judgment of death on man, and his return out of death, appears to be lost to the soul here, in its strong apprehension of what God is (*v.* 4). St. Peter appears by the Spirit to have this scripture in mind. (2 Peter iii. 8.)

The Spirit of God, by the man of God, touches in this Psalm on new creation in Christ Jesus. Of course He could not announce this mystery in the same fulness as a scribe now instructed in the kingdom. But we have it touched on. There will be heavenly and earthly scenes, but all is new creation. The Lamb's wife, the heavenly city, will bear *in* her the glory of God (Rev. xxii. 11); but Israel and the earthly city will know that glory also. It will shine *on* them, if not *in* them: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Is. lx. 1.) All will enjoy it, but in different power. This therefore is the intelligent cry of a man of God, though but with Jewish or earthly hopes, looking on to the kingdom. "Let thy works appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." And this lan-

guage tells us that *Israel* speaks in this Psalm, though it speak of *man* as such. This, however, is simple and just. Because *man* was tested in *the Jew*. *Israel's* fall is the witness of *human* frailty. Seventy years the Psalmist mentions as the period which marks man's frailty or vanity, and that also we know was the time of *Israel's* vanity, or their captive state in Babylon.

Truly blessed, however, the general truth of all this is. The new creation has not had its foundation in the dust, but in the Lord Himself—in the Lord as risen from the dead, when He was in victory over all the strength of the enemy, having put away sin and abolished death. "Lord, *thou* hast been our dwelling-place." The Builder is the chief stone in the building. Waves and winds may beat in vain—the subtlety of the serpent is vain. This is for everlasting. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

XCI.

In contrast with the frailty of man contemplated in the preceding Psalm, here are celebrated the rights and prerogatives of that perfect *Man* in whom there was no frailty (1, 2). For all beside carried the sentence of death by reason of sin, but Jesus knew no sin. His nature was clean, and He ever fulfilled the divine pleasure to perfection, and was entitled to full security and blessing. And such chartered rights are here read out to Him (3-13).

Thus this Psalm was a city of refuge to Christ, had He pleased at any time to run into it. But He was willing that refuge should fail Him, and though without sin, to be made sin for us. He emptied Himself of these His human rights, as He had before of His divine glory. Phil. ii. shows both of these.

How was the whole life of Jesus the great contradiction

of the way of Adam! Adam was nothing, but sought to be as God. Jesus was everything, consciously equal with God, yet made Himself nothing, and emptied Himself. The person He assumed—the form of a servant; the station He filled on earth—a carpenter's son; His life, His ways, His testimony—all was the full contradiction of him whose departure from God in pride has fashioned the course of “this present evil world.” He was ever hiding, ever emptying Himself. He could have commanded legions of angels (as this very Psalm entitled Him, *v.* 11; Matt. xxvi. 53), but He was the silent captive of His wicked persecutors. If He *taught*, and the people wondered, He would say, “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.” If He *worked miracles* He would say, “The Son can do nothing of Himself.”

What worship, what fragrant incense before God, was this life of Jesus! That divine delight in Him is here expressed (14, 16). And what rest and solace to the heart, yea, what satisfaction to the conscience, to know that God has been so honoured, so refreshed, in this world of ours. What savour to the *death or blood* of Jesus does the *life* of Jesus render! His blood is the sinner's plea, his only title; but all God's delight in Him aids in enforcing the claim of that blood on the poor sinner's confidence. What a Christ-honouring contrast shows itself to us, when we read Psalm xci. in company with Psalm xc., “the man of God” is confessing *human frailty*, tracing the *cause* of it in human iniquity, and owning the *only relief* it can count upon to be a new creation of which God will be Himself the foundation as well as the former, the chief corner-stone as well as the head of the corner.

In Psalm xci. a divine oracle addresses Messiah, and tells Him that because of His perfection in faith, His moral glories, God would be His security against all

frailty, accident, hesitation, danger, or damage of every kind ; and God Himself is heard affirming this and recognizing Messiah's perfection in *affection*, as the oracle had recognized His perfection in *faith and morals*.

But there is this further, though not *expressed*, that in His day, Messiah surrendered these His chartered and divinely attested rights and securities, as Son of Man, in that wondrous mystery in which He was willing to be made sin for sinners, and the vindicator and exhibitor of the full glories of God. (See Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.)

Thus man's frailty has to look for its relief only *from* God. Messiah has perfections, not frailties, but surrenders all the rights they secure Him *to* God.

Psalms xcii.-ci. constitute so many parts or chapters of one little book. They celebrate the introduction of the kingdom, or "the world to come," and show Messiah Himself, His Israel, and the nations, anticipating it. Many of the Jewish writers themselves refer them to "the world to come."

Other Scriptures might prepare us for such Psalms. Isaiah tells us, that in the midst of the judgment, the true Israel will lift up their voice and sing for the majesty of the Lord ; and these Psalms might suitably be the subject of that singing. (Isaiah xxiv. 13-15.) Hosea shows that, in the second wilderness, or place of discipline, in the latter day, they shall be spoken comfortably to ; and these Psalms may be the utterance of their comforted hearts. The valley of Achor is to be a door of hope, and they shall sing there. (Hosea ii.)

Indeed Messiah tells His people to sing in anticipation of His kingdom. (Isaiah xlii. 5-16.) Jehoshaphat sang as he entered the field ; and in these Psalms the Remnant rejoice and sing in hope. So the Watchmen in the latter

day sing at the tidings that salvation is coming. (Isaiah lii. 7, 8.) Having put them thus together as forming one little book, and said this much generally upon them, I would open them shortly as follows.

But how small is the measure here given to them ! and how happily and largely may they, to a greater measure, engage the meditations of the saints ! May we all kindle our hearts at such blessed Scriptures more and more in company with Jesus. (Luke xxiv. 32.)

XCII.

This is the language of Christ, the Son and heir of David, anticipating His kingdom or Sabbath. But in this coming Sabbath, God's *thoughts* will be celebrated as well as His *works* (v. 5). This will give the joy and praise of the final sabbath a higher character than the first had, when the *works* alone were celebrated. For counsels of grace, which are God's *deep thoughts*, have produced this. The first sabbath came in simply upon creation, the last sabbath will come in upon the destruction of the enemy, as Christ here also anticipates, so that it will not be exposed to danger and disturbance, as the first was, but the righteous will *still* flourish and be fruitful, as is here also declared.

Zacharias spoke of Jesus as this "horn of salvation," under whom Israel was to be delivered and flourish. Here the speaker takes that character to himself. (See Luke i. 67-79.)

But Messiah, son and heir of David, takes the kingdom from God. (Dan. vii. ; Luke xix.) It is called the kingdom of the Father. God the Father is glorified though it be the day of the Lordship of Jesus. (Phil. ii.)

Jesus was anointed for the ministry of *grace* (Isa. lxi. ; Luke iv.) ; He is to be anointed for the ministry of *the kingdom*. (Isaiah xi. 2-10.) This is the "fresh oil." Faith

in a poor but happy pardoned sinner brought its oil to greet this anointed one. (Luke vii.; John xii.) The nations will also after this manner gladden and honour Him. (Psalm xlv. 8; Matt. ii. 11.) And here Jesus owns the fragrancy of this costly anointing which was on Him.

This is, indeed, "a Psalm or song for the Sabbath day." For this exaltation of the anointed One will be the kingdom, of which the Sabbath is the type and pledge. And then, the teil tree and the oak, which have long been withered, shall flourish again—revive as in the time of old age. Israel shall then, after so long a time, flourish and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit (verse 14; Isaiah vi. 13, xvii. 6). And all this will be to God's praise. "Every tongue shall confess Jesus Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

XCIII.

This is the language of the people, anticipating, in their turn, the same millennial kingdom. They address Messiah the King, celebrating His power and glory in some grand features of it:—

1. His discomfiture of His enemies.
2. The stability of His throne.
3. The holiness of His house or government.

This Psalm seems to announce the great subjects which are in the following Psalms more detailed. It is an Introduction, doing the well-known office of a Preface.

XCIV.

This Psalm, accordingly, resumes the first of those subjects more largely. The people, waiting for their Messiah or King, call on Him to judge the enemy, to still the floods (xcii. 3) that are lifting up their voice. And all Scripture joins to tell, that the millennial kingdom of

Christ will not be brought in, till this judgment is executed on the enemies of Israel.

But in the course of this Psalm, the afflicted Remnant greatly comfort themselves in God, assured that He will work for them. They know that in the midst of these floods and waves, the Lord is their Rock which nothing can move.

The judgment here described is the day of the Lord's vengeance—the year of recompence for the controversy of Zion—the day of breaking up confederacies—the day of the Lord that is to be upon everything lifted up—the day of “revenges upon the enemy.” (Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.) The floods that lift up their waves will then be rebuked by the Lord. (Isaiah xvii. 12, 13.)

But judgment is to “return unto righteousness” (verse 15). The judgment is to lead to the exaltation of righteousness in the earth, when *power* will be on the side of righteousness, as in the kingdom.

The *infidel* character of the faction is strikingly challenged and rebuked by the righteous Israel (verses 7–10). St. Peter addresses the same unbelief, but more in the way of a teacher of God's truth. (2 Peter iii.)

XCV.

Thus encouraging themselves, their hearts are tuned to a song of joy and praise, so lively and fresh are their anticipations. The Lord by His Spirit seems to break in on all this anticipated joy, not to check or alter it, but just to give holy admonition in the midst of it (*vv.* 7–11). And this interruption, or this voice of the Spirit, acts in two ways; it tells them that there is a rest (see Heb. iv.); it tells them also that they must take heed and avoid all that which in their fathers caused a loss of that rest. (See Heb. iii.) For they are still in spirit in the wilderness or place of discipline,—still, as of old, between

Egypt and Canaan, and therefore in need of such admonition. The apostle's commentaries on these chapters give this character to this voice. But we know surely that the admonition is rightly applied to us all.

XCVI.

They continue their joy here, which shows that the Lord had not by His exhortation (xcv. 7-11) designed to check it; and here they summon the whole earth to join it. A "new song" is called for. And the Jews themselves interpret "the new songs" of Scripture to belong to the days of Messiah; that is to "the world to come," as the Apostle speaks—the power of the Son of Man. And besides, as there was a song at creation (Job xxxviii. 7), so another and a richer song, "a new song," will usher in the kingdom or the times of refreshing and restitution, when the earth itself shall be in the liberty of glory. (Rom. viii. 21.)

This Psalm is recited in 1 Chron. xvi., and forms part of that beautiful composition, that sweet compound of songs and joys, which David and Israel prepared for the ark taking its rest, which was the type of the kingdom by anticipation celebrated here.

All shall be included in the closing joy. As in Rev. v. the redeemed, the angelic companies, and all creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the seas, join in it, so here, all are summoned to the millennial song, that there may be a full chorus of praise.

XCVII.

This Psalm is another exercise of the heart of the Remnant anticipating the kingdom. It is as though they were even now bringing the First-begotten into the world the second time, or in His *glory*; not in His *sufferings* as

at His first coming; and joyously they rehearse, in spirit, His discomfiture of all His foes.

But here again, as in Ps. xcv. 7-11, the Lord by His Prophet breaks in on all this joy with words of admonition (*vv.* 10-12). He tells them that for the *righteous* all this light and glory is prepared; and warns them therefore to hate evil, and to cultivate tempers worthy of the coming kingdom.

Fire is to be the instrument of the divine judgments in this expected day of the Lord. The battle of the Lord is to be with burning and fuel of fire. (Is. ix.) The throne of the Ancient of days is like the fiery flame, and a fiery stream comes forth before Him in the day of this judgment. (Dan. vii.) So in the vision of John, the Temple was filled with smoke, as the God of glory and power was preparing the vials of wrath. (Rev. xv.)

But Zion rejoices (*v.* 8). There will be tabrets and harps for the righteous then. (Is. xxx. 32.) For though light and gladness are only then *sown for them*, and not as yet *reaped by them*, still they can sing, as we observed already—anticipations are so sure; for “faith is the substance of things hoped for.”

XCVIII.

Upon this the true Israel sing again. As it were, they use the tabret and harp, which we know, as observed above, are to be theirs, even in the day of God's judgments. His judicial righteousness is the theme of their gladness here; and again they summon all to join with them. They also chant their own salvation in the day of this judgment. For we know that they will be drawn out of many waters: like Noah they will be preserved in the very place of judgment—like Lot, drawn forth in safety from it. (See Ps. xviii. 16.) They will then be spared, the same day illuminating them, and consuming the enemy.

(Mal. iii. iv.) They will only be refined by these fires (Zech. xiii.)

All Scripture shows, like this Psalm, that the joy of the whole earth will follow the restoration of Zion. And the praises of the Lord will then be as "a loud noise:" for all will join in them; and there will be no rebuking of them, or silencing of them, through the unbelief of the world. There will be nothing to check, but all to swell the full concert of praise then.

XCIX.

The same Israel of God are still occupied here, as is very evident, with the same thoughts and joys. They largely anticipate the kingdom, the forgiveness of the nation's sin according to the pattern of the divine mercy to their fathers, and then the people rendering in the temple the services of praise, in the spirit of reverend fear, from the sense of the holiness of God's house and government.

But it is not the precursory judgments that raise the joy, as we saw before, but the actual reign in Zion. For the Lord is now seated between the cherubim, at home in the midst of His people. He is "great in Zion." And His people shout His praise again, exalting the Lord at His holy hill, or place of righteous government; all the review of the past, whether they were the days of Moses and Aaron, or of Samuel, all aiding the praise. And so it will be. For every thing that will not do that shall be restrained, as we saw under Psalm lxxvi.

C.

This Psalm calls on all the Gentile people to follow Israel into the holy house of God with praise. The sureness of His testimonies, His truth, and His mercy, are declared. And thus the mountain of the Lord's house is

established, and nations are flocking to it. Many people and strong nations, according to the prophet, seek the Lord of hosts at Jerusalem. His house there is a house of prayer for all nations ; and while its walls are salvation, its gates will be praise.

And here, at the close of these songs of Israel, we may again observe that Scripture teaches us that Israel will, in the day of their discipline, know these joys (See page 110.) It is true they will mourn like doves ; they will confess the nation's sin, like Daniel or Nehemiah ; they will say "my leanness, my leanness ;" but they will have their joys and anticipated songs also. The Apocalypse shows us the same in principle (See xi. 16-18.) For there the joy in heaven is anticipatory in the day of divine wrath and earth's destruction. And I may say, as Isaiah lx. appears to be the Spirit of Truth teaching the Remnant what the results of the Redeemer coming to Zion (see lix. 20) are to be, surely when they learn that lesson they will have abundant occasion to sing songs in prospect of the kingdom. For the same Spirit is leading their hearts, the same Spirit is weaving sorrows and joys together, the thought of their own iniquity with the thought of the Lord's salvation and kingdom, that their souls may be led into various and profitable affections.

CI.

The previous Psalms have been, as we have seen, varied happy exercises of the Remnant on the great themes connected with the kingdom, and which were suggested at the beginning—such as the discomfiture of the enemy, the stability of the throne, and the holiness of the house or government of the Lord. Here Messiah is again personally heard, as He was in the first of this series. (Ps. xcii.) He takes the kingdom (that is by antici-

pation, greatly desiring it in reality, verse 2), entering it with a song to "mercy and judgment;" for mercy and judgment had just been seen in the way of bringing in the kingdom—judgment on the enemy, mercy towards the true Israel.

And having sung this song, He undertakes to order His kingdom in righteousness, and to maintain the holiness of God's house for ever, as in Ps. lxxii., 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, Is. ix. 7, xi. 4, Zech. xiv. 21.

And observe that, in principle, "mercy and judgment" are the burthen of the thoughts or songs of every believer or worshipper when entering on any divine dispensation. Adam went out of Eden to walk across a cursed earth as a pardoned sinner, with this song in his spirit—so did Noah enter on the new world—and so did Israel enter Canaan in the like way; for each of these in his day, Adam, Noah, and Israel, had witnessed judgment upon others, and were themselves the witnesses of mercy. We have entered on our age, singing likewise of "mercy and judgment;" for we have seen the judgment of our sin sustained by Christ, and ourselves the monuments of mercy. And when the glory or kingdom is entered by and by, as we read here, mercy and judgment will again be sung. And this must be so, for righteousness must be upheld, while grace takes its course; justice will not give way, though love will have its way.

What a perfect little volume this appears to be. (xcii.-ci.) Messiah Himself opens and closes it. At the beginning He anticipates His being anointed for the kingdom, or the exaltation of His horn—at the close He declares how He will order His kingdom. And His Israel in the mean time have, as we have also seen, rehearsed their anticipations of the kingdom in its judicial righteousness and final blessedness. Oh for more concord with all this in our hearts! Oh that we were "tuning our in-

struments at the door"—getting our hearts more in harmony with the joys of this coming kingdom! May we watch and pray for such a mind, and be skilled in the songs of the Lord!

CII.

Something very different is now to be heard. This Psalm opens with the complaint of "the Man of sorrows." He sees Himself deserted by His followers, reproached by the foe, and sustaining the righteous anger of God,—the indignation and wrath due to others falling on Him. (1-11.) We then listen to God's answer to this; and that answer pledges Him life and a kingdom, and display in His glory, rehearsing also the theme of praise with which Israel and the nations will then celebrate Him. (12-22.) Then Messiah is heard a second time solitarily musing on His griefs, (23, 24,); and God, in like manner, again answering Him—reminding Him, so to speak, of His ancient glories at Creation, and pledging Him, as before, life, a kingdom, and a seed. (25-28.)

The quotation in Heb. i. from this Psalm seems to give it this structure and character; for it tells us that *v.* 25-27 is the language of God to the Son, and this leads us to conclude that *v.* 12-22 is the same. And thus the above structure of the Psalm is determined.

But, in connection with it, we may notice one thing. The Lord Jesus Christ is the builder. This entitles us to see the Christ as the head of every dispensation—the great active power in all—whether in Creation, among the Patriarchs, on mount Sinai, or as the God of Israel through all their history. He made the worlds, or ordered the ages. (Heb. i. 2.) He built Moses and every house of God. (Heb. iii. 3.) And it is the Christ whom God addresses in this Psalm as having laid earth's foundations, and outliving, in His glory, all things that are made—the

Christ who was once the bruised and smitten one. Wondrous mystery !

It is a Psalm of very touching beauty and grandeur.

It is like Jesus in Gethsemane, exceeding sorrowful even unto death, going away and praying again, saying the same words, and yet again and again heard—the angel from heaven strengthening Him there, the answer of Jehovah assuring Him here. (See Luke xxii. 43.)

I might further observe that this Psalm also lets us read, in these utterances of Jesus and the divine answers to them, what we learn from other simple doctrinal Scriptures—that *the glories of Jesus come from His sufferings*. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” It shows us “the sufferings of Christ, and the glories *that should follow*.” For the Lamb on *the throne* is the Lamb that had been before on *the altar*. It is the bow of Him who had been once shot by the archers that abides in strength. All Scripture shows us this ; and we have it in these cries of Jesus, and the answers so blessedly made to them.

And so as to our blessing. It all depends on *the same sufferings of Christ*. No thoughts of God’s love are to be allowed which would interfere with the demands of His righteousness. The love is without measure. That is true. But it is not a *mere* emotion. It is that which, at an unutterable cost, provided redemption for the guilty. And if we think of love without believing the provision that it made for the claims and exactions of righteousness, we are dealing with a mere sentiment of our own mind, and not with the revelation of God. And poor are the best conceptions of man’s religion—something different indeed from the moral grandeur and perfections of the Gospel of Christ, where God is *just* while He *justifies the sinner*, where we learn that He has brought back His

banished ones, and received His prodigals, all the while upholding the full glories of His throne of righteousness, and providing in and from Himself an answer to all its demands. The Cross of Christ is the secret and centre of all this.

CIII.—CVII.

These Psalms form the different chapters of another little book. The contents prove that ; and the first of them alone having a title favours it.

It is a fine celebration of God's resurrection-power, or pardoning restoring grace. The 103rd celebrates this grace or power in *the Psalmist's own person*. He rehearses the forgiveness of all his sins, and the guiding of him onward to the kingdom by the safe and tender hand of his heavenly Father. The 104th looks at *Creation* in the same light. God's providence rules over all even now ; but in the end His resurrection strength will be applied to Creation, which therefore will again, as of old, become the object of divine delight, and though it now groans and travails in pain, will then be delivered. The 105th, 106th, 107th, celebrate the same thing in *Israel* ; the 105th looking at Israel blest of God till they were brought to Canaan, and there set under the law ; the 106th looking on all that as failing, and Israel bringing ruin and death on themselves ; and then the 107th presenting the resurrection grace and strength of God, calling Israel from the place of death to know His loving-kindness and declare His goodness as a people who had been dead and were alive again, who had been lost but now were found.

The 106th closes with rehearsing the cries of Israel so often heard in the days of their distress throughout the Book of Judges (*v.* 43-46). The Psalmist then takes up the same cry as for Israel's *present* distress, and anticipating mercy and deliverance, blesses the God of Israel

(v. 47, 48). The 107th gives God's answer, realizing these anticipations of faith.

This little volume of Psalms may thus come happily after the 102nd, where we heard the cry of Him who sought deliverance from death, and was heard, and whose deliverance or resurrection is the grand pledge of the same to all whom He heads; for "in Christ shall all be made alive." His own mystic body, the Church, will rise in the likeness of His glorious body, Israel and the nations will revive in the earth, and the creation itself be delivered from corruption.

There will, it is true, be different orders and glories, but all will be as in resurrection or new creation. When Jesus preached He healed. So did His Apostles and the disciples whom He sent forth. Disease departed where He came, sickness cleared off, and the voice of health and thanksgiving was heard in the villages and cities of Israel. As of old when He led His people from Egypt, it was as God their Healer. (Ex. xv.) He led them. Their feet had not swelled for forty years,—Caleb's strength was green and fresh as when he set out—the witness of what would have been for all the congregation had they been obedient. And so, when the kingdom comes, the lame will leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing. These shall be again the works of the Son of David. (Isa. xxxv., Matt. xii.) For the earthly people shall then be in lovely healthful tabernacles (after the long leprosy, the flesh becoming like the flesh of a little child), while in the higher celestial places, the children of the resurrection will shine in spiritual bodies of glory, according to the mighty power of Christ, whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself.

Resurrection or Redemption (for they are one in principle) has been God's great purpose from the beginning. Without faith in resurrection "the power of God" is not

known (Matt. xxii. 29), neither is "knowledge of God" attained. (1 Cor. xv. 34.) Creation is but the avenue or ante-room. Creation was for redemption and not redemption after Creation. Because in counsel before the foundation of the world, all was to stand in redemption. The law of the Jubilee shows us this. (Lev. xxv.) And the man of God, the pardoned accepted sinner celebrates all this in this magnificent series of Psalms, rejoicing, as we have said, in redeeming or resurrection power as displayed in himself, in creation, and in Israel—seeing it every where, as his soul surveys the glorious prospect.*

Having thus viewed these Psalms together, they are left to the consideration of the saints; judging, however, that a minute observation of each would confirm this general impression. And a sweet meditation they afford to the renewed mind. A poor sinner, in the 103rd Psalm, stands, in spirit, at the golden altar (that is, in the full certainty of salvation) with his incense of praise, and from that happy place anticipates or surveys the past and future dealings of the same Lord, who had thus blest him in all His works and ways, whether in creation itself or in the midst of His people. And indeed the only adequate power of interpreting the divine way is to bear in our souls a sample of it, as is done here. For the believer is "a kind of first-fruits." (James i.) He already stands in the reconciliation, as all will by and by. (Col. i.) God's way is in grace or in resurrection, and the consciously pardoned sinner is, therefore, the only full Prophet of God—the only one who can to the full either enjoy or

* The purpose of the Spirit in these Psalms being *moral* and not *historical*—to vindicate Jehovah in His dealings with Israel, and to convict Israel in their dealings with Jehovah—the Psalmist in civ. and cvi. does not give the *events* to which he refers in strict or accurate order. He speaks of the plague of darkness, for instance, before that of flies, and of Korah's rebellion, before the making of the golden calf. This is natural, and what we ourselves would do very probably, if our purpose in narrating circumstances was, like the Psalmist's here, moral and not historical.

declare Him. "Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldest taste His works."

It is well to add, that parts of the 105th and 106th were sung at the removal of the ark in 1 Chron. xvi., as we have already observed ; the 96th furnishes another part of that same beautiful composite hymn. For that occasion, typically, set forth the season of Israel's coming joy ; and these Psalms are songs of praise suited to that season.

Resurrection—the glorious interpreter of God's ways and purposes, and the full and eternal witness of His love and power—being thus the theme of this book, we may say, in the closing words of it, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

NOTE.—The fourth division of the Psalms, according to the Jews, ends with Psalm cvi.

CVIII. •

In the beginning of this Psalm, Messiah, identifying Himself with the Remnant in the last days of their trouble, calls for the manifestation of Jehovah's power in their behalf. But He does this with full and joyous anticipations, and therefore makes His usual vow of praise. (1-6.) An answer to this comes immediately from the sanctuary, from the presence of God, or, it may be, according to the "holiness" of His counsels, to assure the suppliant that the Lord would, in due season, assert His kingdom. (7-9.) This as immediately awakens Messiah's zeal for the day of vengeance or the year of the redeemed (Is. lxiii. 1-5) ; for we know He is now *expecting* thus to tread down His enemies. (Heb. x. 13.) And then the whole closes with His again looking to Jehovah as the help in Jacob's trouble, and with His confident anticipation of victory.

This Psalm is made up of the joyous portions of two

previous Psalms (see lvii. lx.) which had both begun in sorrow and ended in joy. For there the soul of the believer had sowed in tears and reaped in joy; but here the double harvest is gathered, and the bosom of the worshipper is filled with sheaves. And, truly, joy is the thing that will remain. The sorrows shall be left behind, or remembered only to raise the gladness and give length and breadth to the praise.

This Psalm may happily follow the previous little volume on Resurrection. (ciii.-cvii.) For resurrection leads to joy and praise. As another once observed, Jesus Himself at the tomb of Lazarus wept, indulging the tears of all around Him; but at His own vacant tomb His way was changed, and in the liberty of resurrection Himself, He could say to His loved and loving disciple, "Woman, why weepest thou?"

CIX.

Under the sense of the treason of Judas (and in that treason Judas was the leader and representative of unbelieving Israel, Acts i. 16,) and under the thought of that death to which such treason was hastening Him, Jesus here cries to Him who could both save Him from death, and avenge Him on His adversaries.

I have already observed that we get notice of two characters of communion which Jesus had, and of which this as well as Psalm lxix. easily reminds us. I mean, that spoken of in Heb. v. 7, and that noticed in 1 Peter ii. 23. The first was a cry for *deliverance*, the second a waiting for *vindication*. (See Ps. lxix.)

In this Psalm there is also allusion to "the trial of Jealousy" in Numbers v. (v. 14, 18.) And we know from other Scriptures, that Israel will be treated and even pardoned in the character of an unfaithful wife. (See Hosea i-iii.)

Judas and the nation of Israel are in this Psalm morally one, as Ishmael and that nation are in Gal. iv. Their land is but an extended Aceldama. (Is. iv. 4, Joel iii. 21, Matt. xxvii.) The advocate connects them, also, in His very words here, speaking both in the singular and plural number of His enemies.

The fate of Judas or of the apostate nation, and that of the elect Israel or of the Lord's Jerusalem, are strikingly distinguished. For here the great Advocate desires that Satan may stand at Judas' right hand; in Zechariah iii. He Himself rebukes Satan, when Satan takes that stand against Jerusalem or the true Israel. Here the Advocate prays for judgment against the one that his dignities, family, and possessions, may all be spoiled, and that there may be none to pity; there He desires for the other, that glory may be upon him, the mitre and the robe, and that all iniquity may pass away, all defilement be removed. And all Scripture, in this way, keeps distinct and clear the judgment of the apostate nation, and the redemption and blessing of the elect or true Israel.

The reproach of "the poor and needy man," the slaying of Him who was "broken in heart," is the occasion of the judgment here desired; that is, the rejection of Jesus. The same is the ground laid for judgment on the Jewish people by the same advocate in Psalm lxix. And the New Testament teaches this also; for miserable destruction and the taking away of their vineyard have come upon Israel, because they were the murderers of the heir of the vineyard. And where is cleansing for the land, where recovery of the name of Israel, but in the faith that returns to this rejected one, that looks to Him whom they pierced, that learns to say, "He was wounded for our transgressions;" which recognizes in Him a fountain • opened for sin and for uncleanness, and which, in further

exultation of spirit, says, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"?

CX.

This Psalm conveys, impliedly or informally, Jehovah's answer to the preceding cry. Jesus' ascension in the heavens, then His vengeance on all who had stood against Him, and His exaltation in His kingdom on the earth, are declared.

This Psalm, in this way, suggests an outline of the whole purpose of God touching the earth.

The Prophet's eye, as it were, follows Jesus in the day of the mount of Olives or Bethany (Luke xxiv. 50, Acts i. 9-11) to heaven, and sees His session there at Jehovah's right hand (*v.* 1). Being in this vision, he addresses Jesus as Adon (2-4), and tells Him what Jehovah was preparing for Him—a rod of power, a willing people, and the highest personal dignities. Then, turning from Adon to Jehovah, he tells Him in what way Jesus (Adon) would possess Himself of the kingdom thus prepared for Him. (5-7.)

This is, I conceive, the structure of this distinguished Psalm.

It is worthy of thought, whether the indefinite word "until" (*v.* 1) is not the ground of Mark xiii. 32. And further, this kingdom being the reward of Messiah's service, the time and all other circumstances of it would lie at the Father's disposal. (Matt. xx. 23, Acts i. 7.)

Connected with Ps. xvi., this Psalm gives us a beautiful view of the glorious ascension of Christ—God welcomed Him on high with the words, "Sit on *my right hand* till I make thine enemies thy footstool;" and Christ as it were answered, "in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at *thy right hand* are pleasures for evermore." And, read in the light of Heb. x. 12, 13, we see how duly and perfectly

Jehovah's promise was received by Christ. It filled Him with *hope* or *expectation*, which is always the proper answer to *promise*.

But let me observe, that the Lord's entrance into heaven was not only that He might take His seat at the right hand of power, waiting for the day when He is to make His foes His footstool: it was also an entrance into heaven as a sanctuary, there to occupy Himself in riches of grace, in present priestly services for His saints still travelling and militant here. (See Heb. viii.)

This is indeed a Psalm of great prophetic value, and much used by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament Scriptures. For by it He interprets that Jesus is greater than David (Matt. xxii.)—higher than angels (Heb. i.) now in heaven as Lord (Acts ii. 34-36)—as an expectant (Heb. x.)—and in the joy of an untransferable priesthood (Heb. vii.) which He has received, not of Himself but from God. (Heb. v.) All this we learn by divine comments upon this Psalm got in other Scriptures, Scriptures of the New Testament.

The Lordship of Jesus, I may say, is a principal thing here. In the preceding Psalm we saw Him as the "poor and needy man," but here, as "the Lord." And these two things form the great burthen and theme of the prophets. (1 Pet. i. 11.) He emptied Himself, but God has given Him a name above every name. (Phil. ii.) Peter, in his early preaching to the Jews after the resurrection, sees this Lordship of Jesus every where—now in heaven, by and by on His return to earth, then throughout succeeding ages. He sees it equally over Jew and Greek. He traces *the name* of this Lord, *the day* of this Lord, and *the presence* of this Lord, in their different powers and virtues. (Acts ii. 20, 21, iii. 19, x. 36.)

But it is not mere *divine* lordship, but an *anointed* lordship. And, therefore, His lordship is *for us*. Israel

had their interest in all the anointed officers under God ; whether prophet, priest, or king, all were for Israel's use. The prophet's wisdom, the priest's sacrifices, the king's strength, were all for the people's blessing. So the lordship of Jesus, is for us. Whether He be lord of life, lord of principalities and powers, lord of every region of glory, or lord of all the keys—the key of heaven, the key of the house of David, the key of hell and death, or of the bottomless pit,—all this lordship is for us. He ranges every where as lord, but still for us. His eyes, as the eyes of the Lord, run to and fro in our behalf.

This is a wondrous lordship. It is, however, *over* as well as *for* us. As David here says "*my* Lord." But this has been, and is still to be, more and more *practically* forgotten. For both Peter and Jude prophesy of the closing form of Christendom's apostasy as *the denial of this Lord and His authority*, the turning of His grace into lasciviousness. (2 Pet. ii., Jude.) And it is, therefore, *the Lord* who comes to avenge the wrongs of His neglected name. (Jude 14.) "Behold, the Lord cometh."

A great Scripture, truly, this Psalm is. It may well engage the enlarging thoughts of His saints who love Him, and delight to inquire after Him in His temple.

CXI.

This Psalm, and all those down to the 118th, are without any title. This we may take as a little notice that they hang, in some sense, on the preceding Psalms. For the great divine mystery of the "poor and needy man," exalted to be "lord" in heaven now, with the promise of a kingdom, had been there revealed ; and these Psalms appear to be certain exercises of heart over that mystery. And let me say, the soul should ever be ready to entertain all divine revelation in this way. When the Apostle had,

under the Holy Ghost, traced deep and extensive purposes of God (Rom. ix.-xi.), at the close, he breaks out with a note of admiration, "O the depth of the riches!" And poor and profitless will be all our knowledge, if it lead not to this—"if out of our meditations we do not bring home a few chips to kindle our own fire."

The Jews connected several of these Psalms (cxiii.-cxviii.), and called them "the Great Hallel," using them particularly at the feasts.

Jesus Himself, or the Spirit of Christ in the worshipper, is heard in them.

Praise breaks forth at the very outset. Such would be the fruit of the lips, when the soul had been listening (as we have presumed) to the great theme of the preceding Psalms.

Here in this **IIITH**, the worshipper is celebrating the covenant-works of God, of which, amid the multitude of them, as we know, the sufferings and glory of Jesus form the great material. The "good understanding" of those who feared the Lord is also declared, for the end will surely shew the wisdom of having so lived in this present evil world.

CXII.

The theme is continued—the further blessings of the one who feared the Lord. Jesus is, in the full sense, this obedient one; and all that is here spoken of was pledged in resurrection to Him, and shall be His portion in the kingdom. The present virtues and advantages of the good and righteous one, the one who fears God, are also more fully exhibited. But this is another hallelujah—this is still to the praise of the same Lord—another lifting of the voice in praise.

The Jewish character of this Psalm (as is that of the Psalms generally) we may gather very surely from the

way in which the Spirit in St. Paul uses *v.* 9 in 2 Cor. ix. 8-10. For we may observe, that that which is matter of *promise* here, is only matter of *desire* there. And this is easily accounted for—and it is beautiful. For the blessings, which the saints are to reckon upon in this age, are not earthly, or in the circumstances of the present life, as the promise of God in this Psalm intimates. We may desire, in brotherly love, present good things for the saints, as John does for Gaius (3 John 2); but such things are not the subject of promise from God to us.

CXIII.

This is still an utterance of joy and praise prepared for the same time and people. It is a rich and lofty note of thanksgiving to Jehovah for all that He has done in grace for His people, expressed in the striking figures of raising the poor one out of the dust, and of making the barren woman to keep house. The songs of Hannah (1 Sam. ii.) and of Mary (Luke i.) are kindred with this; and they were, in their day, the poor one and the barren wife, and, in a mystery, Jerusalem. *The works* were praised in Ps. cxi.; the deeper theme, *the name* of Jehovah, is sounded here.

CXIV.

Again we have the same subject. The Exodus is here remembered by the Israel of the latter day. And their fathers, in their day of conflict with enemies, were commanded to have the same recollection, so that they might not fear any that stood against them. (See Deut. vii. 18.)

And the secret of all holy courage is very strikingly disclosed—the power of the divine presence felt through all creation, as soon as it set itself in company with chosen and redeemed Israel.

And in a more awful form will nature again feel it, when the Lord rises up the second time for Israel and for

judgment. There will be a great shaking then. The heavens and the earth will be moved, and the sun and moon be darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. In this language the prophets announce the power of that coming day, when judgment shall fall on the nations, and Israel again become the sanctuary and dominion of the Lord. The second advent will surprise the world, as the presence of Jehovah of old did the hills and the seas, as described here in figure.

The conceptions here are in the richest style of poetry, as has been observed by others. How various the beauties of the oracles of God, how high and deep the wonders, how infinite and unspeakable the moral glories!

CXV.

This Psalm is still in beautiful connection. The earth may tremble, as we have just seen, when the Lord is revealing Himself and declaring His righteousness, but Israel will have a song then. And this is their song, in spirit; in anticipation, the resurrection song of Israel (verses 17, 18). It breaks forth very gloriously, ascribing all the praise of their present condition to the Lord. Conscious resurrection must do that (see Rom. iv. 20); for a dead one, now in life again, has nothing less than *divine* power to own. The Israel of the latter day here celebrate Jehovah as "their help and shield." Through all their holy order they do this. And they triumph over their adversaries and all their vain confidences, and trust Him for blessing still to come (verses 12, 13). And that confidence is at once honoured by an oracle from above. (14, 15.)

Israel rejoices in the thought that their God is "in the heavens." (v. 3; see cx. 1.) They may not fully understand it; but we know that as Jesus *in the grave* was a sign to them (Matt. xii. 40), so is Jesus *in resurrection*.

(Acts ii. 30, 31, xiii. 32, 33.) And they will have an answer to the oft-repeated challenge of their enemies, "where is thy God?" *v.* 2, 3; see Pss. xlii. lxxix., Joel ii., Mic. vii.)

CXVI.

This is the resurrection song of Messiah. It beautifully follows the preceding one, as though Messiah would join this joy and praise, or rather, let His voice rise and swell above that of Israel, so that He might be the leader of the congregation. We know from 2 Cor. iv. 13, that it is *Jesus* who is heard in this Psalm; but we there also learn that any with "like spirit of faith" may, in their measure, use it.

He, to whom Jesus called as able to save Him from death, had heard Him; and this Psalm is, so to express it, His "I thank thee, Father, that thou hast heard me." (John xi.) The true Hezekiah, the head and representative of Israel, is heard here. "The living, the living," he praises God. (See Is. xxxviii.) He *pays* those vows which in His distress He had *made*. (Pss. xxii. lxi. lxvi.) Jacob had somewhat failed in doing this, or been tardy to do it. (Gen. xxviii. xxxv.)

The "land of the living," or the land of the glory (Isaiah iv. 5, Ezek. xxvi. 20), is Canaan. The Jews so interpreted it. But that of course.

The Lord's *cups* are two,—that of sorrow, and that of praise; in other words, that of Gethsemane or Calvary (Luke xxii.), and that of the kingdom. (See Ps. lxxv.)

The Lord's "haste" (*v.* 11) would seem to express the paschal character of His soul. Critics tell us, that the original word does not imply "moral defect." It is the same word as in Ex. xii. 11. For His whole life was in the stranger-character of Israel in the Passover of Egypt, and was the great sure witness that all men were liars—

apostates from God. But from mere "men," He separates the elect, appearing to give them close identity with Himself, as being also precious to the Lord in their death, as He had been.

His song in the kingdom is again suggested here. (Ps. xxii., Heb. ii.) And if Jesus sang with His disciples in the days of His flesh (as we know He did—Matt. xxvi. 30), how much more will He be prepared to do so in the days of the kingdom !

But beside the Lord thus singing in company with His saints, may we not suggest that at times He will be heard alone? For it is here witnessed concerning Him, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people." (v. 14, 18.) It is a tender thought, and the soul will touch it softly. But it does appear that He will be heard *alone* at times. For if His sorrows were once *peculiar*, so may we say His joys will be. And this may lead us to allow the thought, that Jesus will, at times, have a solitary or peculiar song, the congregation then giving audience ; as at times we know they will be heard themselves ; and at times He will lead them. (Psalm xxxiv. 3.)

CXVII.

Here the earth is called on to join in resurrection joy and praise, and to celebrate "mercy and truth," as risen Israel was now doing. Israel, and Israel's living Head, had been heard chanting their several hallelujahs, and the nations are now, in their turn, called into this harmony and to take part in this holy music.

This Psalm, the shortest portion of the Book of God, is quoted, and given much value to, in Rom. xv. And upon this it has been profitably observed, "it is a small portion of Scripture, and as such we might easily overlook it. But not so the Holy Ghost. He gleans up this

precious little testimony which speaks of grace to the Gentiles, and presses it on our attention."

And I may say, I have long delighted in the fact, that the Spirit in the course of the New Testament is often dragging into light, so to speak, some obscure corners of the old scriptures which might be naturally passed by—as Hos. xi. 1, Amos v. 26, ix. 11, Hab. i. 5, Prov. xxv. 22, Nahum i. 15. But it helps to affirm the precious truth, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God." The stars in that hemisphere of glories may differ in magnitude, but they are all equally the workmanship of one hand. There is, perhaps we may say, no portion of the Old Testament, that is not either expressly cited, or distinctly referred to, or silently glanced at in the New.

CXVIII.

This Psalm closes this series of lofty songs of praise. The 110th had seated Adon or Christ at Jehovah's right hand in heaven, and anticipated His return to the power and rest of the kingdom. Here the nation of Israel welcome Him back, and, appropriately, in the character of the "head-stone of the corner," for such had His previous exaltation in heaven made Him. (Acts iv. 11.) It is the language of Israel, just in readiness for Jesus and His kingdom. (Matt. xxiii.) It is the bringing in of this head-stone with shoutings. (Zech. iv. 7.)

Scripture abounds with reference to Christ as "the Stone."

This wondrous Stone or Rock was formed at Calvary; for the archers had to grieve Him, and shoot at Him, and hate Him, ere He could be fully formed the stone, the "tried stone." (Gen. xlix.) Then, in due time, He was laid down before Israel as their *foundation*; but they stumbled over Him instead of building on Him. (Is. xxviii., Rom. ix.) He is now, in the same character,

presented to a whole world of sinners, and some find Him their life-giving stone, while men generally disallow Him. (1 Peter ii.) But He is in heaven, owned as the head of the corner, and from that elevation He will in season descend, and in His fall grind His despisers to powder. (Dan. ii., Matt. xxi.) Then, His true Israel will welcome Him, as this Psalm shows us. And in His kingdom He will be the stone—on earth, engraved with “seven eyes,” exercising diligent government over the whole scene (Zech. iii.)—in heaven, enthroned as the glorious precious stone (Rev. iv.), with His risen saints sparkling as glorious precious stones around Him. (Rev. xxi.)

Wondrous story! but this only as we pass by this magnificent Psalm; our *wonder*, as another observed, being however nothing less than *worship*.

It is the kingdom, or “day of the Lord,” that is here rejoiced in, as it had been “the resurrection” before, in Psalm cxvi. And this “day” will, of course, bring “light” (ver. 27) to Israel; and be also the great witness, that God’s “mercy endureth for ever,” the great theme or occasion of continued sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (ver. 28, 29.) For the joy of Jesus and His saints is twofold: the joy of *resurrection*, and the joy of *the kingdom*. Jesus knew the first, when He broke in His own person the power of death and the grave; He will know the second in the coming day of His power in Jerusalem.

This is a suited and solemn close of this great Hallel, as the Jews themselves call this collection of Psalms, as I have observed already. And this last of them, the 118th is the celebration of the glorious ways of the Lord, in a stage beyond that to which (save in prospect) the 110th had led Him. There we saw Him seated at the right hand in heaven, and we left Him there, an expectant of His day and kingdom. But here His expectation is realised. His enemies have been subdued, and He is

entering the gates of His royal city. As He once went up the shining way from earth to the right hand of God, so now He has descended the shining way from heaven, to execute vengeance on His enemies, as then promised to Him, to satisfy the wishful waiting hearts of His people, and to seat Himself in the kingdom.

What paths for the feet of Jesus are these! Those feet which had known only the thorny places of this desert world, in these Psalms travel these glorious paths—the path upward to God, and the path downward to the kingdom. Then the Lord will have His day. And it will be a jubilee, when God's principles form and fill the scene. (Lev. xxv.) His counsels of wisdom and love shall be displayed and exalted, and His people shall lift up the praise, as they do here—"bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." But who can utter it all? As our poet sings—

"Who shall fulfil the boundless song?
What bold pretender dares?
The theme transcends an angel's tongue,
And Gabriel's heart despairs."

CXIX.

This Psalm rehearses the various virtues of the word of God, and the saints' delight and profit therein. Any believer may generally use it as the breathing of his own soul; but in its full prophetic character, it would seem that it will be the language of the true Israel on their return to God and His long neglected oracles.

When the Lord came, He found the Jews neglectful and ignorant of the Scripture. (Matt. xv. 6, xxii. 29, John v. 38, 47.) But the Remnant are directed to them. (Is. viii. 20; Mal. iv. 4.) And this Psalm shows their obedience to that direction, and the exercise of their heart in the divine writings. They have forsaken their

own traditions and are hearing "Moses and the Prophets." (Luke xvi. 29-31.)

Ezra, while captive in Babylon, did, as the Remnant will do, diligently occupy himself in the word of God. (Ezra vii. 6.) The Berean Jews present a sample of them, likewise, in this character. (Acts xvii. 11.) And the history of Josiah does the same. He reigned after judgment had been pronounced against Jerusalem. His repentance could not change that. Judgment was still to come ; but Josiah shall (like God's Remnant) be spared. For he had set his heart to serve the Lord when all was hastening to ruin. But we have in the history this further fact—that in the midst of his doings and services, the Book of the Law is found, and that at once operates to give a new tone to all his ways. He begins with himself. He takes the place of a convicted and humbled one. In that spirit he sets himself to work again, and *makes the oracles of God the rule of all his service.* (2 Kings xxi. xxiii. ; 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.)

Josiah, in this way, with zeal returned to the word of God which had been so entirely lost to the nation through their idol-vanities. And so, in the latter day, the repentant Remnant will turn with listening and obedient hearts to the word of God, and treat it with special honour and regard, conscious as they will be of having so long and grievously neglected it. For such is the fruit which repentance would duly and naturally yield. It will be restitution ; restoring, like Zacchaeus, fourfold to that which they had wronged.

But we cannot pass by this valuable and deeply devotional Psalm without a little further pause. From the beginning of His ways, we see God's value for His written word. He has made a hedge about it, that no rude hand can guiltlessly touch it, either to add thereto, or take therefrom. And He has bound it round the heart,

before the eyes, and on the hands of His people. The gates of the field, the doors of the house, the morning and the evening family, the walk abroad and the rest within, all was to witness it. (Deut. vi. xi.) It was to mingle itself with all the personal and social life of His people, and shed its light on every path, however ordinary, of their daily journey. Is it not blessed to see the Lord thus esteeming His own revelation and thus commending it to our esteem? And is it now to be erased from our gates and doors and from the palms of our hands? "The malice of Satan has raged no less against *the Book* than *the truth contained in it.*" The divine life of the saint heeds it, and cannot spare any of it. It is the food of the life of faith and hope. It bears the soul to God, and keeps it near Him and with Him, through the Spirit. The more the virtues and consolations of the new life are prized, so will the word be. And the believer pleads the word or scripture as the answer to that great question, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" (Job xxviii. 12.) For He who alone knows the path of wisdom has made scripture its dwelling place. And with Him (Jer. xxiii. 28) the saint says of all in comparison, "What is the chaff to the wheat?"

May we hold it fast, but use it skilfully in the light of the Holy Ghost in us! For if there be the error of taking away this key of knowledge (Luke xi.), so is there the error of using it with an untaught, unstable hand. (2 Peter iii.) Let us use it with the reverent and worshipping mind of the servant of God in this beautiful and most precious Psalm. Let us know something of the burnings of his heart over the holy oracles, saying, "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments."

Psalm cxx.-cxxxiv. are entitled "Songs of Degrees." It has been judged that they were put together, and

received a common title, because they were used on some occasion, or concerned some action, in different stages of it,—such as the return of the captives from Babylon to Jerusalem. And from internal marks, this may well be so. Though indited by the Spirit at different times, they were used, in all probability, in the order in which they here appear, by those returning captives, at different stages of their march homeward—as the various parts of Ps. lxxviii. were sung at different stations of that procession, which was bearing the Ark to the city of David. For in these Psalms we shall find a growing sense of drawing nearer and nearer to home or the place of rest till at last that place is reached with praise.

The coming forth from Babylon is anticipatively celebrated by Prophets, in very lofty language. (Is. xlviii. 20, lii. 11, 12.) But deliverance from Babylon is spoken of, after the captivity had returned from thence in the days of Cyrus. (Zech. ii. 6, 7.) So that the return at that time was, as a type, the pledge of Israel's return from another, that is, their present dispersion; and these Psalms may answer to the utterances of the latter day Remnant, in passing through different stages of their trials, till brought into the rest of the kingdom. And they may suitably, in spirit, under certain conditions and experiences, be the utterance of any saint journeying on through the present world to the glory and presence of the Lord—a wayfaring man with Jesus.

But I might further observe that they were probably *sung* by the returning captives, for with Zerubbabel 200 singers are mentioned, and others also with Ezra, on their respective exodus from Babylon. (See Ezra ii. 64, 65, vii. 7.) And after such a happy pattern we, in spirit, should *sing*, on the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem—from man's city to God's city—from this present evil world to the world to come. The one we have in our calling left,

the other we are reaching. And the sense of this should put a song in our hearts. But we should still be only "on the way," unsatisfied with all short of Jerusalem. Wells of water and songs of gladness cannot make the place of our journey our home. Gideon's chosen 300 express this. Refreshment had no power to stop them on the road. They took it only for the sake of the journey, or as a journeying people ought to take it. They lapped the water as a travelling dog laps it, and did not kneel down to it, as though they were addicting themselves to it.

And this is to be our mind. We are saved in hope; and even the Holy Ghost, the due spring of all consolations by the way, dwells in us to give strength and not check to the hope (Rom. xv. 13); for His presence is not our Jerusalem, His refreshings are not the supper of the Lamb.

These Psalms, in the Syriac, are called "Songs of ascent from Babylon." This is according to the view we have taken of them here. And the same Hebrew word, it has been noticed, is used in reference to the journey or ascent of the captives from Babylon to Jerusalem, as is used to express the title of these Psalms. (Ezra vii. 9.) This is still more confirming.

We would now mark each of them a little more particularly.

CXX.

This Psalm duly suits an Israelite, still (though about to leave it) an unwilling captive in Babylon, or the abodes of wickedness. The tongue, as here, is often noticed as the special offender against God and His people. Doeg, Shimei, the false witnesses (Pss. xii. lii.) thus offended. And so will the last enemy (Jude 15, 16) according to his type, the little horn. (Dan. vii. 25). But coals of juniper and the arrows of the mighty one (Christ—Rev. xix.)

await him ; and the captive, though still in captivity, encourages the thought of this judgment upon his enemies. The citizen of Jerusalem may well utter the language of *v.* 6, 7, while he is still in Babylon ; for the one is God's city, "the city of peace ;" the other, man's city, "the city of confusion."

NOTE.—The Jews themselves understand this Psalm as of the *present* captivity, of which that in Babylon was the sample or forerunner, as we know.

CXXI.

Here, as though the decree for deliverance had just been published, the Israelite looks to God for the expected journey, and receives an answer of peace. And what different company is this for the poor Israel of God ! In the tents of Kedar before, he had the false tongue against him ; now, on the journey home, he looks for his watchful Lord. It was not to be the ancient glory of the manifested Pillar guiding him, but still there was equal care and certainty from the eye of the wakeful Shepherd of His people—wakeful though unseen.

And the promises here made are still for the returning Israel in the latter day. (See *Is.* xlix. 9, 10.)

Verse 1 leads me to say this—that we should accustom our souls to look more at our *resources* than at our *exigencies* or *difficulties*. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." The Lord commands this ; as, for instance, in *Deut.* vii. 17–19. And what is *Rom.* viii. 31–39, but the saint boasting in his resources in the face of all exigencies ? We should make our hearts familiar with the promises and provisions of grace, so that when the occasion arises, we may enter the field of battle, like Jehoshaphat's army, with the sweet voice of these promises, like instruments of music, in our ear, and be led onward in that joy to victory. For "joy is

strength," as Nehemiah told the congregation. (Neh. viii. 10.)

Verses 3-8 seem to be the language of a divine oracle delivered in answer to the faith expressed in *v.* 1, 2.

CXXII.

This song may have been inspired for the use of the worshippers going up to the feasts ; but it suited the returning captives, who had, in the preceding Psalm, been anticipating God's care of them on the journey, and now anticipate the end of that journey, and the regained house of the Lord. So, it may be the breathing of any renewed soul looking toward Jerusalem in the heavens. And surely it will suit the afflicted Remnant in latter-day troubles.

The Psalmist very beautifully celebrates the city of God as the city of peace, the place where God had recorded His name, the scene of joy and praise, the centre of worship and of all holy solemnities, and also the seat of Jehovah's government. It is saluted as the witness of both the Throne and the Temple, where the Glory and the Sword dwelt together, where, as we speak, a Theocracy is displayed. He invites others to seek her peace, and finally addresses her with warm assurances of love, both because of his brethren, and because of the Lord his God ; for *their* stated concourse was there, and *His* house was there.

CXXIII.

The suppliant (identifying himself with others) looks, amid the reproaches of the adversaries, to the Lord in the heavens ; taking to him the happy mind of a servant, who may expect care and protection from the hand of him whom he serves. For *v.* 2 expresses the attitude of *confidence*, not of *subjection*—though of course subjection

is implied. And *protection* may be claimed where *subjection* is rendered.

It suits the utterance of the captives, just as they were setting out on their long and dreary journey ; those who were "at ease" in Babylon at that moment reproaching and despising them. The "proud" ones there would just then have eyed them as a company of poor pilgrims, a fit mark for their derision. They endure the same scorn in their present dispersion among the heathen or Gentiles. (Jer. xxx. 17.) The finger is still pointed.

The quickened soul, just beginning to turn towards Jesus, must count on such despite. For, in spirit, this Psalm is the language of every saint who should understand what the reproach of the proud is, and suffer it gladly. "Paul, thou art beside thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad."

CXXIV.

This Psalm is uttered under a fervent sense of some fresh distinguished mercy. It is adapted to the returning captives, as they were just got beyond the scorn of their Chaldean enemies, which, as we saw, they were feeling in the previous Psalm. But it shows that they had endured persecution as well as scorn—such persecution as would have destroyed them, but for the signal help of the Lord.

In the day of the opposition of men, this utterance may, in like manner, suit any godly soul ; and may, I doubt not, be especially used by the Israel of the last days who are to endure much of this opposition from the men of the earth, who have their portion in man's world.

CXXV.

As the previous Psalm was uttered under the sense of some recent deliverance, this is the expression of being consciously more distant from all that grieved or

threatened. The Israel of God here enjoy calm after storm. The hearts of the returning captives are now at ease ; and their rescue from Babylon has taught them, that though the Lord may for a season use the wicked as a rod of anger upon His people, He will not let that rod rest or abide on them. He will debate with His rod, give it a measured *duration* as well as a measured *severity*, graciously remembering that the spirit might fail under too long an oppression. (See Ec. vii. 7.) Indeed He will end His indignation on Israel by the destruction of that rod. (Is. x. 5-25.)

Israel then desires further good from the Lord, and they assure themselves that He will deal righteously with hypocrites and evil doers. And so the nation will be cleared in the latter day of all that are not the refined Israel of God, the part brought through the fire.

But on this Psalm we may say how strikingly the thoughts of the Spirit in the prophets express the Lord's varied provision for His people! He will plant mountains round Zion when she wants security ; He will spread a plain around her when she wants to bask in the light of glory. (See verse 2, and Zech. xiv. 10.)

CXXVI.

The ransomed of the Lord, now fully on their way, as we have seen, call to mind their joy when the decree of Cyrus was published, and also the kindly words of some neighbours of theirs on that occasion. For in the crowd around the cross, while there were those who cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," there were also the weeping daughters of Jerusalem. Such too have been commonly seen at the martyrdom of the saints. And such appear here at the return of Israel from Babylon. Some despised (cxxiii. 3, 4), while others congratulated them (cxxvi. 2).

The captives on their return, and that very naturally,

call to mind their prayer (verse 4), and are able, from the whole history, to draw the moral (*v.* 5, 6)—a moral, too, that marks the history of Christ Himself and all His people. He afterwards sowed in tears at Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41), but by and by He will there reap in joy. (Isaiah lxv. 18, 19.)

How little do believers realise the joy of deliverance as expressed in this beautiful Psalm. The captives, on the decree of Cyrus, were like men that dreamed. It was as though some brave fiction had filled their hearts, so rapt were they in the joy of that moment. O that we knew this when we think of salvation and of Jesus! The eunuch went on his way *rejoicing*, and the joy seems to have made him indifferent to the strange departure of his dear companion. How should our hearts covet this satiating delight in Him!

NOTE.—We cannot fail to have noticed that Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon and the deliverer of Israel, is a type of Christ, and so treated by Isaiah. (See xliv. xlv.) He and his conquests were named and described by that prophet nearly 200 years before he was born.

CXXVII.

This Psalm is also suited to the returning captives, who must on their journey have had the house and the city in their prospect, and the joys of homes and households again before them, when their fruitfulness and prosperity in their own land would give a triumphant answer to many a scornful word of their haughty adversaries. And so it will be with the Remnant in the coming days when, though in trials, they will have expectations given them from the God of hope. And this Psalm is a devout confession that these expected blessings, yea, that all strength and blessing come from God alone, and that without Him human toil is vanity. (See Zech. iv. 6.)

But often (how often!) is there exercise of spirit where

all should be stillness (verse 2). "Stand still and see the salvation of God." It is unbelief which raises all this. As with Jacob : he was *praying* when he should have been *sleeping in the promise*. (Gen. xxii.) He fears and calculates and settles all according to man's best advice, when as the heir of the blessing and the possessor of the birth-right, he should have trusted and rested. So was it not, however, with Peter. In the very prison, between two soldiers, and bound with two chains, he sleeps, and sleeps so soundly in the promise and sufficiency of God, that his deliverer has to smite him on the side to raise him up. (Acts xii.) And how did the true "*beloved blessed one*" sleep, when winds and waves were around Him. (Mark iv.)

CXXVIII.

Thoughts arising from the same expectations are continued. The happiness of a citizen of Zion, in his temporal prosperity, in his family enjoyments, and in the peace and honour of his country, is rehearsed. It may have been, as well as the previous Psalm, the language of Solomon ; for in his days citizens of Zion were thus manifested in their prosperity. But also, like the previous one, it well suits the returning captives ; for they return, of course, full of visions of all such happiness. And it will be the joyous expectation of God's Israel in future days.

Patriarchal family happiness is here expected ; for that will be revived in the kingdom on earth (ver. 6, and Gen. i. 28). Human delights in family order and general earthly blessing will be the portion of Israel in the days of the kingdom. As of old, in days which were typical of the kingdom, we read that "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry." (1 Kings iv. 20.)

CXXIX.

Here the same company have a *remembrance*, as in the two preceding Psalms they had a *prospect*, in their minds. They look back here, as there they had been looking forward. There it was their expected blessing in Jerusalem that filled them, here their recollected griefs in Babylon—yea, the griefs of their nation from its infancy.

All this is varied and natural exercise of heart for a people on their way; as our souls have such also in journeying across this world of confusion home to our God and the rest that remaineth.

The ransomed of the Lord rehearse their wrongs at the hand of their enemies, and the Lord's deliverance of them; and they look for righteous judgment upon the haters of Zion—all of which will suit another generation of Israel in a like condition. And again they publish that the Lord Himself was everything to them. They contrast also the faded withered state of the ungodly with their own flourishing estate just set forth in the previous Psalms. (See also Psalm i.; Jeremiah xvii.) The quick destruction of the enemy and the wicked in the latter day, even in the very moment of their fullest pride, may also be intimated. For this will be the fate, it would appear from the word of God, both of Babylon and the Beast. (Dan. xi. 45; Rev. xviii. 17.)

CXXX.

This Psalm expresses the joy and confidence that spring from the simple sense of God's forgiving love; for that unaided and alone has power to turn the convicted sinner into an accepted worshipper, and an expectant of glory. (Rom. v. 1, 2.) It is the gospel that is here learnt and enjoyed by the soul. The poor soul had been crying out from its own depths, but apprehending God's for-

giving love, it was at once made to sing of His heights and to wait for Himself.

It is a beautiful abridgment of Rom. vii. viii.—perfect, though so short. For here, as there, the soul is first heard as in the sorrows of conviction; then, on the firm ground of confidence; and then, in the bright elevations of hope, the longings and expectings of an heir of God. And a gospel this is, suited to be the utterance of returning captives, of any soul consciously on its way to God, and so, too, of the awakened and exercised Israel of the latter day. And as in the three preceding Psalms we listened to the returning captives, both remembering Babylon now behind them, and anticipating Jerusalem now before them, here in this Psalm they have remembrances and anticipations also, but of a deeper character, personal and spiritual.

The consciously accepted sinner may boldly and happily tell his fellow-sinners to look with him to Jesus—as here the soul calls on Israel to hope in the Lord because of His mercy and salvation.

CXXXI.

The happy confidence of the preceding Psalm is not to be condemned as presumption. Eliab may accuse David of naughtiness and pride of heart, but it is not so. Hope “in the Lord” may be bold; and such was David’s then, and such is that of the soul in these Psalms, and such is that of every poor sinner who receives the grace and salvation of the gospel.

This Psalm, therefore, strikingly and beautifully follows the preceding one. It was the feeling, possibly, of the really meek David, on turning away from the reproach of Eliab. (1 Sam. xvii. 28, 29.) But it could have been afterwards happily used by ransomed Israel, who were then free and confident in the salvation of God. And this assured “hope in the Lord” is ever, when real and

spiritual, combined with the quietness and subjection of a weaned child.

This allusion to David leads me for a moment to look at him in 1 Sam. xvi. xvii. We may call the time of those chapters the youth or spring-time of David's soul. And how beautifully simple, and how full of real moral dignity it is!

He was the neglected one of the family. But he was content to be so. He would readily tend the sheep in the field, while his more esteemed brothers remained at home to receive the guests, and do the honours of the house.

On the arrival of the prophet Samuel he is called in. But as scorn had not dejected him, distinctions do not elate him. As soon as the occasion is over, he is back again among the flocks.

He is then summoned to the court of the king to do a service which none but he could do. But again, when the service is done, he is in the wilderness with his few sheep, despised but contented. (xvii. 15.)

A third time he is called for. He has now to go to the *camp*, as before to the *court*. But after achieving the greatest feats, he is willing to be still unknown, and without thought of resentment tells who he was to those whose ignorance of him was itself a kind of slight or indignity. (xvii. 55, 58.)

What beauty, what true elevation of soul! And what was the secret of all this? *He found his satisfaction in Christ.* The sheepfold was as important to him as the court or the camp, because "the Lord was with him." He did not live by excitement, nor pine under neglect. He let the world know that he was independent of what they could either give him or make him. Blessed attainment! It may remind us of those affectionate words from the Olney Hymns—

"Content with beholding His face,
My all to His pleasure resign'd,
No changes of season or place
Could make any change in my mind.
When blest with a sense of His love,
A palace a toy would appear ;
And prisons would palaces prove
If Jesus would dwell with me there."

CXXXII.

This Psalm is Solomon's pleading with the Lord to arise and possess Himself of the house which he had builded, upon the ground of David's zeal and affliction, and of the Lord's own covenant and promises (1-13). The Lord seems at once to answer this with still larger promises than He had made before, and with richer blessings than His servant had desired. (14-18.)

For this is His way—this is divine. Even the promise of His own lips, as well as the wish of His people's heart, is exceeded. And the promise which was conditional (verse 12) is now yea and amen in Christ Jesus (verses 17, 18).

I think I see a very right mind, if I may so speak, in Solomon here. For while he desires God's blessing on himself, the "anointed one," he desires it in connection with God's presence, or with the Ark's entrance into its rest. This is quite as it should be. We may seek happiness if we seek it in and with the Lord.

The ark had been a stranger in the days of Saul. (1 Chron. xiii. 3.) David's earliest desire was to restore it; and this Psalm shows that that desire consumed him. We can admit this, when we understand David as presented to us in 1 Chron. And this in David is pleaded here by Solomon. So, Jesus could say, "The zeal of thine house has eaten me up." To restore to God a habitation among men, and to bring back man to God, was the spring of His energies, the secret of His many

sorrows. The griefs and cross of Jesus have opened a way for the glory to return, or the long estranged presence of God to fill the earth again in its season ; as the same blood has already rent the vail, and is preparing mansions in the heavenly house for us.

The "lamp," which is here promised to shine in the kingdom of the Son of David by and by, had been espied afar off by Abraham (Gen. xv. 17), who thus saw Christ's "day," and "was glad." It has been the desire both of Christ and His people, all through the night-time of this present world. (Is. lxii. 1.) The Lord Himself, in answer to that desire, will light it up in due season. (Ps. xviii. 28.) And then it will shine in steady full brightness through the kingdom. (Is. lx. 1.)

So the "horn" shall then "bud," as here also promised. The oak of Judah, the stem of Jesse, has long been a withered stump. But the substance has been in it, though it have cast its leaves (Isa. vi. 13); and in the latter day brought forth, like Aaron's rod, as from the presence of God (Numb. xvii.), it will revive, and bud, and be fruitful. "The mercies of David" are "sure" in Jesus risen. (Acts xiii. 34.)

All this we have in this magnificent Psalm of Solomon. And being of such a character, it could very happily have been used by the captives, now drawing near to this house which Solomon had built for the Lord. And so it may be again taken up by the heart and lips of the people in the days of Israel's revival, when expectation counts on speedy fulfilment.

CXXXIII.

The preceding Psalm was an utterance of the captives, - just approaching Jerusalem or the house of God. This comes in order, and suits them on their being about to enter that house. For it was the centre of the tribes, the

place of the common joy of Israel, where, accordingly, the precious ointment of brotherly unity, as here declared, was shed, so as to make the place good and pleasant and fruitful under the dew of the divine blessing. I can suppose that it was recalled to mind by some of the first gatherings of New Testament saints in Jerusalem in the day of Acts ii. It may also be the breathing of the saint in the joy of his heart on beholding the concord of brethren. And it may do for the Israel of God in the latter days, when their desire for peace and restoration shall be satisfied; for the coming days of the kingdom have been thus anticipated,—“In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.” (Zech. iii. 10.) “Home,” when reached by the returning brethren, shall witness and secure their “unity.”

Blessed prospect! It should arm us with a spirit of forbearance and long-suffering while on the road; for all will be right by and by. We are on our way to “that which is perfect.” “Every Christian is treading the ascent of wisdom and goodness, and an era in his course shall arrive, when surpernal beings, ancient proficients in virtue, shall count him their worthy companion, and delight in his converse.”

CXXXIV.

Having now entered the house, the worshippers fill it at once with the blessing of the Lord. It is in the spirit of Melchizedec—suited to their standing in “the hope of glory;” for they bless the great God and bless others in His name, the name of the possessor of heaven and earth, as that king of Salem did. He had been dwelling alone in the high places of his glory, neither the ways of the world disturbing him, nor even the story of the people of God noticing him, till the servant of God had ended his

warfare. But then he appeared. That was the due moment for his shining forth, bringing his rewards with him, his refreshment and his blessing. And then those solitary abodes of glory, where he had been dwelling as in a temple and a palace, were disclosed, and their rich treasures produced. As here, the voice from the same sanctuary, the Zion of Melchizedec, greets the returned captives.

This is a joyful end of their way across the desert. And, further, it is happy to observe that these two Psalms, cxxxiii. cxxxiv., give us two aspects of the house of God which the returned captives, as we have seen, have now reached—that is, the unity of the people of God, and the praise of the God of the people—the joy of the family, and the glory of their head; for the house of God ever in principle provides for and exhibits these things. It is the dwelling of love, and the court of praise.

And let me add this—that divine joy in the Lord has wondrous moral power. As Nehemiah, in the day of revival, the day of the new moon, or of the feast of trumpets, the first day of the seventh month, said to the congregation of Israel, “This day is holy unto the Lord, neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah viii. 10.)

We have an instance of this in 1 Chron. xii. 30-40. It was a bright and animated moment. David was to be made king, and, as we read, “there was joy in Israel.” Judah could not then have provoked Ephraim, nor could Ephraim then have envied Judah. The common joy had linked all hearts, and borne them away and made them its own creatures. One tribe was therefore the ready servant of the joy of another. No private feelings could be indulged, nor separate interests consulted. It was one of the days of heaven upon earth (Deut. xi. 21); the congregation of Israel, felt the power of it, as Peter did of

the Holy Mount. For how willing was he then, because of the gladness of his heart to be the servant of others. "Master, it is good for us to be here ; and let *us* make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

CXXXV.

This Psalm is of the same character as the previous one. It is not entitled "a song of degrees," nor has it, indeed, any title at all. It is a kind of adjective to the preceding Psalm. For the congregation are still at the house of God—the court of praise, which, as we saw, they had just reached. Out of Zion God is still shining.

The *Lord Himself* is praised, and His *name* is praised—His name, as distinguished from Himself, being that various honour and dignity which He has acquired by His mighty acts.

And the Lord of Israel is here glorified as the only true God who does His pleasure in heaven and on earth, and who also got Himself victory and honour in Egypt, among the Amorites, in Bashan, and in the kingdoms of Canaan, but all for the sake and on the behalf of His people. And how blessed is this association ! The Lord who formed and spread out the heavens, and none other or less than He, was the one who parted Canaan by lot among the tribes. The one who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand is He who gathers the lambs in His bosom, and bears them in His arms. (Isaiah xl.)

And very duly this Psalm of the returned captives, prepared for those who stand in the courts of the Lord, declares the vanity of the idols ; for that had just been manifested in the downfall of Babylon, and in the decree of the Persian to let Israel depart from that stronghold of idolatry. The name of the only true God, the God of Israel, thus endures for ever, while the memorials of all

beside perish for ever. (See also verse 14, and Deut. xxxii. 36.)

CXXXVI.

This Psalm is of the same general character. It is still appended, without any new title, to the 134th, as we have already observed the 135th is.

It is a Psalm which awakens peculiarly happy thoughts. It tells us, and echoes again and again, the joy and the song that are prepared for eternity.

The Jews say that it is prepared for the days of Messiah, which means, in their thoughts, the days of the kingdom. And this surely is so. It is a millennial national hymn, in which everything is found, in the review of it, to draw out the nation's gratitude.

In contrast, however, with the 135th, we observe that this Psalm sees *mercy* where that had seen *glory*. The creation of the heavens and their daily courses, the divine dealings with Egypt, with the Amorites, with Bashan, and with the Canaanites, all these had declared God's *name* or *glory*, and had drawn forth *praise* (cxxxv.); but now the very same things are celebrated as publishing His *mercy*, and draw forth *thanksgiving*. (cxxxvi.) For this is so. The same ways and works of the Lord publish both His name and His mercy, His glory and His grace. With equal clearness and sureness they *honour Himself* and *bless His people*. And thus they are the theme of both the *praise* and the *thanksgiving* of His saints. Praise first opens their lips (cxxxv.), and then thanksgiving. (cxxxvi.) For it is at God's name or glory, as reflected in His works, they first look, and then at their own blessings or profit from those works. His *name* endures for ever (cxxxv. 13) and His *mercy* also. (cxxxvi.)

And, most surely, God has linked His praise and our blessing together in all the counsels and works that He

has formed and executed. And such a thing is worthy of Him. In the garden of Eden, or at creation, He provided for His own honour and His creature's happiness. In Canaan, or in the settlement of Israel, it was still the same; the sanctuary, pitched in the midst of the land and the people, witnessed the constant service both of God and the congregation; the same altar meeting His due as the Lord of the Temple, and their necessities as sinners, day by day. So, at the birth of the Lord Jesus, the word of the angels was this: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." And in the same unchanging grace and wisdom, when at the close the holy city descends out of heaven, it will bring with it both "the glory of God," and "the tree of life"—it will witness God's honour and the creature's health and happiness. Thus, from beginning to end, in every scene and dispensation of divine energy, we see these two things joined together, as these two Psalms in their order celebrate.

But this by the way: the burthen of this very joyous Psalm has been called the Jewish chorus—"for His mercy endureth for ever." It was heard at Jerusalem in the days of Solomon (2 Chron. v.), for those were, in type, the days of the glory. And it was heard before, when David brought in the Ark to its place. (1 Chron. xvi.) And afterwards, as the returned captives were laying the foundation of the second temple. (Ezra iii.) For such occasions also savoured of the kingdom, or of the nation's joy. And here this Psalm or national chorus is sung, as the captives accomplish their journey, and stand in the sacred city again. And raised it will be in still loftier joy, when Israel learns "the songs of Zion," in the days of the kingdom.

CXXXVII.

This Psalm has no title either. It may be read, therefore, like the preceding Psalms, as still the language of the captives arrived at Jerusalem. They remember their captivity in Babylon, and that then and there they had no song. (See James v. 13.) They refused to put their harps to any music but that which celebrated Zion, or to have music at all in the presence of Zion's foes. This they now remember. And this remembrance is easy and natural. They were now reaping in joy, but in the midst of the harvest, they remember how they had sowed in tears. And the feast of Tabernacles, which was the grand season of Jewish festivity, and the type of the millennial joy of the nation, retained the like recollections. For the people then dwelt in booths seven days in *remembrance of the wilderness*. But all such thoughts of the past only give zest and fulness to the present ; as our hearts themselves well understand.

The returned Israel, also, desire judgments on their oppressors. This is still in character. And these exercises of heart are according to heavenly patterns. For, in the Apocalypse, we hear the glorified saints thus variously occupied, either telling out their present joy, remembering their past sorrow and degradation, or anticipating the coming judgment of their enemies. (See Rev. v., vii., xi.) Christ as kinsman-*Redeemer* they celebrate ; Christ as kinsman-*Avenger* they look for. And, when He rises to act as Avenger, they are then prepared to triumph in His judgments (Rev. xix.), as before they had been to celebrate His grace (ch. v.) ; as the mother in Israel of old sang, "Praise ye the Lord for the *avenging* of Israel." (Judges v.)

Edom and Babylon are the enemies looked at by the long afflicted Israel of God. Babylon, we know, is

greatly treated as a mystery in Scripture. As to Edom, we may just notice that its judgment is awfully announced also. "When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate." (See Isa. xxxiv., Jer. xlix., Ezek. xxxv., Ob., Mal. i.) For Esau (called the "profane") deliberately took the world for his portion, giving up his interest in God in exchange for it.

But, to turn to the happier thoughts of this beautiful little volume (Ps. cxx.–cxxxvii.), we may observe that it shows us, that while Israel were in Babylon, they had *no* songs; while they were on their way home they had *occasional* songs; but after they reached home, they had *constant* songs—either blessing (cxxxiv.), praise (cxxxv.), or thanksgiving (cxxxvi.), continually. So with the believer. He learns, that all his mirth before he knew the Lord ought to be shame and sadness; he now finds mingled services of joy and heaviness, of prayer and praise; but he looks to be a dweller in God's house, and then to have undivided songs and joys for ever.

We may observe, however, in addition to this, that reading these Psalms as the utterances of the returning and returned Remnant, and seeing those captives also in the light of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, we may judge, that while in Babylon, they were more blessedly exercised in their souls than the nation before had been in Egypt; and during the returning, than Israel in the wilderness. There was not the same manifested glory, but more of inward spiritual energy. The cloud was not over them, but the exercised heart was in them. While in Babylon, they hang their harps on willows; when risen up to depart, they exercise beautiful faith on the banks of the Ahava; as they journey, they stir up their souls with an occasional song; and on their return, though in weakness and scorn, they set themselves to service and to singing.

CXXXVIII.

This Psalm is one of peculiar interest to the soul. In the 56th the soul rejoiced in *the word* above all. All in God was matter of praise, but above all, His word, His promise, His covenant. "In God will I praise His word." (v. 4, 10.)

In this Psalm *the word* is praised again—esteemed above all God's name or revelation of Himself. The worshipper owns that he had cried, and the Lord had heard him. This was to the honour of His word; this was the faithfulness of His promise. But we know that it is only in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that all the promises are thus yea and amen (2 Cor. i. 19, 20), and that He Himself, in an eminent sense, is *the word*. So that this Psalm is as the language of a soul upon its discovery of Jesus. He learns "the Word" (John i. 1) or "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and sees that God has magnified Himself in that revelation beyond all other, and that there He shines, full of loving-kindness and truth, or, in the language of the New Testament, of "grace and truth" (v. 2, John i. 14). God has published His name again and again in the progress of this world's history. He has successively unfolded the glory of it. He is "God," "the Lord God," "God Almighty," "Jehovah;" and now He stands revealed in fulness in the light and glory and blessedness of His New Testament name.

Upon this discovery, all manner of joy and blessing is anticipated; for the cry of the sinner has been answered and the soul has been strengthened. Kings are heard not merely fearing or falling down (see lxxii., cii.), but singing in God's ways. The lowly are exalted, the proud are abased, according to the ministry of Jesus (Matt. xxiii. 12), and the preaching of His apostles (v. 6, James

iv. 6, 1 Peter v. 5.) Joy in trouble, victory in the face of enemies, yea, revival or resurrection, are anticipated, and the full accomplishing of all that concerns the soul which thus apprehends and trusts this precious revelation of God. For such an one is God's own work, as the Gospel teaches—"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus," as is here, with true Gospel confidence and liberty, pleaded. And this is the highest and most blessed confidence—the believer making his cause God's cause. As the prophet said, "the battle is not yours but God's," (2 Chron. xx. 15,) when he would, through the Holy Ghost, encourage the host of Israel and king Jehoshaphat. The saint's blessing is thus God's cause: and the confidence is, that it shall never be forsaken.

CXXXIX.

This Psalm appears to accompany the previous one. It is like the feast of unleavened bread attending on the Passover. For there the *grace*, here the *holiness*, of our calling in Christ Jesus is set forth. For light is light of God, comforting the sinner but rebuking sin.

The believer begins by confessing the terribleness of the fact that *God knows him*. This was overwhelming to a soul duly convicted of sin. But he finds full relief and occasion for praise in this, that *he knows God*; — knows Him, too, in the mystery of the grave of Christ and the new creation there. (Eph. ii. 5.) This is the fearful, wonderful workmanship; Eve taken out of the sleeping Adam. This at once puts praise into the lips, the desire of further purifying into the soul, and a readiness, not a fear, to be searched out by the inquiring "word of God" (Heb. iv.), that no leaven may be found in that which is now consciously an Israelite's dwelling. The sense of the richest grace is thus in company with the exactest jealousy of holiness. (cxxxviii. cxxxix.) The

passover and the feast of unleavened bread are still together.

Perhaps there is no place in the Scriptures of old where the mystic oneness of Christ and His saint is more distinctly owned.

NOTE.—The human body is, we know, treated as the symbol of the Church or mystic Christ. Both have been fearfully and wonderfully made. And this "great mystery" is looked at in this Psalm.

It is heard as on the lips of Christ Himself (*v.* 14-16). For personally, if I may so express it, Christ is heard in these verses. The theme was so worthy of His own lips and of His own personal presence. The *convicted* saint, led by His Spirit, had, as we have observed above, owned the searching light of God, and it was solemn to the soul (1-13); but now, having listened to this welcome and cheering interruption from the lips of Christ (14-16), he goes on with his meditations and communion, but in the full relief of one who had, in spirit, drunk in the refreshing of such a mystery. (17-24.) And now the *happy* saint can desire (in his love of God and of the holiness and righteousness of His power) *present spiritual judgment of himself* and the *coming destructive judgment of evil*. He invites that searching which the *convicted* saint had dreaded.

Psalms cxl.-cl. form another little Book, giving us the cries first, and then the praises, of the Israel of God in the last days. They may have been indited to serve different times and persons (as we have observed upon Psalms cxx.-cxxxiv.), but they are here together, suiting, in their full and final application, that Jewish election, whose sorrow and deliverance will close this age and usher in the kingdom. And thus they form a seasonable and beautiful close to the whole Book.

The Israel of God speak here rather as martyrs than penitents. And this is still morally fitting. For they are now on their *direct* way to the kingdom.

The Spirit of Christ is heard distinctly in the midst of His Israel. He takes up their sorrows and expresses them as in His own person. It is the language of *one* suppliant, and the enemy is addressed or referred to individually also. But it is Christ in sympathy with His Israel, and the enemy is but the head of a great faction, as other scriptures so fully tell us.

These sorrows of the Psalmist are as those of David from Saul, and not from Absalom. And those were the sorrows (martyr-sorrows) which led, in like manner, directly to the kingdom. He had consolations, however, as well as trials. The enemy persecuted him as a partridge in the mountains; the ungrateful men of Keilah, and the time-serving Ziphites, betray him; and even his companions, in the heat and anguish of a trying hour, speak of stoning him; but he has the sword of Goliath, and the prophet, and the priest with him; the refreshing too of the faith of Abigail; and the strength of the Lord against the Amalekites (in the moment of their fullest pride), that bitter and ancient enemy of Israel, whose spoil he is able to share with his beloved ones in the land. And all this is David in 1 Sam. xxi., xxx., the days of his exile from Israel through the enmity of Saul.

And these are the days too of Jacob's trouble, as the prophet Jeremiah speaks (xxx. 7); but Jacob shall be delivered out of them, as the anointed exile was led by his sorrows up to his kingdom; and as these Psalms begin with a soul in the heaviness of the night, but leave him in the joy of the returned and eternal morning—the day-break of the kingdom.

CXL.

In this Psalm the afflicted Israel are brought into trial with "the violent man" and the "evil speaker" and those who are associated with them. They (or Jesus, their great forerunner and also their sympathizing Lord in all this affliction) cry for protection against the devices of these enemies and for judgment upon them, especially the judgment of "fire" and the "pit" upon the chiefs or "heads." (See Rev. xix. 20; xx. 1.) He then expresses His confidence that the Lord whom He makes all His trust, will maintain His cause as that of the poor and righteous one.

The enemies contemplated are too clearly, I would say, to be questioned, the great infidel apostate ones of the last days—"the Beast" and "the False Prophet," and their army or associates.

At different times in the ripening of human iniquity, there has been this confederacy of kings and counsellors against the Lord's anointed. Pharaoh and his magicians withstood Moses; so Balak and Balaam afterwards. Saul took counsel of the witch, that deep abomination in the land; so did Absalom and Ahitophel meet together against David. The Jews and Caiaphas, with Herod the king, are in company against the true anointed One. And so in latter days will the beast and the false prophet resist the righteous seed in the earth, and affect the power and honour of the Lord Himself. Whether in Egypt, in Midian, in Israel, or in Christendom, thus it has been and will be (and in spirit ever is), man putting forth all his powers, his strength and his wisdom combining. But the Lord is to prove that He sitteth above all water-floods and reigneth king for ever. He will have them in derision.

CXLI.

This Psalm very suitably follows the preceding. For it is the prayer of the Remnant to be kept from all fellowship in word or deed with those apostates, for whose wickedness, in word and deed, judgment (as they had there desired and anticipated) was to come upon them. And they desired to be kept from all such wickedness, even though at the cost of being smitten by the rebukes and admonitions of the godly. Then, as to the enemy, they refuse to take vengeance themselves, (as David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 6, and as Jesus, Matt. xxvi. 51, 52,) but leave their wrongs in the hand, and to the vindication, of God the Lord.

Verse 6 may remind us of 1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi. ; for there the judges or heads of the people were as in stony places, and might have been broken and overthrown ; but, instead of that, they heard David's words of peace.

And rather remarkable, as in connection with ver. 5, David, in the intervening chapter (xxv.) had been reproved by the words of the righteous Abigail, which had proved an excellent oil for his head, anointing him as with a spirit of wisdom and of the fear of the Lord, to turn him away from the counsel of his heart. (1 Sam. xxv. 30-34.)

But all this time David was the martyr ; he and his company had the sentence of death in them, that they should not trust in themselves, but in Him who raiseth the dead. But the Spirit of Christ looks beyond the sorrows of David here ; for David's people were not then slaughtered, as some of the Israel in the latter day will be. (See Ps. lxxix.) So that this Psalm is still the breathing of the Spirit of Christ in sympathy with them. Though it may (like all others, in a large sense, we may say) be used by any saint, when his circumstances and

state of soul suggest it ; as words given to Moses (Deut. xxxi. 6, 8) and to Joshua (Josh. i. 5) may "boldly," in the holy boldness of faith, be received and adopted by any of us. (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.)

And how does ver. 4 warn our souls that the evil ones against whom the Spirit of the Lord here cries in the righteous, have their "dainties," their beguiling subtle temptations, to ensnare, if it were possible, even the elect.

CXLII.

This Psalm, in its conceptions, appears to have been likewise the cry of David in the day of his desertion. The visits of Jonathan (1 Sam xx., xxiii.) were very happy pledges to his soul that in due season the righteous (as this Psalm speaks, ver. 7) would compass him about. It might have also been the musing of the soul of Jesus in such an hour as that of Gethsemane, when He was calling to mind the overwhelming of His spirit, and foretasting the subsequent desertion of His disciples. (Matt. xxvi. 42, 56.) In its application, too, as I have noticed above, it may well suit the soul of any saint tried in such a way ; as St. Paul might have found an utterance for his heart here, in the circumstances of 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.

But still more exactly is it the language of the Israel of God, on entering into the sense of that condition in which they are to be, just on the eve of their deliverance. For then the Lord will take knowledge of them as deserted and friendless, with no eye to pity, no hand to save, but His own (Deut. xxxii. 36 ; Isa. lix. 16) ; and in this condition, He Himself will awake for them. And in this affecting little Psalm, they understand and are in sympathy with this ; they are feeling that state of things which the Lord thus, in other scriptures, is said to see and relieve. And I may observe another sympathy like

this in Ps. cxl. ; for their language in ver. 8 is according to the thoughts of the Lord Himself in Deut. xxxii. 27. This may be noticed by our souls with great interest—the Spirit forming experiences in the saints in company with the mind of God.

CXLIII.

The cry in this Psalm seems naturally to follow the preceding one ; for there the suppliant was deserted of his friends ; here he finds himself, consequently, in the midst of enemies. Both in its conception and application I read it as I did the last.

“The land,” where this afflicted one is now toiling in so much conscious grief and enmity of the wicked, he calls a “thirsty land ;” but the land he looks for he calls by two beautiful titles—“the land of the living,” and “the land of uprightness.” (Psalm cxlii. 5 ; cxliii. 6, 10.) These are happy, honourable titles of God’s place and kingdom in Judea, as it will be by and by. In divine reckoning, righteousness (uprightness) and life are always found together, as are sin and death. “If there had been a law given which could have given *life*, verily *righteousness* should have been by the law.”

But this Psalm suggests, that while they are suffering for righteousness’ sake in the latter day, Israel will be learning their own ways, and that before God they are but poor sinners. While they cry for deliverance and vindication against man, they confess sin to God, desiring to be led of His Spirit, without whom nothing is holy. The land of uprightness, as well as the land of the living, they seek,—to be kept in God’s paths of righteousness, as well as to be led out of their present place of death into the kingdom of the living God.

This is blessed preparation for the kingdom to which they are now hastening—suffering for righteousness’ sake,

and yet learning their worthlessness as sinners. And this is the path of each saint, humbled before God, broken-hearted by reason of conscious short-coming, standing in the full liberty of Christ, and walking among men in suffering righteousness.

CXLIV.

This Psalm follows, I may say, in the train of the previous one; for at the close of that the suppliant had sought the destruction of the enemy, and here he speaks as being assured that God would be his strength, his shield, and his victory, in the battle. He, therefore, desires the day of conflict, anticipating victory. And beyond that, he anticipates its fruit and joy in the kingdom, all human prosperity, children and wealth and settled peace, and the common verdict of the whole world, that "happy is that people whose God is the Lord." (See Deut. xxxiii. 29.)

The suppliant (Christ, no doubt, in sympathy with the remnant) contemplates God as making Himself to him all that he can need or desire (verses 1, 2); and immediately upon this he marvels that it should be so (*v.* 3). And this surprise is expressed in the same language as in Psalm viii., only there it is the sense of the divine greatness,—here it is the sense of the human vanity that awakens this surprise that God should take such counsels of grace and glory about us.

In all this we again find Israel learning divine lessons about themselves, as we observed in the previous Psalm. They own that they are less than the least of all God's mercies, wondering, as it were, that they should be His objects at all.

The spirit of Psalm xviii. is much breathed here. And that is strikingly the language of the true David in the great Jewish deliverance of the latter day leading to the

kingdom. (See also *v.* 5, and Isaiah lxiv. 1.) So here the suppliant knows that this desired deliverance will lead directly into the joy of the days of Messiah or the kingdom (11-15). As the creation knows that her deliverance from present bondage to corruption will be into glorious liberty; and as the saints can and do sing, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 21, 30.) For when the blessed God makes a way of escape for sinners or captives, in His love He will carry them into more than liberty.

CXLV.

Quite in order, this Psalm prepares thanksgiving for the victory and the peace anticipated in the preceding Psalm. And this introduces the praises of the kingdom, which occupy the Prophet's harp from thenceforward to the end. The first verse is very significant of this. "I will extol thee, my God, O King"—it is God *as King* that the prophet's heart now peculiarly or exclusively celebrates. This gives strong and decisive character to this Psalm as being millennial, or touching the kingdom. The Lord was as "a man of war" in the preceding Psalm, but here, the war being over, He is a "king." The Jewish millennial people had been just pronounced to be happy (cxliv. 15), and here they utter their happiness. As it were, others had said, "the Lord has done great things for them;" and they now reply, "the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Praise and song express this gladness. And so does their conversation; for they *speak* of His glory and *talk* of His power. (ver. 11.) *In sadness*, disciples once talked of the things which had happened at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv.), but now her people *help each other's joy*, as they walk and talk together. And converse tunes the heart to praise, and then rapture breaks in on the even flow of

their ever cheered and happy spirits. As in the progress of the Book of Revelation the family in heaven are at times heard in their rapture, in the swelling of their joy beyond its orderly current. (See ch. v. vii. xi. xii. xiv. xv. xix.)

The materials for this unceasing praise are also largely prepared,—His mighty acts—the glorious honour of His majesty—His greatness, goodness, and righteousness—His upholding of the weak—His fulfilling of the desire of the needy—His preserving of them that love Him—His vengeance on the wicked—these are among the themes of praise which will engage the joys and songs of the coming kingdom. One generation is to rehearse them to another. And the Lord Himself is the leader of this praise, according to what He had vowed in His distress. (Ps. xxii. 22.) Jesus—the saints or Jewish people—the sons of men or all flesh—the works of creation—all join in their way and measure. The saints, as it were, take it from the lips of the Lord and teach it to the nations, and one generation teaches it to another.

For now, the character or generation of the Jewish people has changed. It has hitherto been “perverse and crooked” (Deut. xxxii.), “stubborn and rebellious.” (Ps. lxxviii.) But the final generation will be a new creation—a people formed by God to show forth His praise. (Ps. xxii. 30, cii. 18; Is. xliii. 21.) The first generation has not yet passed away. (Matt. xxiv. 34.) Israel is still perverse; but the Lord will have a seed in Israel that shall be accounted to Him “for a generation.” And such Psalms as this let us see and hear some of their happy enjoyments. (See Ps. xii.)

NOTE.—Verse 1. Christ is surely the “King.” (See xlv. 1.) David here owns Him as his “God,” and in Ps. cx. he owns Him as his “Lord.” See John xx. 28.

CXLVI.

This note of praise rehearses the vanity of man and of all confidence in him, which surely now, in this day of the closing history of man's world, will have been abundantly proved. But it celebrates, on the other hand, the blessing of him who has the God of Jacob for his help and portion. The Spirit enlarges on the excellencies of the God of Jacob, and ends with repeating the call to praise Him.

We may observe, how much loftier are the songs which close than those which of old opened the ways of God. The work of *creation* was the only theme for the "morning stars" and the "sons of God" then. But now the Lord, the God of Jacob, has gathered praise in other acts than in that of creation—His keeping of truth, His executing of judgment, His feeding the poor, loosing the prisoner, healing the blind and the oppressed, loving the righteous, preserving the stranger, and reigning in His Zion for ever—these are new and honourable praises for the Lord of heaven and earth.

These beautiful Psalms are the earth's or Israel's expression of that same joy which is heard in heaven thus—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.)

Israel's joy will lead and secure *earth's* joy, for the king of Israel is God of the whole earth (Is. liv.); and what will their recovery be but life from the dead? (Rom. xi.) "Scenes surpassing fable and yet true" will then be witnessed. And in words often enjoyed, I may close this meditation—

"One song employs all nations, and all cry—
Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us !

The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
 Shout to each other—and the mountain tops
 From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
 Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
 Earth rolls the-rapturous hosanna round."

CXLVII.

This Psalm constitutes another of the praises prepared for the kingdom. "The instrument," as one has expressed it, "is tuned here at the door." It is of larger compass than the preceding song, celebrating the praise of the Lord in all His high and holy honours—in His power and knowledge, in creation and providence, in Israel, in grace, and in judgment—as one who, though so high that He numbers and names the stars, yet hears the cry of the young ravens. And the God of heaven and earth is Israel's God. He who does His pleasure throughout the universe gives peace and plenty to Israel. Zion is therefore especially summoned to join in this praise, for God has especially become her God; and they who have been forgiven much and blessed much should love much and praise much.

And as the previous Psalm had shown how God received *praise* in His acts of grace and redemption, beyond all that His acts in creation had brought Him, so here we see that the same acts of grace and redemption bring Him more *delight* than the others. It is not "the strength of a horse" or "the legs of a man," that are now the divine delight, though such show forth His handiwork; but "the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy."

Nothing gratifies love (we may, from this, say) like using it. *Love does not act to be admired, but to be used.* Nothing answers the heart of Jesus so much as drawing from Him, and trusting Him. The woman of Samaria

far more refreshed Him by going away with a heart filled out of His wells, than had she staid to give Him (though He needed it then) out of her pitcher. For that enabled Him to say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This was Jesus on earth, this is God in heaven. And Israel will give Him this delight by and by, as now every poor sinner does who knows that the blood of Christ and the righteousness of God are his precious property, and therefore takes them, and all things with them, as the gift of grace, with confidence and joy of heart.

NOTE.—The Septuagint divides this Psalm into two, beginning a new one at v. 12. (See Psalm x. note.)

CXLVIII.

This hallelujah, or song of praise, calls on heaven and earth and all things therein, to join in celebrating the glory of the Lord. And it challenges this praise from Israel, whose horn or majesty has been exalted, to whom "the first dominion," as another Scripture expresses it, has now come. The Lord Himself, however, is above all this millennial earth and heaven, in His own proper glory. His name *alone* is excellent. (See Psalm viii.)

All this joy of heaven and earth is much spoken of. The times of restitution and refreshing are felt throughout—"the presence of the Lord" becomes the exhilarating atmosphere every where. John, in spirit, heard all creatures in heaven, in seas, on earth, and under the earth, uttering their praise in prospect of this. (Rev. v.) But I would observe, that all this joy of creation the apostle hangs upon "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii.), and the prophets, upon the redemption of Israel. (Is. xlv. 23, xlix. 13, lv. 12.) For these distinct testimonies are according to the several ministries of apostles and prophets. In one place our Psalmist shortly connects the two, touching the chord where their harmonies lie—

“when the Lord shall *build up Zion*, He shall *appear in His glory*.” (Ps. cii. 16.)

May we not, upon this, say, that often, among the saints, there is wanting one to do this happy office of “the sweet singer” in Israel, thus to strike the true unisons. For the voices are not discordant, save in the unattuned ear. There may be real oneness in the spirit of our minds, where there are divers judgments and thoughts—“eating” and “not eating,” if both “to the Lord,” is real oneness, in the esteem of the Spirit of God, though in man’s judgment it may be discordance and separation. (Rom. xiv.) But this only as we pass.

NOTE.—The supremacy of “the Word” in the operations of what is called *nature* is declared, as in 2 Pet. iii. 5-7. (See cxlvii. 15, 18; cxlviii. 8.)

CXLIX.

This is still, I need not say, of the same volume of songs for the kingdom. But it is exclusively for Israel.

It appears, from many Scriptures, that Israel will be employed as the Lord’s weapons of war against the factious heathen who come up against their land. (Is. xli. 15; Jer. li. 20; Micah iv. 13; Zech. ix. 13, x. 3, 4.) But they will enter into the battle “with tabrets and harps” (Is. xxx. 32); or, as this Psalm expresses it, “with the high praises of God in their mouth,” so satisfied and happy will they be in the sure results of having the glory with them.

The order of these things we speak not of: but after the land has become one of “unwalled villages,” and “the deserted places are inhabited,” and “the people are gathered out of the nations,” another army, it appears, will come up. But they shall perish under the withering of the Lord’s strength in hailstones, pestilence, fire, and overflowing rain; and then shall Jehovah be “Most High

over all the earth." (See on Ps. lxxxiii.; and see Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix.)

We have but partial thoughts of all the extended action of these coming days. But this we know, praise shall close the history and fill the scene. The "valley of decision" shall become the "valley of blessing." For the valley of Jehoshaphat is the place of the last struggle (Joel iii.), and that is the valley of Berachah or blessing (2 Chron. xx.), where the din of battle was lost in the music of praise. And the millennial earth will be an extended valley of Berachah. All will be blessing there. Man's city will have become a ruin then; the feet of the poor will have trodden it down. God's city then shines; its walls are salvation and its gates praise; and the righteous nation enter (Is. xxv.-xxvii.) The light and the gladness, which have been as yet but sown (Ps. xcvi.), shall then be reaped, and "it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

"The wars of the Lord" (Num. xxi. 14), I might take occasion from this Psalm to say, are of two kinds—those which *He conducted entirely alone*, and those in which *He employed His people*.

The battle at the Red Sea was of the first kind. The Lord was there all alone. Israel had nothing to do but to be still and see God's salvation. He looked forth from the cloudy pillar and troubled the host of Egypt. (Exod. xiv.) So, in the controversy with Balaam. The Lord was again all alone, apart from Israel, who did not know at the time what was going on in the distant and high places of Moab. (Num. xxii.-xxiv.) The scenes in 2 Kings vii. and xix., in Israel's latter history, are the same.

The battles with Amalek, with Arad the Canaanite, Sihon the Amorite, and Og of Bashan, are of the second kind. The Lord employed His people in them (Ex. xvii., Num. xxi.) So, after they enter the land, the battles of

Gideon, Jonathan, David, at Jericho and Ai, and generally, I need not say, are of this class. In the one case, Jehovah triumphed *for* Israel, in the other, *in* Israel.

Each of these kinds of battle has its own proper moral or spiritual sense. Thus—the great act of redemption, like the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, was entirely single-handed, as we know. The Lord drank the cup alone, and to the dregs. “His be the victor’s name, who fought the fight alone.” But there is a class of battles, for the fighting of which we must enter the field ourselves. Our business is to fight, and nothing is done without us. Spiritual conflicts the believer goes through in his own person. In them he is deeply conscious of the fight. He may know that he has no strength equal to the occasion, but he knows that he must be in the field from first to last. The Lord, it is true, brings the strength, but it is used in and through His saint. The indwelling Spirit meets the indwelling sin; or, the new man in Christ mortifies the earthly members.

Thus is it now with us. And in days still before us, the God of Israel will revive His work both *for* and *with* Israel. As with the rod of another Moses, and with the sword of another Joshua, He will write over again the story of the Exodus and of Canaan. Again will He bend Judah for Himself, and fill His bow with Ephraim. (Zech. ix.) As this Psalm finely has it in the closing verses.

CL.

This is the closing hallelujah, the praise of God in His sanctuary, His upper sanctuary, “the firmament of His power.” The preceding was His praise in the lower sanctuary, “the congregation of saints.” There Israel was heard, but here, the heavens. His acts and Himself, His greatness and His ways, are the themes of this lofty

praise. "All kinds of music," as it were, dulcimer, sackbut, flute, psaltery (for loud joy will, in its place, be as holy, as once it was profane, Dan. iii.), are summoned to sound it, and to sound it loudly, and all who have faculty to praise, to join the hallelujah. Every verse teems with praise. Every thought is about it. Every object awakens it. Every power uses itself only in this service.

The Levites have changed their service. No longer have they burdens to bear through a wilderness, but they lift up their songs in the house of the Lord. (1 Chron. xv. 16, xxiii. 25, 26, 30.)

The heavens have changed their bearing also. They have ended their laughter at the proud confederates, (Ps. ii.) for such confederates have been answered in judgment; and they are filled with joy and singing, and with that glory which is to break forth from them, and to be a covering over all the dwellings of Zion. (Is. iv.)

These are "the days of heaven upon the earth." (Deut. xi. 21.) The kingdom has come, and the will of the Blessed One is done here as there. The mystic ladder connects the upper and the lower sanctuaries.

But these closing Psalms, I may observe, do not spread out before us the *materials* of the millennial world. Jerusalem, Israel, the nations with their kings, princes, and judges, the heavens and the earth, and all creation throughout its order, are contemplated as in "the restitution" and "refreshing," but they are detailed, as there, in their mere circumstances. It is rather *the praise* of all that is heard. The Psalmist anticipates the *harps* rather than the *glories* of the kingdom; and this is beautifully characteristic.

Praise crowns the scene. The vision passes from before us with the chanting of all kinds of music. Man has taken the instrument of joy into his hand; to strike it, however, only to God's glory. And this is the perfect

result of all things—the creature is happy and God glorified. “Glory and honour are in His presence ; strength and gladness are in His place.” (1 Chron. xvi. 27.)

What a close of the Psalms of David ! what a close of the ways of God ! Joy indeed has come in the morning, and struck its note for the “one eternal day.” Praise ye the Lord ! Amen.

Yes, praise, all praise ; untiring, satisfying fruit of lips uttering the joy of creation, and owning the glory of the Blessed One. This is righteous happiness.

And here, in connection with this, and on closing these meditations, let the thought cheer us, beloved, that happiness, and that for ever, is ours. There may have been a path through Calvary, and the scorn of the world, and the grave of death ; but it led to joy and everlasting pleasures. The way for a season lay by the waters of Babylon, but Jerusalem was regained—as our Psalms have shown us. The valley of Baca was the way to the house of God. “Tribulation,” it may be ; but, “I will see you again,” said Jesus.

As to our *title* to it, there is to be no reserve, no suspicion in our souls. It is our divinely appointed portion. To come short of happiness will be the end only of revolted hearts. Our title to look for it is of God Himself. It lies in the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, the God-man, given for us, in the riches of divine grace ; and faith in us reads, understands, and pleads that title. And there is no reason for hesitating to enjoy its fruit and benefit—none whatever. No more reason than Adam would have had to question his right to enjoy the garden of Eden, because he had never planted it ; nor for the camp of Israel in the desert to drink of the water from the rock, because they had never opened it. The garden was planted *for* Adam, the rock was opened *for* Israel, and so

has the Saviour, and all the joy that His salvation brings with it, been as simply and surely provided *for* sinners. Our souls are to make it a question of Christ's glory, and not of our worthiness. He made it so when He was here. He never led a diseased or maimed one to enquire into his own fitness, but simply to own His hand and His glory. "If thou canst believe," that is, if thou art ready to glorify me, to be debtor to me for this blessing, then take it and welcome.

Then as to our *resources*. It is not merely *love* we have to do with, *power* is on our side also. Love and power together shall form the scene we are to gaze on for ever, as they have from the beginning been "workers together" for us, teaching us our wondrous resources.

See them thus working together in some little instances in the days of the Lord Jesus. Five thousand are fed with five loaves and two fishes. Fed to the full—and twelve baskets of fragments left! This tells the *wealth* of the Lord of the feast, as well as His *kindness*. And what satisfaction of heart does this communicate! If we draw on the bounty of another, and have reason to fear that we have partaken of what he needed himself, our enjoyment abates. This fear will intrude, and rightly so, and spoil our ease while we sit at his table. But when we know that behind the table which is spread for us, there are stores in the house, such fears are forbidden. The thought of the *wealth* of the host, as well as of his *love*, sets all at ease. And it is to be thus with us in our enjoyment of Christ.

So in using His *strength* as well as His *wealth*, His resources are immeasurable. Look at this in the scene of danger on the lake of Galilee. He shows Himself on high above all the difficulty that was frightening the disciples. He walks on the tops of those waves and amid the blowings of those winds, which were bringing

them to "their wit's end." What triumphant relief for them was this! Danger could be nothing in the presence of such a deliverer. How easily could He manage a boat for them in the storm, who thus controlled the storm without any boat at all! There was strength enough and to spare here, as there was bread enough and to spare before, and they could not perish. (See Mark vi.)

Here are pictures of our resources! We draw on a wealthy Lord as well as on a loving one. We use a mighty arm as well as an outstretched one. We consult a physician who can heal death as well as sickness. It is as David speaks, "the kindness of God" we enjoy. "A fulness resides in Jesus our Head." We are fed and rescued and healed in ways worthy of Him whose wealth and strength and skill know no measure. His resources, and therefore ours, are glorious and fathomless, and fragments remain, let who will draw on them. And the coming kingdom will disclose them to perfection.

Then, after thus inspecting our *title* and our *resources*, I may just say as to the *joy itself*, the character of it will be worthy of its Giver, and will utter itself, as we find in these Psalms, in a loud noise, as from overflowing hearts, in all kinds of music. And joy of such rare quality this will be, that it will never satiate, never weary, never end, but still begin with more than earliest freshness.

Divers orders of glory, as we know, there will be then. "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." But both will be glory—and glory is the fruit of love, or the manifestation of what love has prepared for its object.

And this coming day has had its past shadows. The joy of Adam in Eden with his days of coronation and espousals (Gen. ii.); the settlement of the land under Joseph (Gen. xlvii.); the meeting of Jethro and the camp of Israel at the mount of God (Ex. xviii.); the feast of

tabernacles and the year of jubilee (Lev. xxiii. xxv.) ; the brilliant and palmy days of Solomon, with the nations paying their honours and gathering their joys at Jerusalem (2 Chron. i.-ix.) ; the holy mount and its two companies (Matt. xvii.) : these are among the past or fled shadows of these future glories shining together, or in their several spheres. In spirit we can sing of them beforehand, and also distinguish their orders, heavenly and earthly, as these verses of our hymn witness :

“Blessed morning ! long expected,
Lo, they fill the peopled air !
Mourners once, by man rejected,
They, with Him exalted there,
Sing His praises,
And His throne of glory share.

“King of kings ! let earth adore Him,
High on His exalted throne ;
Fall, ye nations ! fall before Him,
And His righteous sceptre own :
All the glory
Be to Him and Him alone !”

O for power to long after such joys in the present unsatisfied desires of our hearts ! we are to count largely, and richly, and with unmeasured confidence, on being unspeakably happy.

But there is to be reserve in this point—that we take heed that our expected happiness be *righteous* happiness, such as God can warrant and Jesus Himself can share. (See on Ps. cxxxii.) And this cannot be in the earth as it now is. The gospel does not propose to produce a happy world, or to replant Eden here. The return of the glory, the presence of the Lord, must do that. For where the glory is, there alone is the scene of righteous joys and expectations. If that have left the earth, our expectations should leave it also. When that returns, our delights and prospects may return with it. Happy

scene, when all tells of God again, and He finds a footstool on earth as grateful to Him in its place as His throne in heaven ! And then it will be rebellion in the nations not to find their joy here. The bread of *mourners* was not to be eaten before the Lord. And so, when it is said of Jerusalem, "the Lord is there," if the nations come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles, if they refuse to be joyful before the Lord the King, they must suffer the rebuke and the judgment.

Oh that, with world-weaned hearts, and desirous affections towards Himself, we could indeed say, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Great Father of mercies, we bow,
With thanks for our headship above !
Nor less, holy Jesus, art Thou
The object of praise and of love !
In the three glorious persons in God,
Whose sovereignty all shall adore,
Through Christ, and by faith in His blood,
We'll glory and boast evermore.

Having now, in our measure, passed through these breathings of the Spirit of God, we might ask, what have we got in them? rather, perhaps, in a large sense, what have we not got in them? For how many passions of the renewed mind, how many acts of divine discipline and their corresponding experiences in the believer, has the Spirit of God here anticipated? And how largely has He traced the ways of the heart of Jesus ! His cries, and tears, and praises, His solitary hours, His troubles from man, and His consolations in God ; all these are felt here in their depth and power. What was passing in His soul when He was silent as to man, led as a lamb to the slaughter ; what they who then surrounded Him did not hear, we listen to in this wondrous Book. His thoughts

of men, His worship of God, with all the incense of His various and perfect affections, are understood here. The New Testament tells us that He prayed and sung, but this book gives us His prayers and songs themselves.

And beside this—the whole mystery of Jesus, from the womb to the throne of glory, is rehearsed here in its joys and sorrows. We trace it as far back as “the volume of the Book.” We read Him surrendering Himself before the foundation of the world. The deep silence of eternity is broken to our ear by those words—“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” And from thence we see Him onward to the eternity before Him. Taking up our nature; hanging in infancy on His mother’s breast; in His life of shame and grief and poverty; and in His last sorrows, the treason of His companions, the lying of the false witnesses, the deriding of enemies, the spear and the nails and the vinegar, and above all, the forsaking of God. This is all heard and felt here. And then we follow Him in His joys and songs in resurrection, and witness His ascension and His welcome and honours in heaven. And at last we watch His return from thence to the judgment of the nations, and to His glorious headship of Israel and the whole earth. All this is told out in this volume, not merely, as it were, with pen and ink, but in living lines, in fragments of the heart which this book has gathered up.

These are among the vast and wondrous contents of this little book. And, as we have noticed, it delineates the experiences of the saints. For the saints having “the mind of Christ,” and “the same spirit of faith” (2 Cor. iv. 13, 14), are able to read their sorrows and joys, and the meditations of their hearts there also.* Accordingly,

* In Is. l. 10, and Matt. xi. 29, the Lord seems to present His own experience to the saints as a pattern of what theirs should be. And so in the Psalms—among others, xxvii., xxxi., xxxiv.

this book has been the companion of their souls, when often almost every thing else would have been intrusive and uncongenial.

But still, in using it, we should remember that, having the Holy Ghost in us, our experiences are to flow from that. Christian experience is the tasting of the fruit of the presence of the Spirit, and is according to the forms in which, as we are told in Scripture, He acts in us. And how rich should that be, when He dwells and acts in us, as an *Unction*, an *Earnest*, and a *Witness*. What joy of hope, what largeness of understanding, what strength of faith, should be ours ! what sense of the divine love, when the Holy Ghost Himself is shedding that love abroad in our hearts ! And as this is the due experience of the saint, as far as the Book of Psalms reflects the heart of a righteous Jew merely, the saint is now borne beyond it, or beside it. The Psalmist says, for instance, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments;" the saint now is to prove, that "perfect love casteth out fear," and that he has "boldness in the day of judgment." So again—"Let me not be ashamed of my hope;" the saint is taught to know, that "hope maketh not ashamed." In ways like these, the saint now passes beyond the Psalmist, and walks in the warmer, brighter light of the New Testament, in the strength of the Holy Ghost in him.

So, in the 112th Psalm, all earthly prosperity is promised *absolutely* to the godly man ; but the apostle, quoting that Psalm (2 Cor. ix. 8-11), only states God's *power* to give prosperity, and prays for a measure of it in behalf of the saints at Corinth.*

* So Peter quotes Hosea ; but he does not go on with Hosea to promise the saints now, as the prophet promises Israel, that they shall have all blessing in the earth—the earth hearing the corn and the wine and the oil, and they hearing Jezreel ; but he exhorts them to behave as those who are only strangers and pilgrims while they remain in the earth. (See 1 Peter ii. 10 ; Hosea ii. 21-23.)

But many a mistake on this subject of Christian experience has arisen, I believe, from the wrong use of the Book of Psalms. Many, diligently and graciously desiring to walk with God, have made it something of a model for themselves, and sought to have the heart conform itself to the trials, consolations, and other experiences delineated in it. But this is not its proper use. It should be read, rather, as the varied picture of the soul *exercised by the Spirit under certain conditions and circumstances*. The circumstance, together with the grace and energy of the Spirit, and not any effort of our own souls, is to be the parent of the experience.

This, I believe, is to be remembered. The Psalms were not models to Jesus. He did not, for instance, go through either the patience or the joy of the 16th and 22nd, as though He were conforming the ways of His soul to certain patterns. These Psalms were rather the inspired anticipations of what the paths of His spirit were to be. The circumstances through which He was passing drew out His perfect soul in those utterances.

There are, no doubt, many other sources of mistake connected with this subject. But this I have long thought may be observed as one of them.

But to return. On the difference in the language of the Psalms and the New Testament, we may say, all this is perfect in its season, but strikingly intimates a difference in heavenly and earthly persons and things. And this going beyond the book of the Psalmist in our *experiences*, is like going beyond the books of the Prophets in our *hopes and calling*. For the earth, its people, its judgments, and its glory, are the *due* theme of the prophets. And heavenly things are not to be expected to come within the mind of the Spirit in the Psalmist more largely than in the Prophets. Saints find their sympathies in this book, and use it for their spiritual comfort, but their

calling and glory in the heavens is not *the subject* of the book. The Jerusalem of the Psalmist is not the heavenly Jerusalem of Rev. xxi., but the Jerusalem in the land of Israel. And the people of this book generally are her people, or that Remnant which our meditations have so largely contemplated.

And let me here observe something more particularly as to this idea of "a Remnant," so common in Scripture.

It has its formal foundation in the *incurribleness* of man. Man may smart and cry out under the rod, but he returns to his naughtiness again and again. The Book of Judges illustrates this. And Isa. i. shows us that the idea of a Remnant, as I have said, arises from this. For the prophet there tells us, that those who had been brought up as loved children had rebelled, and that afterwards, chastised as disobedient children, they had refused to repent. *They were incurrible*. Piped or mourned to, they had no answer. And upon this the Lord has only to act on the sovereignty of grace, or on the principle of a Remnant—as the prophet further says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been made like unto Gomorrah." (Is. i. 1-9.)

The Lord was constantly, through Israel's times, exhibiting this sovereignty of grace in the election and manifestation of a Remnant. Such seasons have been called (and justly so) "Revivals." The times of Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, mark so many revivals or eras of spiritual recovery from a state of disease. But the present condition of Israel tells us, that again the bloom has gone up as rottenness. Their summer is departed. The land and the people witness this. But it is not to be always so. There will be still the greatest revival of all. Those which we have here traced were only the occasional recoveries of a

diseased system, which carried the principle of death in it ! but this last revival will be effectual, for it will be in the resurrection life and strength of the Son of God. For while nothing in man can be trusted, and nothing committed to man abides, in Him all the promises of God are yea and amen. (2 Cor. i.)

And in the time of this last and glorious revival in Israel, there will be a great doing of the Lord, as at such seasons there has always been. Samuel was exercised in heart before he was manifested, and David likewise, and Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the rest of them, though variously. The Spirit of God was getting ready the instrument ere the hand of God used it. As we read of Samson, "and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol." (Judges xiii. 25.) And so, in the coming days of Israel, there will be the secret work of the Spirit again in the election from the midst of the nation.

The Prophets, again and again, tell us the fact, that they, a revived people, will be brought through much exercise of soul ; viz., that they will bear the indignation of the Lord because they have sinned against Him—bewail their leanness and that they are only as grape-gleanings—wait for the God of their salvation—remember His former doings—be an afflicted and poor people, abstaining from iniquity and from speaking lies, and shutting their eyes from seeing evil—come with weeping and supplication—be led into the wilderness and there spoken comfortably to—return and seek God and David their king—take with them words—acknowledge their offences—speak often one to another, &c., &c. All this is given to us, historically, of the Remnant by the Prophets, as the Evangelists give us, historically or as facts, the ways of Jesus. And then, this book of Psalms comes, and, in its turn and place, under the same Spirit,

gives us the hidden path both of Jesus and of this His elect Israel through these circumstances thus recorded by Prophets and Evangelists.

Of this election from the midst of Israel, or the Remnant of whom we have so much spoken, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others, give us samples. Their righteous souls were drawn out into godly exercise over the state of the nation, and over the oracles of God. So, Josiah is exercised in a day when the judgment could not be averted from the people, but the righteous seed would be preserved. (2 Chron. xxxiv.)

And as the voices of Haggai and Zechariah animated the people in the work of the Lord's house, so will revived attention to the words of the Prophets give quickening and direction to the hearts of a kindred Remnant by and by, destined, through grace, to be the sons or citizens of the earthly Jerusalem. (See Ezra v.)

• But the purposed fruit of all this discipline of soul and of all other discipline, is only this—"to take away their sin." (Is. xxvii.) For, when all this purifying is over, "the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old." The valley of Achor is to be a door of hope, as it was before (see Josh. vii., Hos. ii.)—from the sorrow and discipline (assuredly through that blood of Jesus which is the only fountain for all sin, whether theirs or ours, Zech. xiii. 1), is to spring for them joy and honour. Their wilderness is to yield a vineyard, or a garden of roses. (Is. xxxv., Hos. ii.) Achan must be removed, and the land shall then be taken. The rebels must be purged out, and then the flock shall be saved, again lie down as "under the shade of Lebanon," and David be their shepherd again.

These simple considerations may prepare us for hearing the voice of this people, the true Israel of God in this book. They will, in their day, be led to find in it what

will suit the condition of their souls from the circumstances into which their obedience to God will bring them. For the Spirit of Christ, in sympathy with them, has indited these Psalms for their use in their day. And of this, Acts iv. 25-27 gives us a very simple and yet very clear instance. For there, the circumstances then around them so form the mind of the disciples (under the Holy Ghost surely), that their souls are at once cast into fellowship with the 2nd Psalm; and, without effort or delay, they get the proper utterance of their hearts through it.

This is just a sample of what we mean; and it is a very happy warrant for our saying, that Psalms are prepared by the Spirit of Christ for His Israel in the day of their quickening, which is to be the day of their trials also. And we may observe that the 78th Psalm was, in this way, prepared for other distant generations, as we are told at the very opening of it. So, Moses tells us, that his song was for all generations of the people, and would be used for blessing in testifying against them, and leading them to know the grace in God that aboundeth, the mercy that rejoiceth over judgment. (Deut. xxxii.) These, therefore, are further warrants for our saying, that ancient words of God's Spirit in the Scriptures have been prepared for the future use of His people, in the day of the softening of their hearts. And is not such a Scripture as Is. liii. clearly of this character? We all now use it as our own to the full; but surely, from the very terms of it, we must see that Israel will use it, as though it had been *altogether* written for their sakes (see I Cor. ix. 10), in the day of their repentance.

Certain Psalms, then, we doubt not, are written by the Spirit of Christ for His people in the time of their revival. And this comes from the sympathy of Christ with His elect Israel; which sympathy we might be prepared to find in the Psalms, for we hear of it *continually*

in other Scriptures:—"In all their afflictions He was afflicted;"—"His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel;"—"He that touches you toucheth the apple of His eye." Here is the *doctrine* of the Lord's sympathy with Israel. And still more in the words of the Lord by Nathan to David:—"Wherever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?" For He would not rest till His people rested, but still go, as He farther says, "from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another;" as He had walked with David "whithersoever he had walked." (1 Chron. xvii.) A beautiful scripture on the Lord's full sympathy with His David and His Israel. And His *ways* had exhibited the same. For when they were in the Egyptian furnace, He was in a burning bush; when they travelled through the desert, He was in a cloudy chariot; when they were seated under the hostile walls of Jericho, He was as captain of their host. As afterwards, He was in the field with the judges or deliverers of Israel; as Deborah encourages Barak,—“Up, is not the Lord gone out before thee?” Here is sympathy. Here is the Lord speaking and acting as one with Israel. And in like manner, He was tending the flock with David, when the lion and the bear met him: and with him in the plain of Elah, when the uncircumcised Philistine came out against him.

Now the Psalms (as far as they are these utterances prepared by the Spirit of Christ for His people) are but the expression of all this over again. They are, so to speak, the voices of Jehovah-Jesus again from the burning bush, or from the chariot cloud, or from under the walls of Jericho the night before the battle. In them, we may say, Jesus is again with Moses and David, with Joshua and with Gideon; again alive to the entrance of the sword

of the persecutor, and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" And these are among the utterances we listen to in this wondrous, precious book. For the experiences of the soul of Jesus, either in His own personal history, or in His sympathies with His people, may have been as fully matter for the anticipations of the Spirit in the Psalmist, as the facts and circumstances of His life were for the anticipations of the same Spirit in the Prophets.

These sympathies are, truly, deep and fervent; and they help to tell us, as all Scripture does, that when the Lord returns to Israel, He will return with all the fervency of "first love." For it is not only *whom* He loves He loves to the end, but *as* He loves He loves to the end. First love never cools there. "Nothing changes God's affection." Happy truth, whether for Israel, or the church, or any saint. When the Lord visited Israel in the days of righteous Jehoshaphat, there was a sample of the restored days of Solomon—the Gentiles bring him presents, his officers of state wait around him, and the fear of the Lord falls on all the world because of Jehoshaphat. Here was something of the palmy days of Solomon again. And all this shows that the ancient glory was still in waiting. It had but retired within a thin veil. And so now; let but Israel learn to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," and the departed glory will return.

Has He changed? Has the Lord become a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness? Or does He still remember the kindness of youth, and the love of espousals, when all who would devour Israel offended Him? Surely He does. And when He returns, in the day of her repentance, it will be in the fulness of His "first love" to her, in this kindness of her youth. Love holds its first *warmth*, as well as its *object*, in "God's affections." Therefore Isaiah says of the return of the Lord to Zion,

that it will be thus—"As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." (Is. lxii.) So Hosea (ii.), so Zephaniah (iii.), so all Scripture. And so our Apostle writes, "As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake," words which tell us that the early love, the first affection, is still remembered; that it is the love towards Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that is to gather and delight over Israel, in the day of their covenant. And the end will prove that repentance is hid from His eyes; and that the manner as unchangeably as the object of His love is remembered to the end.

But this we will not pursue farther, but notice another subject, which these short meditations have also suggested;—the Lawless one, or the proud Apostate of the latter day.

As we said before of the Jewish Remnant, so now may we say of this one, that the Prophets again and again tell of him. And no wonder. For this wicked one will perfect the history of human apostasy. And so special a place does he hold in the accomplishing of the divine purposes in the earth, that he has had his type throughout Scripture, from beginning to end—Nimrod, and Pharaoh, and Amalek, Balak, Adonizedek, and Abimelek, Saul, and Absalom, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, and Herod—these, stretching along the whole line of Scripture history, present him in different features of his character and actions. And, at last, he appears under the symbol of the Beast, to whom the Dragon gives his power and his seat and great authority, and who at last falls before the brightness of the coming of the Lord.

The enmity of this Wilful king, the infidel pride of this Lawless one, will close that course and power of the world which opposed Jesus in His day, and has been ever in revolt, in contradiction of God.

And from this we may expect to find (as we have) this

great Apostate of the latter day much noticed in the Psalms. For, in the prophetic Scriptures, the Spirit of God is continually looking at the great crisis—the solemn closing scenes of the conflict between light and darkness, between Christ and the enemy; and if so, the Jewish Remnant and this Apostate and his faction must be seen also, for they have each their distinguished part in that crisis. Not forgetting, however, but fully allowing, that *we* have more personally and immediately to do with those principles and workings of iniquity which are leading to this crisis—"the mystery of iniquity," which, with greater or less energy, has been at work from the days of the apostles. And it is more important for our souls to know *the false principles* now thus working, than to have great knowledge about *the Antichrist or Wilful king*.

But though this is our point of observation, and our wisdom and duty in watchfulness, still the Prophets and the Psalms have to do (prophetically) with the crisis. And a wrong direction will be given to the soul of a believer, if, in their prophetic character, the Psalms be not so applied. Just like the misdirection that was given, in days before ours, to the minds of many children of God, from reading the wars of the Israelites, as though they were the types of the proper actings of the saints now, and thus getting from them a warrant for taking the sword, and going to battle as on the Lord's side. But all this was zeal without right direction. For we are not now to call on the Avenger to show Himself, as the Psalmist does,—to call on the Lord to pluck His hand out of His bosom, or to lift up His heels to the perpetual desolations. In contradiction of this, we are rather to be willing to wait for our inheritance, rejoicing that the delay or the long-suffering of God is salvation to others. (2 Peter iii.)

When the day of the Avenger is come, the saints will sing. (Rev. xix.) For the present season, they have their

tears over the corruptions around them, and such tears are the fruit of a godly mind. But still, though this is so, such sorrow is to have its measure. We weep over a defiled creation, a forfeited Eden, a lost land of Canaan, or the present ruin of Christendom. But there is to be measure in such mourning. Jesus bewailed the unbelieving cities, but He had relief in the counsels of the Father. (Matt. xi.) Paul could be grieved over apostate professors, but he had relief in the sureness of God's foundations. (2 Tim. ii.) Samuel, in older days, had tears over Saul's sin and the dishonour of the anointed of the Lord, but they were dried up by the Lord Himself. (1 Sam. xvi.) And in the Psalms, Jesus, in sympathy with the afflictions of the righteous, when iniquity is filling up its measure, waits for vengeance and vindication, knowing that there is resource in God for all the mischief that men can work. Thus, as they show us, He desires the deliverance and prosperity of the righteous—the raising of the humble, the abasing of the proud, the vindication of the name of the Lord, and the settling of all things according to right. He can say, it is true, "O that my people had hearkened unto me" (Ps. lxxxi.), as in the days of His flesh, He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." But still, His Spirit in the Psalms is generally exercised on the righteous and settled counsels of God. Jeremiah, in the like spirit, calls for judgment. (ch. xvii.) *For it is resistance to God that He sees:* as Paul, in his measure, when he speaks in Gal. i. 8, and in 2 Tim. iv. 14. And He sees much of this, as I have said, in sympathy with the suffering Remnant of the last days, when iniquity is filled up. As another has said, "Once that the gospel has run its course, Christ will demand righteous judgment against the world. It is Christ calling for righteousness, asking it (generally by His Spirit in the humble and lowly ones of the Jewish nation) against the

proud and violent man. It is not David asking to rule over his enemies, but Christ who demands judgment, because the time is come."

This has been said, I believe, very justly, on much that we get in the Psalms, and simply accounts for breathings and desires there, which are not, and ought not to be, in concert with the *present* movings of the renewed mind of the saints. But we will not pursue this further.

The book of Psalms gives us, as we may say, fragments from the history of Redemption. They are not the orderly parts of a narrative, or of an argument, or even of a poem. They are but fragments, and scattered also here and there. Still, however, there is to be discovered something of method even in the scattering. It is not altogether wild disorder. And the apostle, naming one Psalm as "the second," witnesses that there is something of order in the Book known to the Holy Ghost. And so, in these short meditations, we have found some Psalms grouped together, while others lie alone before the eye. But there should be holy care in the soul to gather up these fragments, and to put them together with a cautious hand, and to walk over the ground where they are lying with unshod feet. Surely we should esteem it "holy ground," since Jesus is there in His sorrows and in His joys. The strings of David's harp are the strings of Christ's heart; and when they are touched we should be still. There should be something of the deep silence of those who listen to distant music; for the melodies of that heart are far enough away from this coarse and noisy world.

It should be thus with our souls in our meditations here. What sorrows, trials, temptations, groans, prayers, meditations, joys, songs, shouts, and praises, do we listen to in this wondrous Book! It is the seat of the affections,—the heart, as it were, of the whole inspired volume, as

we have before taken leave to call it. And how many exercises of spirit have been awakened in the saints through them! How have they soothed and raised the hearts of the Lord's people, regulated the motions there, and, like the prophet's minstrel, enabled them to take their easy and happy course again! The presence of the King of Israel disturbed the mind of Elisha, and ere he could prophesy he needed to hear the harp of a minstrel. And so has this harp of David, this harp of many strings, done for many a saint of God when other occasions have arisen to grieve them. This has been its gracious ministry under the Holy Ghost, the Comforter of the saints, and still is every day.

But, as these meditations show us, the passions of the soul, uttered in this Book, are not descriptions merely, but the felt power of real circumstances. They are experiences *in actual scenes of life*; so that we learn *events* in the utterances. The passion of the soul is the principal thing, but the event or circumstance which had produced it is disclosed through it. In this way a Psalm is like a song. In a song the music is principal, the subject is only secondary, though it may have given occasion to it. So the passion of the soul is principal in a Psalm, though the event conveyed through it occasioned it. The Lamentations of Jeremiah and the Canticles of Solomon are of this kind—the one, the deep-toned sorrows of the Spirit in Jeremiah, or in the righteous Remnant in Israel, or of Christ Himself; the other, the joyous motions of that soul that has learnt to delight itself in the Beloved, and is longing for more of His presence. And the event being intimated through those utterances, gives us the historic or prophetic ministry of this Book.

This Book, therefore, yields twofold service to us. As *devotional*, it soothes, and regulates, and cheers our souls, and is the welcome companion of all our trials of heart :

as *prophetic*, it teaches us the counsels and works of the Lord, and much of what has been, or is to be, His way.

These short meditations are an endeavour to draw forth from the Psalms both of these, the experiences of the soul, and the events from whence they have arisen. But they are only sketches or outlines. And such would we rather have them ; for we are not to think for others. Our communion as saints is not that of the blind leading the blind, nor is it that of the seeing leading the blind, but it is children of light walking together under the common grace of the one blessed Lord and Author of light ; and the mind of one brother is to give occasion to others to exercise themselves in the truth, in dependence on the Holy Ghost in them ; owning, withal, the gift or grace in some to teach, or to exhort ; as it is written, "He that teacheth (let him wait) on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation."

But some are urgent after knowledge. They are ever schooling the mind. Their way calls for a continual effort, and acts as a constant pressure. But the apostle had another method. He would have the teacher as little as possible act the teacher. He could call himself the teacher of the Gentiles (1 Tim. ii.), but he speaks rather as a loving companion or brother. "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." (Rom. i. 11, 12.) "I speak as unto my children," was his word also.

And this style of the apostle was but a distant expression of that of the Great Master Himself. As he intimates when he says (2 Cor. x.), "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." For this lets us know the Lord's style, so to speak, as a teacher. And it is blessed to know that *this* was the style of the Son of

God in the midst of us. He wanted to invest the heart of His disciples with a sense of nearness to Him. He did not deal with them as a patron or benefactor, as man deals with man. (Luke xxii. 25.) Man will be ready enough to confer benefits if he may occupy the place of acknowledged superiority. But the Lord Jesus brings His dependent one near to Him. He sat at the well's mouth beside the sinner whose spirit He sought to fill. Was this patronage after the manner of men? Was this the condescension of a benefactor?

I believe it is something of heaven to apprehend this mind or style in Christ. But we have to be *admonished* as well as *comforted*. If we have this way in the Great Master to notice, we have our way as His disciples to consider and order.

It has been said—and it is much for the observation of our souls—that “we should take care how we traffic with unfelt truth.”

A time of peace is a time in which the mind may indulge itself, and handle knowledge at leisure or speculatively. But knowledge is not divinely attained, truth is not spiritually learnt, if the mind have it as a speculation, or as propositions which the intellect digests and traffics with.

There is danger, now-a-days, of making the Bible “easy.” The clear and full character of revelation in our dispensation is one of its great distinctions. That is true, and very blessedly true. “Blessed are your eyes, for they see,” said the Lord. But still the facility with which divine knowledge may be now attained has its snare and its danger. We may get pleased with the attainment itself, without being stirred up, as we ought to be, to walk in those richer affections and in that deeper moral power, which is alone consistent with our enlarged measure of light and understanding.

The Church at Corinth abounded in knowledge (1 Cor. i. 5), but their walk was so unspiritual that the apostle would not treat them as though they had knowledge. (1 Cor. iii. 1.) And this shows us how the Lord abhors the trafficking in unfelt truth. In heaven there may be ignorance or want of knowledge, but no such thing as the possession of unfelt truth. The angels are heavenly creatures, but they confess their ignorance by their desire to know. (1 Peter i. 12.) *Ignorant* of certain truths they are, but not *uninterested* about them. So, righteous men and prophets have been ignorant, but not uninterested. (Matt. xiii. 17; Luke x. 24; 1 Peter i. 10.) And in the person of the patriarch Abraham, we see how some of old, in dispensations of less light and communicated knowledge, had such right affections, that the Spirit carried them beyond the measure of the stature of their age.

Speaking of Abraham, the Lord says, he "rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56.) His "rejoicing" was the early or previous condition of his soul. It tells us, that he took an interest in the notices which had been afforded him of Christ. They were comparatively few and faint; but they captivated his soul. The glimpses were powerful. And the Lord honoured such an affection, and gave His servant a fuller vision. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; *he saw it.*" And then, as we further read, "he was glad." He used the knowledge he attained aright, as he had sought it aright. His affections were engaged in the search, and they were not cooled or deadened when he had found.

Here was knowledge *sought* and *used* in the due order. O how the heart can say, O for more of this within and among us!

A little knowledge, with personal exercise of spirit over it, is better than much knowledge without it. As the

proverb says, "There is much food in the tillage of the poor." For the poor make the most of their little. They use the spade, the hoe, and the mattock; they weed, and they dress, and turn up their little garden of herbs. And their diligence gets much food out of it. And we are to be these "poor ones," ever to use divine Scripture, as they carry on their tillage, and make the most of our little. It may be but milk we feed on, but if we use our diligence to lay aside malice, and hypocrisies, and envies, and the like, we shall be really feeding and growing. (1 Peter ii.) And because of this much more savour of Christ do we often find in those who have less knowledge, for theirs is this "tillage of the poor." (Prov. xiii. 23.)

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part." We have reason to say one to another, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." And especially, in a little work like this, taking a view of the heart of the Lord Jesus and of His saints, there will necessarily be much that can be entered into only by feeling. Who has not experienced at times vivid emotions, when meditating on the ways of the Lord, which would find a portraiture in a Psalm; while, at other times, we should in vain look for the same features, and, perhaps, wonder how they had once come so bright before us? The soul of one who is in the habit of meditating much on the Lord, would refer one verse of the gospels, it might be, to a whole Psalm; and in doing a certain act, or in suffering a certain unkindness, would find an utterance for his heart to God in a certain portion of this Book. And another, according to the measure of his spiritual apprehension, would refer this to another portion of a different complexion. This could not be with any other part of Scripture. For this Book is not one of doctrine, but of the experiences of the soul.

May nothing in these meditations be allowed to hinder any of its value! For they aim only to be the companion of the meditations of the saints, if haply, through the Spirit, they may help their joy and light in the Lord.

The present is a time, when many are running to and fro to increase knowledge of all kinds. And this must be a caution to our souls; for the saint has always to watch against the spirit of the times. And in these present times of light and knowledge (though it may be knowledge of God), we are still to remember that it is not food merely, but digestion, that nourishes. The clean animal, under the law, chewed the cud. And the Spirit of God, through the wisdom of Solomon, has said, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." (Prov. xxv. 16.)

And our Lord Himself, I may add, instructs us to know how we should cultivate divine knowledge, or knowledge of Scripture. For, in answering questions, He never appears to be satisfying curiosity, but He entertains enquiries, as one who had His eye on the soul of the enquirer, and not His ear merely open to his question. His words, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," show us, that His purpose was not to convey information, as we speak, but to direct the conscience, and feed the renewed mind according to its growing capacity. And this is divine. All other questioning and gathering of knowledge will be but the vain traffic of mere human or Athenian intellect. (Acts xvii. 21.)

But above all, beloved, we would remember, that with our knowledge, we must seek and cultivate that faith which *appropriates* what we know, makes it our own, and gives us personal joy and interest in it. This is the point of chief blessing to us. "The word preached did not

profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Because it is *faith* which thus *appropriates* God—makes the Blessed One and His fulness our own, our home. And this is the thing of great price to us. God is a *home* to us—He is ours. We are said to dwell in Him. A home becomes the very symbol of the due state of our souls when thinking of God. And faith alone gives us this, and this is of chiefest value to us. For who does not feel the charm of home? As we say, "Home is home, be it never so homely." We instinctively appropriate to ourselves all that is there. The furniture may be mean, but it is our own. That is the thought the heart prizes. All that we see reminds us of our rights, our connections, our enjoyments. And thus "home is home." And so with our God. Faith makes Him a home to the heart. Knowledge furnishes the house, but faith eyes all, be it more or less, as our own.

O for increase of faith! A scribe may be much instructed; he may look at the house of glory, and speak of its costliness, tell of the trophies of David, and of the curtains of Solomon, which hang there; but all the time he may be but a visitor. He may pass through all this grandeur, without appropriating faith, without his soul carrying the sense that he is at home in this wealthy place. While another may have less faculty to unfold those curtains, and decypher those trophies, or to weigh the gold and silver of the house, but withal he may have that precious faith which blessedly appropriates all that it sees, be it more or less, and thus makes him not a visitor, but a child at home in God's house.

And seasonable, most seasonable, now-a-days, is the voice of one in other days—"Wouldest thou know that the matters contained in the word of Christ are real things? then never read them for mere knowledge sake. Look for some beams of Christ's glory and power in

every verse. Account nothing knowledge, but as it is seasoned with some revelation of the glorious presence of Christ and His quickening Spirit. Use no discourse about spiritual truths for mere conversation sake, but mind the promoting of edification. And use not duties for mere custom or service sake, but for nearer communion with God.”—*Henry Dorney's Contemplations.*

This is the grace we may well covet : “Lord, increase our faith.”

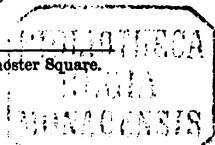
And as clay in the divine potter's hand, may we be ! not at the disposal of man, to be what his thoughts, his wisdom, or his religion, would make us ; but in the Lord's hand, lying there, to be fashioned by His truth and Spirit, after His mind, and kept to the end in “the simplicity that is in Christ ;” and then in season be removed from the potter's house, to be set as vessels of His praise in the sanctuary of His glory for ever and ever. Even so, Lord Jesus !

“Praise ye the Lord.

“Praise God in His sanctuary : praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts : praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet : praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance : praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals : praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.

“Praise ye the Lord.”

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father : to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”



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