STUDIES IN THE PSALMS

J. B. ROTHERHAM

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STUDIES IN THE PSALMS.

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STUDIES

IN THE

PSALMS

BY

JOSEPH BRYANT ROTHERHAM,

TRANSLATOR OF "THE EMPHASISED BIBLE."

LONDON:

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

J. GEORGE ROTHERHAM, 29, Ardoch Road, Catford, S.E.

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FOREWORD.

THE Author of these "STUDIES" did not live to see his work in print, and this volume is issued by his son.

It was very natural that the Translator of "The Emphasised Bible," and the Author of "Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews," should, in a period of unusual leisure at the close of a long life, turn his attention with renewed zest to a study of the Psalter. The immediate incentive to the work came from the Westminster Bible School. In his "Reminiscences," written in 1906, the Author says:—"It is very pleasant to me to avow that the impulse to make an attempt on the Psalms was lately received at Westminster Bible School, so ably conducted by Dr. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN. . . . I could never have anticipated, during the quiet years of bygone labour on the Holy Scriptures, being spared to enjoy the profound satisfaction of hearing lectures so greatly to my mind and so manifestly potent for good as these lectures on the Divine Library by Dr. MORGAN. Long may this Bible School flourish, and far may its influence extend."

The Translator of "The Emphasised Bible" wrote out the whole of the Bible—portions of it several times over—with his own hand. Forty years' experience only confirmed his conviction, that there should be no such thing as finality in the work of Bible Translation and Revision, and in his pamphlet entitled "Our Sacred Books" he says:—

> "Consider further that the world moves. Grammars are multiplied; dictionaries quarry in new directions; Palestine is re-explored; Assyrian and Egyptian Tablets are unearthed; more ancient scrolls are deciphered and collated. And all this means constantly accumulating gains making for revision. For what can be done ought to be done if the claims of truth are supreme.
>
> "Consider further, many men, many minds; various gifts, a more effective army of occupation. The God of the Bible is not weary of bestowing his bounties, and he delights to make one relay of toilers helpful to another. This means much. For, as no two observers of nature ever see with the same eyes, so in the study of Hebrew and Greek no two students detect precisely the same cogencies and felicities.
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> * * * * * * *
>
> "Whatever translation of the Bible we prefer, and whether or not we compare therewith other versions, let us never forget that it is our duty and privilege to rise above all mere formalism even in Bible reading, and use all our powers to get at the heart of divine things. God's works and ways and thoughts so far as revealed in His Word—let these be the objects of our search and the subjects which engage our meditation; let us seek to turn these into

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> realities, by looking at them from every side, and translating them into our *own* language and into our own thoughts. Let us try to get at the facts through the words, at the sense through the sounds. Let us guard against being rocked to sleep by the lullaby of unpenetrated sentences whose meaning we do not understand. Let us not dream that we can be made holy and safe by mere verbal charms."

The writer of these words was in some respects pre-eminently a man of the Grammar and Lexicon. He delighted in subtle shades of meaning sometimes only discoverable by microscopical research. He was fond of tracking words to their hiding-places. He had the instincts and patience of the hunter in following the trail, and he delighted to bring forth into the light of day his trophies of the chase. His trained memory readily recalled parallel passages and related incidents, and in these Psalm Studies the higher teaching of the New Testament is often brought to bear with good effect.

Many choice phrases, culled from the works of modern scholars, and placed in the footnotes following the text, or referred to in the Expositions, bear witness to the Author's keen appreciation of the writings of others; but he was a man of independent mind, accustomed to draw his own conclusions after a careful first-hand investigation of all the available evidence. He occupied a somewhat unique position between scholarly experts on the one hand, and the average Bible student on the other, and in these "Studies," the needs of advanced students and the rights of the unlearned, have alike been conserved.

Special thanks are heartily tendered to Dr. J. W. THIRTLE (whose own work on the Psalter is referred to by the Author in the following Preface) for kindly help in examining the proof-sheets. But for the exceptional clearness of the Author's handwriting, the printing of a work extending to upwards of eighteen hundred MS. pages, without his personal supervision, would not have been possible, and in accomplishing the task grateful reference should be made to the care bestowed upon it by the printers. It is recognized that both Managers and Staff (including the Author's friend, Mr. R. T. HESKETH), have taken special pains in carrying through an undertaking which makes unusual demands on typographical resources and technical skill.

The present writer is persuaded that "the further endeavour after accuracy," by a "diligent revision" of the text of these Sacred Lyrics, and the Freshness and Vigour of the Expositions, embodying as they do the garnered fruit of prolonged meditations and ripe experience, will be welcomed by Bible students, and will justify this addition to the literature of the Psalter.

J. G. R.

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PREFACE.

THE aim of this volume is to induce readers of The Psalms to become students. Any apprehension on my part of being deemed presumptuous in preparing it, has been held in abeyance by three considerations: first, that the wants of students are various; second, that the methods of teachers are diverse; and, third, that the Psalms themselves are inexhaustible. This last conclusion outweighs all others. Franz Delitzsch—himself one of the ablest of commentators on the Psalms—says: The Psalms "are inexhaustible; there always remains an undeciphered remnant; and therefore the business of exposition, although it has a progress, yet has no end." Hence the hope that this further contribution will simply be judged on its merits.

It will be convenient if I at once state precisely what I have here attempted.

In the first place, I have reproduced the text of the Psalms which had already been given in "The Emphasised Bible"—of course, *diligently revised;* for it was not possible to refrain from embodying therein a further endeavour after accuracy. At the same time, I have deliberately retained in this rendering of the Psalms nearly as much as before of the Hebrew Emphatic Idiom, being, as I am, profoundly convinced of the possibility of putting into intelligible and forceful English more of the idiomatic felicity of the original than is commonly deemed consistent with the composition of classic English.

Especially where careful interpretation is the immediate end in view, is a correctly emphasised English text a clear gain for securing a true exposition. Comparison of results, pursued through hundreds of instances, in comments by eminent authorities, makes it no extravagance on my part to say, *There* you are well told that this or that word or

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clause is in the original emphatic: *here* you see and feel it brought home to you by word or sign which with very little trouble you can appreciate.

Scholars will observe that, in the small reference-notes placed at the foot of the text, not only are they themselves conveniently reminded of critical results with which from ampler sources they are already familiar, but that those very notes, fragmentary as they may appear to the casual reader, do nevertheless furnish enticing stepping-stones for such as would hesitate to plunge into deeper critical waters; by a discreet use of which, therefore, the less thoroughly equipped student may be materially assisted.

Less venturous readers—in fact, all who for want of time or self-reliance shrink from being too severely taxed—are requested to observe that the "Exposition" proper which follows the psalm has been as far as possible disencumbered of critical details, so as to render it, if not always quite easy reading, yet at least not so difficult as to impede the progress of sensible and candid lovers of the Psalms. Questions of authorship and subsequent adaptation have, indeed, here been rather freely discussed; but only under the confident persuasion that—based as they are on the broad grounds of circumstantial evidence such as confront most men in daily life—they can be made, not merely intelligible, but intensely interesting to average Bible students.

I have not shrunk from the labour and risks of trying to make my "Introduction" really introductory, by providing the reader with details and references calculated to smooth his path, and to suggest other methods, similar to those here actually pursued, by which he may add to the "Studies" of another further and still sweeter studies of his own.

It remains only to indicate the extent of my indebtedness to various critics in preparing this volume, and to express my gratitude if I have, by the Divine blessing, been enabled worthily to enter into their labours.

To Dr. Ginsburg my obligations are ever growing, the longer I am spared to use his magnificent "Massoretico-Critical Hebrew Bible" with its precious footnotes, and to consult his invaluable "Introduction" to the same.

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To Dr. Driver I am exceedingly grateful for his "Parallel Psalter," from the text, notes, and first glossary of which I have gleaned many suggestions of the greatest practical value.

To the Introductory volumes of Thrupp I owe several fruitful suggestions; and I am still more sensible of all kinds of assistance derived from the translations and commentaries of Perowne, Delitzsch, Kirkpatrick, and Briggs. To the last named, my obligations are peculiar. As may be gathered from my Introduction, Chapter II., I have often felt compelled to decline his over-rigid metrical principles and his over-daring resort to conjecture; at the same time his drastic methods have in several instances furnished relief from difficulties which no other critic has seemed able to surmount.

Next to Ginsburg, however, Dr. Thirtle would seem to have placed me under the deepest debt of gratitude, for having furnished a fresh view-point from which to study the origin and early history of the Psalms. I could not wait to see how he would weather the storm of disapprobation which his two works on "The Titles of the Psalms" and on "Old Testament Problems" were certain to provoke; and therefore laid myself under severe caution to beware of following him too implicitly, especially as the results at which he had arrived were so exceedingly acceptable to my prepossessions. But this I am bound in candour to acknowledge: that, in several instances, where I started the study of a psalm in doubt of Thirtle's view of its origin, I ended in a surprisingly complete agreement. Sooner or later, the weight of internal evidence generally brought me into unison with his conclusions. In a few matters as to which we at present may appear to differ, he will, I think, see that I am right. But when all of this nature is said that can be said, there remains in my mind the persuasion that it is mainly due to Dr. Thirtle that my recent studies in the Psalms became such a delightful discovery to me of traces of autobiographies, weaving themselves into the histories of both David and Hezekiah.

I am profoundly thankful to have been permitted to undertake and complete these STUDIES IN THE PSALMS. *

JOSEPH BRYANT ROTHERHAM.

* See "Foreword," page v.

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

The Psalms as Literature.

The Psalms, whether as a section of our Bible or as an independent book (conveniently named the Psalter), are related to all literature by certain leading characteristics; such as authorship, transmission, multiplication, subject and object; and, like all other books, they have a peculiar history of their own.

The Psalter is obviously a book of Devotion, consisting of prayers and praises addressed to Jehovah the God of Israel, interspersed with personal and national reminiscences intended to promote the spirit of worship.

The Psalter is an ancient book, traceable backwards, through Latin, Greek and Syriac translations to the Hebrew in which it was first written.

The evidence of its antiquity is manifold and conclusive. Hebrew Bibles, containing The Psalms, began to be printed towards the close of the fifteenth century. These were printed from manuscripts, technically called *codices*, some of which were written centuries before the invention of printing and are still preserved in the great libraries of the world. The exemplars from which existing codices were made, or the exemplars of those exemplars, were the standards from which the Ancient Versions were executed, as is known from the practical identity of the Text in those versions with the Text preserved in existing Hebrew copies. The New Testament itself, which had an independent existence and has come down to us through channels of its own, quotes from the Psalter as an already existing book, partly in its Hebrew form and partly in the Greek translation of it and the rest of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. The Septuagint was executed, in successive instalments, during the interval between about B.C. 200 and the Christian Era.

The measure and kind of agreement between the Greek and the Hebrew clearly attest the priority of the latter; seeing that terms and idioms appear in the Greek which could only have been derived from

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the Hebrew, such as musical terms not understood by the Greek translators, and idioms native in Hebrew but foreign in Greek, which no Greek originators would have employed. We thus *know* that the Hebrew Bible is older than the Greek; and can affirm with confidence that the Psalms in particular were in existence at least two or three hundred years before Christ. At this point a new and very peculiar species of evidence comes in, carrying the witness to the antiquity of Hebrew Scriptures some centuries further back. The Hebrew Bible was gradually *transliterated* out of an old script, allied to the Samaritan, into the present square Hebrew letters. This process of transliteration, beginning about the time of Ezra the Scribe, took centuries to bring to completion. Traces of it can be detected by experts in transcription errors which could only arise by confounding with each other letters which were nearly alike in the old script but not in the new. This peculiar form of transcriptional evidence, accordingly, carries us back to a time considerably antedating that in which the Septuagint Version was brought into existence. The Hebrew Bible must have been extant before it could be transliterated into its present square Hebrew characters : which is as far back as we need at present go, inasmuch as we thus obtain a solid foundation on which further observations, specifically relating to the Psalms, can securely rest.

Some of the observations now to follow apply equally to the Hebrew Bible as a whole as to the Psalter. Others have special or sole reference to the Psalms: hence it is left to the reader to widen out the application as he sees fit, and we can concentrate our attention on the book immediately before us.

Observation 1.—*The antiquity of the Psalter has given rise to an interesting and instructive* HISTORY OF TRANSMISSION. We have the Psalms in our possession: how did we get them? by what steps have they come down to us? Let us work out the answer in both directions, backwards and forwards: first beginning with the present, and stepping backwards to the point of origin; and then starting with the origin of the Psalms, and coming down to the present time.

a. The Psalms have been translated into English: no matter now by whom.

b. Most English versions of the Psalter have been made from the *printed* Hebrew Text.

c. This Text is a transcript of previously existing *manuscript* copies.

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d. The copying of ancient Hebrew manuscripts naturally became, in the course of centuries, a *fine art*, on which various classes of literary artists were engaged. They included the following,—still, for the present, working our way backwards :—

α. Manuscript correctors, named *nakdanim*.

β. Manuscript producers, or professional copyists.

γ. Massorites; or "hedgers," custodians, guardians of the sacred text.

δ. Editors; as Ezra, the *sopher* or "scribe," and his successors, the Sopherim.

ε. Authors; as David, Hezekiah, and their associates and helpers in authorship, such as Asaph, Jeduthun and others.

Throwing these now into the reverse or historical order, they stand as follows :—

A. Authors, or original psalm-composers.

B. Editors, or authoritative collectors and care-takers.

C. Massorites—of whom more anon.

D. Copyists, or professional transcribers and multipliers of copies.

E. Nakdanim, or professional inspectors and correctors of copies when made.

As it is important to have as clear notions as possible of these several functions, which to some extent overlap each other, it will not be superfluous to pass them again, and more deliberately, under review.

A. Authors.—It should be remembered that the author of a psalm might employ an amanuensis to do the actual writing down of a composition at his master's dictation. Such an amanuensis, when serving a royal author, would naturally be, permanently or for the time, a "king's scribe": not an author, but the author's right-hand; not an editor, with an editor's right of control and modification, such as was afterwards conceded to the Sopherim as a class, but the mere scribal executor of the composer's wishes; although it would be too much to say that such king's scribe had *no* liberty as to small details, since it may very well have been that, as a confidential servant and a competent penman, he may have paid chief regard to his master's habits and known wishes, and may occasionally have saved his master from himself—in matters of inadvertence.

Still thinking primarily of the author of a psalm, it should be further remembered that he himself might, after composing a psalm, subsequently edit, modify and adapt his own composition to later circumstances. Indeed, it may be laid down as an axiom, which any good

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printing-office can verify: That if an author does not edit his own production, then someone else must do it for him. Doubtless, David thus edited some of his own early psalms, so as, for instance, to fit them for his ascension to the throne, or for his bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem; if not, indeed, also for subsequent use by his son Solomon on the anticipated occasion of the dedication of the Temple, for which we know that he otherwise made thoughtful and ample provision.

It is further worth bearing in mind that the author of some psalms may have suggested the composing of others. David, for example, had about him gifted and trusted men, competent and disposed to share the work of authorship along with their royal master. Such a helper in psalm-production would naturally come under classification as "king's seer," and such a coadjutor Asaph and other devout singers may well have been.

Hezekiah clearly occupied a unique position as a Joint-Author of psalms: not only composing new psalms to suit new occasions; but overhauling, curtailing, changing and extending old psalms, to adapt them to altered circumstances. It would be foolish to blame him for this; since, as a practical man, he no doubt judged, of certain old psalms preserved in the Royal Library, that they must either be thus renovated, or else be left still in disuse so far as temple-worship was concerned. Besides, as a divinely taught man, he may have been conscious of no disability to render this important service to his own generation; while yet his reverence for his great ancestor may have moved him to retain David's name over a psalm wherever feasible. It may thus justifiably have come to pass that quite a number of Hezekiah's adaptations are still superscribed as "by David."

B. Editors.—Passing by the editorship of authors who were, and in so far as they were, their own editors, we come to Editors proper, such as Ezra and his successors. As to Ezra himself, perhaps we shall never know how much, under Divine goodness, we owe it to him that we have any preserved Old Testament at all. Moreover, his Divine commission is so generally accepted, that we are not likely to question the wisdom and authority of what he did, even though to him be largely remitted the question of the formation of the Old Testament canon. It is when we come to his successors, the Sopherim, as a class, that we shall probably be conscious of some serious questioning. Partly owing to our own dulness in grasping the necessities of the case, and partly due to our want of appreciation of our Heavenly Father's favour in watching over his own Written Word, we may quite possibly be rather

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surprised—not to say shocked—to learn how broadly and boldly the Sopherim interpreted their commission. However that may be, let us patiently hear what Dr. Ginsburg has to tell us respecting the work of the Sopherim, or line of professional Editors of the Sacred Text:—"In accepting their transliteration of the text into the present square characters, their division of it into separate words, verses and sections, their orally transmitted pronunciation of the consonants, which determines the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures, and their finally fixing the canon of the Old Testament, we already concede to these spiritual guides of the Jewish Church a divine authority which almost amounts to co-authorship."[a] It is clear, then, that we are not unduly exalting the office of the Sopherim, when we name them, distinctively, EDITORS. They were Editors with large editing functions. They were much more than mere copyists or revisers. They were almost co-authors—but not quite.

C. THE MASSORITES.—These "hedged about" the Sacred Text; and, in doing this, occupied a position peculiarly their own, in which they can have no modern successors. They stood between the Sopherim, whose oral decisions they received, and the ordinary professional copyists, on whom it devolved to carry those traditions into effect; as it then further devolved on the Nakdanim or "Massoretic annotators" to revise the codices which the copyists had made, and to see that the accepted traditions of the Sopherim had been scrupulously observed. It is of importance, as conducive to clearness, to bear in mind that the authoritative instructions of the Sopherim were *orally* handed down. It was the risks that attended this process that called into existence—first the Massorites and then the Nakdanim. The difference between these two classes was this: The Massorites "had to invent the graphic signs, to fix the pronunciation and the sense of the consonantal text, and formulate the Lists of correct readings in accordance with the authoritative traditions"; but "the functions of the Nakdanim were not to create, but strictly to conserve the Massoretic labours": much as modern Press Correctors conserve modern Editorial labours! "They"—these Nakdanim—"revised the consonantal text produced by professional copyists (nearly resembling modern Compositors) and furnished it with the Massoretic vowel-signs and accents, as well as with the Massorahs, both Parva and Magna, as transmitted to them by the Massorites."[b] By way of completeness it may here be added: That in the third century of our era, there were two recensions or *standards* of the Hebrew Text, known respectively as Eastern and Western, differing

[a] G. Intro. 408. [b] G. Intro. 462.

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slightly from each other;[a] and, further, that in the early part of the tenth century, there were two rival Nakdanim or Massoretic Annotators, named Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali, whose recensions differed still less, inasmuch as these worthy men were merely rival *punctists*.[b] If this last circumstance had been heeded, scholars to-day would not have loosely asserted that our present Massoretic Text goes no further back than the tenth century—a statement which, though technically correct, yet is practically misleading. All the truth there is in it is: That the *present pointing* of the Massoretic Text goes no further back than the tenth century. The Massoretic Text itself, in its larger and more substantial features, must have been fixed more than a thousand years earlier, before the Septuagint Version was made.

The present section of our Introduction may be usefully condensed and restfully dismissed by the following approximate dates and divisions of labour:—

The *authorship* of the Psalms—excepting a very few psalms from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and one or two from the time of the Maccabees—covered a period of about 300 years; namely from B.C. 1000 to B.C. 700: from David to Hezekiah.

The *editing* of the Psalms reached through a period of about 350 years: namely from B.C. 450 (Ezra) to B.C. 100.[c]

The *labours of the Massorites* covered a period of about 800 years; namely, from B.C. 100[d] to A.D. 700[e].

Observation 2.—*The Psalter is not one Continuous Treatise, but* A COLLECTION OF INDIVIDUAL PSALMS. According to the division and enumeration current in the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English and other Psalters, there are 150 individual psalms. If, however, we accept Dr. Thirtle's suggestion, that it is only by taking the ancient *incorporated* Hebrew head-lines, such as "Psalm by David," and catch-words such as "Bless thou," "Praise ye Yah," etc., that we obtain any real and ancient marks of division; and if, as a consequence we amalgamate those between which there are no such dividing signs we still get 139 distinct psalms. It is not *the precise number* that for the moment attracts our attention, but the broad and undeniable fact that the Psalter is a Collection of Individual Psalms; whose individuality is in many cases so clearly marked by changes of both topic and tone, that a mere listener to several psalms, read continuously without formal notice by the reader of the transitions from one to another, could perceive that several complete wholes were being read in his hearing. The deeper student, who has shut himself up to one psalm at a time

[a] G. Intro. 197. [b] G. Intro. 241.
[c] G. Intro. 408. [d] G. Intro. 421. [e] G. Intro. 462.

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for continuous meditation, can strongly confirm this individualisation; even though, in the final result, he gains an ability to sit in judgment on formal blendings and partings, so as to wax bold to pronounce on their correctness, judging from internal evidence alone. Brushing aside such exceptions as are thus marked off for special criticism, it remains competent to him to say, that between this psalm and that there is sometimes a difference comparable to that between night and noon; and, even as between the various relieving brightnesses, some of them amount to no more than sudden gleams from openings in a railway tunnel, whereas others are like to an emergence from among tunnels and rock into a spacious sunlit plain.

Observation 3.—*The Headlines of the Psalms have recently awakened fresh Interest, and their Due Discrimination is leading to Important Results.* Confining ourselves to the more obvious Headlines as (at present) grouped together at the commencement of the psalms that have them, we discover in them one, two, three or even four elements: *First*, a description of the following composition, as a "psalm," a "song," a "miktham" or a "maskil"; *secondly*, a personal name (apparently) of the author, as "by David," "Asaph," and others; *thirdly*, a statement of the occasion when a psalm was written, as "When he fled from Absalom his son"; and *fourthly*, what looks like a musical or liturgical instruction, as, "To the Chief Musician," "upon" such and such an instrument, or "for" such and such a choir, as the case may be. These headings had until quite recently been greatly neglected; some leading reproductions of the Psalms actually appearing entirely without them!

Of late, however, a fresh interest has been awakened in these Headings; so that they no longer are regarded as so much literary incumbrance, seldom trustworthy, and of little or no critical or practical value; but are being investigated with the keenest zest, and are already yielding results which bid fair to revolutionise critical psalm exegesis. This renewed interest is principally due to Dr. Thirtle, who has put forth two books of profound importance: the first on "The Titles of the Psalms," and the second on "Old Testament Problems." They concern us here chiefly by the distinction, which their author has seen his way to draw, between the strictly *literary* titles of the Psalms and the purely *musical* instructions. The former, he contends, should stand, where they do at present, as *super*scribed lines; and the latter should be moved into a new position as *sub*scribed lines, generally, if not always, needing merely to be disentangled from the literary lines and placed in each case, by a very easy removal, to the *foot* of the immediately *foregoing* psalm. This may seem a very small matter;

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but on examination is found to lead to far-reaching results. Leaving those results to be (some of them) investigated a little further on, we can now return to our classification of the contents of the Headlines collectively viewed.

First, a description of the kind of composition which follows; as "psalm," "song," etc. The primary use of these, Dr. Thirtle submits, was to describe the kind of document thus distinguished from legal and historical manuscripts, ready for placing in the right department of the Royal Library. It was primarily a Librarian's mark, so attached for the purpose of orderly storage, and speedy reproduction when demanded. It does not especially concern us at present, except perhaps to observe that, when both "psalm" and "song" are inscribed over the same psalm, it becomes an interesting though nice question whether "psalm" was genus and "song" species, or *vice-versâ*.

Secondly, the appearance of what seems to be an author's name. Dr. Thirtle suggests that the insertion of any of these things in a closely written scroll or tablet was not so easy and obvious an achievement as that it should now be lightly regarded as an afterthought and treated as a phenomenon of no value. Thus admonished, the present writer can only express his gratitude for the hint, and testify that, in paying due regard to it, he has been led to results he little anticipated, the chief of which is that in no case does the name "David" appear without reason—every psalm thus distinguished is, he believes, either David's by original composition, or is an adaptation of a psalm, or fragment of a psalm of which David was the author. So confirmed did this impression little by little become as to impel to a narrow and jealous scrutiny in cases where sole Davidic authorship seemed very unlikely; with the result of arriving at the conclusion that David's co-author Hezekiah, *moved by fellowship in suffering*, has saved from oblivion some fragments from David's remorseful pen which no mere "king's scribe" would have presumed to drag forth to the light, and thus, in short, was originated the clear and confident impression that David's psalms, read partly *in* the lines and partly *between* the lines, contain a species of autobiography which it would have been an unspeakable loss to miss.

Thirdly, as with the author's name, so with the avowed occasion of writing. Admonished by the respect felt to be due to these avowals of occasion, rather to *look for* the incidental element so rendered probable, than to *look askance*, the acknowledgment must again be made, that thereby an intenser interest in the compositions so introduced has uniformly been created. And probably the more frequent finding of David, *when named*, has further conduced to a more frequent finding

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of Hezekiah when *not* named. The close scrutiny of internal evidence in the former case has probably led to a much fuller and more fruitful finding of the anonymous author in the latter case. Of this, evidence must be sought in the Expositions that follow.

Fourthly, the disentangled musical instructions have been the incidental cause of other most attractive investigations; generally confirmatory of Dr. Thirtle's conclusions, but in a few instances stimulating fresh departures towards divergent yet sympathetic results. Chief among the confirmed results are (*a*) That, naturally, the words, "To the Chief Musician" should always go to the *foot* of the psalm to which they rightly belong. (*b*) That detailed musical directions, specifying any particular choir to which the rendering of a psalm is assigned, or the air in which a psalm should be rendered should *follow* and not *precede* the note of delivery to the care of "The Chief Musician." The observance of this rule has the remarkably happy effect of moving the Chief Musician's direction—"For the dove of the distant terebinths" to the foot of the psalm (55) containing the wish—"Would that I had pinions like a dove!" (*c*) Among fresh results, indirectly traceable to Dr. Thirtle's readjusting discovery, is the provision of *bass voices* to assist in the musical rendering of Ps. 45: respecting which Dr. Thirtle himself had expressed the opinion that maidens' *alone* could suitably render it,—an opinion which provoked instant dissent, as soon as the requirements of verses 16, 17 of that psalm were considered. Where, then, were the needed male voices to come from? The modification of a line in the neighbourhood, whereby a company of *authors* was converted into a class of *singers*, ultimately settled this question to entire satisfaction. "The sons of korah" being—as was found on careful examination—a class of singers and not a company of psalm-writers, required to be transposed from the head of Ps. 46 to the foot of Ps. 45, and when so removed,—being, as was further discovered, a class of "patriarchs of song"—were both by voice (presumably) and especially by seniority and sex, admirably fitted to sustain in song the fatherly admonition contained in the specified verses—all the more completely seeing that the proposed moving up of this musical line would bring maidens along with the old men! The steps by which this conclusion was reached may be more suitably indicated in our Chapter III.—The Psalms as a Liturgy.

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CHAPTER II.

The Psalms as Lyrics.

Inasmuch as Lyrics are a species of poetry, we may perhaps usefully tarry on the genus before we advance to the species. It will be rendering a service to young and inexperienced readers of the Psalms to emphasise the elementary fact that first of all the Psalms are poetry. We can then all the better consider them as lyrical poetry, fitted for song and for instrumental accompaniment.

1. That the Psalms are poetry, will be a familiar thought to all who have observed how much fervour and passion there is in them; and how, as a consequence, they abound in figures of speech. It would be enough to leave this element in their composition to be felt, without being formally recognised, were it not that the untrained reader is apt either to make no allowance for poetical licence, or else to give up sober interpretation as hopeless. To save him from such uncertainty and helplessness, it may be serviceable to remind him that a statement may be substantially true even when not literally exact; that figures of speech have a natural meaning of their own, and are current coin in literature; that a poet may be a prophet and teacher with a burden to deliver and solemnly lay on the hearts of those to whom he is sent; and that we cannot with impunity close our ears to his message merely because it is enlivened with metaphors or even clothed in allegory.

At this point we may strike in with a few detailed exemplifications of figurative language to be found in the Psalms: on which, however, we cannot tarry—the young student may safely be left to multiply examples and amplify them for himself.

As to *allegory:* it is perhaps well that this figure of speech is not much employed in the Psalms, as undoubtedly it may easily be abused by the too luxuriant imagination of the reader. But, if an allegory is "a description of one thing under the image of another," then it is obvious that we have an allegory in Ps. 80, in which Israel is represented under the image of a Vine. If *climax* is "a rising like the steps of a ladder or stair," then we discover a very striking example of this in 40^{1-3}. If *irony* is "a mode of speech conveying the opposite of what is meant," then instances of this may be seen in 115, 135. "I am like a flourishing olive-tree in the house of God" (52^{8}) being a formal comparison, "they who are planted in the house of Jehovah" is an implied comparison, or a *metaphor;* and metaphors abound, as where the throat

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is called a sepulchre (5[9]), the tongue is termed a weaver's loom (50[19]), or righteousness and peace are said to kiss each other (85[10]). *Metonymy*, or a change of name, is very frequent; as where Jehovah is termed "a crag," "a stronghold," "a rock," "a shield" (18[2]). The rather similar figure of *synecdoche*, by which a part is made to comprehend the whole, is every now and then employed; as where "tongue" stands for the man who wickedly uses it (52[4]). Of course *personification* abounds; as where lute and lyre are summoned to awake (57[8]), or earth is said to be afraid (76[8]), prayer is described as a worshipper (88[13]), or the plain is said to exult, the trees of the forest to ring out their joy (96[12]), and the streams to clap their hands (98[8]). Of course, also, *hyperbole* is not infrequent, literally going beyond the truth, exaggeration; as where the joyful psalmist declares that he will awaken the dawn (57[8]).

Halfway between figures of speech and lyrical measure stands that largely looming method of speech called parallelism which so abounds in the Psalms as to be worthy of special attention. It may perhaps be most simply explained as the saying of the same thing twice over in parallel ways. This definition, however, must be extended by the further statement, that parallelism includes a similarity of manner in saying different things which distinctly carry forward the thought: perhaps the two phrases, "parallel statements," and "parallel methods of statement," cover the ground—at least with sufficient adequacy for the present. A curious thing about Hebrew parallelism is, that, while it is of the greatest service to the expositor—and therefore also to the ordinary reader who takes care to observe and comprehend it—it is the despair of English metrical-versionists, who with one mouth declare that this it is which baffles them in the endeavour to preserve Hebrew parallelism intact under the restraints of English metre and rhyme. Perhaps, however, in the future they may succeed where in the past they have failed.

While we would beware of mapping out more ground than we can usefully cover, we cannot resist the temptation to endeavour to present the whole scheme of the various forms of Hebrew Parallelism in one view; and though we may not have much further use for some of the details, yet this synopsis, it is believed, will serve to refresh the memories of such readers as may have forgotten the distinction, *e.g.*, between synonymous and synthetic parallelism—with which technical terms, and others similar, they may meet in the course of the following Expositions.

It may be said at the outset that the key to parallelism is the resolving of the solid Hebrew text into *lines*. Let any student, who

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cares to begin here, first look at the closely massed Hebrew text of (say) Bagster's Polyglot, and then survey the same text (substantially) as set forth in lines in Ginsburg's Hebrew Bible. He will not only be struck with the difference as attractive to the eye, but will be delighted to perceive what a large contribution has thereby been made towards the perception of the sense of the text. He may not, as he advances in critical culture, always remain satisfied with the length of the lines as set before him,—he may sometimes desire that a word be taken back from one line and attached to the previous, or *vice-versâ*; or he may occasionally prefer that two lines be run on into one, whereas at other times he may prefer that the opposite method of rearrangement be followed by the breaking up of one line into two: all the same, the predominant feeling will be—that a promising start has been made on a path of progress.

Now it is the *interrelation* of the lines, as thus explained, which reveals different kinds of parallelism. These are due to the operation of the following simple principles; namely—repetition, variation, advancement, adornment, return, contrast, and reply. We must not be tempted to do more than refer to an example of each of these. But first let us see how they work out.

Mere repetition	yields	*a.*	emphatic parallelism
Repetition with variation	,,	*b.*	synonymous ,,
Mere advance	,,	*c.*	synthetic ,,
Repetition with advance	,,	*d.*	stairlike ,,
Repetition with adornment	,,	*e.*	emblematic ,,
Advance with contrast	,,	*f.*	antithetic ,,
Advance with return	,,	*g.*	introverted ,,
Appeal with reply	,,	*h.*	responsory ,,

EXAMPLES:

a. Emphatic—$118^{10\text{-}12}$
b. Synonymous—2^{1}, 2^{3}
c. Synthetic—2^{7}
d. Stairlike—$77^{1,\ 11,\ 16}$
e. Emblematic—$37^{1,\ 2}$, 63^{1}
f. Antithetic—1^{6}, 11^{5}
g. Introverted—$80^{10,\ 11}$
h. Responsory—$115^{9\text{-}11}$

2. That the Psalms are *lyric* poetry will appear as soon as the two features in them are observed—first, that they best appear in measured lines, and secondly that they are intrinsically fitted for song. "Lyric (from the Greek *lyra*, a lyre)" is "the name given to a certain species of poetry because it was originally accompanied by the music of that instrument. Lyric poetry concerns itself with the thoughts and emotions of the composer's own mind, and outward things are regarded chiefly as they affect him in any way. Hence it is characterised as

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subjective, in contradistinction to epic poetry, which is *objective*. Purely lyrical pieces are, from their nature, shorter than epics. They fall into several divisions, the most typical of which is the *song*, which is again subdivided into *sacred* (hymns) and *secular* (love-songs, war-songs, etc.)." It will be seen from this, that, while most of the Psalms are strictly lyrical, some of them (such as 78, 105, 106), both by reason of their length and from the nature of their contents, approach the epic; though even these are sufficiently regular in their measure and devotional in their setting to cause them to differ but little, save in their length, from lyrical pieces; it being easy to conceive of them as chanted if not sung; whereas, on the other hand, the longest of all the psalms, the 119th, by reason of its intensely subjective character, is not at all an epic; rather is it a lyrical dirge—lyrical, because well measured off into lines and strophes, and a dirge by reason of the lingering cadence of its lines and the pervading pensiveness of its strains. Call it what we may, it is a wonderful triumph of poetic art. Its very monotony becomes a devotional lullaby, subduing the troubled soul to rest; while at the same time its microscopic and never-ending variations more and more please as the spirit of the worshipper becomes whetted to perceive their kaleidoscopic beauties.

I. The CREATION of the Psalms as Lyrics.

The musical measuring of the Psalms grows upon us as we investigate it: on the one hand throwing us back on the inquiry—How far we are indebted to the experimental sounds of the instrument for suggesting the appropriate words; and, on the other hand, urging us forward to discover, if we can—How far the *sounds* were fixed, and the *words* pliable in their adaptation thereto; or the words were fixed, and demanded of the sounds the pliability needful to bring the words well out in song.

A. The *Musical Origin* of the Psalms.—There is more evidence than has received adequate attention, that but for the LYRE we might never have had LYRICS; in other words, that but for the art of sweeping the strings which we call *psallein* ("psalming") we might never have had in our hands the poetic products which we call *psalmoi* ("psalms"). It is, at least, significant of some profound connection between melody and inspiration, that, when the prophet Elisha was requested to give guidance to the two Kings of Israel and Judah, he felt his need of the service of a minstrel before he could give the desired reply (2 K. 3^{15}); and equally suggestive, that when, in a given instance (Ps. 49), the psalmist was being moved to ponder and pronounce upon one of the profounder mysteries of Providence, he should plainly enough indicate

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that he had more hope of unfolding his "enigma" by the help of his lyre than without its genial aid. And it is not without suggestiveness of a like kind that when the psalmist desired in his joy to awaken the dawn he felt impelled first to summon lute and lyre to awake that they might assist him in bringing to the birth his rousing songs.

B. The *Musical Measurement* of the Psalms in relation to *Criticism*.—The further question, as to the precise relation, in measurement, of sounds and sense, has a newly awakened interest in Biblical Criticism as concentrated on the Psalms. So little is known as to the ancient Temple music, that we have to proceed very cautiously. But the actual question before us assumes the following interesting and practical form: How far was harp-playing in the East elastic, in its readiness to adapt itself to lines and strophes of varying lengths; or how far were strophic and metrical arrangements so rigid and imperative as to warrant our bringing under suspicion—as interpolations and corruptions—such irregularities as made lines and strophes longer or shorter than usual? From the best information we have been able to procure—including the testimony of a friend who has travelled frequently and extensively in harp-playing countries,—we conclude that harp-playing shows ready elasticity, in accommodating itself to more or fewer words; and, on the whole, we feel ourselves to be justified in concluding that we are not warranted in freely and forcibly expanding or contracting lines and strophes *merely* because rigid uniformity in the measures might appear to demand such modifications. In a word, without independent *confirmatory* evidence, we are not justified in pronouncing present words to be superfluous or absent words to be demanded. If a word or a line is found not only in the Hebrew but also in the ancient versions, we ought to be very sure of the imperious character of adverse internal evidence before we omit them; and *vice-versâ*. Subject to these conditions, however, sober criticism need occasion no slavish fears.

C. The *Musical Measurement* of the Psalms in relation to *Metre*.—After the setting up of the foregoing land-marks, we need have no hesitation in affirming the existence in the Psalms of the kind of measurement which, notwithstanding any irregularities in it, may best be described by the familiar term Metre. By this is meant, not the rigid metre of English hymns, but the less exact measurement of lines which is based upon the beats of word-groups instead of mere syllables. An example will make the difference clear. The following is taken from Cassell's *Bible Educator*, Vol. II., p. 341: "Let us take the opening of the sublime Song of Moses at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy:—

Give-ear, O-ye-heavens, and-I-will-speak;
And-hear, O-earth, the-words-of-my-mouth.

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"The hyphens are introduced to mark the phrases which represent one Hebrew term. The twofold symmetry of these lines must strike every ear. The second member is an echo of the first, both in thought and sound: And yet it is not a mere repetition of it. In the opposition of the earth to the sky, in the varied form of the prophet's appeal, where each term is different and yet makes a true balance to the corresponding term of the preceding line, we get all the charm of freshness and change. The dullest ear will perceive the rise and fall, the wave-like motion, which is essential to musical rhythm. Each sentence is contained in a line and ends with it. In other languages a fixed recurrence of feet or rhymed syllables would mark the conclusion of the verse. Here voice and sense pause together, and the ear is satisfied with this natural cadence, which is doubtless improved in the original by the equality of the words in the two parts of the verse."

In this example, two things will be observed: First, that the word-group beats are three to a line, rendering this a "trimeter" couplet; and second, that the equivalence of the sense in the two lines makes this a "synonymous" couplet—as to form, "trimeter"; as to sense, "synonymous." It may be seen in quotations from ancient Church writers in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* that the "ancient trimeters" were still famous in sub-apostolic times. It is, in fact, the favourite measure employed in the Psalms; doubtless owing to the prevailing joyousness of the songs of Zion, and the ease with which this simple measure dances along in the expression of sacred gladness. From the "trimeters" as a starting-point, the reader can easily conceive how more stately tetrameters, and more pensive pentameters would be formed by the simple contrivance of running the word-groups into longer lines. It is, for example, partly by the lingering meditativeness of Ps. 119 that any reader can easily see how the second half of Ps. 19 closely follows it.

II. The Characteristics of the Psalms as Lyrics.

(A.) As our subsequent chapters will, in various ways, keep these characteristics well before us, we need not attempt more at present than to observe how far they are indicated by the descriptions which are found in superscribed lines. These may be arranged in the ascending order of their frequency.

(1) *T'hillah*, "praise": title of 145—a psalm most worthy of the title, since it is purely and only "praise." From this, the whole book is named in Heb., *T'hillim*, "Praises."

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(2) *Shiggâyôn*, prob. "a discursive psalm" (title of Ps. 7), from *sh-g-h*, "to go astray." According to some: "a reel, a wild passionate song, with rapid changes of rhythm."—O.G.

(3) *T^ephillah*, "prayer," occurs 5 times, notably 90[1].

(4) *Mikhtâm*, possibly "tablet," 6 times.

(5) *Maskil*, "instructive psalm," 13 times.

(6) *Shîr*, "song," 41 times.

(7) *Mizmôr*, "psalm," 57 times.

In 8 instances, the double description is prefixed—"a psalm, a song"; and, in 4 examples, the reverse—"a song, a psalm."

To these descriptive names we may add the catch-words, *bâr^eki*, "bless thou," which commences 103, 104; and *hallelu*, "praise ye," which begins 18 psalms, namely:—105–107; 111–118; 135, 136; and 146–150. These are specified in full, as marking off the so-called "hallelujah" psalms, which we propose to call simply "hallels": selections from which are variously known as "the Egyptian Hallel" (113–118) and "the Great Hallel" (136).

It is obvious, therefore, that, for obtaining a general notion of the Psalms through this channel, the two chief names to consider are *shîr*, "song," and *mizmôr*, "psalm": to which can be added the "hallels," not as bearing a distinctive name, but by reason of their number and importance, and the facility with which they can be grouped. It should be remembered that a large number of psalms have no such descriptive headings.

Song, Heb. *shir*, *shirah*, (Sep. *asma*): with which compare the verb *shîr* (Sep. *aido*). The acceptable thing about "song" in this connection is, the clearness with which it connotes gladness; and thereby throws a bright gleam of joy across the entire Book of Psalms. If it were not enough to point to such examples as 28^{7}, 33^{3}, 40^{3}, $96^{1,2}$, $137^{2,3,4}$ to shew that song-singing is at once a natural expression of joy and a signal for its renewed manifestation, we should still have the weighty testimony of the Proverbs (25^{20}) and the Prophets (Isa. 30^{29}, Amos 8^{10}) to set that simple matter at rest. Hence, because so many of the Psalms are strictly and properly "songs," we are warranted to expect a large element of thanksgiving, praise and expectation of blessing in the Psalter. It is observable that while we are frequently invited to "sing a new song," we are never called upon to sing a new psalm. Does this indicate that "songs" were more frequently *improvisations* than "psalms"; and, that after a song had been written and set to music it then became a

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psalm? We must not assume from this that a "song," as such, did not admit of musical accompaniment: the contrary is sufficiently shown by 21^{13}, 33^{3}, $68^{4, 32}$, 105^{2}, $137^{2, 3}$, cp. Isa. 23^{16}, Rev. $14^{2, 3}$, $15^{2, 3}$.

PSALM, Heb. *mizmôr*, Sep. *psalmos*: cp. Heb. verb *zimmêr* and Sep. *psallo*. "Psalm," unlike "song," does not necessarily carry with it the notion of joy, though it frequently does. It may be almost exclusively historical and hortatory: it may even be deeply penitential, and more or less mournful: yea, it may betray unbroken gloom, like 88, which, though a "psalm," is certainly no "song"; and we are glad by a readjustment of headlines to have been emboldened to remove the anomaly of so designating it. Another difference between "psalm" and "song" is, that whereas the latter does not in itself necessarily imply instrumental accompaniment, the former in "more exact usage" does. Thus Delitzsch says: "As Hupfeld has shown, *zimmêr*, as being a direct onomatopoetic word, signifies, like *canere*, 'to make music' in the widest sense; the more exact usage of the language, however, distinguishes between *zimmêr* and *shîr* as 'to play' and 'to sing.' With *beth* (preposition) instrumental, *zimmêr* signifies to sing with a musical accompaniment, and *zimrah* is occasionally, as in Amos 5^{23}, directly music, melody. Accordingly *mizmôr* [='psalm'] signifies technically, the piece of music, and *shîr* . . . the words of the song" (Com. i. 131, 132). Thus also Perowne (on Ps. $47^{6, 7}$): "Make melody, or 'sing and play.' The word means both *to sing* and *to play*. The Sep., rightly, *psalate*." Kirkpatrick (Cambridge Bible) (same text): "The verb from which *mizmôr* ["psalm"] is derived . . . appears originally to have meant *to make melody*, like the Lat. *canere*, but came to be applied specially to instrumental music, as distinguished from vocal music. *Mizmôr* then means *a piece of music*, a song with instrumental accompaniment." The points of agreement which appear in these extracts should be noted. It is agreed that *zimmêr* originally meant "to make melody," in the broadest sense; and it is then further agreed, that when *zimmêr* was differentiated from *shîr*, the former meant "to play" and the latter "to sing." Now it is the especial province of synonyms to differentiate; inasmuch as the broader meanings of words are thereby naturally shared with companion words set side by side with them for the purpose of bringing out the general sense.

It is just at this point that a defect becomes observable in the Revised Version of the Psalms. The difference between *shîr* and *zimmêr* is not clearly and consistently maintained. The two words occur concurrently, as synonyms, in the following places:—21^{13}, 27^{6}, 57^{7}, 68^{4}, 68^{32}, 101^{1}, 104^{33}, 105^{2}, 108^{1}, 144^{9}. The attempt was made by

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the Revisers, in nine out of these ten instances, to mark the difference between *shîr* and *zimmêr* by translating the former "sing" and the latter "sing praises"; but the attempt must be pronounced feeble in the extreme, inasmuch as "singing" (alone, for *shîr*) in all cases is nothing else than singing PRAISE. So that, just where it would appear that some addition or some advance ought to be made, no addition or advance is made; and the "yea" which the Revisers have thrown in only reveals how feeble the discrimination was felt to be. In one case, the first named above, (21[13]), the Revisers' hearts failed them altogether, and as they could not say, "So will we sing and sing praise thy power," they dropped the word "sing" altogether out of their rendering of *zimmêr*, and coined a special rendering, to which they have not adhered in any of the nine passages of the like kind which follow. This text should have been rendered: "So will we sing and harp thy power." And, though the urgency for a clearer distinction is not so keenly felt in all the examples given above, it may safely be affirmed, that in all of them the discrimination should have been maintained.

It is interesting to note the effect of this same discrimination when carried forward into the new Testament—as it clearly ought to be on the strength of the Septuagint, which is therein quoted and in which the Hebrew distinction between *shîr* and *zimmêr* faithfully reappears in their representatives *aido* and *psallo*. That effect will be, on the one hand, to make us content with the generic force of *psallo* in Rom. 15[9], 1 Cor. 14[15] and Jas. 5[13]: whereas, on the other hand, it will compel the affirmation that, according to the established law governing the use of synonyms, the companion nouns — "psalms," "hymns," and "spiritual songs"—in Eph. 5[18] should be properly distinguished from each other; as in verse 19 also, the companion participles "singing" and "playing" should in like manner each receive its restricted or specific sense.

This brief study of *shîr* and *zimmêr*, "song" and "psalm," will further invest the whole problem of psalm-making and psalm-using with new interest. In particular, the reader will be prepared for the very large part which one "Exposition" has assigned to the voice just where musical accompaniments were most in evidence (150). As to psalm-creation, it is easily conceivable how the lone lyre may have helped some sorrowing penitent to pour out his lament before God, without thought at the time of the public employment of his penitential lay; and just as easily conceivable how, by himself in brighter days or by a sympathetic successor in the service of song, a fragment spotted with the tears of the originator may have been rescued from oblivion and fitted for Temple worship as a psalm. In such cases, the individual

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would be permitted to sing on throughout the history of his nation, and the nation for centuries be stirred to its depths by the perception, in its public songs, of those touches of nature which make the whole world kin.

3. Not only from the fitness of these lyrics to be sung to musical accompaniment, but also from the instructions conveyed by inscriptions to the Psalms, it may safely be inferred that the Psalms were ultimately intended to form a liturgy for Temple worship. Respecting this Liturgy a few things are of sufficient permanent interest to be worthy of note here: as—

(*a*) That David was, under Divine guidance, its originator (1 Ch. 28 [11, 12, 19]).

(*b*) That he appointed three leading singers, Asaph, Heman and Ethan (or Jeduthun): all Levites (1 Ch. 6).

(*c*) That under these leaders were ranged, in all probability, three choirs—a treble choir under Asaph, a mixed choir under Heman, and a bass choir (also called *sheminith* = "eighth" = "octave" = "bass") under Ethan.

(*d*) That over these leaders and choirs was placed a "chief musician," the first occupier of which important office was Chenaniah, who "used to give instructions, because skilful was he" (1 Ch. 15[22, 27]).

(*e*) That "the sons of korah" were certainly singers; probably forming the bass choir of Ethan, or as a senior class constituting an important part of the same, whose services were frequently in especial request, as the psalm-inscriptions abundantly show. The evidence of this arises party from treating *korah* as an appellative (= "sons of baldness" = "patriarchs of song") and partly from the fine results obtained by revising and slightly modifying Thirtle's readjustment of the musical *sub*scriptions as distinct from the literary *super*scriptions attached to the Psalms.

(*f*) The revised readjustment above spoken of, when resolutely carried out, yields the following acceptable results:—it brings bass singers along with maidens to the foot of Ps. 45, where both classes are clearly needed; it rids Ps. 49 of any musical instruction, leaving it all the more probable that this sombre, philosophical psalm was intended rather for private use than for Temple-praise; and it brings "responsive dancings" to the foot of one of the few processional psalms (87) and the very one in the text of which "dancers" already appear. To exhibit here all the movements involved in working out these results would be too severe a tax to inflict on general readers; but the results themselves, in their own way, are of no small interest, and may provoke further useful research. (Cp. for "sons of korah" 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, 88).

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(*g*) The highest and most permanent lesson obtained by resolving these sacred lyrics into a liturgy is seen as soon as we confront the practical question as to the part taken by the people in joining in this form of public worship. Considering the limited number of copies of the psalms to be read, chanted, or sung by the Levites obtainable by worshippers in general, it is natural to conclude that the chief part taken by the people was to say "Amen" (106^{48}) to the readings and songs of the priests and of the choirs. That they were sometimes called upon to take a more active part is sufficiently evident from their being actually called upon to join (115^{9-11}, $135^{19, 20}$); and this leads up to the conclusion that the pre-eminent response of the people was that which is appended to every verse of 136, and the meaning of which is expanded in our exposition of 150. Here we catch a glimpse of the Hebrew Liturgy at the precise angle of vision which shows to advantage its fitness to exert its most potent spiritual influence over the Hebrew nation. There are here to be considered—the import of this refrain as singling out the kindness of Jehovah from among all his other perfections; the actual, individual and collective attestation that Jehovah their God was worthy of this pre-eminent praise; and the solemn and memorable circumstances under which they thus proclaimed their undying faith, amid all the solemnities of sacrifice and all the charm and impressiveness of musically accompanied praise. Disobedience and formality might of course invade and counteract even such holy influences, yet the intrinsic fitness of such a liturgy must have been to exert a mighty power over the religious life of the nation by bringing the people into fellowship with a God deemed worthy of such adoration.

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CHAPTER III.

The Psalms as a Summary of Sacred Learning.

That the Sacred Learning which is summarised in the Book of Psalms is sublimated into Song, detracts but little from its practical utility; for figures of speech have a recognised meaning of their own, and parallelism conduces to ultimate precision when couplets are quoted rather than clauses. A proof-text from the Psalms is generally as effective as one taken from the Law or the Prophets. The temporal and personal colouring may, indeed, in some measure fade from a psalm when held under the microscope of logical analysis, and yet may leave an abiding outline of permanent teaching. Prayers and praises rise on rapid wing to heaven, but their didactic presuppositions are generally clear enough to lead the listener forwards into the learning of theological and psychological lessons which will be found worthy to abide with him as a scholar, after they have by their spiritual influence moved him to become a worshipper. The only question is, how to collect and fix the rays of light radiated from struggling and adoring souls. The simplest method will be, to place in alphabetical order a few leading words which will occasion references to such psalms and verses of psalms as treat of the word or topic named.

If this course should impart to the present chapter something of the unattractive features of index and concordance, this will need no apology when it is remembered that the primary intention of this Introduction is, not to induce the curious to *read* the Psalms, but to give practical assistance to such as, having many times read them, are at length eager to devote to them patient study.

Ages.—Probably the time has not yet come when, unaided, the English reader can readily perceive and remember the latitude with which the Hebrew word *'oldm* is used throughout the O.T. Primarily derived from a stem which simply means *what is concealed*, this word, when applied to time, comes to denote concealed and so indefinite duration. By the force of modern usage, however, the English phrase "for ever" is apt to carry the ordinary mind beyond this, and when hardened by dogmatic theologians may be put to a strain it will not bear. Hence the present translator is not as yet prepared wholly to forego the circumlocutory rendering "age-abiding" or "to times age-abiding." Nevertheless he clearly perceives how heavy and cumbrous this translation is apt to become, especially in some connections. Impressed with the practical success of Dr. Weymouth's phrase, adopted for corresponding use in the N.T., "to the ages,"—this lighter and easier phrase has been cautiously employed in the present translation. The following examples will serve as a specimen of the effect of this idiomatic rendering:—5^{11}, $9^{5\text{-}7}$, 10^{16}, 12^{7}, 15^{5}.

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The word occurs nearly 150 times throughout the Psalter; Ps. 145^{13} is the chief instance in which the word is used in the plural, and definitely hardened into "ages" with "all" prefixed.

ANOINTED.—The Heb. word *mashi'ah* ("messiah," "christ," "anointed") occurs 10 times in the Psalms (namely in 2^2, 18^{50}, 20^6, 28^8, 84^9, $89^{38, 51}$, 105^{15}, $132^{10, 17}$); and about 30 times elsewhere in the O.T. *Christos* ("christ") is its uniform Greek (Septuagint) representative. Broadly it (or its verb) is used of priests (Lev. $4^{3, 5, 16}$), prophets (1 K. 19^{16}), and kings (1 K. 1^{34}); and therefore it is not surprising that it should be especially employed of David and the heirs with him of the covenant of kingship announced by the prophet Nathan (2 S. 7). In several of the above references in the Psalter, the primary allusion is to the holder of the typical messiahship for the time being (as in 84^9), although in some cases the allusion is couched in such terms as to point onwards to THE Messiah ultimately to come in David's line. Outside the Psalter, one of the most beautiful and pathetic references to a typical Messiah is found in Lam. 4^{20}. In one of the above instances (105^{15}) the term "messiah" in the plural is used of the patriarchs, simply to signify their consecration to the office of speaking for God and to show the inviolability of their persons. The reference to The Messiah himself in 2^2 is plain from the scope of the psalm. There are many references to the Messiah in the Psalms where this particular official name is not mentioned

EARTH.—"The earth" (Heb. *'erez*) figures in the Psalms more largely than do "the heavens"; but does not severely tax the expositor. Still there are some interesting points about it demanding careful consideration: the chief of which is, whether the original word should be rendered "earth" or "land." It all depends on the extent of the outlook; which may generally be gathered from the scope of the context, or from particular terms therein. The importance of the right determination may be seen in 37, in which the alternative "earth" "or land" is maintained throughout, and in the Exp. of 100, where conflicting considerations are weighed. The earth is regarded as resting on primeval waters (24^1, 136^6), to which poetic allusions may possibly be found (in 40^2). Nevertheless it is firmly and abidingly founded (104^5); though not beyond the possibility of destruction or change ($102^{25, 26}$). Perhaps with allusion to its primeval emergence from the wild waters of chaos it is said to have been "born" (90^2), and to this event dramatic reference is probably made ($104^{6, 8}$). Jehovah visits the earth with his bountiful showers (65^9); and, indeed, it is full of his goodness (33^5, $104^{13, 24}$). To be wholly of earth is, however, a matter of reproach (10^{18}); and a prevailing tendency to earth may be ground for lamentation (44^{25}; cp. 119^{25}). As contrasted with its "lower parts" (doubtless synonymous with Hades, 63^9), the earth's surface is styled "the land of the living" (116^9, 142^5). In a picture of surpassing beauty, Truth is depicted as springing like a vigorous growth out of earth (85^{11}): surely a prophetic word.

The World (Heb. *tebhel:* "perh. as orig. productive"—O.G.) forms an excellent synonym for "the earth." It is to be found as follows:—9^8, 18^{15}, 19^4, 24^1, 33^8, 50^{12}, 77^{18}, 89^{11}, 90^2, $96^{10, 13}$, 97^4, $98^{7, 9}$.

HADES.—This word occurs 16 times in the following version of the Psalms; namely, 6^5, 9^{17}, 16^{10}, 18^5, 30^3, 31^{17}, $49^{14, 14, 15}$, 55^5, 86^{13}, 88^3, 89^{48}, 116^3, 139^8, 141^7. It always stands for the Heb. *sheôl*, a word which is found 65 times in the O.T., and of which in the Septuagint, *hades* is the Greek representative. Besides these 65 examples of the word in the O.T., there are 10 more in the N.T. in which "hades" occurs, in its own right, in the Greek original, still in the same sense as *sheôl* in the Hebrew Bible. The great gain of employing the same word throughout the English

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Bible—whether as a translation or as a reproduction of an original word—is, that it brings into line, to the English eye and ear, all the direct allusions by name to the subject of Hades; and, in all reason, 75 examples ought to enable every English student to judge for himself what Hades in the Bible means—whether place or state or both, and whether the same now as it ever has been, or more or less changed by the coming of the Messiah.

"Hades" is the under-world considered as the realm of the dead. It includes the grave (49^{14}, 141^{7}), but is wider, and deeper: wider, inasmuch as it embraces such dead as have received no burial (Gen. $37^{33, 34}$, Jonah 2^{2}); and deeper, in that it is set in contrast with the heavens for height (Job 11^{8}, Amos 9^{2}). It is so far synonymous with both "death" and the "grave" that it may frequently be employed for either without serious change of meaning (*e.g.*, 6^{5}); and yet some things are affirmed of "hades" which cannot well be spoken of mere death or the grave—as, for example, "hades" has for inhabitants "shades" or "ghosts" (Heb. *repha'im*) (Job 25^{6}, Prov. 2^{18}, 9^{18}, 21^{16}, Isa. 14^{9}, $26^{14, 19}$, Ps. 88^{10}), and is divisible into lower and higher (Deu. 32^{22}, Ps. 86^{13}), the lower hades being in one case pointedly expressed as "the well of the pit" (Ps. 55^{23}). It is undeniable that, before the coming of the Messiah, "hades" was invested with deep gloom, and caused, even in the minds of the godly, strong aversion, leading to earnest prayers to be saved from it and devout thanks for deliverance from the immediate prospect of entering it (18^{4-6} 30^{3}, 116^{1-6}). Not always, it is true, was this aversion felt; and, in one remarkable case, Job (14^{13}) is heard crying out:—

> Oh that in hades thou wouldst hide me!
> That thou wouldst keep me secret, until the turn of thine anger!
> That thou wouldst set for me a fixed time and remember me!

Notwithstanding such occasional sighing for "hades" as a relief,—not without some hope of deliverance,—the description of hades given by Dr. Driver in his Parallel Psalter (Glossary I., "*sheol*") is scarcely too strong, when he says:—"The inhabitants of which pass a dim and shadowy existence, unworthy of the name of life, cut off from the memory and protecting help of God (Ps. 88^{5}), and where the voice of praise is for ever hushed (Ps. 6^{5}, 30^{9}, 88^{10-12}, 115^{17}, Is. 38^{18})." At the same time it should be remembered, as against the extreme view that death ends all, that the very existence of such a place or state as hades is one of extreme significance. It seems expressly to wait some future development.

Turning now to the list of passages in the Psalms in which the "hades" is mentioned, and at once dismissing those in which the word appears as a mere synonym of "death" and "the grave," and so serve more for general impressiveness than for specific teaching,—what do we find?

Doubtless we may gather up several incidental lessons; such as the graphic way in which the bones of the hastily buried, or the unburied, are described in the last passage in the list as lying scattered about the mouth of hades—which sustains the position that hades includes the grave; and such as the basis furnished, by the existence of a lower hades and the well of the pit ($55^{15, 23}$), for the teaching of our Lord (in Lk. 16), that whatever may be the measure of unconsciousness generally experienced by the selfish and unsaved dead, yet that it is possible they may be *aroused* to an acute consciousness of pain and to remorseful memories and apprehensions. Rising, however, far above these incidental lessons, is the prospect opened up by at least two of these hadean passages in the Psalms of a Divine Victory over hades. One of these (49^{15}) is indeed general and theocratic rather than messianic; but it is positive in terms and highly inspiring: "God will do for me what with all your wealth ye rich men cannot do for yourselves, far less for each other: he will ransom my soul—my entire personality: out of the hand of Hades

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will he take me, as Enoch was taken according to the startling story in Genesis." On the whole this sudden outburst of promise looks towards transformation without dying rather than to actual resurrection. The other and earlier passage (16^{10}) just as strongly makes for resurrection after dying, inasmuch as the flesh so rests securely, that, although the body of the speaker should enter hades, yet should he not be abandoned to hades. This was either fulfilled in David or in one of David's line for whom prophetically he spake. Jesus of Nazareth, rising from the dead and ascending to the Father's right-hand, has, in beginning and pledge, abolished death and revolutionised hades: of the dwellers in which he has become Lord (Rom. 14^{9}) and of the keys of which he has taken possession (Rev. 1^{18}).

HEART.—"All scholars know that the Hebrew word commonly rendered 'heart' is used very largely to denote not so much the seat of the emotions as the seat of thought." So proclaims the Preface to the Standard American Revision; but there is still need of insistence in making more widely known among Bible readers this far-reaching fact, inasmuch as misapplications of Scripture are extensively prevalent, based on the erroneous assumption that, as in popular speech, so in the Bible, a strong contrast may be assumed to exist between the "heart" and the "head." The mischief done by this single error is enormous, seeing that the disparagement thereby cast upon the "understanding" in matters of religion is often pushed to such an extreme as to exaggerate the emotional element not only to an unscriptural but to a practically dangerous degree. Nevertheless, let the emotions receive their due; and let the article "Reins," below, be well considered.

HEAVENS.—"The heavens" (Heb. *shammayim*) hold a conspicuous place in the Psalms. Always plural in the Hebrew, probably owing to the primary conception of "height," and so "height above height," and generally "the heights," the word has in it enough of amplitude to include varying degrees of elevation; such as that in which winds blow (78^{26}) and birds fly (8^{8} 79^{2}) and that in which moon, stars (8^{3}) and sun (19^{4}) appear; until it includes the dwelling-place of Jehovah himself (115^{3}; cp. 1 K. $8^{30\,ff}$). The elevation of "the heavens" above the earth is sometimes expressed (103^{11}) and often implied ($14^{2}=53^{2}$, 102^{19}). "The heavens" were made by Jehovah (33^{6}, 96^{5}, 115^{15}, 121^{2}, 124^{8}, 134^{3}, 136^{5}, 146^{6}); and accordingly he is above them ($57^{5,\,11}=118^{5}$ and 113^{6}) and so, in fact or in prayer, is his "glory" (113^{4}, 148^{13}). In some sense, Jehovah has reserved "the heavens" to himself, in contrast to the earth as the assigned portion of the sons of men (115^{16}); in some sense also, as would seem, man's dominion over the earth is to be used as a means of uplifting Jehovah's glory above "the heavens" (8^{1} Exp.). Notwithstanding Jehovah's omniscience ($139^{7\text{-}10}$) and his peculiar rule in Zion ($99^{1,\,2}$), his throne is emphatically in "the heavens" (2^{4}, 11^{4}, 103^{19}, 123^{1}): there his attendants wait upon him, and from thence his messengers go forth ($103^{20,\,21}$). The heavens were made with understanding (136^{5}), are ancient (68^{33}—though Del. thinks this text refers to "primeval" heavens, "in their origin reaching further back than the terrestrial heavens of the second and fourth days of creation"), are holy (20^{6}; cp. Mt. 6^{10}), and are enduring (89^{29}), although they may ultimately perish (102^{26}—in view of which cp. Isa. 65^{17}). This brief survey invests with deepened interest the gathering of all things in heaven and earth under one head (Eph. 1^{10}), and their reconciliation (Col. 1^{20}), as also the prospect of a practical descent of heaven to earth (Rev. $21^{3,\,4}$).

The Skies (or "fleecy clouds"—Heb. *shaḥaḳîm*) are an interesting synonym of "the heavens," chiefly because used to exalt man's conceptions of the Divine Government: see—18^{11}, 35^{5}, 57^{10}, 68^{34}, 77^{17}, 78^{23}, $89^{6,\,37}$, 108^{4}.

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HOW HAPPY.—It is worthy of note that the first word in the Psalter is a word expressive of emotion, being "an exclamation : O the blessedness of so and so"—Del. "A less solemn expression than *Blessed*, without any explicit reference to God. The Heb. word is often rendered *Happy* in the A.V. (as Ps. 127^5, $144^{15, 15}$, 146^1, Deut. 33^{29}, Job 5^{17}, Prov. 3^{13}, 14^{21}, 16^{20}, 28^{14}); and it ought for distinctness to be so rendered always"—Dr. It occurs in the Psalter 26 times :—1^1, 2^{12}, $32^{1, 2}$, 33^{12} 34^8, 40^4, 41^1, 65^4, $84^{4, 5, 12}$, 89^{15}, 94^{12}, 106^3, 112^1, $119^{1, 2}$, 127^5, $128^{1, 2}$, $137^{8, 9}$, $144^{15, 15}$, 146^5.

HUMBLE(D).—A man may be outwardly humbled without becoming inwardly humble : which suggests how great a difference in moral value may exist between two words nearly identical in form. Just about as great a difference in meaning is found between the two Hebrew words *'ânâw* and *'ânî*, the former, according to Dr. Driver, is used "of one who humbles or submits himself voluntarily, esp. under the hand of God," and the latter signifies "one *humbled* involuntarily by external circumstances." Instead of going so far afield as to call the latter "poor," with Driver and others, the venture is made in the following translation to trust to the addition of the letter "d," which is quite significant to careful readers, and closely imitates the slender difference between the two Hebrew forms, at the same time it is well adapted to keep in mind the additional circumstance, well set forth by Driver when he further says : "nevertheless they do not differ greatly in application, especially in the Psalms, both being designations of the pious servants of Jehovah, the one term describing them from the point of view of their external condition, the other from that of their mental character or disposition." Incidentally, a lesson in various readings and in the inevitable risks of transmission, may be gleaned from the following initial examples of one of these words, which must show the dullest scholar how the inevitable happens in a case depending on the length of a down stroke, no miracle intervening to prevent it : namely, $9^{12, 18}$, $10^{12, 17}$. Moreover the decided difference in sense even where there is no diversity of application, will instruct learners to be careful how they read.

JEHOVAH.—The employment of this English form of the Memorial name (Exo. 3^{15}) in the present version of the Psalter does not arise from any misgiving as to the more correct pronunciation, as being Yahwéh ; but solely from practical evidence personally selected of the desirability of keeping in touch with the public ear and eye in a matter of this kind, in which the principal thing is the easy recognition of the Divine name intended ; as to the *meaning* of which every reader can continue to judge according to the evidence before him. If the persistent use of the form Yahwéh, only had the effect of keeping the English reader in mind of the almost certain significance of this gracious name as equivalent to "The Becoming One," then the price of novelty and difficulty of recognition would not be too great to pay. But as the chief evidence of the significance of the name consists not nearly so much in its pronunciation as in the completeness with which it meets all requirements—especially as explaining how the Memorial name was fitted to become such, and to be the pre-eminent covenant name that it confessedly is, it has been thought desirable to fall back on the form of the name more familiar (while perfectly acceptable) to the general Bible-reading public. For a more complete statement of the derivation and meaning of this name, reference may be made to the present writer's "Emphasised Bible," Introduction, Chapter IV. See further "General Reflections" at the close of Pss. 92–99 and "Exposition" of 102.

KINDNESS.—It will appear incredible to such as have chiefly regarded Jehovah as revealed in the terrors of Sinai or through his judgments on his enemies, that the noun for "kindness" occurs 127 times in the Psalms alone, generally as attributed

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to himself as one of his own attributes. Yet this is strictly correct. If "loving kindness" is in form simplified to "kindness" in order to bring it into line with the adjective "kind," and if we are content to conclude that "mercy," *when needed* (as it so often is), is involved in "kindness," and so consistently render the one Hebrew word *ḥesedh* by the one English word "kindness" thereby securing uniformity,—then all the impressiveness and significance of the constant recurrence of the word "kindness" throughout these "Songs of Zion" will be realised. No student worthy of the name will deem it superfluous that all the occurrences of this consoling and inspiring word are here set forth for convenient reference at any moment :—5[7], 6[4], 13[5], 17[7], 18[50], 21[7], 23[6], 25[6. 7. 10], 26[3], 31[16. 16. 21], 32[10], 33[5. 18. 22], 36[5. 7. 10], 40[10. 11], 42[8], 44[26], 48[9], 51[1], 52[7. 8], 57[3. 10], 59[10. 16. 17], 61[7], 62[12], 63[3], 66[20], 69[13. 16], 77[8], 85[7. 10], 86[5. 13. 15], 88[11], 89[1. 2. 14. 24. 28. 33. 49], 90[14], 92[2], 94[18], 98[3], 100[5], 101[1], 103[4. 8. 11. 17], 106[1. 7. 45], 107[1. 8. 15. 21. 31. 43], 108[4], 109[12. 16. 21. 26], 115[1], 117[2], 118[1. 2. 3. 4. 29], 119[41. 64. 76. 88. 124. 149. 159], 130[7], 136[1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26], 138[2. 8], 141[5], 143[8. 12], 144[2], 145[8], 147[11]. To observe the companion words with which this term is frequently and significantly paired, will add an additional interest to the study hereby furnished.

Men of kindness may be regarded by some as an awkward circumlocution for representing the companion word *ḥasidh*, closely related to the abstract noun *ḥesedh*, "kindness"; but in a version so literal as the present, and under pressure of the great desirability of revealing the relation between the two Hebrew words, some awkwardness may be forgiven. Among the various translations which have been put forward to represent *ḥasidh*, none could be more acceptable than the familiar term "godly" provided that term could be relied upon to suggest likeness to God in respect of his attribute of kindness. In any case, it seems extremely desirable to keep this suggestion well in evidence by the most effective means within our reach. Even then the precise phase of relationship between the men of kindness and the God of kindness would remain undetermined: whether as descriptive of such as are the especial objects of Jehovah's kindness, or of those who are honoured to be the representatives and reflectors of that kindness among men. Judging from the fact that some critics regard the word as of passive and others as of active formation, and that the evidence of usage leans about equally in either direction,—the probability is that *ḥasidh* is a middle term which has absorbed into itself both of these delightful conceptions, and so signifies those who at one and the same time receive and reflect the kindness of God. It is all the more desirable that a happy term should be found, already possessed of this amount of flexibility or by consent invested therewith, because of the evidence, which though slight seems sufficient, to show that the Levites, as a tribe, were the abiding official representatives of the kindness of Jehovah; and that from this appropriation the term was further used to denote the entire class of Ideal Israelites. The primary grounds for thinking of the Levites in this connection are discovered in the significant application of the term to Levi himself in Deu. 33[8], in the facility with which in Ps. 132[9. 16] the term would specify an especial class to accompany "priests" (which would naturally be Levites), and in the original calling of the tribe of Levi to be the representatives of all their brethren of the remaining tribes. With these elementary probabilities floating in the careful reader's mind, it is believed that he will be glad for a second series of references to be appended in which the *ḥasidhim* or men of kindness are mentioned in the Psalms :—4[3], 12[1], 16[10], 18[25], 30[4], 31[23], 32[6], 37[28], 43[1], 50[5], 52[9], 79[2], 85[8], 86[2], 89[19], 97[10], 116[15], 132[9. 16], 145[10. 17], 148[14], 149[1. 5. 9].

KINGDOM.—The Psalms are peculiarly rich in instruction as to the Coming Kingdom of God upon earth. The reader who will study in succession Psalms 2, 45, 72, 92-99, and 110,—first independently of the author's expositions, for the

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purpose of maturing a judgment of his own,—and then entering into a comparison with the views set forth by the writer of these Studies,—will probably not feel any need of an extended summary in this chapter. The chief things to bear in mind as preliminaries to a profitable investigation are: *First*, a clear apprehension of the vast difference between the physical and moral spheres of the Divine Government, in that, within the former realm, God speaks and it is done without fail, disobedience being an impossibility; whereas, within the latter—the moral—realm, the promulgation of Jehovah's will is always in fact, even if not in form, an appeal to created wills, calling for but not compelling obedience; and, *second*, that in point of fact Jehovah is always and unchangeably the absolutely rightful ruler of all the universe. There is always an abiding reign of God—whether of right in the moral world or of effectuating force in the natural world—which never begins, never lapses, never ends. Jehovah never abdicates the throne of his own essential supremacy. In regard of this, his reign never waits, never comes, never goes. The more clearly this is seen and the more firmly it is held, the more constant will be the perception that where undeniably such movements and changes are predicated, there some especial phase or form or manifestation of the Divine Kingdom must be intended. Thus David's throne, David's reign, David's Kingdom must be some conditioned form of Jehovah's own reign. So with the Messiah's Kingdom—whether considered as a continuation of David's or as its antitype—it must always be Jehovah's absolute reign only as conditioned and modified by the intervention of the Messiah. The only other caution which needs to be borne in mind, is formally treated of in the following exposition of Psalm 2, where it is pointed out that, according to the evidence undeniably present in the sacred text, Messiah's reign will combine the two principles of suasion and force. It only remains to add, that a careful discrimination between the Church and the Kingdom which has been scrupulously maintained throughout the following Expositions (cp. 45, 87, 102, 105), appears strongly to make for the awakening conclusion, that a goodly number of the Psalms are emphatically Songs of Messiah's Coming Kingdom which await the fulfilment of the necessary conditions to render them in deed and in truth fitted in all their length and breadth to be sung throughout the whole ransomed earth (cp. *e.g.* 66 & 92-99 and General Reflections). To see that only then can they be sung with conscious fitness of self-appropriation, is to discover exactly how they can even now be sung by faith.

REINS.—The Heb. *k'lâyoth*, "as seat of emotion and affection" (O.G.), has by no means received the attention from Bible readers which it deserves. The "reins" were "regarded by the Hebrews as the springs of *feeling*: hence, when it is said of God that He trieth (or seeth) the 'hearts and reins' it implied that he is cognisant of man's emotions and affections, not less than of his thoughts"—Dr. The word for "reins" is found in the following places in the Psalms: 7^{9}, 16^{7}, 26^{2}, 73^{21}, 139^{13}, with which Job 19^{27}, Prov. 23^{16}, Jer. 11^{20}, 12^{3}, 17^{10}, 22^{12} may be usefully compared. See also "Heart."

RIGHTEOUSNESS.—"Righteousness" is not only the love and practice of what is right—which may be distinguished as *ethical;* and the rightful righting of such as have been in the wrong—which may be named *evangelical;* but also the righting of the wronged by the punishment of those who have injured them—and this for convenience we term *vindicatory* righteousness, a species of righteousness which—as towards those in whose behalf it is wrought—is synonymous with "kindness" and "salvation"; and which figures largely in the prophets, especially Isaiah and in the Psalms. From Isaiah may be selected, as good examples, 48^{18} and 62^{1}; and, in the Psalms, the following places may be consulted:—22^{31}, 24^{5}, 31^{1}, 33^{5}, 35^{28}, $36^{6, 10}$, $40^{9, 10}$, 48^{10}, 65^{5}, 71^{15}, $85^{10, 11}$, $94^{14, 15}$, $98^{2, 3}$, $103^{6, 17}$, $111^{7, 8}$, $119^{40, 137, 138, 142}$, $132^{9, 16}$ (cp. 2 Ch. 6^{41}), $143^{1, 11}$, $145^{7, 17}$.

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In such connections as the above the word "judgment" itself assumes the meaning of *vindication:* 1^{5}, 35^{23}, 72^{4}, 103^{6}, 140^{12}, cp. Isa. 40^{27}, 49^{4}.

SELAH.—The precise significance of this word must be said to be still uncertain. That it generally implies a *pause* may safely be asserted; though the object of the pause remains obscure. That it practically serves as a musical *Nota bene*, and by an interlude of musical instruments makes impressive the fact or sentiment just uttered, is with some eminent scholars a favourite theory. The most ingenious and probable conclusion, drawn from actual usage, is that suggested by Dr. Bullinger in "Things to Come"; namely, that it virtually says: "Such being the case then note what follows;" and, to suggest as much without dogmatically affirming it, the symbolic device has here been adopted of a double "fist" with fingers pointing both ways, which may at least hold the place until more conclusive evidence has been secured. That the word is chiefly confined to old psalms suggests the doubt whether it was not originally a mere copyist's acknowledgment of some peculiarity in his exemplar now wholly and hopelessly lost in obscurity.

SOUL.—If the convenience of translators were the chief thing to be considered, it could be wished they might rely on the English word "soul" as the uniform rendering of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and leave it to the English reader to discriminate between the divergent shades of meaning involved in the various usages. Whether "soul" stand for "principle of life" (as in 7^{3}) or as principle or organ of feeling" (as in 6^{3}) the observant reader could soon judge; and he might not be long before waking up to the fact that, as Dr. Driver beautifully expresses it, "soul" is frequently used "as a pathetic circumlocution for the personal pronoun, esp. where it is desired to represent a person as vividly conscious of some emotion or experience whether pleasurable or painful, 3^{1} ('that say of *my soul*' = 'that say *of me*,' but of 'me' represented as keenly sensible of what is said), 11^{1}, 25^{13} ('his soul' = he himself, but depicting him as keenly sensible of the enjoyment described)." But when *nephesh* is freely used to convey the notion of *desire*, *appetite* or *greed*, then it seems desirable for a translation to say so plainly; since "Aha, our soul!" (35^{25}), "Give me not over to the soul of my enemies" (27^{12}), are scarcely intelligible to the untrained English reader. It may be doubted whether Driver has given quite enough prominence to the simple idea of personality as filling the word "soul," though undoubtedly he recognises it. See our Exposition of 16^{10}; and cp. Eze. 18^{4}. Apart from any nice shades of meaning in the word "soul," the broad psychological fact remains that by means of it a man is solicited to exercise his marvellous capacity of projecting himself from himself, to view himself from without himself, and to address himself in the language of expostulation and exhortation; of which $42^{5.\ 11}$, 43^{5} and $103^{1.\ 2.\ 22}$ (see Expositions) are memorable examples.

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CHAPTER IV.

The Psalms as a Stimulus to Holy Living.

Holy Living is here regarded as something more than righteous conduct; just as being is more than doing, and holiness goes beyond righteousness. Correct conduct in all its forms is necessarily included, but holy living has in it the vitality and the bloom which spring from communion with a holy God. To such living, the Psalms are, by experience, found to supply a mighty stimulus.

That they should do so, lies in the very nature of things. Not only do they emphasise character in a remarkably varied and persistently recurring way, but they set the sympathetic soul in pursuit of character by moving the deepest springs of desire and endeavour. They bring the soul into contact with God, in the highest and most spiritual acts of adoration, praise and prayer. To use the Psalms devoutly, is to come into the presence-chamber of the All-Holy. One has only to consider the proportion of direct address to Deity which the Psalms contain, to perceive the extent to which the man who sincerely uses them commits himself to sentiments of penitence, confidence, adoration, love, desire; so as to place himself under moral compulsion either to mean what he says, or to desist from saying it,—unless he would recklessly embark on the repugnant course of daring hypocrisy.

It is not meant that a man cannot respectfully listen to prayers and praises in which he is not for the present prepared to commit himself by voluntary personal undertaking. Yet still, setting callous formalism aside as downright iniquity and mockery, the compelling power of devout compositions,—especially when voiced by worshippers believed to be sincere,—must ever be either sympathetically to join, or candidly to dissent and refrain. Supposing, however, the beginnings of faith and desire to be present in ever so feeble a degree, and the inclination be indulged to join in the devout utterance of the Psalms—then, what is the nature of the influence under which a man's mind consents to come? It must be—to become holy.

Is God himself holy? And is he, in psalms like these, directly addressed? To the first of these two vital questions an affirmative answer is here assumed—without argument. To the second, some fresh emphasis is sought to be given. At this point the appeal of necessity lies to experience. Thousands—myriads—now living—can attest that, to the best of their judgment when turned towards the

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witness of their own consciousness, there is such a thing as speaking directly to the Omniscient, in perfect confidence of being heard of Him. There is such a thing as communion with God. There is such a thing as doing that which these holy psalms are evermore doing. And it is a part of this consciousness that thereby is let in upon the worshipper's soul the mightiest stimulus to become—what the God addressed is—holy.

Nothing further claims admission into this Chapter, save to strengthen what has already, in brief, been expressed.

It is conceivable that the importance which the Psalter attaches to human character, should be obscured by the incidental nature of its enforcement and especially by the surpassing energy with which the influences fitted to bear on character are concentrated on the worshipper's mind. In other words, the grand mission of the psalmists seems to be, rather to display and illustrate the character which Jehovah already bears, than to enforce the character which his adorers are called upon to work out. Their songs of set purpose glorify God: incidentally, they educate man.

But their educative influence, when concentrated, is very strong. The first psalm—introductory to the whole collection—is devoted to character. The fifteenth, dramatically extols character: so does the twenty-fourth, with still more brilliant scenic energy. The fifty-first, with bitter tears for failure, exactingly enforces character—thorough, pure, influential. The seventy-second, in a quite unexpected way, extols character as exemplified in the person of its ideal King; and, out of many to name but one more, the extremely dramatic one-hundred-and eighteenth in a remarkable manner sets character on the highest conceivable pedestal by opening the gate of Jehovah only to the righteous. If behind these direct and indirect encomiums on good character there be massed the strongly disapproving reflections with which the Psalter abounds on men of the stamp of Cush and Doeg and Ahithophel —to name no more of the throng of the cunning, the double-tongued, the ungrateful, the impious—it will in candour be confessed that the mighty moral influence of the Psalms is in favour of the noble, the trusty, the devout, the merciful, the God-like. And even if the execrations of the Psalter on the perfidious and vile are sometimes carried to what in ourselves would be a culpable and un-Christ-like excess which we whole-heartedly deplore, nevertheless they reveal a passion for righteousness which, when refined, is of incalculable moral value.

We have alluded to the larger freedom of the Psalter in displaying the character of God than in prescribing the attributes needful to constitute godly men. And this, indeed, is one of the crowning glories

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of the Psalms. They extol God with a will. They are never tired of praising Him. They delight to effloresce on this ever-welcome theme. For example, they pile up epithets of delight and satisfaction in Jehovah (as witness Pss. 18^{1-3}, $144^{1, 2}$); they echo and re-echo his most gracious Divine Name, (146^{5-10}); by the aid of a simple pronoun of reference, they unfurl clause after clause in his praise (103^{3-5}); they begrudge not to exhaust the whole alphabet to initial his sole doings and perfections (111, 145).

Not as a feeble, doubtful God, do the psalmists extol Jehovah. His character, in their esteem, is weighted with wisdom: it is nerved with moral energy. Their God is a good hater: he detests cruel men, and he abhors hypocrites. His pity does not blind his judgment. He searches men through and through, and sees them as they are. Those who have loved and served him, and walked in his ways, and then, alas! have sinned against him, are not here seen easily commending themselves to be received back into Divine favour. No! their repentance has to go down to the springs of their life; and their restoration has to be a re-creation. Not otherwise can they have given back to them the joys of Jehovah's salvation.

When restored, or as already serving God with loyalty, they not only adore him, but they think of his presence with a holy passion of desire to be admitted thereinto. The very blaze of his holiness warms their craving to be with him. It was, then, not without amplest warrant that we said at the beginning of this chapter that the stimulating power of the Psalms to move to holy living is grounded in the very nature of things. Educatively, *that* is what the Psalms mean: "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

It would not be frank—it would not be honest—in a Christian—to say that the Psalms perfectly meet every want. In truth, they create a demand for more than they supply. To express this abstract assertion in concrete form suggested by the Psalms themselves, how remarkable a thing it is that, whereas it is foretold of David (89^{26}) that he should do the very thing which Christians are always doing, namely call God "Father!", yet he never once does it. He well-nigh says this in hundreds of instances: adoration, admiration, affection, fond comparison—these are ever springing to his lips, ever drawing forth from his lyre the sweetest of sounds; and yet his inspired lips never well-over with the one decisive child's word in recognition of his Father. There is no "Abba Father" in the Psalms! Where direct address is so conspicuously dominant, where terms of direct address are so various and abundant, from "Shield" to "Sun," from "Shepherd" to "King," —the omission is symptomatic. The Spirit of Sonship had not been

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bestowed: the Son himself had not arrived: the relationship itself, though founded and figured, had not been personally perfected; and so the adequate channel of utterance was not in existence:—hence the lack. But the Son—of David and of God—has come at length, personally realised the endearing relationship, received first for himself and then for us the Spirit of Sonship, and so—now—we cannot desist from the outcry for the utterance of which our inmost heart yearns, as, to David's Shield, Sun, Shepherd, King, even to Jehovah, we cry, "Abba! oh Father!" Henceforth the holiness of the Psalms acquires in our esteem a refinement of moral beauty it never before possessed, because now we view it as illumined by a Messianic light; and we are moved to its pursuit by a charm and a power which we gratefully acknowledge as reaching us through the mediation, through the death, resurrection and ascension into heavenly glory, of David's Son and Lord.

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DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF THE INDIVIDUAL PSALMS.

PSALM.

1. The Righteous Man and the Lawless contrasted.
2. The Messiah's Reign in Zion Assured.
3. Conspiracy, Confidence, Courage and Victory. Chief Conspirator left unnamed!
4. The Ideal Levite's Evening Prayer.
5. A Morning Prayer for Deliverance from Conspirators.
6. A Prayer for Deliverance from Sickness and Death.
7. One Wrongfully Accused commits his Vindication to the Righteous Judge of all the Earth.
8. Jehovah's Majesty Exalted by means of Man's Dominion.
9, 10. The Kingship of Jehovah in Zion finally triumphant over a League between the Nations and the Lawless One.
11. Faith's Brave Answer to the Counsels of Fear.
12. General Corruption, evidenced by Sins of the Tongue, impels to Prayer, and calls forth a Divine Answer.
13. A Sorely-tried Believer in Jehovah Expostulates, Entreats, and ultimately Exults.
14. A Vile Person's Testimony to Prevalent Wickedness, when Confirmed by Jehovah, occasions Warning and Prayer.
15. The Approved Citizen-Guest of Jehovah.
16. An Ideal Israelite's Triumph over Death.
17. One who is Righteous Prays, in Great Trouble, for Divine Deliverance and Manifestation.
18. David's Song of Deliverance.
19. Greater than the Glory of God in the Heavens, is the Grace of Jehovah in the Law.
20. To Prayer for a King in Distress, a Favourable Answer is Confidently Awaited.
21. Thanks for the King's Victory, and Confidence of Further Triumphs.
22. The Voice of a Forsaken Sufferer—Loudly Lamenting his Lot, Minutely Describing his Pain and Shame, without Reproaching God or Accusing Himself—is Suddenly Silenced (in Death); and then as suddenly is heard in a Strain of Triumph, in which Other Voices join, All celebrating the Praises of Jehovah as Sovereign Lord.

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23. The All-Sufficiency of Jehovah.
24. The Admission of Worshippers into the Presence of the Previously Admitted King.
25. An Alphabetical Psalm of Supplication.
26. An Ideal Levite's Prayer for Vindication by the Prolongation of his Life.
27. Trust and Prayer in the Hour of Danger.
28. Prayer turned into Praise.
29. Glory in the Temple and in the Tempest: Jehovah's Kingship of Judgment in the Past, and of Blessing in the Future.
30. A Song of Joy on Recovery from Sickness.
31. Fellowship in Suffering and Salvation.
32, 33. Felicitations to the Forgiven, and Examples of the Songs that they Sing.
34. An Alphabetical Psalm of Praise and Instruction.
35. Prayers against Open and Concealed Enemies, followed by Promises of Praise.
36. Oracles False and True, Prompting Prayer and Praise.
37. An Alphabetical Exhortation to Patience in Well-doing.
38. Prayer for Deliverance from Disease and from Enemies.
39. The Lament and Prayer of a Divinely-Stricken-One.
40. Three Stirring Reminiscences of King David's History.
41. Regretting that Enemies and Friends should Meanly Rejoice in his Sickness, the Psalmist nevertheless Perseveres in Prayer for Pardon and Recovery.
42, 43. A Debarred Worshipper Mastering his Sorrow.
44. Israel Suffers for God.
45. A Royal Marriage.
46. Trust in God, Joyfully Maintained in Face of Peril, Speedily Rewarded.
47. Israel Invites the Nations to Rejoice in the Universal Kingship of her God.
48. Jehovah Worthy to be Praised in his Holy City, whose History Redounds to the Honour of her Shepherd-King, who will yet Lead Israel against Death.
49. Death and Redemption: Oppressed Saints Comforted, and Oppressors Rebuked.
50. Judgment on Israel Pronounced amid the solemnities of an Audible and Visible Divine Manifestation.
51. The Prayer of a Penitent.
52. Doeg the Edomite Denounced.
53. A Vile Person's Witness to Prevalent Wickedness, when Confirmed by Jehovah, occasions Warning and Prayer.

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54. A Prayer prompted by the Hostile Action of the Ziphites.
55. A Bitter Complaint of the Treachery of an Intimate Friend.
56. A Song composed by David in Captivity.
57. A Reminiscence of David's Early Troubles when Pursued by Saul, subsequently adapted to Brighter Times.
58. A Significant Warning to Corrupt Judges.
59. The Beleaguered Psalmist Prays for Rescue and Avenging.
60. An Outcry of Anguish, Expostulation, and Entreaty, under a Severe Reverse.
61. The Psalmist, in Banishment, Prays for Restoration.
62. Restful Resolution, Exposing the Treacherous and Encouraging the Timorous, traces both Power and Kindness to God the Judge of All.
63. A Banished Soul, Athirst for God, Anticipates Satisfaction and Vindication.
64. A Prayer against the Evil Tongues of Conspirators, who are Destroyed by their Own Weapon.
65. Israel's Temple-Song of Praise, on behalf of Herself and All Nations, chiefly in Grateful Acknowledgment of Seedtime and Harvest.
66. An Invitation to All the Earth to join in Israel's Song of Praise.
67. Prayer for Blessing on Israel as a Means of Blessing to all Nations.
68. Glimpses of Jehovah's Visible Reign over Israel and the Nations.
69. Pictures of Distress and Outcries for Deliverance, followed by Imprecations on Cruel Enemies, and by Promises of Praise.
70, 71. Prayer not to be forsaken in Old Age.
72. A People's Prayer for a Perfect King.
73. Temptation, arising from the Prosperity of the Lawless, Triumphantly Overcome.
74. Ruthless Injuries to the Sanctuary and Oppression in the Land by an Enemy, call forth Expostulation with God for his Quiescence.
75. A Song, enshrining an Oracular Assurance of Equitable Judgment by the Judge of the Earth.
76. A Song of Triumph over a Divinely Smitten Foe.
77. Comfort in Distress obtained by the Study of a Song.
78. A Didactic Poem, Counselling the Reunion of the Tribes.
79. Invasion, Desecration, Demolition, Massacre and Derision call forth Lamentation, Expostulation, Petition and Pleading; and the Hope of Deliverance evokes a Promise of Perpetual Praise.

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80. Prayer for the Flock and Vine of Israel.
81. A Mission-Song to be Sung to the Northern Tribes.
82. The Judgment of Unjust Judges.
83. An Appeal to God for Deliverance from an Impending Invasion.
84. The Longing of a Levite for the Habitations of Jehovah in Zion, with Inspiring Memories of a Past Pilgrimage and Exultant Joy in Renewed Service.
85. Praise, Prayer and Prophecy lead up to the Reconciliation of Earth and Heaven.
86. Prayer of a Tried and Faithful Servant of Jehovah.
87. The Glorious Destiny of Zion as the Metropolis of the Nations.
88. The Anguished Cry of One Smitten and Forsaken.
89. The Covenant with David Contrasted with the Present Dishonour of David's Heir.
90. A Prayer against the Dominion of Death.
91. A Personal Application of the Foregoing Psalm.
92-97. A Service of Song for a Sabbath-Day.
92. Personal Song—Probably by a King.
93. Jehovah Proclaimed King.
94. Prayer for Vengeance on the Lawless.
95. Invitation—"O Come!" "Come In!" Warning—"Harden not your Hearts!"
96. The Land called upon to Sing to Jehovah, and to Proclaim his Kingship to the Nations.
97. Third Proclamation—Decisive Results, by way of Joy, Fear, Conviction, Shame, Homage, Thanks, Exhortation and Triumph.
98, 99. A Shorter Service of Song (for a Sabbath Day).
100. Invitation to all the Earth to come In before Jehovah and Worship.
101. A King's Resolve to have a Pure House and Court and Royal City.
102. The Prayer of a Humbled One brings a Three-fold Answer of Peace.
103. Bless Jehovah, for he is Worthy.
104. A Creation Hymn.
105. A Hymn of Praise to Jehovah for giving Israel a Covenant-Land in which to observe his Law.
106. Humbled Israel Confessing her Sins as a Nation.
107. Examples of Men's Straits, leading to Prayer; and of Jehovah's Deliverances, calling for Praise.

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108. Two Fragments of Earlier Psalms.
109. David, Rehearsing how his Enemies Cursed him, refers his Cause to Jehovah.
110. A Revelation—through David—to his Lord the Messiah.
111. Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah.
112. Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of the Man who Revereth Jehovah.
113. A Song of Sublime Simplicity: reaching its Climax by Rejoicing with a Glad Mother.
114. A Passover Song.
115. Not for her own Glory, but for his, Israel moves herself to Trust in Jehovah to show his superiority to Idols.
116. Individual Thanks for Deliverance from Peril of Death.
117. All Nations invited to Join in Israel's Tribute of Praise.
118. The Passover "Hosanna" Song.
119. Jehovah's Will in relation to Human Character and Conduct, as celebrated in Twenty-Two Alphabetical Strophes, and by the aid of Eight Comprehensive Synonyms.
120. Peace *versus* War: First Step-Song.
121. Jehovah the true Helper and Keeper of Israel: Second Step-Song.
122. The Tribes Welcomed to the Passover: Third Step-Song.
123. The King's Response to the Injunction to Lift up his Eyes as High as Heaven: Fourth Step-Song.
124. Sudden and Complete Deliverance acknowledged as Jehovah's own Work: Fifth Step-Song.
125. Trust in Jehovah encouraged in presence of the Invader: Sixth Step-Song.
126. The Invader Gone — The First Sowing Begun: Seventh Step-Song.
127. In Relief of Domestic and Civic Anxiety: Eighth Step-Song.
128. A Happy Home and a Prosperous Commonwealth: Ninth Step-Song.
129. Israel's Thanks for Past Deliverances, and Prayer for Continued Vindication: Tenth Step-Song.
130. Ransomed out of the Depths: Eleventh Step-Song.
131. The Sinking of Self in Seeking Israel's Welfare: Twelfth Step-Song.
132. The Davidic Dynasty Humbled and Exalted: Thirteenth Step-Song.
133. Brethren in Fellowship—a Charming Spectacle: Fourteenth Step-Song.

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134. The Night-Service in the Temple: Fifteenth Step-Song.
135. A Call to Temple Worship.
136. A Second Call to Temple Worship, with Responses inserted.
137. A Returned Levite's Memories of Babylon, Apostrophe to Jerusalem, and Imprecations on Edom and Babylon.
138. A King's Public Thanks for Advancement in Royal Dignity.
139. An Individual submits himself to Jehovah's All-Searching Eye.
140. Deliverance from Slanderous and Violent Enemies, Implored and Expected.
141. A Temptation to Conspiracy Shunned.
142. Loud Outcries in a Cave Succeed Guarded Petitions at Court.
143. Continued Concealment in a Cave—its Griefs and its Gains.
144. From David's Psalms are selected Strains by one of his sons—emboldening him to plead for Deliverance from Foreigners.
An Appendix anticipates Happy Times.
145. An Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah's Greatness Goodness, and Righteousness.
146. Twelve Reasons for Trusting in Jehovah.
147. Praise for the Restoration of Jerusalem, and for Israel's pre-eminence: with Grateful Recognition of Rain and of Spring.
148. Praise Invoked from all Creation.
149. A New Song for Israel, which others may NOT Sing.
150. An Expansion and Enforcement of the Public Reader's Invitation to the People to join in the Responses in the Temple Worship.

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TABLE I.

Transliteration of Hebrew Characters into English.

No.	Name.	Form.	Sign.	Form.	Sign.		No.	Name.	Form.	Sign.	Form.	Sign.	
1	aleph	א	ʾ	...	...		13	mem	מ	m	final ם	m	
2	beth	ב	b	soft ב	bh, v		14	nun	נ	n	final ן	n	
3	gimel	ג	g	soft ג	gh		15	samech	ס	s	...	...	
4	daleth	ד	d	soft ד	dh	like *th* in "*then*"	16	ayin	ע	ʿ	...	...	
5	he	ה	h	...	...		17	pe	פ	p	soft פ	ph	
6	waw	ו	w	...	u	when a vowel	18	ṣadhe	צ	ṣ	...	...	
7	zayin	ז	z	...	...		19	koph	ק	k	...	...	
8	heth	ח	ḥ	...	...		20	resh	ר	r	...	...	
9	têt	ט	ṭ	...	...		21	sin or shin	שׂ שׁ	s sh	...	...	
10	yodh	י	y	...	i	when a vowel							
11	kaph	כ	k	soft כ	kh		22	tau	ת	t	soft ת	th	as *th* in "*thin*"
12	lamed	ל	l	...	...								

The above Table may be put to an interesting special use. It will enable the merely English reader to trace the similarity of certain Hebrew letters, as the well-known cause of errors of transcription. For example, he can perceive how minute is the difference in form between *daleth* and *resh*, and so how easily "silenced" might creep in where "uplifted" should have stood, or *vice-versâ*, in 131[8] (see note there); and similarly how readily *kaph* should have usurped the place *beth* in 150[2].

N.B.—The vowel *á* may be pronounced as *a* in father; and *é* as *e* in there.

TABLE II.

Divine Names, as used in the Psalms, and generally regarded as indicating the formation of successive collections of Psalms.

	Jehovah[a]	Yah[b]	Elohim[c] (God)	Eloah[d] (God)	El[e] (God)	Adonai[f] (Sov. Lord)	Elyon[g] (Most High)
Bk. I. (1-41)	272	—	15	1	17	12	4
Bk. II. (42-72)	30	2	164	1	15	18	4
Bk. III. (73-89)	44	2	43	—	24	15	9
Bk. IV. (90-106)	103	6	—	—	9	1	4
Bk. V. (107-150)	236	26	7	2	10	7	1

Obs. 1. The choice of one or other of these Divine Names seems generally to have been determined by intrinsic fitness. (See 9[17], 19[1, 7], 83[18], 119[115]).

Obs. 2. But occasionally shows an overruling adaptation to time, place, or purpose, by author or editor. (Cp. 14 w. 53; 40[12-17] w. 70; and note all Book II.)

Obs. 3. Book I. is prevailingly Jehovistic; Book II., Elohistic; Book III., about equally balanced; Book IV., wholly Jehovistic; and Book V., mainly Jehovistic and Liturgical.

[a] Prop. "Yahweh." [b] Abbre. of "Yahweh." [c] Pl. of excellence, when absolutely used.
[d] Sing. of Elohim. [e] Or "Mighty One." [f] Conventional pron. for Divine name.
[g] Once used of Davidic King.

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TABLE III.—Signs of Emphasis.

1. Double upright lines (‖ ‖) call for decided emphasis on the words so enclosed.
2. Single upright lines (| |) mark slight emphasis.
3. Angular marks (< >) are preferred when emphatic inversion is evident in English as well as in Hebrew: in which case, it will be observed, the enclosed words never end a sentence. Heavier marks are sometimes used for larger portions of sentences, in order the more readily to catch the eye, and to allow shorter inversions within longer ones to be shown. (*See* $89^{30, 31}$).

N.B. Emphasis is idiomatically indicated in the original; and so may be said to be an integral element in the Sacred Text. See "Synopsis" in Chapter II. of Introduction to "The Emphasised Bible."

TABLE IV.—Abbreviations.

Gn.: Ginsburg's notes in his Massoretico-Critical Hebrew Bible.
G. Intro.: Ginsburg's Introduction to his Massoretico-Critical Bible.
Gt.: Ginsburg *thinks* (a guarded *opinion*).
ml.: More literally.
mf.: More freely.
cp.: Compare.
Br.: Briggs
Dr.: Driver
Del.: Delitzsch.
Per.: Perowne.
Kp.: Kirkpatrick
w.: with.
Intro.: Introduction to this work.
Lm.: Librarian's mark.
CMm.: Chief Musician's mark.
Nm.: No mark — whether Librarian's or Chief Musician's.
☞: Sign for "Selah." *See* Intro., Chap. III., "Selah."
God = Elohim.
GOD = El.
God = Eloah.
P.R.I.: Public Reader's Invitation.
M.T.: Massoretic Hebrew Text. (For "Massorites" *see* Intro., Chap. I.)
ear. pt. ed.: Early printed edition of the Hebrew Bible.
Cod.: Codex = written copy.
Sep.: Septuagint (early Greek version).
Aram.: Aramean.
Syr.: Syriac.
Vul.: Vulgate (Latin).
A.V.: Authorised version.
R.V.: Revised version.
P.B.V.: Prayer Book version.
Written: In text of M.T.
Read: In margin of M.T.
O.T.P.: Thirtle's "Old Testament Problems."
U.: Usually.
perh.: Perhaps.
prob.: Probably.
shd.: Should.
O.G.: Oxford Gesenius ("B.D.B.")
J.P.S V.: Jewish Publication (Society Version).
sp. vr.: Special various reading (sevir) in Gn.
T.G.: Tregelles' Gesenius.

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THE PSALMS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

PSALM 1.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Righteous Man and the Lawless Contrasted.

ANALYSIS.—The Righteous man Described—vers. 1—3: by what he Does Not—ver. 1; by what he Does—ver. 2; and by what he is Like—ver. 3. The Lawless man described, as a Contrast, and by what he is Like—ver. 4; also by his Doom, negatively expressed—ver. 5. Jehovah's relation to the Two Ways—ver. 6.

[Nm.]

1 |How happy| [a] the man—
Who hath not walked in the counsel of the lawless,[b]
and <in the way of sinners> hath not stood,
and <in the seat of scoffers> hath not sat;[c]
2 But rather <in the law[d] of Jehovah> is his delight,
and <in his law> doth he talk with himself[e] day and night.
3 So doth he become like a tree planted[f] beside channels of waters,
that yieldeth ||its fruit|| in its season,
whose ||leaf also|| doth not wither,—
And <whatsoever he doeth> he causeth to prosper.[g]

4 ||Not so|| the lawless!
but rather as chaff which the wind |driveth away|.
5 <For this cause> shall the lawless |not rise| in the vindication,[h]
nor sinners [enter] into the congregation of the righteous.[i]

6 For Jehovah |doth acknowledge|[k] the way of the righteous,
but ||the way of the lawless|| shall vanish.[l]

[Nm.]

[a] Note that the Psalms open with a word of emotion. See Intro., Chap. III., "How happy."

[b] "Cp. Isa. 13^{11}, 14^{5}. The use of *r-sh-'* in allusion to Israelites implies disloyal association with the heathen, the impious outsiders (Ps. 25^{8}). The term is opposed to 'the righteous': cp. Exod. 9^{27}, Hab. $1^{4, 13}$, Prov. 8^{33}, $28^{1.4, 13, 28}$, 29^{2} (also cp. *hoi |anomoi* in Macc. 2^{24}, $3^{5, 6}$)"—Thirtle, O.T.P. 106.

[c] Note tenses. "The perfects in ver. 1 describe what he all along has never done"—Del.

[d] Or: "instruction." Cp. $19^{7.14}$, 119 *passim*.

[e] Heb. *hâgâh*; synonymous w. *siach*, "soliloquise." Note throughout.

[f] So Dr., Per., Del., Carter, Leeser; but "transplanted"—O.G., Br.

[g] Ver. evidently expanded in Jer. 17^{8}.

[h] "That is, in the resurrection which takes place in the judgment, at the end of the age of the world"—Br. Cp. Isa. $26^{14, 19}$, Lk. 14^{14}, 1 Cor. 15.

[i] Cp. 111^{1}.

[k] Ml.: "know"; but sometimes, "know w. approval," "recognise," "acknowledge." Cp. 37^{18}, Mt. 7^{23}, Rom. 8^{29}, 2 Tim. 2^{19}.

[l] Ml.: "perish"; but when a *way* perishes, it "disappears"; leading to nowhere, it is "lost," is no longer a "way." Cp. 112^{10}.

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EXPOSITION.

This Psalm is a commendation of the godly life. It opens with an expression of admiration for the man who lives that life: which it proceeds to describe in a simple and engaging manner, by telling us what such a man avoids—what he delights in —and what he resembles. He avoids the downward course by not beginning it; he delights in **Jehovah's law**, and shows his pleasure in it by diligent study; and he thereby resembles **a tree planted** in a spot where it is well-watered. Each of these points is enlarged sufficiently to make it impressive. The man described avoids three things: he **walks not in the counsel of the lawless**—that is, he does not take the advice of those who care not how they live; he **stands not in the way of sinners**—in other words, he declines bad men as his companions; and he **sits not in the seat of scoffers**—he refuses to form one of a circle who spend their time and wit in ridiculing religion. The things to be avoided are thus presented in the form of a double climax: worse and worse companions, and more and more submission to their influence. The unprincipled may prepare you for the immoral, and the immoral for the contemptuous: you may take bad advice, then seek bad company, and at last scoff at all goodness. **Happy the man** who does none of these things! Thrice happy he who **has not begun** to do them!

But life cannot thrive on negations. He that would hate wickedness must love goodness. Now, as **the law**, or instruction, **of Jehovah**, the holy and loving God, affords guidance to a good and holy life, it follows that he who would shun evil will take so much pleasure in divine guidance that he will look out for it, learn it, linger over it. The laws of nature he will revere and observe: the laws of revelation he will welcome and obey. If he is so happy as to know Christ, he will find in him the spirit and sum of all law (1 Cor. 9^{21}). Christ will be the law of his being. As The Christ rejoiced that Jehovah's "law of righteousness was enshrined in his deepest affections" (40^{8}), so will Christ's follower make it his greatest joy to do his Master's will. The newspaper, the novel, will be less highly esteemed than the Bible. He may be compelled, or find it serviceable, to consult the first; he may be able to choose and utilise the second; but it is to the third that his mind will gravitate, from the third that he will store his memory, in the third that he will discover his songs of immortal hope; and though —not being an Oriental—he may not be heard literally **soliloquising** out of the Holy Scriptures, yet will he count every day lost in which he does not gain clearer insight into its wisdom, and will feel every wakeful night-hour soothed which lights up any of its great and precious promises.

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His best life thus thrives. He is like a well-planted tree—**transplanted** that it might be well-planted. He comes directly under the care of the Divine Husbandman, whose well-planned and well-watched irrigation keeps him constantly supplied with the **waters** of life through the **channels** of appropriate means conducive to spiritual growth and fruitfulness. **Seasonable fruit** is the glory of fruit-bearing trees: learning and liveliness in youth, steady work and sturdy endurance in middle life, patience and serene hope in old age as the better-land draws near—these are the fruits to be looked for in the garden of Jehovah. Everything is beautiful in its season (Ec. 3^{11}): yea, even the **leaf** that does **not wither**: the ornamental as well as the useful has place, and the ornamental conceals and shields the useful, as the **leaf** does the **fruit**; and so even beauty is not to be despised—especially that of modesty: even the leaf that hides the fruit may help its growth. But, as a man is better than a sheep (Mt. 12^{12}), so also is a man better than a "tree": no tree being fit adequately to symbolise a "man, made in the image of God" (Jas. 3^{9}). Therefore the psalmist, returning from the man-like tree to the tree-like man, and leaving the tree behind, as unable to bear the weight of such a clause as **whatsoever he doeth**, says of the man with his multifarious capacities, of the man under Divine culture, who soliloquises day and night in the law of Jehovah,—**And whatsoever he doeth prospereth**; and so it does, sooner or later: if not during "the night when Weeping has come to lodge," then "in the morning when Jubilation" appears (30^{5}): then shall we be made "glad according to the years Jehovah had humbled us—the years we had seen misfortune"; and discover that, after all, "the work of our hands had been established upon us" (90^{15}).

Not so the lawless: very much "not so"! Surprise, therefore, need not be felt that the Septuagint *repeats* the negative, both for feeling and for filling out the line: "Not so the ungodly, not so"; even though it must be confessed that the half line in Hebrew is still more effective, and more symmetrically answers to the half-line at the commencement of the psalm. **But rather as chaff which the wind driveth away**—as of no worth and no further account. **For this cause shall the lawless not rise in the vindication**; and, from the Old Testament, scarcely could we learn that they will rise at all: certainly not **in the vindication**, a well-sustained rendering, which anticipates the distinction made by our Lord when he spake of "the resurrection of the **righteous**" (Lk. 14^{14}). **Sinners shall not enter the congregation of the righteous**: whose way, life, character will NOT **vanish**, but continue evermore. **For Jehovah doth acknowledge**—know, approve, perpetuate—**the way of the righteous; but the way of the lawless**

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shall vanish—like a track lost in the waste, where no footsteps can make a path. "Only the way of the righteous is *derek 'ôlâm* ["a way age-abiding"] (139[24]), a way that issues in eternal life"—Del.

This psalm and the next are anonymous, and without any superscribed or subscribed lines. They are admirably adapted for the purpose they were manifestly intended to serve: namely, as introductory to the whole Book of Psalms—the former penned from a purely ethical point of view, and the latter from a national, Davidic, and Messianic standpoint. One or both of these psalms may have been placed here by Ezra; but each may have been first brought into use as introductory to a smaller and earlier collection. Though probably placed here by Ezra, this first psalm was almost certainly composed by Hezekiah, whose spirit it breathes—as may be seen by a comparison of it with the latter half of Ps. 19 and the whole of Ps. 119,—a conclusion confirmed by the fact that it was expanded by Jeremiah (17[5]) and therefore must have already been in existence.

PSALM 2.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Messiah's Reign in Zion Assured.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, A Conspiracy against Jehovah and His Anointed Foretold. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Jehovah's Counter Proclamation. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, The Messiah's Claim to the Throne. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, Counsels of Peace.

[Nm.]

1 |Wherefore| have nations |consented together|?[a]
or should ||peoples|| keep muttering an empty thing?
2 The kings of earth |take their stand|,
and ||grave men|| have sat in conclave together,[b]
against Jehovah and against his Anointed One:—
3 "Let us tear apart their bands,
and cast away from us their cords!"[c]

4 ||One enthroned in the heavens|| will laugh,
||my Sovereign Lord|| will mock at them;
5 |[Then|| will he speak to them in his anger,
and <in his wrath> will dismay them:—

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[a] "So most probably from meaning of Heb. stem and context; 'rage'—A.V., R.V., J.P.S.V., —'rage furiously'—P.B.V., 'tumultuously assemble'—R.V., Kirk., and so variously, most moderns, are not sustained by text or context" – Br.

[b] "It is a general rebellion against Jahve and His Anointed"—Del.

[c] "They are, therefore, at the time of their rebellion subjects of Jahve and His Anointed" —Del.

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6 "Yet ||I|| have installed my king
on Zion[a] my holy mountain,[b]
let him tell my decree!"[c]

7 ||"Jehovah|| said to me:—
<'My Son> art thou,
||I|| <to-day> have begotten thee:
8 Ask of me, and let me give—
nations as thine inheritance,
and <as thy possession> the ends of the earth:
9 Thou shalt shepherd[d] them with a sceptre of iron,[e]
<as a potter's-vessel> shalt thou dash them in pieces.'"

10 ||Now, therefore|| ye kings, show your prudence,
be admonished, ye judges of earth:
11 Serve ye Jehovah with reverence,
and exult with trembling:
12 Kiss the Son,[f] lest he be angry,
and ye perish on the way;
for soon might be kindled his anger.
|How happy| are all who take refuge in Him!

[Nm.]

[a] "Zion is mentioned as the royal seat of the Anointed One; there has he been installed, in order that he may reign there, and rule thence (110[2])"—Del.

[b] "What is meant is the rising ground of the City of David (2S. 5[7, 9], 1 K. 8[1]), including Mount Moriah."—Del.

[c] Thus, by two minute changes: by virtue of wh. this line is moved up from Str. III. to Str. II., giving it the position assigned to it in Sep.; "decree of Jehovah" is resolved into "my decree,' the yod (י), "my" having, it is assumed, been mistakenly regarded as the well-known abbreviation for "Jehovah": thus clearing the sense, equalising the strophes, and effectively introducing Messiah's declaration.

[d] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. "*Rule as shepherd king over them*, is more suited to the context of the sceptre, even if it be of iron; so 78[71, 72], cp. 28[9], 49[14], 80[1], 2 S. 5[2], 7[7], Jer. 3[15], Mi. 5[4], Eze. 37[24], Na. 3[13]"—Br.

[e] Cp. Rev. 12[5], 19[15].

[f] So Del. w. strong defence. Others: "worship sincerely" (ml. "kiss purely"): but distinctly less satisfying to the context.

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is obviously and confessedly Messianic. The word *messiah* of course means "anointed"—whether applied to David, Hezekiah, or Jesus of Nazareth. On what level this psalm is Messianic, whether on the lower or the higher level, remains to be seen; but Messianic it is, on its surface and down into its deepest depths. To ascertain its scope it must be carefully and correctly interpreted; and this at once raises the whole question of the Interpretation of Prophecy in general, and the exegesis of Messianic Prophecy in particular.

It is here assumed that much Scripture prophecy is *typical*, and therefore *indirect*; that is to say, that it first points to a type as foreshadowing some person or thing greater than itself. But it is *not* here assumed that there is no such thing as *direct prediction*, going straight to its mark without the intervention of a type: we do not know that, and must not take it for granted.

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To apply these principles to this first Messianic psalm: let us by all means give preference to the supposition that this psalm is *typically* prophetic; and see whether that hypothesis will carry us satisfactorily through the whole psalm, doing justice to all its leading statements: statements in any case poetical, but not necessarily extravagant,—save, it may be, apparently so, when intended to go beyond the type to the antitype.

Now the most striking thing in this psalm is the concerted opposition of certain enemies to **Jehovah and his Anointed One**; and, next to that, the unique way in which that opposition is overthrown—by counter Divine Proclamation. Who is Jehovah's Anointed One? Is it David, or Hezekiah, or Jesus of Nazareth? Whoever he is, Divine Sonship as well as Messiahship is attributed to him. Whoever he is, his destiny includes the dominion of the world.

Doubtless, David in his time and degree was Jehovah's Anointed One; but will the language of the psalm, as a whole, apply to him and find reasonable satisfaction in him? Or, if not in *him*, then in Hezekiah, or in both combined? But if the two combined—with any other scion of the royal house added to them—still fail to satisfy the outlook of the psalm,—then on what principle are we to be restrained from applying to Jesus of Nazareth the whole psalm, provided we can fairly show that it has been, or is now being, or will certainly yet be exhaustively fulfilled in him?

In point of fact, these two famous Hebrew monarchs do fit the terms of the psalm remarkably well—up to a point; and then completely fail to satisfy them. Both David and Hezekiah were triumphantly enthroned in Zion; both had enemies who were set aside or overthrown; and both had extensive dominion. Moreover, in a very singular way, both these kings answer to the statement, **Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.** For the "day" referred to can scarcely be an ordinary birthday; seeing that, save in high ceremonial, it is not customary solemnly to accost children on the day of their birth. Hence the probability is, that the "day" alluded to here is the day on which something took place comparable to a birth, so as to make such a speech appropriate. Now, certainly it might look rather magniloquent to say of David, that on the day when Nathan the prophet (2 S. 7) revealed to him the royal destiny of his descendants, to whom He—Jehovah—would become a "Father,"—that, on that very day, Jehovah virtually said, "Thou art my son! this day, by my supreme decree, have I begotten thee to this sonly, regal office." It may; and yet there is something remarkable in it. Still more remarkable, when the representation is transferred to Hezekiah, who was raised up from the very

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gates of death to be more firmly than ever seated as king on Jehovah's holy mountain. This, in all candour, must be confessed, even though we hesitate to say with Thirtle, O.T.P. 142: "The new life that was given to Hezekiah, simultaneously with the discomfiture of the Assyrian host, justifies these remarkable words—words of resurrection." They are indeed words *typical* of resurrection!

But, with all this frankly admitted, it must be maintained that these and other incidents in the Davidic House are simply beggared by the language of the psalm. It is questionable whether the opening scene of the psalm found more than a partial realisation in either of the lives we have so far been considering; but, in any case, neither David nor Hezekiah asked and received *universal dominion*—which, however, is writ large on the psalm, and cannot be erased by any legitimite plea of poetic licence. Besides, we shall probably do well to guard against bulking out and hardening the type in order to make it as large as the language, fairly interpreted, appears to indicate: in other words we must beware of assuming that the Spirit of Prophecy could not easily carry away the psalmist's mind far beyond any type that was within range of his vision. Let us use types as helps and not as hindrances. We need have no craving to *add* to the letters of the typical alphabet; but the free Spirit of God may well be expected sometimes to combine those letters in unprecedented forms, and so spell out revelations which have never before been divulged.

If these things are so, then we must beware of inferring that because a clearly foretold event did not happen in the type, therefore it will not be fulfilled in the antitype; or that, seeing it is attenuated to mere shadow in the type, therefore it has no further significance. For example, the appearance of the semblance of a New Birth which we have detected in the life of David, and the still more striking semblance of a New Birth easily seen in the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah, should not blind us to the comparative feebleness of the fulfilment on either of these lines. David himself was not declared Jehovah's Son by Nathan the prophet: neither did David, that we know of, ever say to Jehovah, in the gushing tide of the spirit of adoption, "Abba! Father!" It was, indeed, foretold that he should so address the Most High (89^{26}); but we have no record that he ever actually did so. In like manner, there are circumstances which obviously enfeeble the fulfilment of the psalm in Hezekiah, who, for example, was Jehovah's king in Zion for years before he passed under the shadow of death and resurrection; and who greatly as he loved Jehovah,—as he had much reason to love him,—yet never ventured to call him his Father, so far as the records show.

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To go back from the centre of the psalm to its beginning, and remarking that it opens with the unmasking of a conspiracy between kings and nations against Jehovah and his Anointed,—why should we close our eyes to the plain fact, that the Assyrian invasion was not such a *conspiracy*, but merely one of the ordinary doings of an Oriental despot? Then, turning in the other direction from the centre of the psalm, and glancing forward to the **iron sceptre** that was to dash enemies to pieces **like potters' vessels**,—ought we not to be quite sure of our ground before—even under guise of high-flown poetry—we conclude such absoluteness of rule to have been here encouraged in either David or Hezekiah?

On all hands, then, we see abounding indications that a Greater than either David or Hezekiah is here. And therefore we point with confidence to that Greater One as the Hero of this psalm. The conspiracy of the Nations—though it may have been often attempted—has not yet been brought to a head; and, although the Heir to the Throne has appeared, and been saluted as Divine Son on the day of his literal Resurrection (Acts 13^{30-32}), yet has he not at present been installed on Jehovah's holy mount of Zion. When he is brought forth from his hiding-place in heaven (Col. 3^3, Acts 3^{21}) then **the kings and judges of the earth** will need **show** all their **prudence**; for, assuredly, the **iron sceptre** that will appear in his hand will be no meaningless symbol, but will stand for what it naturally means,—absolute, resistless physical force, which is far more fittingly entrusted to immortal hands than to mortal. Yes! this psalm is Messianic; but on the higher level. The astounding pledge already given by the literal resurrection of the Messiah from the dead, assures us that in due time the entire psalm, in all its length and breadth, will be amply fulfilled, not as mere grandiloquent speech, but in commensurate and therefore amazing facts.

We are indebted to Delitzsch for calling attention to the obvious but much overlooked circumstance, that those kings and counsellors who are discovered in rebellion when the psalm opens, have already come under obligation to Jehovah and to his Anointed One. They are already under the restraints of duty to Jehovah and to his Christ; since it is under those restraints that they turn restive, against those restraints that they rebel.

There is food for thought here. Indeed, we are so impressed with the possibility of framing out of this element in the psalm an *eirenicon* which may be welcomed by expositors who have differed among themselves as to the character and incidence of the Messiah's

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predicted kingdom, that we pause here just long enough to remind ourselves that, although Prophecy (if it have any definiteness in its inception) cannot need to await fulfilment before it takes on a reliable meaning, yet may most naturally and legitimately assume a clearer and yet clearer intention as fulfilment advances.

To apply this thought: It follows that, if Jesus of Nazareth is the Anointed One of this psalm; and if the day of his resurrection was the day of his being begotten to the Heirship of the Davidic dynasty; then it may be reasonably anticipated that, whether fulfilment has lingered or has greatly advanced since Jesus rose from the dead,—at least we ought to begin to see our way more and more clearly as to how to interpret the Messianic Prophecies as a class.

It is just at this point that Delitzsch's simple and obvious reminder flashes like a beacon-light across the troubled waters of Messianic Interpretation. The movements of our labouring oar are facilitated by the following encouraging considerations:—Since this psalm was written (*a*) other similar ones have been penned, such as—notably—that strictly cognate psalm, the 110th, which may be expected to throw light on this; (*b*) a part fulfilment of this psalm has confessedly been witnessed in the Messiah's Resurrection, and in the broad facts consequent on that outstanding event, such as his ascension to the right hand of God. (*c*) The notorious negative fact arrests our attention, that no one imagines that the Risen Messiah is now in any special sense reigning in and from Mount Zion in Palestine. Is it too much to hope that, by advancing on these lines, substantial progress in Messianic exegesis may be made?

(*a*) The very first helpful suggestion actually comes from Ps. 110. There we discover a link missing from this second psalm—that is, if we have but opened our eyes to miss it here. Clear as a sunbeam, it is written in Ps. 2 that Jehovah's derision of the rebels there revealed simply consists in the announcement of an accomplished fact; which accomplished fact constitutes such a counter-movement to the conspiracy as to reduce it to ridicule—*that*, in a word, is how Jehovah in heaven laughs at this conspiracy: he has already taken a step which nullifies all the counsels of the grave men, all the stand of kings, all the gathering of the nations; he has already installed his King on Zion his holy mountain! The implication is: That Zion's King will make decisive work with the conspirators! And the further implication is: That the rebels little dreamed how Heaven was prepared to deride their plot. And yet all the while, beforehand, these selfsame conspirators had been bound by the bands and cords of obligation to Jehovah and his Anointed One! How can this be explained?

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Quite easily—taking Ps. 110 as our guide. It will be seen from our Exposition of that psalm, that we conclude its natural meaning to be, that the elevation of the Messiah to Jehovah's right hand in heaven out of the midst of his enemies, and his session above, run on until he descends to his centre of subduing activity on Mount Zion. That explains everything; inasmuch as the seat of honour at Jehovah's right hand is not a mere seat of honour, but a heavenly enthronement; David's lord is seated at Jehovah's right hand as jointly regnant with him. He is, as he himself expresses it (Rev. 3^{21}), sitting during all this waiting interval (Heb. 10^{13}) on his Father's throne. That fact unlocks the difficulty which just now appeared in the 2nd psalm. It is during the joint session of the Son with the Father in heaven that these kings, senators and nations were brought under those obligations to Jehovah and his Anointed One from which they ultimately desire to break loose.

All of which presents the current proclamation of the Gospel in a light which, if not new, is more widely illuminative than it has been deemed heretofore. It thus appears that the appointed current proclamation of "the Gospel of the Kingdom" of which we read in Mt. 24^{14}, not only serves as a testimony that earth's rightful King is coming, but by its intrinsic force, as news of salvation to men, binds kings, senators and nations with "bonds" and "cords" from which they can by no means escape. Men may hear the Gospel or they may forbear; but they can never be quite the same as if they had not heard it. These kings and nations must have heard the Gospel; they must have heard the story of Crucified Love and of Death-Vanquishing Power; and been admonished to amend their ways, and their laws—to reign in righteousness—to undo heavy burdens—to educate their subjects for the Immortal Life. As the result of Antichrist's seductions, however, they grow tired of these restraints, and they rebel. The conspiracy into which they enter comes to a head *before* the Divine Installation of a King in Zion is known. The announcement of that startling fact—*that* is how Jehovah will laugh at them. Well may they be admonished to beware, and show their prudence.

The discerning will not fail to perceive how essential a part is played in the above interpretation by the assumption that, in the Psalms, Zion means Zion—the earthly Zion, a part of and frequently synonymous with the historical city Jerusalem. It is on the strength of this assumption that, in the second psalm, it could be supposed that the same rebels as were aware of the Messiah's heavenly reign on the throne of the Father, and so had come under allegiance to Jehovah and his Anointed,—in that sense and to that degree,—were at the same time

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and up to that moment unaware that Jehovah had now recently installed his Christ on his holy hill of Zion. It is the absolute difference between the two enthronements which renders it possible for men to have been rendering nominal homage to the one, and yet be in absolute ignorance of the other. It is the sudden announcement of the earthly enthronement, which renders their conspiracy an object of Divine derision. Accustomed to do as they pleased in governing or misgoverning their subjects, fearless of eternal issues to be tried before an invisible throne, they are suddenly confronted by a counter Divine movement, evidently and utterly subversive of their rebellious schemes, with the prospect of their being called to account by this newly installed monarch who wields an iron sceptre and holds a commission where necessary to dash his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. In like manner, the same assumption—that Zion in the Old Testament means the earthly Zion—is vital to our exegesis of Ps. 110. It is that, and that only, which resolves ver. 1 of that psalm into an invitation to the Messiah to come out of the midst of his earthly enemies; and ver. 2 into a commission to return into their midst, for the purpose of demanding their submission.

Under these circumstances, it is manifestly desirable that each reader should confront this question for himself, and if possible once for all settle it:—Is the Zion of the Psalms practically identical with the historical city of Jerusalem? The highest court of appeal is the usage of the name in the very book we are seeking to interpret. The name "Zion" occurs in the following places in the Psalter, namely:—2^{6}, $9^{11, 14}$, 14^{7}, 20^{2}, $48^{2, 11, 12}$, 50^{2}, 51^{18}, 53^{6}, 65^{1}, 69^{35}, 74^{2}, 76^{2}, 78^{68}, 84^{7}, $87^{2, 5}$, 97^{8}, 99^{2}, $102^{13, 16, 21}$, 110^{2}, 125^{1}, 126^{1}, 128^{5}, 129^{5}, 132^{13}, 133^{3}, 134^{3}, 135^{21}, $137^{1, 3}$, 146^{10}, 147^{12}, 149^{2}. It would be unreasonable to expect that all these examples should be demonstrative as to the point at issue: it will suffice, to render the appeal conclusive, that (*a*) there should be no instances where plainly "Zion" cannot be identical with the earthly Jerusalem; and (*b*) that there should be a large number in which an alleged reference to a heavenly Zion would bring the Holy Scriptures into ridicule. This reference to a "heavenly" Jerusalem is suggested by a few allusions in the New Testament which name a Jerusalem which is so distinguished: as to which it is obvious to remark that the very term "heavenly" presupposes an earthly Jerusalem to which a contrastive allusion is made; and further that such qualifying term is never found in the Old Testament. The Psalms, in particular, know nothing of a Zion or a Jerusalem in heaven. It would seem like an insult to readers of ordinary intelligence to remind them of such decisive phrases as "Go about Zion," "wherein thou didst

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make thy habitation," "and his lair in Zion hath been placed," "Zion heard and was glad," "Thou wilt arise and have compassion upon Zion," "Jehovah hath built up Zion," "turned the fortunes of Zion." Plainly it is the earthly Zion that is intended; and it is fearlessly submitted that there is nothing demonstrative on the other side.

It will conduce to perfect fairness of exegesis, and at the same time lead on to a becoming conclusion to our present study, to call attention to an attractive hortatory element in this psalm which it would be a misfortune to overlook. There is a gracious, subduing light which falls back on the earlier portions of the psalm from the closing strophe, in which the poet is led to fill the part of a kindly monitor. In the opening verses the mutterings of enemies are heard; then comes Jehovah's counter-proclamation in tones of thunder, alarming in the last degree; the terror naturally caused by such a warning of wrath is seen to be abundantly justified when the Son rehearses his commission, which includes stern rule, in some cases at least issuing in utter destruction. Now, although it would be a very hasty exegesis to infer that none of the Son's enemies will relent, or relenting and suing for mercy will notwithstanding be destroyed; yet it is most acceptable to perceive in the poet's mind a yearning for the salvation of those who have been seen in imminent danger of rushing on to ruin. For *that* is clearly the spirit at work in the entire conclusion of the psalm; and when the peculiar perils of kings and senators are remembered—with few or none above them to represent and enforce Divine claims—it is especially grateful to us to recognise the wooing note which is directly addressed to them, entreating them to show prudence and accept of admonition. It reminds us of our own Scripture which assures us that God willeth all men to be saved— even though they are such as are "in eminent station," wielding authority over us. But the Divine Father is, as our own Scriptures assure us, jealous of any withholding of worshipful honour from the Son of his Love; and we are therefore predisposed to value at its highest rendering the pointed appeal of Jehovah that such honour be accorded; and, moreover, to interpret the wrath looming against such as withhold it as the Father's wrath; and the refuge into which they are pronounced happy who flee as the refuge which, according to the whole tenor of the Psalms, Jehovah is ready to become to all who seek refuge in Him.

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PSALM 3.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Conspiracy, Confidence, Courage and Victory. Chief Conspirator left Unnamed!

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, A Surprising Conspiracy. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Unshaken Confidence. Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, Calm Courage. A Monostich Relic of the Original Psalm—ver. 7a. Strophe IV., vers. 7b, c, 8, Final Victory.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David—When he was fleeing from the face of Absalom his son.

1 Jehovah! how have mine adversaries |multiplied|!
||multitudes|| are rising against me!
2 ||multitudes|| are saying of my soul[a]—
"There is no salvation for him in God!"[b]

3 But ||thou, Jehovah|| art a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter-up of my head.
4 <With my voice> <to Jehovah> I call,
and he answereth me out of his holy mountain.

5 ||I|| laid me down—and slept,
I awoke—for ||Jehovah|| still sustained me.
6 I will not be afraid of myriads of people—
who <round about> have set themselves against me:—

7 Arise, Jehovah! save me, O my God!

Surely[c] thou hast smitten all my foes on the cheek![d]
<the teeth of the lawless> hast thou broken in pieces!
8 <To Jehovah> belongeth salvation:
<On thy people> [be] thy blessing!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] On stringed instruments.

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[a] Or: "my person."
[b] Sep.: "in his God."
[c] Or: "For."
[d] Cp. 1 K. 22[24], Job 16[10], Lam. 3[30], Mi. 5[1].

EXPOSITION.

This is the first psalm ascribed to David, and it well sustains Thirtle's theory of the joint-authorship of the Psalter; which maintains that Hezekiah freely utilised the work of his famous ancestor David, adapting it to the service of the Temple in his own day; but taking care, while himself remaining anonymous, to do homage to David whenever any material portion of a psalm had come down from the father of

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Hebrew Psalmody. To start with the assumption that this psalm was not at all from David, is not only to pay wanton disregard to the literary headline embodying a tradition which has come down from time immemorial, but is to miss the exquisite fitness between David's known circumstances and all the earlier portion of this psalm. On the other hand, to infer that David must have composed the whole of the psalm as it now stands, is to bring ourselves into trouble before we reach the end. With David in mind as author, all is well up to the stirring outcry which opens ver. 7; but then we get into perplexity; for the next line either announces a sudden victory (surely!) in which case it is incredible that no anxiety for the safety of Absalom should have been betrayed; or (with *ki* as "For") it brings up past deliverances as a plea for present rescue, of which allusion the language contains no trace, and it is extremely unlikely, to say the least, that the writer would come so near to the contradiction of pleading, "O save! for thou hast saved!" without inserting some little word determining the accomplished salvation to the past. This perplexity is removed the instant we detect here Hezekiah's adapting hand; since every line of the final strophe suits the overthrow of the Assyrians. David, in no case, could very well have written, "Thou has smitten all my foes," without adding, "heretofore;" whereas Hezekiah, on receiving news of Sennacherib's overthrow, could write in the conviction that he had no other enemies to fear; and, moreover, if there is any fitness in the word "lawless" (cp. 1[1], note) to point to foreigners, then that is the very word Hezekiah would be likely to employ.

Thus released from all embarrassment respecting authorship, we are in a position to appreciate to the full the encouraging, yea even inspiring, spectacle of lofty confidence with which the lately fallen but now spiritually restored monarch—the hero of so many triumphs and the singer of so many songs—now faces the sore chastisements which confront him in the thorny path of discipline which he must henceforth for a long time tread. God has had mercy upon him; has restored to him the joys of his salvation; has renewed to him the gift of his ennobling Spirit. He is inwardly a new man: has had granted to him Divine healing. Hence he is now again a strong man. He can by faith behold Jehovah about him as a shield. He stands erect: his Divine Supporter has lifted up his head. The God whose ark he has dutifully sent back to Jerusalem is already, as by angels' mouths, sending him answers of peace from his holy mountain. And, thus sustained, he soundly sleeps; and, refreshed, rises without fear to confront the myriads of Israel who have been led astray into rebellion.

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We can imagine Hezekiah's muse poising itself on that outburst of supplication from the pen of his ancestor, **Arise, Jehovah! save me, O my God!**—lingering over it, as still most suitable to himself ere yet Assyria's power in the land was broken; and perhaps wondering how much of the original closing strophe could be saved from oblivion: when further uncertainty was obviated by the decisive rebuke of the great Eastern Power; and two good lines remain to weave into his own climax. David first and then Hezekiah would be ready to own—

To Jehovah belongeth salvation;

and both alike—nobly caring for the flock of Jehovah's pasturing—would be prepared, with a full heart, to exclaim—

On thy people be thy blessing!

Thus we need not deny ourselves the pleasure of repeating the delightful words in which Ewald and Delitzsch unite to honour David:—

"As in olden times, he still bears his people upon a loving, interceding heart. He commiserates those who have been led astray, without being angry with them. Distinctions vanish altogether from his mind when he prays for the nation as a whole. The one concluding expression of the psalm—remarks Ewald—throws a bright light into the depths of his noble soul."

PSALM 4.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Ideal Levite's Evening Prayer.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, New Favour Sought in the Strength of Past Supplies. Strophe II., ver. 2, Expostulation addressed to Wealthy Worshippers, whose Taunts for the Poverty of his Office he had borne. Strophe III., ver. 2, The Levite magnifies his Office, and counts on his nearness to God to ensure an Answer to his Prayer. Strophes IV. and V., vers. 4, 5, The Salutary Lessons which his Answer brings him. Strophe VI., ver. 6, A Shrewd Observation on a Prayer Frequently Heard in the Temple. Strophe VII., ver. 7, Grateful Praise for Superior Spiritual Blessings. Strophe VIII., ver. 8, Resolve on speedy and contented Retirement to Rest.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 <When I call> answer me, O God of my right
<when in a strait> thou didst make room for me,
be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer.

2 Ye sons of the great! how long shall my glory be a reproach,—
while ye love emptiness, while ye seek falsehood

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3 Know, then, that Jehovah |hath distinguished| the man of kindness[a] as his own,—
||Jehovah|| will hear when I call unto him.

4 "Be deeply moved, but do not sin,
reflect in your hearts, on your bed, and be silent. ☜

5 "Sacrifice ye sacrifices of righteousness,
and direct your trust unto Jehovah."

6 ||Multitudes|| are saying—
"Who will let us see prosperity?
lift up on us the light of thy face, O Jehovah."

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart
more than when ||their corn and their new wine|| have increased.

8 <In peace, at once> will I lay me down and sleep,
for ||thou, Jehovah, in seclusion||
<in safety> makest me dwell.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] As to Inheritances.

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[a] Cp. Intro., Chap. II., "Kindness."

EXPOSITION.

The presumption is that David wrote this psalm, and that he intended it for evening worship; but on what occasion did he write it, and for whom? Did he write it for himself, when yet fleeing from Absalom, as some suppose; or did he write it for a Levite for ordinary evening worship, as the subscribed line suggests?

It is perhaps not an unnatural supposition that as David wrote the previous psalm, which, in fact, whether so intended or not, comes out well as a morning prayer; therefore he wrote this psalm also as an evening prayer, soon after, under similar circumstances, in fact while yet fleeing from before his rebellious son. Now while the grounds for such a conclusion are very slight, still, if the contents of the psalm had decidedly favoured it, we might have accepted it:—but do they? It is submitted that they do not; and the more obviously that this psalm on its own merits is fitted for evening worship, the more is that circumstance alone sufficient to account for its position here, quite apart from the precise circumstances that gave it birth.

Is it likely that David would compare his escape from Jerusalem to a deliverance from a narrow place into one of more ample room (ver. 1)? Is it likely that he would imply that Absalom's partizans were composed of the great men of the nation (ver. 2)? Is it likely that he would

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advise rebels on the march to reflect on their beds before further committing themselves (ver. 4)? Is it likely that, merely because the Levitical services were left going in Jerusalem, he would advise conspirators to sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness and trust in Jehovah (ver. 5)? And, finally, is it likely that he would represent Absalom's men as revelling in an abundance of corn and new wine, while he, the rightful king, was acting the poor pilgrim, "beggar's staff" in hand (ver. 7)? The extreme unlikelihood that David would do any of these things, emboldens us to decline such an hypothesis of origin, even though sustained by all the eloquence of Professor Delitzsch.

As soon, however, as we entertain the other account of origin suggested, every step in our inquiry deepens our impression in its favour.

David, as we know, was in deepest sympathy with the Levites as a tribe; and after he discovered how he had neglected them in his first essay to bring up the ark to Jerusalem, he took care to assign them the place of honour to which their calling as a tribe entitled them. And when we see him dancing before the ark in a linen ephod we are led to regard him as a Levite in spirit, wanting only the name and the formal appointment. If, therefore, the Levites came to feel their need of an evening psalm, and revealed their want to David, we may be sure that they would readily secure the services of his harp and of his muse.

Turning now to the subscribed line of the psalm and discovering there words which, when properly deciphered and rendered, refer to **Inheritances**, we are at once reminded that Jehovah himself was the inheritance of the Tribe of Levi, and that he, by the bountiful provision which he made in the holy ritual connected with offerings and sacrifices, took care that this consecrated and peculiarly dependent tribe should not in vain look to him for their temporal supplies. (Cp. Num. 18^{20-24}, Deu. 10^{9}, 18^{2}, Josh. $13^{14\ 33}$, Ps. $132^{9.\ 16}$.) We have only to add to this the great truth, attested by Num. $3^{11\ 13,\ 45}$, that the tribe of Levi was by express Divine appointment a representative tribe, in order to realise how certainly and how fully the Levites as a class were an *ideal* tribe. All the godly in Israel were, by calling, Jehovah's *ḥasidhim*, or men of kindness; but the Levites were officially this, and it was peculiarly their duty and privilege to keep all Israel in mind of this their high calling to represent among men the essential kindness of their God. If, therefore, we may assume that the two kinds of inheritance would naturally combine in one celebration,—namely the inheritance of the Levites in Israel, and the inheritance of Israel among the nations,—and one evening song would blend two such congenial memories, then nothing would be more becoming than

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that the Levites should have and should sustain in the Temple service just such an anthem of praise as this.

The more narrowly we examine this psalm, so subscribed, the more admirably do we find it fitted for such a purpose.

The Levite proclaims that his right is in Jehovah, who has made room for him in Jerusalem, although he has given him no landed estate among his brethren of the other tribes. His peculiar position exposes him to especial trials; and, among them is his liability to be taunted for his poverty and dependence by the insolent rich. These are apt to turn the glory of his position into a reproach. He would, therefore, have such lovers of emptiness, such seekers of falsehood, know that the great principle of Divine kindness of which his tribe is the embodied representative has been made wonderful by Jehovah: who will assuredly now hearken to his evening prayer. Indeed he seems to be already possessed of an answer: counselling him when deeply moved by the taunts of the wealthy to beware of the sin of dissatisfaction and envy: let him, therefore, school his mind to contentment in the silence of the wakeful midnight hour, as he lies on his lonely bed; let him do his duty when offering sacrifice for himself and for the sins of his people; and so let him direct his trust unto Jehovah. To this answer, he gratefully responds. Having observed how multitudes in their prayers when offering their temple-gifts, appear, with all their possessions, to be harassed by adversity and hoping for better times; having noticed also the gladness of his clients when their corn and their new wine have increased; he acknowledges that Jehovah has put into his heart a deeper and more lasting joy than any which the wealthy have experienced. Thus refreshed in spirit, at peace with God and with his fellow-men,— he lays him down to sleep in his temple-chamber, — in seclusion from the world—apart, it may be, from his loved ones in the distant Levitical city; but in conscious safety as he thus reposes under the very wings of the God of Israel. Thus concludes the Ideal Levite's evening psalm.

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PSALM 5.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Morning Prayer for Deliverance from Conspirators.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Petitions Pleaded to which an Answer is Awaited. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Jehovah's Character Forbids the Success of the Rebels. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, The Petitioner's Privileged Position made a Plea for Guidance through Present Perils. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, The Punishment of the Wicked will Restore the Confidence of the Righteous.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 <To mine utterances> give ear, O Jehovah,
understand thou my plaint:
2 Attend to the voice of my cry for help, my King and my God,
for <unto thee> do I pray.
3 Jehovah <in the morning> shalt thou hear my voice,
<in the morning> will I set in order for thee, and keep watch.

4 For <not a GOD finding pleasure in lawlessness> art |thou|,
there <shall not sojourn with thee> a doer of wrong:
5 Boasters |shall not stand their ground| before thine eyes,
thou hatest all workers of iniquity:[a]
6 Thou wilt destroy the speakers of falsehood,
<the man of bloodshed and deceit> Jehovah |abhorreth|.

7 But ||I|| <in the abounding of thy kindness> may enter thy house,
I may bow down towards thy holy temple in reverence of thee.
8 Jehovah! lead me with thy righteousness, because of my watching foes,
make even before me thy way.
9 For there is, in his mouth, nothing steadfast—<within them>is a yawning gulf,
<an opened grave> is their throat—<their tongue>they smooth.

10 Hold them guilty, O God, let them fall by their own counsels,
<in the abounding of their transgressions> thrust them out—
for they have defied thee:
11 That all <may rejoice> who take refuge in thee—
<to the ages> may ring out their joy,
And do thou overshadow them, that |they| may exult—
who are lovers of thy name.
12 For ||thou thyself|| dost bless the righteous one,
O Jehovah! <as with an all-covering shield> <with favour> dost thou encompass him.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] With stringed instruments. Over the male choir.

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[a] "Naughtiness"—Dr.

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm is attributed to David; and its contents well sustain the inscription—especially if we date its origin at the time when the rebellion of Absalom was being fomented by men who were yet maintaining the appearance of loyalty to the king, though really plotting against him.

The danger prompting the prayer was evidently most serious. It seems to have been caused by one chief offender, aided by associates: hence the alternation of the language between the leader and his followers—**his mouth, their tongue**, and the like. The character of these workers of mischief is described in unsparing terms. They are **lawless** men, patrons of **wrong**, guilty of **defying** Jehovah: **boastful**, yet **deceitful**; their language is fair, for **they smooth their tongue**, but their principles are foul: their transgressions abound, and at least one of their number is **a man of bloodshed and deceit**. They are plotters; with nefarious designs not yet avowed. Probably the perfidy of Ahithophel is already evident to the king, although he does not yet point to him so plainly as in later psalms.

It is perfectly clear that the psalmist perceives himself to be aimed at by the conspirators: hence his prayer for Divine guidance **because of his watchful foes.**

It is further clear that the psalmist perceives the very government of Jehovah in Israel to be at stake, so that deliverance vouchsafed to the petitioner by bringing him out of this crisis will cause great joy to the godly men of the nation.

It is no objection to the Davidic authorship of this psalm that the writer appears to be animated by the Levitical spirit of consecration—so much so that we are tempted to ask whether he was not himself a Priest with the ordering of the sacrifices on the altar under his own charge. But this spirit and this lively interest in the Divinely appointed ritual, as we know, had found a remarkable embodiment in David himself, as the history indicates, and as these psalms are themselves beginning to reveal. Hence it is perfectly natural that the king should seem to count on his psalm being used in the next morning's worship, and that he should liken his prayer itself to an ordered sacrifice, promising himself that he will watch for a divine response.

The yet deeper element of instruction to be discovered in this psalm, is, the evidence it affords of spiritual restoration on the part of the king. If we are right in dating this psalm at the time when the fire of rebellion was already glowing in secret, then we know where we are, with reference to the antecedent event of David's deplorable

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fall. He is no longer under the spell of that spiritual paralysis which followed his transgression: he has humbled himself in the dust, has sought and found forgiveness, is once more in fellowship with his forgiving God. Hence, now again, Jehovah's cause is his own; and the spiritual well-being of those who love Him is near to his heart. Restored to fellowship with his holy God, he realises his covenant relation to Him who is carrying forward his vast plans of Redemption; and therefore anticipates abiding gladness to all who love Jehovah's name.

PSALM 6.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Prayer for Deliverance from Sickness and Death.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Prayer for Favour instead of Anger. Strophe II., vers. 4—7, For Life instead of Death. Strophe III., vers. 8—10, In the Strength of a Divine Answer, Mischief-makers are Dismissed.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 Jehovah! do not <in thine anger> correct me,
nor <in thy wrath> chastise me:
2 Be gracious unto me, Jehovah! for <languishing> am |I|,
heal me, Jehovah! for <dismayed> are my bones,—
3 yea ||my soul||[a] is dismayed exceedingly;
And ||thou, Jehovah|| how long?

4 Oh return, Jehovah, rescue my soul,
save me, for Thy kindness' sake;
5 For <in death> there is no memorial of thee,
<in hades> who can give thanks[b] unto thee?
6 I am weary with my sighing,
I soak, every night, my couch,
<with my tears> <my bed> I drench:
7 <Shrivelled from vexation> is mine eye,
it hath aged, because of all mine adversaries.

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;[c]
For Jehovah |hath heard| the voice of my weeping,
9 Jehovah |hath heard| my supplication,—
||Jehovah|| doth accept my prayer:
10 <Shamed and sorely dismayed> will be all my foes,
they will turn back, will be shamed, in a moment.

[Nm.]

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[a] The sphere in which various emotions . . . come into consciousness "—Dr. P. B. V. Glos. I. "Soul."

[b] "*Own* or *acknowledge* publicly and openly" —Dr.

[c] "Naughtiness "—Dr.

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EXPOSITION.

This is the first of a series of psalms of profound importance in the inward and spiritual history of redemption; inasmuch as, among them, they disclose a fact never formally stated in David's history nor made obtrusive in his psalms. David's lamentable fall being in any case notorious, it has ever been a satisfaction to the spiritual-minded to be able to point to his penitential psalms as proof that, if he sinned wickedly, he repented very humbly and sincerely. Had it been otherwise, his eminence as a king and as a psalmist would have been a stumbling-block to the superficial and unwary. His penitential psalms, therefore, have been made none too prominent. They have served as a salutary warning to morally weak souls, who have been only too ready to stumble at David's great offence, if not also to extenuate their own errors under the specious cover of his example.

This invaluable lesson is susceptible of being all the more strongly enforced when the disclosure to which we have alluded becomes evident. It is, that before David repented, he had to be severely chastised. Not only was he soon after punished by the death of his child, the fruit of his illicit connection with Bathsheba; not only was he long held under chastisement by the various retributions in kind which for years served to remind him of his own guilt; but, as it would seem, even before the death of that child, he had to endure a severe infliction from the hand of his offended God, which smote him in his own person, disfigured his otherwise noble face, caused him excruciating and long protracted pain, compelled him to make midnight outcries of agony which spread consternation through his palace, not unattended by the aversion of some of the members of his household and the evil surmisings and whisperings of others. Indeed, it is tolerably clear that these whisperings reached the ears of his courtiers, some of whom were moved thereby into base though cloaked disloyalty.

The evidence of this comes out little by little, partly in the lines and partly between the lines, of the series of psalms of which that before us is the first. Attribute to David the psalms to which his name is prefixed—render them fearlessly and consistently—read them one after another with the apprehensiveness which the known circumstances of David's life are fitted to suggest, and the conclusion emerges, with a cogency which candour cannot resist, that the very punishment threatened on David's sons in the event of their transgressing (2 Sam. 27), actually fell on himself—and he, David, for a time, though perhaps none about him dare say it save with bated breath—became a leper! This explains many words and facts which are otherwise inexplicable.

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From this point of view, this sixth psalm falls into its place, as the first of a series which have liturgically and conveniently been called "penitential." In truth there is in this psalm no actual confession of sin —rather an awkward circumstance, one might think, considering the frankness which becomes avowed confession, but which is fully explained when we remember that the name "penitential" is in this case purely conventional, and that what we miss here we find explicit enough later on. Nevertheless, there is this convenience in the classification—that by bringing back to this psalm what we learn from subsequent evidence, we are rewarded by the discovery of a richer meaning in these words than we might otherwise have detected.

Well might David apprehend that his present pains were a token of Divine **displeasure**: well might he feel as though he were carrying in himself the sentence of **death**: well might he be quite unable, under the circumstances, to rise above the more gloomy views of **hades** which were current in his day (cp. Intro. Chap. III. "Hades"), intensified by the contrast between the silence of the underworld, as usually apprehended, and the musical and joyful **memorial** of **thanksgiving** now being daily rendered in Jerusalem under the fostering care of his own inventive genius: well might the discovered presence at his court of **adversaries** add to the bitterness of his shame that he could not conceal from them its visible as well as audible manifestations. And now to think that these adversaries to his person were plotting **mischief** to his throne and realm, on the assumption that his demise could not long be delayed,—this was perhaps the bitterest ingredient in his cup. From this point of view, the psalm before us becomes intensely dramatic.

The suddenness and completeness with which the scene changes, in the last strophe, would appear psychologically puzzling in the last degree, had the writer of the psalm been any other than David. No prophet with a message of peace comes on the scene; and yet the storm within is hushed in a moment. It is instant peace, which brings active power; the Divine healing simultaneously penetrates and pervades body and mind. Somehow, the petitioner knows in a moment that he is heard. His courage rises commensurately, as in a kingly soul accustomed to command. **Depart**, says he, to the faithless cowards who were secretly gloating over his ignominious humiliation; and, with prophetic glance, he apprehends the completeness of their overthrow, rendered certain by his recovery.

How is this? How has it come about? David KNEW, as his threefold assurance, twice of the **hearing**, and then—with changed emphasis —**of the hearer** of his prayer—attests. How did he know?

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He was a prophet. He had been long ago anointed with the Holy Spirit. His spirit had for years been responsive to God's Spirit. Full many a time had the Divine Artist's invisible fingers swept over the chords of his soul, calling forth music which he knew well had come from heaven. And, however obstinately slow he had been to perceive it, at length his loss of spiritual power had become to him too painfully evident. Hence, when just now he had exclaimed, **Oh return, Jehovah!** there was a conscious void, the refilling of which had behind it a background of experience which made it most real, most certain, most invigorating. Jehovah's restored presence was its own witness; and, once more, "Jehovah's word" of prophetic certainty "was on his tongue."

Hence this psalm fills us also with a chastened joy. We are instructed, that the spiritual life is no imaginary thing; that our Heavenly Father has efficacious means at his command whereby to make his absence felt when we wilfully and persistently offend him; and again, at his command, when he would restore unto us the joy of his salvation. And though we are not prophets, and may not in some ways be as directly conscious of Divine activities upon our spirits as though we could pour forth prophetic strains admittedly given from above, yet is there a residuum of identity between the influences of the one Divine Spirit on all men in all ages. The Spirit of Jehovah is always and everywhere a holy spirit, both demanding and creating holiness where he dwells: demanding it in David, demanding it in ourselves. Hence psalms like these have a value that is perennial.

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PSALM 7.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—One Wrongfully Accused Commits his Vindication to the Righteous Judge of All the Earth.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—2, Appeal to Jehovah for Safety. Strophe II., vers. 3—5, False Accusations Indignantly Denied. Strophe III., vers. 6—11, The Interposition of Jehovah as Judge Invoked. Strophe IV., vers. 12, 13, The Divine Pursuer Lying in Wait for the Human Pursuer. Strophe V., vers. 14—16, The Author of Trouble brings it back on his Own Head. Strophe VI., ver. 17, A Refrain Couplet, Promising Praise.

[Lm.] A Discursive Song —By David—Which he sang to Jehovah over the words of Cush the Benjamite.[a]

1 Jehovah, my God, <in thee> have I taken refuge,
save me from all who pursue me, and deliver me:
2 Lest he[b] tear in pieces, like a lion, my soul,
and there be no deliverer[c] to rescue.

3 Jehovah, my God <if I have done this,—
if there be iniquity in my hands,—
4 if I have requited my friend with evil,—
or despoiled[d] him who was mine enemy without cause>
5 Let an enemy |pursue| my soul, and overtake it,
and tread, to the earth, my life,
and <my glory, in the dust> let him cause to dwell. Selah

6 Oh arise, Jehovah, in thine anger,
lift up thyself against the furious outbursts of my foes,
and awake for me!—<justice> hast thou commanded!
7 <When ||the assembly of peoples|| gather round thee>
then <above it, on high> oh sit enthroned![e]
8 ||Jehovah|| judgeth peoples—do me justice,[f] Jehovah,—
according to my righteousness,
and according to mine integrity[g] upon me.
9 Let the wrong of lawless ones, I pray, come to an end,
and wilt thou establish him who is righteous,—
seeing that <a trier of minds and motives>[h] is God the righteous.
10 ||My shield|| is with God—saviour of the upright in heart:
11 ||God|| is a righteous judge—a GOD who threateneth[i] every day.

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[a] Prob. a courtier in the court of Saul: incident otherwise unknown.
[b] Prob. alluding to Saul himself.
[c] So it shd be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. Lam. 5[8]—Gn.
[d] So it shd be (w. Aram. and Syr.).—Gn.
[e] So Br. and others. M.T.: "return"—as Dr. and others.
[f] Or: "vindicate me," as in 26[1], 43[1].
[g] Or: "blamelessness," "whole-hearted-ness."
[h] U.: "hearts and reins." "The reins are the seat of the emotions, just as the heart is the seat of the thoughts and the affections"—Del. Heart—"the organ of intellect": reins—"the organs of feeling"—Dr. Cp. Jer. 11[20], 12[2], 17[10], 20[12].
[i] "If in the end God lets his anger break forth, He does so not without having previously threatened every day, viz. the godless (cp. Isa. 66[14], Mal. 1[4])"—Del.

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12 <If a man turn not>
<His sword> he whetteth,
<His bow> hath he trodden and made ready,
13 and <against him> hath prepared the weapons of death,
<His arrows, into burning ones> he maketh.

14 Lo! he travaileth with trouble:
yea he hath conceived mischief, and brought forth delusion,
15 <A pit> he digged, and deepened it,
and then fell into the ditch he must needs make.
16 His mischief |turneth back| on his own head,
and <on his own crown> ||his violence|| descendeth.

17 I will thank Jehovah, according to his righteousness,
and will celebrate in psalm the name of Jehovah, Most High.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the Winepresses. The Feast of Tabernacles.

EXPOSITION.

As this psalm is avowedly **discursive**, we need not be over-solicitous about its framework or its precise line of thought. Nevertheless, in its author and its occasion, we may find fruitful suggestions wherewith to attempt our exposition. We have no subsidiary information respecting **Cush the Benjamite**, but may infer, with some probability, that his tribe is mentioned for the very purpose of suggesting that he was a partisan of King Saul. It is plain that he had slandered David to his royal master; and it is not difficult to make out the nature of the accusations he had made—with sufficient clearness, at least, to show how untrue they were, how base, and how hard to David's noble and sensitive nature to bear. Cush had, apparently, accused David of wrongfully retaining in **his own hands** spoils which belonged to the king; of **returning evil for the good** which Saul as his early **friend** had done him; and, in some way, of **taking toll** for his professed generosity in twice over sparing Saul's life. Not only were these accusations hard to bear, but in all probability David had no opportunity to defend himself, and was satisfied that he would not now be heard even if admitted into Saul's presence. Under these circumstances his whole soul turns to Jehovah as his supreme Judge; and to him he pours out his complaint.

Probably this was the chief feature of the Psalm as David first wrote it; and was well and effectively closed by those concluding strophes which picturesquely show how wrongdoers often prepare their own punishment. That he afterwards added to it, and greatly

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strengthened it, is a perfectly natural supposition; and this may have occasioned the irregularity of the composition, at the same time that it materially added to its permanent value.

It is so instructive to trace the ways in which Jehovah prepares his prophetic servants to receive and make known their messages, that we may be pardoned for surmising that David's subsequent discharge of the duties of judge of Israel, and his enlarged outlook on surrounding nations, which doubtless afforded him opportunities of perceiving how often the great ones of the earth suffered justice to their subjects to be trampled in the dust,—became the educative means of enabling David to grasp some of the deeper problems involved in Jehovah's judgeship over the individuals and nations of the earth.

Be this as it may, we are struck and impressed by the strong gleams of light which are here focussed upon several portions of the judicial province pertaining to the Judge of all the earth. In the first place, we observe the Divine Judge's frequent *apparent unconcern* with the moral quality of the actions of men. In his holy wisdom, he, to some considerable extent, allows his human creatures to do as they please, even when they are rebelling against him. We may well believe that he does this, partly to suffer the wicked to work out what is in them in the exercise of their birthright of moral freedom, and partly to discipline the righteous in patience, courage and undying faith. But, whatever his reasons, the fact is undoubted; and the consequent trial to such as are earnestly trying to please God is such as sometimes to make it appear as though Jehovah were asleep. Hence the outcries of a psalm like this:—**Arise**—**lift up thyself**—**awake for me.** In the next place, this psalmist recognises that in Jehovah there is and must be such a fund of *holy passion for righteousness* as to ensure not only that he must ultimately do right, but that there must be in him such a cumulative storage of anger with wrong-doing as to render natural and inevitable outbursts of wrath on fitting occasions: otherwise there would be something deficient in Jehovah's personal sanction of his own holy laws. David as judge in Israel would be able to feel this. Moreover, as he himself had been commanded to do right, as between man and man among his people, how could he afford to lose faith in Jehovah's own observance of the justice which he had commanded to those who judicially represented him among men? Amid the throngs that gathered around him in the gates of Jerusalem from day to day, David had learned the lesson that justice to the masses demands justice to individuals; and though Jehovah had nations to govern and judge, David was assured that his own individual case must pass under Divine recognition—he could not be lost in a crowd before God:

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Jehovah judgeth peoples—do me justice—the transition was easy. All the more is individual judgment demanded, that Jehovah is **a trier of minds and motives**, without which outward actions cannot be accurately weighed. It is probable that the slanders of Cush the Benjamite had brought this home to David's painful experience. There may have been a colourable element of truth in every fact alleged against David by his accuser, and yet the damaging suggestions grafted upon them have been most unjust and cruel. Hence the solace derived by David from his conscious **integrity**: hence his ultimate feeling of safety as **shielded** by the **Saviour of the upright in heart.** Whether with individuals or with nations, the processes of Divine government are preparatory, educative, transitional. It is right that liberty even to rebel should be granted for a time; and yet right that it should not be allowed to continue for ever: hence the prayer of the psalmist should find an echo in every upright heart—**Let the wrong of the lawless, I pray, come to an end.** Wherefore should it be perpetuated for ever? Then the lawless must forsake his way and the man of iniquity his thoughts. If he will not part with his iniquity by salvation, then he must perish with it in destruction; for the decree has gone forth. GOD, however, **is a righteous judge** in the large sense that giveth mercy every chance to triumph over judgment; and therefore he is an **El**—a Mighty One—**who threateneth every day.** His anger is not manifested in punitive action every day, or else where would be the apparent unconcern which prompted the opening outcry of this very psalm? All the more, then, that the wrath of God against sin is not every day revealed in Divine action, must the Divine word which faithfully **threatens**, be sounded forth among men. The Divine method plainly is, that scope should be given for fear to prepare the way for love.

It may be admitted that there is some doubt as to the precise way in which the two concluding strophes of this psalm follow up those which have preceded. But if we are right in concluding that the opening words of verse 12 refer to the **pursuer** of the early part of the psalm: **If he**—the offender—**turn not** from his evil way; then **He**—the Divine Judge—**whetteth his sword**, etc.; that is, holdeth himself ready to stop the offender's wicked course by visiting him with sudden arrest and punishment:—if, we say, this be the onward course of the psalm, then two principles are evolved which are worthy of being laid side by side; namely that, while Jehovah is prepared himself to stop evil-doers; evil-doers are preparing their own destruction: **Their mischief returneth upon their own head.** Is it possible that this is how evil will at length be swept out of the universe? and that this is the reason

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why it is so long permitted? We may not precipitate the teaching of the psalms; but this at least is unquestionable; namely, that the cessation of moral evil in this psalm becomes an object of desire and prayer. How will it end? Is Jehovah preparing to destroy it, by permitting it to continue until it destroy itself? The question, thus presented, is perhaps too vague to arrest the student's mind. A preliminary question is needed:—Has moral evil a personal embodiment in one who is, par eminence, The Evil One? That question will recur in the next psalm.

The main tenor of this psalm being what it is, it must be regarded as a significant coincidence, that the musical line,—moved up from the head of the next psalm (where its appropriateness was not evident) to the foot of this, in conformity with Dr. Thirtle's readjustment of the psalm-titles,—should so fully vindicate its new position. "The Wine-presses," reminding us of the complete ingathering of the fruits of the year, serve at once directly to anticipate the closing of Jehovah's retributive dealings with men, and at the same time to lead on to such Scriptures as Isa. 63^{1-6}, Joel 3^{12-17}, and Rev. 19^{15}, where this solemn subject is more fully set forth.

PSALM 8.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Jehovah's Majesty Exalted by means of Man's Dominion.

ANALYSIS.—An Original Solo, vers. 3—8: Adapted to Temple Worship by Prelude and Refrain, vers. 1a, b, and 9, and by an Introductory Strophe, vers. 1c, 2.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 *Jehovah, our Sovereign Lord!*
|how wonderful| is thy name in all the earth!

2 <Because thy majesty |hath been uplifted| above[a] the heavens>
<Out of the mouth of children and sucklings> hast thou founded a stronghold,
on account of thine adversaries,—
to silence[b] foe and avenger.[c]

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[a] So Sep. | [b] Or: "destroy." | [c] Cp. 44^{16}

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3 <When I view thy heavens, the work[a] of thy fingers,
moon and stars which thou hast established>
4 What [was] weak man, that thou shouldst think of him,
or the son of the earth-born, that thou shouldst set him in charge;[b]
5 And shouldst make[c] him but little less than messengers divine,[d]
yea <with glory and state> shouldst crown him;
6 Shouldst give him dominion over the works of thy hands,—
<all things> shouldst have put under his feet:—
7 cattle, small and large,—all of them,—
yea even the beasts of the field,—[e]
8 the bird of the heavens, and the fishes of the sea,—
whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
9 *Jehovah, our Sovereign Lord!*
|how wonderful| is thy name in all the earth!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] 'L M T H L B N = prob. "Maidens to a youth": pos. "concerning the death of the champion": pos. "concerning the white death=leprosy."

[a] So the Eastern Massorites; but the Western (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.): "works" (pl.)—Gn.
[b] Cp. Num. 3[10], 27[16], Jer. 49[19], 50[44].
[c] For tense see Heb. of Job 7[18] and Ps. 144[3].
[d] Heb. *'elohim*; as in 82[1], 97[7].
[e] Or: "plain."

EXPOSITION.

The reason for resolving the chief part of this psalm (vers. 3—8) into a Solo, is written upon its face, by the appearance of the personal pronoun I. From that point onward, the strain runs on breathlessly, as a single magnificent sentence, to the end, where the voice of the soloist is hushed in the renewed acclaim of the united congregation, in which, for a second time, the whole people adoringly address **Jehovah as our Sovereign Lord.** The introductory strophe (vers. 1c., 2), interposed between the prelude and the solo, is in any case special, and indeed remarkably unique: probably imparting to the whole psalm its deepest prophetic import.

In attributing the solo to David's early shepherd days, there is no need to overlook the analogical argument so beautifully put by Delitzsch, in favour of not dating the finished production of the psalm earlier than that momentous day on which the Spirit of Prophecy came upon the youthful harpist. "Just as the Gospels contain no discourses delivered by our Lord previous to his baptism in the Jordan, and the Canon of the New Testament contains no writings of the Apostles dating from the time before Pentecost, so the Canon of the Old Testament contains no Psalms of David that were composed by him prior to his anointing. Not till after he is the anointed of the God of Jacob does he become the sweet singer of Israel, upon whose tongue is the word of Jahve (2 Sam. 23[1, 2])." Already, therefore, even in this early psalm, may we regard its composer as "a prophet," carried away into things to come by the Holy Spirit of insight, foresight and wisdom.

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The Solo gives a night-view of the heavens, in their vastness stability and splendour; which would have made weak man, by contrast, seem small and evanescent, but for the recollection of his creation and destiny as revealed in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, with the great words of which the poet's mind was manifestly filled. Creation, seen in one of her most lovely moods, and the Creation Story, recalled in one of its most suggestive features, are, so to speak, the alphabet employed by the Illuminating Spirit to quicken the psalmist's mind. That the scene is a night-scene, naturally follows from the absence of the sun; and is confirmed by the fact that the blaze of the sun by day renders the heavens as a whole practically invisible; whereas, here, not only are the heavens scanned with lingering delight, but their minute and variegated beauties call forth admiration of the skill of the Divine Artist's fingers. Nevertheless, vastness is here, as the poet's eye sweeps the whole heavens; and permanence, as he recalls how many times he has gazed at the same spectacle, and his ancestors before him have been similarly delighted: and so his mind is carried back to the Creation Story, to realise how abiding are moon and stars which Jehovah has established in the heavens. The first effect of this midnight survey of the heavens is to make man appear weak and short-lived. Because I see this, or when I see it afresh, I am moved to exclaim—What is weak man—what the son of the earth-born that thou shouldst remember him, visit him, set him in charge over this lower world? And so, by the aid of the Creation Story, a reaction is induced in the poet's mind; and there come into view Man's capacity, charge, dignity, destiny. After all, such a responsible being cannot be wholly weak and short-lived.

Besides: to "weak man" succeeds a son of man, for Adam is not only an individual, but a race; and it is to the race, as such, that the charge to wield dominion is given: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it,—and have dominion." The earth is to be filled and subdued in order to the exercise of dominion. Therefore the commission is to the race; and this alone justifies the conclusion that the allusion to the first chapter of Genesis begins with verse 4 of our psalm, and not merely with verse 5 as some critics have thought.

With such a charge laid upon him, to rule inferior creatures, Man appears to be little less than the messengers divine, here termed in Hebrew *'elohim*, a word of wider applicability than our English word "God" when spelled with a capital initial; as will appear from an examination of Exo. 21^{6}, $22^{8\ 9,\ 28}$, and Ps. $82^{1,\ 2\ 6,\ 7}$. If, as appears from these passages, human judges, as representing the Divine Judge, could

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be called *'elohim*; much more may heavenly messengers have been so named in this place; and, to them, accordingly, we conclude that reference is here made.

Whether the crowning of Man with glory and state, when he was visited and installed into office, imports the bestowment on him of any visible splendour calculated to strike his animal subjects with reverence and challenge at once their submission, we are not plainly told; and yet the discovery of the "nakedness" which made man "ashamed" after his transgression may, not unnaturally, be deciphered as suggesting something more akin to an actual disrobing than the inner consciousness of disobedience alone.

It is probably of greater importance to connect with Man's commission to govern this lower world his possession of the Divine Image: "Let us make man in our image . . . and (qualified by that endowment) let him have dominion." It is the Image bestowed which qualifies for the Dominion assigned. This consideration ought probably to go a long way towards settling the question: Wherein consisted that Image? If we could only be content to derive our answer from the First of Genesis, that answer might stand thus: The Image of God in which man was created was his capacity to rule —his capacity to rule over and care for beings beneath himself. It cannot be denied that God possessed that capacity: that it was His glory and honour to know his subjects, to appraise their powers, to foresee their needs, and to provide with an unspeakably gracious goodwill (145[16]) for the due and orderly satisfaction of every propensity with which he himself had endowed them. If so, it cannot be denied that the bestowment of the same capacity on man would render him God-like just to the degree to which he came to possess it. It is surely to some extent confirmatory of this, to note the seeming pride with which the psalmist lingers on the extent of Man's realm, in the several orders of which it is composed, and the several areas in which his subjects dwell. Indeed, the apparent inclusion of wild animals under the terms **beasts of the field** or **plain**, and the comprehension of **birds** and **fishes**, to say nothing of **the monsters of the deep**, as all placed under Man's dominion, go to show that so vast a kingdom needs a God-like king; and to raise the question, whether Man ought not to be able to wield a wider and more potent control over his subjects than he is now seen to possess. In any case, Man was originally majestically crowned; and if to any extent he has lost his dominion, it can scarcely be that he has lost it for ever. To assume that he has, would afford a poor prospect of **silencing** for ever the **foe and the avenger.**

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This reference reminds us that Strophe 1 (vers. 1c, 2) now demands our patient attention. The attachment of the third line of the psalm to this strophe, as its introduction, is presumably correct; inasmuch as we can scarcely think that the prelude of the psalm and its final refrain were not meant to be identical. If so, the precise form which this third line should assume and the meaning it should bear, become all the more important when it is seen to be the very base on which the charming "child and suckling" strophe is made to rest. Critics are nearly agreed that some word or letter has gone wrong in this line; and we should be content implicitly to follow Dr. Ginsburg's lead in emending it by reference to Num. 27^{20}, save for the difficulty of seeing any comparison whatever between the putting by Moses of some of his majesty on Joshua and the putting by Jehovah of his majesty on the heavens. Under these circumstances, while gladly accepting the suggestion of Ginsburg and others by restoring the word *nâthatta* out of the seemingly broken fragment *t'nah* of the M.T., we would prefer to follow the Septuagint, which reads, as we think, with profound significance: **Because thy majesty hath been uplifted above the heavens.** The preciousness of the result, by heightening the prophetic significance of the whole psalm, must be our excuse for detaining the reader on a point so critical.

Advancing at once to the broad meaning of the introductory strophe when thus emended, we remark: That we are thus warranted in concluding, that it is in some way this very uplifting of Jehovah's majesty into the heavens, which makes way for the ministry of children; and that at least the ministry of children is to assist in **silencing the foe and avenger** whose existence is so singularly introduced into this psalm at its very head and front. It cannot be denied that he is here brought forward with a circumstantiality which is positively startling. For first there is a general reference to Jehovah's **adversaries,** as furnishing a reason for the Divine procedure of preparing the mighty ministry of children's praise, which praise is made the foundation of a bulwark which Jehovah rears in the midst of his foes. That is the general statement; which is then particularised by the more specific assertion of the result expected to follow from the testimony of infant voices. So that, in fact, we are here confronted with a *company* of **adversaries;** headed, as it would seem, by *one* **foe** in particular, who is not only a foe but an **avenger,** with vengeance in his heart; as though he had a wrong to redress, an injury real or supposed to resent by retaliation. Such is the natural and proper force and setting of the words. It is a conceivable state of things: a band of adversaries, with a champion foe and avenger at their head. Even as, in the early days

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of David—probably not far from the time when this psalm was written—the Philistines were "the adversaries" of Israel, and of Israel's God, Jehovah; and then there stood forth, at the head of those adversaries, and in their name, a foe and avenger, by name Goliath: who, indeed, by a well-aimed blow from David's sling was for ever silenced in death. This is not to say, that such an incident could by any means fill out the words before us; but only that we may do well to seize the words in their proper force and full significance. Jehovah has adversaries: at their head is a chieftain, who is determined, resentful and relentless. He is to be silenced. Children are to be employed to close his mouth. Their weapons will be their words. Jehovah founds a tower of strength in their words; which, presumably—as the Septuagint interprets—will be words of "praise." Children praise Jehovah for his majesty. His majesty is seen in creation, on which and through which glimpses of it are seen. His name—that is the revelation of his power, wisdom, and goodness in creation—fills the whole earth. This revelation is already an objective reality: the moon-and-star-lit heavens are stretched forth over all the earth. Wherever the sons of the earth-born tread, they find above them the same eloquent heavens. The Maker of the stars above is the Creator of the flowers beneath. The tokens of God fill all the earth. But this objective revelation has not yet become subjective. The wonderful fact of Jehovah's creatorship has not yet been translated into the worshipful feeling of adoration and gratitude in all the earth. Until this is realised, the very refrain of this psalm is unfulfilled prophecy. Jehovah does not receive back "the fulness of all the earth" as "his glory" (Isa. 6^3) so long as "man is vile." Adversaries to Jehovah abound; his foe is at large; and his friends are much in the position of a beleaguered fortress.

But the process of fulfilment has received an auspicious beginning. In one sense, Jehovah's glory was uplifted into the heavens when Man fell into disobedience. In another, and a redemptive sense, it is receiving a new and more wonderful elevation in Jesus as the Son of Man. This elevation was inaugurated by the resurrection, ascension and enthronisation in heaven of the Man Christ Jesus. And, on earth, children have begun to sing their hosannahs with new point and with adoring ecstasy. They not only know how to wonder at the stars, but they are learning from generation to generation to love the Man who died for them and rose again. By-and-by, when the Lord of Life has glorified his Suffering Assembly and presented it before the heavenly throne, the process of uplifting Jehovah's majesty above the heavens will be complete, and the whole earth will be filled with a bright

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reflection of his glory. The adversaries of Jehovah are doomed to defeat. Their Champion—the Adversary—the **Foe and Avenger** of this psalm—has met with his equal. But the process of silencing the Enemy is moral before it is physical. Hence the more than symbolic employment of infants' tongues to silence the Devil. The victory will be earned by Self-sacrificing Love before it is confirmed and consummated by expelling and destroying power. The Foe hates children; and has had good reason, ever since the promise came that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head. The child-spirit of humble and trustful love will yet finally and for ever **silence the Foe and Avenger.**

David may well have felt himself to have been a mere **child** when he went forth to meet Goliath; and his son Hezekiah must have been possessed of much of the childlike spirit, when he quietly rested in Jerusalem, waiting for the overthrow of Sennacherib. Whether the introductory strophe of this psalm was written by the one or the other of these psalmists, the Spirit of God has by its means turned this Shepherd's lay into a psalm as far-reaching as it is beautiful, dramatic and above all instructive as to the ways of Jehovah with men.

The possible concurrence of meanings decipherable in the musical instruction now moved to the foot of this psalm are so astounding as almost to pass belief; and we are quite content with the first named as abundantly sufficient. Those who are prepared for further cryptic meanings can discreetly ponder how much further they may wisely go.

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PSALMS 9, 10.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Kingship of Jehovah in Zion Finally Triumphant over a League between the Nations and the Lawless One.

ANALYSIS.—These two psalms are bound together as originally one, chiefly by the remains of a set of Alphabetical Initials beginning the former psalm and extending into the latter, and by Coincidences of Language which cannot be regarded as accidental; and yet the feeling of the Compound Psalm so completely changes as to reveal Two Distinct Situations,—the one suited to the time of David after a decisive victory over his enemies, and the other strikingly fitted for Hezekiah's peculiar trials due to the Assyrian Invasion. For an attempt to trace these changes, see "Exposition." The Remains of the Alphabetical Acrostic are as follow: *aleph*, vers. 1, 2, four times; *beth*, ver. 3, once; *gimel*, ver. 5, once; *he*, ver. 6, once; *waw*, vers. 7, 8, 9, 10, four times: *zain*, ver. 11, once; *ḥeth*, ver. 13, once; *ṭeth*, ver. 15, once; *yod*, ver. 17, once; *ḳoph* (? for *ḳaph*), ver. 19, once; *lamed*, 10^{1}, once; *ḳoph*, 10^{12}, once; *resh*, 10^{14}, once; *shin*, 10^{15}, once; *tau*, 10^{17}, once.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 I would fain thank Jehovah with all my heart,
I would tell of all thy wondrous works:
2 I would rejoice and exult in thee,
I would make melody of thy name,[a] O Most High!

3 Because mine enemies turned back,—
they stumbled and perished at thy presence:
4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause,
thou hast sat on a throne judging righteously.

5 Thou hast rebuked nations, hast destroyed the lawless one,
<their name> hast thou wiped out, to the ages and beyond.
6 <As for the enemy> they have come to an end, [their] ruins [are] perpetual,
and <as for the cities thou hast uprooted> <perished> is their very memory.

7 But ‖Jehovah‖ <to the ages> holdeth his seat,
he hath set up, for judgment, his throne;
8 And ‖He himself‖ will judge the world in righteousness,
will minister judgment to the peoples in equity.[b]

9 So may Jehovah |become| a lofty retreat for the crushed one,[c]
a lofty retreat for times of extremity:[d]
10 That |they| may trust in thee who know thy name,
because thou didst not forsake them who were seeking after thee, Jehovah!

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[a] Ml.: "I would psalm thy name" = "celebrate in psalm" (singing and playing). See Intro. Chap. II., 2.

[b] Ml.: "in straightnesses." (Prob. intensive pl.)

[c] "The oppressed"—Del.; "the down-trodden"—Dr.

[d] Ml.: "Dearth."

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11 Make melody[a] to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion,
declare among the peoples his doings:
12 For ||he who exacteth [satisfaction for] shed blood|| <of them> had remembrance,
he forgat not the outcry of humbled[b] ones:—

13 "Be gracious unto me, Jehovah, see my humiliation from them who hate me,—
my Uplifter out of the gates of death!
14 To the end I may tell of all thy praises,[c]—
<in the gates of the daughter of Zion> let me exult in thy salvation.'

15 Nations |have sunk down| in the pit[d] they made,
<in the net which they hid> hath been caught their own foot.
16 Jehovah |hath made himself known|—<justice> hath he done,[e]
<by the work of his own hands> is he striking down the lawless one.

Soliloquy.

17 Lawless ones |shall turn back| to hades,—
all nations, forgetters of God;
18 For <not perpetually> shall the needy |be forgotten|,
nor ||the expectation of humble[f] ones|| perish for ever.

19 Oh arise, Jehovah! let not mere man prevail,[g]
let nations |be judged| before thy face:
20 Set, O Jehovah, a Terror[h] for them,
let nations |know| that <mere men> they are.

[Nm.]

PSALM 10.

[Nm.]

1 |Why| Jehovah, wilt thou stand in the distance?
[why] wilt thou hide thyself in times of extremity
2 <Through the pride of the lawless one> the humbled one |burneth|,—
let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

3 For the lawless one |hath boasted| of the longing of his soul,
and ||the robber|| hath contemned[i] Jehovah:
4 ||The lawless one|| <according to the loftiness of his look> [saith], "He will not exact."
"No God here!" is [in] all his plots.

5 <Firm> are his ways at all times,
—<on high> are thy judgments out of his sight,—
<As for all his adversaries> he puffeth at them.

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[a] Or: "psalm."
[b] So *written: read*, "humble." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Humble(d)."
[c] Some cod. (w. 5 ear. pr. edns. [1 Rabb.]): "praise" (sing.)—Gn.
[d] Or: "ditch."
[e] Or: "maintained"—Del., Dr.
[f] So written: read, "humbled"—Gn.
[g] Or: "be defiant"—Del.
[h] With other vowels: "a lawgiver.
[i] "The primitive reading"—G. Intro. 365.

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6 He hath said in his heart,
"I shall not be shaken,
<To generation after generation> [am I one]
Who shall be in no misfortune."

7 <Of cursing> his mouth is full,
and of deceits and oppression,
<Under his tongue> are mischief and iniquity.

8 He sitteth in the lurking places of villages,
<in hiding places> he slayeth the innocent one:
<As for his eyes> <for the unfortunate> are they on the watch.

9 He lieth in wait in the hiding-place, like a lion in his thicket,[a]
he lieth in wait to capture the humbled one,—
He captureth the humbled one, dragging him along in his net.

10 He croucheth, he sinketh down,
and <there fall into his claws> the disheartened.[b]
11 He hath said in his heart,
"God hath forgotten,"
"He hath veiled his face,"
"He hath never seen."

12 Oh arise, Jehovah! do not neglect the crushed one,[c]—
do not forget the humbled[d] ones.
13 |Wherefore| hath the lawless one |contemned| God?
said in his heart, "Thou wilt not exact"?

14 Thou hast seen!
for ||thou|| <travail and vexation> dost discern,
to lay [them] in thine own hand:
<Unto thee> doth the unfortunate one |give himself up|,
<to the fatherless> ||thou thyself|| hast become a helper.

15 Shatter thou the arm of the lawless one,
and <as for the wrongful> wilt thou exact his lawlessness till thou find it no more.[e]
16 ||Jehovah|| is King to the ages and beyond,
<vanished> are nations out of his land.

17 <The longing of humble[f] ones> hast thou heard, Jehovah!
thou dost establish their heart, dost make attentive thine ear:
18 To vindicate the fatherless and the crushed,—
that weak man of the earth |may cause terror no more|.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] So *Gt.* Cp. Jer. 47.
[b] So written: to be read, "host of afflicted ones"—Gn.
[c] So *Gt.*
[d] So written: read, "humble"—Gn.
[e] "That it may vanish from before thee"—Del.
[f] Some cod. have "humbled." Others write: "humbled" but read "humble"—Gn. Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Humble(d)."

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EXPOSITION.

In all probability these two psalms were originally one, as may be inferred from the remains of an *alphabetical* structure beginning with Psalm 9 and ending with Psalm 10, and from coincidences of language and sentiment which cannot otherwise be easily explained. The probability is nearly as great that the interference with the original initial alphabet is due, not so much to accident, as to editiorial adaptation to later circumstances. In short, the phenomena visible on the face of this compound psalm seem to be easily reconcilable by the hypothesis that it was originally composed by David after some signal overthrow of his enemies, and was afterwards adapted—very likely on two occasions—by Hezekiah, first soon after the Assyrians invaded his land, and then again, when their presence had for some time been permitted to continue. This hypothesis will account for the gradual subsidence of praise into prayer, and the increasing sense of urgency which is seen in the suppliant's petitions. It will also account for the disappearance of so many of the successive alphabetical initials; it being natural to think that in the perturbed state of things consequent on the presence of invaders in the land, Hezekiah would lack both time and inclination to preserve so refined and elaborate a literary result as a perfect alphabetical arrangement in the adapted psalm. The great inspiration of faith derivable from his illustrious ancestor's danger and deliverance, would be the attraction offered by the old carefully prepared composition: some abruptness and lack of finish in the new matter do but add to the verisimilitude of additions made under such disadvantageous circumstances.

The more fully we allow for changed circumstances as thus accounting for the damage visible on the surface of the psalm, the more firmly can we maintain its essential unity. The enemies of Israel are throughout foreigners: only, in David's day they were foreigners threatening the land, whereas in Hezekiah's time they were foreigners already encamped in the land, and insolently treading down its villages. The **lawless one** would be **the robber**; the robber would be the God-defier (Rabshakeh) whose blasphemies are heard reproaching Jehovah the God of Israel (as in Isa. 36, 37). **The humbled one, the crushed one, the unfortunate one**, would, all through, be Israel, or Israel's suffering representatives.

When we have thus approximately ascertained the conditions under which this remarkable psalm was originated, our minds are set free to observe the outgoings of the Spirit of Prophecy working through the circumstances of the present into the future.

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The overthrow of David's enemies was sufficiently decisive to furnish a thread of thought along which the psalmist's mind could easily be led to the contemplation of the overthrow of all Israel's enemies who should at any time rise up against her: he foresees **nations rebuked, the lawless one destroyed,** the ruins of Israel's foes made **perpetual.**

The re-establishment of David's own throne, brings in glimpses of the perpetuity and universal extension of Jehovah's reign out of Zion over all the earth; when **He himself should minister judgment to the peoples in equity.**

But even as his eye catches sight of this entrancing prospect, there seems to be borne in upon the singer the foreboding, that, as he himself had been led up to the throne of Israel along a path of sore trial and long waiting, so his people would yet have to be humiliated and **crushed,** and to pass through **times of extremity** before their destiny among the nations would be realised. This foreglimpse of such **times** in $9^{9, 10}$ is so remarkable as to tempt us to think that here already we detect the revising and adapting hand of Hezekiah; until a comparison of this place with 10^{1} causes us to reflect on the access of power to the psalm, if we choose rather to think that there was really granted to David a foresight of "the times of trouble" through which Hezekiah had to pass; which would serve to invest the second allusion to such dark times with an experimental interest which otherwise it would not possess; as much as to say, in the second reference: "Alas! **the times of extremity,** of which thy servant David my father spake, are now upon me, but he desired that when such times should come thou wouldst prove a **lofty retreat: wherefore,** then, shouldst thou **stand in the distance** and suffer us to pass through such a **fiery** trial as this, whilst thou **hidest thy face?**"

Thus declining to yield to our first inclination to see in $9^{9, 10}$ some other than David's hand, we are triumphantly borne along (still by David) through the jubilant call to praise found in 9^{11}, and the anticipation of Divine remembrance and vindication preserved in 9^{12}, past the parenthetically quoted **outcry of the humbled ones** set forth in $9^{13, 14}$ up to a suitable Davidic climax in $9^{15, 16}$, whereupon, after a significant **Soliloquy** and **Selah**-call to look backwards and forwards (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Selah"), and **mark well** the path by which we are travelling—way is made for Hezekiah's newly originating hand to put before us first his assurance, in $9^{17, 18}$, that the present Assyrian enemy shall be overthrown, and then the strong plea that Jehovah will effect that overthrow:—the which prayer, however, not at once being answered, but the Assyrian occupancy of the land still dragging along

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its slow length, to the fearful devastation of the villages, further additions and modifications follow, which, while wholly unsuited to David's circumstances, depict to the life the ravages and the reproaches and the blasphemies of the robber Rabshakeh. And thus the present Tenth Psalm unfolds itself, with echoes, indeed, of the previous psalm, but modified by the sombre mutterings of present trouble: nevertheless, at length rising up to the very same climax as that which characterised Hezekiah's first addition at the end of the Ninth Psalm: the desired Divinely taught lesson in each being a lesson to the nations, to be enforced by Jehovah's ultimate deliverance of his people Israel.

It would not be wise to lay overmuch stress on the sevenfold occurrence of the expression the lawless one, in the singular number ($9^{5, 16}$, $10^{2, 3, 4, 13, 15}$), as against the one occurrence of the plural number (9^{17}), as though that circumstance alone would warrant the inference that here already we have references to "The Lawless One" of later prophecies. It is easy to conceive that, in every combination of nations against Israel, there has ever been some one turbulent spirit actively inciting the nations to rebel against Jehovah and his Anointed One. Nevertheless the appearance of such a lawless one in combination with what looks like a final assault by the nations on Israel's land is very suggestive, and should be borne in mind by the student of prophecy. All the more does the significance of this ebullition of evil become impressive, when it is observed how the heading-up of evil is converted into its death-knell.

On $10^{15, 16}$ Delitzsch significantly observes: "The thought that God would take the wickedness of the wicked so completely out of the way that no trace of it remained, is supplemented by the thought that he would do this by means of a punitive judgment. It is not without deliberation, that, instead of employing the form of expression that is used elsewhere (37^{36}; Job 20^{8}), the psalmist still addresses his words to Jahve: that which can no longer be found, not merely by the eyes of man, but even by God Himself, has absolutely vanished from the sphere of that which actually exists. Such a conquest of evil is as certainly to be looked for, as that Jahve's universal kingship, which has been an essential element in the faith of God's people ever since the election and redemption of Israel (Ex. 15^{18}) cannot remain without a perfect and visible realisation. His absolute and eternal kingship must ultimately be exhibited in all the universality and endless duration predicted in Zech. 14^{9}, Dan. 7^{14}, Apoc. 11^{15}."

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PSALM 11.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Faith's Brave Answer to the Counsels of Fear.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe, vers. 1—3, Counsels of Despair, with an Expression of Surprise Refused. Antistrophe, vers. 4—6, Confidence in Jehovah Triumphantly Affirmed. Refrain, ver. 7, The Righteous are Sure of Jehovah's Love and Long to Behold his Face.

[Lm.] [a]By David.

1 <In Jehovah> have I taken refuge:
how say ye to my soul,—[b]
"Flee to a mountain, like[c] a bird;
2 for lo! ||the lawless ones|| are treading the bow,
they have fixed their arrow on the string,—
to shoot, in darkness, at such as are upright in heart:—
3 <When ||the buttresses|| are being torn down>,[d]
what ||can a righteous man|| do?"[e]

4 ||Jehovah|| is in his holy temple,—
<as for Jehovah> <in the heavens> is his throne:
||His eyes|| behold [the earth],[f]
||his eyelids|| try the sons of men:
5 ||Jehovah|| trieth ||a righteous man||,
but <a lawless man and one who loveth violence> his soul |hateth|:
6 Let him rain, on such as are lawless, live coals,[g]
||fire and brimstone and a burning wind|| are the portion of their cup.

7 *For <righteous> is Jehovah, <righteous acts> he loveth*
||an upright one|| shall have vision of his face.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the male choir.

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[a] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "Psalm"—Gn.
[b] See Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[c] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[d] So Dr.
[e] Or: "what hath a righteous man (ever) done?"
[f] "The poor"—Sep. and Vul. Br. prefers "world" (w. Theodotion).
[g] So *Gt.* (*peḥâm*, instead of *paḥîm*, "bird traps," "snares.") Del. prefers "snares"= lightnings; "for the lightning that flashes from one point of the heavens and darts with a serpentine motion towards another may really be compared to a snare or noose that is thrown down from above."

EXPOSITION.

It will be seen from the analysis that the structure of this psalm is of the simplest—a strophe, an antistrophe, and a refrain. The first point of advantage, is to notice, that the timid advice beginning, **Flee to a mountain**, runs on to the end of the strophe: to see this, is

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to perceive what an evil case the psalmist's advisers consider he is in. He is as helpless as a little **bird** watched by **archers in ambush**—instant **flight** is his only hope of personal safety: and, as for public reasons for remaining at his post, they are gone: further resistance is useless, seeing that **the buttresses** of public justice and social order are one by one being torn down; and, with no redress available, what has a righteous man ever done under such circumstances or can he now hope to do? Such are the counsels of despair offered by the psalmist's timid friends,—counsels which the psalmist's faith in Jehovah emboldens him to reject, with surprise that they should have been offered him.

Of the two sets of circumstances in which such advice might have been tendered to David—while he was at the court of Saul, and when the revolt of Absalom was coming to a head—the former seems the more probable, while his faith was yet undimmed and he was a stranger to distrust and vacillation.

It is well that, thus early, the heavenly **temple** should be near to the psalmist's faith. **Jehovah is in his holy temple** above, with his mighty hosts waiting to do his will. With stronger emphasis and greater explicitness, the psalmist repeats, **As for Jehovah, in the heavens is his throne.** The distance does not obstruct his vision, **His eyes behold the earth.** He is intently watching the conduct of these lawless men. **His eyelids**—fixed for steadfast gaze and narrow scrutiny—**test** the quality, course and tendency of the actions of **the sons of men.** He may delay the deliverance of **the righteous man,** but he is only **putting** him **to the test**; whereas **the lawless man** he hates with all the intensity of his holy affections. He has judgment in store for all such: like as when he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah! The language may be figurative, but the faith is sublime; and it keeps the persecuted hero at his post. Note also the course of instruction through which the psalm conducts us. The sight of Jehovah's throne in the heavens brings Jehovah himself all the nearer to the persecuted believer's extremity. Heaven is equally near to every scene of trial on earth. For the present, indeed, we have need to localise Jehovah's presence; and in any case we must not lose hold of his personality. He is a God who hates, who loves; and the more we are assured that it is he who makes us **righteous,** the more shall we long for the beatific vision of his face.

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PSALM 12.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—General Corruption, Evidenced by Sin of the Tongue, Impels to Prayer and Calls Forth a Divine Answer.

ANALYSIS.—In Strophes I. and II. (vers. 1—4), the Petitioner Describes the Prevalent Sins of the Tongue, and Prays for the Excision of the Offenders. In Strophes III. and IV. (vers. 5—8), Jehovah's Answer is Announced and Amplified.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 Oh save, Jehovah! for the man of kindness |is no more|,
for the faithful |have ceased| from among the sons of men:[a]
2 <Unreality> speak they, every one with[b] his neighbour,
<with a flattering lip and a double mind> do they speak.

3 May Jehovah |cut off| all flattering lips,
the tongue that speaketh great things:
4 Them who have said, "<To our tongues> we give strength,
our lips are with us, who is |our| master?

5 <"Because of the spoiling of humbled ones, because of the sighing of needy ones>
||now|| will I arise," saith Jehovah:
"I will place him in safety who panteth for it."[c]
6 ||The promises of Jehovah|| are promises that are pure,
silver smelted down in a furnace to the ground,[d]
refined seven times.

7 ||Thou, Jehovah|| wilt keep them,[e]
wilt guard him,[e] from this generation to the ages.
8 <On every side> |lawless ones| march about,
when worthlessness |is exalted| among the sons of men.[f]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Cp. Isa. $57^{1,2}$, Mi. 7^{2}.
[b] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. ed., Sep., Vul.): "unto"—Gn.
[c] "I will shine forth for him"—Br.
[d] So Del. and similarly Dr. But Br. reads and renders the verse: "When thrust down to the earth he shall be purified seven times."
[e] Some cod (w. Sep., Vul.): "us"—Gn.
[f] Br. renders this verse:—
Though round about the wicked walk
When thou risest up thou dost lightly
esteem the sons of mankind.

EXPOSITION.

It is difficult to reduce to writing the successive impressions made by the study of this psalm. Who wrote it? Again that becomes an absorbing question; simply because a candid and sympathetic investi-

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gation of the psalm itself insists upon a reconsideration of the *primâ-facie* conclusion. It is inscribed to David; and we cannot lightly dismiss the presumption thence arising that he wrote it. Nevertheless the situation as a whole suggests another set of circumstances than any in which we know David to have been placed; and, inasmuch as we are learning to perceive an element of adaptation in psalms which are still reverently attributed to David as original author, we may feel perfectly free to look those circumstances full in the face.

Now there is no denying that David at the court of Saul had ample occasion to lament the mischief made by tongues that were at once **flattering** and **false**; and so it is easy to conceive that the original draft and for a time the permanent form of this psalm as it came from David's pen began nearly as does the present recension of it.

All the same, the outlook, as it now stands in the very opening couplet, appears too broad to have come within David's early survey of **the sons of men**. It is not in the least likely that, in those early expectant days, such a pessimistic conclusion would have forced itself on David's mind.

Moreover, the desire that Jehovah would **cut off** all flattering lips seems premature while as yet the son of Jesse had not come to the throne; and when he could scarcely yet have felt such a sense of responsibility for the moral condition of the nation as would suggest such a prayer. Even when he had come to the throne the royal resolve to banish evil tongues from his court, and so discredit them to the nation, which we find in Psalm 101, much more commends itself than a sweeping prayer like this.

Still more conclusively in favour of a wholly different time is the underlying assumption which is seen in verse 5, which presupposes a whole class of **humbled** and **needy ones** for whose vindication Jehovah's interposition has been long delayed.

If these considerations were not forcible enough to carry our point, —who can imagine David, at any time of his reign, admitting not only that **lawless men** were **strutting about** in the land, but that worthlessness itself was exalted, not only amongst a rapidly growing faction, as in Absalom's days, but generally **amongst the sons of men**?

It is remarkable how thoroughly the hypothesis of a revision of the original psalm by King Hezekiah, more particularly in the early days of his reign, meets the difficulties above suggested, and provides a situation which responds to all the leading features of the psalm.

From the known infidelities and weaknesses of Hezekiah's father **Ahaz**, we might safely have inferred the consequent corruption of the morals of the people; which, in any case, is independently attested by

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the early chapters of Isaiah's prophecies. As if to make surety sure, the opening lament of this psalm is almost verbally repeated by the two parallel passages referred to under the text above; namely Isa. 57[1] and Micah 7[2]. That Micah was an early enough witness, will be universally conceded; and if the so-called Isaiah II. was no other than the familiar friend of our youth, Isaiah of Jerusalem, then we have a combination of evidence which no gainsaying can overthrow, that in or about the time of Hezekiah's early reign there was quite sufficient ground for the sweeping opening lament of this psalm.

Nor is it from these parallels alone that confirmation of a Hezekian adaptation comes. For the words **Now will I arise, saith Jehovah,** of verse 5, are a literal quotation from Isa. 33[10]; and, once we are in that remarkable chapter, another coincidence meets us. The singular descent from the **humbled and needy ones** in general to one particular suppliant in peril of verse 5 of our psalm—**I will place him in safety**—is alone suggestive of Hezekiah; how much more so when, after Isaiah's beautiful description of the ideal King—so strikingly realised in Hezekiah,—he proceeds to say, "He the heights shall inhabit, a stronghold of crags shall be his refuge (his lofty retreat)" (Isa. 33[16])—that is indeed being **placed in safety!**

Even the variations in the reading and rendering of verse 6 of our psalm, rather embarrass with a wealth of allusions than cause us any perplexity. We may confess to a strong liking to the longer form of that verse presented by the Massoretic text, for several reasons: as, first, for the occurrence of the poetic word *'imrah*, which we render "promise" in Psalm 119, and of which Delitzsch here says: "The poetical *'imrah* serves especially as the designation of the divine words of promise which are so full of power," and, second, for the intrinsic beauty of the comparison of Jehovah's promises with **smelted silver.** And yet, after all, there is even a surpassing aptness of reference to Hezekiah himself in the shorter form preferred by Dr. Briggs, **When thrust down to the earth he shall be purified seven times.** Delitzsch rejoices in the longer form, and lovingly speaks of the "hexastich" as the gem of the psalm, whose brightness relieves the gloom of the psalm's Massoretic ending, which he cannot deny. Briggs delights himself with the shorter form, as bringing the whole psalm within four strophes of four lines each!

Even yet our easily borne embarrassments are not at an end. The gloomy finish to the psalm is mildly defended by Delitzsch, as above intimated; Perowne regretfully admits it, remarking, "this return to gloom and doubt is, I believe, without parallel at the conclusion of a psalm"; the which frank admission may prepare us for the drastic

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treatment of Briggs, who, by a new decipherment of the consonants, and in part leaning on the Septuagint and on verse 5, sets forth as the concluding couplet

> Though round about the wicked walk,
> When thou risest up, thou dost lightly esteem the sons of mankind.

"This," says he, "gives an appropriate climax to the psalm."

PSALM 13.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Sorely Tried Believer in Jehovah Expostulates, Entreats, and Ultimately Exults.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Expostulation; Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Entreaty; Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, Exultation.

[Lm.]—Psalm—by David.

1 |How long|, Jehovah—wilt thou forget me for ever?
|how long| wilt thou hide thy face from me?
2 |how long| must I lay up sorrow in my soul?[a]
|how long| shall mine enemy |be exalted| over me?

3 Oh look well, answer me, Jehovah my God!
light thou up my eyes, lest I sleep on into death,
4 lest mine enemy say "I have prevailed over him,"
and ||mine adversaries|| exult when I am shaken.

5 But ||I|| <in thy kindness> do trust,—
let my heart |exult| in thy salvation,
6 let me sing to Jehovah because he hath dealt bountifully with me,
and let me harp to the name of the Lord Most High.[b]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] M.T.: "How long must I lay up designs in my soul, sorrow in my heart by day."

[b] Line preserved in Sep and Vul.

EXPOSITION.

The keynote of Strophe I. of this psalm is, **How long?**—from which, indeed, we cannot safely infer that the present trial had lasted for many years; but only that, to the tried one, it seemed as if it would never end. Time, to our consciousness, is relative: under stress and strain, minutes seem hours; hours, days; days, as though they would drag on their slow length for ever. Such has been the feeling

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of the psalmist; but his half-formed thought is corrected ere he utters it—hence the broken construction of the first line. The very attempt to utter his complaint soothes his spirit, and he becomes measured and musical in the expression of his appeal to Jehovah his God, to whom his words reveal unmistakable nearness. We readily forgive his anthropomorphisms, for the sake of the vivid sense we thereby obtain of his accustomed personal fellowship with his God. We note the orderly progression of the singer's thought, as he passes from the Divine **mind** to the Divine **face** as its manifestation; then from Jehovah to himself; then from himself to his enemy. On our way through the strophe we note the fine phrase **lay up sorrow in my soul**: "the soul," or sensitive nature, which feels the sorrow caused by the trial; and includes the memory which stores it up, and renders the soul a treasure-house of experience. We also note the apt and characteristic restraint which in all probability points to King Saul as **the enemy.**

He who can thus remonstrate with Jehovah, can do more: he can ask his interposition. And so Strophe II. is prayer. It is more—it is argued prayer. It dares to tell Jehovah what will be the deplorable results of leaving the prayer unanswered. Two decisive petitions, **Oh look well** (or **Look around**) as if to take in the whole situation, and **answer me**—in what way he does not indicate, for he is speaking to one who knows the actual facts, and knows, as well, his own gracious purposes; and then we feel how the petitioner lays hold of Deity by the name of promise and its appropriating synonym, **Jehovah, my God. Light thou up mine eyes,** he adds, seeking for the invigoration which will cause his eyes to gleam with new health and hope: **lest**—and this is the keynote of Strophe II., twice expressed and once implied. His apprehensions move outwards in enlarging circles; beginning with himself, he fears that answer deferred will mean death; then, thinking of his enemy, that answer deferred will mean his openly expressed boast; and, still further out from himself, that thereupon a whole chorus of adversaries will exult. The weight of these deprecations he leaves his divine Friend to estimate.

And now we come, in Strophe III., to the psychological problem of the psalm. Is it possible that the same singer can now thus early and thus suddenly mount from the depths of despair to so near an approach to exultation? We say "approach" advisedly; for, strictly construed, the language is still that of prayer. But it is easy to see that prayer is by this time lit up with joyful anticipation. In the very act of saying **Let my heart exult,** he is letting his heart ascend to the altitude of joy. Here, again, we are delighted with the orderly evolution of thought: on the objective side, **kindness brings salvation,**

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salvation is crowned with **bountiful dealing**; and on the subjective side, **trust** produces **exultation**, exultation leads to **song**, song calls for the **harp**. We are thus well-pleased with the completeness, in spirit and in form, secured by accepting the additional line preserved by the Septuagint and Vulgate. Moreover, we are thus led to a critical preference of Briggs over Delitzsch, which, for once in a way, is not distasteful. The latter, severely following the Massoretic Text, resolves the psalm into three decreasing strophes—five lines, four, three; and then temptingly says, "The five lines of lamentation and the four of supplication are now followed by three of joyous anticipation." The leading characteristics—of "lamentation," "supplication" and "joyous anticipation"—are a manifestly correct description of the psalm; but why "anticipation" should be less exuberant in language than "lamentation" and "supplication," we do not clearly see, and, inasmuch as the shortening of the first strophe relieves the third question of the psalm of abnormal distinctions between "soul" and "heart," as Briggs forcibly points out, and inasmuch as this emendation, together with the restoration of the last line from the old versions, levels the whole psalm into three equal strophes, we—feeling that symmetry does count for something when sustained by other evidence—are constrained to say, Briggs has it.

PSALM 14.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Vile Person's Testimony to Prevalent Wickedness, when confirmed by Jehovah, occasions Warning and Prayer.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I. (ver. 1), An Impious Man revels in Wickedness. Strophes II. and III. (vers. 2—3). His Testimony Confirmed by Jehovah. Strophes IV. and V. (vers. 4—6). Warning against Present Iniquity drawn from History. Strophe VI. (ver. 7) Prayer for Israel's Salvation.

[Lm.] (Psalm)[a]—By David.

1 |Said| a vile[b] person in his heart—"No God here!
their conduct is corrupt, their practice abominable, there is no well-doer!"

2 ||Jehovah|| <out of the heavens> looked down over the sons of men,
to see whether there |was| one that showed understanding in seeking after God:—

[a] So in one cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. | [b] "Senseless"—Dr.

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3 ||"The whole|| have turned aside, drawn back[a], |together| become tainted,
there is no well-doer, there is not so much as one!"

4 Have none of the workers of iniquity[b] |learned| anything? devourers of my people!
they have devoured food, <Jehovah> have they not invoked!

5 ||There|| dreaded they a dread, when ||God|| scattered them,
6 their plan was put to shame, when ||Jehovah|| rejected them.

7 Oh that <out of Zion> were granted the salvation of Israel!
<When Jehovah |restoreth| the prosperity[c] of his people>
let Jacob |exult|, let Israel |be glad|.

[Nm.]

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[a] So Br., uniting the two verbs found, the one in 14^3, the other in 53^3.

[b] So in substance Br., mainly following 53^5. M.T., here, more fully: "Because God is in the circle of the righteous man. The purpose of the humbled ye would put to shame, because Jehovah is his refuge."

[c] So Br., also O.G. 986, esp. Ps. $126^{1, 4}$.

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is highly dramatic, and as such must be interpreted: a position of so much importance in this instance, that the reader should satisfy himself of its soundness at the outset of his study. Observe well the course of observation which the psalmist takes. He tells us that a **vile person**,—coming to a spot resembling Sodom and Gomorrah with no Lot in its midst, or the world before the flood without a Noah,—felicitates himself that **there is no God there**. Since he must have had some grounds for this conclusion, and no firmer ground can be imagined than his own observation of the conduct of the people; since, moreover, bad men are ready to believe evil against their fellows,—it seems natural, having no quotation marks to guide us, to carry on the thought of this vile person to the end of the sentence, and attribute to him the further mental observation: **Their conduct is corrupt—their practice abominable—there is no well-doer.** It is certainly a little surprising to find a vile person making to himself so frank and correctly expressed an admission. But even such an observer may not have forgotten the radical distinction between good and evil; and, in any case, as only his thoughts are reported, we are not bound to conclude that the vulgar slang in which he would half mask his conclusion, is here expressed with painful exactness. It is sufficient to conclude that here we have, correctly reported for us, the substance of

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his thought. And, clearly, the damaging and sweeping fact of wicked conduct to which his observations and enquiries have led him, abundantly justifies his first-expressed conclusion—**No God here!** The circumstance that he himself is a **vile person**, will excuse us if we surmise that it is with some satisfaction that he notes the absence of any thing to serve as a check on the indulgence of his own vile propensities. Here he can do as he likes. There are worse people than himself here. So he may think, little realising how vile he himself is. Thus interpreting, we get a bad man—in a bad neighbourhood—coming to a natural conclusion—and giving to himself a sufficient reason for it. In the dramatic spirit, we may picture a heavenly messenger during a visit to the place as overhearing the vile person's whisper, and as being so incensed to see how corruption breeds corruption, that he forthwith wings his way to the High Court in heaven to report what he has seen and heard. Whereupon—for so the poetic link of connection between the first and second strophe seems to forge itself—whereupon Jehovah looks down from heaven to see whether the evil has grown to these alarming dimensions.

Pausing here a moment to strengthen our exegesis of the first strophe, it is fair to say that if this account of the words **Their conduct is corrupt**, etc., be declined in favour of attributing them directly to the psalmist, then you arrive at the unacceptable conclusion, that he first says a thing imperfectly, and then says it effectively by means of a formal introduction and a more carefully graduated set of expressions. Is this likely in the case of a poet of such power as the writer of this psalm? Assuming then that in the charge of immoral conduct contained in the first strophe we have the sufficiently explicit and highly suggestive thought of the **vile person**, we can advance to the second and third strophes with an eye open to see their moral elevation and crushing logical force.

The moral elevation of the second strophe consists in this: That JEHOVAH does not look down merely to see how bad the sons of men are, in the place reported upon,—but to discover whether there is no redeeming feature in the case, whether there is not at least one person, who, with whatever failings, is at least **seeking after God!**

The sad fact that there is not—no! not even one Lot in this Sodom—is there necessarily included in the verdict contained in the third strophe: the tremendous force of which is due partly to this implied inclusion—partly to the carefully graduated terms employed, **turned aside, drawn back, tainted,** together tainted—and partly to the endorsement of the villain's own word with a formal addition, **There is no well-doer, there is not so much as one!**

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We are assuming that **Jehovah's** verdict relates to the same sphere of observation as the **vile person's**; and this we do in full view of the general phrase **the sons of men** whom Jehovah beholds: say, **the sons of men**—in the place referred to; **the sons of men** in general, as far as represented by these particular sons of men in this particular place. This is a correct dramatic limitation. To set this aside is to get into contextual difficulties of a most serious kind, and to have to face an incredible result. The chief contextual difficulties are, overlooking the circumstance that the context has an eye to the **devourers of Jehovah's people**, and the admission that Jehovah HAS **a people** to be devoured. If "the sons of men" here are simply and absolutely all the sons of men on the face of all the earth at all times, then all minor distinctions are abolished, and all mankind without exception are swept into the all-devouring net of this hasty piece of cruel dogmatism! Besides, the appalling result is best described by saying simply—that IT IS NOT TRUE. It was not true of Sodom, as long as Lot was in it: it was not true of the antediluvian world, so long as Noah was in it. To apply the exclusive phrase **not so much as one** to spheres in which, under Divine guidance, the **one** can be found and named, is wantonly to trample underfoot the commonest laws of human speech, and needlessly and mischievously represent the Bible as contradicting itself. There may have been a spot where there was literally **not so much as one** exception; and, if that was at all symptomatic of the general moral corruption of a given age, it was quite enough for the psalmist to refer to it. That, therefore, is what we are entitled to assume is here done.

Strophe IV. now follows as an appropriate advance on what has gone before. The psalmist wishes to stay the marauding invasion begun by **devourers** of his **people**. What! he exclaims, have they **learned nothing** from the records of the past? Do they **not know** that high Heaven, too long provoked, may at length hurl down vengeance upon them? Incidentally hitting off their character as a combination of cruel greed and light-hearted irreverence, he describes them with keen irony. They do not say grace at a common meal: much less will they **devour Jehovah's people** with any reverence towards him!

Then, in Strophe V., he recurs to the historical precedent which—as to its sin—he has already described: let us not forget what we have learned about that character. In it were practical atheism, corrupt conduct, abominable practices—the very place for a debauche to visit: like Sodom, but worse; like the old world, but worse. **THERE dreaded they a dread**—as they had much occasion; **when**, just as they were combining for a devouring expedition, **God scattered them**;

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just as they had perfected their scheme, **Their plan was put to shame, for Jehovah rejected them.** Have these present would-be **devourers of Jehovah's people** never **heard** of this? Let them beware!

It is no objection to this exegesis that the precise historical reference eludes us. Many a place besides Sodom may have been signally overthrown; and no wonder that it was overthrown, when there was found in it, by verdict of both earth and heaven,—**not so much as one well-doer!**

It must not be thought that the above interpretation gained an unfair advantage at the outset, by starting with a **villain** instead of a **fool.** Dr. Briggs well says: "The *Nabhal* is not a 'fool' in any of the meanings of this word, but a more aggressive personality: not *aphron*, *stultus*, *fool*, but *impudent*, *contumelious*, *shameless*, as *impudens* with the double sense of *immodest* and *impudent*." In truth, then, he is a **villain**; and under the name **vile person** is well described in Isaiah 32^{5-7}; from which it will be seen: That he is ignoble, overbearing, injurious; he gives his mind to plans of mischief; calls things by wrong names; injures the helpless by cruel falsehoods, and misrepresents God. Hence, we were doing him no wrong by taking a hint from his character how to interpret his words: he is glad to find **no God here**, in the recognition of the people, to hamper him in indulging in his propensities; and he has the impudence to admit with satisfaction how **depraved** the people of the place are; and, as if he had made enquiries for the purpose of discovering that there was no good man to reprove him, he shamelessly congratulates himself on that fact—**There is no well-doer.**

Nor, again, have we taken an undue liberty in rendering **the villain's** opening exclamation relatively rather than abstractly or absolutely; as rather **No God here** than **No God at all**; seeing that the negative particle *'ayin*, though confessedly strong, not only "denies existence absolutely," but "more commonly in a limited sense, *there is none here* or *at hand*" (O.G. p. 34).

It will be observed that the fifth strophe above (vers. 5, 6) has been given in a shorter form than that appearing in the M.T., as seen in A.V., R.V. That is due to Dr. Briggs' endeavour to harmonise the two psalms (14, 53); and the result, for its terseness and aptness, pleases well. But before we dismiss the longer form, it may be remarked how strongly it supports the protest offered above, against giving an absolutely universal application to the united verdicts of earth and heaven to human corruption; for, assuredly, it cannot be said both that "God *is* in the circle of the righteous" and that he is *not*; nor can such a circle, inclusive of the **humbled** who hath made Jehovah his refuge be

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wholly tainted. And thus both the context and the general consent of Scripture unite in opposing the ruthless endeavours of misguided men to harden drama into dogma, by representing all men, everywhere, as always and wholly depraved, beyond further advance in sin. The Bible does not teach that: least of all does the Apostle Paul, in the Third of Romans; for whom it was quite enough to take these damaging testimonies of the Hebrew Scriptures to human sinfulness as he found them, without reading into them a dogmatic universality they were never meant to bear; since his only object was to convince his Scripture-boasting Hebrew brethren that they as well as sinners from among the Gentiles had absolute need of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

With this fifth strophe (vers. 5, 6), Dr. Briggs thinks the original psalm came to an end; and it may have done so; yet it is difficult to agree with him. Not only the standing needs of congregational worship, but even poetic justice seems to demand a more hopeful conclusion to so strong a psalm. And in view of the would-be devourers of Jehovah's people, whom the fourth strophe brought into view, it is not easy to see how a more fitting conclusion than the present could have carried the psalm to a climax. **Oh that out of Zion were granted the salvation of Israel**: that would presuppose a Saviour in Zion whose saving power would go forth to the utmost bounds of the land, beating back every foe, and raising a defence against the further encroachments of practical atheism and moral degeneracy. When that is witnessed—**when Jehovah restoreth the prosperity of his people**—then **let Jacob exult, let Israel be glad.** The prophets of God must have good tidings to tell. There must be salt to stay corruption, light to scatter darkness. Now, in the present time, Jehovah has not only looked down from heaven, but has COME DOWN—"to seek and to save the lost."

Without casting doubt on the primary Davidic authorship of this psalm, which at the first may have begun nearly as it does now, it is nevertheless fair to admit that most aptly may the allusion to **a vile person** at the outset be taken as an indignant reference to Rabshakeh (2 K. 18, 19; Isa. 36, 37): and who knows but that, among the cities of Judah which he took, he may have discovered "a sink of iniquity" in which could be found **not so much as one** to protest against his villainies. The Assyrians, at any rate, were devourers of Jehovah's people, who little knew into whose hands they were about to fall. "The special circumstances of the city afforded ground for the additional verse"—Thirtle's O.T.P., p. 112.

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PSALM 15.

DESCPIPTIVE TITLE.—The Approved Citizen-Guest of Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, Worshippers Approaching the Holy City enquire What Kind of Persons may Enter and Dwell there. Strophe II., vers. 2—5, The Reply from Within specifies Ten Virtues, Assuring their Possessor of an Undisturbed Residence.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 *Jehovah! who shall be a guest in thy tent?*
who shall dwell in thy holy mountain?

2 He that walketh without blame in his righteousness,[a]
and speaketh truth with his heart:

3 hath not played the spy on his neighbour,
hath not done his friend a wrong;
and a <reproach> hath not taken up against his intimate:[b]

4 <despised in his eyes> is the reprobate,[c]
but <them who revere Jehovah> doth he honour:

5 he hath sworn to his friend and will not change,
<his silver> hath he not put out on interest;
and <a bribe against the innocent> hath he not taken:—

‖*He that doeth these things*‖ *shall not be shaken to the ages.*

[Nm.]

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[a] So Br. M.T.: "He that walketh without blame, and doeth what is right."
[b] Or: "one near him."
[c] "Who is displeasing in his own eyes, worthy of contempt"—Del.

EXPOSITION.

This is an interesting psalm of instruction, valuable in its bearing on character. It is brightly dramatic. It places the inhabitants of Jerusalem in a beautiful light, as guests in Jehovah's house at the same time that they are dwellers in his holy city: their residence in the one giving them easy and constant access to the other. The same character that would make them honoured citizens, would make them welcome worshippers. In placing Jehovah in the light of a Host, the psalm

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sheds a soft radiance on the Divine character. It was beseeming that such a Host should have noble guests; and it will be observed how prominent nobility of character is here made, by the very nature of the virtues which are signalised. Such a man as is here portrayed could not be mean. The close observer will discover that the ten characteristics named are arranged in couplets and triplets :—a couplet of general principles in work and word (ver. 2); a triplet of social virtues, coming nearer and nearer to the man himself—neighbour, friend, intimate (ver. 3): a couplet of bold contrast, touching religious character (ver. 4a, b); then a triplet of sterner excellences, safeguarding social intercourse (vers. 4c, 5a, b). Summing up all that has gone before as the condition, the psalmist assures the would-be Citizen-Guest of a permanent welcome. Several other psalms fall into line with this in emphasising character: as 1, 24, 121; and Isaiah 33[14-16] may be aptly compared. The Christian justly enamoured of justification for the ungodly and salvation for the lost, will act wisely by reminding himself that the initial justification without works is in order to works; and the universal and imperative requirement of repentance demands the production of godly character as the great object of the Gospel.

PSALM 16.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Ideal Israelite's Triumph over Death.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Prayer for Preservation: offered in Dependence on Jehovah, Discernment of his Doings, and Detestation of Idolatry. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Contentment with Jehovah as a Present Portion, under Divine Counsel creates Confidence for the Future. Strophe III., vers. 9—11, Exultant Expectation of Escape from Death and Entrance upon Heavenly Delights.

[Lm.] Tablet[a]—By David.

1 Preserve me, O God, for I have taken refuge in thee.[b]
2 I have said[c] to Jehovah—<"My Sovereign Lord> art |thou|,
for ||my well-being|| goeth not beyond[d] thee."

[a] So Sep. With this well agrees Thirtle's suggestion: "The term *Michtam* seems best explained by a *personal* or *private* prayer or meditation." A "tablet" would well serve such a purpose. "Seems to mean primarily an inscription'"—Del.

[b] "This short introit is without any parallel clause, and is therefore monostichic—a sigh that expresses everything in few words"—Del.

[c] So some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.; and so Del., Per., Dr., Kp., Br. M.T.: 'Thou saidst" ("O my soul" prob. understood).

[d] Ml.: "upon," "over." "That is, 'in addition to thee, beside thee,' equivalent in meaning to 'apart from thee,' or 'without thee'"—Del.

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3 <To the holy ones who are in his land>
Jehovah |is making wonderful| his delight in them.[a]
4 They |will multiply their sorrows| who <backwards> do hurry:[b]
I will not pour out their drink-offerings, because of bloodshed,
nor will I take their names upon my lips.

5 ||Jehovah|| is my share, my portion, and my cup,
||Jehovah|| is the maintainer of my lot for me:[c]
6 ||The measuring lines|| have fallen for me in pleasant places,
verily! ||mine inheritance|| is mighty over[d] me.
7 I will bless Jehovah who hath counselled me,
yea! <in the dark night> have mine impulses[e] |admonished me|:
8 I have set Jehovah before me continually,
<because he is on my right hand> I shall not be shaken.

9 ||Therefore|| doth my heart |rejoice| [in Jehovah]
and my glory[f] |exulteth| [in my God][g]
even ||my flesh|| shall dwell securely:
10 For thou wilt not abandon my soul to hades,
neither[h] wilt thou suffer thy man of kindness[i] to see the pit:
11 For thou wilt make known to me the path of life,—
||fulness of joy|| [is] with thy face,[j]
||delightfulness|| [is] at[k] thy right hand evermore.

[Nm.]

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[a] So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn. M.T. (as rendered in R.V. text): "As for the saints that are in the earth, They are the excellent in whom is all my delight." Delitzsch's rendering is striking: "I say to Jahve: 'Thou art the Lord, Besides thee there is for me no weal,' and to the saints that are on the earth: 'These are the excellent, in whom is all my delight.'" So is Driver's: "I have said unto Jehovah, 'Thou art my Lord; my good is not beyond(?) thee.' As for the holy ones that are in the land, they are the nobles in whom is all my delight." But, for the text as emended above, see "Exposition."

[b] So, in substance, Br. "Their anguish shall be multiplied who have taken an idol in exchange"—Del. "Their sorrows are multiplied that take another in exchange (for Jehovah)."

[c] So Br. M.T. (R.V.): "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot." On which Del. beautifully says: "The very thing which the tribe of Levi exhibits in a national and external manner is true in its whole spiritual depth of every believer; it is not the earthly, the visible, the created, the material that has been assigned him as his possession and enjoyment, but Jahve, He alone; in Him, however, also perfect satisfaction."

[d] So Sep. "The Sep. gives a well-known word, a usual construction and an appropriate meaning"—Br. Cp. 117[2].

[e] U.: "reins": Lit. "kidneys." "Regarded by the Hebrews as the springs of *feeling*"—Dr. "Conceived of as the seat of the blessed feeling of the possession of Jahve"—Del.

[f] For "glory" in like sense, see 30[13], 57[9], 108[2]. And see "Exposition."

[g] Thus (but with "Yahweh" twice) does Br. gain a line here and fill up the strophe. Del., keeping to the shorter M.T., calls the *seven* lines "seven rays of light."

[h] So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.

[i] *Written* "men": *read* "man" (sing.) Some cod. (w. 8 ear. pr. edns.) both *write* and *read*: "man" (sing.)—Gn.

[j] "In association with, in communion with the divine face or presence"—Br. "In thy presence"—Del., Per., Leeser, Carter, Dr.

[k] "On"—Br. "At"—Per. "In"—Del., Dr. ("*viz.*, to distribute: cf. Prov. 3[16].")

EXPOSITION.

This is the language of an Ideal Israelite, as a glance at Strophe II. will show. Of the spirit of the Ideal Israelite, it is needless to say, both David and Hezekiah largely partook. For that very reason, they must have been predisposed to accept and utilise any worthy psalmody-contributions from Levite-Seers. If the writer of the present psalm

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was literally a Levite—a priest—then his protest against idolatry at the close of Strophe I. would assume an aspect of personal repugnance so much the more intense; and suggests the possibility that in the days of declension into idolatry, from the days of Ahaz and onwards, the same men may have sometimes been expected to act both as priests to Jehovah and as priests to idols.

Strophe I. as here critically emended by Ginsburg and Briggs, has in it several features of great interest. The very opening word, in view of the ending of the psalm, challenges a deeper significance than usual: **Preserve me,** save me from death, hold me in being. **I said to Jehovah**: "the Becoming One," who has yet more and more of the riches of his own immortal being to communicate: **My Sovereign Lord art thou**: I am at thy disposal. **My welfare,** my blessedness, **is not without thee**: has no independent existence. Make of me what thou wilt: I have no blessedness but in thee. A Christian's mind is irresistibly carried along to think what these words must have meant to the youthful Jesus of Nazareth; and once our thoughts reach that point of departure, we are naturally led on to conceive of the joy with which the Messiah would note how **the holy** men and women in the days of his manifestation on earth would perceive that **Jehovah was making wonderful his delight in them,** and in their kinsfolk and neighbours, as they were taught and healed. We pretend not to give to the words of the psalm any such exclusive application; for they apply to every visitation of Israel and every deliverance wrought in their midst, from the day they were written. **Jehovah** ever **delighted** in his **holy ones,** and on many occasions made his delight appear **wonderful.** The reference to idolatry in ver. 4, no doubt received its exactest fulfilment in the latter days of the monarchy, before idolatry had received its great check by the punishment of the Exile. Yet, still, we cannot think of that young Nazarene, save as entering into a fellowship of spirit with the faithful priests who in the times long before his coming had steadfastly refused to lend themselves to idolatrous rites; to which we may add the reflection that the occasional contact of Galileans in later times with caravans of idol worshippers, would be sufficient to keep alive in Northern Israel a wholesome detestation of the cruel customs of heathenism. We frankly admit that it is in foresight of what follows in this psalm that we thus early begin to breathe the Messianic spirit.

It is, however, when we rise to the spiritual elevation of Strophe II. that we become more positively conscious of the Messianic atmosphere. And, indeed, it is just **as an atmosphere** that its penetrating and elevating energy is felt. It is here that the ideal Israelite submits himself to our admiring gaze. **Jehovah** is **his portion** and in his

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portion he delights; nor his portion only, but the **maintainer** and defender of it. Then he thinks of **the measuring lines** which have marked out his portion for him, as if with mental reference to the broad acres which such lines have mapped out for others: leaving him still perfectly contented with his own lot. Thus he reflects on his **inheritance** until it becomes **mighty over him,** throws over him a mighty spell. Again we say: How can a Christian help thinking of words which fall in line as fulfilment? How can he restrain his thoughts from One of whom he has read in a primitive Christian document: "Who, in consideration of the joy lying before him, endured a cross, shame despising; and on the right hand of the throne of God hath taken his seat?" That, surely, was an **inheritance** worthy to become **mighty over** even the Messiah. This Ideal Israelite still further lays bare his inmost being as he allows us to see that he discovers the **counsels of Jehovah** in, or by means of, the **impulses** of the **dark night,** when silent reflection causes the activities of the day to stir the inmost springs of being. In this case, however, the impulses are so chastened and purified as to call forth **blessings on Jehovah** who uses them to unveil his will. We can never in this world know how mighty and timely was the nightly training of Him, who after being thronged through the day with the multitudes coming and going, spent whole nights in prayer. As dangers thickened and enemies became more bitter and determined, he **set Jehovah before him continually, Because he was on his right hand,** he *was* **not shaken** from his purpose to go up to Jerusalem, and there become obedient as far as death.

In advancing now to the third strophe of this psalm we can scarcely fail to bring with us the one outstanding observation: That it is the moral elevation of the second strophe which prepares the way for the victory of the third. **Therefore**: because Jehovah himself is my portion; because I am fully content with mine inheritance, and it has a mighty influence over me; because night and day I follow Divine counsel and unreservedly place myself under Divine guidance for the future; **therefore** my heart is glad,—and in the strength of my joy I am led on to victory over death.

If the moral elevation of the second strophe is unique—as we think it is—if, in its own way, there is nothing quite equal to it elsewhere in the Psalms; then we need not be surprised to be led on to a more complete analysis of the human constitution than is to be found anywhere else in the Old Testament. Such an analysis does, indeed, appear to await us. The triumph to be realised is sufficiently complete that the WHOLE MAN, in the most exhaustive analysis of him, should be

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summoned to rejoice in it: **therefore, my heart—my glory—my flesh** are marshalled to advance to its realisation,—**my heart**, that is, my intelligent nature; **my glory**, that is, my spirit, God-given, God-related, the recipient of Divine impressions, the spring of emotional force; **my flesh**, that is, my body, with its well-known uses, wants, weaknesses and susceptibilities. Each of these is coupled with a suitable verb: my heart **rejoices** with intelligent joy; my glory **exulteth** with joy intensified into ecstasy; my flesh **shall rest**,—fatigued with stress and strain, shall rest; weakened by work and weariness, shall rest and be still; shall rest and be refreshed and renewed. For some cause, the "flesh" lags behind the "heart" and the "glory;" "my heart *already* rejoiceth" (verb in the complete tense); "my glory *already* exulteth" (verb again practically in the complete tense—imperfect with *waw* conversive); but "my flesh shall rest" (verb in the incomplete or incipient tense). Further, an element of surprise is introduced along with the flesh: *'aph* "even," "implying, something surprising or unexpected" (O.G. p. 65)—"Yea," "moreover," "even" (= "surprising to say") my flesh shall rest securely. Then, too, the noun "flesh," in being set before its verb, is by a well-known rule emphasised. There was good cause for the surprise—good cause for the emphasis. For "the flesh" was in danger: in danger of corruption! in danger, because the contingency supposed was the event of death. *It must have been death;* otherwise there would have been no entrance into hades, and consequently the promise of not being *abandoned to hades* would have been superfluous. When Dr. Burney wrote in *The Interpreter* for July 1907, p. 375, that "my flesh is only employed of the *living* body," he must have forgotten Job 19^{26} and Psalm 79^{2}. "Flesh," clearly, may mean the dead body; and that it does so mean here, naturally follows from the surprise and the emphasis already noted; and, we may add,—forms the allusion to danger made by the adverb "securely;" for why should the "flesh" alone be represented as in danger, but for the assumed fact of its exposure to early decay by death?

The point to which the danger extends is the point at which victory commences. This godly man dies, yet even his flesh rests securely. Why?

For thou wilt not abandon my soul to hades. **My soul** may here be taken to include the whole personality, according to the most common usage of the word throughout the Old Testament; and this brings it into parallelism with the term *ḥasidh* in the next line:—

> Thou wilt not abandon my soul (that is, ME) to hades,
> Neither wilt thou suffer thy *ḥasith* (= thy man of kindness = thine Ideal Israelite = thy Levite = ME, bearing as I do that character) to see the pit.

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It is, of course, implied that he, the man, would *enter* hades; although he, the man, would not be *abandoned* to it. He would not, with the wicked, see the pit *in* hades: that is expressed. He would not, in his flesh, suffer harm; seeing that his flesh would dwell securely. The dominion of hades over him would be harmless, and therefore presumably brief. He would not remain long in hades. He would not suffer harm in hades. His whole personality would come safely through hades. As much as this, the words naturally convey: we need not press them to signify more. It is obvious how completely they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth by his early resurrection.

Less than resurrection cannot be intended; for resurrection is the true and complete antithesis to death. If Jesus had not been raised bodily, to that extent he would have been abandoned to hades—which includes the grave.

Besides, the path to life naturally starts from the lowest point to which Jehovah's loved and loving One was permitted to descend. If he was suffered to lay aside his body, then he was permitted to take it again. Not only does the path to life lead up out of the underworld inclusive of the grave, but it leads up into heaven. It matters not, in this connection, where heaven is; but it matters much that it is where Jehovah most gloriously manifests his presence and unveils his face. **Fulness of joy**, for redeemed man, is "in communion with the divine face or presence." **Delightfulness**—more than "pleasure" (rather an abused word), more than "beauty" or "loveliness" to the eye, more than "sweetness" to the taste: all combined, and unspeakably more. The general thought is that man's utmost capacity for happiness will be satisfied in the **Divine Presence**, or with (the unveiling of) the Divine **face**, to behold which he is invited, and to which under the guidance of Redeeming Love he tends.

"The original situation is provided in 1 Sam. 26. For 'hasten after another' (4) see *v.* 19; for 'maintainest my lot' (5), see *v.* 25; for 'heritage' (6), see *vv.* 19, 25; for 'the Lord before him (8) see *vv.* 16, 19, 20, 24; for 'deliverance' (1, 10, 11), see *v.* 24. On verse 11, cp. 1 Sam. 26[10]. The whole was also remarkably appropriate for the reign of Hezekiah, and doubtless the psalm was adopted on that account. The delineation is found in Isa. 57 [which is attributed to Isaiah of Jerusalem], wherein whoredom (*vv.* 3, 4, 8) expresses the 'hastening after another.' In the words of this psalm, in *vv.* 4, 5, the pious of Judah were enabled to dissociate themselves from abominations specifically described by the prophet. The 'drink offerings' of the depraved people are repudiated; and over against their 'portion' and 'lot,'

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another is made the subject of boasting (cp. Isa. 57[6]) As for *vv.* 8-11 of the psalm, they are remarkably appropriate for the man who was brought to the gates of death and then raised to newness of life (Isa. 38[18-20]; cp. Ps. 17[15]; 140[13])"—Thirtle, "Old Testament Problems," pp. 313, 314.

It will be seen, from the giving of the above liberal extract, how far these "Studies" are from ignoring the existence of typical prophecy in the Psalms. Whenever, and to whatever extent, foreshadowing types can be found, their employment in exposition is helpful. Nevertheless, as protested in dealing with Ps. 2, it is conceived that we should dutifully expect now and then examples of the bounding away of the Spirit of Foresight into things to come. These adjustments being borne in mind, the present writer has no need to excuse himself for having in the above Exposition felt himself at once carried away to think of Jesus of Nazareth as the Great Fulfiller.

PSALM 17.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—One who is Righteous Prays, in Great Trouble, for Divine Deliverance and Manifestation.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, The Prayer of Righteousness. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, The Proving of Righteousness. Strophe III., vers. 4--6, The Precaution of Righteousness! Strophe IV., vers. 6—8, Prayer for Attention, Kindness and Tender Care. Strophe V., vers. 9, 10, Refuge sought from Greedy, Gross and Arrogant Enemies. Strophe VI., vers. 11, 12, Invaders Advancing, Surrounding, Encamping, and Waylaying. Strophe VII., vers. 13, 14, Arise, Confront, Bring down, Deliver, Slay! Strophe VIII., vers. 14, 15, Punishment invoked on Three Generations—Reward counted upon by a Hoped-for Satisfying Vision of God.

[Lm.] Prayer—By David.

1 Oh hear, Jehovah, one who is righteous—attend to my piercing cry,
oh, give ear to my prayer—without lips of deceit:
2 <from thy presence> let |my sentence| come forth—that ||mine[a] eyes||
may behold it.

(3) <With equity> [3] hast thou tried my heart—hast inspected me by night,
hast proved[b] me, thou findest in me no evil purpose—my mouth
|transgresseth not|:
4 <as for the doings of men> by the word of thy lips [do I regard them].

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[a] So Sep. | [b] "*Zaraph*, smelt, refine, test"—O.G.

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||I|| have watched the paths of the violent one;
5 my steps |hold fast| to thy tracks—my footsteps |slip not|.
6 ||I|| have called upon thee—surely thou wilt answer me, O God!

Incline thine ear to me—hear my promise,[a]
7 make wonderful thy deeds of kindness[b]—thou Saviour from assailants![c]
(8) I am taking refuge at thy right hand—[8] protect me as the pupil, the daughter of the eye.
(9) <In the shadow of thy wings> wilt thou hide me [9] from the lawless,
those mine accusers that assail me—<with greed>[d] encompass me,
10 <their gross heart>[e] have they closed—<with their mouth> have they spoken proudly.

11 They advance, ||now|| they march round us—<their eyes> they fix,
(12) they mean to encamp in the land—[12] they maltreat as a lion,
they are greedy for prey—they are like a young lion lurking in secret places.
13 Oh, arise, Jehovah! confront him, bring him down,
oh, deliver my soul from the lawless one [destroy with] thy sword!
14 let them be slain [by] thy hand—slain out of the world.

Let their portion be during life—let ||thy stored-up penalty|| fill their bosom,[f]
let their sons be sated—and leave their residue to their children;
15 but <as for me> let me have vision of thy face—be satisfied with thy form.[g]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] "Saying" or "speech"; but cp. Ps. 119, table.
[b] "Make signal thy kindnesses"—Dr.
[c] "Those that rise up (against them)"—Dr.
[d] Ml: "with (or in) soul."
[e] Ml.: "fat, midriff, diaphragm."
[f] Ml: "belly."
[g] Or: "the form of thee" M.T., more fully:—
But <as for me> <in righteousness> shall I have vision of thy face,
Oh let me be satisfied when I awake a resemblance of thee!

EXPOSITION.

The first method of these "Studies" as to the question of authorship was to analyse a psalm with exclusive regard to internal evidence; and to interrogate that evidence by saying, "Now what sort of man appears to have written that psalm, under what circumstances, with a view to what dangers (if any), and with what feelings?" Only after pursuing this method with the present psalm, did any name occur as probable; and then it was the name of King Hezekiah, in view and in presence of the Assyrian invasion. If we take this suggestion as a working hypothesis, it is at once seen what a large amount of verisimilitude gathers about it. It is at once noticed how naturally, in such case, the writer appears both as an individual and as a personified

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nation; and the danger comes into view as an actual and most formidable invasion, by a cruel, greedy, insensate enemy. It is easily realised how naturally a good man like Hezekiah would assure himself of his rectitude, as a man and a monarch, in pressing his suit at Jehovah's footstool; and, considering the multitude of persons and the variety of interests at stake, how inevitable were the passion and the persistence in petition which are here displayed—piercingly loud (ver. 1), courageously bold (vers. 13, 14), thoughtfully tender (ver. 8); how suitable to the gravity of the occasion is the largeness of the blessings sought—that the answer should plainly have come forth from the **Divine Presence** (ver. 2), that it should amount to nothing less than Jehovah's **making his deeds of kindness wonderful** (ver. 7)—and that its result on the enemy should be his inevitable **slaughter** (vers. 13, 14). In view of such a situation, how little of personal vengeance appears in the most sweeping petitions for the punishment of the foe; for only by such an overthrow could the deliverance sought be so much as imagined. Even the desire that the stroke might be felt to the third generation (ver. 14) would seem to be necessarily involved in the making of Israel's deliverance effective. Perhaps, even beyond all these features of adaptation discoverable in this psalm, is its conclusion; and, quite unexpectedly, to the writer of this exposition, its conclusion rather in the shorter form inserted in the text than in the longer form relegated to the margin. For, assuredly, it was not without searchings of heart that the familiar and favourite ending of the Massoretic Text was, at the bidding of a very refined criticism—unwilling to admit any unsymmetrical distension of metre or strophe,—assigned to a lower place; especially considering that such assignment would in a measure put out of confident use the significant word "awake," which had always been felt to be evidence that actual resurrection from the dead formed, for the psalmist, "the path to life" by which he hoped to ascend to the beatific vision of Jehovah's face. But, with the apprehension that HEZEKIAH might have written this psalm, the whole realm of probability was changed. The natural thing for HEZEKIAH to say, under the circumstances, would be the very thing that the textual critic prefers should be regarded as the original text: **But, as for me, let me have vision of thy face!**—the very thing Hezekiah had hoped for, without *need* to "awake," because without having previously fallen asleep! This we can confidently gather from the very bitterness of his lament when the prospect of death came upon him: "I shall not see Yah even Yah in the land of the living!" (Isa. 38[11]). *That*, then,—namely to "see Yah in the land of the living,"—had been Hezekiah's cherished hope; and that is the hope expressed

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in the short but powerful conclusion of this psalm preferred in the text above. In decipherment of the final word—**be satisfied with thy form**—a backward and a forward glance will repay us: backward to Num. 12^{8}, to discover the same word employed as here; and forward to John 1^{18}, 14^{9}, 1 Pet. $1^{7,8}$, 1 John 3^{2}, to be reminded of the form, and the vision of that form, which we are joyfully assured will give unbounded satisfaction.

This psalm is a *t'phillah* **prayer**; and admirably that word describes it. It is attributed **To David**; and doubtless its groundwork came from him. So strongly, however, is the image of Hezekiah impressed upon it, that already, in the above exposition, had such authorship been confidently inferred, before the perusal of Dr. Thirtle's second book: which offers the following re-enforcement:—"Hezekiah was familiar with persecution. Ver. 5 reads like Ps. 73^{2}; ver. 14 like 73^{2-9}, a psalm from the time of Hezekiah. The concluding verse looks forward to recovery from sickness."—Thirtle, O.T.P., p. 314.

PSALM 18.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—David's Song of Deliverance.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—6, By many Epithets of Admiration, the Psalmist proclaims Jehovah as Worthy of Praise, for Delivering him from Extreme Danger, in Answer to Prayer. Strophe II., vers. 7—12, a description of the Divine Descent from the Heavenly Temple, for the Purpose of Deliverance. Strophe III., vers. 13—19, Amid a Storm of Thunder and Lightning, the Drowning One is rescued. Strophe IV., vers. 20—27, Principles of Divine Procedure Declared. Strophe V., vers. 28—34, Enumeration of Deeds Done in Divine Strength. Strophe VI., vers. 35—42, More Deeds—of Climbing, Pursuing, Destroying: Girding, Defeating and Trampling Underfoot. Strophe VII., vers. 43—50, Deliverance from Feuds at Home, from Foes Abroad, and from Foreigners Infesting the Fastnesses of the Land,—made a Theme of Loving Thanks to Jehovah, and a Prophecy of Lasting Prosperity to the Dynasty of David.

[Lm.] By the servant of Jehovah, by David,—who spake to Jehovah the words of this Song on the day when Jehovah had rescued him

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out of the grasp of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul; and he said:

1 I will tenderly[a] love thee, Jehovah, my strength![b]

2 ||Jehovah|| was my crag, and my fastness, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I took refuge;
my shield, and my horn of salvation, my lofty retreat.
My Saviour! <from violence>[c] didst thou save me.[d]
3 <Worthy to be praised> I proclaim Jehovah,
since <from my foes> I am saved.
4 There |encompassed me| the breakers[e] of death,
||the torrents of perdition|| made me afraid;
5 ||The meshes of hades|| surrounded me,
there |confronted me| the snares of death.
6 <In the strait I was in> I called on Jehovah,
and <unto my God> made I outcry for help:
He heard, out of his temple, my voice,
and ||mine outcry before him|| entered into his ears.

7 Then did the earth |sway and quake|,
and the ||foundations of the heavens|| [f]were disturbed,—
they swayed to and fro, because his anger burned:
8 There |went up| a smoke in his nostrils,
and ||fire from his mouth|| devoured,—
||coals|| were kindled therefrom.

9 Then bowed he the heavens, and came down,
and ||thick gloom|| was under his feet:
10 Then rode he on a cherub and flew,
and swooped down on wings of wind;
11 And he put darkness[g] round about him,
a covering of darkness of waters:
(12) thick clouds of the sky [12] without brightness,
<Before him> his cloud-masses rolled along.[h]

13 Then Jehovah |thundered in[i] the heavens|,
yea ||the Highest|| gave out his voice;[j]
14 And he sent forth his arrows and scattered them,
yea <flashes> flashed he, and made a loud noise[k]
15 Then |appeared| channels of waters,
|were uncovered| the foundations of the world,—
(at thy rebuke, Jehovah,
at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils).[l]
16 He reached out from on high, he laid hold of me,
he drew me out of many waters:
17 He rescued me from my foe so mighty,
and from those who hated me, because they were too strong for me:

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[a] "Fervently"—Per., Dr. For the unusual word here used, see 1 John 4[19] and final par. in Exposition.

[b] This line not in 2 Sam. 22. a prob. addition by Hezekiah. (Cp. Thirtle, O.T.P., 123.)

[c] Perh. originally: "violent one"; cp. v. 48.

[d] This line adopted from 2 Sam. 22.

[e] So in 2 Sam. 22[5]. M.T. here: "meshes"; but (Br.) "It is improbable that that the original was so unnecessarily tautological."

[f] So 2 Sam. 22[8]. M.T. here: "mountains."

[g] M.T. adds: "his hiding-place."

[h] M.T. (emended by Ginsburg) adds: "There were kindled live coals of fire." Prob. a repetition, in error, of ver. 8c.

[i] In some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.): "from." And so 2 Sam. 22[14], and Br. here.

[j] M.T. adds: "Hail and live coals of fire." "Not in 2 S.: is a gloss"—Br.

[k] So Br.

[l] Note change of person; and that strophe too long by two lines.

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18 They confronted me in my day of distress,
then became Jehovah a stay to me;
19 and brought me forth into a wide place,
He rescued me, because he delighted in me.

20 Jehovah |rewarded me| according to my righteousness,
<according to the cleanness of my hands> he repaid me
21 Because I had kept the ways of Jehovah,
and not broken loose from my God:
22 Because ||all his regulations|| were before me,
and his <statutes> did I not put from me:
23 So became I blameless with him,
and kept myself from mine iniquity:
24 (So Jehovah |returned| to me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands before his eyes).[a]

25 <With the man of kindness> thou dost shew thyself kind,
<with the blameless man> thou dost shew thyself blameless,
26 <with the pure> thou dost shew thyself pure,
and <with the perverse> thou dost shew thyself able to contend.[b]
27 For ||thou|| <a humbled people> didst save,
but <looks that were lofty> layedst thou low.

28 For ||thou|| wast[c] my lamp, O Jehovah,
||my God|| enlightened my darkness;
29 For <in thee> I brake down a fence,[d]
and <in my God> leapt I over a wall.
30 <As for God> <blameless> is his way,[e]
<a shield> is ||he||—to all who take refuge in him
31 For who is a God,[f] save Jehovah?
and |who| is a Rock, save our God?—
32 ||The God|| who girded me with strength,
and made blameless my way;
33 Who set my feet like hinds,
and <upon high places> made me hold my ground;
34 Who taught my hands to war,
and made mine arms |bronze|.

35 Thus didst thou grant me, as a shield, thy salvation,
and thy right hand upheld me;
and ||thy humility|| made me great.
36 Thou didst broaden my stepping-places under me,
so that mine ankles |faltered not|.
37 I pursued my foes, and overtook them,
and turned not until I had made an end of them;
38 I smote them, and they were unable to rise,
they fell under my feet.
39 Thus didst thou gird me with strength for the battle,
thou didst bring down mine assailants[g] under me;
40 <As for my foes> thou gavest me their neck,
and <as for them who hated me> I exterminated them:

[a] Prob. a repetition of ver. 20.
[b] Ml.: "tortuous": perh. = "able to cope with their perversity."
[c] So 2 Sam. 22[29].
[d] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[e] M.T. adds: "The saying (promise) of Jehovah is refined as with fire."
[f] "A divine being"—Del.
[g] "Or: "those that rose up against me."

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41 They cried out, but there was none to save,
unto Jehovah! but he did not answer them:
42 So I beat them small like the dust of the earth,[a]
<like mire in the lanes> I pulverised[b] them.

43 Thou didst deliver me from the strivings of a people,
thou didst set me as head of nations,—
‖a people I had not known‖ served me:
44 <At the hearing of the ear> they submitted to me
‖the sons of the foreigner‖ came cringing unto me
45 ‖The sons of the foreigner‖ lost heart,
and trembled forth out of their fastnesses.
46 <Living and blessed> is my Rock,[c]
and <exalted> is the God of my salvation:—
47 ‖The God‖ who avenged me,
and subjugated peoples under me:
48 Who delivered me from my foes,
yea <from mine assailants>[d] didst thou raise me on high,—
<from a man of violence> didst thou rescue me.
49 <For this cause> will I thank thee among the nations, Jehovah!
and <to thy name> will I make melody.
50 Who hath made great the victories[e] of his king,
and wrought kindness for his Anointed—
for David and for his seed, to the ages.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

[a] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[b] So Br.
[c] M.T: "Jehovah liveth and blessed be my rock—Del., Dr.
[d] Or: "those rose up against me."
[e] Or: "magnified the great salvation (pl. intensive). Cp. Isa. 26[18], 33[6].

EXPOSITION.

It is important to remember that David inherited the unfinished task of Joshua, whose divine commission was—to extirpate the Canaanite nations whose abominable iniquities had justly called down on them this awful doom. Unless this is borne in mind, the Royal Singer of Israel must appear to the Christian mind, especially in this his triumphal ode, as resting under a cloud of suspicion that he did not hate war as he should: seeing that when his wars were ended, he could, with such manifest satisfaction, celebrate the completeness of his victories. It is doubtless well that we should recoil from the terrible necessity for extermination, and realise the extent to which another spirit has fallen on us from our suffering and rejected Messiah; but it is not altogether well when we, for want of reflection, fail to mark the footsteps of God in history; and thus are led to blame an ancient hero whom we ought rather to praise. Whatever of courageous and skilful warrior David was, that had he become under divine training; and we have to beware lest we blame that training rather than the Canaanitish abominations

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which called for such avengers as the men who received it. The dispensation under which we live is one of forbearing and suffering Love; and, if we cast a longing eye on territories to possess ourselves of which we have received no such mandate as was given to Moses and his people,—let us beware lest we go before we are sent, and are sternly called to account by our Divine Judge for our lust of dominion. No opinion is here expressed as to whether a commission to exterminate tribes guilty of enormous wickedness may or may not be constructively inferred, in the absence of express Divine revelation; but let statesmen remember the position in which they stand in such matters, and make very sure of their Divine call to invade other lands before they draw the sword for such ends. Extremes beget extremes. Let us avoid them in this matter, by remembering that we are not Israel; but, of the Israel of ancient times, let us judge fairly; and of her hero king, as he appears in this truly magnificent song.

It will have been observed by every reader how very figurative is this psalm. Many of the metaphors employed, it is true, are so obvious in their significance and of such easy application to well-known or readily imaginable incidents in David's history as to need little explanatory comment. But there is one figurative representation in the psalm which is so bold, and prolonged as almost to amount to an allegory; and is at the same time so lofty in its sublimity as to render it possible for us to let its historical application escape us. The historical event to which it refers is David's danger of perishing by the hand of the violent King Saul; and the daring figure by which his escape from that danger is set forth is that of escape from drowning; but until we connect the danger as described in vers. 4 and 5 with the deliverance as briefly asserted in ver. 16; and observe that the intervening verses pourtray first a divine preparatory movement from the highest heaven down to the skies of this lower world, and then the gathering of the Storm which is to effect the rescue; and then, finally, the outburst of the Storm, culminating in the deliverance of the Drowning Man from sinking down into the abysses of destruction;—the possibility is that the point of the allegory may be lost in what may unjustly appear to be a cloud of words. But when once the largeness of the poetical scheme of representation is apprehended, then it may be found that the need arises for a fresh grasp of the historical situation, to enable us to discover some proportion between the facts as they occurred and the figures in which they are here clothed. Let us then sufficiently recall the incidents of the history to enable us to realise that the danger to David from Saul was greater, more prolonged, and more distressing, than any other which befell Israel's favourite hero prior to

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his firm settlement in his kingdom. Of the troubles which befell him afterwards and of their grievous occasion, there is no need here to take account; since we are only concerned now to get behind this Triumphal Ode and the events which led up to it. We have, then, to remember that Saul was David's first hero and lord; that, as Jehovah's anointed, he commanded the young Bethlehemite's profoundest homage; that he drew the young harpist and warrior into peculiarly close and difficult relations to himself; that he became unreasonably jealous of him, lent a willing ear to every malicious story told of him, persecuted him with relentless hatred: and, all the while, he—David—could not, would not, durst not lift up a hand against his master. He had to suffer and wait for Divine interposition; and many a time must it have appeared that such interposition was never coming. Is it any wonder, then, that, being a poet born, he should oft have compared himself to a DROWNING MAN, in his last exhausted struggles against the surging flood of the Kishon, the Jordan, or even of the great western sea, of sinking in the depths of which he may, in the course of his eventful life have been in danger? And, considering how in this contest he could not strike a blow in self-defence but had to leave his succour exclusively in Jehovah's hands, is it so very surprising that, being a poet born and conscious of a Divine afflatus carrying him out and beyond himself, and his deliverance when it came being so unexpected and ultimately so complete,—he should have conceived the idea and clothed it in words of such a theophanic interposition as he here describes? Other enemies could be alluded to in quite an ordinary manner; and his own share in **running, leaping, climbing, bending the bow**—using his **feet**, his **arms**, his **hands**, could all be allowed to shine through by means of familiar poetic allusions; but the **enemy**—the **violent man**—the **perverse**,—HE had to be reverently left to the judgment of God; and none can say that that judgment has not been most effectively—even if most poetically—described. From his chief foe, the poet had been rescued by an interposition absolutely Divine.

It has been objected to Strophe IV. (vers. 20—27), that, in various degrees it is unlike the original psalm, and must be regarded as made up of later glosses. Of vers. 21—24, in particular, it is alleged (by Br.) that "it has nothing in keeping with the previous thought of the psalm. The original is hot with passion: this is calm and placid." Now the fact of a passing change of feeling may be frankly conceded. But is the inference drawn therefrom legitimate? Why may not David have rested his muse for a little, and imparted a moral backbone to his ode by drawing from the stores of his memory sentiments learned in the school of Samuel during his brief sojourn in Naioth? In particular,

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those singular epigrammatic sayings forming vers. 25, 26 (**To the man of kindness**, etc.), may well be a sample of the wisdom learned by the sons of the prophets under the presidency of the great seer: who, as we know from 1 Sam. $15^{22, 23}$, *knew how to moralise*. Moreover, there are several points of contact between the strophe brought under suspicion and those going before and after. The close of the previous strophe, at ver. 19 (**because he delighteth in me**), forms an excellent point of departure for what immediately follows; and then again ver. 27 reads much like an application of the foregoing principles, by David, to his own actual circumstances. It seems peculiarly apt that he should think of his own little band of followers **as a humbled people, saved**; and of the downfall of Saul's house as the **laying low** of **looks that were lofty** almost beyond endurance. Again, it may be observed that in any case the hot passion of the opening strophes has cooled towards the end of the psalm. For there is something, not merely placid, but almost playful in the way in which, through Strophes V. and VI., the now staid monarch recounts the exploits of his early and more warlike young manhood. Finally, it may be said, in the interest of the poetic art, that the retention of the strophe which Dr. Briggs sets aside, brings the strophes up to the perfect number seven, and admirably places the Wisdom strophe in the centre of the psalm, just between the passivity and the activity of the psalmist; at the same time leaving the closing strophe with those nice touches of royalty upon it which impart to it a special fitness to form the crown of the song.

It is reassuring, after the contrary denials of Wellhausen, to find so strenuous a critic as Dr. Briggs admitting that: "If we remove the glosses, which have adapted an ode of victory of David to later religious uses, the ode stands out in simple grandeur as fitting appropriately to the historical experience of David, whether he wrote it or another wrote it for him by historic imagination, entering into the experience of the heroic king. After removing the glosses there is nothing that bars the way to his authorship." Even a critical reader may doubt whether it is necessary to remove the alleged glosses, beyond the point which leaves us with seven symmetrical strophes. It may be further said that, in view of the admitted beauties of this song, we need never decline the Davidic authorship of a psalm merely on the score of its poetic excellence.

The great value of the following extract will excuse its length. "David began, as in ver. 2, 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer'; and went on to rehearse the wonderful acts of God in his daily deliverance. Hezekiah had as much to say, if not more; but he must begin differently. His deliverance from death and a host of

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enemies, induced in him a tenderness of expression which suggested a new beginning for the psalm, even though confined to a single line. So he prefixed the words, 'I love thee, O Lord, my Strength.' The terms are striking—'Fervently do I love thee': 'warmly do I cherish thee' (*r-h-m*). After such a pledge of affection, the king could proceed, and appropriate to his own lips lines which, in the language of poetry, are suitable for the description of any notable intervention on the part of Jehovah . . . The grateful soul must entertain a warm affection for Jehovah by whom it had been loved (*h-sh-k*). Hence, he says in one place: 'I love (*'h-b*) the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication' (Ps. 116[1]); and the Lord spoke in response 'Because he hath set his love (*h-sh-k*) upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my name' (Ps. 91[14]) . . . Upon whom is the king's affection lavished? Upon 'Jehovah, MY STRENGTH.' Who could say this like Hezekiah? The man whose name was *hzkyhu* speaks of his Deliverer as *yhwh hzky*. All the promise and assurance of the king's name have been realised; and now love is returned, in warmest emotion, to a faithful God. In other words, in the terms used we have the elements of the name Hezekiah . . . Everything favours the conclusion that substantial changes [in the psalms], so far as they may be detected, belong to the reign of Hezekiah"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 122—124.

PSALM 19.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Greater than the Glory of God in the Heavens is the Grace of Jehovah in the Law.

ANALYSIS.—A Composite Psalm: in which, by the mere force of Juxtaposition, the Grace of Jehovah in the Law, is seen to be even More Precious than the Greatness of God in the Heavens. Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, 4, The Witness to God borne by the Heavens in General. Strophe II., vers. 4c—6, The Witness by the Sun in particular. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, The Excellence of the Law in Itself and in its Beneficent Effects. An Overflow from the foregoing Strophe (ver. 10). Strophe IV., vers. 11—14, A Personal Application: with Prayer, for Profit by the Law, and for the Divine Acceptance of this Psalm.

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[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 ||The heavens|| are telling the glory of GOD,
and <the work of his hands> |the expanse| is declaring:
2 ||Day|| <unto day> doth pour forth speech,
3 and ||night|| <unto night> doth breathe out knowledge:[a]
4 <Through all the earth> hath gone forth their voice,
and <to the end of the world> their sayings:

<For the sun> hath He set up a tent therein;
5 and ||he|| is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
he rejoiceth as a hero to run a race.
6 <From one end of the heavens> is his going forth,
and ||his circuit|| unto the other end thereof;
and ||nothing|| is hid from His glowing sun.[b]

7 ||The law of Jehovah|| is perfect[c]—refreshing[d] the soul,
||The testimony of Jehovah|| is trustworthy—making wise the simple;
8 ||The precepts of Jehovah|| are right[e]—rejoicing the heart,
||The commandment of Jehovah|| is clear[f]—enlightening the eyes;
9 ||The reverence of Jehovah|| is clean—enduring evermore,
||The regulations of Jehovah|| are truth—vindicated altogether.
10 ||More desirable|| than gold—yea than much fine gold,
||Sweeter|| also than honey—or than the droppings from the comb.

11 ||Even thine own servant|| findeth warning in them—
<in keeping them> the reward is great.
12 <Mistakes> who perceiveth?[g]
<from concealed things> acquit me,
13 Also <from presumptuous ones> restrain thy servant—
let them not rule over me:
||Then|| shall I be blameless—[h]
and be cleared of great transgression.
14 <Acceptable> be the sayings of my mouth—
and the soft utterance of my heart,
Before thee, continually,[i] O Jehovah—
my rock, and my redeemer.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] M.T. adds:—
There is no speech, and there are no words:
unheard is their voice.
Sep. and Vul. expand this into:—
There is no speech, there are no words,
where their voice is not heard.
These are followed by the italics in A.V. Delitzsch renders as follows:—
There is no speech and there are no words,
whose voice is inaudible.
Driver's alternative rendering runs:
It is not a speech, neither are they words,
the voice whereof cannot be heard.

[b] So Br.

[c] Or: "blameless," "whole," "sound."

[d] "See Prov. 25^{13}, Lam. $1^{11, 16, 19}$; and cf. Ps. 23^{3}. Lit. *bringing back*, i.e. restoring, invigorating. The 'soul' is the principle of life . . .; here, of the spiritual life."—Dr. "To restore the sense of life"—Dr. Glossary I. to Parallel Psalter.

[e] Or: "upright." Ml.: "straightforward." Cp. 119^{137}

[f] Or: "bright." Sep. "far-shining."

[g] "Lapses—who marketh them?"—Del. "That is, sins of inadvertence; cf. Lev. 4^{2}, R.V. *marg.*—Dr.

[h] Ml: "one whole" ("all of a piece").

[i] "So Sep. as the measure requires"—Br.

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EXPOSITION.

This is a psalm of exquisite beauty, which winningly invites us along the path of exposition; but which, nevertheless confronts us with a difficulty which we shall do well to settle at once if possible, so as to study the psalm without distraction and to the utmost profit. The difficulty, when first stated, appears sufficiently formidable; seeing that it involves the serious question whether or not ver. 3 should be regarded as an excrescence. Whoever will look at this verse as it appears in the A.V., will readily understand the nature of the problem. Strip off the three italic words which, in that version, are incorporated with it, and which young readers will remember are to be taken as having no express warrant in the original,—and the statement remaining is found to be a thrice repeated negative: "no speech, nor language, their voice is not heard"— in express contradiction of both the spirit and letter of vers. 1, 2 and 4; and the remarkable thing is that the Hebrew text handed down to us, simply contains these three unqualified negatives. Next observe, that the supplied words have the startling effect of converting the negative into a positive; and asserting that, wherever any language is spoken, there the heavens utter a voice —of course, in harmony with the context; thereby getting over the difficulty, and not wholly without authority, seeing that both Septuagint and Vulgate (Greek and Latin) versions contain the very words (or their equivalent) which thus turn the statement completely round. Noting these things, the first impulse of many readers will undoubtedly be to acquiesce in this solution, by saying: "Evidently some little word or words have dropped out of the Hebrew, the substance of which has been fortunately preserved by the ancient Greek and Latin versions." Well: for those so content, the verse will be found at the foot of the text; and further, inasmuch as some think that even the direct negatives of the Hebrew can be *harmonised* with the context, as either a sort of "aside" spoken by an objector (which was suggested in "the Emphasised Bible") or with a sort of mental gloss: "No LITERAL voice —though, 'in reason's ear,' there *is* a voice," for this cause, the literal Hebrew, as reflected in the R.V., is also given at the foot. Now will these contented readers exercise a little forbearance towards a few more critical minds, who are not so easily satisfied, but who prefer the opinion that this verse is an excrescence. Their reasons are: *first*, that it just makes this strophe so much too long, which alone would not count for much, but is of sufficient force to sustain the additional reason now to be submitted: namely, *secondly*, that as soon as the negative is turned into a positive, then it is *needless*, seeing that vers. 1 and 2 positively assert that "the heavens," etc., **tell, declare, pour**

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forth, and breathe out their witness to God's glory; and further, that ver. 4 makes this positive assurance universal in extent. So that, in a word, by dropping the two lines which make the strophe too long, nothing substantial is lost, while brevity and point, as well as symmetry, are gained. The reader who is not yet quite persuaded to join the more critical, will at least understand, without a disturbing thought, why the following exposition takes the shorter and more direct route leading to the same end.

The general witness of the heavens is brought to bear upon a point twice expressed: it is the glory of God—their brightness and beauty being expressive of his own; and being, as they are, the work of his hand, the inference is that he is greater than they. The fact that the heavens bear this witness is four times expressed: they tell it out or recount it, as if spoken of a story composed of numberless details, they declare it, as with authority, making God's glory conspicuous; they pour it forth in a stream of eloquence as from an exhaustless fountain of evidence; and they gently breathe out the intelligence, with such soft accents as leave the truth larger, loftier, louder than their low utterance can attain. The second couple of these verbs is apportioned, the one to the day, and the other to the night. It is the day that pours forth speech, as through the channels of a thousand voices: it is the night that breathes out her almost inaudible whispers. Moreover, one day speaks to the next, the day-studies being handed on for further days to prosecute; and the night, ceasing her story when the day appears, takes up the broken thread when the next night comes—which is poetically true to fact: since day-studies can only be pursued by day, and night-studies by night. To suggest all this without actually saying so much is a triumph of the poetic art. An effective synonymous couplet sets the seal of universality upon this testimony to the glory of God. Wherever men can dwell, God is there, in his works, to speak to them of himself. So much, says Strophe I., of the heavens in general.

But now the sun takes a strophe all to himself; and, as seems meet, the figures wax more bold. The emphasis now to be laid on "the sun" is shown by his position at the very head of the strophe. An excellent point of connection with the first strophe is gained by attributing the act of setting up the tent for the sun to God himself (the *'El* of the opening line of the psalm) and for once we spell the pronoun He with a capital initial. The word tent is the simple and usual rendering of the Hebrew *'ohel*, and no "Sunday garment" is needed for it. The word therein naturally refers back to the heavens of ver. 1, and so forms another link of connection with the first strophe. Moreover, as

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every eye can see *where* the sun enters his tent in the evening and *where* he reappears in the morning, the perhaps rather fanciful question arises whether the ancient Hebrews were quite so backward in their nature-views as is commonly supposed. The emphasis on the pronoun **he** in the second line of the strophe naturally carries the mind right back to the "sun" at the head of the previous line: **and ‖ he ‖ is like.** By a most beautiful figure of speech, comparing the sun to a **bridegroom** coming forth with a smile on his face from his nuptial **chamber**, the freshness of the sun every morning is expressed. With joy behind him, he has at the same time gladness before him, as he **comes forth** like a **hero rejoicing** in the consciousness of his staying powers, and that whoever may have need to retire for sleep at mid-day, he, unwearied, will be able to hold on his way till his race is run. The poet's eye measures the racer's course **from one end of the heavens to the other**; and, impressed with its magnificent sweep, his mind is struck with the universality of the sun's searching **warming** rays. The word for **sun** at the beginning of the strophe was *shemesh*, the customary word: it is now, at the end of the strophe, *hammah*, a poetical and less customary word to denote the orb of day; and though derived from a root meaning *to be hot*, yet in O.T. usage it is always used of the sun himself, and not merely of his heat, as all the other instances of its occurrence in the O.T. will show: Job 30^{25}, S. Song 6^{10}, Isa. 24^{23} and 30^{26}. It is hence permissible to conclude that here also it is the **sun** himself that is meant; and, if so, the pronoun **His** ("His sun"),—again spelling it with a capital, like the **He** of the first line,—will once more carry us up to "God," whose representative the **sun** so strikingly is: implying, without expressing, that, as the sun searches all, so in a higher sense does God. Thus the end of the second strophe returns to the beginning of the first, and the two are locked into a unit.

With Strophe III. we enter upon the second half of the psalm: the transition to which is certainly very abrupt, however we may account for that circumstance; some conceiving that here we have two distinct psalms on two distinct subjects, whose juxtaposition, as an afterthought, naturally causes the sense of abruptness; others thinking that the same mind that originated the first half, pausing to face a new but counterpart theme, instinctively adopted a new vocabulary and a new style. The exact genesis of the change we may never know, but the fact of the change remains undeniable, and the magnitude and tenor of it we may briefly trace.

Note, then, that the Divine name **El**, "the Mighty One," used once, and once only, in the former half of the psalm, now gives place to the Divine name **Jehovah**, which occurs six times in this strophe and once

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in the next, making seven times in all, in the second half of the psalm. This fact is significant; for, though this second half of the psalm is not strictly speaking about Jehovah himself but about his Law, etc., yet the repeated use of this different and more gracious Divine Name clearly ought to be regarded as shedding a soft lustre over the whole of this division of the psalm. If it only be true that "Jehovah" is pre-eminently a name of grace, as it undoubtedly is, then everything which it touches is graciously affected thereby. Whether "law," "testimony," "precept," or whatever else of "Jehovah," every form of his instruction for my guidance is lit up by its relation to himself, as the "Becoming One," "the helper of his people."

With this agree the breadth and variety of both nouns and adjectives which are related to Jehovah: his **law** in his "instruction" to guide as well as his "law" to bind; his **testimony** witnesses to his own grace as well as to the saint's duty; and so on to the end. The same with the adjectives: **perfect,** lacking nothing that the soul needs; **trustworthy,** warranting the fullest confidence; **right,** satisfying man's better judgment; **clear,** saying what it means, making duty plain; **clean,** no foul spot in it, to corrupt and abolish it; **truth,** giving right decisions between man and man, claim and claim, and therefore regulations worthy to regulate.

But if nouns and adjectives have the grace of "Jehovah" resting on them, how much more those beautiful little pendants hanging upon them, each like a jewel in the ear of beauty; which, in four cases, describe the beneficent action of Jehovah's instruction, and in the two remaining instances attest its self-preserving power. The actions are all gracious: they **refresh,** they **make wise,** they **gladden,** they **enlighten.** Such Divine guidance must abide: **enduring evermore,** their Divine perfections are **vindicated** from all attacks, and they mutually explain and defend **each other.**

But is all this praise of the **Law,** not just a little exaggerated? No! why should it? Granted that the Law was a tutor guiding to Christ: are we to think that the child-guide had no affection for his ward? Besides, the terms employed are too broad and various to be limited to the mere binding force of the edicts from Sinai's summit: though even the Ten Words of Thunder had their gracious undertones. Let the Christian bethink him whether he cannot translate the whole of these six synonyms into the terms of Jesus and his Apostles, and then sing, "How gentle God's command"! Do the New Testament instructions not "refresh," "make wise," "gladden," "enlighten"—and "endure," triumphantly "vindicated"?

That "overflow," the 10th verse,—what means it? It looks as though, to the incipient apprehension of the psalmist, it had occurred, as

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a first thought, to have EIGHT full-fledged synonyms of the Law, as in Ps. 119; which half-formed design was subsequently abandoned; and then the unused colours were dashed on the canvas in magnificent profusion that nothing might be lost. Instead of saying seventhly,—"The word of Jehovah is costly—**more desirable than gold!**" and, eighthly, "The statutes of Jehovah are satisfying—**sweeter than honey,**" his enthusiasm breaks bounds, and he takes the saint's experimental response alone and intensifies two phases of it into a climax, and exclaims without more ado: **More desirable than gold—yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey—or the droppings of the comb.**

The transition at ver. 11 to the last strophe is very striking. Hitherto, neither "El" nor "Jehovah" has been directly addressed; but now a sense of *nearness* leads the psalmist reverently to look in the face of Jehovah, and say, **Thy—Thou—Thee.** He is in his heavenly Master's presence, and dutifully terms himself Jehovah's **servant,** yet without losing his sense of nearness or favoured acceptance; for he lays stress on this as a further commendation of the **regulations** of the Divine Law: **Even thine own servant**—who has long delighted himself in thy precepts and made them known to others—even HE **findeth warning in them**; lest, through inattention or over-confidence, he should insensibly or presumptuously fall into the error of the wicked. Thus admonished and restrained, he can bear witness that **in keeping them the reward is great.**

As if now moved to a searching of heart, the psalmist abruptly exclaims: **<Mistakes> who perceiveth?** By the emphasis he throws on the word "mistakes" through boldly preplacing it, he calls pointed attention to the precise nature of the failures of which he is thinking. Of course he is keeping within the general limits of *practical* "mistakes," errors of conduct in doing or leaving undone, as alone worthy of notice here; but in thus calling attention to their exact character, he throws his mind back on this as the essence of them, that, being genuine "mistakes," they are of course **unperceived,** or they would not be "mistakes"; and then the disturbing question arises: "How often may I not have unwittingly done wrong? For 'wrong,' after all, was the doing of the thing graciously forbidden, or the leaving undone of the thing graciously commanded. It was 'wrong' all the same—though I noted it not: the 'law' was transgressed, and my 'soul' lost its 'refreshing.'" And so on, along the interminable line of sins of ignorance, which yet *are* sins. And therefore the psalmist is moved to pray the first prayer of the psalm: **from concealed things** (understand, "SUCH concealed things, concealed from myself by error or

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inadvertence," otherwise they might still have been presumptuous though "concealed" from others) **acquit me.** What a searching lesson for us all!

Carelessness, in not noticing or remembering Divine Law, may lead to indifference as to heeding it when known and remembered; and thus sins of ignorance suggest sins of **knowledge and daring**; and behind even these the impulse to commit them may be strong, the temptation great; and then Divine **restraint** will be needed and is here earnestly sought—*how* earnestly, is seen by observing how aptly the petitioner reminds himself that he *is* Jehovah's **servant**—and therefore bound by every tie thrown about him by his Master's favour,—and by observing how seasonably he calls to mind that **presumptuous** sins, if not sternly checked, will assume **dominion** over him. No wonder that, with an evident sense of relief, a mind thus happily sensitive should exclaim: **Then**—acquitted from unwitting sins and restrained from presumptuous sins—**shall I be perfect**—not indeed in degree, but in **whole-heartedness, and be cleared of great transgression.**

Most appropriately is this last strophe of the psalm concluded by the unique prayer—in which surely even the holy men of to-day may join, at a long distance behind those holy men of old—**accepted be the sayings of my mouth**—which are here set forth as "pruned" to suit the strings of my lyre,—**and the soft utterance**—the tentative soliloquising—**of my heart**—on mine own ear while constructing this my poem: **Before thee, continually** (surely the recording angel made a memorandum of them all!) **O Jehovah**—thou God of covenant grace —**my Rock** of strength and confidence, **and my Redeemer**—from sin, sorrow and death.

There is little need to say, that reasonable latitude should be given to the inscription **To David.** So long as the Royal Librarian felt justified in thus marking a psalm, the ends of literary justice and working convenience were met. A psalm may have been written by one of David's prophetic scribes or singers; yet, if offered to his royal master, and examined and approved by him, it would naturally be regarded as strictly Davidic, and be fittingly deposited in the department of the library set apart to David's psalms. Notwithstanding all this, there would seem to be a peculiar poetic justice in attributing the first part of this psalm to David himself. The shepherd of Bethlehem was as familiar with the sun as with moon and stars; and having, in the leisure hours of his pastoral duties, oft marked the freshness of the sun in his rising, the triumphant valour of his unwearied way, the vast sweep of his daily circuit, the searching energy of his penetrating

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heat, and the calm majesty of his nightly retirement to his tent,—who so likely among psalmists as he, to have penned this snatch of song in his praise? The poetic justice lies in cherishing the conception that he who harped to the moon and the stars in Ps. 8 was the likeliest man to be allowed to sweep his strings to the sun in Ps. 19. It has been remarked, in the above Exposition, that even this snatch of song to the sun possesses a closely welded unity. Nevertheless, its ending is abrupt, and if it stood alone, must, as a psalm, have been pronounced unfinished. This apprehension is at once appeased by the theory of co-authorship. What the original ending of the sun-strophes may have been, we know not; but the hypothesis is an easy one, that it had in it some local or temporal element which could be spared for the worthy purpose of making way for a second part. And then, as to the authorship of that second part, who so likely as Hezekiah to have composed it? With the passionate love for the law and for the temple and for the functions of priests and Levites which history attributes to him; with the leisure and the culture which as a prince naturally fell to his lot; and with the high poetic genius which, from Isa. 38, we know he possessed;—who so likely in all history as he, to have wedded this Law-Bride to that Sun-Bridegroom? Besides, the segments of truth are formed for cohesion; and the poet who penned the second part of this psalm, is the likeliest man whose shadow has ever been seen, to have possessed in himself and been able to command in gifted associates, the constellation of sanctified genius adequate, under Divine guidance, to the production of that literary marvel, Ps. 119,—after which it is but little to say, that, of course, he also wrote our present Ps. 1. Thus, another chain of unity at an early date, is forged for binding together The Song Book of all coming ages. "The king whose delight it was to speak of 'the Maker of heaven and earth' (Isa. 37^{16}; Ps. 121^{2}); and who encouraged the priests and Levites in their devotion to the Law of the Lord (2 Chron. 31^{4}), would readily adopt [and expand] this poem of David's"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 314.

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PSALM 20.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—To Prayer for a King in Distress, a Favourable Answer is Confidently Awaited.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Petitions for Divine Succour. Refrain, ver. 5, Promise of Praise for Victory. Strophe II., vers. 6—8, Assuring Answer Acknowledged. Refrain, ver. 9, Praise Offered in Anticipation.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 May he[a] answer thee in the day of distress,
may the[b] God of Jacob |set thee on high|;
2 Send help to thee out of the sanctuary,
and <out of Zion> uphold thee;
3 Remember all thy grain-offerings,
and <thine ascending-sacrifice> esteem.[c]
4 Give thee according to thy heart,
and <all thy purpose> fulfil.
5 *We will ring out our joy in thy victory,*[d]
and <in the name of our God> will we exult.[e]

6 ||Now|| hath ||the hand of Jehovah|| been made known,[f]
Jehovah |hath given victory| to his Anointed One:
he answereth him out of his holy heavens,
by the mighty deeds of victory of his right hand.
7 ||These|| <by chariots and horses>
but ||we|| <by Jehovah> are strong:[g]
8 ||They|| have bowed down and fallen,
but ||we|| have arisen and are established.
9 *||Jehovah|| hath given victory to the king,—*
He answereth us on the day when we call.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] M.T.: "Jehovah."
[b] M.T.: "name of the."
[c] "Find thy sacrifice fat"—Dr.
[d] Or: "salvation."
[e] So with many critics, and some copies of Sep. M.T. adds: "Jehovah fulfil thy petitions." Prob. repetition from ver. 4.
[f] Thus, by Br., conjecturally restored. M.T.: "Now do I know that Jehovah hath saved his Anointed One."
[g] M.T.:
||These|| <by chariots> and ||those|| <by horses>
But ||we|| <by the name of Jehovah our God>
make memorial.
But, in any case, according to Ginsburg, make memorial (*nazkir*) shd. give place to "be strong" (*nigbir*).

EXPOSITION.

This psalm and the next, pair well together. The occasion of them [in their present form], was, in all probability, the peril and deliverance of King Jehoshaphat as recorded in 2 Ch. 20. "The victory of

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Jehoshaphat in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, cf. 2 Ch. 20, gives us a most appropriate historical situation; and the promise of victory, given by the prophet, gives an appropriate explanation of the change from petition to certitude in the two parts of the psalm"—Briggs. It is observable that whereas the prayer had been that Jehovah would send help **out of the sanctuary**, the assurance, later on, traces the victory to **the holy heavens** as its source. There is in reality no contradiction between the two representations: king and people were already assembled "in the house of Jehovah, before the new court," when Jahaziel a Levite, and therefore a servant of the sanctuary, stood forth in the midst of the convocation; and, with the spirit of prophecy upon him, gave the people a Divine assurance of victory. It was rightly felt that this assurance came direct from heaven, as also the signal deliverance which on the next day became an accomplished fact. "For if God then condescended to dwell in visible glory among men, yet He would teach his people that he is not limited by the bounds of time and space"—Perowne. "This turning toward heaven is not inconsistent with the previous turning toward the sanctuary as the source of help, for the conception of theophanic residence in sacred places on earth, did not from the earliest times of the Hebrew religion, lead them away from the thought that the real residence of Yahweh was in heaven"—Briggs.

Notwithstanding the opinion expressed above that Psalms 20 and 21, "in their present form," commemorate primarily the peril and deliverance of King Jehoshaphat, both psalms in their original form may have come from David, and may have had special reference to Solomon. From these assumptions, it becomes all the more striking to note how well their main characteristics suit Hezekiah also. "The words were a timely prayer for Hezekiah, in whose reign vers. 7—9 were added (note the plural number predominating in the pronouns here)" —Thirtle, O.T.P., 314.

PSALM 21.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Thanks for the King's Victory, and Confidence of Further Triumphs.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1–6, Recent Victory with Joy Acknowledged, vers. 1, 2; traced back to Blessings beginning with Coronation, ver. 3, when Long Life was asked, ver. 4; the Continuance of which Life and Blessings is now Counted upon with Confidence, vers. 5, 6. *Refrain*, ver. 7, The People extol their Monarch's Faith, and Assure Themselves

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of the Stability of his Reign. Strophe II., vers. 8—12, Coming Conquests Foretold, ver. 8, bringing on Enemies Fearful Punishments, vers. 9, 10, and the Defeat of their Devices, vers. 11, 12. *Refrain*, ver. 13, Jehovah's Power Extolled.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 Jehovah! <in thy might> rejoiceth the king,
and <in thy victory[a]> he exulteth greatly!
2 <The longing of his heart> thou hast given him,
and <the request of his lips> hast thou not withheld.
3 For thou camest to meet him with blessings of goodness,
thou didst set, on his head, a crown of fine gold:
4 <Life> he asked of thee—thou gavest it him,
length of days, to the ages and beyond
5 <Great> is his glory in thy victory,[a]
<majesty and state> thou layest upon him;
6 For thou dost appoint him blessings evermore,
thou dost cheer him with gladness by thy countenance.

7 *Yea ||the king|| is trusting in Jehovah,*
and <in the kindness of the Highest> he will not be shaken.
8 Thy hand |will find out| all thy foes,
||thy right hand|| will find them who hate thee:
9 Thou wilt put them in a furnace of fire,
in the time of the setting of thy face against them.
||Jehovah|| <in his anger> will swallow them up,
and there |shall consume them| the fire of his wrath;[b]
10 <Their offspring[c]> <out of the earth> wilt thou destroy,
and <their seed> from among the sons of men.
11 <Though they have held out, over thee, a wicked thing,
devised an evil device> they shall not prevail;
12 For thou wilt make them turn shoulder in flight,
<on thy bow-strings> wilt thou make ready against their faces.
13 *Be thou exalted, Jehovah, in thy strength,*
We will sing and will harp thy power.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] Concerning The Hind of the Dawn?=Sunrise=The King in his Beauty.

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[a] Or: "salvation."
[b] Ver. 9 slightly expanded by Br., to make four lines and fill strophe.
[c] Ml.: "their fruit."

EXPOSITION.

The temptation to declare this psalm to be simply a Coronation Psalm, to which some expositors have yielded, is obvious. On closer examination, however, it will probably be found that a more satisfactory view of the setting and scope of the whole psalm can be obtained by regarding the reference to coronation as incidental to the more general

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conception of reign. A recent victory restores the lustre of a reign which had become beclouded by the invasion of foes: this very naturally brings up a reminiscence of the high hopes with which the reign was begun. The king then became Jehovah's vicegerent; for Jehovah crowned him. Aspiring to rule well, as every dutiful Son of David must,—he naturally desired to rule long; in which desire his people loyally united, apprehensive of the evils of succession and change. Hence sprang the coronation greeting, May the King live! How long? Who could think of assigning a limit? Nay, may the king live for ever! as long as ever Jehovah please: loyalty declines to assign a limit. Besides, who knows when King Messiah shall come? Who can ever tell whether this Heir to the Throne may not be He? and who knows whether the Heir Himself, breathing such an atmosphere, may not have conceived the incipient wish that it might be himself? Dim, visionary, yet withal dazzling,—the wish may have been father to the prayer: **Life he ask of thee,** to which he felt no need to assign an end—**life,** only **life!** The spirit of the Messiah, working in the psalmist, carries him out of himself. It has not been revealed to the psalmist who will be the Messiah. But, in language vaguely and benevolently suited to *any* Son of David, yet strictly applicable only to *the* Son of David, he adds:—**thou gavest it him, Length of days,** *'olâm wâ-'edh*, **age-abidingly and beyond.** From this point onward the radiance of a Messianic light rests on the psalm. It is King David or King Jehoshaphat who sits yonder, but on him rests a light from afar, not his own. Through the type, we catch glimpses of the Antitype.

While abiding by the dominant view of authorship appended to the preceding psalm, hearty consent may be accorded to the following judgment:—"When, in after times, the prosperity of Hezekiah was celebrated in the Temple worship, this psalm was singularly appropriate. Whether by adaptation or not, ver. 4 had a special meaning when spoken of him; and vers. 11, 12 tell of the Assyrian army and its destruction"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 314–15.

PSALM 22.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Voice of a Forsaken Sufferer—Loudly Lamenting his Lot, Minutely Describing his Pain and Shame, without Reproaching God or Accusing Himself—is Suddenly Silenced (in Death); and then as Suddenly is Heard in a Strain of Triumph,

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in which Other Voices join, all Celebrating the Praises of Jehovah as Sovereign Lord.

ANALYSIS.—This psalm naturally falls into two parts: the *first* part, spoken by One Voice, consisting of six decastich strophes, One of them Broken Short; and the *second* part, spoken by Other Voices, consisting of four tristich strophes, each of these including an Appropriate Refrain.

PART I.—Strophe I. vers. 1—5, a Sufferer, Loudly Complaining of being Forsaken by God, is yet careful to Acknowledge Jehovah's Delivering Faithfulness to his People in the Past. Strophe II., vers. 6—10, He owns himself Disesteemed Abroad and at Home, and Openly Derided by Spiteful Enemies; yet Claims that he has been Divinely Sustained from his Birth. Strophe III., vers. 11—14, He asks God to be Near Him in his Distress, caused by Enemies acting like Wild Beasts (Bulls and Lions), and by his Own Deplorable Bodily Condition. Strophe IV., vers. 15—18, Suffering from Thirst and in Prospect of Death, his enemies like Fierce Dogs gather round and ill-treat him; His Person being exposed to his Own and to the Vulgar Eye, and His Garments being Distributed. Strophe V., vers. 19—21, He Renews his Petitions for Help, Rescue and Salvation . . . Strophe VI., vers. 22—25, Strains of Triumph break forth from the Same Voice, in Praise of Jehovah's Name, before a Large Assembly.

PART II.—Strophe VII., ver. 26, Humble Seekers of Jehovah Felicitated. Strophe VIII., vers. 27, 28, Distant Nations render homage to earth's king. Strophe IX., vers. 29, 30, Both the Vigorous and those who are raised from Imminent Death, Alike Worship. Strophe X., vers. 30, 31, Perpetuation of Testimony to Jehovah's Deeds.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

[Part I. Spoken by One Voice.]

1 My GOD, my GOD! |why| hast thou failed[a] me?
"Far from my salvation" [are] the words of my loud lamentation.
2 My God! I keep crying—||by day|| and thou dost not answer me,
and ||by night|| and there is no respite for me.
3 But ||thou|| [O Jehovah] the Holy One,—
enthroned upon the praises of Israel:—[b]
4 <In thee> trusted our fathers,
they trusted—and thou didst deliver them:
5 <Unto thee> made they outcry—and escaped,
<in thee> they trusted—and were not put to shame.

6 But ||I|| am a worm—and No-one,
a reproach of mankind—and despised of a people:
7 ||All that see me|| deride me,
they open with the lip—they shake the head [saying]:—
8 "Roll [thy cause] on Jehovah—let him deliver him!
let him rescue him—since he hath found pleasure in him!"

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[a] Cp. Job 19[14] and Ps. 27[10].

[b] "The songs of praise, which resound in Israel as monuments of His saving deeds, are like Cherubs' wings, upon which His presence in Israel hovers"—Del.

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9 Yea ||thou|| art he that caused me to be born,[a]
my trust, on the breasts of my mother:
10 <Upon thee> was I cast from birth,
<from the lap[b] of my mother> <my GOD> wast |thou|

11 Be not far from me—for there is distress,
be near—for there is no one to help:
12 There <have surrounded me> many bulls,
||mighty ones of Bashan|| have encircled me:
13 They have opened, against me, their mouth,—
||a lion, rending and roaring||.
14 <Like water> am I poured out,
and <parted from each other> are all my bones:
|My heart| hath become |like wax|,
it is melted in the midst of my body.[c]

15 <Dried as a potsherd> is my palate,[d]
and ||my tongue|| is made to cleave to my gums;
and <in the dust of death> will they[e] lay me.
16 For there <have surrounded me> dogs,
||a pack of maltreaters||[f] have closed in about me;
they have bored through[g] my hands and my feet.
17 I may count all my bones,
||they|| look about[h]—they gaze[i] upon me.
18 They part my garments among them,
and <for my garments> they cast lots.

19 But ||thou|| Jehovah! be not far off,
oh my help! <to aid me> make haste!
20 Rescue, from the sword, my soul,
from the power of the dog, my solitary self:
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion,
yea <from the horns of wild oxen> mine afflicted one.[j]
* * * * * * * * * * * *[k]
22 I will tell of thy name unto my brethren,
<in the midst of an assembly> will I praise thee:—
23 |"Ye that revere Jehovah|| praise him,
||all ye seed of Jacob|| glorify him,
and <stand in awe of him> all ye seed of Israel:
24 Because he hath not detested to answer the humbled one,
neither hath he hid his face from him;
but <when he cried for help unto him> he heard."
25 <From thee> will come my praise in a large assembly,
<my vows> will I perform before thee.

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[a] Ml. "severed me from the womb." So it shd. be (w. Syr.); cp. 71[6]—Gn. M.T.: "drew me forth."
[b] Ml.: "womb."
[c] Ml.: "mine inwards."
[d] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[e] Br. reads "3rd pers. plu."
[f] So Maclaren. "A crew of miscreants"—Del.
[g] "They dig into"—Br. "They have digged into" (so Sep., Vul., Syr.)—Dr.
[h] For the difference between *nabat* and *r'aah*, see 1 Sam. 17[42].
[i] "Feast their eyes"—Del.
[j] That is: "my poor soul." M.T.: "thou hast answered me." (The psalmist, by a sudden impulse of faith, pictures his deliverance as accomplished—Dr.) The difference consists of one letter and of a change of vocalisation.
[k] These asterisks are to suggest an abruptly broken and unfinished strophe.

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[Part II. Spoken by Other Voices.]

26 Humble ones |will eat| and be satisfied,
|they| will praise Jehovah, who are seekers after him :—
"*May your heart |live| evermore!*"[a]

27 All the ends of the earth |will remember and return to Jehovah|,
and all the families of the nations |will bow down before him| :—
28 *Surely <to Jehovah> belongeth the kingdom—and one to rule over the nations.*

29 Yea <to him>[b] <will bow down> all the vigorous of the earth,
<before him> <will kneel> all who were descending to dust :—
(30) "*Yea ||mine own soul||*[c] *<to him> doth live*—30||*my*[d] *seed*|| *shall serve him.*"
(31) It shall be told, of my Sovereign, to a generation 31 to come,[e]
that they may declare his righteousness to a people to be born :—
"*That he hath done it! [That he hath done it!]*"[f]

[Nm.]

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[a] "Owing to the change of person this can only be the words of those who seek Yahweh, addressed to the afflicted"—Br.

[b] So *Gt.*—Gn. Merely a different grouping of the letters.

[c] "Pathetic circumlocution for personal pronoun." See Dr. quoted Intro., Chap. II., "Soul."

[d] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn.

[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.). Cp. 4^{13}, 102^{18}—Gn.

[f] For this repetition (to fill the line), cp. 15^{6}.

EXPOSITION.

The Mysterious Forsaken Sufferer of this psalm appears to be AN INDIVIDUAL: seeing that, in the course of his loud lamentation, he distinctly alludes to his **mouth, palate, tongue, gums, heart, bones,** and **clothing**; looks back to his **childhood** and forward to his **death.**

His SITUATION is indicated with circumstantial minuteness. He is **exposed to public view**; for he refers to **all who see him.** He is **fixed to one spot**; for his enemies **gather round** him. He has been **deprived of his clothing**; for he can **count his own bones,** shrinks from the **vulgar gaze,** as men **look for** and **behold** him, and sees his **garments distributed** to others. He has, moreover, been subjected to at least one form of bodily violence; for his enemies have **bored through his hands and his feet.** And finally, inasmuch as such as would see him, both **look for** and **gaze upon** him, it may not unnaturally be surmised that either he has companions in suffering from whom visitors to the spot would desire to distinguish him, or else darkness has gathered, making it difficult to descry him.

He is either absolutely FRIENDLESS, or his friends are so few and feeble that they do not count, being powerless to help him: hence his repeated cries for Divine pity and succour. Nevertheless, strange to

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say, he has brethren somewhere in the background, numbering a large assembly; but these come not into view until his sufferings are ended.

His ENEMIES are many. Mankind in general reproach him: his own people despise him: beholders deride him with scornful gestures and taunting words. The gathered throng of his foes appears large and threatening, formidable and fierce: he compares them to bulls, wild and gigantic—each as a lion rending and roaring; and either the same or others he likens to dogs, fierce, foul and mean, united into a pack large enough to close in about him. Moreover, the sword of authority appears in their midst. His life is threatened on every hand.

Meanwhile his SUFFERINGS are intense and prolonged. His body is so distended that his bones are dislocated; his mouth is parched with thirst, his strength flows away like water, his physical courage fails like melting wax. His mind, sensitive to the shame of his exposure and to the cruel taunts of his enemies, struggles bravely to maintain its confidence in God: the deepest distress of all being that HE seems to be far away, and to be slow to rescue,—incessant crying to Him day and night bringing no answer.

The PRIMARY CAUSE of suffering is implied rather than expressed. Reverently keeping to what is actually before us, in our search for what is implied,—the answer appears to be at once simple and sufficient. The mental anguish so strongly indicated is due to the Divine permission that he, the Sufferer, should thus fall into the hands of his enemies; and that his God should be so long in coming to his rescue. The Sufferer feels himself to be forsaken, or, rather, that his God has failed him—THAT is in evidence. His enemies have got him into their power—THAT too is in evidence. Ver. 11 suggests a connection between the two; and vers. 19–21 confirm it. The Divine forsaking consists in leaving him thus to fall into his enemies' hands. The converse, prayed for, shows this. These verses (11, 19–21) say, in effect: "Return, come near; and rescue me from the sword, from the dog, from the lion, from the wild-ox"; thereby implying that it was God's withdrawing and holding aloof, that delivered him into the power of these his enemies. The Divine withdrawing, the Divine holding aloof,—THIS was the Divine failure. So much is in evidence. And this is sufficient. We have no need, no right, to seek for more. It is sufficient. Are we to say, it is not sufficiently *mysterious?* As surely as we do say this, we show how completely we fail to enter into the position of the Sufferer. It is painfully mysterious to him, to be at all allowed to fall into his enemies' hands. The fathers had trusted, and always been delivered: HE has trusted, and NOT been delivered: herein lies the mystery—herein the chief pain—the agony—continued—oh! so long!

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The SUDDEN CLOSE of the suffering is very remarkable. It is that in any case: whether, strictly adhering to the M.T., we get the break in the form and by the force of a single word, in a new strain, at the end of line 6 in strophe v (lit., **thou hast answered me**); or whether, by a slight modification of the M.T., helped out by the Sep., we become aware of the change, not by a single word, but by the dramatic force of a sudden breaking off of the one strophe and the commencement of another in a new key. In either case, the fact remains, that all at once the strain of sorrow ceases; and, when it ceases, it ceases altogether: there is absolutely no recurrence of pain, no trace further of a single sob. It cannot be doubted that it is the same voice which thus suddenly breaks out in praise; for the metre is the same, the direct address to Jehovah is the same, and—allowing for the change of tone—the theme is the same: the lament has been, "He hath not heard"; the joy now is, "He hath heard." Moreover, as if to make this point clear, the very terms of the announcement which the late Sufferer now makes to his **brethren**, bear upon them vivid reminiscences of the shame and pain through which he has passed: by man he had been **detested**, and deeply **humbled**. God had **hid his face**, and he the Sufferer had **cried for help**. Now all is changed; and by every sign of continuity of speech we are warranted to rest in the conclusion, that it is the same voice that tells us the joyful news.

A mystery at present hangs over the **assembly** in or from which the triumph shall be sounded forth; but no ambiguity rests on the language then and there to be employed. According to a classification with which we have become familiar in our study of Hebrew Poetry, we can detect Gentile worshippers in the phrase—**Ye that revere Jehovah**, and the parallel phrases **seed of Jacob, seed of Israel** are too plain in their application to the Hebrew nation to leave room for a moment's doubt. So that we are here met with the rousing prospect that the Delivered Sufferer will announce his deliverance as a fact of deep interest to the world at large as thus represented. It looks, indeed, as though, to his own nation, the announcement would be more profoundly moving than even to the Gentile world; seeing that, while Gentile worshippers are simply called upon to **praise** Jehovah for this his interposition in behalf of the Sufferer, the seed of Jacob are called upon not only to **glorify** him, but to **stand in awe** of his holy majesty, for this story of his doings.

As this sixth strophe completes the first part of the psalm, and to all appearance other voices now carry on the psalm to its conclusion, the present seems a convenient point at which to raise the broad question of FULFILMENT: Who IS this Mysterious Sufferer?

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We took care to remark, at the beginning of our exposition, that the Sufferer appears to be an INDIVIDUAL; and no doubt this impression ought to be left undisturbed until something more likely can be suggested; until it can be shown that, though he so appears, yet this is but the allegorical dress in which the prediction is adorned; and that the seeming individual is, after all, a larger or a smaller group of individuals—a nation or a remnant of a nation. Now it may be frankly allowed, that there is no *prima-facie* impossibility in this. Nevertheless, every psalm, every representation in the psalms, must be considered on its own merits. *This* sufferer cannot be the nation, because he is distinguished from the nation—despised of a people. But may he not be a Suffering Remnant of the nation? At first sight, this appears possible; but then what sort of remnant would this be? If not a sinless remnant, at all events it is one that here makes no confession of sin. Besides, if it is a remnant that suffers, it must also be a remnant that is delivered, and declares Jehovah's name *in an assembly*: all of which goes to show how unnatural it is to see in this individual a number of individuals. A remnant may indeed be delivered from further suffering; but to represent a remnant as declaring Jehovah's name in an assembly is so incongruous as to suggest how much more simple and natural it is to adhere to literal individuality throughout this part of the psalm.

It is notorious that Christians see in this psalm a wonderfully vivid and realistic picture of the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In order to account for this, it is not necessary to hazard the opinion that anyone could have said before the event: "This sufferer in the psalm is evidently undergoing the horrors of crucifixion." All that is necessary is to take the psalm as it is written, and the story of the crucifixion of Jesus as it is told in the four Gospels, to lay them side by side, and then to look first on the one picture and then on the other. Detail by detail, the striking similarity comes into view. There are—the outcry on the cross from the opening of the psalm, the mocking of the by-standers in the very words that follow later on in the psalm, and the source of which those mockers must surely have forgotten; the parching thirst; the outstretched body; the cruel gaze of the assembled throng; the wounded hands and feet; the parted garments. As Dr. Briggs well says: "It seems to the Christian that the psalmist indeed gives a more vivid description of the sufferings of Christ on the cross than the authors of the Gospels." Myriads of readers can attest that this is no exaggeration. It may be added, that there are less obvious harmonies, which, when perceived, deepen the impression of fulfilment. That suddenly interrupted strophe (like a broken column

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in a cemetery) eloquently suggests the hushing of the voice of Jesus in death. The sudden resumption of speech in tones of triumph: it may not even yet have been fulfilled in its full and ultimate intent, for the assembly—that large assembly may not yet have been gathered; and yet, for all that, the Resurrection of Jesus, together with his renewed intercourse with his disciples; his promise, on parting, to return; the gradual formation of his assembly, his ecclesia; his own undying love for the seed of Israel:—all these serve to give a sense of spaciousness for complete and more than complete fulfilment, which leaves nothing to be desired.

It is little to confess, that we can only with the greatest difficulty begin to imagine, how an alphabet of thought for conceiving such a psalm as this, could have been communicated to any psalmist's mind. That the suffering prophets of old were types of the coming suffering Messiah, we can well believe; that every phase of suffering here portrayed may have been already experienced in rudimentary forms, a little by one sufferer and a little by another, and then passed into a common stock of conceptions made ready for the actual writer of this part of the psalm, is also not impossible. Those conceptions may even have been vivified and intensified by an actual experience which converted the writer into a not unworthy type of the Suffering One; and yet after all have amounted to nothing more than a dim outline of the Reality. From this point of view, we can well believe that David wrote the earlier part of this psalm; if, at least, we admit with Delitzsch that "David descends with his complaints to a depth that lies beyond the depth of his suffering, and rises with his hopes to a height which lies beyond the height of the reward of his suffering," so that "the hyperbolical element is thereby changed into the prophetical." The ultimate product remains, in this Divinely illumined fore-sketch, offering a Spectacle of Jesus of Nazareth, suffering on the Cross, as a proof of Divine Foresight and Divine Skill,—which nothing that we can conceive can ever surpass for satisfying the judgment and moving the soul.

In advancing to Part II. of this psalm, attention is called to the circumstance that by careful regard to expert critical judgment on a few nice points, some obvious difficulties have been removed and the whole presented with a striking measure of symmetry and brightness. Of difficulties, may be mentioned this: That however suitable it may appear that the humble should now eat and be satisfied (ver. 26), it is by no means so acceptable to be told (ver. 29) that the already "fat" shall eat as well as worship. This incongruity is at once removed, simply by a different grouping of letters, as advised by Ginsburg. Then if we

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render **vigorous** instead of "fat" as suggested by O.G. we get a fine strong line, forming a good contrast with that which follows it:—

> Yea to him will bow down all the vigorous of the earth,
> Before him will kneel all who were descending to dust.

Not who "go down," with A.V. and R.V.; but, as the participle may just as well be rendered, **who were going down** or **descending**; which makes all the difference, since their progress downwards to the dust is suddenly arrested. These emendations prepare the way for another. For how is any helpful sense discovered by the next clause thrown in by the A.V.: "And none can keep alive his own soul"? Whether left just so, or even slightly altered by the R.V.: "Even he that cannot keep his soul alive," it sounds quite as much like a burlesque as any advance of thought in the main line of the psalm: inasmuch as it seems to say, "They may worship, but still they have to die all the same." Whereas, by accepting a hint from the Septuagint; and another from ver. 26, which is crowned by a quotation; and yet another which Dr. Ginsburg had already given us, **My seed**;—we obtain a splendid refrain to this little strophe also.

Yea, my own soul to him doth live—my seed shall serve him
Why! it is both literally and metaphorically, "life from the dead"!
Thus, in getting rid of difficulties, a second quotation, serving as a refrain, appears, and puts us on scent for a third (ver. 28) and a fourth (ver. 31). For we have only to bear in mind that the Hebrew has no quotation marks, and is reluctant even to employ the word "saying"; and then to reflect that when men **bow down** they are apt to have words of worship on their lips, to become satisfied that ver. 28 is composed of quoted words; and a magnificent refrain it makes for **the families of the nations** unto **the ends of the earth** to utter. In like manner, when generation after generation **tells** and declares something to posterity of which it is glad, it can generally find words, however simple, in which to express it; and so, once more, we hear herald voices exclaiming in honour of earth's King:—

> He hath done it! He hath done it!

Those who, with a view to the thorough understanding of Part II. of this psalm, have thus minutely observed its peculiar structure—in contrast with all that had gone before,—will be prepared for our acquiescing in the judgment of Thirtle (O.T.P.), that the chief part of the present conclusion of the psalm was penned by Hezekiah. Recalling the almost certain fact, that the bitterest ingredient in Hezekiah's cup was the reflection that by his death his race would be extinguished, and the Royal Line of David would be buried with him,

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we feel that a new and thrilling interest invests the joyful exclamation which now crowns the last strophe but one of the psalm,—

Yea ||my own soul|| <to him> doth live—||my seed|| shall serve him.

This from the man who just before was rapidly descending to dust; whose own soul, instead of living, was on the point of dying; and who had no seed to succeed him!

PSALM 23.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The All-Sufficiency of Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3a, As Shepherd; Strophe II., vers. 3b, 4, as Guide; Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, As Host.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 ||Jehovah|| is my shepherd—I have no want:
2 <in pastures of tender grass> he maketh me lie down,
<unto waters of quietness> he leadeth me;
3 <my soul> he refresheth[a] continually.[b]

He guideth me in right tracks—for the sake of his name:
4 yea <when I walk in a gloomy ravine>[c]
I fear no harm—for ||thou|| art with me,
||thy club and thy staff[d] ||they|| comfort me.

5 Thou spreadest before me a table—in presence of mine adversaries,
thou hast anointed with oil my head—||my cup|| giveth cheer:—
6 Surely ||goodness and kindness|| will run after me[e] all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah evermore.[f]

[a] "To restore the senses of life."—Dr. Par. Psalter.
[b] So Br., resolving the Heb. letters into finite verb, followed by infinitive absolute, which then yield above meaning.
[c] So most moderns, after older commentators. Cp. O.G. 853.
[d] "The nail-knobbed club, for purposes of defence, and the staff with a bent handle, for help in walking, still used by shepherds in the East."—Dr.
[e] As the alert servants of my host.
[f] Mi. "to length of days." N.B.: Br. finds in strophe one 3 beats, in strophe two 4 beats, and in strophe three 5 beats.

EXPOSITION.

The beauty of this little psalm consists, *first*, in its calm assurance of Jehovah's all-sufficiency; and, *second*, in the simplicity, variety, and fulness with which this assurance is set forth. How much the essential

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theme contributes to the reader's satisfaction, may be gathered from the undoubted fact that the majority of readers never reflect on the change of figures which takes place before the psalm is ended. The essential thought is felt to be one from beginning to end, and that thought is sweet. The infinite God is mine, and cares for me, provides for me, is with me—this is the charm of it. There may be need and danger, discipline and even hostility on the background; but there they remain throughout: the things that come to the front are—the supply for the need, the deliverance from the danger, the use of the discipline, and the powerlessness of the hostility. Quite simply all these blessings come from One Person, whose loving activity is noted throughout. Every blessing named appears as a personal gift. It is this intense personality which so greatly endears the psalm. Practically, there are but two persons in the psalm—Jehovah and I. And then there is a satisfying conclusion: it is a consummation, which delights, because of the feeling of home-longing to which it appeals, and which it assures of satisfaction. There are figures in the psalm, but they are transparent throughout. The One Personality shines through all. Jehovah begins by being my shepherd; soon and imperceptibly he becomes everything. This, then, is the first and chief element in the preciousness of this psalm. The *second*—which is worthy of it—consists in the simplicity, variety and fulness with which the assurance of the psalm is set forth: Shepherd, Guide, Host—relation to whom as sheep, traveller, guest, is easily imagined by every quickened soul. Little is said of each relation; but what is said is fundamental, and each detail speaks a volume. It is better to regard the relation of Shepherd as completed by three clauses, which are congruous and complete: the shepherd secures for his sheep—food, with rest; drink, with rest; and the consequent reinvigoration of life. This rounds off the first figure. Letting this figure go, the next brings an advance of ideas. As a sheep, Jehovah led me; and, with renovated life, all was well.

Now, as a traveller, I have tracks to find; and he guideth me to the right tracks for conducting me safely home. Over the hills, the tracks may be few, faint, and divergent: for the sake of his own name and honour he guideth to those that are right. Down among the valleys, I may come to a dark and fearsome ravine. Still he is with me, my companion as well as my guide. I hear his voice, as he cheerily beguiles me along. I know he has a club for defence against assailants, and is well able to wield it. His staff he lends me to lean on in my weariness. And so both his rod and his staff ‖they‖ comfort me. The idea of guidance is complete. It wants no addition.

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Once more the scene changes. I am welcomed to a mansion. A spread table awaits me. Enemies who may witness my admission, dare not come near to molest me; for they know that the power and honour of my host are pledged to my defence. I am his privileged guest. I have been to the bath, and now with his own hand he anoints my head with fragrant oil. My cup is well filled and gives me good cheer. In the hall of my host are attendants. Upon me two of them wait. Their names are Goodness and Kindness; and these follow me with alacrity whithersoever I please to go, anticipating my every want. And so it is to be as long as I live; for finally I discover that here, in this mansion, at last I am at home! No need for another word.

PSALM 24.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Admission of Worshippers into the Presence of the Previously Admitted King.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Ownership of the World the Ground for Worshipping him. Strophe II., vers. 3—6, Worshippers seek and obtain Admission into the Presence of Earth's King: first, Asking Who may Enter; second, Getting an Answer by Description of Character; third, Claiming to be the Class Described. Strophe III., vers. 7—10, Prior Admission demanded for Jehovah Himself as the King of Glory.

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.

1 <To Jehovah> belongeth the earth, and the fulness thereof,
the world, and they who dwell therein;
2 For ||he|| <upon seas> founded it,
and <upon streams> maketh it firm.[a]

3 *Who may ascend the mountain of Jehovah?*
and who may stand in his holy place?
4 ||The clean of hands, and pure of heart,
who hath not uplifted, to unreality, his desire,[b]
neither hath sworn to deceit||
5 Shall bear away a blessing from Jehovah,
and vindication from his delivering God.[c]
6 ||*This*|| *is the class of those who are seeking after him,*
who are seeking the face[d] *of the God*[e] *of Jacob.*

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[a] See Intro., Chap. III., "earth."
[b] U.: "soul."
[c] Ml. "his God of safety" or "salvation."
[d] So Sep.
[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Syr.)—Gn.

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7 Lift up, ye gates, your heads,
and lift yourselves up, ye ancient[a] doors,—
That the king of glory |may come in|.
8 *Who', then, is the king of glory?*
Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah, mighty in battle.

9 Lift up, ye gates, your heads,
and lift yourselves up, ye ancient doors,—
That the king of glory |may come in|.
10 *Who, then, is' the king of glory?*
Jehovah (God) of hosts,
||He|| is the king of Glory. [illegible]

[Nm.]

[a] Or, "age-abiding."

EXPOSITION.

The peculiarity in the structure of this psalm, as revealed by the analysis prefixed to it, is so thoroughly sustained by internal evidence as to need little more than reaffirmation here. The first strophe is in any case introductory to the other two, and no one will seriously question its fitness to serve that purpose. The second strophe, representing worshippers asking who may ascend the holy mountain, necessarily presupposes that Jehovah's residence has already been fixed there; for surely they would not ask for admittance into his presence before he had taken up his abode in the tabernacle prepared for him. Consequently, the third strophe must have come from an earlier time; because it represents Jehovah himself as demanding admission into his new abode. The psalm may easily have been so constructed. David himself may have indited both parts, at times only a little distant from each other. First, in view of the upbringing of the ark, he may have written expressly for that occasion—the third strophe, as an independent psalm to be sung among others; or as a fragment of a larger psalm meant for that occasion only. Then, later on, either for habitual use in connection with the tent when set up and honoured by the symbolic Divine Presence; or, for use in the Temple which Solomon was about to build, the first and second strophes may have been prefixed to make the psalm as a whole suitable for general use, which the third strophe alone would scarcely have been.

Passing on to survey the psalm as we have it on its merits, we observe the admirable fitness of the introductory strophe to serve its purpose, because it lays a solid foundation for all worship. The earth,

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with its contents, the world, with its inhabitants,—these all belong to Jehovah, because he made them; and therefore it is meet that he should be adored, thanked and praised for what he has done. Jehovah, the God of grace, is at the same time the God of nature: had he not created us such as we are, we could not have desired to worship him; we could not have known him and realised a need and a desire to know him better.

Knowing him—knowing these fundamental things about him—and desiring to worship him; we next need to know where he may be found; and we learn that he dwelleth in yon holy place, on yonder holy mountain of Zion. This may not be all the truth: it may be but a stepping-stone to higher truth. His local earthly presence may be only introductory to his local heavenly presence; and even his local heavenly presence may ultimately be found to be only introductory to his universal presence. Nevertheless, this is the way in which he is leading us; and we had better accept our lessons as he gives them. Even through means of an earthly symbolic presence, we may learn invaluable lessons; and one such lesson is given us here. Who may enter yonder sacred spot, who stand with acceptance in yonder hallowed shrine? The answer comes in the form of a *description of character:* nothing else is named. Nationality is ignored: tribe, clan, family, age, social standing—these are all brushed aside; everything gives place to character. Character is to be triumphant. He that possesses these sterling characteristics shall bear away in triumph a blessing from Jehovah, a vindication from his delivering God. Are there only a comparatively few who possess such a character? Then let all seek to belong to the comparatively few? Do any protest that they are not saints but sinners; that their characters have become broken and damaged and unpresentable before this holy God? Then, this conviction may prepare them for the next lesson: it may put them on the track of salvation. But meantime this first lesson must be strongly enforced: that salvation is salvation into character: character becomes an abiding reality. Only the pure in heart can see God. The craving to worship is a craving to see God. But this earthly presence speaks of a heavenly presence; and the ultimate lesson is that a holy character is essential to the heavenly presence of Jehovah. But the heavenly presence is coming down to earth. God is coming down to lift us up. The tent of God—his eternal tent—his eternal near and intimate dwelling—is coming down to be with men. Then men should arise and prepare to meet their God.

Advancing to the third strophe for general lessons, we mark the character in which Jehovah himself demands admission into his earthly

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temple: it is as "King of Glory." Twice the demand for admission is made; twice it is as the "King of Glory." When identification is sought as to Who the King of Glory is, and the answer has been by name and attribute and relationship given, that answer is crowned by a third employment of this descriptive title: "He is the King of Glory." What is the NAME of "the King of Glory"? His name is "Jehovah." What are his attributes? "Strong"—"mighty"—"mighty in battle": these are his attributes—all chosen as if to support the claim to be King, as much as to say—"Beware! for none can successfully resist him." Certainly, then, the Kingship of Jehovah is made especially prominent: by the threefold repetition of the title; by the attributes selected to enforce it; and, we may add, by the claim here made, that he has "ARMIES" at his command; for such is evidently the force of the word "hosts," "Jehovah of hosts," "Jehovah of armies in battle array." Is it asked who are these, Jehovah's hosts? First and foremost, in the merely typical application, to the time and circumstances then present, David and his men; successors of Joshua and his men; the hosts of Israel, who are now completing their conquest of Canaan, the hosts of Israel with Jehovah, the King of Glory, at their head. This is the lowest application. We need not stop there. As the Kingship is lifted up and the claim for submission is widened,—the "hosts," the "armies," will multiply, until they include the heavenly hosts themselves. The one point on which we would concentrate attention is the Kingship of Jehovah. And let it be remembered that "the King of Glory" is another way of saying, "Glorious King." As King he will enter: as King he will be enthroned: as King he will be worshipped. The Creator of the beginning of the psalm, is the Glorious King of the close of the psalm.

Is all this a Type? From early times—from the times of the early "Fathers"—and we are willing to think from the very times of the Apostles, when Christ's early disciples realised that their Risen Lord had gone up into heaven, Christians have felt they were getting near—if they had not altogether reached—the Antitype of that Type—that magnificent Type from one point of view—that feeble type from another. It is doubtless the Antitype that dwarfs the Type. Let it be remembered that it is the type of David's time which just now sets us on the right road of application. The Type had in it these elements: That it was the Earth—not heaven—to which claim was laid; that Jerusalem was regarded as the Governmental Centre of the Earth; that visible and effectively enforced Kingship claimed to be acknowledged at that centre: Jehovah of armies—he is the Glorious King of

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Earth! Christ's ascension is only a part of the fulfilment; for—in a sense much needed and most true for the safe development of this theme—Christ's ascension is not yet complete. Christ the Head of the Church has ascended; but the Corporate Christ has not yet been "taken up in glory" (1 Tim. 3^{16}): *that* complementary ascension awaits the time when by "preaching Christ among the Gentiles," and his being "believed on in the world," the number required to complete his body will be made sufficiently large to suit the purposes of the Father's love. Then and thereafter will the Type be carried forward into a yet wider, deeper, higher fulfilment. We are but learners on this theme. This psalm does not stand alone, as though it were the only Ascension Psalm: there are others, and notably among them the 47th, in view of which we may shadow forth a legitimate surmise—provided we call it no more—that in the Coming Kingdom, Ascension and Descension may be repeated until at length the tent of God shall be with men, and He will dwell among them as their God.

Due consideration of the structure and contents of this psalm will easily adjust the questions of authorship and fit occasions for use. The whole of the psalm may well have been composed by David; though probably the third strophe was written before the second, as suggested in the above exposition. After being used on some fitting occasion of solemn procession to the temporary tent, it can have scarcely failed to be employed on the dedication of Solomon's temple; and must have been thrice welcome to Hezekiah when he cleansed and reopened the house of Jehovah. It has been a fountain of inspiration for analogous occasions ever since; and yet, possibly, only in the future manifestation of the promised Kingdom of the Messiah, will its sublime capabilities for leading the praises of adoring multitudes be fully realised.

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PSALM 25.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Alphabetical Psalm of Supplication.

ANALYSIS.—Seven lines of Direct Address to Jehovah, vers. 1—7; three lines in Praise of Jehovah, vers. 8—10; one line of Direct Address, ver. 11; three lines Descriptive of him who Revereth Jehovah, vers. 12—14; one line Concerning the Psalmist, ver. 15; six lines of Direct Address, vers. 16—21; and one line of *Refrain*, ver. 22.

[Lm.] By David.

א 1 <Unto thee, Jehovah,> <my soul> do I lift—
oh let me not **be put to shame.**[a]

ב 2 <In thee, my God>[b] have I trusted—
let not my foes exult over me.

ג 3 Yea let ||none who wait for thee|| **be put to shame**—
let |them| **be put to shame** who act covertly without cause.[c]

ד 4 <Thy ways, Jehovah> let me know—
<thy paths> **teach** thou me.

ה 5 Guide me into thy truth, and **teach** me—
for ||thou|| art my saving[d] God.[e]

ו 6 **Remember** thy compassions, Jehovah, and thy kindness—
for <from age-past times> have they been.

ז 7 <The sins of my youth>[f] do not **remember**—
<according to thy kindness> **remember** ||thou|| me.

ח 8 <Good and upright> is Jehovah—
|therefore| will he direct[g] in the **way.**

ט 9 He will guide humble ones to vindication—
that he may teach humble ones his **way.**

י 10 All the paths of Jehovah are kindness and faithfulness—[h]
to such as keep his covenant.[i]

כ 11 <For the sake of thy name> Jehovah—
|therefore| wilt thou pardon mine iniquity, though it is |great|.

ל 12 |Who| then is the man that **revereth** Jehovah?—
he will direct him in the way he chooseth.

מ 13 ||His soul|| <with prosperity> shall tarry—[j]
and his seed shall possess the land.

נ 14 <The intimacy of Jehovah> have they who **revere** him—
even <his covenant> to let them know.

---

[a] So (w. Br.) transposed from ver. 2. The redistribution of clauses speaks for itself.

[b] So *Gt.*, by simple transposition bringing *beth* to beginning of line.

[c] "Treacherously without effect"—Br.

[d] Or: "delivering."

[e] M.T. adds: "for thee have I waited all the day." Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) prefix *waw* = "and" (Gn.). Perh. relics of an original *waw* (ו) strophe.

[f] M.T. adds: "and my transgressions."

[g] M.T. adds: "sinners"; but redundant in measure, and morally improbable.

[h] Or: "truth."

[i] M.T. adds: "and his testimonies."

[j] Or: "be a guest."

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ע 15 ||Mine eyes|| are continually unto Jehovah—
for ||he|| **bringeth forth** <out of the net>[a] my soul.

פ 16 Turn unto me, and be gracious unto me—
for <lonely and humbled> am |I|.
צ 17 <The distresses of my heart> oh relieve—
and <out of my straits> **bring** me **forth.**
(ק) 18 Come to the relief[b] of my humiliation and my travail—
and take away[c] all my sins.
ר 19 See my foes, for they have multiplied—
and <with the hatred of violence> do they hate me.
ש 20 Oh keep my soul, and **rescue** me—
let me not be **put to shame**, for I take refuge in thee.
ת 21 Let ||blamelessness[d] and uprightness||[e] rescue[f] me—
for, O Jehovah, I have waited for thee.
22 *Ransom Israel, O God, out of all his distresses.*[g]

[Nm.]

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[a] "Too specific"—Br. Yet well suited to David or Hezekiah.
[b] So some critics (*ḳara'*): supplying the missing *ḳoph*, and obviating the M.T.'s repetition of *resh*.
[c] Or: "grant forgiveness of."
[d] Or: "wholeheartedness," "integrity."
[e] Or: "straightforwardness." "These two fundamental virtues he wishes to be his guardians on his way"—Del.
[f] Prob. *nṣl* as in prev. line, instead of *nṣr* (in M.T.).
[g] Cp. Ps. 34[22].

EXPOSITION.

This psalm needs little expounding; but will repay devout meditation. It springs from a deep sense of need, and abounds in supplication. It is artificial in structure, and has many minute beauties. It was framed to help the memory when books were few. It suggests many literary and historical problems, some of which it helps to settle. Specially worthy of note is the fact that, although clearly alphabetical, one letter of the alphabet has been suppressed, presumably to make way for the refrain at the end, outside the acrostic arrangement, yet so as not to exceed the number twenty-two. Its companion psalm is the thirty-fourth: this being a psalm of petition—that of praise. The refrains to these psalms are specially noticeable. The psalms themselves are private and individual; but the refrains reach out to public events in which all Israel are interested. Thus viewed, the two psalms become intensely dramatic; and lend themselves to thrilling events in Israel's ancient history. Cp. Thirtle, O.T.P., 107–8.

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PSALM 26.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Ideal Levite's Prayer for Vindication by the Prolongation of his Life.

ANALYSIS.—An introductory Petition, ver. 1a, is sustained by six strophes of protestations and prayers. Strophe I., vers. 1b, c, 2, A protest of blamelessness and trust, is sustained by Prayer for further Testing. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Protest continued, of right feeling, right conduct and avoidance of evil company. Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, Protest prolonged, and pointed towards worship! Strophe IV., vers. 7, 8, To proclaim Jehovah's wonders, his House is loved. Strophe V., vers. 9, 10, Plea for life, in contrast with evil doers. Strophe VI., vers. 11, 12, Blamelessness moves to prayer for redemption, and gives assurance of public praise.

[Lm.]—By David.

1 Vindicate me, [a] O Jehovah! [b]

For ||I|| <in my blamelessness> have walked,
and <in Jehovah> have I trusted without wavering: [c]
2 Try me, Jehovah, and prove me,
test thou my motives and my mind. [d]

3 For ||thy kindness|| hath been before mine eyes,
and I have walked to and fro in thy truth;
4 I have not sat with worthless men, [f]
and <with dissemblers> would I not enter.

5 I have hated an assembly of evil-doers,
and <with lawless men> [g] would I not sit. [h]
6 I can bathe, in pureness, my palms, [i]
and would fain march around thine altar, O Jehovah.

7 <To proclaim aloud [j] a thanksgiving,
and to tell of all thy wondrous works>
8 Jehovah! I have loved the dwelling of thy house,
even the place of the habitation of thy glory. [k]

9 Do not take away, with sinners, my soul,
nor, with men of bloodshed, my life:
10 <In whose hands> is an evil device,
and ||their right-hand|| is filled with a bribe.

---

[a] Cp. 7^8, 43^1.
[b] Cp. short line for emphasis $1^{1, 2}$, $8^{1, 9}$.
[c] Cp. 2 K. 18^5.
[d] U.: "my reins and my heart." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "heart," "reins."
[e] Cp. Isa. 38^3
[f] "'Insincere persons'; (or *frivolous persons*: lit. *men of unreality*)"—Dr.
[g] "Implies disloyal association with the heathen, the impious outsiders"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 106.
[h] Cp. 1^1.
[i] 73^{13}.
[j] Ml. "with voice."
[k] Note the continued presence of the shekinah.

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11 <Since ||I|| <in my blamelessness> do walk>[a]
ransom me, and be gracious unto me (Jehovah).
12 ||My foot|| hath taken its stand in a level place,
<in assemblies> do I bless Jehovah.[b]

[Nm.]

[a] Cp. ver. 3 and Isa. 38[3].
[b] Cp. Isa. 38[20]. "In the choirs of the congregation do I praise Jahve"—Del. "In full assemblies will I bless Jehovah"—Dr.

EXPOSITION.

This is a bright and beautiful psalm, with a ring of sincerity in it, and lighted up with a glowing hope of public blessing. The experiences of both David and Hezekiah lie behind it. Thirtle well says of it:—"Words in every sense suited to the times of either king. Ver. 8 recalls Hezekiah's love for the Temple, and ver. 9 expresses his revulsion at the thought of dying the death of a sinner, which was his interpretation of the mortal sickness with which God had smitten him" (Thirtle, O.T.P., 315–6.) The references appended to the text will transport the reader into a realm of reality, and the Analysis prefixed to it will probably make detailed exposition appear unnecessary.

PSALM 27.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Trust and Prayer in the Hour of Danger.

ANALYSIS.—Part I., Two pentameter hexastichs: Strophe I., vers. 1—3, That which Jehovah Is Now, he Has Been in the Past, and Will Be in the Future; Strophe II., vers. 4—6, The One Thing sought, in spite of Intermediate Danger, is Anticipated with Confidence. Part II., Four irregular tetrastichs, betraying Adaptation: Strophe I., vers. 7, 8, Prayer in Seeking Jehovah's Face. Strophe II., ver. 9, The Hiding of Jehovah's Face Deprecated. An addition, ver. 10: Jehovah will Not Fail, though Father and Mother may. Strophe III., vers. 11, 12, Prayer for Guidance in Presence of Enemies. Strophe IV., ver. 13, The Prospect of Prosperity Awaited with Confidence.

[Lm.]—By David.

Part I.

1 ||Jehovah|| is my light and my salvation—
of whom shall I be afraid?
||Jehovah|| is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be in dread?

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2 <When there drew near against me evil-doers—
to devour my flesh>
||Mine adversaries and mine enemies, mine||
||they|| stumbled and fell.
3 <Though there encamp against me a host>[a]
my heart |shall not fear|,
<Though there rise up against me a battle>
<in spite of this> ||I|| am trustful.

4 <One thing> have I asked of Jehovah—
<that> will I seek to secure:—[b]
To gaze upon the delightfulness of Jehovah
in the morning[c] in his temple.
5 Surely he will conceal me in his covert
in the day of calamity,
He will hide me in the hiding-place of his tent—
<in straits>[d] will uplift me.
6 ||Now|| therefore shall my head be uplifted
above my foes round about me,
And I will sacrifice in his tent
sacrifices of sacred shouting[e] to Jehovah.

Part II.

7 Hear, O Jehovah, my voice,
I call—be gracious unto me, then, and answer me.
8 <To thee> said my heart—[f]
<"Thy face> Jehovah, do I seek."

9 Do not hide thy face from me,
do not thrust away, in thine anger, thine own servant:
<My help> hast thou been,
do not abandon or fail me, my saving God![g]

10 <Though ||my father and my mother|| have failed[h] me>
yet ||Jehovah|| will care for me.[i]

11 Point out to me, O Jehovah, thy way,
and guide me in an even path:[j]
12 Do not give me up to the greed[k] of mine adversary,[l]
he that breatheth out violence against me.

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[a] Ml.: "camp."
[b] M.T. adds: "That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life." But as the claims of strophic uniformity, in a psalm like this first part, are considerable; and as the essence of the "one thing desired" seems to be preserved by the next line, the force of symmetry has been allowed to bring this line to the foot of the text.
[c] So with Br.; and cp. 5^4, 59^{17}, 88^{14}.
[d] Or, as otherwise pointed: "in a rock."
[e] M.T.: "I will sing and will harp": too much for the measure, yet not improbably by the co-author (cp. Isa. 38^{20}).
[f] M.T. adds: "Seek ye my face." Prob. (w. Br.) "an early marginal exclamation" which "eventually came into the text."
[g] Symmetry is improved by Br.—at risk of wiping out co-author's intensifications.
[h] Or: "forsaken"; yet see 22^1.
[i] Or (w. Thirtle): "recover me." For this meaning of *'aṣaph*, see 2 K. $5^{3.6.11}$. Remarkable, as there applied to leprosy.
[j] M.T. adds: "because of my watchful foes."
[k] U.: "soul." See Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[l] M.T. adds: "for there have arisen against me false witnesses."

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13 I believe[a] that I shall gaze upon the good things of Jehovah in the land of the living.[b]
Wait thou for Jehovah: Be strong,[c] and let thy heart |be bold|,
wait thou, then, for Jehovah.

[Nm.]

[a] M.T.: "Unless" ("unless I had believed") —but marked as spurious—Gn. "It is not justified by the most ancient versions"—Br.

[b] Cp. Isa. 38[11].

[c] Heb. *ḥzḳ*: in prob. allusion to HeZeKiah's name.

EXPOSITION.

There is great beauty in this psalm, and there are some irregularities: traces of careful preservation, and tokens of accidents and changes which may elude our most careful research. The psalm is manifestly composite, though not the less instructive for that reason. If we could know its exact literary history, we should probably see how some supreme event welded its composite parts into one; and its transcriptional history would probably account for its various readings. Part I. is exceedingly beautiful from the poetic point of view; and its spiritual elevation is most inspiring to the devout mind. Danger is near, but the spirit of the psalmist is calm; his thoughts flow with ease, and his numbers hold their way with clearness and regularity. This part is, indeed, a fine specimen of Hebrew poetry; nor is it less valuable as showing the calm height to which communion with Jehovah can lift a soul in the midst of peril. It needs but little detailed exposition: yet a perception of the situations implied, tend to make it all the more luminous. Part II. is altogether different, except as to the strength of faith and devotion expressed. It shows a marked change of measure; and has probably not been preserved so well as the more finished production that precedes it. An enquiry into authorship, and a glimpse of probable originating situations may best help readers to appreciate this psalm at its true value. Joint authorship is strongly indicated. There is no reason for doubting the truth of the inscription **To David**; though, what portions he contributed, it is impossible now to say. Dr. Briggs sees, even in the first part, glimpses of the days of Hezekiah. "The calm confidence," says he, "in connection with extreme perils from enemies, apparently besieging the city, reminds us of the situation of Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah, *vide* 2 Kings 18, 19." On the other hand, Dr. Thirtle says: "The second part (vers. 7—14) seems to have been added by Hezekiah when consumed with a desire to go up to the house of the Lord (Isa. 38[22])." And,

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further on: "We are not to find in ver. 10 a biographical note, or an allusion to personal bereavement, but rather an expression of implicit confidence in God--as if to say, 'Though my sickness is such that even father and mother may forsake me, yet for all that the Lord will receive me,' or *recover* me, as the verb *âsaph* implies in a context relating to the treatment of leprosy (cp. 2 Kings $5^{3\ 6,\ 11}$). In other words, 'Though nearest and dearest prove false, the Lord will be faithful to me'"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 316. Charming and helpful as this is, it may not be out of place to suggest, that even the second part of this psalm may have had a Davidic *foundation*; and, in particular, that if only we had David's history before us, that alone might have made it perfectly gratuitous to resort, with Dr. Briggs, to Maccabean times to find a situation in which ver. 10 could have been written. David's "father and mother" did not indeed "forsake" him; but they naturally "failed" to afford him the counsel and help which he might have fondly hoped to derive from their presence in the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22^{1-4}). On the other hand, adaptations to Hezekiah's circumstances quite cluster about the close of the psalm. Ver. 12 may be held to point plainly to the Assyrian invader; ver. 13 to refer to Hezekiah's trust (2 K. 18^{5}), to reproduce Hezekiah's very style (Isa. 38^{11}), and to enshrine an allusion to his name. (See note on "Be strong," above; and Thirtle, O.T.P., 123, 124.)

PSALM 28.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer Turned into Praise.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Prayer Boldly Pleads the Feared Result of Refusal to Answer. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4 (with addition, ver. 5), Depicts the Character of the Lawless, and Imprecates their Punishment. Strophe III., vers. 6—8, Praise for Deliverance. *Refrain*, ver. 9, Invokes Jehovah's Blessing on his People.

[Lm.] By David.

1 <Unto thee> I call, my Rock—[a]
do not turn silently from me;
Lest <if thou turn silently from me>—
I be likened with them who are going down to the pit.

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[a] M.T. adds: "Jehovah."

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2 Hear the voice of my supplication—
as I cry for help unto thee,
As I lift up my hands (O my God)[a]
unto thy holy shrine.[b]
3 Do not drag me away with the lawless—
and with workers of iniquity,[c]
Who are speaking peace with their neighbours—
while wrong is in their heart.
4 Give them according to their deed—
and according to the evil of their doings;
<According to the work of their hands> give them—
bring back their dealings to themselves.

5 <Because they heed not the deeds of Jehovah—
nor the work[d] of his hands>[e]
he will put them down and not build them.

6 <Blessed> be Jehovah
because he hath heard the voice of my supplication:
7 ||Jehovah|| my strength and my shield—
in whom hath trusted my heart,
<Since I have found help and my heart hath exulted>
<with my song> will I thank him:
8 ||Jehovah|| a strength to his people[f]
and <the all-saving stronghold[g] of his Anointed one>
is he!

9 *Oh save thy people, and bless thine inheritance,*
and shepherd them and carry them, unto the ages![h]

[Nm.]

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[a] Not in M.T.
[b] "Chancel"—Dr.
[c] "Naughtiness"—Dr.
[d] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.): "works" (pl.)—Gn.
[e] Cp. Isa. 5[12].
[f] So it shd. be—G. Intro., 148. And so it is in some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. Ps. 29[11]—Gn.
[g] Ml.: "the stronghold of the salvations" (="great salvation," pl. intensive).
[h] Ml.: unto the age: Heb. *'adh-ha 'olam.*

EXPOSITION.

In this psalm prayer is prolonged; but praise, when it comes, is pronounced. The prayer is prompted by some unnamed peril, the continuance of which, it is feared, will cause death. We are struck with the terms in which the prayer is couched. God is so addressed by the term **Rock** as to make of this word a proper name, inasmuch as the *figure* of a rock as such disappears, since an entreaty to a rock to turn or not to turn is incongruous: thus showing that the application of the term to Jehovah has become so familiar that the appropriate imagery is forgotten. The Becoming One (="Jehovah") is the Abiding One, the Changeless One (the "Rock"): the conception of

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immutability being retained, all else is let go. The Changeless in nature, is thought of as changing in attitude: turning towards in favour, ready to answer prayer; or turning away in silence, leaving the suppliant's mind in painful suspense. The feeling for the personality of Jehovah is intense; and the sense of nearness to him is so vivid as to induce great boldness in supplication. The impression of this made by the first strophe is deep. Before leaving this strophe, we may recall the fact that the name **Rock**, as a favourite name for Jehovah, is found in Psalms closely bound up with David's name; *e.g.* $18^{2, 31, 46}$; *Debir* for **shrine**, as used of "the holy of holies," is more closely associated with the Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 6^{5} and onwards) than with the holy tent of David's own day; but as names are often carried backwards it would be trifling to make of this an argument against the Davidic joint-authorship of this psalm. It is wonderful, however, to note how much Hezekiah found in David suited to his own case; and then further how brightly the image of Hezekiah himself is wont to shine out in the close of the psalms. There is, indeed, nothing in the third strophe (vers. 6—8) which David could not have used; but a sense of enhanced fitness greets a reference to the unparalleled experience of the later monarch. "At ver. 6 Hezekiah adds his experience (cp. Isa. 38^{10-20})"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 316.

With the reference to the "lawless" in ver. 3, Ps. 9^{17} and the note on "lawless" in Ps. 1^{1} may be usefully compared.

The imprecations of vers. 4, 5 may serve to remind us of the instinctive passion with which injured human nature turns to "the vindicatory righteousness of God" (Intro., Chap. III., "Righteousness"); and that it is only in the strength of the highest manifestation of the Messianic Spirit that we can hope victoriously to exclaim, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." At the same time all persecutors would do well to beware of the Divine indignation which may necessarily alight on them in order that Jehovah may **save his people, bless his inheritance—shepherd them also and carry them unto the ages.**

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PSALM 29.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Glory in the Temple and in the Tempest: Jehovah's Kingship of Judgment in the Past and of Blessing in the Future.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Angels Called to Worship in the Heavenly Temple. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Commencement of Storm on the Mediterranean. Strophe III., vers. 5—7, Bursting of Storm in the North. Strophe IV., vers. 8, 9, Sweep of the Storm to the South. Strophe V., vers. 10, 11, Jehovah's Abiding Kingship will Ultimately bring Strength and Blessing to his People.

[Lm.]—Psalm by David.

1 Give unto Jehovah, ye sons of the Mighty,[a]
give unto Jehovah glory and strength;
2 Give unto Jehovah the glory of his name,
bow down unto Jehovah in holy adorning.

3 ||The voice of Jehovah|| is on the waters—
||the God of glory|| hath thundered;
||Jehovah|| is on mighty waters:
4 ||The voice of Jehovah|| is with power,
||the voice of Jehovah|| is with state.

5 ||The voice of Jehovah|| is breaking cedars,
aye! Jehovah| breaketh in pieces| the cedars of Lebanon
6 He maketh Lebanon|[b] skip about like a calf|,
and ||Sirion|| like a bull-calf of wild-oxen:
7 ||The voice of Jehovah|| cleaveth open [and letteth out] flames of fire.

8 ||The voice of Jehovah|| whirleth—about the wilderness,
Jehovah |whirleth—about| the wilderness of Kadesh:
9 The voice of Jehovah |whirleth—about| terebinths,[c]
and strippeth—bare forests;
And <in his temple>[d] ||the whole of it|| is saying[e]—"Glory!"

10 ||Jehovah|| <for the flood> sat enthroned,
and Jehovah |will sit enthroned| a king to the ages:[f]
11 ||Jehovah|| will give ||strength to his people||,
||Jehovah|| will bless his people with prosperity.

[Nm.]

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[a] Heb. *'élim*: prob. a synonym of *'elohim*, and like it a plural of excellence; and therefore —"sons of God," like the more usual form in 89^{7}, Job 38^{7}. Cp. also 8^{2}, 82^{1}, 97^{7}.

[b] So, almost certainly (w. Br.) should Lebanon and Sirion be distributed. For "Sirion," see Deu. 3^{9}.

[c] So *Gt.*—Gn. And so Br.

[d] Or: "palace."

[e] "Everything saith"—Del. "All are saying,"—Dr.

[f] Ml.: "to concealed duration."

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EXPOSITION.

This is in every way a magnificent psalm,—exquisite in form, splendid in imagery, lofty in sentiment, and probably prophetic in adumbration. We can scarcely fail to perceive how fitting an instrument for producing it was the sweet singer of Israel who penned the 8th psalm, the 18th and the first part of the 19th, in all of which the same gift for reflecting the beauties of Creation can be detected. Perhaps the most precious element in this psalm is the firmness with which it grasps the manifestation, in nature, of Jehovah the God of grace. The thunder of the tempest is his voice. Scarcely less precious a feature is the light swiftness of the movements by which, in the opening strophes, heaven and earth are united; and, at the close, the past is run on into the future. He that sat enthroned at the flood sits enthroned still. He who executed judgment then, is guiding all toward blessing on and through his people in the ages to come. Meanwhile, though the storms are still raging here below, heavenly worshippers, as through an open door, are permitted to let us know, that everything is being well guided to that great far-off event to which the whole creation moves. The God of nature is the God of grace. Jehovah is no tribal God, but the Maker of heaven and earth.

PSALM 30.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Song of Joy on Recovery from Sickness.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Declaration of Praise and its Occasion. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, Call on Levites to Praise, with Words Supplied. Strophe III., vers. 6, 7, Record of Experience Prior to the Sickness. Strophe IV., vers. 8—10, The Prayer offered During the Sickness. Strophe V., vers. 11, 12, Great Joy Beautifully Expressed.

[Lm.] Psalm—Song of the Dedication of the House[a]—By David.

1 I exalt thee, Jehovah, for thou hast drawn me up,
and hast not gladdened my foes concerning me!
2 Jehovah, my God!
I cried for help unto thee—and thou didst heal me:
3 Jehovah!
thou hast brought up, out of hades, my soul,
hast restored me to life, from among them who were going down to the pit.

[a] Cp. prob. 2 Sam. 5[11, 12].

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4 Make melody to Jehovah, ye his men of kindness,
and give thanks unto his Holy Memorial:[a]
5 "Surely ||a moment||[b] in his anger—
||a lifetime||[c] in his favour;
<At eventide> there cometh to lodge—Weeping,
but <by morning> Jubilation!"[d]

6 But ||I|| had said, in my careless ease—
"I shall not be shaken to the ages."
7 Jehovah!
<In thy good pleasure> thou hadst given stability to mountains of strength:[e]
thou didst hide thy face—I became dismayed!

8 <Unto thee, Jehovah> I continued crying—[f]
yea <unto Adonay>[g] making supplication:—
9 "What profit in my blood, when I descend into the pit?
will dust |thank[h] thee|? declare thy truth!
10 Hear, O Jehovah, and be gracious unto me!
Jehovah! become thou a helper to me!"

11 Thou hast turned my lamentation into a dance for me,
thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;
12 That my glory[j] |may make melody to thee|, and not be still:
Jehovah, my God! <to the ages> will I thank thee.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] "Poet. for 'name': cp. Ex. 3[15], Ps. 135[13]"—Dr.
[b] Cp. Isa. 54[7].
[c] Or: "life" (on and on).
[d] Or: "a ringing cry."
[e] So *Gt.*—Gn. "Thou hadst established strength for my mountain"—Dr. But Br. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "thou didst cause mine honour to stand firm in strength."
[f] "Imperfects referring to past experience, and therefore frequentatives implying oft-repeated importunate prayer"—Br. Cp. 2 K. 19[14–20].
[g] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "Jehovah."
[h] Cp. 6[5], n.
[i] Cp. Isa. 38[18].
[j] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr.). Cp. 108[1]—Gn. For "glory" in the like sense, see 16[9], 57[8], 108[1].

EXPOSITION.

This psalm appears to be so full of Hezekiah, that the wonder is, where David can be found. And yet there is but little unsuited to David's time, if we had but the biographical details to identify one or two more incidents of his life which seem to be here memorialised. Perowne's suggestion is good, that the dedication alluded to in the inscription, was perhaps the dedication of his own house, "the building of which he seems to have regarded as a pledge of the security and prosperity of his kingdom" (2 Sam. 5[11, 12]). "We must however still suppose that he had suffered just before from a sickness, about which the history is silent." There is nothing surprising in such silence, and we must not be unreasonably exacting in seeking for the historical occasions giving birth to individual psalms. [Yet see, *post*, on

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Pss. 38 and 41.] We may at least feel satisfied that we are within the charmed circle of psalm-production. For when, in the case of this psalm, we do advert to the co-authorship of King Hezekiah,—we discover Hezekian incidents starting out of every strophe. By the help of the references any reader can verify this for himself. Briggs makes an apt reference from the "moment" of this psalm to the "small moment" of Isa. 54^{7}. Nevertheless, we must regard as futile the attempt to establish the position that the seeming *individual* whose deliverance is here celebrated was the nation of Israel. Far rather, may we reverse the process—especially when the so-called "Second" Isaiah is discovered to be the well-known Isaiah himself—by permitting the King here in the psalm to celebrate the almost momentary brevity of his own trial; and then find, in its most fitting place, the great prophecy itself, the Prophet's improvement of the royal incident, with which we know he was perfectly familiar: "Like as the hiding of Jehovah's face from our beloved King was but as for a moment; so, O Israel, when the long vista of future blessedness opens before thee, shall all the grief of thy long forlorn condition appear to thee in retrospect as having been but for 'a small moment.'" In deference to Dr. Thirtle, we may imagine Isaiah to have added: "Even as the weary months of the Assyrian invasion shall appear to the nation to have been but 'for a moment,' when the glorious fifteen years of assured prosperity have well set in."

Perhaps the one reflection most apt to arise in the devout mind on the reading of this psalm will be, the grateful recognition of the selective power with which the human mind is endowed, whereby it can suffer long months or years of suffering to contract themselves into practically a short compass, comparatively a "moment," while the mercies of the past can be counted lingeringly one by one, and allowed to extend into a long line of blessings. **At eventide cometh to lodge Weeping—in the morning, Jubilation.**

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PSALM 31.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Fellowship in Suffering and Salvation.

ANALYSIS.—Strophes I. and II., vers. 1—4, and 5—8, Suffering, caused chiefly by enemies, some of them Idolatrous, Overcome by Steadfast Faith. Strophe III., vers. 9—12, The Lament of a Leper. Strophe IV., vers. 13—16, A complaint of conspiracy, concluded with confidence of Salvation. Strophe V., vers. 17, 18, Prayer for Vindication from the Lawless. Strophe VI., vers. 19, 20, Jehovah's Goodness Admired. Strophe VII., vers. 21, 22, Praise for a Special Deliverance from an Alarming Danger. Strophe VIII., vers. 23, 24, Closing Exhortation to Love, Confidence and Courage.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 In thee, Jehovah, have I taken refuge—
oh shame me not to the ages, deliver me:
(2) <In thy righteousness> [2]bow down unto me thine ear—
speedily rescue me:
Become thou to me a stronghold-rock—
a house of munitions[a] to save me:
3 <Because <my cliff and my fastness> art thou>
therefore[b] lead me and guide me:[c]
4 Wilt thou bring me forth out of the net which they have hidden for me—
because ||thou|| art my stronghold.

5 <Into thy hand> I commit my spirit—[d]
thou hast ransomed me, O Jehovah.
(6) O God of truth! [6] thou hatest[e] such as
give heed to unreal vanities.[f]
(7) ||I||, therefore, <unto Jehovah> have directed my trust—
[7] I will exult and be glad in thy kindness,—
Thou who hast looked upon my humiliation—
hast taken note of the distresses of my soul,
8 And hast not delivered me into the hand of an enemy—
hast given standing, in a roomy place, to my feet.

9 Be gracious unto me, Jehovah, for ||distress|| is mine—
<wasteth away>[g] my soul and my body;[h]
10 For <consumed with sorrow> is my life—
and ||my years|| with sighing:

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[a] Or: "castle." Ml.: "house of fastnesses."
[b] M.T.: "for the sake of thy name, then."
[c] Cp. 71[3]
[d] Cp. Lk. 23[46]
[e] So some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. "This reading gives the contrast required by the next line"—Kp.
[f] So Dr. "That is false gods, or idols: cp. Deu. 32[21], Jer. 14[22]."
[g] M.T.: "with vexation mine eye."
[h] Ml.: "my belly," Heb. *beṭan*. Cp. 44[25].

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(11) <Staggered with humiliation>[a] is my strength—
and my bones waste away[11] because of my distress;
I have become a reproach, <and to mine acquaintances> a terror—[b]
<in the street> they flee from me;[c]
12 I am forgotten like a dead man out of mind—
I am become like a missing vessel.

13 For I have heard the whispering of multitudes—
"*A terror round about!*"[d]
<When they have sat in conclave together>—
<to take away my life>[e] have they intrigued;
14 But ||I|| <on thee> have set my trust—
<Jehovah, my God> art ¦thou|.
15 <In thy hand> are my times—
rescue me from the hand of my foes and my pursuers,
16 Light up thy face on thy servant—
grant me salvation[f] in thy kindness.

17 Jehovah! oh let me not be put to shame that[g] I have called on thee:
<shamed> be the lawless—become silent for hades;
18 <made dumb> be lips of falsehood,
|which are speaking against a righteous one arrogantly|
||with pride and contempt||.

19 |How great| is thy goodness, (O Jehovah),[h]
which thou hast treasured up for them who revere thee,
which thou hast wrought, before the sons of men,
for them who take refuge in thee.[i]
20 Thou hidest them, in the hiding-place of thy presence,
from the harshness[j] of men:
Thou treasurest them, in a shelter,
from the strife of tongues.

21 <Blessed> be Jehovah! in that he hath made wonderful his
kindness for me in a city besieged.
22 <But ||I|| had said in mine alarm—
"I am driven out[k] before thine eyes!"
||Nevertheless|| thou didst hear the voice of my supplication,
when I cried for help unto thee.
23 Love ye Jehovah, all ye his men of kindness,
it is <the faithful> Jehovah preserveth;
but he repayeth in abundance[l] the proud doer.
24 Be strong,[m] and let your heart be bold—
all ye who are waiting for Jehovah.

[Nm.]

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[a] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[b] So apparently Br. M.T. (as rendered by Dr.): "Because of all mine adversaries I am become a reproach, and unto my neighbours exceedingly, and a dread to my familiar friends: they that see me without flee from me." ("Read probably," says Dr. "'I am become a reproach exceedingly, and a dread to my familiar friends, and to my neighbours.'")
[c] "This verse is difficult."—Per.
[d] Jer. 6^{25}, $20^{3,10}$, 46^{5}, 49^{29}, Lam. 2^{22}.
[e] U.: "soul."
[f] Or: "deliverance"; occasionally, "victory."
[g] Or: "for."
[h] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.) add this "O Jehovah—Gn.
[i] Clause transposed for clearness of sense and assonance of ending.
[j] So Br. "Plottings"—Kp. "From the bandings together"—Dr. "Conspiracies"—Per. "From the factions of the people"—Del.
[k] Cp. Jonah 2^{4}.
[l] Ml.: "on the basis of abundance"—O.G.
[m] Heb.: HIZKU (?reminding one of HEZEKIAH).

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm might very well be described as a Mosaic of Misery and Mercy. Its most striking feature is, the bringing together of such varied experiences of suffering, that the reflective reader seems compelled to picture to himself several distinct types of sorrow; and herein probably lie the greatest charm and value of this psalm.

For two strophes, we realise that we are at home with David: the dangers are his, and the deliverances; the favourite phrases also and figures are his. We may even go so far as to suggest that the subdued climax to which these strophes rise in vers. 7 and 8 admirably suits the time of the coronation of David in Hebron. He had not then reached the summit of dominion over all Israel, but his feet had become firmly planted in a **roomy place.** Many a time had the courtiers and soldiers of Saul, sought to catch him by a **net** of diplomacy or military stratagem. More than once, we know, he was in such imminent danger of death, as to have been moved to **commit** his imperilled **spirit** to his **redeeming** God.

The third strophe transports us into a widely different scene. We are in the presence of a stricken one, who is **wasting away,** who **staggers** under the **humiliating** blow which has fallen upon him. If he goes into the **street,** his old **acquaintances** flee from him: in dismay and disgust he stays in his "several" house until he is **forgotten.** We instinctively think of the leper-king Uzziah! Who, but an author having deep sympathy for lepers, would have introduced such a realistic picture into a psalm? But one touch of *nature* makes the whole world kin! And Hezekiah had felt that touch.

Again we are transported, by the fourth strophe, into a scene of persecution. We have set before us a victim of intrigue, whose likeness we recognise. He is a man with a nickname. They mockingly call him *Magor missaviv,* **A terror round about.** It is no other than Jeremiah. How he came here is another question. Ezra or one of the Sopherim may have let in his picture into this gallery of portraits of Famous Sufferers—in which Jeremiah well deserved a place.

But now, in the fifth strophe, we seem to be brought back to an earlier conclusion of the psalm. The voice is Hezekiah's. The **lawless** foreigners are in evidence. They do not **whisper** like Jeremiah's cowardly persecutors: no! they **speak arrogantly with pride and contempt**—like that "vile person"—Rabshakeh! And it is against an *individual* **righteous one** that the villain points his profane tongue. We count ourselves happy that we are beginning to know that righteous KING OF ISRAEL better than we did! *He* suffered of old for his momentary pride: *we* have long suffered for his modesty.

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But the tones of his harp wax more full and loud. Note to what a goodly theme he rises in the sixth strophe—how largely he generalises—how lofty are his conceptions of **Jehovah's goodness**, as one while He **hides his loved ones in his presence from the harshness of men** and at another works his wonders **before the sons of men.**

More specific still, is the reminiscence of personal history contained in strophe seven. Over and over again, may Hezekiah have anticipated flight from the holy city. He had, in his alarm, imagined himself reproaching his Divine Protector—"**I am driven out before thine eyes.**" But the realisation of that extreme stage of desperation had been spared him. Jehovah had **made his kindness so wonderful**, as effectually to prevent it.

After this, what more fitting than that praise should be merged into exhortation? and, as the psalmist calls upon his **men of kindness**, official as well as unofficial, to **love Jehovah** as well as praise him, and remembers the **preservation** granted to himself and his fellow-believers, he seems to be glancing to the mountains on which the Assyrians fell when he says, **But he repayeth abundantly** the proud doer. **Be strong**, he says, almost signing his name, (see footnote to ver. 24) and **let your heart be bold, all ye who**, at any time for evermore, **shall be waiting for Jehovah.**

PSALMS 32, 33.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — Felicitations to the Forgiven, and Examples of the Songs that they Sing.

ANALYSIS.—Part I., Psalm 32. Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Happy the Forgiven; yet Divine Discipline has sometimes to Drive to Confession. Strophe II., vers. 5, 6, Confession brings Pardon, and promotes Exhortation. Strophe III., ver. 7, Petitions prompted by Exhortation. Strophe IV., vers. 8, 9, Divine Response to Petitions. Strophe V., vers. 10, 11, A Moral and an Invitation.

Part II., Psalm 33. Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Praise to Jehovah urged by his Word, Work, and Character. Strophe II., vers. 6—9, Jehovah's Creatorship a Ground for Earth's Reverence. Strophe III., vers. 10—12, Jehovah Overruleth All Nations for the Good of his Own Nation. Strophe IV., vers. 13—17, Jehovah's Regard for All Nations should Wean them from Trust in Brute Force. Strophe V., vers. 18—22, Experience Gratefully Closes the Song.

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[Lm.] By David—An Instructive Psalm.

1 |How happy| is he—
whose transgressions |is forgiven|,[a]
whose sin |is pardoned|,[b]
2 |How happy| the man—
to whom Jehovah |reckoneth not| iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
3 <When I refused to confess>[c] my bones |became old| with my loud lamentation;[d]
for <day and night> <heavy on me> was thy hand,—
4 I was changed into misery, as when thorns smite me.[e]

5 <My sin> I then made known to thee,
and <mine iniquity> did I not cover:
I said—"I will confess, concerning my transgressions, to Jehovah,"
and ||thou|| didst forgive mine iniquity,
<my sin> didst pardon.[f]
6 <For this cause> let the[g] man of kindness |pray| unto thee in a time of distress.[h]
<At the outburst of waters> <unto him> shall they not reach.
7 O ||thou|| my hiding-place! <from distress> wilt thou preserve me,
<with jubilations of deliverance> wilt thou encompass me!

8 "I will give thee understanding—I will instruct thee in the way thou shouldst go,
I will counsel thee—will fix[i] on thee mine eye.
9 Do not become as the horse, as the mule—without understanding,—
having bridle and halter, as his harness, for holding him in."[j]
10 <Many pains> hath the lawless one,
but <he that trusteth in Jehovah>—||kindness|| will encompass him.
11 Be glad in Jehovah, and exult, O ye righteous ones;
and ring out your joy, all ye upright in heart.

[Nm.]

PSALM 33.

[Nm.]

1 Ring out your joy, ye righteous, in Jehovah,
<to the upright> <seemly> is praise:
2 Give thanks to Jehovah with the lyre,
<with a lute of ten strings> make melody to him:
3 Sing to him a song that is new,
<with skill> sweep the strings, with sacred shout.
4 For <straightforward> is the word of Jehovah,
and ||all his work|| is in faithfulness.
5 He loveth righteousness and justice,
<of the kindness of Jehovah> the earth |is full|.

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[a] Ml.: "lifted off," "taken away."
[b] Ml.: "covered."
[c] Ml.: "when I kept silence."
[d] M T. adds: "all the day."
[e] So Br., after Sep.
[f] Prob. *ṣ-l-h* (="pardon") was omitted because of its close resemblance to ṣ-l-h (=selah). —see Br.
[g] M.T.: "every."
[h] So Br., reading *m-ṣ-ḳ* for *m-ṣ-'r-ḳ*. Cp. O.G. 848*a*.
[i] So Br. with Syriac.
[j] M.T. adds: "he will not come near thee."

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6 <By the word of Jehovah> |the heavens| were made,
and <by the breath of his mouth> all their host:
7 Gathering, as into a skin, the waters of the sea,
delivering, into treasuries, the roaring[a] deep.
8 Let all the earth |be in fear of Jehovah|,
<of him> <stand in awe> all the inhabitants of the world;
9 For ||he|| said [Be!],[b] and it was,
||he|| commanded, and it stood forth.

10 ||Jehovah|| hath frustrated the counsel of nations,
he hath brought to nothing the plans of the peoples.
11 ||The counsel of Jehovah|| <to the ages> shall stand,
the plans of his heart, to generation after generation.
12 |How happy| the nation whose God is ||Jehovah||,
the people he hath chosen as an inheritance for himself.

13 <Out of the heavens> hath Jehovah |intently looked|,
he hath seen all the sons of mankind:
14 <Out of his fixed place of abode> hath he directed his gaze
unto all the inhabitants of earth:—
15 Who fashioneth together their heart,
who giveth heed unto all their doings.
16 ||Not the king|| can win victory by greatness of force,
||a mighty man|| will not deliver himself by greatness of strength:
17 <A delusion> is the horse for victory,[c]
and <by his greatness of force> shall he not deliver.

18 Lo! ||the eye[d] of Jehovah|| is toward them who revere him,—
to such as have waited for his kindness:
19 To rescue, from death, their soul,
and to keep them alive in famine.
20 ||Our own soul|| hath longed for Jehovah,—
<our help and our shield> is |he|.
21 For <in him> shall our heart |rejoice|,
for <in his holy name> have we trusted.
22 Be thy kindness, O Jehovah, upon us,
according as we have waited for thee.

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "primeval"—Br.
[b] So Carter.
[c] Or: "safety" (as Dr.)
[d] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "eyes" (pl.) —Gn.

EXPOSITION.

"The headlines serve to individualize psalms . . . . this fact will yield important results . . . There is no headline to Psalm 33, so on the surface it belongs to Psalm 32. A study of the material places the relation beyond question" (Thirtle, O.T.P., 102). This witness is

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true; and, in the present case, adds quite an unusual interest to the sequence thus assumed. Kirkpatrick had already called attention to the close relationship between the two psalms. At the commencement of his comments on Ps. 33, he says: "The psalm begins by repeating the call to praise with which the preceding psalm closed, and recites the grounds on which Jehovah is worthy to be praised. It stands here as an answer to the invitation of 32^{11}, an example of the 'songs of deliverance' spoken of in 32^{7}. Yet it differs widely in character from Ps. 32. That psalm is an instruction based upon a particular personal experience; this is a congregational hymn of praise, arising (if indeed any special event inspired it) out of some national deliverance." If to these observations we add the suggestion, that it is when a man receives and enjoys the forgiveness of his personal sins, that he is prepared to unite "with all saints" in the celebration of public mercies, we shall perhaps have reached the inwardness of the connection between these two psalms. Not that a single reference to the fact of such connection can by any means exhaust its fruitfulness. It is nothing less than thrilling, to hear David, when forgiven, calling out in spirit, to his son Hezekiah in 32^{6}; to think of the latter (32^{7}) coming into just such a time of distress; in imminent danger of being swept away by the outburst of the mighty (Assyrian) waters (cp. Isa. $8^{7, 8}$); and that nevertheless they did not reach him. Thus in ver. 7 we may detect the response to ver. 6. The earlier verse said "Let him pray": in the later verse he does pray, and we seem to hear Hezekiah crying unto Jehovah, and promising at the close of his petitions the very thing that he promised more explicitly in Isa. 38^{20}. To complete the entwining of these bonds of connection between the two psalms, and Isaiah, it may be observed how admirably Ps. $33^{10, 11}$ compares with Isa. 8^{10}, 14^{24-27}, 46^{10}.

To the reader who has grounded himself carefully in the text of these psalms, and has also grasped the illuminating connection between the two, little more assistance need be offered than a few brief notes on the successive groups of verses as they are rapidly passed in review.

Verses 1—4 (Ps. 32). The great thing here is to ponder well the undoubted truth, that unforgiven sin must sooner or later be punished. Second only to this, is the reflection, that unconfessed sin cannot be forgiven. It follows that all Divine chastisements, which—falling short of capital punishment—are fitted to lead to the confessing and forsaking of sin, are administered in mercy, whatever instruments are used to inflict them. How much misery might be spared us, if we would sooner humbly confess our transgressions!

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Verses 5—6. If sin can be pardoned, every other mercy may be hoped for and be made a subject of prayer. Hence the opening clause of ver. 6 is perhaps wider than "**For this**"—namely forgiveness. Rather does it suggest: That the man whose heart is touched by the Divine kindness may embolden himself to pray that a pardoning God would become a delivering God. In passing, we may note how well the various reading **distress** in ver. 6 prepares for the **distress** of ver. 7.

Verse 7. To perceive in this verse a response to the appeal of the previous, is to discover a reason for its abruptness and brevity. It is graphic: neither advice to pray, nor promise, but PRAYER. As already suggested: it seems like Hezekiah's practical response to David. What is strophical uniformity, compared with such tokens of life?

Verses 8, 9 are surely (with Kirkpatrick) Jehovah's words rather than (with Delitzsch and Perowne) the psalmist's. The reference to horse and mule seems to say, "Let us beware of becoming brutish, lest Divine Pity have to deal with us sternly."

Verses 10, 11. **The lawless one** reminds us of Rabshakeh 1^{1} note, 9^{17}, and **he that trusteth in Jehovah** of Hezekiah (2 K. 18^{5}).

Verses 1—5 (Ps. 33). Jehovah is no "tribal God," as men sometimes mistakenly say: **With the kindness of Jehovah, the earth,** and not merely the land of Israel, **is full**; for this alone leads on to what follows.

Verses 6—9. Creation is wide as the earth, and furnishes reason why all the **world** should **revere** Jehovah, who, as Hezekiah delights to tell us (Pss. 121^{2}, 134^{3}) is "Maker of heaven and earth."

Verses 10—12. Nevertheless vain are the **counsels** of the other **nations**, when directed against **the nation** whom Jehovah has **chosen as his own inheritance.**

Verses 13—17. Far from neglecting the nations, Jehovah severely discounts their trust in brute force.

Verses 18—22. He has a **watchful regard** for all who in any nation **revere him**; but happy are they who know him and trust him. So sings one of a remnant who can speak from experience of what Jehovah has done for their **own soul**: knowing what they do, **they long, they rejoice, they trust, they pray, they wait!**

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PSALM 34

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Alphabetical Psalm of Praise and Instruction.

ANALYSIS.—For convenience, this psalm may be regarded as resolving itself into three strophes of seven verses each, followed by a *Refrain*. Its chief contents are: Resolve to Praise, Invitation to Join, and a Manifesto of Principles to be Discovered in Jehovah's Government. Its principal Literary features are: its Alphabetical structure, with the Waw-strophe Absent, as if to make way for a Redemption-*Refrain* without exceeding Twenty-two verses. It responds, with its Predominant Praise, to Psalm 25 with its Burden of Prayer. For its probably Romantic Origin, see "Exposition."

[Lm.]—By David—When he disguised his sanity before Abimelek; and he drove him away, and he departed.

א 1 Let me bless Jehovah at all times—
<continually> be his praise in my mouth.
ב 2 <In Jehovah> shall my soul |boast|—
let the humble |make it heard| and be glad.
ג 3 Ascribe ye greatness to Jehovah with me—
and let us exalt his name together.
ד 4 I sought after Jehovah, and he answered me—
and <out of my terrors> he rescued me.
ה 5 They looked intently unto him, and beamed—
and ||their faces|| were not abashed.
ז 6 ||This humbled one|| cried, and ||Jehovah|| heard—
and <out of all his distresses> saved him.
ח 7 The messenger of Jehovah |encamped|
around those revering him and rescued them.

ט 8 Taste and see, that <good> is Jehovah—
|how happy| the man taking refuge in him.
י 9 Revere Jehovah, ye his holy ones—
for there is no lack to them who revere him.
כ 10 ||Young lions|| have wanted, and hungered—
but ||they who seek after Jehovah|| lack not any good thing.
ל 11 O come, sons, and hearken unto me—
<the reverence of Jehovah> will I teach you.
מ 12 Who is the man that taketh pleasure in life—
loving days that he may see good?
נ 13 Keep thy tongue from evil—
and thy lips from speaking deceit:
ס 14 Depart from evil, and do good—
aim at peace, and pursue it.

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פ 16 ||The face of Jehovah|| is against the doers of evil—
to cut off, from the earth, their remembrance.[a]
ע 15 ||The eyes of Jehovah|| are towards the righteous—
and ||his ears|| towards their cry for help.
צ 17 They made outcry, and ||Jehovah|| heard—
and <out of all their distresses> delivered them.
ק 18 <Near> is Jehovah to the broken of heart—
and <the crushed in spirit> he saveth.
ר 19 <Many> are the misfortunes of the righteous—
but <out of them all> Jehovah |rescueth him|.
ש 20 He keepeth all his bones—
||not one from among them|| is broken.
ת 21 Misfortune |will slay the lawless one|—
and ||the haters of the righteous one|| shall be held guilty.

22 *Jehovah |ransometh| the life[b] of his servants,*
and none |shall be held guilty| who take refuge in him.

[Nm.]

[a] That the פ-strophe originally stood before the ע-strophe, is deemed probable by Delitzsch; and is sustained by reference to Lam. $2^{16, 17}$, $3^{46-48, 49-51}$, $4^{16, 17}$. Transposing vers. 15 and 16 accordingly, as above, causes the matter to run on consecutively, and makes it needless to *supply* the words "the righteous" in ver. 17, as is done in A.V., R.V. and Sep. The further effect of this transposition is to produce an Introverted Strophe, which devotes its first and last verses to the wicked, and all the intermediate verses to the righteous.

[b] U.: "soul."

EXPOSITION.

The *occasion* of this psalm, as stated in the ancient head-lines, is sufficiently extraordinary to appear romantic, if not incredible. There is no need, however, to make the occasion psychologically impossible, by overlooking the precise terms of the superscription; and assuredly the *primâ-facie* evidence strongly suggests that such an account of the origin of the psalm could not easily have been placed where it is, had it been a mere afterthought. It would obviously be mere wanton oversight to suggest that David was disguising his sanity at the Court of King Achish (or Abimelek) and composing an acrostic at one and the same time. The legend distinctly enough points to David's *departure* from Gath; and suggests the question—Whither went he when he so departed? Learning as we do (from 1 Sam. 22) that it was to the cave of Adullam, probably less of an incommodious hole in the rocks than a subterranean palace, large enough for multitudes to hide in, and comfortable enough to afford accommodation for David's father and mother, —as we think of all this,—incredulity begins to retire, and an almost fascinating romance steps into its place. All sorts of realistic questions come to our aid. Did not David, in all probability, reach the cave of Adullam nearly alone? Ere yet comrades gathered to him, how spent

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he his time? What sort of man was he? Was he not devout? Was he not a poet and a musician? In his fleeing from place to place, did he never contrive to have his harp near him? A worshipper—a poet—a harpist—yea, and possessing an oriental memory, with genius enough in him to contrive those acrostics to aid it,—how far yet are we from the atmosphere of the credible? And then, supposing he had with him no writing-skins, were there no rock surfaces available for such a record? It is true, these are mere tentative questions; but at any rate they are ventilated in the interests of an indubitably ancient inscription: which inscription, be it said, was of no more probable invention, than it was of easy insertion, when once the psalm had been continuously and closely written on tablet or parchment, and safely deposited in David's palace library! Books were not then printed in thousands and scattered broadcast, that their readings should be tampered with by every scribe, and wild fancies gain admission and insertion by the royal librarian!

Turning now to the *structure* of this psalm, the two things which claim our attention are: first, that it is alphabetical or an abecedarian acrostic; and, second, that the letter *waw* is wanting, raising the enquiry—*Why?* As to the mere fact that it is alphabetical, there is this to add to a former suggestion, that such an arrangement may, under conceivable circumstances, have been due as much to the exigencies of the composer, as to his desire to help the memory of his readers (or hearers, when books were few). Not only were books few for readers; but occasionally papyrus or skins were scarce for authors. The absence of *waw* from the alphabetical arrangement, points to the suppression of a strophe, not for the purpose of reducing the lines to 21 (or 3 times 7) as Briggs suggests, but rather to make way for the additional REDEMPTION strophe at the end, without exceeding the number 22.

As to the *sentiments* of this psalm, they are in any case remarkable, and that for several reasons. The quiet, didactic character of the psalm, naturally springs from its artificial structure. That it should reveal clear kinship with what is now frequently called Wisdom Literature, is not to be denied, but by no means betokens a late date for that reason. Before conceding that, it would be well to inquire from whom the Wisdom Literature first sprang; and the opinion may again be hazarded, as when we first observed a strain of this in Ps. 18, that probably it should be traced back to the prophet Samuel, as familiarised by him in his school for the sons of the prophets. If so, even apart from especial Divine illumination, we need feel no surprise at the occasional appearance of such sententious moralising in David's own

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psalms as we find here. When we next observe the air of lofty faith and calm joy which pervades this psalm, we begin to feel that we are treading upon holy ground. David had godly parents. His youth, spent in keeping his father's sheep, was given to devout meditation. He had come into contact with Samuel, whom doubtless he regarded with great veneration. Besides all which, since the holy oil of anointing had been poured on his head, he had known the mighty inworking of the Spirit of Jehovah. He had a great destiny in store for him, and he knew it; and however long he might have to wait for its realisation, he knew that those noble heights would ultimately be attained. All these were formative influences of no common order; and, therefore, while we admire the lofty devotion of this psalm, we refrain from incredulous wonder; and it no longer seems impossible to the elasticity of David's devout—as yet unspoiled—young manhood, that after several hairbreadth escapes, he should find the very cave of Adullam converted into a temple, as its spacious vaults echoed to his well-handled harp. We have not forgotten the motley crew that gathered about him in this romantic glen, nor do we doubt that it numbered some ne'er-do-wells; but, on the other hand, we may well surmise, that it included some of the finest spirits in Israel. Under such conditions, this restrained acrostic psalm almost palpitates with the life and fire of an oration. We catch the singer's glance around as he exclaims—**Ascribe ye greatness to Jehovah with me, and let us exalt his name together.** Having made his own personal contribution to holy memories by saying—**I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me,** he notes a group of witnesses to Divine faithfulness, and sings of them—**They looked unto him and beamed, and their faces were not abashed;** when, observing one signal trophy of Jehovah's faithfulness, standing or reclining near him, he subdues his voice to say—**This humbled one cried, and Jehovah heard, and out of all his distresses saved him.** And so forth: calling to a group of doubters—**O taste and see!** then to group of listless young men—**O come, sons, and hearken unto me!** tendering them some excellent advice. But he must needs nerve his comrades to enter boldly into the strife between sin and righteousness, and so rises to that trumpet-like strophe with which the psalm concludes. Happy was Hezekiah to have such a literary treasure in the Royal Library, to pair off with the 25th: adding to that the note of Redemption as an imperial need, and to this the answering note of Redemption in realisation.

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PSALM 35.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayers against Open and Concealed Enemies, followed by Promises of Praise.

ANALYSIS.—Three irregular strophes. Strophe I., vers. 1—10, An Indignant Imprecatory Prayer against False Accusers—especially against One. Strophe II., vers. 11—18, A Succession of Accusers, including Former Friends, Wound the petitioner to the Quick. Strophe III., vers. 19—28, A Probable Supplement contains a Prayer for Vindication against Concealed Enemies whose Chief Weapon is Insinuation.

[Lm.] By David.

1 Accuse, O Jehovah, mine accusers—
war on them who war on me;
2 Grasp shield and buckler—
and arise in my help;
3 Then draw the spear—
and close up[a] against my pursuers:
Say to my soul—<Thy salvation>[b] am |I|!"
4 <Put to shame and confounded> be they who are seeking my life,[c]
<turned back and abashed> be they who are devising my hurt:[d]
5 Let them become as chaff before the wind—
with the messenger of Jehovah pursuing[e] them,
6 Let their way be dark and slippery—
with the messenger of Jehovah thrusting[e] them down.
7 For <without cause> have they hid for me their net,
<without cause> have they digged a pit for my life.[f]
8 May there reach him[g] a ruin he could not know,
and let ‖his own net which he hath hidden‖ capture him,—
<into the pit that he digged> let him fall.
9 *Then ‖my soul‖ will exult in Jehovah—*
will exult in his salvation.[h]
10 *‖All my bones‖ will say "Jehovah! who is like unto thee—*
rescuing the humbled from one stronger than he,
yea, the humbled and needy, from his spoiler?"

11 There <keep rising up> witnesses promoting violence—
<of what I know not> they question me:
12 They repay me evil for good—
a bereavement to my soul.[i]

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[a] Perh. supply "the way." Per. and others take *ṣgr* as a noun="battle-axe."
[b] Or: "deliverance," "victory."
[c] U.: "soul."
[d] Op. 70[2].
[e] Most critics suspect here an accidental transposition in the Heb.
[f] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[g] As if thinking of a chief individual—such as Doeg.
[h] Or: "victory."
[i] "Such conduct makes him feel as desolate as a childless mother"—Kp.

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13 But ||as for me|| <when they were mortally wounded> ||my clothing||
was sackcloth!
I humbled, with fasting, my soul,
though ||my prayer|| <on mine own bosom> might return:[a]
14 <Like as for a friend, like as for mine own brother> I bowed myself
down,[b]
<Like as one mourning for a mother> I gloomily walked to and fro.[b]
15 But <when I stumbled> they rejoiced and thronged together,
<there thronged together against me> smiters, and I knew not,
they cried out,[c] and were not silent:
16 <Amidst profane praters of perversion>[d] have they gnashed upon me
their teeth.
17 My Sovereign Lord! |how long| wilt thou look on?
Recover my soul from their ravages—
from lions, my solitary self.
18 *I will thank thee in a large assembly,*[e]
<amidst a numerous people> will I praise thee.

19 Let not those |rejoice over me| who are my foes for false reason,
nor ||those who hate me without cause|| wink the eye;
20 For <no salutation> do they utter,
but <against the quiet of the land> <treacherous things> do they
devise;
21 And they have opened wide, against me, their mouth—
they have said—"Aha! Aha! our eye |hath seen|!"[f]
22 Thou hast seen, O Jehovah, do not be silent;
my Sovereign Lord! be not far from me:
23 Bestir thyself, and wake up to my vindication, O my God—
yea my Sovereign Lord, to my plea.
24 Vindicate me, according to thy righteousness, Jehovah my God,—
and let them not rejoice over me.
25 Let them not say in their heart—"Aha! our desire!"[g]
let them not say—"We have swallowed him up!"
26 <Put to shame and at once abashed> be they who are rejoicing
at my hurt,
<Clothed with shame and confusion> be they who are magnifying
themselves against me.
27 <Let them ring out their joy and be glad> who are desiring my
justification,
and let them say continually—<"Magnified> be Jehovah[h]
who hath taken pleasure in the prosperity of his servant!"
28 *And ||my tongue|| shall talk to me of thy righteousness—*
<all the day long> of thy praise.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] "And my prayer—may it return into mine own bosom" ("so true a prayer was it")—Per.
[b] *Gt.* "bowed down" and "walked to and fro" should be thus transposed—Gn.
[c] Cp. G. Intro. 144.
[d] Or: "as profane men, mockers for cake"—O.G.
[e] As in 22^{25}.
[f] Cp. 70^{3}.
[g] Ml.: "our soul."
[h] Cp. 70^{4}.

EXPOSITION.

Probably the endeavour to get at the authorship of this psalm, will go further than the pursuit of any other line of enquiry, to place the

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meaning of the psalm within our grasp. The psalm as a whole is inscribed to David, nor is there the slightest perceptible reason to doubt the validity of this inscription, especially so long as we confine ourselves to Strophes I. and II. When careful attention is bestowed on Strophe III., little by little we recognise a difference between the tone of this and that of the previous two; and this perception makes the Davidic authorship of what has gone before, still more evident than it was at first. There is a difference, however, even between Strophes I., and II. also,—to lay hold of which is to become more completely penetrated than ever with the assurance that David wrote both these strophes, but under the domination of two successive moods. The governing note of Strophe I. is indignation: that of Strophe II. is wounded love. The indignation is fiery, and finds vent in imprecation (Cp. on 69)—nothing is too bad to ask from Jehovah in avengement of the wrong the petitioner has received from his enemies at court, especially from one of them. But when, in the second strophe, his memory passes from the supreme wrong this one has done him, to other false witnesses that come up before his mind, and he recalls his intimate friendship with some of them, indignation melts into a wail of anguish, as he remembers how keenly *he* had suffered in their behalf when *they* were in trouble. He perceives all the meanness of their conduct—all the perfidy of it; but he does not imprecate. He looks their ingratitude and treachery full in the face: the enormous wrong they have done him is revolting, like the ravages of lions; but he cannot curse them. He has been robbed of the precious jewel of friendship, and he feels it as a mother feels the loss of her children. All he can do in resentment, is to ask how long his Sovereign Lord will look on. It is David all over: both strophes are from David—if we know anything of David: David at the court of Saul, with jealous courtiers passing in and out before the king, suddenly asking ensnaring questions, throwing out innuendoes, to David's hurt to which no reply can at once be made. The most casual reader can see this situation reflected in the first strophe; nor does anyone need to be told how exquisitely fitted for friendship was the son of Jesse, and therefore how open to feel the anguish so graphically portrayed in the second strophe. It is not so easy at first to realise the change of situation which almost imperceptibly comes into view in Strophe III. Kirkpatrick recognises the change of tone, as is evident from his anticipatory summary of it: "19–28. Renewed prayer in a somewhat calmer tone." But something more than the "tone" here changes: very informally is here introduced a new situation. In a word, it is no longer David who writes; but rather Prince Hezekiah, in the latter years of his father's degenerate

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reign; as the prince's ripening godly manhood moves to concealed hatred the sycophants at his father's court. The writer notes with some vexation the withholding of a salutation which he was well-entitled to expect, he is intimate with the quiet of the land, learns the treacherous things that are devised against them, and hears the malicious insinuations thrown out regarding himself. The injured one is no longer the high-spirited warrior of Strophe I., nor the wounded personal friend of Strophe II., but one who can afford to wait a little, and yet eagerly looks forward to vindication—a vindication which will cover his detractors with shame. If, *as prince*, the writer penned this strophe—or at least *lived* it, it may well have been *as king* that he added to it the beautiful climax which now brings it to a conclusion; and fitted it to be soon passed on To the Chief Musician. The Refrains to this psalm contribute something material towards the exegesis of the whole. In the first place they serve to mark real divisions in the psalm where otherwise the lines of transition would be less perceptible. It cannot, for example, be denied, that vers. 9, 10 form a natural resting-place. And this assists the perception that, although the second strophe, resumes the same general thought, yet it is with a difference: the one enemy is lost sight of by the succession of accusers which comes into view, bringing in those perfidious friends who cause such anguish to the psalmist's mind. Then the close of the second strophe, in vers. 17, 18, is especially arresting, inasmuch as each verse strongly reminds us of Ps. 22: the lions recalling vers. 13 and 21 of that psalm, and the solitary self its 20th verse; the large assembly also linking itself with the same not very usual designation in ver. 25 of Ps. 22;—small things in themselves, it may be thought; but if, as we saw reason to suppose, they came from David's pen in the earlier psalm, then the probability is increased that David wrote them here. Again, the strong climax here reached, distinctly awakens us to note with some surprise that, however well the psalm might have ended here, in point of fact it does not; and so, however quiet the transition to what follows and however neat the "seam" of attachment thereby formed, yet we really do enter upon a new situation as well as perceive a calmer tone. Needless to say the actual conclusion of the psalm, vers. 27, 28, are in every way worthy of that UPRIGHT KING whose harp (Isaiah 38[20]) was solemnly enlisted to celebrate the triumphant vindication that ultimately came, and which, when it did come, awoke the respectful acknowledgments of all nations.

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PSALM 36.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Oracles False and True, Prompting Prayer and Praise.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Personified Transgression Deluding and Driving on its Victim. Strophe II., vers. 5, 6, Jehovah's Kindness with its Associated Divine Attributes. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, Jehovah's Kindness Experienced by Men. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, Prayer for Protection, suddenly Giving Place to Triumph.

[Lm.] By the Servant of Jehovah—by David.

1 <An oracle of transgression>[a] hath the lawless one in the midst of his heart,
there is no dread of God[b] in the sight of his eyes;
2 For it flattereth him as to finding out his hateful iniquity:[c]
3 ||the words of his mouth|| are trouble and deceit—
he hath ceased to act circumspectly:
(4) <To make[d] trouble thoroughly> he deviseth on his bed;
he taketh his stand on a way not good—
<evil> doth he not refuse.

5 Jehovah! <in the heavens> is thy kindness,
||thy faithfulness|| reacheth as far as the clouds:
6 ||thy righteousness|| is like the mountains of GOD,
and ||thine acts of justice|| are a great deep,—
<Man and beast> thou savest, Jehovah!

7 |How precious| is thy kindness, O God!
and ||the sons of men|| <in the shadow of thy wings> take refuge:
8 They are satisfied[d] with the rich provisions of thy house,
and <of the full stream of thine own delights> thou causest them to drink;
9 For <with thee> is the fountain of life,
<when thou shinest>[e] light appeareth.[f]

10 Prolong thy kindness to them who know thee,
and, thy righteousness, to the upright in heart.
11 <Do not suffer to invade me> the foot of pride,
nor ||the hand of lawless ones|| to make me a fugitive.[g]
12 ||There|| are fallen the workers of iniquity,[h]
thrust down, and not able to rise!

[Nm.]

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[a] Graphic: Transgression deified, enthroned in the heart of the lawless one, uttering misleading oracles.
[b] The lowest form of respect for Divine things—absent.
[c] For various explanations of this verse, see Per.
[d] Ml.: "saturated."
[e] "Lettest the light shine from thy face, as Pss. 4^7, 44^4, 89^{16}—Br.
[f] With Br., read (niphal) *nir'ah*, rather than (kal) *nir'eh*.
[g] Cp. 81^{22}.
[h] Or: "trouble" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).

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EXPOSITION.

It is easy to assert that this is a composite psalm, and yet fail to grasp its life-history. Composite it manifestly is, in that its component parts undoubtedly came into existence on distinct and successive occasions, but none the less does it now stand before us as a living unit. Starting with **David**, as in duty bound by the superscript line exhibiting a palace-library tradition behind which we cannot go; and with David—probably in his strength of devotion to Jehovah, as if by reason of some signal service rendered by his heroic faith, and so with David as emphatically **the servant of Jehovah**;—we awake to the perception that in Strophe I. we have such a startling picture of practical Atheism as could never have been sung alone. Acting as a moral tonic, this fragment prompts the mind that selected it, to appease Devotion's hunger, by finding a fragrant antidote to the poison of Lawlessness to which for some reason it was desired to give currency. This antidote is discovered in the beautiful Song, probably equally Davidic, which now forms Strophes II. and III. of our psalm: a song, first glowing with all the beauty of Jehovah's **kindness**, as sustained and strengthened by the associate attributes of **faithfulness, righteousness** and **justice**; and then eliciting the appreciation of **the sons of men**, as they are thereby drawn **under the shadow of Jehovah's wings**, emboldened to partake of **the rich provisions of Jehovah's house**, and even **to drink of the full stream of Jehovah's delights**. A notable song, indeed; well serving as an antidote to the deadly **oracle of transgression** which here precedes it. But who could find these fragments,—who feel the need to risk the circulation of the poison, and yet lay ready hand on so effective a counteractive? We can conjecture who it was, as soon as we can discover among David's sons a man who could see the chilling shadow of another Lawless One extending over the land; and yet, in the face of it, could still sing in faith the antidote Song: especially if, in this inheritor of the Sweet Singer's mantle, we can discover a CO-AUTHOR, who has the gift to adapt these fragments to a new and urgent occasion, and the authority to get them sung. Thus prompted, we eagerly scan the final strophe of this psalm; and by the time we have read its first couplet and found all the previous praise turned into PRAYER, we bethink us of the man who **knew** Jehovah, who was undoubtedly **upright in heart** but still had urgent need to PRAY! the name of the man is on our lips! But before we pronounce it, we read another couplet; and since this couplet apprehends **invasion** and deprecates **the flight of a fugitive**, we hesitate no longer to pronounce the name: it is HEZEKIAH! But there is this more to be said. The

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entire life-history of this psalm is chequered. This final strophe, we must believe, at first only mounted a little higher in prayer, or concluded with trustful benediction. Soon was the prayer answered; soon, the trustful benediction vindicated; and the same hand that wrote it, gladly erased enough to make way for the thrilling announcement:—

There are fallen the workers of trouble,
Thrust down, and not able to rise!

PSALM 37.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Alphabetical Exhortation to Patience in Well-Doing, notwithstanding the Temporary Prosperity of the Lawless.

ANALYSIS.—It is not easy to resolve this psalm into any other strophes than those small ones formed by the Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. The Chief Burden of the psalm is the Seeming Inequity of the Divine Treatment of the Righteous and the Wicked: for the removal of which a Time-Solution is mainly relied on (see "Exposition"), while various Other Qualifying Considerations are Suggested.

[Lm.] —By David.

א
1 Do not burn with vexation because of evil-doers,
be not envious of the workers of perversity;
2 For <like grass> will they speedily wither,
and <like fresh grass> will they fade.

ב
3 Trust in Jehovah, and do good,
settle down in the earth,[a] and pasture with confidence;
4 So shalt thou find exquisite delight in Jehovah,
and he will give thee the requests of thy heart.

ג
5 Roll on Jehovah thy way,
trust thou also in him,—and ||he|| will effectually work;
6 So will he bring forth, as the light, thy righteousness,
and, thy justice,[b] as noon-day.

ד
7 Be still[c] as to Jehovah, and wait longingly for him;
do not burn with vexation at him who is making prosperous his way,
at the man who is bringing wicked devices to pass.

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[a] Or: "land," and so throughout, vers. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. All depends on the breadth of the outlook.

[b] Or: "vindication."

[c] Dr.: "resigned."

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ד 8 Desist from anger, and forsake wrath,
do not burn with vexation at the doing of evil;[a]
9 For ||evil-doers|| shall be cut off,
but ||they who wait for Jehovah—they|| shall inherit the earth.

י 10 <Yet a little, then> and the lawless one |will not be|,
<though thou attentively consider his place> yet will he not be;
11 But ||humble ones|| shall inherit the earth,
and find exquisite delight in the abundance of prosperity.

כ 12 <Plotting> is a lawless man against a righteous,
and gnashing at him with his teeth:
13 ||My Sovereign Lord|| will laugh at him,
for he seeth that his day |will come|.

ל 14 <A sword> have lawless men |drawn out|,
and have trodden their bow;
to bring down the humbled and needy,
to slaughter the upright in life:[b]
15 ||Their sword|| shall enter their own heart,
and ||their bows|| shall be broken.

מ 16 <Better> the little of a righteous man
than the abundance of many lawless;
17 For ||the arms of lawless men|| shall be broken,
but <an upholder of righteous men> is Jehovah.

נ 18 Jehovah |knoweth| the days of the blameless,
and ||their inheritance|| <to the ages>[c] shall be:
19 They shall not be put to shame in the time of calamity,
but <in the days of famine> shall they be satisfied.

ס 20 For ||the lawless|| shall perish,
and the enemies of Jehovah shall be cut off:
Yea while in high esteem, while exalted, have they vanished,
<like smoke> have they vanished.[d]

ע 21 A lawless man |borroweth|, and doth not repay,
but ||a righteous man|| is gracious, and giveth.
22 For ||such as are blessed of him|| shall inherit the earth,
but ||such as are accursed of him|| shall be cut off.

פ 23 <Of Jehovah> are a man's steps rendered firm,
when <in his way> he taketh pleasure:
24 <Though he fall> he shall not be cast headlong,
for ||Jehovah|| is upholding his hand.

צ 25 <Young> have I been, and now am old,
yet have I not seen |a righteous man| forsaken,
or |his seed| begging bread:
26 <All day long> is he gracious and bending,
and ||his seed|| [is] for a blessing.

---

[a] So w. Br.
[b] Or: "behaviour." Ml.: "way." Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "heart." Cp. 7^{10}—Gn.
[c] Ml. "to concealed duration."
[d] So in the main, w. Br., after Sep.

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ס 27 Depart from evil, and do good,
and settle down to the ages;[a]
28 For ||Jehovah|| loveth justice,
and will not forsake his men of kindness.

ע <To the ages>[a] have perverse men been destroyed,[b]
and |the seed of lawless men| hath been cut off:
29 ||Righteous men|| shall inherit the earth,
and settle down, to futurity, thereon.

פ 30 ||The mouth of a righteous man|| talketh to him[c] of wisdom,
and ||his tongue|| speaketh of justice:
31 ||The law of his God|| is in his heart,
his steps |shall not slide|.

צ 32 A lawless man |spieth| upon a righteous,
and seeketh to put him to death:
33 ||Jehovah|| will not leave him in his hand,
nor condemn him when he is judged.

ק 34 Wait thou for Jehovah, and observe his way,
and he will exalt thee to inherit the earth:
<on the cutting off of lawless men> shalt thou gaze.

ר 35 I have seen a lawless man ruthless,[d]
and spreading himself out like a cedar in Lebanon;[e]
36 Then have I[f] passed by, and lo! he was not,
yea I sought him, and he was not to be found.

ש 37 Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright,
for there is ||a future|| for the man of peace;[g]
38 But ||transgressors|| have been destroyed together,
||the future of lawless men|| hath been cut off.

ת 39 But ||the salvation of righteous men|| is from Jehovah,
their stronghold in the time of distress;
40 And Jehovah |will help them| and deliver them,
will deliver them from lawless men, and will save them,
because they have taken refuge in him.

[Nm.]

---

[a] Ml.: "to concealed duration."
[b] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.); cp. v. 38—Gn.
[c] Or: "soliloquiseth."
[d] "As a terrible one"—Dr.
[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr.); cp. Hosea 14[6]—Gn.
[f] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.)—Gn.
[g] By general consent, this is the true construction of the sentence: "the man of peace" is the "subject," of whom something is affirmed. As to what that something is, see above rendering and the "Exposition."

EXPOSITION.

While the artificial character of this psalm as an *alphabetical acrostic*, and its practical aim to encourage saints in well-doing, fully account for all that is discursive in it; it is obviously weighted with

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the great moral problem—How to account for the undeniable facts, that the lawless are often prosperous in life, whereas the righteous are not infrequently called to pass through adversity. How these facts can be reconciled with the gracious equity of God, is a problem which in all ages has perplexed observant and thoughtful minds; and many parts of Holy Scripture are devoted to endeavours to solve the problem; among them, the book of Job and several psalms are conspicuous. Among such psalms, this one and Pss. 49 and 73 are worthy of special mention; the present one being remarkable for its buoyant courage in confronting the difficulty; the 49th, for the beauty of its form in stating the problem and the unexpected and irregular way in which its solution is proposed; and the 73rd, for the revelation it makes of a soul's struggles before it successfully rises above doubt. They are indeed a remarkable triad of psalms, especially devoted to this very grave, but yet most fascinating theme.

This psalm boldly meets the difficulty by presenting *time* as the chief solution. Subsidiary mitigations, no doubt, are simultaneously presented, to console the suffering saint; and among them is discovered the enhanced delight found in Jehovah himself which significantly anticipates the same mighty consolation which comes out so triumphantly in Ps. 73 the third of the series. But the dominant exhortation here turns on the question of *time*: the burden of the advice tendered being this: "Wait! All will come right in the end. The triumph of the flourishing lawless will be short. When he has been **cut off**, thou, O patient wronged one, will be inheriting the earth." This is the note struck at the beginning of the psalm, and this carries us through up to the climax at its close: a climax which confessedly comes with all the greater force when the crowning words are adequately translated: **There is a future for the man of peace; But transgressors have been destroyed together, the future of lawless men hath been cut off.** This forms a worthy climax to the psalm, and adequately meets the difficulty calling for solution. Only grant that there is a **future** for the patient well-doer; and that, for the lawless, however long they may live and flourish, there is **no future** worthy of the name,—and the solution is felt to be complete.

It is true, indeed, that the edge of the psalmist's argument has been rather blunted by critics of note through their acceptance of the term "posterity," in place of **future**, in vers. 37 and 38. To such a weakening of the solution it may be permitted us to object, for two or three reasons: *first*, that the main current of the psalm points to survival in person rather than by proxy; *second*, that in the parallel use of the same word (*aḥarith*) in Ps. 73[17] it is impossible to accept

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"posterity" as an adequate translation, seeing that, there, the writer's resolve is to enter "the great sanctuary" for the purpose of considering, not the "posterity" of the lawless but their own latter end or hereafter or future, as the sequel to that passage conclusively shows; and *third*, that the prophetic word itself elsewhere — notably in Jer. $31^{29, 30}$ and Eze. 18^{1-4}—expressly discounts the principle of punishment by proxy, so making it exceedingly unlikely that this far-seeing and forth-reaching psalm intends us to be content with either substitutionary punishment or substitutionary reward. Hence, as "posterity" is by no means the primary or customary meaning of *aḥarith*, we can confidently rely on the solid reasons above given for declining it; and for preferring the well-sustained rendering which concludes the psalm with such fine effect.

Will it be objected, that the rewards of the righteous appear in this psalm to be too earthly to be eternal, and the punishment of the lawless to be too summary to be final? Such objection may be safely dismissed as virtually demanding that no Old Testament rays shall penetrate the great Hereafter unless they flood it with all-revealing light. What if the heaven of the Old Testament, as well as that of the New, should prove to be a heaven upon earth? and what if the expansion of the hints here discovered should, after all, find room for all the details subsequently revealed? If we at all apprehend that God hath yet more light to break forth from his word, let us beware of closing up the very avenues by which that light may reach us!

PSALM 38.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer for Deliverance from Disease and from Enemies.

ANALYSIS.—Part I. *Against Disease.* Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Anger Deprecated. Strophe II., ver. 3—5, The Psalmist traces his Disease to his Sin. Strophe III., vers. 6—8, Describes Effect of Disease on Himself. Strophe IV., vers. 9—11, On his Friends.

Part II. *Against Enemies.* Strophe I., vers. 12—14, Enemies' Perfidy —How Treated by Psalmist. Strophe II., vers. 15—18, Reasons for so treating it. Strophe III., vers. 19—22, The Character and Strength of his Enemies move the psalmist to Importunity in Prayer.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David—To bring to Remembrance.

[Part I.]

1 Jehovah! do not <in thy vexation> correct me,
nor <in thy wrath> chastise me; [a]

[a] Cp. 6^{1}.

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2 For ||thine arrows|| have sunk down in me,
and thy hand |hath sunk down upon me|.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh, by reason of thine indignation,
no wholeness in my bones, by reason of my sin;
4 For ||mine iniquities|| have passed over my head,
<like a burden that is heavy> they are too heavy for me:
5 My weals| stink, they fester|,
by reason of my foolishness.

6 I am bent, I am bowed very low,
<all the day> have I gloomily walked;
7 For ||my loins|| are filled with shame,[a]
and there is no wholeness in my flesh:
8 I am benumbed and crushed exceedingly,
I have roared with the growl of a lion.[b]

9 Sovereign Lord! <before thee> is all my desire,
and ||my sighing|| <from thee> is not hid.
10 ||My heart|| fluttereth,[c] my strength |hath forsaken me|,
and ||the light of mine eyes[d]—even they|| are not with me;
11 ||My lovers and my friends|| <from before my stroke>[e] stand aloof,
and ||my neighbours|| <at a distance> remain.

[Part II.]

12 And they who seek my life[f] |have laid snares|,
and ||they who study my hurt|| have threatened engulfing ruin;
and <deceitful things> <all the day> do they mutter.
13 But ||I|| am as one deaf—I do not hear,
and <as one dumb> who openeth not his mouth.[g]
14 Thus have I become as a man who cannot hear,
and in whose mouth are no replies.

15 Because <for thee> have I waited,
||thou thyself|| wilt answer, Sovereign Lord, My God.
16 Lest mine enemies |rejoice over me|,—
<when my feet slipped> <against me> they did great things.
17 Because ||I|| <to stumble> am ready,
and ||my pain|| is before me continually;
18 Because <mine iniquity> must I declare,
I am anxious by reason of my sin.

19 <Since ||mine enemies without cause|| have become strong,
and <multiplied> are they who hate me for false reason;
20 And ||they who repay evil for good||
are mine adversaries because I pursue good>

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[a] "That which is contemned"—Br. (after ancient versions). Or: "burning"; so Dr., Del., Per. Leeser ("burning disease").
[b] So *Gt.*—Gn.; and so Br.
[c] "Palpitates"—O.G. "Is in a ferment"—Br. "Throbbeth violently"—Del.
[d] Cp. Eze. 24[16].
[e] Note the word: *nega'*—"esp. of a disease, regarded as sent by divine chastisement"—O.G. and note is occurrences in Lev. 13, 14; 2 S. 7[14], Ps. 38[11], 39[10], 89[33], Isa. 53[8]. "The word is especially used of the plague of leprosy"—Kp.
[f] U: "soul."
[g] Cp. Isa. 53[7].

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21 Do not forsake me, Jehovah,
my God! be not far from me:
22 Oh haste thee to my help,
Sovereign Lord! my salvation!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] To Jeduthun.*

* Prob. leader of Male Choir, having "thanks and confession" specially under his care. Other Jeduthun psalms are 61, 76. "Sheminith" prob. indicates the same choir. Cp. Intro. Chap., II., 8.

EXPOSITION.

Our analysis suggests that this psalm is divisible into two parts; not because there are any outward signs of such division, but solely for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact, which becomes clear on examination, that there are two distinct strains of thought in the psalm, however closely they are conjoined. For three strophes the prayer is solely for the removal of disease, without any allusion to enemies. Then, for three more strophes, there is a sustained reference to enemies, with only a bare allusion to disease. In both parts of the psalm the writer acknowledges that he has sinned; but this confession is naturally more frank and solemn in the former part than in the latter. The whole psalm may well have been indited by David, even as it is inscribed to him: the only surprising—but by no means incredible—thing is, as we are beginning to discover, that David was severely chastised for his great sin by the direct infliction, from Jehovah's own hand, of a loathsome disease, concerning which the history in Samuel and Chronicles is silent. However surprising such silence may at first sight appear, it is so far from being incredible that on reflection it seems natural, or at least excusable. No royal scribe would feel called on to record the damaging fact in the public chronicles; and it may well have been that even the faithful prophetic historian of the time felt relieved of any duty to insert in his narrative an account of an affliction endured in almost unbroken silence by the erring but still beloved monarch. Notwithstanding which, however, now that, after all these centuries, we look back on those distant times, and realise afresh the dishonour done by David to the name of Jehovah and to the sanctity of his ways,—we cannot fail to discover something more than poetic justice, that the terrible secret should long ago have come out; and THAT in just the very best way conceivable,—namely, by disclosure from the offending monarch's own mouth,—slightly veiled by poetic allusion rather than by blunt narration, and divulged amidst the solemnities of the worship of Him who is of too pure eyes to behold

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iniquity, yet still plainly confessed and sorely lamented. If anything were yet wanting to impart a finishing-touch of moral and æsthetic fitness to the manner of the revelation, it would be found in the reflection, which Dr. Thirtle has brought home to us, that we probably owe it to David's loving son Hezekiah that these Davidic confessions of Divinely inflicted disease ever saw the light. When once Hezekiah had himself groaned under a similar Divine infliction—though not perhaps for the like cause—and been again mercifully raised up from his couch of tears, then was prepared a joint-author of psalmody of sufficiently refined and sanctified culture to be entrusted with the delicate task of deciding that these snatches of leper-songs should find place in Temple worship. He, finding the leper-wail of Uzziah in the palace library, could be trusted to find place for it in his gallery of sufferers in Ps. 31, where it could serve to strike a preliminary note and thus prepare us—as the sixth psalm had in a measure prepared us—for the fuller and more personal confessions of the psalm now before us, and then for the further confessions of Ps. 39, in both of which the leper-wail is heard and leper-disfigurement is seen; after which the renewed confessions of Pss. 40, 41, 51 and others no longer surprise us. Henceforth, it may be surmised, we shall handle these reminiscences of an exciting creative age in Israel, with a tender reverence which only a measurably adequate appreciation of their spiritual origin could have inspired. After this, it seems but commonplace to observe, as before noted, that David's wail over a Divinely inflicted disease, as a direct punishment for his sin, is pointed with a franker and more explicit confession of his transgressions, than are his complaints of the treacherous friends who had now turned against him. Doubtless, it was due to his sin that they were permitted thus to wrong him, and it was well even in this connection, that he should **declare his iniquity** and be **anxious by reason of his sin**; but we can well understand that the royal transgressor felt that many of the wounds he was now receiving from his enemies were such as *they*, at least, had no right to inflict, of which infliction therefore he had good cause to complain. If these things are noted, the psalm will be read to all the greater and more varied edification. We have only to add that the **Chief Musician's** assignment of this pathetic psalm to **Jeduthun**, as leader of the Male Choir, commends itself as most appropriate, and would probably hold good for the similar psalm that follows.

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PSALM 39.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Lament and Prayer of a Divinely Stricken One.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, How the Stricken One's Resolve to be Silent is Broken. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Lament that Life, already Short, should be further Shortened. Strophe III., ver. 7—11, Prayer for Pardon and Healing, with a recognition of the Marring Effect of the Disease. Strophe IV., vers. 12, 13, Supplementary and Subdued Prayer for Help.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 I said—"Let me take heed to my ways—
that I sin not with my tongue,
Let me restrain my mouth—[a]
while a lawless man is before me.'
2 I was dumb with silence—
I abstained from blessing;
But ||my pain|| had been stirred—
3 <hot> was my heart within me:
<As I murmured> there <was kindled> a fire—
I spake with my tongue.

4 "Let me know, O Jehovah, mine end—
and the measure of my days, what it |is|:
I would fain know, why <forsaken>[b] am |I|.
5 Lo! <as handbreaths> thou hast given my days,
And ||my life-time|| was as nothing before thee:
6 <*Only a vapour*> *is any man*, though set firm, Selah
<Only in semblance> doth any man |march to and fro|,
Only a vapour that he should make a commotion:
He heapeth things up, and knoweth not who shall carry them off!"

7 ||Now||, therefore for what have I waited, Sovereign Lord?[c]
<as for my hope> <thine> it |is|!
8 <From all my transgressions> rescue me,
<the reproach of the vile>[d] do not make me.
9 I am dumb, I will not open my mouth—
for ||thou|| didst [it]!
10 Remove from off me thy stroke,[e]
<through the hostility of thy hand> ||I|| am spent.
11 <When <by rebukes for iniquity> thou hast corrected a man>
then hast thou consumed, as a moth, his comeliness.
<*Only a vapour is any man*> / Selah

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[a] Ml.: "Let me put [so *Gt.*—Gn.] to my mouth a muzzle."
[b] Same word as "rejected" in Isa. 53[3]. Cp. Thirtle, O.T.P., 186; and see Ps. 38[10, 11].
[c] Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram. and Syr): "Jehovah"—Gn.
[d] Or: "senseless"—Dr.
[e] See note on 38[11] (same word here).

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12 Oh hear my prayer, Jehovah!
and <unto my cry for help> oh give ear!
<at my tears> do not be silent;
For <a sojourner> am ||I|| with thee,
a settler, like all my fathers.
13 Look away from me, that I may brighten up,
ere yet I depart, and be no more.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

EXPOSITION.

The first thing in this psalm to arrest our attention is its likeness to the previous psalm; and then, the next thing, its unlikeness; which, indeed, is so great as to divert attention from its similarity. To describe this psalm, as some have done, as merely an Elegy on The Vanity of Life, is quite to miss its especial characteristic. First and foremost it is the Wail of one who has been Stricken of God with a plague on account of Transgression. The Vanity of Life is merely the background of the picture, to enhance the pity of it, that one who in any case had but a short life to live should have his comeliness disfigured and his life made shorter still. The plague—probably leprosy—which appeared in Ps. 38, re-appears here in Ps. 39: that is the striking but greatly overlooked fact. As will be seen, the same technical word (*nega'*) which was used in ver. 11 of the previous psalm, is again used in ver. 10 of this; and as, there, a descriptive confirmation was found (vers. 10 and 11) giving unmistakable effect to the suspicious word, so here an equally sure confirmation of it is discovered in the unquestionable allusion to his own marred looks in ver. 11. To catch this reference to his own lamentable bodily condition, is to feel a new point in his plea that he might have declared to him the measure of his days. He already knew the ordinary brevity of human life, and feels it so strongly that he employs it as a refrain; but, for that very reason, he was not likely, in an ordinary way, to make it the point of a special petition. But now, as the case is, he would be glad to know the worst. Hence it can be no longer open to question that, as in the previous psalm, so in this,—the petitioner has fallen under the punitive stroke of Divine displeasure.

It is just when this similarity has been put beyond further question, that our apprehension of the wide contrast between the two psalms becomes keen and inquisitive. Is this *another* plague-stricken psalmist; or, if the same, what has happened to impart such a different tone to his present effusion? The similarity being conceded, the contrast is so great as to become almost startling. There, enemies were in evidence:

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here, there are none. There, all was excitement and turmoil: here, all is as restful as it is sad. There, no general reflections on the brevity of life were indulged in: here, they abound, and are set forth so forcibly as to mislead the casual reader into the mistake of regarding this composition as a dirge to the note of "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!" Besides all which, there is a tone of resignation here, and an extreme moderation of request, which are in the greatest contrast with the previous psalm.

How is this contrast to be accounted for? Is the writer of this psalm *another man* than he that wrote the previous? But for the inscription, we should quite readily have come to that conclusion; and should have unhesitatingly fixed upon the leper-King Uzziah as the probable author. We should have called attention to the probable fact that Uzziah was smitten for life—which would have accounted for his resignation and for his seeming to say: "And if there may be no complete and early **removal** of the **stroke**, let there be at least a **brightening up** before I go hence." This, too would have given especial point to the seeming apprehension of the sufferer that he might, in his distress be overheard by an attendant apparently **sinning with his tongue**. The previous psalm, however, warns us against being hasty in concluding against the authorship of David, even here. According to that psalm, his wives withdrew from him, his lovers and friends stood aloof, his neighbours kept at a distance; and, under these circumstances, although David may not have been formally banished to a "several" house like that to which Uzziah had to retire, he may have been confined to his own apartments during his sickness, and may have had ample opportunities to **bridle his tongue** while uncertain attendants were **in his presence**. Then, moreover, it must be remembered that sick people are proverbially subject to moody fluctuations—fiery one day; subdued the next; besides which, time works wonders, —by giving space for reflection; and reflection, on a sensitive mind like David's, may have added to the wonder, by soon transforming the high-spirited and resentful statesman of the 38th psalm, into the resigned and patient moraliser of the 39th; especially may this have in part come about by influences due to changing circumstances in the state: as, for instance, by a recrudescence of the bodily plague, after Absalom's rebellion had become a thing of the past, when the sadder but wiser king had ample time and increased motive to dwell, as he had never done, on the vanity of human life. It is, in any case, significant, that, in his pathetic address on the consecration of the offerings for the building of Solomon's temple as recorded in 1 Ch. 29[15], the venerable monarch should, in fellowship with his people, have used language

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precisely similar to that which closes this psalm: language which we shall do well to keep in mind, as suggesting that Messianic hope did not always run high in Israel, and, indeed, by the very reaction of its occasional brilliance was apt to make it appear that only in this life had those ancients hope in Jehovah their God—that they were, indeed, for a brief span, sojourners and settlers with their God in the enjoyment of the good things of his house; and then departed into the land of forgetfulness.

PSALM 40.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Three Stirring Reminiscences of King David's History.

ANALYSIS.—Part I., Significant Memorials of David's Coronation. Strophe I., vers. 1—3, A highly Figurative Description of David's Deliverance from being an Outlaw to being King. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, Felicitations to All who Trust in Jehovah, prompted by David's Own Experience, awaken Glad Memories of the Past, and Adoring Anticipations of the Future. Strophes III. and IV., vers. 6—9, 10, 11, David's Profound Apprehension of his Kingly Calling makes of him a Proclaimer of Jehovah's Righteousness to an ever-Enlarging Assembly.

Part II., A Significant fragmentary Memento of David's Sin, ver. 12.

Part III., King David in Trouble. Strophe I., vers. 13—15, Prayer against his Enemies. Strophe II., vers. 16, 17, Prayer in Favour of his Friends. In both strophes the Note of Urgency is struck.

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.[a]

[Part I.]

1 I ||waited intently|| for Jehovah—
and he inclined unto me,[b]
2 And brought me up out of the roaring[c] pit—
out of the swampy mire;
And set up, on a cliff, my feet—
making firm my steps;
3 And put, in my mouth, a new song—
praise unto our God:
Many |will see| and revere—
and trust in Jehovah.

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[a] Some cod.: "Psalm—By David"—Gn.
[b] M.T. adds: "and heard my cry for help."
[c] See Intro., Chap. III., "Earth." According to a slightly different reading: "destroying."

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4 |How happy| the man
who hath made Jehovah his trust,
And hath not turned aside to vanities—[a]
nor to such as are falling away to falsehood!
5 <Many things> hast thou done—
||thou|| Jehovah my God!
<Thy wondrous works and thy plans>—[b]
there is no setting in order:[c]
I would tell and would speak—
they are too numerous to be told.

6 <Peace-offering and grain-offering> thou didst not delight in—
||then|| was there a covenant for me,[d]
<Ascending-sacrifice and sin-bearer> thou didst not ask—
||then|| didst thou command[e] me:
7 Lo! I am come—
<in the written scroll> is it prescribed to me,
8 <Thy pleasure> I delight in—
and ||thy law|| is in my deepest affections,[f]
9 I have heralded the good-tidings of righteousness[g] in a large assembly—[h]
behold my lips!

(10) I will not withhold, O Jehovah, ||thou|| knowest—
thy righteousness,
I have not covered in the midst of my heart—
thy faithfulness and thy salvation;
I say—I have not concealed thy kindness and thy truth—
from a large assembly:[i]
11 ||Thou, Jehovah|| wilt not withhold thy compassions from me,
||Thy kindness and thy truth|| will continually preserve me.

[Part II.]

12 Surely there <closed in upon me> misfortunes—
till they were without number,
Mine iniquities |overtook me|—
and I could not see,
More numerous were they than the hairs of my head—
and ||my heart|| failed me.

[Part III.]

13 Be pleased, Jehovah, to rescue me—
Jehovah <to help me> oh make haste!
14 <Put to shame and abashed together> be they who are seeking my life[j]
<Turned back and confounded> be they who are taking pleasure in my hurt,
15 <Astounded as a reward of their own shame> be they who are saying of me—"Aha! Aha!"

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[a] Or: "vain idols"—reading (w. Br. and O.G.) *ʾăḇîl* instead of *rāhaḇ*. M.T.: "the proud."
[b] M.T.: "for us"; but not in Sep.
[c] M.T.: "unto thee"; and then render (w. Del. and Dr.): "there is none to be compared unto thee." But not in Sep.
[d] So, in substance, Br., endeavouring to get behind, and account for, the divergence between M.T. ("ears hast thou digged for me") and Sep. ("a body hast thou fitted for me") quoted Heb. 10[5].
[e] So Br., by a very slight change from M.T. For such use of *ʾanar*, see 105[31, 34], 2 Ch. 29[36].
[f] ML: "in the midst of mine inwards."
[g] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "righteousness."
[h] Cp. 22[25], 35[18], and ver. 10 below.
[i] Cp. ver. 9 above.
[j] U.: "soul." M.T. adds: "to snatch it away." Not in 70[3].

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16 <Glad and joyful in thee> be all who are seekers of thee,
Let |them| say continually—"Jehovah be magnified" who are lovers of thy salvation.
17 <Since ||I|| am humbled and needy> may ||my Sovereign Lord||[a] devise for me!
<[Since] |my help and deliverer| ||thou|| art> my God! do not tarry.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

[a] Some cod. (w. 7 ear. pr. edns.): "may Jehovah"—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

Not only is there no sufficient internal evidence to throw doubt upon the Davidic authorship of this psalm; but the assumption of the correctness of the superscription **By David** probably leads to a clearer insight into the bearing of the different parts, and a firmer grasp of the unity of the whole, than can by any other means be obtained. Who ever **waited** more **intently** for anything than David for the kingship of Israel? How could more suitable images be found to picture the trials through which he had to pass on his way to the kingdom, when endlessly harassed by King Saul, than those of the **swampy mire** and the **engulfing pit**? How can we better represent the completeness of his deliverance from these trying delays, than to represent him as having his feet at length **set high upon a cliff** and a **new song put into his mouth**,—his exaltation being seen and known of all men? Moreover the very figures employed strongly remind us of David's great song preserved in Psalm 18. Assuredly David could speak from experience of the **happiness** of **trusting** in **Jehovah**—he never turned aside to the **vanities** and **falsehood** of **idolatry**; and, when once finally delivered, how **many things** had he to tell of signal mercies in the past—things already done,—and **wonderful plans** yet to be carried forward into fulfilment! It is, however, when we reach the strophe (III.) regarding **sacrifices**, that we are most impressed. It was on this rock of sacrifice, that David's predecessor Saul struck his foot to his grievous injury: he could not trust Jehovah's **will** as prophetically made known to him through Samuel, and so he took the priestly law into his own hand, and brought on himself the severe reprimand of Samuel:—

Doth that which is pleasing unto Jehovah consist in
ascending-offerings and sacrifices,
So much as in hearkening unto the voice of Jehovah?
Lo! to hearken is better than sacrifice,
And to give heed, than the fat of rams.

We must surely be short-sighted not to discover in these ringing tones

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of remonstrance the very *motif* of the strophe before us: the which, indeed, sounds like a glorified revulsion from the sin of Saul. For a king after his own heart, Jehovah has other and nobler work to do, than the slaughter of animals in ritual worship. He has to set before priests and people the sublimer example of loving Jehovah's will supremely, and doing it; delighting in it, embedding it in his deepest affections, and heralding the good-tidings of it to such a large assembly as a king could easily command, whether at Hebron or at Jerusalem. This, indeed, had been prescribed to him in the written scroll: how he was to write out the law, that he might have it ever by him, and read therein daily, and revere Jehovah his God, and keep his statutes, and not be lifted up above his brethren (Deu. 17^{18-20}); and now he solemnly covenants that he will do it—that it will be his delight to do it; yea, moreover, he proclaims his delight in an assembly so large, that those who cannot hear his voice may at least witness the movements of his covenanting lips—Behold my lips! Moreover, the very righteousness which he pledges himself to proclaim is glorified on his covenanting lips; for it is no longer merely the obedience of Israel to the law, but the faithfulness of God to Israel. First and foremost, it is Jehovah's faithfulness to himself, in giving him the kingship at last, after so long keeping him waiting for it. And so law is turned into Gospel: David declares that the righteousness which he will herald, will be good-tidings. And so it will; and therefore his eagerness to proclaim it overflows into another strophe: that he may call Jehovah to witness that he will not conceal such a righteousness as falls nothing short of kindness, faithfulness and salvation. Sure the singer is: That if he withhold not his testimony to Jehovah's law and providence, so neither will Jehovah withhold his compassions, his kindness, his truth, his preservation. And if that does not amount to a Coronation Oath and a Kingly Covenant,—we may boldly ask what would. And before a large assembly too!

Thus freely have we woven into our Exposition the word covenant as shrewdly conjectured by Dr. Briggs to have been the word originally employed by the psalmist in the place where now the M.T. and the Sep. unfortunately differ; and, indeed, when the consonants of *krth* and *brth* (which are in question in the doubtful place in the text), are compared in Hebrew as coming extremely near to each other, there need be little surprise felt that such a transcriptional error should have crept in. At any rate, the word covenant bids fair to fill so effectively the place here assigned it, that still another covenant strain of thought is now in addition suggested, as extremely pertinent to this very juncture in David's life and this precise place in his writings: then had I a

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covenant. When David came to the throne, then was granted to him the covenant concerning his seed—reaching out to and including the Messiah—which the prophet Nathan propounded according to 2 Sam. 7. As much as to say: The grand purpose of Jehovah, even in ordaining sacrifices, being to educate Israel to love and practise his will; and then, in providing an approved King, his purpose being still the same; there was vouchsafed to that King the covenant, to bring forth out of his family the Messiah. who should still further throw animal sacrifices into the shade, and still further commend and advance the grand principle of doing and delighting in Jehovah's will, as his people's highest satisfaction and blessedness. So much for the first Part of our psalm.

Turning now to the second Part (ver. 12), which we have not hesitated to call a mere fragment,—it is obvious to observe what an important fragment it is, and what an essential link it furnishes in any comprehensive survey of David's reign. **Misfortunes closed in upon him**, even after he had become Israel's king:—wherefore? Alas! **his iniquities overtook him**; and the sad fact was that he had committed them. And they dimmed his spiritual vision—**he could not see.** It may be, that the larger offences brought to mind the smaller which had opened the door to the larger; and were in turn followed by the smaller though very grievous sins of persistence, impenitence, denial, prevarication, hardness of heart, disparagement of spiritual blessedness; until at length, now that remorse is setting in, they appear **more numerous than the hairs of his head.** And when to all things else the humbled man adds his confession that **his heart failed him**, we are probably to understand—not merely that his courage failed him, which may very well have been included, but—that his **mental powers** failed him, for such is the comprehensiveness of the Hebrew word for **heart.** And, perhaps, it is precisely to this dimming of spiritual vision, this failure of mental power, that we are to attribute that spiritual vacillation—that failure to hold steadfastly to Messianic hopes—which at the close of Ps. 39 struck us as so remarkable.

Happily, the humbled and forgiven soul returns to its God; and though troubles abound, and enemies appear, and base souls point the tongue and finger of scorn at the late offending monarch, yet prayer is once more brought into active exercise; and if there are men who rejoice in iniquity, there are also men who sympathisingly rejoice in the truth: the scoffers may, to their shame, cry "**Aha! Aha!**"; but the godly and considerate exclaim, to the increase of holy **joy, Jehovah be magnified!** And so the **humbled and needy** king is encouraged to seek with new faith and hope for **speedy help** from the God of his **salvation.**

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Satisfactory as it thus appears to trace each successive part of the psalm to David's own composing, it is by no means certain that David himself brought them together into one psalm as they now appear. In fact the selection of the pieces for permanent Temple worship, and the welding them into one, seem naturally to fall to Hezekiah, whose practised judgment would on the one hand suggest that Parts I. and III. required Part II. to unite them; and on the other hand recommend the detachment of Part III. as now Ps. 70 for occasional separate use.

PSALM 41.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Regretting that Enemies and Friends should meanly Rejoice in his Sickness, the Psalmist nevertheless Perseveres in Prayer for Pardon and Recovery.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, The Blessings that Might have been Won by being Considerate to a Sick Man. Strophe II., ver. 4, The Sick Man Prays for Pardon and Healing. Strophe III., ver. 5—9, How both Enemies and a Particular Friend have turned against him in his Affliction. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, Prayer for Restoration Rises to Strong Assurance. *Doxology* (ver. 13).

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 |How happy| is he who is considerate towards the helpless![a]
<in the day of calamity> Jehovah |will deliver him|,
2 ||Jehovah|| will preserve him, and keep him alive—
he shall be called happy in the land.
Do not, then, give him up to the desire[b] of his enemies!
3 ||Jehovah|| will sustain him on a bed of sickness:
<All his lying down> hast thou transformed in his disease!

4 ||I|| have said—"Jehovah! be gracious unto me,
heal thou my soul,[c] for I have sinned against thee."

5 ||Mine enemies|| keep saying—"It is bad with him![d]
when will he die, and his name |perish|?"
6 And <if one hath come in to see me <unreality>[e] he speaketh,
||his own heart|| gathereth mischief[f] to itself:

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[a] "Or, perhaps, *the weakly*"—Dr. "The afflicted"—Del.
[b] U.: "Soul." Cp. Intro. Chap. III., "Soul."
[c] Or: "person." "The soul is the man's whole 'self'; the living personality which results from the union of spirit and flesh"—Kp.
[d] M.T. "me." Only the difference (in the length of a stroke) between *yod* and *waw*.
[e] That is: insincerity.
[f] Or "trouble" ("naughtiness" Dr.)

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(7) he goeth forth outside—he telleth [7]everything.
<Against me> <whisper together> all that hate me,
<Against me> reckon they—"It is bad with him,—[a]
8 ||an infliction of the Abandoned One|| hath been fixed[b] on him;
and <now that he hath lien down> he will not again rise!"
9 ||Even the great man I used to salute—in whom I trusted—
accustomed to eat my bread|| hath lifted against me a high heel![c]

10 But ||thou, Jehovah|| be gracious unto me, and raise me up,
and I will repay them!
11 <By this> I know that thou delightest in me,
that mine enemy ||shall not shout|| over me.[d]
12 But <as for me> <in my blessedness>[e] hast thou held me fast,
and hast caused me to stand before thee to the ages.

13 <Blessed> be Jehovah, God of Israel,
From antiquity even unto futurity![f]
Amen and Amen!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah = "the patriarchs of song."[g]

[a] M.T. "me." Only the difference (in the length of a stroke) between *yod* and *waw*.
[b] Ml.: "molten," "cast."
[c] Cp. 55[12, 20]. [d] Cp. 55[23].
[e] Or: "devotion," "whole-heartedness," "integrity": ml. "my wholeness," "entirety."
[f] Ml.: "From the age (concealed duration in the past) even unto the age (concealed duration in the future)."
[g] These two instructions transposed and brought here by readjustment of titles based on Thirtle. Cp. Intro., Chap. II., 3.

EXPOSITION.

By substituting the world "helpless" for "poor" in the first line of this psalm, we at once obviate the appearance of self-righteousness, which would have been seen and been in no wise welcome as a commencement to the psalm. It would have appeared to say, "I have always been considerate of the 'poor,' and therefore might have hoped for better treatment than I am receiving." The word "poor" would have seemed to refer to others than himself, and so the line would have looked like sounding his own praise. But the moment we substitute the equally correct rendering "helpless," then we detect a pathetic reference to himself as confessedly in a deplorably "helpless" bodily condition, and can credit the psalmist with a genuine feeling of regret that he had not received such commiseration under his "stroke" as would have called forth from him the blessings on his comforters which in this strophe he amplifies.

It must be admitted, however, that although this corrected keynote seems well fitted to introduce the psalm, yet the sound of the keynote appears rather muffled by lines 4 and 6; because line 4 sounds

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like a wish weakly inserted amidst assurances strong enough to bear out the initial exclamation "How happy:" "How happy—because Jehovah will deliver him," &c., &c. Line 6 seems to disturb the strophe for an opposite reason: it is too strong: it is too much an announcement of prayer already answered: as a further reason for felicitating the considerate man it equally disturbs the strophe. One has only to think of Hezekiah as adapting the psalm to his own circumstances, and interpolating first line 4, and then, after his recovery, adding line 6,—to feel how naturally these disturbances might have occurred, and yet how unspeakably too precious they are to be removed for mere symmetrical reasons.

The emphasis on the pronoun "I" at the head of ver. 4 has, after the foregoing introduction, a welcome effect. It appears to stand out in anticipatory contrast with what his enemies have to say, as recorded in the following verse: as much as to imply—"Whatever mine enemies have to say about me, what before thee, O Jehovah, I have to say of myself, is this, That I have sinned, and implore the healing which thou alone canst bestow." This, indeed, is a welcome note to catch from the psalmist. His sin has many times of late come before us, and it materially contributes to our edification to observe that, however naturally he resents blows from enemies and friends which they might have spared him, yet at the same time, before God there is no equivocation, no sparing of himself. Before Jehovah, he lies in the dust crying for mercy.

The picture given of the visits of perfidious enemies coming to visit the psalmist with hypocritical professions of friendship on their lips, their malicious eyes closely noting everything that might be construed to the Royal Sufferer's disadvantage, and then their lips divulging every damaging appearance and incident to those outside waiting for the verdict,—is far too lifelike to need much comment. That a trusted counsellor—for doubtless it was Ahithophel—should have given his late Master an insidious blow—this was one of the hardest things to bear; and the thing which most tended to make David, as shamefully betrayed, a type of his Son and Lord (John 13^{18} and 17^{12}).

We should be glad to think, with Dr. Briggs, that the purpose of retaliation expressed in ver. 11 was an interpolation; but there is just enough reason to suppose that, in his public capacity, David felt compelled to punish so glaring an offence, to make us hesitate to omit a clause which the ancient versions with the Massoretic text retain; and therefore we are content to remind ourselves that *we* may not curse, but must overcome evil with good!

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Before closing our comments on this series of psalms, satisfaction may be expressed that so able an expositor as Kirkpatrick admits how weak are the objections which can be urged against the belief that King David really did suffer the terrible infliction of bodily disease which sufficiently comes to light in these psalms. He says: "It is true that the narrative in 2 Samuel makes no reference to an illness such as here described; but that narrative necessarily passes over many details. Such an illness would account for the remissness in attending to his official duties, which Absalom's words to the suitors for justice seem to imply (2 Sam. 15[3]). It would account also for the strange failure of David's natural courage which his flight from Jerusalem at the first outbreak of the rebellion appears to indicate. Unnerved by sickness, in which he recognised a just punishment for his sins, David watched the growing disloyalty of his courtiers, and in particular of Ahithophel, without feeling able to strike and crush the conspiracy before it came to a head. Compare generally Psalm 55." Compare, further, the "Exposition" of Ps. 38, *ante*. In a word, it is impossible to over-estimate the moral gain to revealed truth rendered by restoring David to his proper place in these penitential psalms. Every one knows how grievously David sinned: nothing can blot out the sad story from the historical records of the time. Let everyone equally know how ignominiously he suffered; how severely he had to be chastised before he repented. Let us be permitted in these psalms to hear his groans, not indeed to our pleasure, but to our lasting profit. Our honour—the honour of our God—the honour of the whole history of Redemption—is bound up with the sincerity of David's repentance. Grant us, then, the melancholy and yet salutary opportunity of becoming witnesses to its genuineness and its depth. There is no gain, but much loss, to be had by transferring these penitential psalms bodily to the nation, as their primary subject. And therefore we hope that those critics who have been teaching us to date their origin in and after the exile, will show willingness to revise their conclusions; will not only admit how greatly transmissional and historical evidence is against them, but also how strongly exegetical considerations appeal to us to find their *authors* in men whom we know, and in *occasions* clearly indicated for us by evidence which can be no longer overlooked.

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THE PSALMS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

PSALMS 42 and 43.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Debarred Worshipper Mastering his Sorrow.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, A Debarred Worshipper, Nursing his Grief, nevertheless Strives to Rise Above it. Strophe II., vers. 6—11, Deeply Feeling his Personal Condition, the Sufferer Encourages Himself by Recalling a Past Deliverance, and begins to Pray Hopefully, though Sorely Dismayed by Outward Troubles. Strophe III. (43), vers. 1—5, Looking his Public Troubles in the Face, the Psalmist Prays for a Triumphant Deliverance.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm.

1 <As ||a hind|| cometh longing up to channels of water>
so ||my soul|| longeth for thee, O God!
2 <Athirst> is my soul for God— for a GOD who liveth,—
when shall I enter in, and see[a] the face of God?
3 My |tears| have served me for |food| day and night,
through its being said unto me all the day—"Where is thy God?"
4 <These things> would I fain remember, and pour out, upon me my soul—
how I used to pass over in a throng—
used to lead them in procession unto the house of God,
with the sound of jubilation[b] and thanksgiving—
a crowd keeping festival!
5 *Why shouldst thou despair, O my soul, and groan upon me?*
Wait thou for God, for |yet| shall I thank him,—
as the great salvation[c] of my[d] person,[e] and my God.[f]

6 <Over myself>[g] |my soul| keeps despairing—[h] |therefore| will I remember thee,—[i]
from the land of Jordan and the Hermons—from Mount Mizar,—

[a] So it shd. be—G. Intro., 458; and so it is in some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Syr.)—Gn. "It is probable that in the original it was 'see the face of Yahweh'"—Br.
[b] Or: "of a ringing cry."
[c] Pl. "intensive."
[d] M.T.: "his"—clearly in error for "my": cp. vers. 11 and (43) 5.
[e] So O.G. 447a. Or: "the health of my countenance"; or: "the victory of my presence."
The same alternatives apply to vers. 11 and (43) 5.
[f] "Should probably be added"—Dr. To the same effect—Del.
[g] Stands emphatically at the beginning of the sentence.—Kp., Del.
[h] Frequentative. "Is cast down" blunts the point.
[i] That is, "what I learned of thee."

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7 ||Deep|| <unto deep> calling out, to the sound of thy waterfalls:
||all thy breakers and thy billows|| <over one> passed.
8 <By day> may Jehovah |command| his kindness, and <by night> his song,
<with me> a prayer to the God of my life.[a]
9 I would fain say to God—"O my Cliff! |wherefore| hast thou forgotten me?
|wherefore| should I gloomily walk, through the oppression of an enemy?"
10 <Like[b] a shattering in my bones> have mine adversaries reproached me,
through their saying unto me, all the day, "Where is thy God?"
11 *Why shouldst thou despair, O my soul, and why groan upon me?*
Wait thou for God, for |yet| shall I thank him,—
as the great salvation[c] of my person, and my God.

[Nm.]

PSALM 43.

[Nm.]

1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against a nation without kindness,
<from a man of deceit and perversity> wilt thou deliver me!
2 For ||thou|| art my protecting God—[d] |wherefore| hast thou rejected me?
|wherefore| should I gloomily wander,[e] through the oppression of an enemy?
3 Send forth thy light and faithfulness—let ||them|| lead me,
let them bring me into thy holy mountain,[f] and unto thy habitations!
4 So would I enter in unto the altar of God—unto the God who gladdened my youth,[g]
so will I thank thee with a lyre, Jehovah[h] my God!
5 *Why shouldst thou despair, O my soul, and why groan upon me?*
Wait thou for God, for |yet| shall I thank him,—
as the great salvation[i] of my person, and my God.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah = "the patriarchs of song." Cp. Intro., Chap. II., 3.

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[a] Specially fitting, if the writer was thinking of an occasion when God saved his life. Some cod. however read: "to a living God"—Gn.
[b] So some cod. M.T.: *beth*, "With the effect of"; or "At the cost of"—O.G. 90a, "8."
[c] Cp. ver 5.
[d] Ml.: "My God of stronghold."
[e] Or: "march to and fro." "Go mourning"—Del. "Why go I about in dark attire"—Dr.
[f] Cp. 2 Ch. 3[1], 33[15], Isa. 30[29], Jer. 26[18], Mi. 3[12].
[g] So the Sep.—a beautiful and suggestive reading.
[h] So Sep., preferred by Kp. and others.
[i] Cp. 42[5].

EXPOSITION.

The crowning feature of this (double) psalm is its lofty and intense spirituality: A soul athirst for God; moved by strong desire for fellowship with God—to be conscious of his nearness, to be face to face with him; assured that such a realisation will be as satisfying as for a thirsty animal to drink of the cooling stream.

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The next thing noticeable in this (double) psalm, is the beauty of its form—in three strophes, each with a refrain repeated in identical words; and easily detected when this structure is observed, a gradual advance from sheer sorrow, to circumspect petition, and then to bold entreaty.

Perhaps the third thing to arrest our attention is, the psychological wonder of a Sufferer striving to master his sorrow and to rise above it.

Probably the surest way to observe these three leading features with interest and profit is to institute an investigation into the probable authorship of the psalm.

David has been thought of: though we are no longer under any obligation to presuppose that he wrote it, inasmuch as this psalm is really an "orphan" psalm, since undoubtedly "the sons of korah" were singers, or a class of singers, and not authors. Nevertheless, it is an interesting fact, that David has been regarded as the probable writer of this pathetic composition; several circumstances combining to give this hypothesis an air of probability—chiefly his intense love for the worship of Jehovah's house in Jerusalem, and his flight from the holy city on occasion of Absalom's rebellion. That David crossed over the Jordan, and then turned north, ascending the high lands of Gilead as far as Mahanaim, and so came into full view of Mount Hermon on the north is another circumstance rather favourable to this conclusion. The objections to this view are: *first*, That, even so, David did not go far enough north to get among the "waterfalls" of the Upper Jordan; and, *second*, That he was surrounded by faithful friends, all the time, and not by enemies who would keep mocking him with the taunt, "Where is thy God?"—to which we may add, *third*, That, formidable as was Absalom's rebellion, David would scarcely refer to it as "the oppression of an enemy." These considerations preclude our deciding for David. Some would add, that the very absence of David's name from the head of the psalm should, among other reasons, count for something, why David could not have penned this psalm,—seeing the many evidences of care to place his name wherever it had any right to stand.

Under these circumstances, some have thought of an unknown Levite as author, on account of the memory, so vividly preserved by the writer, of having headed processions to the Temple in happier days. This conjecture has little else to support it; and, in short, it can scarcely be said that any Levite occupied so important and central a position as this psalm requires. The desperate suggestion that this psalm may have been written by King Jehoiachin on his way to Babylon, may safely be dismissed; since the writer, at any rate, hoped soon to return

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to the holy city; and we must not go out of our way to court failure for the hope of the psalm.

It is time to say: That for no man, as author of this psalm, can such numerous and strong reasons be advanced as for King Hezekiah, notwithstanding one or two apparent reasons to the contrary. Let us look at the reasons for and against.

In favour of this conclusion the following weighty reasons may be alleged:—First, the writer appears to be suffering from two chief causes: one personal to himself, and one of a more public character. He is apparently suffering from some personal disease, which amounts to a disfigurement of his **face** or disablement of his **person**. Hence the force of his description of God as **the health of his countenance**; or **the salvation of his person**, or **the triumph of his presence**. And then there is an **enemy**, under whose oppression he has to groan, whose taunts he has to bear. Now the significant thing is: That in Hezekiah both these causes of suffering met: He was struck for death with leprosy, and the Assyrian army was at the gate of Jerusalem:—the Assyrian, a mighty and oppressive nation indeed—well answering to the description, "A nation without kindness," whose foul-mouthed representative the villain Rabshakeh was, who mercilessly hurled his taunts against Hezekiah, and deceitfully perverted facts to degrade Hezekiah in the eyes of his own people. To these leading reasons in favour of the authorship of Hezekiah, there are several others to be added: Such as his "tears"—mentioned here, and mentioned in the history; his "lyre"—of which also we read both here and in the history; his enthusiastic participation in the worship of the Temple, in reference to which it may safely be said that the very word in the 4th verse (of Psalm 42) "passed over" or "crossed over" is exquisitely adapted to describe the king's procession from the Royal Palace to the Temple, since there was a splendid viaduct connecting the two. It is extremely unlikely that such a combination of reasons for any other author can be found.

The one objection that may be urged can easily be obviated. The writer, it may be said, was not merely a "debarred" worshipper but a *banished* worshipper; since he prays to be led back into the holy mountain, proving that he was away from Jerusalem. Standing alone, that objection might have been plausible, though not conclusive; seeing that the language is perfectly consistent with mere enforced banishment from Mount Moriah—"the mountain of the house" (Cp. 2 Ch. 3^{1}, 35^{15}, Isa. 2^{3}, 30^{29}, Jer. 26^{18}, Mi. 3^{12}), and we know that Hezekiah regarded it as an *ascent* to visit Jehovah's temple (Isa. 38^{22}). From that holy place, while his plague was upon him, he was debarred.

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Perhaps a still stronger objection to the claims of Hezekiah to be regarded as the author of this psalm, will be framed upon the assumption that the writer was far away from Jerusalem when he penned it—that, in fact, he was still among the **waterfalls** of the upper Jordan. But this assumption is quite to mistake that allusion—quite to lose grip of the fact that that allusion was a memory; a memory not recalled while he was in the north, but a memory of a thrilling experience which befell him when he was in the north. To be sure of this, we have only to adhere to an accurate rendering of 42^6: "**Over myself**—over my own deplorable bodily condition, **my soul keeps despairing**—keeps falling into fits of despondency: **therefore**—because of this, that I may repress altogether this tendency to hopelessness, **I will remember**—I will recall an incident which befell me when I was a young man visiting the Upper Jordan: **I will remember thee**—in thy 'marvellous kindness' which was then 'made wonderful to me' by rescuing me from drowning in the rapids of the Upper Jordan. A storm came on; the waters, rolling down the mountain sides, caused a 'spate'; the **waterfalls** were roused to activity; the lakes into which their waters descended answered to each other, **deep calling unto deep.** I was in personal peril, **all thy breakers and thy billows passed over me**—all seemed lost, when I found myself landed on a **cliff**; the flood that engulfed me, saved me, it carried me to a safe spot—my feet were on a rock: the waters abated, and I was saved! Yea, **O my Cliff**, O thou **God of my life, the gladdener of my youthful days**,—thus **will I remember thee**, and fortify myself against these fits of despondency." The beauty of the poet's picturesque reference can with difficulty be suppressed, however slovenly the translator's rendering, however dull the expositor's imagination. Nevertheless, it may perhaps be remarked, without presumption, that, for lack of a correct historical point of observation, the psalmist's graphic allusion has been deplorably enfeebled. The words have been inexactly rendered; the incident has been represented as part fact and part figure, to the enfeebling of both, instead of being first taken as a connected whole in its literal completeness, and then employed as a whole in its metaphorical application to the sufferer's now present bodily condition—as by no means excluding hope; the preposition *mem*, "from," has been assumed to bind the writer *to be at the Jordan when* he remembers, instead of leaving him free afterwards to *recall the incidents from the Jordan*: and thus, in fine, one of the most beautiful things in the Psalms has dwindled into very small dimensions indeed, and become unavailable for any practical purpose. Whereas, on the other hand, the treating of the whole thing as a memory, throws into delightful vividness both the singular desig-

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nation of Jehovah as the writer's **Cliff**, and the peculiarly touching allusion to Jehovah as the **gladdener of his youth.** And thus, in fact, we are getting back not only Hezekiah's name into the authorship of the Psalms ; but, as a consequence, we are recovering precious snatches of his autobiography.

Thus refreshed by our study, let us turn back again and make the first thing noticed, also the last thing to abide in our hearts. This we may do by the trite observation that we do not **thirst** for things of which we have no knowledge. To thirst for God as a living God, we must first know him to be such; and know the incomparable satisfaction to be thence derived. Hezekiah knew the living God of Israel: he had seen his face—only figuratively, representatively, adumbratively, it may be. But there was divine reality in it. The cloud of glory was there—behind the veil: the fire consumed the sacrifices: the Urim and Thummim gave responses: the prophets brought messages. The character of God gave the soul perfect satisfaction—his might gave protection—his promises imparted hope—his pardon inspired love. These things, Hezekiah had known and enjoyed; and, though for the present there was a hiding of Jehovah's face, the memory of the brightness and blessedness of its revelation was not lost. What he had once enjoyed he desired to enjoy again—desired with an intensity of desire and keen sense of need which only the figure of **thirst** could represent. We, too, must know God in order to thirst for him. May the blessed sense of nearness to him abide with us in all the freshness and force of the fuller revelation of himself which he has made in Christ Jesus our Lord!

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PSALM 44.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Israel Suffers for God.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—8, The Psalmist, Encouraging himself by Jehovah's Past Favour in Giving Israel their Land, Emboldens himself to Expect Further Victories. Strophe II., vers. 9—16, Sudden Reverses Confound Israel, and cause the Psalmist to feel the Deepest Shame. Strophe III., vers. 17—22, Expostulation based on Israel's Fidelity. Strophe IV., vers. 23, 24, and V., vers., 25, 26, Impassioned and Plaintive Appeals for Divine Interposition.—Psalm probably written by David on a defeat of Israel by Edom (inferred from a comparison of 2 Sam. 8^{13} with 1 K. 11^{15}, and the inscription to Ps. 60), and Adapted to a Later Occasion by Hezekiah.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm.

1 O God! <with our own ears> have we heard—
  ||our fathers|| have told us,
  the work thou didst work in their days—
  the days of aforetime:
2 ||Thou thyself|| <with thine own hand> didst dispossess ||nations||
  and plant |them|,
  didst afflict peoples—
  and spread |them| out.
3 For <not by their own sword> possessed they the land,
  nor did ||their own arm|| win victory for them;
  But thine own right hand, and thine own arm,
  and the light of thy face, in that thou didst take pleasure in them.

4 ||Thou thyself|| art my king, my God,
  the commander[a] of the victories[b] of Jacob.
5 <By thee> <at our adversaries> will we thrust,
  <in thy name> will we tread them under, that rise up against us.
6 For <not in mine own bow> will I trust,
  nor can ||mine own sword|| give me victory.
7 For thou hast saved us from our adversaries,
  and <them who hate us> hast thou put to shame.
8 <In God> have we boasted all the day,
  and <unto thy name> <unto the ages> will we give thanks. ☞

9 But nay! thou hast rejected and confounded us,
  and art not going forth with our hosts;
10 Thou turnest us back from the adversary,
  and ||they who hate us|| have plundered at will:
11 Thou dost give us up like sheep to be devoured,
  and <amongst the nations> hast thou scattered us:

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[a] So Sep., Syr., Br. and others. | [b] Or: "great salvation" (pl. intensive).

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12 Thou dost sell thy people for no-value,
and hast not made increase by their price:
13 Thou dost make us a reproach unto our neighbours,
a mockery and derision to them who are round about us:
14 Thou dost make us a by-word among the nations,
a shaking of the head among the peoples.
15 <All the day> is mine ignomy before me,
and ||the shame of my face|| hath covered me:
16 At the voice of him who reproacheth and revileth,
At the face of the foe and avenger.[a]

17 ||All this|| hath come upon us, yet had we not forgotten thee,
neither had we dealt falsely with thy covenant:
18 Our heart |had not turned away backward|,
neither had our steps |declined| from thy path:—
19 That thou shouldst have crushed us down in the place of jackals,
and covered us over with deep darkness.
20 <If we had forgotten the name of our God,
and had spread forth our palms to the GOD of a foreigner>
21 Would not ||God|| have searched into this,
since ||he|| knoweth the secrets of the heart?
22 Surely <for thy sake> have we been slain all the day,
we have been accounted as sheep for slaughter.

23 Oh arouse thyself!—|wherefore| shouldst thou sleep, Sovereign Lord?[b]
oh awake! do not reject altogether.
24 |Wherefore| <thy face> shouldst thou hide?
shouldst forget our humiliation and our oppression?
25 For our soul |hath sunk down to the dust|,
our body[c] |hath cleaved to the earth|.
26 Oh arise, as succour for us,
and ransom us, for thy kindness' sake.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For lilies = Passover. For the sons of korah = "patriarchs of song." Cp. Intro., Chap. II., 3.

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[a] Cp. 8[3].
[b] Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns): "Jehovah"—Gn.
[c] Ml.: "belly." Heb. *beṭan*. Cp. 31[9].

EXPOSITION.

It is quite possible that, in the course of adaptation and transmission, this valuable psalm has suffered some disturbances of its outward form as regards both metre and strophe. It is doubtful, however, whether successful attempts can now be made to restore the original symmetry which may well have existed. For example, it is not unlikely that the psalm was a trimeter throughout, including the opening lines, which now appear as pentameters. But it would not only take a bold hand to reduce the lines to a severer metre, but that bold hand might strike off accretions which are equally authentic with the original verse, as may

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appear when once the principle of joint-authorship is admitted. If Hezekiah's harp could adapt itself to those grand pentameters which open the psalm as we now have it—and, we may add, which appear to have offered themselves to the ancient Greek translators—who are we, and what know we of any rigidity in harping exigencies, that we should deliberately lop off syllables which, at all events, are very ancient. Similar caution must stay our hand from undue meddling with the strophes. They are slightly irregular, as it is, undoubtedly; but we may justly refuse to mutilate the psalm, especially when the very lines we should sacrifice might prove of the highest value in bringing the historical occasion of its production into clear perspective.

That this psalm was written by David, notwithstanding the absence of his name from the inscription, at once becomes in the highest degree probable by merely comparing it with Ps. 60, which bears witness to the occasion which gave it birth. Then, when we ponder the weighty fact that, when this psalm was written, Israel was *free from the taint of idolatry;* and come to realise, for *that* reason, our choice lies between a very early and a very late date—the time of David, on the one hand, and the time of the Maccabees, on the other; we shall perhaps find, at every step, how reasons multiply for preferring the early date. The very changes which literary criticism plausibly suggests, and the adaptations to after occasions which historical criticism more strongly claims, all required time before they originally appeared. Public texts are not modified in a day: especially where copies are few, and for the most part are jealously preserved in royal libraries. So that, if we assume that changes had already been made in the days when the Septuagint was executed, it is but reasonable to allow those changes ample time in which to appear—which requires us rather to push back authorship than to draw it forward. Besides all which the more the Davidic authorship of this psalm is candidly examined, the more does it commend itself.

Let us now recall the undoubted fact, that the work of Joshua was left for David to complete. What more natural, then, than that David should strengthen himself in God for the arduous work that remained, by steeping his spirit in remembrances of the work Divinely done now so long ago? Those brave ancestors drew the sword, indeed; but it was their God who gave them the victory: **Not by their own sword possessed they the land; but thine own right hand—thine own arm—the light of thy face**—these were the sources of strength by which Joshua and his men had gone on from victory to victory. And David realises that it still is so:

> **‖Thou thyself‖ art my King, my God,**
> **The commander of the victories of Jacob.**

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It is David all over:—the intense personal faith—the fellowship with his brethren: in swift alternation, first the man, then his people, then himself again: **our adversaries, our assailants; mine own bow, mine own sword.** The stripling who before Goliath strengthened himself in his God, and boasted of him, does so still.

> **In God have we boasted all the day,**
> **And unto thy name, unto the ages, will we give thanks.**

Then comes the sudden reverse, the astounding fact of disaster: in the portrayal of which some otherwise excellent critics have failed to see David. In particular, they think that the language of the second strophe indicates something more than temporary defeat. Thus Perowne says: "The language of the psalm is altogether too large to be applied to a sudden attack. It describes a more serious and lasting calamity." But it is respectfully submitted that this estimate of the poet's language results from some failure to apprehend the psychological elements in the situation. David was nothing if not intense. He believed his mission to be Divine. If *his God* failed him, no general could save him. If Jehovah failed him *once*, he might fail him *again:* if he continued to fail him, all would be lost. The present reverse was evidently most serious: David's men had been slain and captured and sold as slaves. The small surrounding nations were on the watch, ready to join in the fray as soon as they deemed it safe. The larger nations at a distance were being kept well-informed and ready to point the finger of contempt at valiant little Israel. Then see how the profoundly moved monarch took it all home to himself:

> **All the day is mine ignominy before me,**
> **The shame of my face hath covered me;**
> **At the voice of him who reproacheth and revileth,**
> **At the face of the foe and avenger:**

using the very language of the 8th psalm. Moreover, the 19th verse, graphic as it is, describes rather one terrible defeat than a long series of reverses. One can see the individual battle-field, whereupon the defeat happened: the carcasses of David's men consumed by **jackals:** calamitous enough to David—who was only used to victory, and only expectant of it—to make him feel how **deep** was the **darkness** which for the moment **covered** Israel: "for the moment!" yes, but that moment was equal to days of mortal agony. Intensifying the agony and turning it into temporary despair, was the mystery of it: there had been no unfaithfulness to the national **covenant**—no drawing back to idolatry.

And so was learned the lesson, to be learned again and again through the ages, that Israel may be called upon to suffer even where Israel has not sinned. It is comparatively a new lesson, leading up to

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a higher level than that hitherto frequented by mortal feet; but it is a lesson which God's saints are to be privileged to learn; and, therefore, so beloved a man as David must have his share. By-and-by, one of his descendants will be called upon to drink more deeply of the cup of undeserved—and therefore Divine—suffering; and, finding this psalm in the royal library, will be able to appreciate its teaching, and will be moved to add to it a few words growing out of an experience of which David has had little or no share: words pointing to the peculiar combination of sorrows due to the fact that when **the soul hath sunk down to the dust** under the weight of public calamity, **the body also hath cleaved to the earth** under a loathsome though only temporary and comparatively undeserved disease; imparting an additional pathos to the plea that God would arise to **succour** and **ransom** by a new display of his well-known **kindness**. On the whole, we may deem this to have formed a grand passover psalm, in the musical execution of which **the patriarchs of song** could most appropriately take a conspicuous share.

PSALM 45.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Royal Marriage.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, The Psalmist bespeaks Attention to his Poem. Strophe II., ver. 2, The King's Surpassing Beauty and Gracious Discourse bring down upon him an Abiding Divine Blessing. Strophe III., vers. 3—7, The King is Suddenly Summoned to War: his Throne, Sceptre, Character and Anointing. Strophe IV., vers. 8, 9, Ready for the Marriage Ceremony. Strophe V., vers. 10—12, Address to the Bride. Strophe VI., vers. 13—15, The Queen and her Attendants brought into the King's Palace. Strophe VII., vers. 16, 17, Final Words to the Queen and to the King.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—a Song of Love.

1 <Astir> is my heart with a theme that is good,
Recite I my poem concerning a king:
||My tongue|| [be] the pen of a scribe that is skilled!

2 Beautiful, beautiful![a] thou art, beyond the sons of men!
a gracious charm |hath been set| on thy lips;[b]
||*Therefore*|| *hath God* |*blessed thee*| *to the ages.*

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[a] The same word as that used of the Queen in ver. 11, but here reduplicated.

[b] "Graciousness is shed over thy lips"—Dr. "Over his lips there is poured, viz., from above, *hên*, charm or graciousness, inasmuch, as even without his having to speak, the very form of his lips and every one of their motions awaken love and trust; but it is self-evident that from such lips, full of *charis* ['grace'], there must also proceed *logoi tees charitos* ['words of grace'], Lk. 4^{22}, Ec. 10^{12}"—Del.

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3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O hero!
in thy majesty and thy state:
4 Tread the bow,[a] succeed, ride on!
for the sake of truth and the humiliation of righteousness,[b]
And thy right hand |will teach thee fearful things|.
5 ||Thine arrows|| are sharp—||peoples|| <under thee> fall:—[c]
in the heart of the foes of the king.
6 ||Thy throne, O God|| is to the ages and beyond,
<A sceptre of equity> is the sceptre of thy kingdom;
7 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness:
||*Therefore*|| *hath God, thy God,*[d] *anointed thee*
with the oil of gladness above thy partners.

8 <Myrrh and aloes—cassias—> are all thy garments,
<out of the palaces of ivory> |tones of strings| have delighted thee.
9 ||Kings' daughters|| are among thy female servants,[e]
<stationed>[f] is the queen, at thy right hand, in gold of Ophir.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and see, and bow down thine ear,—
and forget thine own people, and the house of thy father;
11 And the king |will long| for thy beauty,
for ||he|| is thy lord![g]
12 <Homage to him> will the daughters of Tyre with gifts |render|,
<thine own face> will the rich men of the people |appease|.

13 All glorious! daughter of a king![h]
<pearls[i] in chequer work of gold> her clothing!
14 <On tapestry of divers colours> is she conducted to the king:[j]
||virgins, in her train, her companions|| are brought to her,
15 <with gladness and exulting> are they conducted to her,
brought into the king's palace to her.[k]

[To the Bride.]

16 <Instead of thy[l] fathers> be thy[l] sons!
thou wilt make them rulers in all the earth.

[To the Bridegroom.]

17 I will memorialise thy name through all succeeding generations,
|*Therefore*| ||*peoples*|| *will thank thee to the ages and beyond.*

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah along with maidens.[m]

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[a] So, following the Sep.
[b] Or: "righteousness with humility"—nearly with Del. Or: "the afflicting of righteousness"—Br.
[c] "The poet has the field of battle present to him as if he were an eye-witness"—Del.
[d] Doubtless for an original "Jehovah, thy God"—So Del.
[e] So the majority of MSS. which Ginsburg had consulted—G. Intro. 268.
[f] In Sep. *parastao*, as in Eph. 5[27]. See Exposition.
[g] Thus the Sep. See Exposition.
[h] In this exclamatory form, this clause may be a father's fond note of comparison; as if= "any king's daughter."
[i] *Penimah*, "pearls," by some critics preferred to *penimah*, "within," which just here seems premature and disturbing.
[j] Perowne has offered strong reasons for this rendering.
[k] The foregoing three lines have been conformed to Dr. Briggs' "restored" Heb. text. The assonance of their endings has a pleasing effect.
[l] These pronouns (which are pointed as masculine in M.T.) shd. be feminine (w. Syr.) —Gn.
[m] Cp. Intro., Chap. II., 3.

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EXPOSITION.

Two things at the outset may be taken for granted: first, that the ultimate Hero of this psalm is the Messiah; and, second, that if we can find a Type of the Messiah in fair measure answering to the terms of the psalm, it will be a gain to allow that type to speak to us of the Antitype—as far as it may: this limitation being intended to remind us of the caution thrown out in dealing with Ps. 2, to the effect that we must not assume that the Spirit of Prophecy may not leave the type behind, and reach forth to greater things than any shadow can express. Adequately to fill up the terms of the psalm must be our governing aim: using the type as a help, and not becoming enslaved to it.

In the present instance the *type* and the *writer* are associated in a remarkable way. Dr. Thirtle has suggested (O.T.P., 49f, 318) that Hezekiah is the type; and instantly our deepest interest is excited. By all means Hezekiah, provided that the requirements of the psalm are thereby fairly met: much rather Hezekiah than Solomon, Joram, Jehu, or any of the rest whose names have been mentioned as probable; for, of these, we either know too little to feel drawn to them, or else what we do know renders them decidedly unacceptable for the honour of adumbrating the Messiah in a psalm of such pure and lofty idealism as this. Hezekiah, by all means: subject to necessary conditions. The one objection to his name, probably will turn out to be a commendation. We know that Hezekiah married a wife named Hephzibah, and Jewish tradition has it, that she was daughter to Isaiah the prophet, Hezekiah's trusty friend. Delightful, indeed, to think of the good King Hezekiah as marrying Isaiah's daughter. But then the psalm, it is thought, indicates that the Bride, in this marriage, is of Gentile descent. Nor can it be denied that to such a bride the advice would be peculiarly appropriate. **Forget thine own people, and the house of thy father.** Still, this indication alone can scarcely be said to be decisive; since "people" may mean, less widely, tribe, clan, or general circle of relatives; as to which it may be said that, not being of the royal family, the spirit of the advice would still be appropriate. Moreover, this measure of inferiority in the type may be regarded as sufficient to hint at a larger measure of inferiority in the Antitype: the non-royal element in the ancestry of Hezekiah's bride being regarded as enough to suggest the non-Israelitish strain in the Bride of the Messiah. Leaving these suggestions for the consideration of the thoughtful, it may be frankly admitted that the name of Hezekiah has an undeniable fascination—if for this reason only: The Jewish tradition that the Hephzibah who became Hezekiah's wife was Isaiah's daughter, naturally raises the question whether Isaiah himself was not the author of this psalm.

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Who so likely as he, to have been delighted with the restored monarch's "beauty"? Who so likely, to have admitted by implication, that the Queen's beauty was less striking than the King's? Who so likely and so fitting to have addressed the Bride in the *fatherly* terms with which the writer of the psalm is credited: **Hearken, O daughter?** And, finally, if some commentators have concluded that Isaiah wrote the psalms immediately succeeding this, why may he not have written this also, when for this task he presumably had such a mighty impulse and such supreme qualifications? Isaiah's genius as a poet was transcendent; but is not this magnificent epithalamium worthy of it? And, to go for a moment deeper than to poetic genius, from whose pen could so appropriately have come the surprising words of the psalm, **Thy throne, O God,** as from his who declared that the Messiah's name should be called *El gibbôr*—"God hero"? (Isa. 9^6, 10^{21}).

It is easy to admit that Hezekiah does not completely fill up the terms of the psalm: *who, as type, does?* But this at least may be maintained: That, on the whole, Hezekiah goes further than Solomon, and much further than Jehoram, Jehu, or any of the rest, to fill the outline required. Suffice it, that there is nothing incongruous in the type, as such, so long as we think of the good king, Hezekiah.

That every possible type comes short of fully answering to the large terms of the psalm,—that, no matter who may be fixed on as probable, it must finally be allowed that he falls behind the description in almost every particular,—THIS is the contention herewith most earnestly made, and for the consistent maintenance of which the preliminary caution was submitted, against being bound down by types when interpreting the prophetic word. Allowance must ever be made for the possible bearing away of the prophet under the mighty afflatus of the Divine Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. In interpreting the Holy Scriptures, we have to reckon, not only upon their sight of things present, but also upon their foresight (Gal. 3^8) of things to come; and, therefore, if we are to expound them congenially, we must be prepared to see with their eyes. If it be said, that if God is at all to speak to man, then we must presuppose his condescension to the employment of human speech, with its limitations,—it may be said in reply: Granted; and yet the impress of a new genius and a new spirit on the old forms may at any time appear; and though types may be accepted as a species of Divine-human alphabet, to which we must needs submit our minds, and which we have no right to suppose that the Spirit of Prophecy will discard or wholly transcend, yet may we venture to challenge any man's claim to confine *to a single type* the reachings forth of that Spirit towards the Antitype. For anything we know to the contrary, there may yet lie in the future an

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August Union in consummation of the tenderness and purity of Divine Love, which it might tax all the purest Royal Marriages in Israel only faintly to foreshadow. Still, we are glad of the types: without them we could not hope to spell out the revealed mind of God. In the present instance, for the forthshadowing of royal magnificence, we might prefer Solomon; for proved skill as an archer, we might prefer Jehu; for the yet higher qualities of faith and suffering nobleness—yea and possibly of deferred marital blessedness—we might greatly prefer Hezekiah: all we protest against is a crude and over-stringent typology. Let our Divine Father speak to us as he pleases.

But what, precisely, have we here, in the psalm now before us? Let us make sure of our facts, as far as we can.

First and foremost (Strophe I.) we have a poet deeply moved by his theme; and if he knows that his mind has ever travailed in birth with grand and godly conceptions almost too big for utterance, he is conscious that it is so now.

Next (Strophe II.) we have an observable inversion of the usual delicacy of male preference for female beauty: here it is the King's surpassing beauty which throws its radiance over all the canvas; the Queen's beauty being only incidentally alluded to later on. Either the poet is a sycophant; or he has before him a King most wonderful. Nor is it beauty of form and feature alone which attracts his admiration. To beauty of appearance is added the worthy concomitant consisting in graciousness of discourse: charming the ear and delighting the mind at the same time that the eye rests upon the pleasing vision of his person. That is all: no more is said for the present. These two things, the poet feels, must please God as well as man. **Therefore hath God blessed thee to the ages.** The first and most natural sense of the word **therefore** is, that these qualities satisfy God and evoke his abiding benediction. Such a king he will delight to bless for so long a time that the poet cannot see beyond it. Short is this strophe, but it is complete; and the refrain marks that it is so.

A surprise now awaits us (Strophe III.) in the sudden summons of the beautiful and eloquent king to make ready for war. Had the poet merely clad his hero with armour, and bade him ride in his chariot for display and for impressive suggestion of what on occasion he might be trusted to achieve,—we could have admired the poet's art, and been ready to pass on to the next scene. But it is far otherwise. An occasion for war has arisen. The king has to vindicate his **faithfulness** to the implied obligations of his kingship. **Righteousness** has been **humiliated** within his domain, and **for this cause** he is summoned to interpose. An enemy has arisen on whom avengement must be inflicted,

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involving **fearful** punishment. No plan of campaign can be assigned the avenging monarch: his own skilled **right hand** will teach him what to do, first and last. No companion warriors are named, yet the king's arrows are sharp and their execution is so widespread that **peoples** fall under them; and the overthrow of the king's foes is so sudden that the description is broken, that the reader may behold it. As intimated, not only is the issue of the battle seemingly immediate; but the summons to wage this war is inferentially unexpected. So, at least, the poet's art suggests; since, to permit of this royal campaign, the royal marriage is postponed. This may, in exegesis, mean little; but it may mean much, and the poet's skill will be best vindicated should it appear to have been carefully designed. The foreseen issue of this war furnishes the poet with an occasion to speak the praises of the Warrior's **throne, sceptre,** and **character**; and then to crown this view of the King with another logical refrain, longer and larger than the first. His **throne** is an abiding throne, says the poet; and he takes pains to negative the thought of its overthrow or removal or disuse, by adding a word to his time reference: **to the ages and beyond** shall that throne stand! It may be naturally inferred, that it is the King's promptitude and prowess in making the war for the vindication of down-trodden righteousness, already noticed, which occasion the poet's reflection on the stability of his throne. And the same may be said of the notice of his sceptre. But this is now distinctly traced to the King's character: **He loveth righteousness and hateth lawlessness**—the which, indeed, is thrown into the form of direct address, and stated in the complete tense which is fitted to comprehend an abiding quality with its recent manifestation. **Therefore**—because of this, the triumphant hero is **anointed with the oil of gladness above his partners.** It is a Divine anointing: Jehovah his God has bestowed it. It is a festive gift: causing joy to its recipient. This joy is superlative in degree: **above thy partners**—whoever these may be, which is not yet declared. Placed where this anointing is: after the war—before the marriage: it looks in both directions. The Hero is made supremely glad, inasmuch as he has been able to deal so decisive a blow to lawlessness: being so made glad, he is ready for his Bride.

The marriage approaches (Strophe IV.). Again the King most wonderful comes into view, not now clad in armour, but with flowing robes redolent of sweetest spices, as though woven of nothing else. In the near distance music is heard: reminding him of the happy occasion, in response to which his heart leaps for joy. **King's daughters** are proud to serve as menials in his household. And now **the Queen**, his Bride, is **stationed at his right hand**, place of highest honour; clad in gold-

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decked raiment. The poet recites these facts in language addressed to the King: **thy garments—delighted thee—thy servants—thy right hand.** This prepares us for a marked change of address, which is thereby rendered impressive.

For hearken! the venerable poet (Strophe v.), who may be regarded as at once giving away the Bride and solemnising the nuptials, presumes to *address* the Queen. His address is familiar, for he calls the Bride **daughter**; but his words are few, and much to the point—if the Lady whom he accosts has either been brought from a foreign land or promoted from a lowly station: one caution, one inference, one sanction. One caution: let the Bride be supremely devoted to her husband, comparatively **forgetting** all else. One inference: **thus will the king long for thy beauty.** One sanction: **he is thy lord**—he owns thee, thou art his, he will be within his rights. No more. That short line from the Septuagint is splendidly eloquent in its stern reticence. Nothing can be added without spoiling it. How the harpist would deal with so short a line, is a minor question: we recall several such short lines, left short for emphasis ($1^{1, 4}$, $8^{1, 9}$, 150^{6}); or the musician by a simple *repeat* could expand his line into a tetrameter, a measure which is characteristic of this psalm. Let the **bowing down in homage** be reverently (with the Septuagint) handed on for **the daughters of Tyre**, and so help to form a well-balanced line to match the respectful suit for the Queen's favour pressed by the **rich men** of the honoured nation to whom the King is related.

After this address to the Queen, it is at least poetically correct to conceive of all eyes as now (Strophe vi.) directed to *her*, and to have her resplendent appearance made the subject of admiring exclamations. Ere the King finally disappears in his palace, and the Queen is conducted to him, and her companions follow in her train, appropriate good wishes are by the poet addressed to them both (Strophe vii.): first, as Dr. Ginsburg has pointed out, to the Queen; to whom is assigned the privilege, in the event of the fulfilment of the good wishes, of furnishing rulers for **all the land**, or as better suiting the wide outlook of the psalm, **all the earth**, a wish not more notable for its delicacy than for its boldness; and then, finally, the address passes over to the King—good wishes for whom take the form of a positive intention, as the avowed motive on the poet's part. It might have passed as an obvious and natural compliment, to have merely said, that he, the poet, hoped to **memorialise his hero's name to all succeeding generations**; but, when he goes on to foretell that the **thanks** of all coming time will, by virtue of this marriage-song, be tendered to his hero by peoples or nations, then we feel that the poet

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is either guilty of extravagance or is assuming the *rôle* of a prophet. Only by assuming that he is a prophet, and that the Messiah is his ultimate theme, can we acquit him of such suspicion. Shall we lower our estimate of holy men of God, or shall we elevate our conceptions of their message? This question brings us to the crux of the interpretation of this psalm.

The foregoing survey of the actual contents of the psalm will have served its purpose, if it should now be deemed needless to urge with any prolonged tenacity any question concerning the Types: it is time that all our interest should converge on the Antitype. No mere type can stay the psalm from collapsing on our hands. It is a good start, in quest of the Antitype, to find Jewish expositors frankly admitting that Messiah himself is THE hero of the psalm (the Targum paraphrasing ver. 2 thus: "Thy beauty, O King Messiah, exceeds that of the children of men; a spirit of prophecy is bestowed on thy lips)"—Kp.; but it is a sorry finish, to find any of them protesting, that no other Messiah than Hezekiah need be looked for by their nation ("Rabbi Hillel" saying, "Israel shall have no more Messiah: for they have had him in the days of Hezekiah"—Talmud, quoted by Thirtle, O.T.P., 277). In truth, the key to the psalm is in the Christian Expositor's hands; and it is merely a question of degree, how far his use of the key can be pronounced satisfactory. All Christians are agreed in finding in Jesus of Nazareth the King most beautiful, most wonderful, of whom this psalm speaks. He is, indeed, most beautiful in their eyes: they admire and love him with a passionate devotion which has led myriads of them to die for his sake. So far the solution is perfect. But Christian Expositors have been driven against two rocks which have well-nigh shattered their exegesis. In the first place, they have wrongfully applied the war-picture, which delays the marriage, to the gracious delivery—by their King's heralds to the nations of the wooing message of his love, which they rightly call their "gospel." Had they restricted this feature of their exegesis to the apostolic prediction of their Messiah's personal onslaught on "the Lawless One" by direct interposition from heaven (2 Thes. 2), and resolutely thrown forward the alleged fulfilment of that prediction into the future when "that Wicked One" shall incontestably have appeared, this rock would have been avoided, and we should have been spared the humiliation of being chargeable with such a gross misapplication of terms as that which *confounds the Messiah's sudden overthrow of his enemies on a fearfully vast scale, with the gently elective process by which he wins individual friends and disciples from among the nations.* The second rock on which Christian exegesis has been well-nigh wrecked, is the double

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error of failing to regard the Church, considered as Messiah's Bride, in the light of an absolutely spiritual incorporation, to be rendered spotless before being presented beside her Lord; and concomitantly with that, failing to regard "the Marriage of the Lamb" as a future consummation, consisting of the blessed union with its Head, in immortal glory, of the Corporate Body, the completed Ecclesia. This rock also escaped, there is nothing to hinder the triumphant sailing of Christian Interpretation into the harbour of an invincible application of this psalm to its true prospective realisation. Kirkpatrick well says that "such poems as this . . . are ennobled and consecrated by being thus made the vehicle for lofty thoughts and the type of spiritual mysteries (Eph. 5^{23ff})"; but the way in which some expositors excuse themselves just where, as it might be supposed, the type ought to be regarded as profoundly significant, probably proves neither more nor less than the loss of the correct prophetic point of view from which to interpret a psalm like the present. Let all thoughts of the Messiah's Bride, as realisable in the Church, be resolutely held fast to the following most obvious and most necessary restrictions—that by "the Church," in such a connection, we mean the Church *collective*, and therefore no mere individual soul, the Church *final*, and therefore no temporary organization, and consequently the Church *immortal*, freed from all the desires of earth, from whose communion with her Lord is banished every thought of fellowship other than the heavenly and spiritual communion in the high interests of the kingdom of God,—only let these restrictions be observed, and there need be no shrinking from the broad and bold expectation, that the consummating crisis which lies between this Dispensation and the next will be fruitful in blessedness to the nations of the earth, in providing them with "rulers" worthy and capable of sharing with the Messiah the honour and responsibility of reigning over all the earth in righteousness, and ruling it in justice (Isa. 32^{1}). Patience, dear suffering souls. Keep the word intact—and wait!

Nothing now remains but to add: That the provision of an Elect Assembly—consisting chiefly of Gentiles—as the Bride of the Messiah, is indeed a Sacred Secret, unrevealed in the olden prophetic days (Eph. 3^{3-7}, 5^{32}; Col. $1^{26, 27}$); and, therefore, that had it been plainly disclosed in this psalm—the sagacity at least of the Apostle Paul, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of it, would have been shown to be at fault. But such a thought cannot be entertained, inasmuch as a fair treatment of the psalm leaves it absolutely true that it contains nothing beyond *a veiled allusion* of the Queen's gentilic descent, with no reference at all to her corporate character. We thank the authors of

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the Targum for suggesting, on ver. 10, that Messiah's Bride was to be a "congregation," and not an individual. But, as Christians, we cannot but be content to follow the guidance of our beloved Apostle Paul in his identification of the one pure Bride designed for the Messiah (Eph. 5^{25ff})—for whom in an especial sense he gave up his life. And again we have to thank the ancient Greek Translators for providing our Apostle with a word (*parestē*), of which he has not failed to make good use in his triumphant note to the Ephesians (*para-stēsē*) which we have been very dull in not sooner discerning to mean this: "that HE might **present—with himself—all glorious—the ecclesia.**" "**With himself**" (*heautō*); for so, assuredly, should it be rendered, seeing that *there it is*, in the psalm, before our eyes: the King, with the Queen *placed at his right hand.* Dull, indeed, must we have been, if we have not before seen this, and have not found our exact Pauline parallel in Col. 3^4:—

> **As soon as the Christ shall be made manifest—our Life!**
> **Then ye also, together with him, shall be made manifest in glory.**

In view of these fruitful suggestions, we can afford to wait and see how near to mortal view the Queen will be brought, before we permit ourselves to be entangled in any small questions as to how far literal and how far figurative the language may be which describes **the daughters of Tyre as bowing down in homage** to our King, and **the rich men of the people** (of Israel) as seeking a smile on the fair face of his Queen. Enough has already been fulfilled in the King, in pursuance of this magnificent psalm, and enough has been suggested as already in preparation with regard to the Queen, to make us patiently expectant of the solving and harmonising effects of complete accomplishment. To be of any use beforehand, the general drift of prophecy should be plain; but it must be left to fulfilment to solve questions of detail. In deference to the severe "beauty of holiness" demanded in the Messiah's Ecclesia, we may well expect that the first exclamation, on occasion of her unveiling will be—**All glorious!** and that the discovery of the Divine Fatherhood of the Ecclesia will occasion a second acclaim—**Daughter of a King!** After which it will be fitting that the Hallelujahs of heaven should burst upon the World's astonished ear, and that Earth should respond with a loud "AMEN!"

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PSALM 46.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Trust in God, Joyfully Maintained in Face of Peril, Speedily Rewarded.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Trust in God held fast in presence of National Troubles that are likened to the Catastrophes of Nature. Strophe II., vers. 4—7, With His secret Water-supply and her God Himself in her midst, the Besieged City is kept Glad and Safe, and is Speedily Delivered. Strophe III., vers. 8—11, An Invitation to View Jehovah's Doings in Forcibly bringing Wars to an End; and a Divine Warning, bringing Hope to the Nations of the Earth. A *refrain* celebrates Israel's Confidence in her God.

[Lm.] Song.

1 ||God|| <for us> is a refuge and strength,
a help in distresses, most willingly found.[a]
2 |Therefore| will we not fear though the land |should roar|,[b]
and the mountains |stagger| into the midst of the seas:
3 ||Seas||[c] may roar, the waters thereof |foam|,
mountains |may shake| at the swelling of the stream,—
[||*Jehovah of hosts*|| *is with us,*
<a lofty retreat for us> is the God of Jacob.[d]]

4 ||His channels|| make glad the city of God,
the Most High |hath kept sacred|[e] his habitations:
5 ||God|| is in her midst—she shall not stagger,
God |will help her| at the approach of the morning:
6 Nations |have roared|—kingdoms| have staggered|,
he hath uttered his voice—earth |melteth|:—
7 ||*Jehovah of hosts*|| *is with us,*
<a lofty retreat for us> is the God of Jacob.

8 Come view the doings of Jehovah,[f]
who hath set desolations[g] in the earth:
9 Causing wars to cease unto the end of the earth,
<the bow> he breaketh, and cutteth asunder the spear,
<waggons> he burneth with fire,
10 "Desist, and know that ||I|| am God,—
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
11 ||*Jehovah of hosts*|| *is with us,*
<a lofty retreat for us> is the God of Jacob.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah.

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[a] Ml.: "letting himself be found exceedingly."
[b] So Br. M.T. "show change."
[c] Prob. omitted by oversight in M.T. Cp. Br.
[d] The refrain of vers. 7, 11, prob. omitted here by oversight. So Del., Kp., and others. Per. thinks the omission designed.
[e] So it should be (w. Sep. & Vul.)—Gn.
[f] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "God." Cp. 66^5—Gn.
[g] "Wastes," "horrors"—O.G.

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EXPOSITION.

The three psalms now coming before us are nearly connected, and yet differ considerably from each other. Ps. 46 immediately reflects some historical event—possibly the invasion of Judæa in the days of Jehoshaphat as recorded in 2 Ch. 20, but more probably the later invasion by Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah, as narrated in 1 Kings 18, 2 Ch. 32, Isa. 36. Ps. 47, while doubtless suggested by the same event, is an ideal prediction and prophetic celebration of Jehovah's reign over the earth through Israel; and Ps. 48, which again reflects the past deliverance of the Holy City, is probably as much prophetic as it is historical; and strongly presses forward towards the final establishment of Jerusalem as the Metropolis of the World.

The spirit of Ps. 46 is that of stout-hearted trust in God. God is nearer than any enemy, and more powerful to relieve from danger than the enemy is to inflict it. The images employed in the psalm are bold, being formed by depicting such convulsions of nature as are seldom or never witnessed, yet are easily conceived. The terrible **roar** of the **land** in an earthquake, when **the mountains** are seen **staggering into the midst of the sea,** and the resentful sea is witnessed dashing its mighty waves on the **mountains** that overhang the shore: such is the scene which the poet's art presents as a figure of disturbed nations. At first this picture is presented without express application: amid even these convulsions, **God is our refuge and lofty retreat.** In the second strophe the national application is made prominent. They are **nations** that **roar, kingdoms** that **stagger:** still our trust is in the mighty God who governs nature, holding its tremendous forces in check, and who in like manner controls kings and peoples. But before this application is made, a contrast in natural images is introduced, which is the more effective because a literal realisation in the holy city is assumed to be well known to those who sing this anthem of deliverance. The God of the mighty sea is also the God of the springs which supply water to the holy city. These springs have lately been captured by Hezekiah through the formation of channels and enclosing walls which direct all the water to the city itself, while concealing and denying the supply from the enemy. The springs form the city's Divine supply; the wit and wisdom which have utilised them to the utmost and conserved them with so much care, being regarded as God's gifts, it could be well said that **his channels make glad the city;** and not only glad, but patient, bold and even defiant (Isa. 37^{22}) in presence of the besieger. Louder than the roar of nations is the **voice** of God; at the resounding of which **earth melteth** and the courage of her most valiant sons becomes weak as water. The minds

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of the singers of this song are left to supply the rest. Assyria has been overthrown in the land. The scene is one of terrible devastation. We are invited to view it, and to learn its great lesson. Wars will cease when Jehovah inflicts such **wastes** and **horrors** on those who wage them, that they will be compelled to stay the carnage. He will say **Desist** in such manner that they will **know** that He who speaks **is God** and must be obeyed. Then will he be **exalted among the nations**: "scattering those who in war take delight" (Ps. 68[30]) and giving the nation rest and peace.

PSALM 47.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Israel Invites the Nations to Rejoice in the Universal Kingship of Her God.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, The Invitation Itself, announcing the Central Fact of Jehovah's World-wide Sovereignty. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Israel Claims her God-given Supremacy over the Nations. Strophe III. and IV., vers. 5, 6; and 7, 8, God's Ascension to his Holy Throne calls for Thoughtful Praise, with Instrumental Accompaniment. Strophe V., ver. 9, Gentile Nobles Gather Themselves Together, with the Hebrew Nation, in Acknowledgment of the Ownership and Enthronement of Abraham's God.

[Lm.] Psalm.

1 All ye peoples! clap the hand,
shout to God with the voice of jubilation;[a]
2 For ‖Jehovah, Most High, fear-inspiring‖
is a great king over all the earth.

3 He subdueth peoples under us,
and races of men under our feet:
4 He chooseth, for us, our inheritance,
the pride of Jacob whom[b] he loved. ~~Selah~~

5 God |hath ascended| with a sacred shout,
Jehovah, with the sound of a horn.
6 Make melody unto God, make melody,
make melody to our king, make melody.

7 For God is |king of all the earth|,
make melody with contemplation:
8 God |hath become king|[c] over the nations,
‖God‖ hath taken his seat[c] on his holy throne.

---

[a] Or: "of a ringing cry."
[b] Or: "which."
[c] "The verbs express not merely a fact but an act. God was King, but He has given fresh proof of it. He has caused Himself to be acknowledged King, and taken His seat upon His throne to judge and rule (103[19]). Cp. Rev. 11[15]" —Kp. Similarly—Dr.

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9 ||The nobles of the peoples|| have gathered themselves together
[with] the people of the God of Abraham;
For <to God> belong the shields of the earth:
<very high> hath he ascended.[a]

[Lm. To the Chief Musician—accidentally omitted.]
[CMm.] For the sons of korah.

[a] *Niphal*, conjugation of *'alah*—the verb used in *kal* in ver. 5, the relation with which should be shown. Cp. for same form of verb 97[9]: also, for force of cong. *niphal*, Num. 9[17, 21, 22], and in particular Eze. 9[3].

EXPOSITION.

The scope of this psalm is our surest guide in the settlement of questions which mere verbal criticism cannot set at rest. Ought we to render, in the second strophe,—"He subdued," "He subdueth," or "He will subdue"; "He chose," "He chooseth," or "He will choose"? The mere circumstance that the tenses here used are imperfects, with an incipient, initialling, or repeating force, will not determine this point—strange as this may seem to those who are accustomed only to Western grammars. In such cases, the known facts, or the main scope, are our best guides. Now it cannot be overlooked that this psalm is first and last an invitation to the nations of the earth to rejoice in the newly assumed Divine Sovereignty over the whole earth. This at once strongly impresses on the psalm a future reference: not only a *then* future but a *still* future reference. For if it is difficult to see how the overthrow of the Assyrians under Sennacherib could form the basis of an invitation to all nations to come and acknowledge themselves under Jehovah and at the same time under the feet of Israel; still more difficult must it be to discover such a ground of joyful submission, in the action of Israel when in the time of the Maccabees she took up arms against foreign nations. Briggs sees and frankly admits this difficulty; and his words are worth quoting. Against the witness of the Heb., Greek, and Latin, in support of the pronouns **under us, under our feet,** and in favour of a conjectural emendation, "under Him," "under His feet," he truly says: "The triumph of the people of Israel . . . . certainly would have been no ground for the rejoicing of foreign nations . . . . which in fact had no realisation until the Maccabean times. Then the victories were so exclusively national and hostile to other nations, that no one would have thought of asking them to share in Israel's triumph." But the remarkable thing is that even this purely conjectural change in the text, leaves the broad outlook of the

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psalm untouched: it still remains an enthusiastic invitation to all nations to acknowledge with gladness the newly assumed, or newly proclaimed, sovereignty of the God of Abraham over all the earth. And though "under Him," "under His feet," may look less repugnant to the nations than the present authentic reading, yet will the broad testimony of the prophets as illustrated by such passages as Isa. 14^2, 60^{12}, Mi. 4^3, remain unsilenced as a standing protest in favour of Hebrew supremacy in the coming kingdom, and against tampering with the witness of this psalm. Such supremacy, we must indeed suppose, will ultimately be so obtained as to make reasonable Israel's invitation to the nations of the earth to clap their hands over the new assumption of world-wide sovereignty by Israel's God. All we have any right to say, in face of the inviolable Scriptures of God, is: That, if Israel has never yet been in circumstances to tender such an invitation with any chance of its being accepted, then, in the providence of Him who is "excellent in counsel and wonderful in working," she will yet have it put in her power to sing this psalm with such sincerity and force of appeal that it shall evoke a willing response from the nations. Under the influence of considerations such as these, we may very well content ourselves to represent Israel as saying with the abiding force of a recurrent truth: **He subdueth—He chooseth.** "I am inclined, therefore," says Perowne, "with Ewald, Hengst., and Bunsen, to take both verbs as *presents* (which the previous context seems to require), either as referring to a recent act of God, or (as Delitzsch) to a continued act—'God is ever choosing Israel's inheritance anew, inasmuch as He shows Himself to be the true and mighty Protector thereof.' The *present* may be used, as in 104^2, where the act of creation is spoken of as present, because its results are present. Comp. Is. 14^1, where Israel's restoration is described as another choosing."

The same breadth of outlook which has assisted us in the interpretation of the second strophe of this psalm, may perhaps throw light on the reference of the third, and help us to just thoughts regarding the **ascension** there spoken of: To what throne hath God ascended? On what occasion—one or many? Instead of urging either of these questions at present, it may be better to confine ourselves to two elementary facts: first, that no argument can be based upon the difference between "gone up" and "come up"—it is *either*, and therefore the neutral word "ascend" is better; second, that a form of the Hebrew word *'âlâh*, "to ascend," is used both in ver. 9 of this psalm and in Ps. 97^9, "Very high hath he ascended above all messengers divine"; which forcibly suggests that the ascension intended is not so much local, as relative to other beings—God's

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manifest placing of inferior rulers beneath himself. This of itself subordinates the mere question of locality to more important considerations. The grand *fact* celebrated is Divine rule manifestly supreme; the *act* particularised is the assumption or proclamation or demonstration of that rule. The event forms an epoch in history. It takes place at a particular time. It can be joyfully celebrated. All nations can be called upon to celebrate it. That is what is done in this psalm. Therefore the psalm is unfulfilled. Fulfilment will settle all questions of detail. Meanwhile, side-lights of probability may fall on the general question of Divine Ascension from other sources. Cp. Exposition on Ps. 2, and see Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom."

There is but one other matter of interpretation here needing attention: The Massoretic text of the second line of ver. 9, says Kirkpatrick, "must be rendered 'To be the people of the God of Abraham' . . . 'Unto the people' is scarcely legitimate . . . The consonants of the word *'am*, 'people,' are identical with those of *'un*, 'with' . . . It is a natural conjecture that we should restore the preposition and render:

The princes of the peoples are gathered together,
Along with the people of the God of Abraham.

The title [God of Abraham] recalls the promises of blessing to the nations through Abraham (Gen. 12^{2f}, etc.) . . . Princes are called [the shields of the earth], as the protectors of their people. Jehovah is their overlord, and they come to acknowledge their dependence. The title *shield* is often applied to God, and sometimes to the kings and princes of Israel (Hos. 4^{18}, Ps. 89^{18})."

PSALM 48.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Jehovah Worthy to be Praised in his Holy City, whose History redounds to the Honour of her Shepherd-King, who will yet Lead Israel against Death.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Greatness in his Holy City calls forth Praise for Himself and World-wide Gladness at the Elevation of his Earthly Dwelling. Strophe II., vers. 3—7, The Deliverance of His City Dramatically Described. Strophe III., vers. 9—11, A Thoughtful Recognition of the Leading Characteristics of Jehovah's Dealings with His People. Strophe IV., vers. 12—14, A Challenge to Verify the Story and Note its Great Lesson.

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[Lm.] A Song—A Psalm.

1 <Great and highly to be praised in the city> is our God,
(2) ||His holy mountain|| is [2] beautiful for elevation, the joy of all the earth.
||Mount Zion|| <on the northern ridge>[a] is the city of a king,
3 Jehovah |hath striven|[b] in her citadels, hath let himself be known as a lofty retreat.[c]

4 For lo! ||the kings|| met by appointment—crossed over together,
5 ||They themselves|| saw—|forthwith| were amazed—dismayed—alarmed;
6 ||Trembling|| seized them there—anguish as of a woman in travail;[d]
8 <"As we had heard> |so| have we seen[e]—||Jehovah|| establisheth her to the ages."

9 We have pondered, O God, thy kindness, in the midst of thy temple,
10 <As is thy name, O God> |so| is thy praise to the ends of the earth:
(11) <With righteousness> <is filled> thy right hand, [11] let Mount Zion |be glad|,
Let the daughters of Judah |exult|, because of thine acts of vindication.

12 Go about Zion, and encircle her, count her towers,—
13 Apply your heart to her rampart, distinguish her citadels;
That ye may tell to the generation following:—
14 That <such a God> is our God, to the ages and beyond,
||He|| will lead us against death!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah.

[a] "The temple being on the north-eastern corner or back of Mount Zion"—Br.
[b] So, taking *rb* as Heb. verb.
[c] Nearly thus Br. The chief departures from the M.T. are different groupings of the Heb. words, securing a better balance of clauses and lines.
[d] M.T. adds, as ver. 7: "With an east wind thou shatterest the ships of Tarshish." Doubtful, as interrupting the sense; unless as a marginal note.
[e] M.T. again adds: "In the city of Jehovah of hosts, in the city of our God." Yet seems to stand interruptingly in the midst of what otherwise commends itself as the speech of the panic-stricken kings.

EXPOSITION.

As critically revised above, this psalm as a whole does not seem of very difficult interpretation. It naturally follows the previous psalm, by detaining the reader's thoughts *on the place* where "the nobles gather themselves together with the people of the God of Abraham"; and this naturalness reacts, so as to account for the informal way in which it is here first named as "the city." But being now **the joy of all the earth**, it is to be expected that "the nobles" should delight to visit her, and when they approach should be struck with her **beauty**, though chiefly attracted by her King. Moreover, the fourth line of this fourth strophe, at once forges for itself a link with Ps. 46. Jehovah had indeed **striven** in **her citadels** by the "devastations he had wrought in the earth" from thence, thereby proving himself a **lofty retreat** for his beleagured people.

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This naturally brings on the second strophe, the extreme graphic beauty of which, of course, every eye can see. It should, however, be remarked in all candour, that the scene there depicted is highly idealised—that is, assuming that the reference is to the historical fact of the miraculous overthrow of the hosts of Sennacherib. For though the proud Assyrian monarch might call his "generals kings," it scarcely follows that a Hebrew bard would so name them, unless he were being guided to make his language fit a later and larger scene. It looks very much as though those **ships of Tarshish** had brought the confederate kings to the holy land, in which case the panic into which they are thrown is the more readily understood. In passing, it may be noted they do not "hasten away," as some render the last word in ver. 5); for they cannot get away, but are arrested on the spot—**there!** as the poet graphically declares. They have just time in their **anguish** to gasp out that opposition to the holy city is hopeless. All of which may excuse the conclusion that this wonderful picture of consternation is as much prophetic as it is historic.

After the storm comes the calm: after the shrieks of anguish comes the voice of praise. Worshippers in the temple have quiet and impulse to **ponder** well the mighty doings of their God. Jehovah has fulfilled **his name** so undeniably in the sight of all nations as to call forth **praise to the ends of the earth.** This again imparts a prophetic tone to words which, though poetically justifiable as suggested by the Assyrian overthrow, are large enough to prompt comparison with predictions yet unfulfilled. The **righteousness** with which Jehovah's **right hand is filled** being **vindicatory**, gives cause why **Mount Zion** should **be glad** and the **daughters**, or cities, **of Judah should exult.**

The time being now one of peace, with no enemy near to threaten, dwellers in Zion, and visitors with them, can deliberately **go about Zion, count her towers**, and, recalling her chequered history, can learn the lessons of the past and hand them on to the future: language singularly inappropriate had it been spoken of a heavenly Zion, rather fantastic if referred to ecclesiastical Zions, but very forcibly rooting itself in the past, as a mould of the chief ideas suggested, if connected with the thrilling events which signalised the reign of King Hezekiah. Death, as a king of terrors, gazed both on the nation and, by a special and concurrent providence, on her king—Israel's God as a Shepherd led both king and people through the valley against the monster—and he fled, overcome! Of course not, then, finally; for Hezekiah died afterwards, and the nation has been invaded and carried into captivity since. But in little—in shadow—in outline—in prophecy—Jehovah **led them against death!** Significant words. They will find an echo

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in the very next psalm; or rather perhaps a clearer note will there be struck; and if Isaiah wrote this psalm, then about this time he is elsewhere renewing the theme (Isa. 25^{6-9}, 26^{19}).

PSALM 49.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Death and Redemption: Oppressed Saints Comforted and Oppressors Rebuked.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—6, An Introduction, consisting of the Proem and the Problem. Strophe II., vers. 7—12, Answer first, Personality more Precious than Possessions. Strophe III., vers. 13—20, Answer second: The Unrelieved Future of the Oppressor in Contrast with the Redeemed Future of the Psalmist. The *Refrain* Charges Home the Byword.

[Lm.] Psalm.

1 Hear ye this, all ye peoples,
give ear, all ye dwellers in this passing world; [a]
2 Both sons of the low, and sons of the high,
|together| both rich and needy.
3 ||My mouth|| shall speak forth wisdom,
and ||the soft utterance of my heart|| be understanding:
4 I will bend, to a by-word, [b] mine ear,
I will open, on the lyre, mine enigma:—[c]
5 WHY SHOULD I FEAR, IN THE DAYS OF EVIL,
WHEN ||THE INIQUITY OF MY CIRCUMVENTORS|| ENCLOSETH ME,
6 WHO ARE TRUSTING IN THEIR WEALTH,
AND <IN THE ABUNDANCE OF THEIR RICHES> DO BOAST THEMSELVES?

7 But[d] no man can ||really effect a ransom||
and give, unto God, his ransom-price—[e]
8 <of such worth is the ransom of men's self, [f]
it has failed to the ages—
9 That one should live on continually,
should not see the pit.
10 For one must see that ||wise men|| die,
<together with foolish and brutish> they perish;
they leave to successors their wealth:
11 ||Graves||[g] are their houses to the ages,
their habitations, to generation after generation,—
Though their names had been given to landed-estates!

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[a] Or: "age"—"*aion* not *kosmos*"—O.G.
[b] See vers. 12 and 20. "An aphorism"—Del.
[c] Or: "hard question," "riddle": Sep. "problem."
[d] So—*'ak*, "but," instead of *'ah* "brother"—in some cod.—Gn. Better here, since the problem is whether a man can really redeem at all—even himself. Not at the hands of God, though from man he may (Exo. $21^{29, 30}$).
[e] Ml.: "covering" (Heb. *kopher*).
[f] Ml.: "their soul."
[g] So *Gt.* (|k|-b-r-m or k̤-r-b-m)—Gn.

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12 *A man who will not understand ||his own worth||*
Bringeth on him the by-word—No better than brutes![a]

13 ||This|| is their way—in their folly!
and [this] their future —[b] who <with their present portion>[c] are so pleased.
14 <Like a flock> <to Hades> are they assigned—
||Death|| will tend them!
So let them descend smoothly to the grave,[d]
and their image[e] be for Hades to consume out of his dwelling.
15 But ||God|| will ransom my soul,
<out of the hand of Hades> will he surely[f] take me.
16 Do not fear when a man ||groweth rich||,
when the splendour of his house |increaseth|;
17 For <when he dieth> he can take |nothing|,
his splendour |cannot descend after him|:—
18 Though <his own self>[g] <while he lived> he used to bless,
and thank it, because it was doing well for itself.
19 He will enter[h] as far as the circle of his fathers,—
<never more> can they see daylight!
20 *A man who will not understand ||his own worth||*
Bringeth on him the by-word—"No better than brutes!"[i]

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[a] Ml.: "Brutes they resemble."
[b] With Br. substituting *th* (ת) for *h* (ה): thus bringing this psalm into verbal relation w. $37^{37, 38}$ and 73^{17}.
[c] Ml.: "their mouth." Cp. O.G. 805, 5b.
[d] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[e] Or.: "form."
[f] Cp. O.G. 472, 1, e; 474, "note."
[g] U.; "his soul." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[h] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn.
[i] Ml.: "Brutes they resemble."

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is one of great beauty and power. Its *breadth* is at once evident; since it appeals to men everywhere, of all sorts and conditions: **peoples—low, high, rich, needy.** Its *elevation* is clear; inasmuch as it implies that the present order of things is temporary—a mere **passing world,** during which **the days** may be **evil,** and the wealthy **iniquitous, overbearing** and **boastful**; but beyond which **God** may interpose in **redemption.** Its *insight* is penetrating; for it pierces through to man's **true worth,** which **money** cannot measure. Its *structure* is simple: one strophe, containing proem and problem, and two strophes of argument, crowned each by an identical refrain. Its *unity* is complete; rendering the psalm, to a large extent, self-interpretive. But, withal, its chief characteristic is, that it is *parabolic, enigmatic and ironical:* its sarcasm is as biting as it is benevolent. It has its surface meanings, and its deeper intentions. It plays upon words. Its **wise men** are only **clever**: they **perish,** or at least they pass into **the land of shadows.** They are **brutes** in behaviour; yet, if they were really only brutes, they would not thus be blamed. They

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think much of themselves; and yet how little! if they would only think more of themselves, they would not think so little of their poor neighbours. Such is the style; and it is this which makes successful translation and exegesis difficult. The more difficult these are, however, the more need is there that the unity of the psalm should be held fast, and the interpretation be made as self-consistent as possible.

The *proem* or exordium, so far from being an afterthought of a later date, strikes the key-note of the psalm. It is the utterance of a man who is conscious of having something weighty to say, and is inwardly compelled to give it expression. He has glimpses of a coming better time, or he would not speak of the present as a **passing age**; esteems his solution radical, or he would not propound it for the consideration of all classes. He bespeaks attention to a **by-word**, and warrants our expectation of finding one in the sequel. He promises to open his **enigma**, by the help of his harp; and therefore justifies us in looking for a real solution of his problem—his music should at least do something to calm the troubled breast.

The *problem* itself is stated in terms sufficiently explicit to reveal its bearings. It is not the brevity of life which perplexes the psalmist, for of that he makes no mention. Nor are the inequalities of life what chiefly trouble him; but mainly the iniquitous scheming and vainglorious boasting of those who have the larger share of this world's goods. They plot and they plunder; they do as they please, and boast that so they will continue to do. Such neighbours are as formidable as they are unscrupulous. They may well be feared. And if the writer nevertheless asks **why he should fear**,—it can only be because he has good reasons for not being afraid of the injuriousness which he is powerless to arrest. It cannot be merely that these boasters will *soon* be in their graves; for the same, in the ordinary course of things, may be said of those who are suffering such wrongs.

The *solution* strikes home, though it takes the form of a paradox. These injurious boasters do not really think enough of themselves: it is for their adventitious wealth that they have such an inordinate affection. If they more highly esteemed their essential **selves**, they would more highly esteem their poor neighbours. If they would but think of it, they themselves are **so precious**, that not all their wealth can bribe God to add to their life a single day—how much less to extend their life indefinitely? And is not every other man essentially **as precious** as they? They deem themselves **wise**, and they *are* very **clever**; but—as any one can see—**clever** people die as well as the **foolish** and **brutish**. And the clever rich afford contrasts, when they die, which their poor neighbours do not occasion: the large mansion, and

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the little grave—how different they appear! and the tenants of these "long homes" have left their **names on broad acres**! Ah! if these, whose helpless relics are thus **housed**, had only risen to the high level of esteeming themselves aright, they would have esteemed all others as essentially their equals; and would have scorned to brow-beat them with the **brute-force** of wealth. But now the scorners are scorned. These men lowered themselves to do as the brutes; they intimidated and trampled on the weak. They forgot that they themselves were men!

The poet returns to the charge. His sarcasm bites more bitterly. Look on their late **way** of self-gloriousness—ah the folly of it; and look on the end of the way—the **future** at which they have arrived. They are My Lord Hades' **small cattle**, under the care of his **shepherd—Death!** Begrudge them not ease, comfort, plenty, on the road to such an inglorious end. Let them down **gently**. Let them take with them their **good looks**—which will soon enough fade!

"But who art thou, O scornful poet? What of thyself? Shalt not thou, too, soon become weak as we?" might not these shades of the rich reply? The poet's answer is ready:—"God," saith he, "will do for me, what your money could not do for you,"—and the words are suited to the time of waiting for Messiah's first advent,—**God will ransom my soul—my person—my essential self,—<from the hand of Hades> will he surely take me.** The words have just that measure of ambiguity which fits them to their time; but they have all the point and force needed to adjust them to their context. They are ambiguous so far as this: That they may denote either the forestalling of the grasp of Hades by TRANSFORMATION; or the rescuing out of the hand of Hades by RESURRECTION. But they have all the point and force which the context requires. "**God**" will place me in such a position of realised immortality, that I shall **live on continually, and not see the pit**,—which is what riches have never yet accomplished. And, looking forward, as I do, for such Divine redemption,—**I will not fear** the worst that **iniquitous circumventors** can do unto me during the **days of evil**.

But this final strophe is not yet complete. Having given conclusive reason why *he* should not fear, the poet counsels others to be equally bold: **Do not fear!** But as, in his first reply, he descended from argument to irony, so does he, in this his second answer: only, as the argument is stronger now than then, so is the irony keener and more prolonged. *Then* the argument was drawn from *the inherent worth of man: now* it is derived from *the redeeming purpose of God.* And, accordingly, we are here treated to an exquisite picture of the rich

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man's pampering and flattering of his superficial self, which is terminated only by the fall of a curtain of thick darkness—suited to those pre-messianic times, when the future of the wicked was as yet unrevealed. The "shade" of the once great man may penetrate as far into the dark vault of Hades as to bring him into the circle of his fathers; but—no more at present can be said: silence reigns—and the familiar by-word is once more heard. The clever but foolish tyrant has brought it on himself—no better than brutes!

In finally reviewing the psalm, one is struck with its numerous points of contact with other scriptures. Kirkpatrick well says: "The theme of the psalm is akin to that of Psalms 37 and 73." It "reminds us of the parables of Rich Fool (Luke 12^{16ff}) and the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16^{19ff})." Moreover, this psalm "contains numerous parallels of thought and language to the Books of Job and Proverbs." "There seems to be an allusion in ver. 11 to the vast estates which are condemned by Isaiah and Micah." See Isa. $2^{9, 11, 17}$, $3^{14, 15}$, $5^{8, 15}$, 59^{9-15}; Mi. $2^{1, 2}$, 3^{1-3}. But perhaps the most significant reference should be to Mat. 6^{26}.

PSALM 50.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Judgment on Israel Pronounced amid the Solemnities of an Audible and Visible Divine Manifestation.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—7, Preparations for Judgment: consisting of a Divine Announcement and Appearing, and a Summons to Heaven and Earth to Declare the Righteousness of the Judge, who now Opens his Address to His People. Strophe II., vers. 8—15, Formalists Admonished to Supplement their Offerings by Gratitude, Faithfulness, and Prayer in the Day of Distress. Strophe III., vers. 16—23, Secret Deserters Denounced for Hypocrisy and Lawlessness. *First Refrain*, a Summons; *Second Refrain*, an Admonition; *Third Refrain*, a Proclamation.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph.

1 ‖Jehovah‖[a] hath spoken, and called the earth,
from the rising of the sun unto the going in thereof

[a] M.T.: "El, Elohim, Jehovah," as in Josh. 22^{22}; but prob. (w. Br.) due to accidental repetition; and the subsequent restoration of the displaced name "Jehovah."

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2 <Out of Zion the perfection of beauty>
|God| hath come shining forth.[a]
3 ||A fire|| <before him> devoureth,
and <around him> it stormeth exceedingly:
4 He calleth to the heavens above, and unto the earth,—
in order to minister judgment to his people.
5 "Gather unto me my men of kindness,
the solemnisers of my covenant over a peace-offering,"
6 And let the heavens |declare| his righteousness,
for ||God himself|| is about to judge. Selah
7 "*Hear, O my people, and let me speak,*
O Israel, and let me admonish thee:—
<*God, thy God*>[b] *am* ||*I*||
[*who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*]"[c]

8 <"Not concerning thy peace-offerings> will I reprove thee,
nor concerning thine ascending-offerings before me continually;[d]
9 I will not take, out of thy house, a bull,
out of thy fields, he-goats;
10 For <mine> are all the beasts of the forest,
the cattle on the mountains, in their thousands,[e]
11 I know all the birds of the heavens,[f]
and ||that which moveth in the plains|| is with me:[g]
12 <If I were hungry> I would not tell thee,
for <mine> is the world and the fulness thereof:
13 Shall I eat the flesh of mighty oxen,
or <the blood of he-goats> shall I drink?
14 *Sacrifice, unto God, a thank-offering,*[h]
and pay, to the Highest, thy vows;
15 *And call upon me in the day of distress,*
I will rescue thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

16 But <to the lawless one>[i] saith God:—
"What hast |thou| to do with telling my statutes,
and taking up my covenant on thy mouth?
17 Since ||thou|| hast hated correction,
and cast my words behind thee?
18 <If thou sawest a thief> thou didst run[j] with him,
and <with adulterers> hath been thy chosen life:
19 <Thy mouth> hast thou thrust into wickedness
and ||thy tongue|| weaveth deceit:
20 Thou wouldst sit down—<against thine own brother> wouldst thou speak,
<in thine own mother's son>[k] wouldst thou expose a fault:—

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[a] M.T.: "Let our God come and not keep silence"—wh. has the appearance of an added pious wish. Yet see Dr., Tenses, § 58.

[b] Prob. an elohistic substitute for "Jehovah thy God." Cp. 45⁷.

[c] Prob. a copyist's abbreviation, words in brackets understood by pious Jew—Br. Cp. 81¹⁰, Exo. 20².

[d] Or: "And thine ascending-offerings are continually before me"—(w. Del., Dr., Per., R.V., text, Leeser, Kp.).

[e] Some read [omitting one letter]: "mountains of God," as in 36⁶—O.G. 49.

[f] So Sep.

[g] "In my mind"—Dr. (comparing Job 10¹³, 18¹¹.)

[h] So Br. "Thanksgiving"—Del., Per., Dr.

[i] Cp. 1¹ note, 25⁵.

[j] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "wast pleased."

[k] Felt to be still more mean in polygamous society.

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21 <These things> hast thou done, and I have kept silence,
thou deemedst I should |really be| like thyself.
22 *I will convict thee, and set it forth to thine eyes,*
pray consider this, ye forgetters of God.[a]
23 ‖*He that sacrificeth a thank-offering*‖[b] *glorifieth me,*
and <him who is consistent>[c] *in behaviour*[d] *will I cause to view with*
delight the salvation of God."

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] M.T. adds: "Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."
[b] So Br. "Thanksgiving"—Del., Dr.
[c] Or: "whole-hearted." *Gt.*: *tâm*, instead of *shâm* or *sîm*—Gn.
[d] Ml.: "way."

EXPOSITION.

This impressive psalm includes many things which require and will repay careful consideration. It is clear that the Judgment it describes is held on Israel as a nation. This being the case, it is the more remarkable that **earth** and **heaven** are summoned to interest themselves in the proceedings: thus teaching the momentous character of the issues involved, the Divine Equity and Grace in desiring that whatever can be said in Israel's favour shall be advanced, and the Divine Determination that right shall be done. That the Divine Glory comes shining forth **out of Zion**, intimates that the issues to be tried are connected with Jehovah's settlement as King in Israel, and grow out of the worship established in Jerusalem. That the Divine Majesty comes forth with **fiery tempest** and **raging storm** betokens that God's holy anger with his people is roused, and therefore that the time is one of national degeneracy. The summons to **gather** Israel does not perhaps imply that the greater Dispersions have yet taken place, so much as simply that the gathering is to be national, one of the whole people, on the largest scale possible, so that all classes may be reached, and a general verdict on the nation be pronounced. The description of the nation in the summons as **the men of Jehovah's kindness** is probably designed to remind the people of what by their national calling they ought to be (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness"); and though, in a suitable context, the further description of the people as **those having solemnised Jehovah's covenant over a peace-offering**, might very well have directly pointed to Moses and the Elders who so accepted the covenant at Mount Sinai, according to the sublime account in Exo. 24,—yet it would seem less imaginative, and more pointedly

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practical, rather to think of some recent confirming of the Sinai Covenant, such as we read of in the history of Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Ch. 29[10], 34[31]). To go no further than Hezekiah, we can easily see from the very opening of Isaiah's prophecies, how easy it was for Israel to sink from national reform into national formalism. And, truth to tell, heavy as are the charges against Israel which follow in this psalm, they do not go beyond the corrupt state of things which at that time characterised the people as a whole. The voluntative moods of the verbs which open the climax to this strophe (**let me speak, let me admonish**) may usefully remind us of the patience of Jehovah in listening so long in silence to the calumnious speeches of men; while the assertion by Jehovah of his relation to Israel as her Redeemer may remind us of the reasonableness of all Divine demands, seeing that they are based on privilege already bestowed (cp. Isa. v.: "my vineyard—what more could I have done to it?").

The great lesson of the second strophe appears to be, that stated and especially national worship is apt to degenerate into formalism; and, what is still worse, may lead worshippers to feel as though by its regular maintenance they were conferring a favour upon the Object of their worship. Hence the indignant protests of Jehovah of his independence of any material service which men can render him (cp. Acts 17[24, 25]). What he desires is men's gratitude; and as **thank-offerings** are personal and spontaneous, and so more certain expressions of gratitude than stated public offerings, they are here preferred—especially where they have been promised by **vows**; in which case faithfulness as well as thankfulness is involved. It seems to be further taught that thankful returns for the more common of special blessings, laid a basis for the outcry of the soul to God in the severer trials of life. Thus may days of sunshine prepare us for days of storm; and pervading thankfulness may slowly generate the confidence in God needful to draw us near to him in times of **distress**. **Deliverance** *then* will prompt the soul to a public **glorifying** of the Deliverer.

In a soil of formalism the germs of apostacy may take root. Men may become so accustomed to repeating "the commandments," that they may keep up the appearance of piety even when the practice of profanity is seducing them into rebellion and unutterable meanness. This appears to be the underlying thought of Strophe III. The Apostle Paul might have had this strophe in mind when he wrote, "Thou that proclaimest—Do not steal! Art thou stealing?" (Rom. 2[21]). Presuming on God's silence as though it were indifference, is a sure way to become **forgetters of God**; and to forget Him is to be **startled** and **convicted** when he pleases to speak. The climax of the third strophe seems to

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fold back on the whole foregoing psalm: the **thank-offering** counselled at the end of the second strophe, is now invested with the dignity of a standing proclamation of habitual truth; and whereas thankfulness appeared in vers. 14, 15 as only the beginning of a course which would end in glorifying God, it is now (ver. 23) said to be in itself a rendering of glory to the Divine Majesty. There is frequently a difficulty in suitably rendering in English the small Hebrew word *tâm*, which Ginsburg here prefers to *shâm* ("there") or *sâm* ("put" or "place"). It means "wholeness," "completeness"; and so in some contexts may be translated "wholehearted," "devoted," "perfect." Perhaps, here, "consistent," "all-of-a-piece" sufficiently represents it. Taking the word *derek*, "way," as here equivalent to "way-of-life," "behaviour," and connecting the two, we get the simple and practical conception—which admirably folds back over this third strophe—**him who is consistent in behaviour**: who does not profess one thing and practise another, who does not uphold the national covenant in words and then deliberately break its great and vital commands one after another,—**him will I cause to view with delight the salvation of God**: a very remarkable ending. It is not: "he is already saved"—from the point of view of Hebrew twilight and imperfection, that could hardly be said. Besides, there may be a forward glance towards a great national deliverance. We know of some who were spared to view with delight **the salvation of God** when the Assyrians were overthrown; and who doubtless rang out the words, "Lo <our God> is this! We waited for him that he might save us,— ||This|| is Jehovah! We waited for him. Let us rejoice and exult in his salvation" (Isa. 25^9). And even the Christian may remind himself that as yet he is only "saved in hope"—that he yet "waits for the redemption of the body," and "for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8^{19}). But to return for a moment **to him who is consistent in behaviour**, it is clear that he need not be a work-monger, or a self-righteous person; but that there are such things as "works meet for repentance"—that, though sincerity cannot save, yet there can be no saving without sincerity; that, in short, though the kingdom of heaven can only spring from the word of the kingdom, which is the seed, yet the very heart to receive that seed is the "noble and good" heart that feels its emptiness and poverty.

Into what historical situation does this psalm, by its terms and tenor, fit itself? It is the first of the psalms attributed **To Asaph**; but who was he? Was there a seer of that name in Hezekiah's days as well as one in David's? Dr. Thirtle (O.T.P., 91) thinks there was; but the evidence he submits does not appear conclusive. Yet he may be right; and the more we reflect on the inner elements of the situation revealed

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by this psalm, the more it identifies itself with the state of things known to have existed in Hezekiah's days. In David's time there may have been some formalism; but we have no ground to think there was any apostacy, even incipient; nor—to be quite candid—is formalism just the sin we should have charged on Israel in the days of David. But, in Hezekiah's time, there was not only rampant formalism, as Isaiah so pungently witnesses, but there was that sort of lawlessness which wavered in its adherence to the worship of Jehovah? That "villain" Rabshakeh doubtless appealed to faltering hearts in Israel. His bold plausibilities and blasphemies and insinuations were bearing fruit in some restive and resilient hearts. Gross corruption and practical atheism had eaten out the moral life of some places in Israel, as the fourteenth psalm disclosed to us. The **day of distress** was near; and some would soon need all the comfort derivable from the promise of **deliverance**. The day of secret apostacy had come. These elements constitute a situation which strikingly suits this psalm.

PSALM 51.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Prayer of a Penitent.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Petitions for Pardon and Cleansing sustained by Confessions, Condemning Self and Vindicating God. Strophe II., vers., 5—9, In Further Pleading for Pardon, the Psalmist Confronts his own Deep Need and God's Just Requirements, passing on to Consenting Petitions and Petitions pure and simple. Strophe III., vers. 10—14, Petitions for Renewal, against Banishment and Deprivation, for Restoration and Upholding; urged, with Alternating Hopes and Fears. Strophe IV., vers. 15—19, Assured that Only his Divine Lord can open his Lips, the psalmist Depreciates Accustomed Sacrifices as Inadequate to meet his Own Desperate Case, but prays for Such Prosperity in behalf of Jerusalem as shall make Right Offerings Acceptable.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David—When Nathan the prophet went unto him, when he had gone in unto Bathsheba.

1 Be gracious unto me, O God, according to thy kindness,
<in the multitude of thy compassions> blot out my transgressions;
2 |Thoroughly| wash me from mine iniquity,
and <from my sin> make me pure.
3 For <my transgressions> ||I myself|| acknowledge,
and ¡|my sin|| is before me continually:

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4 <Against thee, only thee> have I sinned,
and <that which is wicked in thy sight> have I done,—
That thou mayest be justified, when thou speakest,
be clear, when thou enterest into judgment.

5 Lo! <in iniquity> was I born,
and <in sin> did my mother conceive me.
6 Lo! <truth> thou hast desired in the inward parts,
and <in the hidden part> thou wouldst cause me to know ‖wisdom.‖
7 Thou shalt[a] cleanse me from sin with hyssop, that I may be pure
thou shalt[a] wash me, that I may be whiter ‖than snow‖.
8 Thou shalt[a] satisfy[b] me with joy and gladness,—
the bones thou hast crushed |will exult|.
9 Hide thy face from my sins,
and <all mine iniquities> blot out.

10 <A heart that is pure> create[c] for me,[d]
and <a spirit that is steadfast> renew.[e]
11 Do not cast me away from thy presence,
and <thy Holy Spirit> do not take from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,
and <with a generous spirit> shalt thou uphold me.
13 I would fain teach transgressors thy ways,
and ‖sinners‖ <unto thee> would return.
14 Snatch me away from the guilt of bloodshed,[f] O God,[g]
my tongue |will ring out| thy righteousness.

15 Sovereign Lord! <my lips> shalt thou open,
and ‖my mouth‖ will declare thy praise.
16 For thou wilt not delight[h] in peace-offering,[i]
‖Ascending-sacrifice‖ will not please:[h]
17 ‖The peace-offerings of God‖ are a spirit broken,—
<a heart broken and crushed>[j] thou wilt not despise.[k]
18 Do good, in thy favour, unto Zion,
thou shalt build the walls of Jerusalem:
19 ‖Then‖ wilt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,[l]
‖then‖ shall ascend, on thine altar, young bulls.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] These verbs "thus give utterance to the psalmist's faith that God can and will restore him—Kp. We might almost call these "consenting petitions."

[b] So *Gt.* Cp. 90[14]—Gn.

[c] Does not imply creation out of nothing—Br.,—true: "always used strictly of the creative power of God"—Pe.,—equally true. "The whole spiritual being of the man had fallen into chaos"—Pe. Yet in chaos are the elements which "the creative power of God" can turn into kosmos.

[d] M.T. adds: "O God."

[e] Or: "make anew." M.T. adds: "within me."

[f] Ml.: "from bloods." "Guilt of" seems necessarily implied; as neither "killing" nor "being killed" can be meant as something impending.

[g] M.T. adds ("for emphasis"—Del.) "thou God of my salvation." Too long a line for Br., who conjectures "Yahweh" instead of "O God." The additional words are in both Sep. and Vul.

[h] As futures, these verbs readily lend themselves to the restriction: "in *my* case."

[i] M.T. adds: "that I should give it."

[j] M.T. adds: "O God."

[k] How natural, that friends of the injured should "despise" a repentance which, however sincere, could never be the restoration of innocence and life.

[l] M.T. adds: "ascending-sacrifices and entire-offerings."

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EXPOSITION.

The lesson of the First Psalm is, Blessed is the man who has not sinned. The lesson of the Thirty Second, is, Blessed is the man who, though he has sinned, has been forgiven. The lesson of this psalm is, That the removal of sin by pardon and purification is so difficult, that none but God can accomplish it. This ultimate lesson is here so taught as to make it deeply impressive. There is in this psalm no cheap promise of amendment—in fact no promise at all, until, by every form of supplication, God himself has been importuned to grant deliverance from the condemnation and stain and power of sin.

Of all the one hundred and fifty Psalms, this is pre-eminently *the* Penitential Psalm. There are others; but this is the chief. In fact, throughout all the Bible, this prayer for pardon stands pre-eminent. It is all prayer, and its prayer is so personal, so comprehensive, so sustained, that it naturally serves for all time as a fund of feeling and storehouse of words, to help all petitioners who are craving for pardon at the hands of Infinite Love. It includes no fewer than seventeen distinct petitions, two of which are repeated, so as to total nineteen; and these are urged with great fulness and urgency of pleading. Many of the petitions are winged with considerations which at once embolden the petitioner and present pleas for a favourable answer: **according to thy kindness—in the multitude of thy compassions —that I may be pure—that I may be whiter than snow**; coming down to physical results, **the bones thou hast crushed will exult**; going out to the good of others, **sinners unto thee would return.**

The STRUCTURE of the psalm is worth notice. After the historical *occasion*, which the whole psalm sustains, the petitioner leads off with four petitions, the first general, then three specific, touching **transgressions, iniquity, sin.** These are followed by frank *confession*, the psalmist condemning himself, and vindicating his Divine Judge, before whom he feels himself to be arraigned; succeeded by two *discoveries* (**lo! lo!**) both of which form an aggravation of the condition of the suppliant—he comes of a corrupted stock, and has to do with a God whose requirements are exacting. He is thus driven back to *petitions* for Divine mercy and help as his only hope, three of which are "consenting petitions"—**thou shalt cleanse, wash, satisfy,** which have all the appearance of being a laying hold of promises expressed or implied, and an accepting of the Divine method of restoration; the two remaining petitions being the bare imperatives of urgency—**Hide, blot out.**

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Having devoted two strophes (twenty lines) mainly to entreaties for pardon, the psalmist now goes more deeply into the need for renewal. His need is for a heart—mind, inner man—that is pure from the trail and stain of sin; and for a spirit—a directing inward energy—that is constant in its action, in holding him unwaveringly to the higher ends of life. The supply of a need so deep must come from God: the offender has no hope in himself. Hence his prayer: create, renew or make anew. The precise nature of such Divine action need not perplex us. It may be said, that to re-create a man is a greater work than to create him. And yet, if creation itself does not necessarily include the production of new material, but rather the new disposal and fashioning of the old, as the history of *bara'* plainly shows (see especially Num. 16); much more must it be so in re-creation, which is the new fashioning of the same man, and not the making of another independent being. Personal identity *must* remain. But herein lies the supreme wonder of the new creation—that with the preservation of personal identity, should be harmonised the new fashioning of its moral character. To remember the sin of the past, and yet no longer to feel its fascination: this is indeed a wonderful thing. To own responsibility for the past, and yet no longer to dread capital punishment: this is another wonder, equally great. Both wonders demand the creative energy of God for their production.

Probably this is no mere academical discussion; although, it must be owned, that the succeeding deprecatory petitions of the psalmist form links with a better past than with most men can be assumed to have existed; for it is much to be feared that heaven does *not* lie about *all* human beings in their infancy. The psalmist, at any rate, knew what it was to live in God's presence; hence his prayer not to be cast away from it: knew what it was to possess God's Holy Spirit; hence his cry not to be bereft of it: knew by experience the joy of God's salvation; hence his entreaty to have it restored to him. And doubtless this happier past colours all he has yet to say: suggests the generous care for others which flows therefrom, which would fain teach transgressors the right way, and would work for them with a hope of inducing them also to return. But now suddenly starts up a spectre—the horrible spectre of conscious blood-guiltiness. It is as though in the realm of the spirit could be seen a Blood-Avenger in hot pursuit. Snatch me away, he cries, to God himself. Nothing so vivid could have sprung to a brave man's lips as to any of the ordinary dangers of war; and of any feeling of revenge, moving to the shedding of any other man's blood, there is certainly no trace in this psalm. Hence we are psychologically compelled to endorse the avowed occasion

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of the psalm which stands at its head. It is not surprising that the psalmist should reveal his assurance that such a display of Divine mercy would be sure to result in a public outburst of thankfulness,—an assurance well vindicated by the composition of Ps. 32, which was evidently written after this; but the wonder is, that God's **righteousness** should be signalised as the Divine attribute to be celebrated. Had he here written, "My tongue will ring out thy COMPASSION," we should not have been surprised; but **righteousness**! that is another matter, and demands thought; for the great demonstration of Divine rectitude, even when forgiving offenders, had not then been displayed (Rom. $3^{25, 26}$). Still, of course, it *is* **right** that God should exercise his **right** to forgive. He will not, cannot, exercise it wrongfully. It is well that we should at least see how thorough was this offender's repentance.

The **opening** of David's **lips** is instructive; for they had doubtless been significantly closed, first in obstinacy (32^{3}), and then in shame. Now that they are opened once more, it is to good purpose. The Levitical sacrifices were never intended to cover wilful and flagrant sin. David ought to have been cut off from among his people. His double crime richly deserved it. But then, who could set the law in motion against him? He could only be left in the hands of that Heavenly Lord whose vicegerent he himself was; and if He, in loving severity, had already been chastising him, as from several psalms (such as 32, 38, 39) we have seen reason to believe was the case,—who are WE that we should wish to stay the hand of Divine Mercy? Admitting all this, it is fitting that we should see how little disposed the Royal Penitent was to daub with untempered mortar his own desperate case; which he would have been doing, had he piled up animal sacrifices to atone for his awful guilt. Of unspeakably more worth than they, for the purpose of restoring fellowship with God, was that offering which David had left him to render,—the presentation of **a broken spirit,—of a broken and crushed heart.** These, *men* might **despise**—excusably despise, but David's merciful God would know how to value them, as being in fact beyond all price. Is it any great wonder that, for such a truly humbled spirit, there should come a rebound? that the feet of a man thus uplifted out of the abysses of degradation and despair should already show signs of being consciously placed on a rock (40^{2})? Hence we need not resort, with many critics, to the hypothesis of a later origin for the conclusion of this psalm. With Dr. Briggs, we prefer to regard the psalm as a consistent whole; only, unlike him, we cannot for a moment think that in the first instance this penitent suppliant was a nation: the conscience of a nation, though not to be

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despised, is a very conglomerate product, compared with an individual conscience with such exquisitely delicate folds in it as this which quivers and groans and is made glad in this psalm. In any case, the walls of Jerusalem were as yet unfinished, as the history plainly shows (1 K. 3[1]); and it seems like a natural outburst of patriotism that the true worth of the Temple ritual should now at length come into the view of the better self of that King David whom we otherwise know to have been so profoundly interested in the orderly ritual worship of Jehovah his God.

There are still a few words and phrases scattered throughout this precious psalm, which will repay us for a parting recognition. The reader is presumably familiar with the words **transgression, iniquity, sin** here used, as "meaning respectively, (1) defection from God or rebellion against Him: (2) the perversion of right, depravity of conduct: (3) error, wandering from the right way, missing the mark in life"—Kp. The phrases to express the removal of sin are also worthy of note: (1) **blot out**, twice employed (vers. 1, 9), which regards sin as a debt recorded in God's book which needs to be erased or cancelled—who then can cancel it but God? (2) **wash**, which it is remarkable properly applies to clothes, yielding the profound suggestion, that no mere skin-deep cleansing meets the sinner's case; but that, as garments become ingrained with filth, so the very fibres of our minds become defiled, so that a process of much treading and rinsing is needed to detach and remove sin therefrom—again who can thus "wash" but God? (3) **cleanse**, for which we lack a literal rendering in English, seeing that the Hebrew word is an intensification of the verb "to miss the mark," or "lose," or "sin," and we have no such word as *unsin*, which Edersheim suggests. (4) To render **pure**, physically, ceremonially, morally—the Levitical association of this and the foregoing with the removal of leprosy, being another profound suggestion, calling to mind the corroding and contaminating and generally loathsome nature of that which has to be removed. (5) But perhaps the association of **hyssop** with the process of "unsinning," is most striking of all—far more significant than would at first sight appear. Hyssop is "a well-known aromatic plant which grows on walls (1 K. 5[13]), and when bound in bunches serves as a brush or fan in sacred sprinklings (Exo. 12[22]; Lev. 14[4-6, 49, 51])." Its significance lies in the fact that, when employed in ceremonial sprinkling, it was always closely or remotely connected with blood-shedding; closely, when dipped in blood (Exo. 12[22]) or in blood and water (Lev. 14[5, 7, 49-52]), remotely though not less really when dipped in the water of separation (Num. 19); when thus remotely then even the more impressively,

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as furnishing the singular idea of sacrifice perpetuated any length of time, and individually applied to any person or thing. It is surely remarkable, that in this very psalm in which the penitent declares the inapplicability of animal sacrifices to his case, he should nevertheless employ terms so intimately bound up with the sacrificial system. This, at least, may be said: that when a Christian intelligently rejoices that his "heart has been sprinkled from an evil conscience," his gladness is intensified by the realisation of an individual bringing home to him of an offering made once for all away in the past whose efficacy has not yet been lost. This survey of the sacrificial and cleansing terms employed in this psalm, especially as bringing leprosy into view, may perhaps throw a welcome side-light on the word "righteousness, which rather puzzled us when we came across it in our general survey of this psalm. "Righteousness," as faithfulness to promise, we can easily understand; but had God then ever promised the forgiveness of deadly sin to David? In literal explicitness—no: by gracious construction of his plighted word—yes! In his covenant with David by the mouth of Nathan the prophet concerning David's descendants (2 Sam. 7) Jehovah had promised never to remove his kindness from David as he had removed it from Saul. If his sons should commit iniquity—alas! the father himself has done that now: Jehovah would correct them with the rod of men—David is even yet smarting under that rod: and with the stripes, the plague-strokes, or leprosy-strokes, of the sons of common men—even these we have already seen have not been withheld from David. What a mercy! David himself has thus been brought within the very terms of the covenant formulated for his sons. And now, if God will only answer David's outcry for mercy: that mercy will be the **righteousness** which fulfils the Divine word to the letter:—

My tongue will ring out thy righteousness!

Righteous in smiting—righteous in sparing: a covenant-keeping God is Jehovah "the Becoming One," who thus "becometh" the gracious interpreter of his own covenant; so as to treasure up unlooked-for grace, and, when unveiling it, shewing it to be at the same time unsullied **righteousness.**

One thought more. David—as we have seen—had enjoyed the presence of the Holy Spirit, or he could not have prayed, **Take it not from me.** Was that Spirit not hallowing, as well as illuminating and revealing? Can we really enter into the undercurrent of this psalm, without perceiving that a hallowing Divine **Presence** had lain at the roots of the writer's spiritual life; without recognising that this anxious

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petitioner is craving, not only again to sing psalms, but also and mainly to live a pure life? By how much soever this is clear, by so much also must it be clear that the Evangelist spoke comparatively when he said (Jn. 7^{39}) that the Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified. If then the inward presence of the Holy Spirit meant so much to David, how much more, as a dynamic working out righteousness, ought it not to be to ourselves unto whom the ages have reached forth their gifts!

PSALM 52.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Doeg the Edomite Denounced.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Doeg Remonstrated with, Described, and Threatened. Strophe II., vers. 6—9, The Laugh of the Righteous over him.

[Lm.] Instructive-psalm—By David—When Doeg the Edomite entered and told Saul and said to him, David entered the house of Ahimelek.

1 Why wilt thou boast thee in wickedness, O mighty man, all the day?[a]
2 <Engulfing ruin> thou devisest—||thy tongue|| is like a whetted razor.[b]
3 Thou lovest evil rather than good—falsehood than righteousness. ☙
4 Thou lovest all devouring words—O[c] deceitful tongue!
5 ||God also|| will pull thee down—<for ever> snatch thee away,
will pluck thee up tentless—and uproot thee out of the land of the living. ☙

6 So will the righteous both |see| and revere—and <over him> will laugh:—
7 "Lo! the mighty man[d] who made not God his stronghold,
But trusted in the abundance of his riches—was strong in his wealth!"
8 But ||I|| am like a luxuriant olive-tree, in the house of God,
I have put my trust in the kindness of God to the ages and beyond.
9 I will thank thee to the ages, that thou didst effectually work,
I will proclaim[e] thy name, that it is good, before thy men of kindness.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For Dancings.[f]

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[a] M.T.: "the kindness of God all the day." Sep.: "lawlessness all the day."
[b] M.T. adds: "O thou worker of deception"—Dr.
[c] So Per.; others—"a" or "the deceitful tongue."
[d] Vocalised as in ver. 1.
[e] *Gt.*: "utter" or "proclaim." M.T.: "wait on."
[f] So Thirtle, reading *mᵉḥoloth* instead of *maḥalath*.

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EXPOSITION.

It would be a fair inference from the superscription of this psalm alone, that there *was* a man of the name of Doeg, bearing the character here described, when David wrote this psalm. But seeing that, in 1 Sam. 21^{7}, 22^{9-19}, we find a man of that name, evidently capable of the baseness here attributed to him, there is no excuse for declining the identification. By some, indeed, it has been regarded as a matter of surprise, that the psalmist should go no further than notice Doeg's mischievous tongue, and should not also have alluded to his atrocious cruelty in slaying the priests of Nôb. This difficulty is removed by pushing the writing of the psalm just far enough back to make way for the easy supposition—which the very wording of this superscription favours—that Doeg privately gave Saul the information about David, before he publicly proclaimed it in the presence of all Saul's servants. He **entered** and told Saul, before he openly proclaimed it. Doeg was overheard; and David informed of this private communication. That hypothesis exactly meets the case. It is to be observed from David's words to Abiathar on receiving from him the news of the massacre (1 Sam. 22^{22}) that he already knew enough of Doeg's character, to be at once apprehensive when he met him at Nôb that he would go and tell Saul. The spirit of prophecy at once seized David and moved him to write as he here does. To the known facts may be added two expressions in the psalm itself slightly confirmatory of its superscriptional origin. Doeg was a foreigner, but had **not** come, like Ruth (2^{12}), to take **refuge** under the wings of the God of Israel. The tabernacle was at this time at Nôb, which "was the northern summit of Olivet, a mountain which derived its name from the olives and olive-yards with which it once was clothed"—Per. Hence with peculiar aptness the psalmist says: **But I am like a luxuriant olive-tree in the house of God.**

Of the psalm itself, there remains little to be said. By its pointed denunciation of a particular man, it comes into line with Isaiah's denunciation of Shebna (Isa. 22) and Jeremiah's denunciation of Passhur (Jer. 20) and of Hananiah (Jer. 28).

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PSALM 53.

[Lm.] An Instructive-psalm—By David.

[*N.B.—For Title, Analysis and Exposition of this psalm, see Psalm* 14, *with which this psalm is practically identical—this being an Elohistic recension of that.*]

1 |Said| a vile person in his heart—"No God here!"
their conduct is corrupt, their practice abominable, there is no well-doer!

2 ||God|| <out of the heavens> looked down over the sons of men,
to see whether there |was| one that shewed understanding in seeking after God:—

3 ||"The whole|| have turned aside, drawn back,[a] |together| become tainted:
there is no well-doer, there is not so much as one!"

4 Have not[b] the workers of iniquity[c] |learned| anything?—devourers of my people!
they have devoured food, <God>[d] have they not invoked!

5 ||There|| dreaded they a dread, when ||God|| scattered them,
their plan was put to shame, when ||God|| rejected them.[e]

6 Oh that <out of Zion> were granted the deliverances[f] of Israel!
<When God[g] |restoreth| the prosperity[h] of his people>
let Jacob |exult|, let Israel |be glad|.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] With stringed instruments.

[a] So Br., uniting the two verbs found, the one in 14^3 and the other in 53^3.
[b] In some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "none of": cp. Ps. 14^4—Gn.
[c] "Naughtiness"—Dr.
[d] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "Jehovah"—Gn.
[e] So Br., as in $14^{5,6}$:
There dreaded they a dread—there was no dread!
for ||God|| had scattered the bones of the besieger,
Thou hadst put him to shame, for ||God|| had rejected them.
[f] Or: "great salvation" (pl. intensive). In some cod. (w. Sep., Syr.): "salvation" (sing.). Cp. Ps. 14^7, G. Intro., 148.
[g] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr.): "Jehovah." Cp. 14^7—Gn.
[h] So Br., also O.G. 986, esp. Ps. $126^{1,4}$.

PSALM 54.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Prayer Prompted by the Hostile Action of the Ziphites.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Prayer for Salvation and Vindication; supported by a *Refrain*, ver. 3, describing the psalmist's Enemies. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, Coming Help Welcomed and its Effects Anticipated. Strophe III., vers. 6, 7, Willing Sacrifice Promised and Thanks Formulated.

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[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By David—When the Ziphites entered and said to Saul, "Is not ‖David‖ hiding himself with us?"

1 O God, <by thy name> save me,
yea <by thy heroic strength> shalt thou vindicate me.
2 O God, hear thou my prayer,
Do give ear to the sayings of my mouth.
3 *For ‖aliens‖*[a] *have arisen against me,*
and ‖ruthless ones‖ have sought my life:[b]
they have not set God before them.[c]

4 Lo! ‖God‖ is bringing help to me,
‖my Sovereign Lord‖ is among the upholders of my life.[d]
5 Let him turn back the mischief upon my watchful foes,
<in thy truth> exterminate them.

6 <Willingly> will I sacrifice unto thee,
I will thank thy name[e]—"For he is good;
7 For <out of every distress> hath he rescued me,
and <on my foes> hath gazed mine eye."

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] With stringed instruments.

[a] Some cod (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram.): "insolent men." Cp. Ps. 86[14]—Gn.
[b] U.: "soul." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[c] "Whoever at that time in Israel feared God more than man could not have made himself the instrument of the blind fury of Saul. God had already plainly enough acknowledged David"—Del.
[d] U.: "soul."
[e] M.T.: "Jehovah"—not in Sep.

EXPOSITION.

It is easy to see how psalm-collectors would be unwilling to let these little personal snatches of song die, and equally obvious how in after times these minor compositions could be adapted to occasions bearing some similarity to those which gave them birth. The wonder is, not that they found their way into the psalm-books of Israel, but that they were ever originated under the romantic circumstances which their superscriptions set forth. Yet it would be an irreparable loss to the history of revelation if we were to allow our wonder to land us in scepticism. Rather ought we to say:—This is the sort of man David was—at least in his unsullied youth and young manhood, while yet waiting for the kingdom: hunted, fleeing, hard-pressed, deceived by men who acted as spies and informers, circumvented at the royal head-quarters by hirelings and foreigners and envious old companions now turned traitors; yet all the while maintaining his faith in his Divinely given destiny, cast down by fresh troubles, cheered by new mercies; discovering in a loving message from Jonathan, or in the arrival of a few fresh adherents tokens that **God was bringing him help**, that his **Sovereign Lord was among the upholders of his life**—not, of course, as one upholder among many, but chief mover and upholder of them all.

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As for these officious Ziphites, we know too little of them to say much. The inhabitants of a little town fifteen miles to the south-east of Hebron,—though within the bounds of Judah, may very well have included some influential men of alien birth or at least of insolent disposition; and as for tyrants, there may have been several at Court, like Doeg and Cush, deserving of that name; among whom the writer may have mentally included the arch-tyrant Saul himself, though not more pointedly alluding to him.

The more thoroughly we enter into David's especial circumstances, the more easily shall we be able to see how naturally—nay almost inevitably—he could only conceive of the removal of such enemies from a kingdom over which he was to reign, by looking forward to their extermination. Even Israel as a nation might afterwards feel justified in appropriating the same language, without excusing Christians from the supreme duty of forgiving their enemies. "The 'salvation' for which the psalmist prays is a temporal deliverance, which can only be effected at the expense of the implacable enemies who are seeking his life; and it will be a vindication of God's faithfulness and a proof of His righteous government at which he cannot but rejoice"—Kp.

"The perfect tense" hath rescued, hath looked, "looks back from the hour of thanksgiving upon an answered prayer"—Kp. as also Per.; and therefore in the above rendering these clauses have been included in the quotation marks.

PSALM 55.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Bitter Complaint of the Treachery of an Intimate Friend.

ANALYSIS.—(Of the psalm as reconstructed.) Strophe I., vers. 1—7, Invocation of God under great Nervous Excitement, leading to a Desire to Escape like a Dove. Strophe II., vers. 8, 16—19, Refuge sought in Prayer for Personal Deliverance and for the Punishment of Traitors. Strophe III., vers. 12—14, 20, 21, Vivid Delineation of Treacherous Friend. Strophe IV., vers. 9—11, 15, 23a, b, Graphic Picture of Civic Disorders and Terrible Imprecations on the Authors of them. Strophe V., vers. 22, 23c, The Psalmist Admonishes Himself and Regains his Confidence in Jehovah.

[Lm.] An Instructive-psalm—By David.

1 Do give ear, O God, to my prayer—
and do not hide thyself from my supplication:

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2 Do attend to me, and answer me—
I may wander[a] in my murmuring, [b] and may moan—
3 At the voice of an enemy—
because of the pressure[c] of a lawless one;
For they keep dislodging[d] on me trouble—[e]
and <in anger> bear me a grudge.
4 ||My heart|| continues writhing within me—
and ||terrors of death|| have fallen upon me:
5 ||Fear and trembling|| ever and anon enter me—
and |there overwhelmeth me| a shudder, and I say:—
6 "Would that I had pinions like a dove—
I would fly away and settle down:
7 Lo! <afar> would I flee—
I would lodge in a wilderness."

8 I would await a deliverer for me—[f]
from rushing wind, from storm:
16 ||I|| <unto God> would cry—
and ||Jehovah|| should save me;
17 <Evening and morning and noon>—
would I murmur and moan:—[g]
18 "Ransom thou, in peace, my soul—
that none may approach me;[h]
for <in multitudes> have they come—
who are against me."
19 May GOD |hear|, who aforetime sat enthroned,
and may he humble them[i] who have no reliefs—[j]
since they revere not God.

12 For it is ||not an enemy|| who keeps reproaching me—
or I might bear it;
Nor ||one who had been hating me|| who against me hath magnified himself—
or I could hide myself from him;
13 But ||thou|| a man mine equal—
mine associate and mine intimate,—
14 So that ||together|| we were wont to find sweet counsel—
<in the house of God> used we to walk in the throng.
20 He hath thrust forth his hand against them who were wont to salute him—
hath violated his covenant:
21 <Smoother than curds> was his face—[k]
yet war was in his heart;
<Softer> were his words than oil—
yet ||they|| were drawn swords!
9 Confuse, Sovereign Lord, divide their tongue,
for I have seen Violence and Strife in the city;
10 <Day and night> they go round on her walls,
and ||Trouble[l] and Mischief|| are in her midst,—

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[a] Or: "shew restlessness."
[b] Or: "soliloquy."
[c] *Gk.*: "outcry." O.G. 734 prefer "pressure."
[d] Or: "letting fall."
[e] Or: "iniquity."
[f] So Sep. On marginal notation of verses, see Exposition.
[g] M.T. adds: "that he might hear my voice."
[h] Cp. O.G. 897b.
[i] So nearly—Gn. and Dr. (note).
[j] Or: "changes."
[k] So Br. after Sep.
[l] "Naughtiness"—Dr.

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11 ||Engulfing ruin|| is in her midst,
and there depart not from the broad place (within her gate[a])
Oppression and Deceit.
15 Desolations[b] on them! let them go down to hades alive[c]!
for ||wicked doings|| have their dwelling place within them.
23 But ||thou|| O God! bring them down to the well of the pit:
||men of bloodshed and deceit|| let them not live out half their days!

22 Cast, on Jehovah, thy lot, and ||he|| will sustain thee:
he will not suffer, to the ages, that a righteous man be shaken.
||I||, therefore, will trust in thee, O Jehovah![d]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the dove of the distant terebinths.[e]

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[a] Where the court of justice usually sat, and where Justice and Truth should have been conspicuous.

[b] Or (dividing one word into two): "May death pounce on them." Then, as if recalling that wish to make it stronger: "Let them go down," etc.

[c] Cp. Num. 16[30, 33].

[d] In Sep: "kyrie."

[e] See Intro., Chap. I., Obs. 3, "Fourthly."

EXPOSITION.

The abrupt transitions observable in this psalm seem to have been noticed by all expositors, by some of whom dislocation has been suspected and transpositions accordingly proposed. It is comparatively easy to *translate* fragments, though always with risks due to losing the thread; but, in the present case, as soon as a resolute attempt was made at continuous *interpretation*, the irresistible conclusion was brought home that some ACCIDENT must have happened in the early history of this psalm, as violent as that which may be expected to result from the tearing out of a leaf and its re-insertion in the wrong place. Such readers as cannot be induced to believe that such an accident might happen, can restore the psalm to its traditional form by following the marginal notation of verses; and by the same means open-minded critics can trace and test the endeavour here made to present the psalm in an intelligible and profitable shape. Perfect success is not claimed for the result; but it is hoped that the candid will at least benefit by the endeavour now made—an endeavour reluctantly begun and cautiously executed.

The problems confronted by the exposition of this psalm on its merits, become absorbingly interesting in proportion as they are understood. Is it possible that David wrote this psalm? and if he did, what light is thrown on the events of his reign, additional to that

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which is obtainable elsewhere? For some, indeed, the bare fact of the ascription of this psalm **To David** will be conclusive evidence that he wrote it. Others there are, who, while regarding that fact as presumptive evidence of the Davidic authorship, are not at all disinclined to the testing of such presumption by internal evidence; and at least are prepared to give a candid consideration to any difficulties which can be legitimately shewn to stand in the way of such conclusion. There seems to be a general consent that *if* David wrote the Psalm, then AHITHOPHEL, his counsellor, must have been the treacherous friend who is so vividly portrayed in it. But then it is said by some, that a king could never have so emphatically called his servant his **equal.** Surely those who raise this objection underestimate the generosity of David's nature; and assuming, as we must, that David's counsellor was an exceedingly able man, and believing, as we well may, that he had until lately readily promoted the public interests which he knew lay near his master's heart, it is easy to think that the more David's kingly position put a distance between himself and many of his subjects, the more would his heart be drawn out to the gifted man whose counsels he had learned to prize. This difficulty then may be dismissed as imaginary. A far more plausible objection may be based on the unlikelihood that David could ever have written of Jerusalem in such terms as are here employed of the city in which the psalmist finds himself—especially considering David's undoubted responsibility for the condition of the city. "It is difficult to believe," says Kirkpatrick with great force, "that Jerusalem can have been such a hotbed of discord and disorder and iniquity as the psalm describes; and still more difficult to imagine that David should use the language of this psalm in regard to a state of things for which he was largely responsible." The great responsibility of David in such a case no one can question. Whether, *if* such a deplorable state of things existed, David would have been likely so frankly to confess it, is a psychological problem depending for its solution on the play of some of the most subtle capabilities of the human heart. If we can imagine, as we readily may, that the unhappy king was now in a state of mind predisposed to make a clean breast of everything, and at least to look the ugliest facts full in the face; then, even though he is not now consciously weighing his own responsibility, but rather inclining to dwell on the responsibility of others, we may credit him with the *rising courage* to abate nothing of the truth, and therefore to give frank expression to his convictions, however appalling. Besides, all that was noblest in David's ideals of what Jerusalem ought to be, and all that he had to be most proud of in his past endeavours to bring her up to those ideals, would now tend

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to make him—if otherwise in a likely state of mind—a severe critic of Jerusalem's present condition. So that the only serious question we have to confront is whether Jerusalem's moral condition was in *as bad a way* (or nearly as bad, allowing something for unconscious exaggeration, due to morbid apprehensions) as is so forcibly set forth in this psalm. Alas! it may. The evidence is growing upon us—that it may. The connected study of foregoing psalms has been gradually preparing us to perceive the alarming possibility—that it may. What are the principal factors of the situation? They are these. David has for years been the chief judge in Jerusalem; and he has now for a good long while been neglecting his judicial duties. His people have grown used vainly to look for him in the gate of the city. Grievances and wrongs have been unredressed. Justice delayed has been justice denied. Unvisited offences have fast begotten others, and worse. The chief judge absent, his subordinates have grown remiss. Even Kirkpatrick admits that "David's administration of justice seems to have been lax or inadequate (2 Sam. 15[2ff.]). A well-grounded admission! *How long* has this royal remissness been working out its consequences? We cannot exactly say; but we have several baleful influences to reckon with, for the play of which allowance must be made: the adultery—the murder—the impenitence; indisposing for attention to duty; the leper-stroke—the pain—the disfigurement—the shame, naturally and inevitably increasing and prolonging such indisposition. And then the habit of neglect would breed excuse for further neglect. All these influences would be additional to those absences from home on warlike expeditions, which would all tend indefinitely to prolong David's absence from his post as judge in Israel. So that it is a natural surmise, that David's neglect of his judicial functions in Jerusalem had extended to many months' complete absence from his post in the gate of the city; and that, during those weary months, civic disorders had been growing apace. He awakes at length to the stern realities of Jerusalem's internal condition; institutes inquiries, receives information, compares the notes of his informants; and this is what he sees; and, being a poet, this is the graphic picture drawn by his muse: **Violence, Strife, Trouble, Mischief, Engulfing Ruin, Oppression, Deceit,** walking abroad, stalking through the city, circumambulating her walls, by day, by night—causing a rapid and awful moral deterioration and even devastation. Alas! in the circumstances, it is not too bad to be true; but it is a terrible revelation. Instead, therefore, of being content, with Kirkpatrick, with a "negative conclusion," by saying we cannot tell who wrote this psalm, much rather are we entitled to revert to David's terrible fall, and to discover here, drawn by his own hand, this further effect of his sin.

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Further: it is just like *him*,—not as though he were essentially a revengeful man, but as undoubtedly a passionately devoted lover of Zion and an inborn hater of perversity,—that, on surveying the picture his own hand has drawn, he should break out in terrible imprecations on those who had done so much to degrade the city of his love! **Desolations on them!**

But *is* it fully as much like him, to have—if not whined like a whipt cur—at least mournfully cooed like a timid, disconsolate **dove**? This too is life-like—under the circumstances, the peculiarities of which should not for a moment be forgotten. Months of suffering and shame have wrought havoc on his personal condition. He is fitful, moody, morbidly imaginative. He is so conscious of his disturbed mental condition, that, when he begins to compose this psalm, he anticipates he shall **wander. The voice of an enemy**, which he overhears, alas! is the voice of an old friend. He can perceive, acting on his old friends, **the pressure of a lawless one**, an enigmatic phrase, most apt and illuminating when understood as an allusion to the as yet absent Absalom,—whose name, we have before noted David's reluctance to mention. Ahithophel has set the ball of calumny rolling. One damaging fact after another has been whispered in conclave; so that, to David's heated imagination, his enemies are rolling down **boulders** upon him! No wonder, then, that for a few moments, he longs for the strong **pinions of a dove** in the vain hope of leaving all trouble behind him—at least till the **tempest** of rebellion has passed. For a few moments only! For although the timid spirit of the dove still lingers on him, after he has in his own imagination finished his flight far away, yet his *cooing* soon turns to *cursing*, especially when fired with dark memories of Ahithophel.

It has been too hastily concluded, from 2 Sam. 15[31], that David could not have known of his counsellor's treachery when he wrote this psalm. That, however, is not in evidence. He may have been well aware of that some time before Absalom's Insurrection had become an accomplished fact.

The suicide of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17[23]) comes into a most suggestive relation to ver. 23 of this psalm; and, on the whole, the ancient Jewish expositors seem to have had a truer insight into this relation than modern Christian interpreters. "The Talmud and Midrashim occasionally refer to him [Ahithophel]. In the latter he is classed with Balaam as an instance of the ruin which overtakes wisdom that is not the gift of Heaven; and in the former (*Baba bathra*, b. 7) the great lesson of his life is said to be, 'Be not in strife with the house of David, and break off from none of its rule'"—Hastings' "Bible Dictionary," Vol. I., p. 57.

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PSALM 56.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Song by David in Captivity.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, In a few words, David Describes his Captive Condition, and Composes a *Refrain* of Praise. Strophe II., vers. 5—11, After a Fuller Description of his Captors, the Prisoner prays for their Subjugation because of their Iniquities, Asks that His Own Sufferings may be recorded, Anticipates Future Victory over his Enemies, and Repeats and Enlarges his *Refrain*. Strophe III., vers. 12, 13, The Captive, Remembering his Vows, Promises to Fulfil them; and Anticipates Freedom for his Spared Life.

[Lm.] By David—A Tablet—When the Philistines seized him in Gath.

1 Be gracious unto me, O God, for mere man hath |crushed| me:
<all the day> |a warrior| keeps on oppressing me.
2 They who are watching me |have crushed me| all the day,
for ||multitudes|| are warring on me loftily.
3 <What day I am afraid> ||I|| <unto thee> will direct my trust.
4 *<In God> will I boast, as my theme*[a],
<In God> do I trust, without fear,—
What can' |flesh| do |unto me|?

5 <All the day> <my words>[b] do they wrest,
against me> are all their plots:
(6) <For mischief> [6]they gather, lie hid,
||they themselves|| mark my footprints,[c]
as they have waited for my life.
7 <Because of iniquity> there is no[d] deliverance for them:—
<in anger> bring down ||peoples||, O God!
8 <My wandering> ||thou thyself|| |hast recorded|:
put thou my tears in thy wine-skin,
are they not in thy scroll?
9 ||Then|| shall my foes |turn back|—on the day I proclaim.[e]
<this> I know, for ||God|| is for me!
10 *<In God> will I boast, as a theme,*
<In Jehovah> will I boast, as a theme;
11 *<In God> do I trust, without fear:*
What can' |a son of earth| do |unto me|?

12 <Upon me>, O God, are thy vows,
I will pay back thankofferings to thee;
13 For thou hast rescued my soul from death,
wilt thou not [rescue] my feet from thrusts[f]?
that I may walk to and fro, before God, in the light of the living?[g]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] Do not destroy.

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[a] The M.T. and versions have "his" word or theme; but as the difference in Heb. is merely the length of a single fine stroke, "my" is preferred here, as better preparing for the omission of the pronoun in ver. 10.
[b] Or: "affairs."
[c] Ml. "my heels"—perh. "to trip me up."
[d] So *Gt.*; and so Baethgen, in O.G. 812b.
[e] That is: Either proclaim myself King, or proclaim war against them.
[f] Ml.: "from thrusting": *i.e.*, by an enemy to trip me up. See 116[8].
[g] "In the light of the land of the living." Cp. 116[9]—Br.

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EXPOSITION.

Nothing is lost, but much is gained, by letting this bright little psalm into the niche provided for it by its superscription. It can still be regarded as subsequently employed in national worship, with the obvious gain of bringing up afresh into the memories of the people the story of their beloved hero-king. Any analogies between the chequered experiences of the nation and those of David, would leave intact those snatches of Davidic autobiography thus preserved, which become increasingly precious when dovetailed into each other so as to furnish an inner history, illuminative of the outer facts with which we are already familiar in the study of David's life.

It has been assumed by critics, with good reason, that David's first sojourn with the King of Gath, as narrated in 1 Sam. 21, 22, though half voluntary in the impulse to risk it as a method of escaping from Saul, was nevertheless in the experience of it a species of "durance vile," which sufficiently answers to the circumstances assumed by the psalm to be existent. But, in truth, there need be no feverish anxiety on our part to reach absolute certainty in our attempts to fix on the particular seizure of David by the men of Gath, presupposed by this psalm. After the slaying of Goliath by the young Bethlehemite, it must always have been a tempting thing to the Gittites to get that famous but yet perhaps personally unknown stripling into their hands, and to wreak on him some of the vengeance, the chief volume of which nevertheless was pent up for bursting on the more formidable head of King Saul. We cannot therefore be sure that David individually did not find himself more than once a captive in Gath.

It is more to the point to open our eyes to perceive the realistic fitness of the language of this psalm to apply to such a captivity. We no sooner do this, than we see the whole thing set vividly before our eyes. With his living faith in Jehovah, these stalwart Gittites are, in David's sight, no more than **mere men.** Nevertheless, for the time, they **have crushed** him. **All the day** long a **warrior-guard** annoys and vexes him, needlessly making him feel how irksome are his chains. Outside are **watchers,** taking good care he shall not escape. **Multitudes** of warlike men, carrying **loftily** their heads, are ready to slay him. Is he **afraid?** He takes up his harp, and directing his trust to Jehovah, improvises thus: **In God will I boast, as my theme.** How much of his language his warders understand at its fall value, we know not, but he holds on: **All the day my words do they wrest;** and so on, gathering strength, he proceeds. If they do attend, and can decipher his words; one while, they may well tremble as he alludes to their

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iniquity, or laugh him to scorn as he foretells their turning back before his face in the yet coming days when he shall proclaim war against them; another while, they may almost relent, as they catch him confessing his tears. Again, he rings out his Refrain, made more strong and more bold; nor forgets to promise how in happier times he will make good his vows.

PSALM 57.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Reminiscence of David's Early Troubles when Pursued by Saul, Subsequently Adapted to Brighter Times.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Prayer for Deliverance from Outward Trouble, marked by Resignation during its Continuance. Strophe II., vers. 6—11, Further Reference to the Trouble speedily gives place to Joyful Praise. A *Refrain*, vers. 5, 11, of Comprehensive Beauty Lights up the Whole Psalm.

[Lm.] By David—A Tablet—When he fled from the face of Saul into a cave.

1 Be gracious unto me, O God, be gracious unto me,
for <in thee> hath my soul taken refuge:
yea <in the shadow of thy wings> do I take refuge,
until the storm of ruin |shall pass|.

2 I will cry unto God, Most High—
unto GOD, who is carrying through my cause for me.

3 He will send out of the heavens, to save me,
he hath given to reproach[a] one who would trample upon me. Selah
God |will send forth| his kindness and his truth.

4 ||My soul|| is in the midst of lions,
I must lie down amidst such as consume the sons of men:
||their teeth|| are spears and arrows,
and ||their tongue|| is a sharp sword.

5 *Be exalted above the heavens, O God!*
<above all the earth> be thy glory!

6 <A net> made they ready for my steps,
<bowed down> was my soul:
They digged, before me, a pit,
they fell into the midst thereof. Selah

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[a] So Sep.

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7 <Steadfast> is my heart, O God, <steadfast> is my heart:
I would fain sing and would play!
8 Oh awake, my glory! oh awake, lute and lyre!
I would fain waken the dawn!
9 I will thank thee among the peoples, Sovereign Lord,
I will celebrate thee in psalm[a] among the races of men;
10 For <great unto the heavens> is thy kindness,
and <unto the skies>[b] thy truth.
Be exalted above the heavens, O God!
11 *<above all the earth> be thy glory!*

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] "Do not destroy."

[a] Or: "make melody unto thee." | [b] Or: "fleecy clouds."

EXPOSITION.

It is with confidence submitted that the early portion of this psalm abundantly sustains its ascription **To David.** The latter part was probably added at a later period: hence its duplicate appearance as the early portion of Ps. 108,—a conclusion confirmed by the unshadowed brightness of vers. 7—10. The singular reappearance of trouble in ver. 6, after the first occurrence of the joyful refrain in ver. 5, raises some doubt as to the preservation of this part of the psalm. But, for the moment, it seems fitting to give ourselves up to the undisturbed persuasion that in vers. 1—4, not excluding ver. 6, we have a genuine Davidic fragment. It is just like David; and, by several delicate strokes, exactly reflects the peculiar position he occupied in those early days when he was harassed by Saul. He is not in a fighting mood; but is hunted, seeks refuge, is prepared to wait for deliverance. His cause is in God's hands, who (ver. 2) will **carry through his cause for him:** an expectation which finds fitting use for the unusual word *gmr*, which has given the critics trouble—it is exactly the happy word. Then, too, ver. 3 vividly reminds us of Ps. 18^{16}; and the allusion to Saul himself in ver. 3b is so unmistakable, and yet so delicate, as to sustain the conviction that it was conceived just to suit such a reference; 3c being almost as vivid an assurance that the breastplate of the high-priest would not fail him (Cp. 1 Sam. 23^{9-12}); while the **spears** and **tongues** of Saul's warriors, in the midst of which he now was, formed a closely compacted series of dangers, which David was the last man to underrate. Even the awkwardly recurring danger of ver. 6 is too apt not to have originally belonged to the Davidic representation. Although it may, plausibly, be alleged that this part of the psalm fitted the troublous days before Nehemiah's arrival at Jerusalem, yet that does

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not estop us from saying that here, in David's own unique situation and experience, we discover the actual genesis of the words. Their subsequent adaptation to a different set of circumstances, bearing some resemblance to the original, was a comparatively easy matter.

With respect to the latter half of the psalm—namely, the joyful portion of it,—it is quite natural to conclude it to have been of later origin than the former half. This, however, is no reason why David himself should not have written it, after his position was secured. Or Hezekiah may have penned it. Even Isaiah may have supplied it. It is of small importance; and the evidence is perhaps too scanty to warrant a conclusion. This may be said: That ver. 9 reminds us of 18^{49} and vers. 5 and 11 are similar to vers. 1 and 9 of Ps. 8. We may be sure that in the earlier days of David's reign over all Israel, a great joy filled his heart; and congenial influences would predispose him to just such an outburst of song as here delights us: when the sweet singer would anticipate the dawn, awaken it with song to the accompaniment of lute or lyre, give expression to his messianic hopes for the nations of the earth, and mount to the skies in his grateful recognition of the kindness and faithfulness of his God.

With all those memories and hopes of his noble ancestor to inspire him in the dark days of Sennacherib's invasion, HEZEKIAH could most appropriately commit this psalm to his Chief Musician with the injunction to associate it with the sentiment Do not destroy.

PSALM 58.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Significant Warning to Corrupt Judges.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Corrupt Judges Apostrophised, Described in their Evil Doings and Training, in the Harm they Do and the Hopelessness of Trying to Reform them. Strophe II., vers 6—9, 11, the Judgment which has Overtaken them, by the Advent of a Righteous King. [A Maccabean cry for vengeance, ver. 10.]

[Lm.]—By David—A Tablet.

1 *Do ye ||indeed||, ye mighty ones, [a] speak ||righteously||?*
<with equity> do ye judge, the sons of men?
2 Nay! ||ye all||[b] do work ||perversity||,
<throughout the land> it is ||violence|| |that your hands| weigh out.

[a] So *Gt.*; cp. Exo. 15^{11}—Gn.
[b] So it shd. be (w. Syr.)—Gn.

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3 Lawless men |have been estranged| from birth,
they have gone astray from nativity, speaking falsehood:
4 They have poison, like the poison of a serpent,
like a cobra, deaf and stopping his ear;
5 That will not hearken to the voice of whisperers,
when the wise one is casting his spells.

6 ||God|| hath broken[a] their teeth in their mouth,
<the incisors of young lions> hath Jehovah |knocked out|.[a]
7 Let them flow away like water, let them disperse of themselves,
are they luxuriant as grass? ||so|| let them fade![b]
8 Like a snail that melteth away as it goeth:
there hath fallen fire, they have not viewed the sun:
9 <Before they perceive it> they have become like brambles,
<while they are yet green>[c] <in hot anger> he sweepeth them away.[d]
11 *A son of earth, then, may say—|Surely| there is ||fruit|| for a righteous man!*
|Surely| there |are| messengers divine who are judging[e] in the land!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] Do not destroy.

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[a] Tenses changed by mere change of vowel-points.
[b] So w. Sep. and Br. in this and following lines.
[c] Ml.: "living."
[d] M.T.: (prob. Maccabean addition):—
10 Let a righteous man |rejoice| that he hath seen an avenging,
<His feet> let him bathe in the blood of the lawless one.
[e] Plural in Heb., warranting reference to 82^{1}, 977, also Exo. 21^{6}, $22^{8, 9, 28}$.

EXPOSITION.

So little excuse is there for discrediting the superscription of this psalm by David, that we no sooner accept for it the proffered historical setting, than we become conscious of a powerful appeal to our sense of the fitness of things. There is nothing inherently improbable in the supposition, that, when David began to reign, he found occupying the position of judges throughout the land, men utterly unfit for it: wealthy, overbearing, careless; accustomed to falsehood from their youth up. Carry forward the state of things known to have existed from the time of "the judges"; recall how little the sons of Eli and of Samuel did to inculcate a high standard of national righteousness; notice how conspicuous by their absence are any efforts by King Saul to elevate the practical godliness of the nation; then remember how, as we have lately seen (Ps. 55), a comparatively short period of royal remissness, somewhere after this time, brought forth an enormous crop of noxious weeds in Jerusalem itself;—and the conclusion will no longer seem far-fetched, if we assume that, when David came to the throne, he discovered judicial conditions so corrupt as to cause to flame out his

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known passion for righteousness. We know, from Ps. 101, the purity he deemed essential to his court; and, from Ps. 82, the estimate formed by his Chief Singer Asaph of the enormous wrongs easily inflicted on the helpless by a lax administration of justice. Hence we need feel no surprise to find him, in this psalm, equal to the occasion of giving corrupt judges notice, in solemn psalmody, of the drastic treatment which their perversion of righteousness might expect at his hands: no surprise to discover what a mighty instrument he was thus employing to create a purified and elevated public sentiment, likely to aid him in subsequent detailed endeavours to make Israel a law-abiding and holy people.

From this point of view, survey this psalm; and how fitting an instrument it appears for the forwarding of these noble ends. It grips these high-placed evil-doers with a will; sets their wrong-doing plainly before their faces; shows them that their characters have been thoroughly reckoned up; warns them that little is expected of them by way of reform—even the spell of a psalm is unlikely to save them from the consequences of their inborn and long-practised depravity. Such is the purport, under poetic guise, of the first Strophe of this psalm. The warning is veiled; but men must be stupid as well as stubborn if they cannot see through it.

The King, however (Strophe II.), has them in his power; and he knows it. They may yet be as fierce as lions; but in setting over them his righteous servant David, **God has already, in effect, broken their teeth in their mouth**; yea, let the young magnates, who are prepared to exceed their fathers in high-handed injustice, know, that **Jehovah hath already knocked out their terrible incisors!** The best thing they can do, is to disappear **like water** that drieth up; **like grass** for which the sun is too hot, whose luxuriating hours are done; **like snails** crawling away and wasting as they go. Otherwise, if they will not be admonished, let them beware lest they be suddenly made like unto **thorns**; yea, even though they be like **green brambles**, lest the **fierce fire** and **strong wind** of Divine wrath scorch and scatter them as in a storm of retribution!

Is it terrible? Yea, but it is just! Is it unmerciful? Nay, for they are thus publicly warned. The tempest will clear the air, and bring about health and peace. Justice is the foundation of grace. The common man has to be cared for. Well-doers must be encouraged—must have given back to them the conviction, that **there is fruit for a righteous man**: that, as there are visible **representatives of God judging in the land**, so there is an invisible God judging on the earth and in heaven.

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PSALM 59.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Beleaguered Psalmist Prays for Rescue and Avenging.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, In Praying for Rescue, the Psalmist Describes the Character and Conduct of his Enemies, and Protests his Own Innocence. Strophe II., vers. 6—9, Further Describing his Enemies, he Anticipates a Divine Mockery of the Nations, and Rises to a *Refrain* of Praise for Divine Protection. Strophe III., vers. 10—13, In his Confidence, he Prays for the Monumental Preservation, and Ultimate Destruction of his Enemies, to the Praise of Jehovah as Universal Ruler. Strophe IV., vers. 14—17, With the Disappointment of his Enemies, he contrasts His Own Anticipated Joy, and Repeats his *Refrain* of Praise.

[Lm.] By David—A Tablet—when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

1 Rescue me from my foes, O my God,
<from them who rise up against me> shalt thou set me on high:
2 Rescue me from the workers of iniquity,[a]
and <from the men of bloodshed> save me.
3 For lo! they have lain in wait for my life,[b]
mighty ones |keep gathering against me|,—
not for transgression of mine, nor for sin of mine, O Jehovah!
4 <Without iniquity [of mine]> do they run and station themselves,—
oh rouse thyself to meet me, and see:
5 Yea ||thou, Jehovah of hosts, God of Israel||[c]
oh awake to visit all the nations,—
do not be gracious unto any mischievous traitors. Selah

6 *They return at even, they growl like a dog, they surround the city.*
7 Lo! they pour forth with their mouth,
||swords|| are in their lips,—
"For who can hear?"
8 But ||thou, Jehovah|| wilt laugh at them,
thou wilt mock at all nations,[d]
9 *O my[e] Strength! <unto thee> will I make melody,*[f]
for ||God|| is my lofty retreat.

10 ||My God of kindness|| will come to meet me,
||God|| will let me gaze on my watchful foes.
11 Do not slay them, lest my people |forget|,
cause them to wander by thy hosts,[g] and prostrate them,—
our Shield! Sovereign Lord!

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[a] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).
[b] U.: "soul." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[c] M.T. (as rendered by Dr.): "And thou, Jehovah God of hosts, the God of Israel." Br. has simply: "Thou Yahweh, Sabaoth."
[d] Cp. 2^4.
[e] So some cod. *read* (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn.
[f] So it shd. be. Cp. ver. 17—Gn. M.T.: "over thee will I keep guard"—Dr.; "upon thee will I wait"—Del.
[g] Or: "army," "force"—earthly or heavenly.

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12 ||The sin of their mouth|| is the word of their lips,
let them, then, be captured in their pride,—
both for the oath and for the deception they recount.
13 Bring to a full end in wrath, bring to a full end that they may be no more:
that [men] may know there is a God in Jacob,
who is ruling to the ends of the earth,[a] Selah

14 *Then let them return at even, let them growl like a dog, let them surround the city.*
15 ||They|| will be suffered to prowl about for food,
and <if not satisfied> then let them whine!
16 But ||I|| will sing thy strength,
I will ring out, in the morning, thy kindness;
For thou hast become a lofty retreat for me,
and a place to flee to, when I am in a strait.
17 *O my strength! <unto thee> will I make melody,*
for ||God|| is my lofty retreat, my God of kindness.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the "lily of testimony" = The feast of weeks.

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[a] "That the God of Jacob ruleth the ends of the earth"—Sep.

EXPOSITION.

Most of this psalm answers well to the historical occasion named in its superscription; and though, both in form and in substance, it suggests subsequent adaptations and additions, yet these are comparatively unimportant, and need not divert us from the fruitful reflections which spring from the origin of this striking composition as a whole.

The writer is beset by enemies: just such enemies as we know David had in the court of King Saul—**workers of iniquity, men of bloodshed, foreigners** who had taken the **oath** of allegiance to Israel and yet could boast of the **deception** they had practised in accepting it; probably, like Doeg, the Edomite, rich and powerful, with ready **access** to the ear of Saul, and more willing than David's fellow-Hebrews to become the tools of that fickle and jealous monarch. Such men, in David's intensely patriotic eyes, would appear like unclean **dogs**, ravenous, cruel, dangerous.

At the hands of these enemies, the writer is now in imminent danger. They have been **lying in wait** for him, keep **gathering together against** him, saying **false and cruel things** about him, thereby converting their **tongues into swords**; they not only gather against him, but **watch**, one or two by day and a larger number by

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night, **surrounding the city,** so as to guard every avenue of escape. So far, a graphic picture of the way in which Saul's emissaries would seek David for the purpose of **killing** him.

There is surely little cause for wonder that so much importance should be attached to the active use of their **tongues** in hunting for David. For though scouts and watchers when thus on duty would naturally do that part of their work in silence and by stealth; yet the most effective part taken by these men, would be their use of their tongues when they had Saul's ear, and when rallying their own and David's fellow-servants to join in the pursuit and the waylaying. No doubt there would be times of actual watching, when their policy would be silence; but there would be times of discovery that they had lost their prey, when volleys of cursing would be **poured forth by their mouth**; and when compelled to return to their master with the confession that the young Bethlehemite had escaped them, it is likely that their crestfallen looks and abject words made them appear not a little like curs **whining** as if in fear of a beating. And, if David could foresee their shame overtaking them, he might very well say: **If not satisfied, then let them whine!** Whether it be supremely dignified or not, at least it is life-like! So far, both the conditions presupposed by the psalm, and the movements evident therein, are unmistakably such as suit the crisis named in the superscription.

But, in two places of the psalm, it must be admitted to be open to question whether we have an original sentiment, or a later addition. Those two places are at vers. 5 and 8 respectively. At the former point, there is the outburst of the prayer—**Awake to visit all nations;** and, at the latter, there is the positive assurance—**But thou, O Jehovah, wilt laugh at them, Thou wilt mock at all nations.** Here it may, plausibly, be contended, we have traces of a later time. And it may be so. It may be, that it is too soon yet for the antagonism of Gentile nations to Jehovah and of His antagonism to them to be thus anticipated. Such a forecast would more naturally become the later times of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Israel with his Assyrians; or of Jeremiah, when Nebuchadnezzar was coming with his Babylonian hosts; or, still more, the troublous times of the return from the Exile when the little Gentile nations around Israel were so persistent and so malicious in their conspiracies and attacks on Israel. These outbursts in the psalm against Gentiles may very plausibly be attributed to such a later time. And there we might be content to leave the problem; especially as not raising any real objection against the Davidic authorship of the main body of the psalm, when the known habit of adapting psalms to later occasions has due allowance made for it.

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On this point we should not have lingered, but for the desire of protesting that even this concession to the probability of a later date for a few lines in this psalm cannot be compelled. It is probable—no more. It may have been given to David himself, thus early in his prophetic career, to catch glimpses of later events in the history of Israel: to be led on to catch such glimpses from nothing more developed than the antagonisms and treacheries of a few Doegs among the retainers of Saul.

Worthy of observation is that unique prayer in ver. 11 of this psalm: **Do not slay them, lest my people forget, cause them to wander.** On the one hand this reminds us of Pharaoh, who instead of being at once slain, was preserved to permit him to develop all the obstinacy that was in him—to the brighter manifestation of the glory of Jehovah; and, on the other hand, it quickens our inquisitiveness to learn from later prophecies whether or not the restored Israel of the future may not be similarly **kept in mind** by the monumental sparing of enemies who would otherwise be summarily destroyed (cp. Dan. 7^{12}).

|| "They || —let them whine; but || I || will sing": a contrast, almost harsh in its sharpness; yet how suggestive. Ours be the faith in the Right, and in the God of Rightness, that by detestation of all meanness, and the wholehearted love of nobleness, we may know how to escape the **whine** and ensure the **song.**

PSALM 60.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Outcry of Anguish, Expostulation and Entreaty, under a Severe Reverse.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Lamentation over a Defeat. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Prayer for Victory, based on an Ancient Oracle. Strophe III., vers. 9—12, In Order to Victory, Divine Guidance and Presence Besought.

[Lm.] A Tablet—By David—To instruct—When he waged war with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand.[a]

1 O God, thou hast rejected us—hast broken out upon us,
Thou hast been angry—wilt thou not take us back?[b]

[a] Cp. 44, text and Exposition. | [b] So O.G. 998b.

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2 Thou hast shattered the land—hast split it open,
Heal thou the fractures thereof—for it hath tottered.
3 Thou hast sated[a] thy people with hardship,
hast let them drink reeling as wine.[b]
4 Thou hast given to them who revere thee a signal,
in order to take flight before the bow![c]

5 <That thy beloved ones |may be rescued|>
oh give victory with thy right hand, and answer me.[d]

6 ||God|| spake in his sanctuary:—[e]
"Let me exult, let me apportion Shechem,
And <the Vale of Succoth> will I measure out:

7 <Mine> is Gilead, and <mine> Manasseh:
But ||Ephraim|| is the defence of my head,
||Judah|| is my commander's staff:[f]

8 ||Moab|| is my wash-bowl,
<Unto Edom> will I cast my sandal:[g]
<Over Philistia> will I[h] raise a shout of triumph."

9 Who will conduct me to the city entrenched?
who will lead me as far as Edom?
10 Wilt not ||thou|| O God, [who hast] rejected us?
yea wilt thou not, O God, go forth in our hosts?
11 Grant to us help out of distress!
since <unreal> is a victory[i] by man.
12 <In God> we shall do valiantly,
||he himself||, therefore, shall[j] tread down our adversaries.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For stringed instruments.

[a] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[b] So O.G. 947.
[c] As if with the irony of astonishment.
[d] *Written* "us"; but *read* "me." Some cod. (w. 4 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.), both write and read "me"—Gn.
[e] Or: "holiness."
[f] Sep.: "my king.
[g] Thus assigning to both Moab and Edom a menial position.
[h] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[i] Or: "deliverance." "salvation."
[j] A consenting petition: "We are willing to accept his terms, and give him the glory." Cp. Exposition on 51[7, 8].

EXPOSITION.

By reference to Ps. 44, text and notes, it will be recalled that this psalm as well as that was written in the interval of suspense that occurred between the alarming raid of Edomites while the main portion of David's army was in Syria, and the effective relief obtained by Joab's sanguinary defeat of these their troublesome neighbours. The exact circumstances have to be inferred from a few known facts; but, notwithstanding the disadvantage under which we thus labour, this psalm offers a few outstanding features, which are not a little impressive and instructive. It is needless to speak of the temporary alarm, almost amounting to panic, which is so often caused in the history of

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warfare, by reverses which are serious enough at the time, but soon overcome and forgotten. It is not often that their effect is so vividly described as in the opening strophe of this psalm: this raid from the south seemed for the time like the driving home of a wedge splitting open the whole fabric of the nation; like the administering of a poisoned draught stupefying the senses of the people. It is seen at a glance how both weal and woe are ever closely associated with Jehovah's providence over Israel. It is specially observable how the psalmist bases his plea for restored success to his arms on the records of the past. As we have had repeated occasion to remark, David's wars were first and foremost a resumption and continuance of those of Joshua. Here is an old record, dating from the conquest, from which the inferiority of Edom's assigned relation to Israel is clearly foretold. And is **Edom** thus to seize a favourable chance to overrun the whole land? This can never be tolerated: **Who will conduct me to the fortified city** among the rocks? We cannot say whether Joab, in his terrible slaughter of Edomites, exceeded his commission, or made more than necessary reprisals, but this we can see—that David, at least, desired, from the outset of this southern expedition, to act in unreserved submission to Divine guidance. To the student of prophecy it is enough to say, Watch **Edom**, for developments not even yet complete! To the humble saint, who cannot well grasp national and world-wide problems, it may suffice to address the watch-words: **Who will conduct me? Vain is a victory by man! In God we shall do valiantly.** May no readers of these lines have **adversaries** other than those whom **God himself will tread down!**

"Shechem at the foot of Mt. Gerizim, the chief gathering-place in the time of Joshua, stands for the country west of the Jordan: cp. Josh. 24[1]. The Valley of Succoth, in the valley of the Jordan on the eastern side, near the Jabbok . . . stands for the country east of the Jordan . . . Gilead, as distinguished from Manasseh, must indicate with it the two chief divisions east of the Jordan, as Ephraim and Judah, the two chief divisions on the west. Accordingly Gilead here is for the southern portion assigned to Reuben and Gad, Nu. 32[1-29], and Manasseh for the northern portion, or the land of Bashan. . . . Moab was the troublesome neighbour of Israel, occupying the region east of the Dead Sea. He is to be so reduced that he becomes the wash-basin which is carried by a slave to pour water over his master's hands or feet. . . . Edom, the troublesome neighbour of Judah on the south-east, was also so reduced as to become another slave to whom the master kicks off the sandals when he would have them removed to wash his feet"—Br.

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PSALM 61.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Psalmist, in Banishment, Prays for Restoration.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Prayer for Restoration based on Past Mercies. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Prayer for Long Life, grounded on Public Blessings, and closing with a Promise of Perpetual Praise.

[Lm.] By David.

1 Do hear, O God, my piercing[a] cry,
oh attend unto my prayer:
2 <From the end of the land> <unto thee> will I cry, when my heart fainteth,
<into a rock too high for me (to climb)> shalt thou lead me.
3 For thou hast been a refuge for me,
a tower of strength from the face of the foe.
4 I would fain be a guest in thy tent to the ages,
I would take refuge in the hiding-place of thy wings. Selah

5 For ||thou||, O God, hast hearkened to my vows,
thou hast given a possession to the reverers of thy name.
6 <Days, unto the days of a king> shalt thou add,
his years, as of generation after generation:
7 He shall be enthroned to the ages before God,
<Kindness and Truth> appoint thou to preserve him.
8 <Thus> will I make melody of thy name to futurity,
that I may pay my vows day by day.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For Jeduthun.

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[a] "Plaintive"—Del.; "ringing"—Dr.

EXPOSITION.

No better origin in David's life for this sweet little psalm need be sought, than when the psalmist was at Mahanaim; Absalom's rebellion having been crushed, and the King waiting to return to Jerusalem. It is only a snatch of song, revealing but a glimpse into the experiences of the Monarch; but it is striking, and well worthy, not only of preservation, but of occasional use in the liturgy of the Temple.

Far from home, far from the services of the Sacred Tent, the petitioner cries out to be permitted to return. He is occasionally depressed, but finds solace in his harp, whereon he formulates his

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plea. He recalls past mercies, and the memory of them emboldens his present requests. To be again Jehovah's guest and to realise the sense of nestling under His protection, is his foremost wish.

Reverting to the past, he remembers that those past mercies had been granted in answer to vows previously made; and, in particular, that to his brethren as well as to himself, the Sanctuary had been granted as a priceless possession. Continued life then comes into the field of his desire; and, at this point, he is carried away in what we may describe as a Messianic Ecstasy; asking for such a prolonged continuance of days as far transcended ordinary human existence. What mortal, though crowned, could reasonably expect to live generation after generation? to be enthroned age-abidingly before God? It may be that, as some interpret, David was thinking rather of his dynasty (according to 2 Sam. 7) than of his own person. But the mind soon tires of the thought of a mere dynasty abiding, while the members who in succession sustain it, are all, one after the other, swept away by death. At all events it is a welcome and instructive relief to find the ancient Targum-writing Rabbis discovering, in the prospect of the dynasty, the brighter prospect of a Final Holder of dynastic promises—the Messiah? Thus on ver. 8: "Very pathetic is the paraphrase of the Targum (=*interpretation* or *translation*). 'So will I pay my vows in the day of the redemption of Israel, even in the day when King Messiah is anointed to reign'"—Kp.

PSALM 62.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — Restful Resolution, Exposing the Treacherous and Encouraging the Timorous, traces both Power and Kindness to God the Judge of All.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Counselling himself to be Patient, the Psalmist Remonstrates with False Friends. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Again (by *Refrain*) Counselling Himself to be Patient, he seeks to Restore the Confidence of the People. Strophe III., vers. 9—12, exposing False Grounds of Confidence, he traces all Power and Kindness to the Supreme Judge.

[Lm.] A Psalm—By David.

1 |*Surely*|[a] <*unto God*> *be thou still*,[b] *my soul*,
for[c] <*from him*> *is my salvation:*

[a] Or "only"; and so in vers 2, 4, 5, 6, 9.
[b] M.T.: "silence [is] my soul."
[c] So some cod. (w Sep., Syr., Vul.); cp. ver. 5—Gn.

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2 |*Surely*| ||*he*|| *is my rock and my salvation, my lofty retreat,*
I shall not be greatly shaken.[a]
3 |How long| keep ye rushing at a man,
continue crushing, all of you,—[b]
as at a leaning wall, as at a bulging fence?
4 |Surely| <from his dignity> have they counselled to thrust him out,
they delight in falsehood:
<With his mouth> doth each of them bless,
but <inwardly> they curse.

5 |*Surely*| <*unto God*> *be thou still my, soul,*
for <from him> is mine expectation:
6 |*Surely*| ||*he*|| *is my rock and my salvation, my lofty retreat,*
I shall not be shaken.
7 <On God> depend my safety[c] and mine honour,
||my rock of strength and my refuge|| are in God.[d]
8 Trust in him, all ye congregation[e] of the people,
pour out, before him, your heart,—
||God|| is a refuge for us.

9 |Surely| <mere breath>[f] are men of low degree,
<falsehood> men of high degree:
<in balances> going up, ||they|| are of breath[g] altogether.
10 Do not trust in extortion, nor <on robbery> set vain hope,
<as for wealth> <when it beareth fruit> do not regard [i
11 <One thing> hath God |spoken|,
<Two things> [there are] which I have heard:—
that ||power|| belongeth unto God,
12 and <thine>, Sovereign Lord, is kindness;
for ||thou|| repayest each one according to his doing.[h]

[Nm.]

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[a] "Be shaken"—Br.
[b] According to another vocalisation: "All of you shall be crushed."
[c] Or "salvation."
[d] Or (taking *beth* as *beth-essential*): "is God."
[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.
[f] Or: "a mere vapour."
[g] Or: "of vapour."
[h] Cp. Job 34^{11}, Prov. 24^{12}, Jer. 32^{19}, Eze. 7^{27}, Mt. 16^{27}, Ro. 2^{6}, 2 Cor. 5^{10}, Eph. 6^{8}, Col. 3^{25}, 1 P. 1^{17}, Rev. 22^{12}.

EXPOSITION.

Successfully to adjust this unique psalm to the life of David requires some alertness of apprehension in regard to psychological possibilities. If, however, we assume that the great sin of his life is in the past; that the sore smiting has been borne; that the deep repentance has been felt; that assured pardon has come; and that, in the strength of renewed spiritual health, the mind of this man of God has now become attuned to public duty: if we then further assume that the first consternation on discovery of Absalom's unfaithfulness, has driven the King to his God, with strong crying and tears, and that

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thus the monarch's soul has been calmed to face the situation as best he may;—we can possibly *then* bring, into the realm of the conceivable, the peculiar emotions evident in this psalm. The psalmist is being schooled to calm trust. He has poured out his complaint, wrestled with his fears, and he has tested the sweetness of fellowship with God in his present and prospective troubles; yet not *so* assuredly, but that he feels the need of again and again girding up the loins of his mind, and fully settling it that now, at length, there is no becoming attitude of mind Godward other than one of **silence**, the **silence** that is resolved to distrust no longer—so that, instead of repeating petitions identical with those already offered, he is determined calmly to await the issue. This resolve is what we see crystallising itself into the remarkable introductory refrain to this psalm. The piling up of epithets—**my rock, my salvation, my lofty retreat**—shows the mind actively at work upbuilding its confidence; needless to say, these epithets are strikingly Davidic. But duty has to be faced; and, to this end, is confidence carefully husbanded. The king must make no mistakes about the real situation: his own position has for some time appeared weak in the eyes of his faltering friends,—a little more, and the **leaning wall** will sway over and go down; and there are those who are ready to give a concerted **rush** at it and overthrow it. It is **his dignity** from which they would **thrust** him, that they may set up another in his place. In some given conclave, he learns that he has not a true friend left. Some, in that conclave, who still maintain the appearance of friendliness, are showing treachery in act: **With his mouth doth each of them bless, but inwardly they curse.** So ends the first strophe.

But there is another danger: the *people* are wavering! The first need is to let them see that *the king* does not waver; and therefore, after repeating his self-assuring refrain with its inspiring array of Divine epithets, he deliberately declares his **expectation** to be firm as a rock. Would **the congregation of the people** share this **trust**? let them seek it as the psalmist has done, by **pouring out** their **heart** before **God** so as to find in him a **refuge**. It will be noticed that the prelude to this strophe is made stronger than when it was set before the first: *then* the psalmist was sure he should not be **greatly shaken**, *now* he is confident that he shall not be **shaken**! This is, at least, very life-like!

Finally, the writer of this psalm strongly asserts the stability of Divine order in contrast with human rebellion against it. What is man in opposition to God. **Mere breath** or worse! Whether of **low degree** or of **high degree** in these **balances** he kicks the beam. And man is mere man when he resorts to **extortion** and **robbery**;

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moreover David by this time was **wealthy**; and though we have no reason to think that he unworthily **regarded** his riches, yet can it easily be conceived that base promises were being quietly circulated, as to the gains to be secured by a transfer of allegiance from David to Absalom. There may be some flavour of Wisdom Literature in the noble moralising with which this psalm is concluded; but that literature did not grow up in a day, and David may well have been a link in the chain of writers that, starting from Samuel, gave it birth; as we were reminded by certain sententious sayings in Ps. 18. Certainly, nothing could seem to be more fitting for imparting a strong finish to this psalm, than to be oracularly reminded that **power belongeth unto God**, to bestow as he pleases. David had not sought power: through prophetic channels it had sought him (1 Sam. 16) and been confirmed to him (2 Sam. 7). It is especially life-like, as if with a bright gleam of Davidic inspiration, that the thought of **power** bestowed should be coupled with an appreciation of the **kindness** that moved to the gift (cp. 2 Sam. 7^{15} w. Isa. 55^{3}); and, if any little stroke were wanting to make it seem the more natural, it might be found in the irregularity of suddenly passing from speaking *of* God to the speaking *to* God; **and thine, Sovereign Lord, is kindness!** It appears to come warm from a heart accustomed to sun itself in "the kindness of God" (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness"). Remarkable, too, it is, that **judgment** should be logically linked with **kindness**—of course it is "vindicatory righteousness" (cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Righteousness") which is chiefly prominent in such cases. Still, it is a precious association of ideas; and it is extremely satisfactory that it is, as clothed with such an association, that the closing words of this psalm meet with such an extended response, as our numerous references reveal, throughout the Bible.

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PSALM 63.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Banished Soul, Athirst for God, Anticipates Satisfaction and Vindication.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, The Psalmist Avows and Describes his Longing for God. Strophe II., vers. 2, 3, He Traces it back to Sanctuary-worship. Strophe III., vers. 4—8, He Promises himself a Life of Glad, Satisfying and Trustful Devotion. Strophe IV., vers. 9, 10, His Enemies, he foresees, are Doomed to Destruction. Strophe V., ver. 11, His Own Joy Anticipates that of Others over the Divine Silencing of Falsehood.

[Lm.] A Psalm—By David—When he was in the Wilderness of Judah.

1 O God! <my GOD> art |thou|—I earnestly seek thee:[a]
<thirsty for thee> is my soul, <faint for thee> is my flesh,
in[b] a land that is dry, and weary for want of water.

2 ||Thus|| <in the sanctuary> gained I vision of thee,
to see thy power and thy glory.
3 <Because <better> is thy kindness than life>
||my lips|| shall extol[c] thee.

4 ||Thus|| will I bless thee while I live,
<in thy name> will I uplift mine open hands:
5 <As with fatness and richness> shall my soul |be satisfied|,
and <with lips of jubilation>[d] shall my mouth |utter praise|.
6 <If I remember thee on my couch>
<in the night-watches> will I talk to myself of thee.
7 <Because thou hast become a succour to me>
therefore <in the shadow of thy wings> will I tarry.[e]
8 My soul |hath come clinging| to thee,
<on me> |hath laid hold| thy right-hand.

9 <Since ||they|| <unto ruin> seek for my life>[f]
they shall enter into the lowest parts of the earth:[g]
10 He shall be given[h] over to the power of the sword,
<the portion of jackals> shall they become.

11 But ||the king|| will rejoice in God:
every one who sweareth by Him |will glory|,
for the mouth of such as speak falsehood |shall be stopped|

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Or: "I long for thee."
[b] Some cod. (w. Syr.): "like"—Gn.
[c] Or: "laud"—as in 117^1, 145^4.
[d] "Uttering ringing cries"—Dr.
[e] So *Gt.*, Gn. M.T.: "ring out my joy."
[f] U.: "soul."
[g] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Hades."
[h] ML.: "they will give him"—perh. "they," the unseen agents of providence, as is Lk. 12^{20}.

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EXPOSITION.

This is a psalm to be experienced rather than expounded. Apart from experience it seems unreal. It has but little framework to sustain it, though what little there is helps us to get to the inner sense. The king is in banishment, passing through a dry and weary land—probably the northern border of the wilderness of Judah, on his way to the Jordan. Had his mind been moving on a lower level than at present, he would naturally have lamented his absence from the sanctuary, and longed to return. But, for the time, he is borne up to a higher altitude. He has brought with him **a vision** of God, obtained in **sanctuary**-worship, but outliving it. He has brought with him an assurance, that "the God of vision" there, is still with him here; ready, even under these altered circumstances, to verify the foregoing vision, by revealing his **strength** to sustain him here in the wilderness, and his **glory** to bring him home again.

God's **kindness** has been seen in his life, but it is felt to **be better than life**; and therefore shall call forth abiding praise. He has begun a life of praise, and banishment cannot silence his praise: he will keep on praising **as long as he lives**. His **lips** shall make the welkin ring: here, in the open, he will solemnly **lift up his hands** in prayer, and so find a new and larger sanctuary under the spacious dome of heaven.

Such worship will not be barren. **His soul** will be **fed to satisfaction**, and **his lips** in **jubilant** strains will break forth anew. The night may come on, and its shadows close him in as he reclines on his tent-bed; but he will not be alone. Should he awake in the night, an inviting theme of meditation will await him, even the inspiring theme of his ever-present God of kindness—a theme he can never exhaust; it will move him to soliloquy, perchance entice him to song.

A sense of safety will encompass him. He will be **under the shadow** of Divine **wings**, and there will he **tarry**. He thus speaks, not as to an absent God: **My soul hath come clinging to thee.** Not in vain, does he thus come: **On me hath laid hold thy right hand.**

This is the glory of the psalm: that the worshipper brings his sanctuary with him—his thoughts, his feelings, his trust are filled with God. To this extent it is a psalm for all time—for every dispensation—for every place—in assembly or out of it—at home or abroad—in prosperity or adversity. It may be an ecstacy, but it is real, and bears abiding fruit. Such an ecstasy would appear all the more astonishing were we to suppose that it was experienced on occasion of his restoration from his terrible fall; and yet it is in that direction that the time-indication points. The psalmist may soon have to descend to a lower

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level, but the mountain heights will leave precious memories behind. The valley cannot swallow up the mountain.

In truth, the last two strophes of this psalm may in a general way serve a useful purpose. As Bp. Perowne well says: "We pass all at once into a different atmosphere. We have come down, as it were, from the mount of holy aspirations, into the common everyday world, where human enemies are struggling, and human passions are strong. Yet this very transition, harsh as it is, gives us a wonderful sense of reality. In some respects it brings the psalm nearer to our own level."

Still, we must remember, that "the common everyday world" of the psalmist was not quite the same as ours. Our lives are not in continual danger, as was his life; nor are we warranted to assume that the doom of our enemies will be their consignment to the lowest hades, the finding of their way thither through the terrors of the battle-field. Nevertheless, our own joy is enhanced by the joy of every righteous king who rejoices in God; and whether, like our Lord, we accept of an oath-taking which we cannot prevent, and "swear not at all" of our own free will, or like the ancient Hebrews and the Apostle Paul sometimes voluntarily solemnly swear by God,—this at least may furnish us with a prospect to glory in: that the mouth of such as speak falsehood shall sooner or later be stopped, and truth be triumphant.

PSALM 64.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Prayer against the Evil Tongues of Conspirators, who are Destroyed by Their Own Weapon.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4a, Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies, whose Chief Weapon is described. Strophe II., vers. 4b—6a, Plotting to Employ the Weapon with Crushing Effect. Strophe III., vers. 6b—9, Sudden Overthrow of the Enemies by their Own Instrument, to the Astonishment of Onlookers and the Glory of God. *Refrain*, calling for Joy and Praise.

[Lm.] A Psalm—By David.

1 Hear, O God, my voice in my complaining,[a]
<from dread peril by the foe> shalt thou guard my life:
2 Thou shalt hide me from the council of evil-doers,
from the conspiracy[b] of the workers of iniquity:[c]

[a] Or: "soliloquy."
[b] Cp. = Br. on 2[1].
[c] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).

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3 Who have sharpened, like a sword, their tongue,
have made ready their arrow—a bitter word:
4 to shoot, in secret places, at the blameless.

|Suddenly| they shoot at him, without fear:
5 They strengthen for themselves a wicked thing,
they recount the hiding of snares:[a]
they say—"Who will look at them?"[b]
6 They devise acts of injustice—have hidden[c] a plot.

It is plotted—each one |draweth near| with deep mind;
7 And |God shooteth at them|,—<suddenly> |have appeared| their wounds,
8 yea he maketh stumble each one,—<against themselves> is their tongue!
(9) All looking on them |wag the head|,[d] (9) and all men |fear|,
and declare the doing of God, <his work>[e] they ponder.
10 *<Glad> be the righteous man in Jehovah, when he hath taken refuge in him,*
<Now may glory> all the upright in heart.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Or: "lures."
[b] That is: the snares, well-concealed as they are. Some transpose the Heb. words, and render: "They say to themselves—Who will see?"
[c] So some cod. Others: "completed"—Gn.
[d] Or: "take flight"—O.G.
[e] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "works." (pl.)—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

It is easy to see that at times David suffered severely from false and venomous tongues. This method of assailing him was naturally most employed before the power of suppression came into his hands; also when for the time he had lost it, or it was already slipping from him. Doeg (52) represents the former period of exposure to this weapon, and Ahithophel (55, 62) the latter. Probably the former period was the more extended, and offered the more numerous occasions of defamation to David's detractors. It is impossible to say how soon the earlier crusade of the tongue against David began: probably as soon as Saul showed himself ready to listen to evil reports concerning him, and therefore while yet Jonathan stood between his father and the young Bethlehemite; and therefore Jonathan may naturally have been an unknown and unsuspected instrument Divinely made ready for putting evil tongues to shame. We cannot, of course, dogmatise, where we are without detailed information; but it is, to say the least, quite conceivable, that when the detractors had succeeded in gaining Saul's ear, and had been pouring into it carefully and maliciously concocted stories to David's hurt, the appearance of his son on the scene, with newer and more authentic information, might have served to blow to the winds the cobwebs of venomous slander, and for the

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time being at least bring down on the slanderers' heads the wrath of the monarch thus baulked of his prey. Some such climax as this seems to be required to give a realistic verisimilitude to this remarkable psalm. One can almost see the conspirators **drawing near** to Saul with **plots hidden** in their **inscrutable minds**, suddenly dismayed as by **an arrow from God** by the unexpected appearance and report of a man whom with all their cunning, they had left out of their account. Their surprise and confusion would naturally **turn their tongues against themselves**, and complete the failure of their **deep-laid plots**. Coming to the young harpist's knowledge, what more natural than that he should embalm the memory of these early God-given triumphs in song! The difficulty perhaps is, to people those early days with the needful factors of such experiences. And yet, human nature must then have been very different from what it is now, if there were not several Doegs among Saul's retainers; and if, under every appearance to the contrary, David had not several rivals at heart. There were probably several aspirants for Merab's hand and for Michal's; and, young as he was, the son of Jesse was probably well advised by his native good sense and caution when he suspected foul play, as he appears to have done, in being incited to aspire to wed one of the king's daughters (1 Sam. 18^{23}).

From some such point of view as that suggested by these reminiscences, we can reperuse this psalm with added interest. Unused to the wicked ways of the world, the youthful courtier may well have felt keenly those early slanders as so many **sharpened swords**—as envenomed **arrows**. But even slanders must be made colourable; and so, to give effect to the **bitter word**, there must be invented a **wicked thing**. A plausible story must be worked out of incidents false and true: the unsuspecting object of envy must be entrapped unawares into sayings and doings which can easily be made to appear suspicious; and so the **bitter word** is let fly as part of a **plot**. Sayings and doings are interwoven with sufficient cunning to fit the story to do fatal damage; until, by God, they are suddenly exploded, and the slanderers are held up to infamy. Such decisive victories of truth have many a time—in David's history, in Israel's history, and in our own—made **righteous men glad in Jehovah**, and sustained in just **glorying the upright in heart**.

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PSALM 65.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — Israel's Temple-Song of Praise, on behalf of Herself and all Nations, chiefly in Grateful Acknowledgment of Seedtime and Harvest.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Preparations for Worship. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, The God of Israel is the God of All the Earth. Strophe III., vers. 9, 10, Praise for Seedtime. Strophe IV., vers. 11—13, Praise for Harvest.

[Lm.] Psalm—by David—Song.

1 <To thee> is recited a song of praise,[a] O God, in Zion,
and <to thee, in Jerusalem>[b] shall be rendered the vow:
2 Thou hearer of prayer! <unto thee> |all flesh| shall come.
3 ||Reports[c] of iniquities|| have been too strong for me,
<As for our transgressions> ||thou thyself|| shalt[d] put a propitiatory cover over them.[e]
4 |How happy| the man thou dost choose and bring near,
he shall inhabit thy courts:
We would be satisfied with the blessedness of thy house,
the holiness[f] of thy temple.

5 <By fearful things> <in righteousness> shalt[g] thou answer us, O God of our Salvation,—
who art the trust of all the ends of the land, and of the sea far away,[h]
6 who settest fast the mountains by thy[i] strength, being girded with might,
7 who stillest the noise of the seas, the noise of their billows, and the tumult of populations;
8 <Thus are moved to reverence> the dwellers in the uttermost parts, by thy signs:
The goings forth of morning and evening> thou makest ring out their joy.

9 Thou hast visited the earth and given it abundance,
<full oft>[j] dost thou enrich it,—
||The channel of God|| is full of water;
Thou preparest their grain, when <thus> thou preparest the land:[k]

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[a] So Br. "For thee praise waiteth"—Per. "Praise beseemeth thee"—Kp.
[b] So in some MSS. of Sep. and P.B.V.
[c] "Instances"—Del. "Manifold"—Dr.
[d] For "consenting petitions," cp. 51[7, 8] note.
[e] "Thou wilt cancel them"— Del. "Is always used in a fig. sense of *covering morally*... In the Levitical law the priest is usually the subject; and then the meaning is that he *covers up* sin by means of a propitiatory rite upon ground of which God consents to overlook it; in this sense, it is the word which is often reduced *to make atonement* (Lev. 1[1], 4[20, 26, 31], &c.)"—Dr., Glossary, I.
[f] Or: "holy place."
[g] Or: "dost," w. Del. and Dr.
[h] "The most distant sea"— Del. "Read perhaps, *and of isles* (or *coasts*) *afar off* (Isa. 66[19])" —Dr.
[i] So Sep.
[j] Cp. 129[1, 2].
[k] Mt.: "her"=the land. Cp. O.G. 466, 2a.

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10 <The furrows thereof> drenching, settling the ridges thereof,
<with myriad drops> dost thou soften it,
<the sprouting thereof> dost thou bless.

11 Thou hast set a crown on thy year of bounty,
and ||thy tracks|| drop fatness;
12 They drop [on] the pasture of the wilderness,
and <with exultation> |the hills| do gird themselves;
13 <Clothed> are the mountains[a] with the flock,[b]
||the valleys also|| cover themselves with corn:
they shout to each other for joy, yea they sing.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

[a] So, conj., w. Br.; and in antithesis to the "valleys" (*harim* for *karim*).

[b] = small cattle, sheep and goats.

EXPOSITION.

It is difficult to say which feature of this psalm is most worthy of admiration: whether the beauty of its twin-pictures of seed-time and harvest; or the broad and sympathetic setting which turns these in combination into a song for all nations; or the quiet presuppositions which place Israel at the head of the nations in rendering this tribute of praise. When we have satisfied our powers of discrimination in tracing these features of the psalm, we have still to congratulate the joint-author that he had such gems at his disposal as the two snatches of song for the ever-recurring seasons to which he here gives such an appropriate setting; and still more that, having them in his repertoire, he had so signal an occasion as we assume he had for weaving his materials into such a complete and beautiful whole.

To begin at the end of these points of observation, we can assume, with the general concurrence of commentators so far as our observation extends, that the occasion for which this psalm was prepared for temple-service was a no less remarkable occasion than the first full harvest reaped in Palestine after the Assyrians had been either destroyed in the land or driven from it as it was foretold by Isaiah that they should be (Isa. 37^{30}). Surely never was a harvest-song composed with so many grateful hearts bursting with eager joy to waft to heaven its strains. Assuming this as the occasion, we instinctively think of King Hezekiah as the poet-musician who acted as co-author in constructing this psalm and adapting it for actual use in the temple at Jerusalem. Just as naturally do we think of David as the composer of the seed-time and harvest gems, here so happily brought together; and we do so for the two good reasons,—first, that

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David's name is at the head of the psalm; and, second, that he, rather than Hezekiah, was a son of the soil, born on the land, familiar from boyhood with its hills and glens, its pastures and its prairies, its waggon-tracks and its sheep-walks, its sowing-seasons and its harvest-times, its want of water and its bountiful supplies; he, rather than his descendant of princely birth, had enjoyed many a quiet opportunity of admiring the mountain and hills as enrobed in the flocks which were spread over them, and of hearing valley answering to valley with voices calling forth and answering his own songs; he, moreover, having elsewhere given his night-view (8) and his day-view (19) of the heavens, and glimpses of flocks peacefully resting beside still waters (23); and being, as we know, skilled with his harp, and therefore fond of it, and therefore oft sweeping its strings, what more likely in the nature of things than that he should have left behind him these hitherto unused fragments, which we are the more entitled to call "fragments," if, according to Dr. Briggs, the one consists of "five tetrameters," and the other is "a trimeter heptastich"—just the polished gems that Hezekiah knew how to appreciate and on fitting occasion to employ. The setting is not David's. Other times, other manners. The temple has now been reared; and by the best minds (Isa. 56^{7}) has come to be regarded as "a house of prayer for all nations." And so, while **Zion** and **Jerusalem** are placed in the forefront of this psalm, there is an immediate reference to Jehovah as a **hearer of prayer to whom all flesh shall come.** But Hezekiah had been born in a decadent reign, and had known what it was to be slighted as prince (35), to be thwarted as king (Isa. 22); and therefore no wonder that, before his enthusiastic gratitude (Isa. 38) for recovery from sickness and deliverance from Sennacherib could find full and fitting public expression, he should feel his praise a little *belated* and should complain that **reports of iniquity** from all parts of the land (14, 53) **had been too strong for him**; and that, in fact, his own **transgressions** and those of his people only **God himself** could **effectually remove.** Thinking thus of **propitiation,** he thinks of the priests—**chosen, brought near, inhabiting the temple-chambers**; and prays that he and his people may be **satisfied with the blessedness** of God's **house, the holiness of his temple.** By characteristic features judged, this first Strophe is certainly from the pen or by the suggestion of King Hezekiah.

And now see how again the psalm widens out. It can take in, as familiar, the thought of chastisements to be **revered,** because hard to bear, like his own and his people's, yet administered in **righteousness**; and there are more such answers to come (Isa. $39^{6,7}$). Nevertheless, the **God** of Israel's **salvation** is exalted; and the more, in humble

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submission to him, King and people realise their national calling as "a kingdom of priests" (Exo. 19[6]) the more are they qualified to fear and to rejoice with the nations of the earth—in common alarms and common reliefs. And so the psalmist—this co-author, as he plainly is—looks out on nature and up to nature's God with a feeling of real fellowship with the peoples dwelling in the ends of the land and of the sea far away; he looks on the same strong mountains, and hearkens to the same surging and thundering seas as they do. Just like Hezekiah to have added, and the tumult of populations. Moreover, on this common ground, their signs are ours, and ours are theirs; and they, in their measure and way, revere the same great manifestations of Divine power as do we. And so we help them to express the reverence we all feel. But, besides the common signs, inspiring fear,—the storm, the flood, the earthquake, the popular tumults,—there are the common blessings of life, the sweet and gentle ministries of nature, which with us they share. They rise with the lark, refreshed; and sing as do we; they return to their homes after their toil is done and sing in their homes like ourselves. It is the good God who gladdens all. Wars make terrible upheaving and pour out an awful roar; but the music of morning and evening is more constant as well as more sweet. "Therefore praise we thee, in thy temple, O Jehovah;—for ourselves, for the nations who, with less clear vision, behold thy glory and thy love."

That the first strophe of this psalm distinctively celebrates "seed-time" rather than "harvest," though still of course with a view to harvest, becomes evident as soon as candidly examined with this idea in mind. It begins with the early rains that prepare for the seed, and culminates with the sprouting of the seed when sown. There it stops; which it scarcely could have done had not seed-time been, so far, its one dominant topic. That seed-time has harvest in view, is a matter of course; but very beautifully does the main thought turn back on the preparing of the land; and this is pictured in a few graphic touches as the detailed way in which the grain itself is prepared. You see the plough at work, scooping out furrows and turning up ridges by one and the same process: and the Divine Co-operator dealing with both according to need and capacity. The furrows are naturally receptive of the streams which flow in abundance from those upper and invisible channels of God which are full of water; and what they thus receive, they hold and convey to the roots of the young plants. The turned-up ridges need to be settled down and closed well in upon the precious seed which they have received. The same rain that does the one does the other: fills the furrows, settles the ridges. Divine

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agriculture is economic of means, various in adaptations. But soon the surface becomes encrusted, and might imprison the tender blade, did not the gentler after-showers with their myriad drops come to soften the soil and make it easily permeable. And so, as eyes of wonder look on, and discreet judgment calculates how many dangers have been passed as the green crop carpets the earth, Devotion exclaims, **The sprouting thereof thou dost bless.**

It is harvest, however, that is set as a crown on the head of the year of bounty: harvest largely viewed as presenting in perfection the result of earlier processes. The very thought of a crown gives a glimpse of the golden grain. As if in special recognition of the latter rains, securing a full harvest, the laden clouds are conceived as the chariot of God leaving in its tracks fruits of fatness and plenty. The refreshed pastures of the open lands—the wilderness or prairie land—will shew the tracks of the chariot of God. The hills made vocal with the tuneful voices of harvesters seem to lift up a loud voice of exultation. The mountains, nearly to their summits, are well-nigh hidden by their robe of goats, sheep and lambs: the vales, running between the hills, are clad with a rich mantle of corn; and happy voices, shouting and echoing and ringing and singing, celebrate the Divine Coronation of the year.

PSALM 66.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Invitation to All the Earth to Join in Israel's Song of Praise.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Invitation based on Display of Divine Power. Strophe II., vers. 5—7, Examples of God's Ancient Doings, leading up to his Abiding Rule. Strophe III., vers. 8—12, Renewed Invitation based on Recent Deliverance. Strophe IV., vers. 13—15, Individual Resolve to Fulfil Personal Vows. Strophe V., vers. 16—20, a Record of Personal Experience.

[Lm.] Song—Psalm.

1 *Shout unto God, all the earth,*
2 *celebrate in psalm*[a] *the glory of his name,*
establish ye the glory of[b] *his praise.*
3 Say unto God—"|How fear-inspiring| are thy works![c]
<through the abounding of thy power> will thy foes |come cringing unto thee|[d]:

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[a] Or: "make melody unto."
[b] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Syr.)—Gn.
[c] Or: "doings."
[d] Or: "feign obedience unto thee." Cp. for same significant word, 18[44] (2 S. 22[45]), 81[1].

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4 ||All the earth|| will bow down to thee, and make melody unto thee,
will celebrate in psalm thy name." ☙

5 *Come and see the doings of God,*[a]
Fear-inspiring is he in act, towards the sons of men:—
6 He turned the sea into dry land,
<through a stream> passed they on foot;—
<there let us be glad in him!
7 <Ruling, in his might, to the ages>
||his eyes|| <over the nations> keep watch:
<as for the rebellious> let them not show exultation against him! ☙

8 *Bless, O ye peoples, our God,*[b]
and cause to be heard the sound of his praise:
9 *Who hath set our soul*[c] *among the living,*
and not suffered, to slip, our foot.[d]
10 Surely thou hast tried us, O God,
hast refined us, like the refining of silver:
11 Thou didst bring us into the net,
didst lay a heavy load[e] on our loins,
12 didst let mere men ride over our head,—[f]
we came into fire, and into water;
and then thou didst bring us forth into a spacious place.[g]

13 I will enter thy house with ascending-sacrifices,
I will render unto thee my vows,—
14 What my lips |uttered|,
and my mouth |spake|, in the strait I was in:
15 <Ascending sacrifices of fatlings> will I cause to ascend unto thee,
with the perfume of rams:
I will offer cattle, with he-goats. ☙

16 *Come hearken, and let me tell, all ye that fear God,*
what he hath done for me:—[h]
17 <Unto him> <with my mouth> did I cry,
with high praise under my tongue,—[i]
18 <<Iniquity>> had I cared for in my heart>
my sovereign Lord |had not heard|,—
19 ||In truth|| God |hath| heard,
hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
20 |Blessed| be God—
who hath not turned away my prayer [from before him[k]],
nor his kindness from being with me.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] With stringed instruments.

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[a] Cp. 46[8].
[b] Some cod. (w. Aram., Syr.) simply: "God"—Gn.
[c] Some cod. (w. 7 ear. pr. edns.): "souls" (pl.)—Gn.
[d] Some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns.): "feet"—Gn.
[e] Or: "constraint"—Br. and others.
[f] Some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns., Sep., Vul.): "heads" (pl.)—Gn. Cp. Isa. 51[23].
[g] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. 18[19]—Gn.
[h] Ml.: "my soul," but undoubtedly Br. is right: "The *naphshi* is as usual a poetic expression for the person, and does not refer to the soul as distinguished from the body." Notwithstanding, the definition of Dr. is apt: a pathetic circumlocution for the personal pronoun"—Dr. PP. Glos. I.
[i] "Ready to burst forth in speech"—Br.
[j] "Naughtiness"—Dr.
[k] Cp. 88[3. 13], 102[1], 119[170]. This personification of prayer, as coming in before God, helps to explain the one application of the verb rendered *turned away* to both *man's prayer* and *God's kindness*.

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EXPOSITION.

Instead of speaking of this psalm as "composite" (w. Br.), it would probably be more accurate to term it *various*, passing from scene to scene, from the remote past to the recent past, and from the nation to the individual; but threaded through with a clear and strong principal of unity; namely, the inspiring occasion that gave it birth. The overthrow of the Assyrians, and simultaneously therewith the recovery of King Hezekiah from sickness, form a cluster of events worthy of being the occasion to inspire this beautiful and significant psalm. It is indeed Israel's song of praise; but all nations are invited to join in singing it, and to make Israel's joys their own. The spirit of prophecy which inspired the predictions of Isaiah, Micah, and others, pulsates strongly throughout this song, imparting to it an outlook and an onlook adapted to justify it more effectively than a mere foreglance at immediately following events in Israel could have done. Its companion psalms are notably the 46th and 47th; and its ultimate sphere of fulfilment is nothing less than that manifest dominion of Jehovah, under the person of the Returned Messiah, which is the burden of prophecy, and which alone, from among all known or foretold combinations of events, supplies the conditions needed for the complete realisation of this psalm. Never during the Monarchy prior to the Exile, never during the stand made by the Maccabees after the Exile, and—needless to say—never since, has there been such a conjunction of events as could induce Israel's foes, or Jehovah's foes, to come cringing unto Him, while Earth as a whole was singing and harping to his name. Least of all, with any show of New Testament sanction, can cringing foes, feigning an obedience they dare not withhold, be regarded as possessing the essential qualifications for membership in the Christian Church. No: in its ultimate outlook, this is a song for the Coming Kingdom; while nevertheless the inspiration to compose it, and begin singing it, sprang, under God, from the significant deliverance in Hezekiah's days, a deliverance adumbrative of a larger deliverance from Antichrist's dread domination.

But, clear as is the general outlook of the psalm, there meet us in the study of it a few minor difficulties which it were to be wished could be removed; though possibly, since they may be due to accidents of transmission, they may for the present have to remain unresolved. In any case it will repay us to endeavour to trace the changeful current of thought as it passes from strophe to strophe: before attempting which however, it may frankly be admitted that the strophical division itself cannot probably be placed beyond question, without resorting to drastic changes and excisions for which we are by no means prepared;

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though happily the Selahs (☜ ☞), and the evident changes of person in the speaker, go some way to supply the defect. Submitting our division of the psalm as tentative and practical only, we proceed.

In Strophe I., an invitation is boldly given to **all the earth** to join in the public worship of God, by the employment of the *teru'ah*, or sacred shout, the *lute* or *lyre* as leading in song, and therefore in accompanying words; and so, by shouting and harping and singing (implied) **to the glory** of God's **name, to establish the glory of his praise** on a basis of worldwide faith and unison. Words are then suggested for use in such worship by the formula: **Say unto God**; and the tenor of the words which follow shows two things: *first* that some fearful manifestation of **Divine Power** has recently been witnessed in the earth; and, *second*, that, while **foes** will come crestfallen in submission, the **earth** as a whole will, to all appearance, join heartily in the praise.

In Strophe II., the **mighty deeds of God** are still the theme; but now, by examples from history, the past is called on for its testimony; which it renders by (probably *two*) conspicuous specimens, the one at the **Red Sea**, and the other at the **Jordan**. It cannot, indeed, be dogmatically affirmed that there are *two* events, rather than a duplicated narration of the one great event when Pharaoh was overthrown; but, in favour of including both passages through water, may be urged: that thereby the entire transfer of the nation into the promised land is comprehended; and more especially that thereby a point of connection is provided for the following line, which has given critics some trouble: **There let us be glad in him.** If the one journey out of Egypt into Canaan has been covered by the two lines preceding, then this line may be taken to apply to the Holy Land itself. **There**—namely in the land so reached, equivalent to "HERE, in our own land, into which we were so miraculously brought; HERE, in our own land in which we again realise that we are a free people now that the invading Assyrians have disappeared, **let us be glad in him**: with the old joy renewed." Otherwise, if both the preceding lines refer to the transit through the Red Sea, then the line following ought to have read, as in most English versions: **There were we made glad in him**; which would indeed have brightly suggested the song of Miriam, but is strongly represented by Perowne as an ungrammatical rendering of the Hebrew word. It is barely possible that, in the ancient risks of copying, the whole line has been accidentally brought back from (say) the end of ver. 12, where slightly modified into "Here let us be glad in thee"—"Here," in this **spacious place**, it might well have stood; but, meantime, the previous suggestion is submitted to thoughtful readers: **There**—in the land so

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miraculously given to us (and now afresh made our own)—**let us be glad in him.**

However this small difficulty may be disposed of—and small relatively it certainly is—it is evident that the transit through **sea** and **stream** (or through the **sea** regarded as the same as the **stream**) is but a stepping-stone to the larger thought of the **age-abiding rule** of God. His work for Israel was not then ended, when he so brought Israel into this delightful land: he continues to care for Israel, and therefore **His eyes over the nations still keep watch**: first, for Israel's sake; but, second, also to their own good; for only the **rebellious** among them have need to beware of **exalting themselves against** Israel's God.

In Strophe III., we perceive the inspiring spirit going forth to the non-Israelitish nations with new and stronger impulse, in order to impress upon them this lesson: that Israel's history is theirs, Israel's deliverances are ultimately fraught with blessing for them. Hence, now, this recent Divine interposition is brought forward and elaborated in seven lines of graphic life and power, which need no detailed comment. They are Hezekiah's reading of the event of the Assyrian invasion—the reading also of all the godly in Israel—in respect of the disciplinary improvement it was hoped would follow from that invasion and that deliverance. It was hoped that the nation was **refined as silver is refined through the fire**; and so undoubtedly, in a measure, it was. Nor did Israel only profit: even Gentile nations are still being instructed by those thrilling and exemplary events.

And now at length, in Strophe IV., there steps into view an INDIVIDUAL, whom we instantly recognise as Hezekiah himself. We know that Hezekiah's heart was set on going up to the house of Jehovah, when his sickness should be ended (Isa. 38^{22}); we know also the liberality of the provision of sacrifices which he made on other occasions (2 Ch. 29^{20-35}); and therefore we instinctively feel that the resolution which is amplified in this strophe is like him and worthy of him. The most liberal offerings which he could now make would not be more than commensurate with his abounding gratitude.

And, finally, in the last strophe of the psalm, we are invited to hear him tell the story of his prayer in his sickness. He does not indeed tell us all. He makes no mention of the nature of his sickness. That it was nothing less than leprosy, we have already learned incidentally from various sources: *that*, however, he does not here divulge. Nevertheless, his language betokens that his complaint was of grave import, moving him to earnest supplication; and two additional touches enhance the interest of this his personal reminiscence:

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there was faith in his outcry, *and* no allowance of iniquity marred his prayer. There was faith; for this, cherished in a warmth of rising gratitude, is what is implied by the highly poetic representation: **With high praise under my tongue**—prayer *on* the tongue, praise *under* it! And there was a sincere renunciation of evil (2 K. 20^3, 2 Ch. 32^{26}, Isa. 38^3). Had he cloaked iniquity, or still tolerated in his heart an inclination towards it, his prayer would not have been heard. But his prayer has been heard—the leprosy has been removed; and so the happy event confirms the clear consciousness of renunciation of sin.

PSALM 67.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer for Blessing on Israel as a Means of Blessing to All Nations.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, The Priestly Prayer urged with a view to the Enlightenment of All Nations. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, The Peoples will Give Thanks for Governance and Guidance. Strophe III., The Fruitfulness of the Earth, and Divine Blessing on Israel, securing the Universal Reverence of the Divine Benefactor.

[Lm.] Psalm—(By David)[a]—Song.

1 May ||God|| be gracious unto us, and bless us,
  may he light up his face among[b] us.
2 That men may know, throughout the earth, thy way,
  <among all nations> thy victory.[c]

3 Peoples |will thank[d] thee|, O God!
  peoples, all of them, |will thank thee|,
4 Populations |will rejoice and ring out their joy|:
  when[e] thou shalt judge peoples in equity,
  and <populations throughout the earth> thou shalt lead.[f]

5 Peoples |will thank thee| O God!
  peoples, all of them, |will thank thee|:
6 ||Earth|| hath given[g] her increase:
  God, our own God,[h] |will bless us|,
7 God |will bless us|—
  and all the ends of the earth |will revere him|.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] So in some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.
[b] So Per.; ml. "with."
[c] Or: "salvation"; but cp. Pss. 96—98.
[d] Cp. 6^5 n.
[e] Or: "because."
[f] As in Exo. 15^{13}, Pss. 5^8, 28^3, 27^{11}, 73^{24}. So Kp. and Br. "Guidest"—Per.
[g] As if on some recent occasion (65); but may be prophetic perfect of certainty: "shall have given."
[h] Prob. an elohistic substitute for "Jehovah our God." See Table of Divine Names, *ante*.

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EXPOSITION.

The most marked characteristic of this psalm is its clear and quiet blending of Primary Blessing on Israel with Consequent Blessing on All Nations. The leading position of Israel is clearly indicated. The pronouns **us** and **they** (implied) at once strike the keynote of the relationship assumed to exist between the one nation and the many. "*In* the Messiah," there is neither Jew nor Gentile: *under* the Messiah, there are both—blended but not confounded. Let the reader note how in this psalm the people who speak of themselves as "us" occupy the foreground. With a clear reminiscence of the blessing which Aaron and his sons were authorised to bestow on the sons of Israel (Num. 6^{22-27}) the fulfilment of that prayer-blessing is here first sought for Israel as the people on whom Jehovah had thus "put his name," and which formula He himself had promised to make good. Then immediately an outspread of blessing, proceeding from the one nation to the many, is besought: **That men throughout the earth may know thy way,** as exemplified in the long recorded history of Israel; and **thy victory** first *over* them and then *for* them *over* their enemies. Only in that long history, as prophecy enables us to complete it, can that **victory** be traced. Then, for a whole strophe the psalm is engrossed with the nations, so introduced. Not only for what they behold in Israel will they **thank** God, but also and more immediately for immeasurable benefits brought home to themselves: they themselves will be **judged,** that is **governed, in equity;** and He who governs them will **guide** them as a shepherd **leads** his flock (as a comparison of the references will show). When Israel gets her blessing, **the nations,** as nations, will get theirs; yea **all of them** will get it, as the poet is careful to repeat. He who thus **governs** and **guides** the nations will assuredly **lead** them to peace and industry and honesty, and thereby also to plenty: **Earth will give her increase**—no doubt a covenant promise to Israel (cp. Lev. 26^{4}, Ps. 85^{12}, Eze. $34^{26, 27}$) but a promise doubtless overflowing to the teeming **populations** of earth. The blessings previously named—**governance, guidance**—rise up from the political into the spiritual realm, probably to a large extent annihilating the distinction between them; but this—like the "daily bread" petition in the prayer given by Jesus to his disciples—is undisguisedly temporal, as why should it not? Why should not national blessing *come down:* as do the dews of heaven and the showers that water the earth; as does redemption, that delivers first the soul from the bondage of sin, and then the body from the bondage of decay (Rom. 8^{20}); as will the Heavenly Jerusalem itself, so that "the Tent of God" may be

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"with men" (Rev. 21[3])? Therefore do we feel at home with one plainly temporal blessing in this comprehensive prayer. Yet—as here we are not on Church ground but on Kingdom ground—we are once more reminded that Israel is here the intercessor; and the circumference of blessing for the whole earth is set around the centre of the covenant-nation. "Jehovah our God" **will bless us: will bless us** AND **all the ends of the earth will revere him.**

What then is Jehovah's **way**; and, especially, wherein will consist the **victory** which will yet thrill all nations and tune their hearts as well as their harps to this song? His **way** is seen in his dealings with the nation of Israel: trace it! Note their birth as a people; their enslavement in Egypt; their deliverance; their journeyings in the wilderness; their settlement in Canaan; their degeneracy; their captivities; their partial restorations; their treatment of their Messiah; their present long-continued banishment from their beautiful land; their sorrows, so heavily pressed on them; their sufferings, so often cruelly unjust; and, applying to the mind's eye the telescope of the prophetic word, note the issue of all this in national regeneration and restoration:—THERE, along that chequered course, is to be seen Jehovah's **way**, as nowhere else! And the **victory**—where and what is that? In psalms yet lying ahead of us, will it be repeatedly seen; but perhaps nowhere more brightly and suggestively than in the shortest psalm of this priceless psalter, the 117th. One word therein goes straight to the root of this matter of Jehovah's **victory**: it may be a victory over the jealousies and oppressions of Gentile nations, it may be a victory over the beleaguring forces of Antichrist; but it will be, first and last and foremost, a **victory** over the Hebrew nation itself. And when Israel can say to the nations, concerning Yahweh their God, **His kindness hath prevailed over us,** then those who listen to the story will no longer be slow to believe that **His faithfulness is age-abiding.**

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PSALM 68.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Glimpses of Jehovah's Visible Reign over Israel and the Nations.

ANALYSIS.—(See Headlines inserted in text.)

[Lm.] By David—Psalm—Song.

[Division I.—THE KING: his prowess and perfections.]

1 God |ariseth|, his foes |are scattered|,
yea they who hate him |flee from his presence| :[a]
2 <As smoke is driven about>are they driven,[b]
<As wax |is melted| at the presence of fire>
the lawless |perish| at the presence of God;
3 But ||the righteous|| are glad, they exult in the presence of God,
and shew their joy with gladness.

4 Sing ye to God, harp ye his name,
raise ye (a song)[c] to him that rideth through desert plains:
<in Yah> consisteth his name,[d] then exult in his presence.
5 <The father of the fatherless and the advocate of widows>
is God, in his holy habitation:—
6 ||God|| who causeth the lonely to dwell in a home,[e]
bringeth forth prisoners into prosperity;
Howbeit ||the stubborn|| remain in a sunburnt land.

[Division II.—THE MARCH: from Egypt to Canaan.]

7 O God! <when thou didst go forth before thy people,
when thou didst march through the desert>
8 ||Earth|| quaked, yea ||the heavens|| dripped,
at the presence of the God of Sinai,
at the presence of the God of Israel.[f]

[Division III.—THE LAND: the home of the humbled people.]

9 <A copious rain> dost thou shed abroad, O God, on thine inheritance,
<when exhausted> ||thou thyself|| hast restored it:
10 ||Thy living host|| hath dwelt therein,
thou dost provide, in thy bounty, for the humbled one,[g] O God.

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[a] Cp. Num. 10[35].
[b] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[c] "Lift (a song)." "Cast up a highway"—O.G. 699 b.
[d] So O.G. 88, 7 a. Cp. ver. 18.
[e] *Gt.*: "who bring back lonely ones home"—Gn.
[f] The Sep. has been followed in re-arranging these two clauses.
[g] Or: "humiliated one."

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[Division IV.—THE CONQUEST: Enemies in flight; abundant spoil.]

11 ||The Sovereign Lord|| giveth the word,[a]
||the herald bands|| are a mighty host.
12 ||Kings[b] of armies|| they flee! they flee!
and ||she that stayeth[c] at home|| divideth the spoil.

13 <When ye rest on the camping ground>[d]
||the wings of the dove|| are covered with silver,
and ||her pinions|| with green-shimmering gold.
14 <When the Almighty scattereth kings therein>
it snoweth on Zalmon.[e]

[Division V.—THE MOUNTAIN: Unlikely Choice; Possession taken.]

15 <A mountain of might>[f] is the mountain of Bashan,
<a mountain of peaks> is the mountain of Bashan:—
16 |Why| steal ye envious glances, ye mountains, ye peaks,
at the mountain which God |hath coveted| for his seat?
Surely ||Jehovah|| will dwell [there] evermore!

17 ||The chariots of God|| are in myriads, thousands on thousands,[g]
||the Sovereign Lord|| hath come from Sinai into the sanctuary:—[h]
18 Thou hast ascended on high, hast captured a body of captives,
hast accepted gifts consisting of men,[i] yea even the stubborn;[j]
that thou mayest dwell [there], O Yah Elohim!

[Division VI.—THE PEOPLE: whose daily burden God beareth, whose safety he secureth, whose lives he preserveth, whose blood he avengeth.]

19 |Blessed| be the Sovereign Lord!
<day by day> he carrieth a load for us:
||God himself|| is our salvation. Selah
20 ||God himself|| is <for us> a God of saving deeds,[k]
and <to Jehovah, Sovereign Lord> belong escapes |in view of death|.[l]

21 Surely ||God|| will shatter the head of his foes,
the hairy crown that goeth on in his guilty deeds.
22 Said Adonai—<"From Bashan> will I bring back,
I will bring back from the depths of the sea:
23 That thou mayest bathe thy foot in blood,
||the tongue of thy dogs|| <from foes> hath its portion."

[Division VII.—PROCESSION, CONGREGATION, AND SONG: all Nations invited to sing.]

24 Men hath seen thy goings, O God,
the goings of my God, my king, into the sanctuary:
25 <In front> are princes,[m] <behind> are harpers,
in the midst of damsels sounding timbrels:—

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[a] "Will make the summons resound"—Del.
[b] Some cod.: "Messengers"—Gn.
[c] "The beautiful one," as in Jer. 6[2]—Br.
[d] Ml.: "between the ash-heaps," *i.e.*, where encampments have been. Cp. O.G. 1046.
[e] So O.G. ("meaning obscure"). "Zalmon"= snow-capped mt.; prob. E. of Jordan—O.G. 854. "The point of the comparison lies either in the booty being abundant as snowflakes and in brilliancy like the dazzling snow, or in the white, pale corpses"—Del.
[f] Ml.: "A m. of God."
[g] So Kp. and others. "Innumerable, inconceivable thousands"—Del.
[h] So *Gt.*—Gn. "The sense is perfectly plain when we resort to the primitive orthography"—G. Intro. 162.
[i] Or: "mankind." "Among men"—Del., Per., Dr. and others (as of tribute); but Michaelis, Ewald, Cornill, as in text above; and see Exposition.
[j] As in ver. 6, and Deu. 21[18, 20].
[k] "Deliverances"—Dr.
[l] So O.G. 426: ("lit. 'for' that is 'in view of' death.") Cp. esp. Ps. 48[14], and Isa. 26[18].
[m] So some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "singers."

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26 <In assemblies> bless ye God,
||the Sovereign Lord|| among the elect[a] of Israel.
27 |There| is Benjamin, the Diminutive—ruling them,[b]
the princes of Judah, their throng,[c]
the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

28 Command, O God,[d] thy strength,
the strength, O God, which thou hast wrought for us.[e]
29 : Because of thy temple over Jerusalem>
<unto thee> shall kings |bear along| a gift.

30 Rebuke thou the beast of the reeds,
the herd[f] of mighty oxen, among the calves of the peoples;
trampling in mire the favoured ones, refined as silver:[g]
Scatter thou[h] the peoples who <in war> take delight.
31 There |come| high messengers[i] out of Egypt,
||the Ethiopian|| hasteneth his hands unto God.[j]

32 Ye kingdoms of the earth! sing ye unto God;
harp ye the Sovereign Lord:[k] [illegible]
33 To him who rideth on the ancient heaven of heavens:[l]
lo! he uttereth his voice, a voice of strength.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God,
<over[m] Israel> is his majesty,
and his strength, in the skies,[n]
35 <Fear-inspiring> is God, out of his sanctuary.[o]
<The GOD of Israel> it is, who giveth strength and abundant might to the people.
|Blessed| be God!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For lilies=passover.

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[a] So it shd. be—Gn.
[b] "The conqueror"—Br.
[c] "A heap of them"—Br. "Their motley company"—Del.
[d] So some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. And so Br. M.T.: "God hath commanded."
[e] Cp. Isa. 26[12].
[f] U.: "congregation."
[g] Line as conjecturally emended by Br.: with which compare 66[10].
[h] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "He hath scattered."
[i] Meaning doubtful.
[j] "'As for Cush, his hands will run out to God,' in the gesture of supplication . . . a prediction of the conversion of Egypt and Ethiopia in accordance with Isa. 19[19 seq.], 43[3], 45[14], 60[5 seq.], Zp. 3[10]." Rather: a pred. that Egypt and Eth. will be represented in the coming kingdom.
[k] "Praise ye the Lord with stringed instruments"—Del.
[l] Ml.: "on the heavens of the heavens of aforetime (or antiquity)."
[m] Or: "On." Cp. Isa. 4[5].
[n] Or: "fleecy clouds."
[o] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

The interpretation of this magnificent psalm is beset with difficulty; owing in part to its highly dramatic character, and in part to its subtle allusions to ancient history and song. Neither time nor space permits of even a statement of the differences of opinion to which it has given rise among expositors. The only thing which can here be

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attempted, is, if possible, to do something towards reducing those differences by earnestly endeavouring to hold fast to sound principles of exegesis, and by paying due regard to correct readings and renderings.

The first thing to be sought is the scope of the psalm as a whole: what is its theme? what its keynote? To set this forth has already been aimed at by the "Descriptive Title": "Glimpses of the visible reign of Jehovah over Israel and the Nations." That the reign is that of Jehovah, no one can doubt. That his reign is first over Israel and then over the kingdoms of the earth, is plainly evident when the whole psalm is connectedly read. That the reign at first appears to be a visible dominion, will not be denied—so long as Israel only is taken into account. It is only when **the kingdoms of the earth** outside Israel come into view that the applicability of the term "visible" is likely to be questioned. It is therefore at once submitted, that only by the extension of the idea of visibility or *open manifestation* to the whole psalm, is consistency preserved and the entire trend of Prophecy duly regarded. Under this Divine Reign, there are **kingdoms,** recognised as such: in the Ecclesia of the Messiah, in other words in the Church of Jesus Christ, there are no kingdoms. In this psalm from first to last, Israel stands out peerlessly distinct from the other kingdoms of the earth: in the Church of the New Testament this distinction disappears. *Therefore* the Kingdom here is *not the Church*; and the essential idea intended to be conveyed by the qualifying term "visible" or "manifest" is seen to be needed to preserve the unity of the psalm. Only thus can the several seemingly disconnected glimpses afforded by this psalm be brought into relation as an organic whole. This conclusion, it is believed, will be found well sustained by a rapid survey of the seven divisions into which the psalm naturally falls.

Division I.—As soon as the unity of the psalm is perceived, the dominant note of its first division is heard. The idea is not formally stated, but is incidentally—because dramatically—conveyed. It is helped out into clearness by a very slight modification of the language of Num. 10^{35}, out of which its first couplet is framed. The words of Moses are a prayer—"Arise, O Jehovah." The words of the psalmist are either a prediction—"God will arise;" or, more probably, a generalised statement of fact—"God ariseth": as much as to say—"When God ariseth, then are his foes scattered." Who then is he whose mere **arising** disperses his enemies? The answer fills vers. 1—3: behold then his prowess! But note also his mercy, hidden behind his majesty: God is love, and, even in the Old Testament, this cannot be concealed.

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Therefore must come into view the mighty movement of tenderness which prompts God to arise and scatter his foes, the oppressors of his people. **In Yah=Jehovah=The Becoming One=consisteth his name.** Therefore must he **become—the father of the fatherless, the advocate of the widow**: a song to be sung, only with deep emotion by a people in **prisons** and in **exile**; and yet with searchings of heart, seeing that **the stubborn** may be left, for further chastening, **in a sun-burnt land.** Thus simply, yet broadly and grandly, is Israel's King portrayed. His character gives character to his reign. Here the whole psalm rests on stable foundations. No matter what **desert plains** may lie between Israel and her own land, here is a psalm fitted for the banished ones to sing.

Division II.—Visible reign: therefore manifest interposition when needed. It was needed and granted, to bring Israel out of Egypt. When Jehovah **went forth before his people**, in the pillar of cloud and fire, it was the **march** of a Divine Conqueror. Only unbelief hid this at any time from view. The poet sees it all now, and deftly expresses it: by one stroke revealing majesty; and then, by another, depicting tenderness: **Earth quaked, the heavens dripped,** how refreshing must the latter have been in the desert! That is all—all the strophe, all the "Division." But it is enough. Israel's God is no mere tribal Deity; but the Lord of earth and heaven. Creation subserves Redemption. The Unseen knows how to make his presence seen.

Division III.—The mention of an occasional **dripping** in the desert, suggests an even more essential dripping: the ever-recurring showers in the land to which the people came. This was Jehovah's **inheritance,** which, for needed discipline, was occasionally **exhausted** by drought, and was then **restored** by **copious rains** to its accustomed fruitfulness: the inheritance **wherein dwelt a living host** of animals and men, for all of whom **provideth** in his **bounty** Israel's God. Thus provideth he for the **humbled** people, once a family of slaves. The God of Redemption and Creation is also the God of providence.

Division IV.—Here we must pick our path with care. It cannot perhaps be dogmatically determined whether the *original* "conquest" under Joshua here comes into view, or whether a *re*-conquest of a portion of it as under Deborah and Barak, may not be intended. The allusions to Deborah's song (Judges 5) are fairly evident; and it is possible that one such incident may stand for all similar interpositions. Still, the opinion may be hazarded that, while some of the language is taken from the song of the prophetess, it is here generalised to suit the entire conception of both conquering and re-conquering the land of

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Israel's inheritance. This conclusion is favoured by the turn given to ver. 13, which no longer seems framed to apply as a well-merited reproach to home-loving cowards like Reuben (Judges 5^{16}), but rather to be intended as a simple congratulation on the abundance of spoil falling to the lot of the gentle "dove" of Israel when her enemies disappear before the manifested presence of her God. However this may be, and it is wise not to magnify the difficulty of following the allusion—the chief point evidently is, that success, whether in conquest or re-conquest, depends upon the commanding word of the **Sovereign Lord** of the land. When he **gives the word** ("maketh the summons resound"), whether the mandate be regarded as past, present, or future, then decisive results follow: **herald bands**—probably not *women* as some venturously interpret, seeing that the word for **herald band** both here and in Isa. 40^{9} may be feminine merely as a linguistic matter of course, and especially seeing that this very passage appears to give the hint that, in war, the place for woman is to **stay at home**—the **heralds**, whoever they may be, convey the King's word to his ready hosts; concerning whom it may be "taken as read" that they make their onset, but that victory so speedily follows that the next thing to be actually noted is, concerning the opposing **Kings**, that **they flee—flee!** Joshua's conquests were rapid; and there may lie concealed in the future flights more rapid still. The Almighty—if we hearken to prophecy—has not yet made an end of **scattering Kings therein.** The reference to the **falling of snow in Zalmon** is probably merely a proverbial way of depicting the fate of the hapless kings so scattered.

Division V.—It would be uncandid not to admit some difficulty here respecting the original text. The Sep. shows a considerable divergence from the Massoretic Hebrew; and Dr. Briggs, in his own drastic way, has reconstructed the two strophes of which this Division is constituted, so as to show a rather wide departure from what is familiar to us in this part of the psalm. The best way will be to give Dr. Briggs' result intact; and then say why we hesitate to follow him implicitly, and to point out how valuable a remainder survives criticism. Vers. 15—18, as revised and abbreviated by Dr. Briggs, appear thus:—

> O mount of Yahweh, fertile mountain!
> O mount of summits, fertile mountain!
> Mount Yahweh desired for his throne!
> Yahweh thou didst ride in thy chariot from Sinai into the sanctuary.
> Thou didst ascend up on high. Thou didst lead captives captive.
> Thou didst accept gifts, to dwell among mankind.

In the first place, we are predisposed to admit that in many places where Dr. Briggs substitutes "Yahweh" for "Elohim" in this

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Elohistic Book (Pss. 42—72) he is right; and that doubts as to particular passages become mere questions of detail, since no one denies that *both* Divine names *may* in many instances appear side by side. This matter affects the present passage thus: that whereas **mountain of Elohim** may mean no more than **mighty mountain, mountain of Yahweh** would naturally apply solely, in this connection, to Mount Zion. Now, since the Sep. goes on to speak of the mountain in question as "fertile mountain," as in Dr. Briggs' rendering above,—it is impossible not to feel that the ancient translators may have read, in their Hebrew exemplar, D SH N, "fertile," where we now read B SH N, "Bashan." To that extent there is legitimate room to doubt what was the true, most ancient text. In the second place, to other of Dr. Briggs' changes, we can only say—That as he goes behind all known texts and resorts to conjecture, we must reserve our consent till we see more difficulty than we do at present in the M.T. as needfully emended in a word or two. In the third place, it is especially satisfactory to find Dr. Briggs practically confirming Dr. Ginsburg's conclusion in favour of the beautiful and significant phrase **From Sinai into the sanctuary**—of which anon: most of all satisfactory is it to discover that the great *ascension* passage is left in substance intact, including in it such helpful accuracies as **captives** for "captivity," and the dwelling among **mankind** as the great object of the ascension—though, to that result, we come by a different route, which enables us to retain the clause **yea even the stubborn** ("rebellious") with a grip which nothing can at present induce us to relinquish. These explanations made, we attempt a brief survey of the passage.

The essential thing contained in the earlier part of it is, Jehovah's choice of Jerusalem as his fixed abode. The unquestioned clearness with which this is asserted, and the concurrence of O.T. testimony confirming it, may well make us chary of admitting that the present lapsed condition of Jerusalem is more than temporary. Nevertheless, we shall be well advised if we open our eyes to the magnitude of the Divine movement which is expressed in the solid line, **The Sovereign Lord hath come from Sinai into the sanctuary.** That he came escorted by **myriads** of angelic **chariots** may safely remain in the background; not, indeed, as in anywise incredible, but as not elsewhere distinctly asserted, and as in any case a generalised expression of a journey from Sinai to Zion which certainly did not *at once* take place, seeing that it was centuries after the entry into the land that the hill of Zion was captured. But the transition of the Divine Manifestation from Sinai into the sanctuary remains unquestioned; appealing strongly to what may be called the theological imagination,

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as a crystallised expression of a profound truth:—Sinai, the dark mountain of thunder and terror and law; Zion, the sunny mount of grace and praise. They are, indeed, in line with each other in historical continuity; but, in other ways, they are almost at opposite poles of Divine O.T. Manifestation. At the one end, Angel hosts: at the other, Levitical choirs. At the outset, Moses trembling in fear; at the close, David with his harp in an ecstasy of adoration and praise. It is true that **Sinai came into the sanctuary,** and that, accordingly, the Dispensation remained that of Sinai still; and further true that, to the last, Jerusalem, Hagar-like, was and is "in bondage with her children." The "grace" and the "truth" did not and could not come by Moses. Nevertheless, Moses became witness to a grace he did not himself minister; and Jerusalem, with its Davidic ministry of praise, had given to it the function not only of pointing back to Sinai, but of pointing onward and upward to its heavenly counterpart; so that, indeed, the towers and palaces and temple of Jerusalem are ever pointing to the sky; and Jehovah's home below becomes the counterpart of his home above; as in this very psalm, before we are well aware of it, we behold Jehovah **riding upon the ancient heaven of heaven**; and seem ourselves, in his strength, to mount up to **the fleecy clouds.**

Suddenly, however, we are brought back to earth, to recognise that we are slowly learning by types. **Thou** (O **God,** O **Sovereign Lord**—where note the abrupt direct address, **Thou**) **hast ascended on high.** In the first instance the language, as all admit, is used of the ascent of the ark to its resting place in Jerusalem, at which point Ps. 15, 24, and in some measure 47, come into line, comparison with which renders needless further comment here. But the very next clause—**hast captured a body of captives**—once more usefully revives the whole question of prophetic typology, or typological prediction. Expression has already been given, in the Exposition of Pss. 2, 24 and 45, to the conviction that types should be regarded as hints rather than programmes—as pencilled sketches rather than architect's plans; so that we never need conclude that, because a certain feature is feeble in the type, therefore it must have either a small place or no place at all in the antitype. It is of the essence of types that they should be comparatively feeble. What, indeed, was the ascent of the ark up to Jerusalem, compared with the ascent of the Messiah into heaven? Therefore would it seem to be little better than trifling to ask, with any anxiety, whether David or Joab seized a "body of captives" when the ark was carried up the hill, or whether the captives presumably taken when Jebus was captured, were in evidence, as the spoils of a

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conqueror, when the ascent was made. It is surely abundantly sufficient that the ark was triumphantly carried up into its destined place in spite of all the difficulties that had to be surmounted: the custom of conquerors may answer for the rest. It is customary with conquerors to capture a body of captives; customary, for them to accept presents consisting of men, yea even the stubborn. And therefore, the very feebleness of any known facts that happened in David's day to fill out the language of the psalm at this point, may well make us conclude that something far transcending the type is here forthshadowed. Hence we turn with relief to the teaching of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4, and discover with delight how wonderfully well the great facts connected with the Messiah's ascension to the right hand of God in heaven, do something more than justice to the comprehensive language used in the psalm: "more than justice," in that the verbal departure of the apostle from the psalmist at a single point melts away into higher harmony when set in the light of the great fulfilling facts. The Messiah both received gifts consisting of men—his Apostles, his Church, all mankind—and, in turn, gave gifts *to* men, which gifts themselves *were* men, namely apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers! Critics truly affirm that the Hebrew itself cannot mean "gave gifts to men"; but it is submitted that all of them should have done what some have done; and, instead of being content with the phrase: "among men"—which leaves it very questionable what to do with the rebellious or stubborn—seeing that it is not very likely that Yah Elohim would "dwell" peacefully "*among them*,"—should have gone just the one step further,—on the strength of the *beth-essential*, as it is called, which is well exemplified in ver. 4 of this very psalm,—by saying, here, gifts consisting of men, yea even the stubborn; especially considering how clear and solemn a N.T. truth it is that "the Father hath given all judgment unto the Son" (John 5^{22}), and that Jesus "died and lived again that he might be lord of both dead and living" (Rom. 14^{9}). Surely, right thoroughly does the New Testament pledge itself to fill the Old Testament to the full, seeing that it can suggest how really and grandly the Messiah, out of "the wicked spirits" darkening the lower "heavenly places" (Eph. 6), captured a body of captives when on his way to the central throne to accept gifts consisting of men, so "spoiling principalities and powers" (Col. 2) in demonstration of what more in that direction he will yet achieve when the time shall arrive for him to make his great and warlike descent into this lower sphere, and so further prepare the way for the final consummation, when "the tent of God" shall permanently "be with men."

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DIVISION VI.—If the reader will accept these Divisional summaries, not as exhaustive descriptions of contents, but as interpretive hints of special features, helping out the main theme of the psalm, it will be found that the point here made plain is, WHAT PEOPLE it is which, here and elsewhere through the psalm, comes into peculiarly close relationship to God: **carrieth a load for US—OUR salvation—is for US a God of saving deeds.** It is by taking into account in their entirety *all* the characteristics of this people, that we arrive at anything like certainty as to that people's identity. All worshippers of the one true and living God—all saints among the Gentiles—all members of Christian churches the world over—may not unnaturally deem themselves to be included, so long as the Divine bearing of **daily burdens** and **salvation** itself are the benefits which come into view as calling forth praise; but, when it comes to **bathing thy foot in blood,** it becomes a question as to whether we had not better hark back, and reopen the inquiry as to *the people intended.* Surely, better leave it to the Twelve-tribed Nation, to sit for the portrait, as the people intended by the we and the our and the us throughout the psalm; than to throw the whole psalm into confusion, by overlooking the fact that *Gentiles also* are found here in their own right, so far as description is concerned: **kings, messengers out of Egypt, Ethiopians, Kingdoms of the earth,** are surely comprehensive enough designations to do ample justice to all Non-Israelites.

In view of other prophecies, especially those which touch on the great biblical question of the bringing of life and incorruption to light, perhaps the line in this division of the psalm which most strongly attracts us is that which says: **And to Jehovah, Sovereign Lord, belong escapes in view of death.** Here, as in so many cases, translation and interpretation reciprocally serve each other: the right rendering helps out the true exegesis; and, *vice versâ.* Until we are satisfied that we have seized the true exegesis, we cannot be quite sure that we have hit upon the happy rendering. **Escapes in view of death.** More literal than escapes is outgoings, and various "outgoings" are conceivable; "sallies," "outlets," "issues" or "results" each being worthy of a moment's thought. Indeed, had the Hebrew phrase been quite literally, "the outgoings *of* death," we might have thought of DEATH'S OWN EXITS, his departures from first one sphere and then another of his former dominion; so that first the Messiah dieth no more, then the Church dieth no more, until at length Death itself is swallowed up in victory. But probably this would in any case have been too great a stride to suppose here taken by the revealing Spirit, whose disclosures ordinarily advance by gently graduated degrees.

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Hence, and the Hebrew being literally as peculiar as it is, and the English phrase "escapes in view of death" being as striking and satisfying as it is, probably we shall be doing wisely to content ourselves with its obvious suggestions. The moment we do this, we bethink us of the numberless "escapes in view of death" which David himself had experienced; of the one marvellous "escape" of Hezekiah "in view of death;" then, rising to the level of national outlook, we recall the "escape in view of death" granted by the passage through the Red Sea; the resuscitation of the nation by deliverance from captivity; and realise how ample were the reasons for the insertion of such a line as this in such an ode, and how mighty is the impulse of devout thankfulness to attribute all such "escapes in view of death" to **Jehovah, Sovereign Lord.** After submitting all which, it is difficult not to feel that even this rich line of things scarcely fills up the passage;—which apprehension, however, is partly due to the immediately succeeding lines, which, to say the least, countenance the surmise of a two-fold allusion; namely one to Jehovah's enemies, as well as one to his friends. In other words, vers. 21—23 suggest an enlarged application of the previous words, so far as this: "To Jehovah, Sovereign Lord, belong escapes in view of death"—which *he grants or withholds* according to his holy will; so that neither *by* death nor *from* death can his enemies escape the visitation of his righteous wrath. This extension of the sense will appear the more called for the more we find in Amos 9^{1-4} a parallel to vers. 21, 22 of this psalm. The decisive force of ver. 23 in determining who are the **us** and the **we** of the psalm has already been indicated.

DIVISION VII.—It seems possible and convenient to comprehend all the remainder of this psalm under the one compound division-line placed at its head. **The goings of God ... into the sanctuary** are pretty clearly pictured as "a procession," or, still more probably, as "processions": the whole being uplifted into the realm of the ideal, so as to comprehend not only an allusion to the original bringing up of the ark by David, and the repeated bringings home of the ark after it had gone out before the hosts of Israel to battle (2 Sam. 11^{11}) but also any procession which the future may have in store. Whether, in ver. 25a, we should read with some authorities *sharim*, "singers," or with others *sarim* "princes," is a nice question, which perhaps cannot be dogmatically decided: the verses following (especially ver. 27) perhaps favour "princes;" and the more readily, when two things are considered—first, that a procession without "princes" would be very incomplete; and, second, that a procession with "princes" leading the way, would even then not be without "singers,"—that is to say, if we may

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gather from Rev. 15[2-4] that harpers need not be tongue-tied, but may sing as well as play.

It seems quite fitting that the psalmist should, in ver. 26a, address the processionists in anticipation of the assemblies which they are about to form in the temple courts; and further that (in ver. 26b) he should synonymously term those "assemblies" the elect of Israel—to appropriate the word which Ginsburg decides should stand in the text; and which prepares us to find an elect group of *tribes* in ver. 27—probably as representatives of the whole twelve-tribed nation: before leaving which we may ask, without assuming that David himself wrote this part of the psalm, Who so likely as David to have set Benjamin at the head of the group? That David—partly out of his old habit of reverence for Saul and partly out of his love for Jonathan—should have done it is conceivable. No later singer would have been likely to indulge in such a stroke of antiquated chivalry.

From this point onward for some way in the psalm, there is little that demands comment: save, perhaps, chiefly, to note how admirable a parallel with ver. 28b is found in Isa. 26[12]; to observe that by the beasts of the reeds we are, by general consent, to understand the "hippopotamus" as the symbol of Egypt, in which case the mighty oxen which follow would naturally suggest the monarchs of Assyria and Babylon, and thus prepare us to favour Dr. Briggs' emendation of 30c, remembering how repeatedly, between West and East, Israel was trampled in the mire.

After the direct address to God—Command, Rebuke, Scatter (ver. 23—31)—which may itself form part of the song which the processionists sing; we come upon the exhilarating climax of the entire psalm, in which (as it would appear) Israel in her gladness invites the outlying nations to join her in praise: a climax which is indeed exhilarating, by reason of the comprehensive vision it gives of earth and heaven united, and the frank and grateful strains in which we hear the nations themselves recognising that the God of the heavens is the God of Israel: **He rideth on the ancient heaven of heavens, yet over Israel is his majesty; His strength is in the skies, yet the God of Israel it is who giveth strength and abundant might to the people.** It is this very blending of earth and heaven, of the past and the future, which for once induces a slight uncertainty as to which sanctuary is intended in the last verse of the psalm. If we felt bound to restrict the outlook of ver. 35 to that of vers. 17, 24, we should decide for the earthly sanctuary; but, perceiving as we do the delightful way in which, here at the close, the vision of the psalmist seems to alternate and vibrate between earth and heaven with a general uplifting

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effect, we are disposed to leave this nice point for the event of fulfilment to determine. It is probably more important to note that, whether the Divine Manifestation intended be made from the heavenly sanctuary or the earthly, there will be in it a sufficiently marked element of terror to render it **fear-inspiring**. So far—no further as yet—does the vision reach. Nevertheless, coupling the end of the psalm with its beginning, and noting well the promising transition from Sinai to Zion in the centre of this magnificent composition, we can be well content to rest in the final note—**Blessed be God!** and can felicitate ISRAEL that, under the leadership of such men as David, Hezekiah and undoubtedly Isaiah, such strains as these were in the earlier centuries of the Monarchy prepared for the celebration of the "lily" feast at the beginning of the year, that is, for the Passover; according to Dr. Thirtle's principle for the re-adjustment of the musical inscriptions. "Undoubtedly Isaiah" may be thought to be going beyond the evidence; but after the weighty arguments for attributing the authorship of Isaiah 40—66 to the known Isaiah of Hezekiah's day, which have been advanced by Dr. Thirtle, in his "Old Testament Problems," it may soon be open to us to turn the tables upon Kirkpatrick, for example (who infers the late date of this psalm from its numerous resemblances to "Isaiah II."), by contending that, on the contrary, those very resemblances go far to prove that the closing chapters of Isaiah as well as the psalm were written early enough to justify the librarian's mark inscribing even this psalm **to (or by) David**: from whom we may well believe its fundamental strains actually came. That Hezekiah probably added to it and adapted it to temple worship, does not really throw doubt on the traditional heading; any more than does an addition or two by an exilic editor, who may, for example, easily have supplemented Division I. by the line, **Howbeit the stubborn remain in a sunburnt land.** Even this supposition, however, is by no means necessary to the assumption of the Davidic authorship and the Hezekian co-authorship, seeing that extensive deportations to sunburnt eastern lands had already taken place in Hezekiah's day.

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PSALM 69.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Pictures of Distress and Outcries for Deliverance, followed by Imprecations on Cruel Enemies, and by Promises of Praise.

ANALYSIS.—This psalm is almost certainly Composite, not easily lending itself to Strophical divisions. The following are its principal contents. Chiefly under the figure of a Man Drowning in a Swampy Stream, the psalmist describes his Sufferings from Innumerable Foes—vers. 1—4. He confesses his Folly and Wrong-doing—ver. 5. Prays that others may Not be Injured through Him—ver. 6. Declares that he Suffers for Jehovah's sake—vers. 7—9. Is Exposed to Ridicule—vers. 10—12. Yet Hopes to be Heard—ver. 13. Frames his Petitions on his Original Description of Peril—vers. 14, 15. Becomes yet More Importunate—vers. 16—18. Is Broken-hearted by the Bitter Mockery of his Enemies—vers. 19—21. At length, in seven strong couplets, he prays for the Punishment of his Foes—vers. 22—28. Returning to his Own Case, he Confidently Counts on Salvation and Promises Praise—vers. 29—31. He anticipates that the Humbled will be Revived and Jehovah Exalted—vers. 32, 33. And finally invites Heaven and Earth to Give Praise for the Restoration of Zion—vers. 34—36.

[Lm.] By David.

1 Save me, O God, because waters |have come in| as far as the life :[a]
2 I have sunk in a swamp that is deep, where is no place to stand,
I have come unto depths of waters, and ||a flowing stream|| hath swept me away ;
3 I[b] am weary with mine outcry, <parched> is my throat,
<bedimmed> are mine eyes, through waiting for my God.
4 <More than the hairs of my head> are they who hate me without cause,
<more numerous than my bones>[c] are they who are falsely my foes :
<When I had seized nothing> then ||I||[d] had to make good.

5 O God ||thou|| knowest my folly,[e]
and ||my wrong-doings|| <from thee> are not hid.

6 Let not those who have waited for thee |be put to shame through me|
O Jehovah of hosts ![f]
let not those who are seeking for thee |be confounded through me|
O God of Israel !
7 Because <for thy sake> have I borne reproach,[g]
confusion |hath covered| my face :

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[a] U: "soul."
[b] These varying indentations indicate varying measures in the original.
[c] So it shd. be (w. Syr.) (or "locks")—Gn.
[d] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[e] Cp. 38^5.
[f] So Sep. M.T.: "O Adonai, Jehovah of hosts."
[g] Cp. 44^{22}; Rom. 8^{36}.

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8 <Estranged> have I become from my brothers,
yea <an alien> to the sons of my mother:
9 Because ||zeal for thy house|| hath consumed me,[a]
and ||the reproaches meant for thee||[b] have fallen on me.
10 <When I have humbled,[c] with fasting, my soul>
then hath it become a reproach to me:
11 <When I have made my clothing sackcloth>
then have I become to them a taunt-song:
12 They who sit in the gate |compose songs[d] about me|,
yea, string-songs for the imbibers of strong-drink.

13 But <as for me> my prayer is to thee, Jehovah, in an acceptable time,[e]
O God! <in the abounding of thy kindness> answer me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Rescue me from the mire, and oh let me not sink,[f]
oh let me be rescued from my haters, and from depths of waters:
15 Let not a flowing stream of waters |sweep me away|,
nor a deep |swallow me up|,
nor |a well| close over me| her mouth.
16 Answer me, Jehovah! for <good> is thy kindness,[g]
<according to the abounding of thy compassions> turn thou unto me;
17 And hide not thy face from thy servant,
<because I am in distress> haste thee, answer me.
18 Oh draw near to my soul, redeem it,
<on account of mine enemies> ransom thou me.
19 ||Thou|| knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my confusion,
<before thee> are all mine adversaries.
20 ||Reproach|| hath broken my heart, and I am incurable,
And I waited for one to show sympathy, and there was none,
and for comforters, but I found none;
21 But they put, in[h] my food, poison,[i]
and <for my thirst> they gave, as my drink, vinegar.[j]

22 Let their table, before them, become a trap,[k]
and <unto their friends>[l] a lure[m].
23 Let their |eyes| become too dim |to see|,
and <their loins> continually cause thou to shake.
24 Pour out, over them, thine indignation,
and ||let the glow of thine anger|| overtake them.
25 Let their |encampment| become |desolate|,[n]
<in their tents> be there none to dwell.
26 Because <whom ||thou thyself|| hadst smitten> they pursued,
and <unto the pain of thy wounded ones> they must needs add.[o]
27 Lay punishment on their iniquity[p]
and do not let them come into thy vindication.[q]

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[a] Cp. Jn. 2[17].
[b] M.T. (ml.): "And the reproaches of those reproaching thee."
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep.): cp. 35[13]—Gn.
[d] So Br. (cp. 105[2]; Judges 5[10]).
[e] Ml. "in a time of favour."
[f] Cp. v. 2 ff.
[g] Cp. 109[21].
[h] Or: "as"—O.G.
[i] Cp. Mt. 27[34].
[j] Cp. Jn. 19[29].
[k] Cp. Rom. 11[9, 10].
[l] "And their peace-offerings"—Br.
[m] Or: "bait." So Dr.
[n] Cp. Acts 1[20].
[o] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[p] "Impute guilt to their guiltiness"—Carter.
[q] Or: "righteousness."

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28 Let them be blotted out of the register of the living,[a]
and <with the righteous> let them not be enrolled.
29 But ||I|| am humbled and in pain,
||thy salvation, O God|| shall set me on high!
30 I would fain praise the name of God in a song,
and would magnify him with thanksgiving;
31 And it will be more pleasing to Jehovah than a bullock,—
||a bull, with horn and split hoof||.
32 The humble |have seen| and rejoice:
ye seekers after God! let your hearts then |revive|,
33 Because <a hearkener to the needy> is Jehovah,
and <his prisoners> hath he not despised.

34 Let the heavens and the earth |praise him|,
the seas, and everything gliding therein
35 Because ||God|| will save Zion,
and will build the cities of Judah,
and men shall dwell there, and possess it;
36 And ||the seed of his servants|| shall inherit it,
and ||the lovers of his name|| shall abide therein.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] = "book of life"— Cp. Exo. $32^{32,33}$, Ps. 87^{6}, Isa. 4^{3}, Eze. 13^{9}, Dan. 12^{1}.

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is remarkable, on the one hand, for its terrible imprecations on enemies; and, on the other, for the frequency with which it is quoted in the New Testament; also, in a minor degree, for its manifestly composite structure, which sets strophical arrangement at defiance—as may be seen by observing the varying indentations of the lines, which in the present rendering call attention to the numerous metrical changes evident in the Hebrew.

As to this last peculiarity, it may at once be remarked: That only by a drastic re-arrangement of its parts, can continuity of measure and symmetry of form be secured; and, even so, only at the risk of obliterating traces of living adaptation to his own circumstances effected by the final author: whose spontaneous comments on the two original psalms before him, we can here and there with probability distinguish. Readers caring to follow up this suggestion may find assistance by noting: That lines here set fully out in the margin are regarded as pentameters, those pushed in one degree as tetrameters, and those indented two degrees as trimeters, counting with Dr. Briggs by word-group beats. After making reasonable allowance for possible contractions and expansions of the lines without serious disturbance of the sense, there will still surely emerge to the critical eye clear indications that, in its present form, the psalm is decidedly composite.

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Nearly connected with these matters of form arises the always interesting question of authorship. The traditional headline traces the psalm ultimately to David; nor is this note of origin probably so easily discredited as some critics appear to suppose. The opening lines of this psalm remind us of the first strophe of Ps. 40, which we saw reason to conclude came from David's pen; and at the close of those lines (namely at ver. 4c) is a statement so peculiar that scholars have pronounced it a mere proverbial saying, the exact meaning of which is not to be pressed; **when I had seized nothing then had I to make good.** It seems not to have occurred to them to reflect how naturally this would become literally true of David, in those early days when he was accustomed to make raids in the name of King Saul into the territories of the Philistines and others, and when the hatred of the meaner spirits amongst Saul's courtiers had already begun to show itself. As, however, there is no temptation to attribute the entire psalm to David, it becomes easy to remark how well many parts of the psalm could have come from Hezekiah—especially its close. To what extent the early life of Hezekiah was conformed to that of David in respect of the stern discipline of suffering and waiting, perhaps we shall never know, but from slight indications, discovered in Pss. 35, 42 and 43, our minds are familiarised with the possibility that Hezekiah had a considerable share in sufferings such as are so emphatically memorialised in this psalm. Naturally, JEREMIAH stands pre-eminent as a prince of sufferers; and if in Ps. 31 we felt constrained to admit "the weeping prophet" into that gallery of portraits—even though placed there by the Sopherim (Intro., chap. I.)—it would be taking an extreme position to assume that we have none of Jeremiah's work in this psalm. Nevertheless the reasons for so late a date to the whole psalm are probably by no means so conclusive as, for instance, Kirkpatrick deems them to be. But, in truth, anything like adequacy in experience of suffering to prepare the psalmist for penning the more sorrowful of the strains before us, is the less anxiously to be sought, the more we perceive the spirit of the Messiah to have been at work in preparing these lines of lamentation. If even Briggs has to say: "This sufferer is doubtless the ideal community of Ps. 22, Is. 53;" how readily may we assure ourselves that "the ideal community" has to be summed up and made possible by the patiently borne sufferings of the IDEAL MAN who, to our eyes, is in those scriptures so plainly delineated. In point of fact, as in previous psalms, so in this, the reachings forth of the Divine Spirit towards something more than types could express, are plainly visible; so that, for instance, as in Ps. 45 no "king most beautiful" can be found in Israel fully answering to the description there given, so probably it

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would be vain to expect to find in Israel any typical sufferer—or circle of sufferers—exhausting the terms of this psalm. Suffice it to observe, at this point, that whether with types or without them, many and undeserved are the woes which lead up to the great imprecatory passage which fills vers. 22—28 of this psalm: which, indeed, for length and intensity, is really not exceeded by Psalm 109.

Now there are several considerations which may well be urged in mitigation of the difficulty widely felt respecting the OUTCRIES FOR VENGEANCE which are scattered throughout the Old Testament; and which, in the devotional atmosphere of the Psalms, are, to many sensitive minds, painfully unacceptable.

In the *first* place, it should be considered: That desire for the punishment of persistent evil-doers, is an ineradicable instinct of the human breast, rooted in the persuasion that the Judge of all the earth must needs do right, and in the apprehension that, were it otherwise, all faith in the government of God would necessarily come to an end.

In the *second* place it should be remarked: That vengeance is seldom if ever expressed, with any show of Divine approval, except as provoked by atrocious crimes of wilful cruelty and bloodshed. In this very psalm, an aggravation of offence is alleged against those against whom imprecations are uttered:

> **Because whom thou thyself had smitten they pursued,**
> **And unto the pain of thy wounded ones they must needs add.**

With which may be compared Isaiah 47[6] and other passages.

In the *third* place, it should be remembered: That there was no clear revelation, in those olden times when the Old Testament was being written, of the reservation of rewards and punishments to a future life. Under such conditions the feeling naturally sprang up: "Now or never must justice be done!" Hence it was inevitable that, in periods of strain due to the triumph of the wicked, good men should cry out for early Divine intervention; so that normal moral conditions of life might be restored, and men generally be reassured that "there is fruit to the righteous." Given, then, the instinctive impulse, the bitter occasion, and the time urgency,—what wonder that grossly injured men should cry out to God for vengeance?

But in the *fourth* place, it should be called to mind: That to a large extent, times have been constitutionally changed since those Old Testament imprecations were uttered. For the Church of Christ, at least, a new Era has set in; seeing that the example, the commands, and especially the spirit of the Lord Jesus not only forbid outcries for vengeance, but render indulgence in them abhorrent to our better

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natures: so that what was excusable under the Law is unpardonable under the Gospel. We ourselves have been forgiven; and, at the risk of having our own pardon withdrawn (Mat. 18[21–35]), we are solemnly bound by our Master to forgive even our enemies. Their repentance we must seek; and be ready to pardon. Hence we live in the atmosphere of forgiveness, human and divine. This is very much the reason why we are so shocked at the imprecations of the older time, and have to excuse ourselves from making them our own.

But this is not all. We have now, in the *fifth* place, to brace up our minds and to sharpen our vision to perceive and to realise: That the forgiveness of injuries is only a partial and after all temporary manifestation of the spirit of Christ. It is binding on individual Christians, and binding on the collective Church; but it is certainly not binding on the civil magistrate, or he would indeed "hold the sword in vain;" and even on individual Christians and the collective Church, it is, though binding, yet transitionally educative rather than of absolute and permanent obligation. For the present, retaliation is forbidden: for the present, forgiveness of injuries is enjoined: for the present, the forcible suppression of evil is to a real and serious degree postponed: for the present, prayers for the punishment of evil-doers naturally falter on our lips. Adequately to realise this is to reach a vantage ground which reveals on the one hand to what a spiritual elevation our Lord Christ has uplifted us, and on the other hand that the kingdom of God comprehensively viewed has in it lower levels which must be included. The most effective way to bring this home to us is to study, not the earthly life only of our Master, but his entire commission as Redeemer and Monarch of mankind. On earth, he did not curse; he only blessed. But he warned, and uttered woes; he denounced, and he predicted; and the woes that trembled on his lips seemed to forecast the terrible "accursed" which he knew he should have to utter when he should sit as king on his throne of glory (Mat. 25[41]). And, finally, "the wrath of the Lamb," in its partial unveiling, is seen in the Apocalypse to strike apprehensive consternation into the hearts of men who would if they could hide themselves from its terrors (Rev. 6[16, 17]). So that, when we declare that the spirit of Christ is opposed to imprecations on the doers of wrong, this statement needs to be brought under the regulative restriction: That the Messiah in his humiliation, while as yet he was learning obedience by the things that he suffered (Heb. 2[10]) might not curse, and did not; but that, when released by his Father from that severe course of discipline, his "love of righteousness and hatred of lawlessness," may and must so flame forth that "his own right hand shall teach him fearful

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things" (Ps. 45[4]). Whether as it is now with him so it will hereafter be with us, when vested with immortal strength to bear so weighty a responsibility, may to some minds seem speculative and doubtful, and in any case probably remains to be seen. Ideally considered, it might seem fitting that, even to the Church, regarded as the Bride of the Lamb, should NOT be given the work of inflicting punishment on offenders, nor even be assigned the duty of offering prayers for its infliction; but, if not to Christians as such, yet almost certainly to Hebrews, there is in store a prerogative of vengeance of which the most formidable of Gentile nations might do well to stand in fear. Anything more solemnly admonitory in that direction than Ps. 149 cannot well be conceived; seeing that therein Jehovah's very "men of kindness" are taught that it will be nothing less than a splendid service which they shall render when they are commissioned to—

> "Let extollings of God be in their throats,
> And a two-edged sword be in their hand;
> To execute an avenging on the nations,
> [To inflict] chastisements on the peoples;
> To bind their kings with chains,
> And their honorables with fetters of iron,—
> To execute upon them the sentence written."

Let Turkey beware! Let Russia beware! And let us British Christians learn to respect and not be wholly ashamed of the punitive element in our Holy Oracles.

The QUOTATIONS made from this psalm in the N.T. are too instructive to be passed over in silence. From Mat. 27[34] and Jn. 19[28, 29]; also from Jn. 2[17], 15[25], and Rom. 15[3], we see how clearly the Apostles discovered in their Lord the Sufferer of the psalm. From Acts 1[20], we gather how the imprecations of the psalm served the useful purpose of preparing the minds of his fellow-apostles for the falling of Judas out of their number. And, finally, from Rom. 11[9, 10], we perceive that this psalm assisted the Apostle Paul in accepting the unwelcome conviction that a temporary hardening of heart had been permitted by God to befall his own chosen people. In fine, while on the one hand there is in the N.T. no distinct echo of the maledictions of this psalm—no direct cursing therefrom repeated; yet, on the other hand, there is no shrinking from the practical use thereof in other ways—on the contrary, the evidence goes to shew how deeply its lessons had engraven themselves on the most godly minds in Israel. We ourselves also, in humble obedience to our Lord, must abstain from cursing—from making our own its prayers for the punishment of the wicked, even the maliciously injurious; but, if we enter intelligently into the reasons why this

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abstention becomes our duty, we can then study to profit this and the like examples of O.T. imprecations. The high standard of poetic beauty mostly attained by these stern lyrics may excite our reverent admiration; while the intense moral earnestness which they breathe may help to brace our minds to the strong and healthful conviction that in sacred things there should be no trifling, and that, after all, justice is the foundation of grace.

PSALMS 70 and 71.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer Not to be Forsaken in Old Age.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3 (70), Prayer against Enemies. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5 (70), Prayer in behalf of Friends. Strophe III., vers. 1—3 (71), Prayer for Rescue and Deliverance, with Appeals to Divine Righteousness and Protection. Strophe IV., vers. 4—6 (71), For Deliverance from One who is Lawless, Perverse and Ruthless, sought by Reference to Youthful Days. Strophe V., vers. 7—9 (71), The Wonders of a Lifetime are pleaded against Rejection in Old Age. Strophe VI., vers. 10—13 (71), Urgency against Appearance of being Forsaken. Strophe VII., vers. 14—16 (71), More Hopeful Strain. Strophe VIII., vers. 17—19 (71), Renewed references to Youth and Age, coupled with desire by this Aged Saint to do more for his Matchless God. Strophe IX., vers. 20—24 (71), In view of Resurrection, whole-souled Praise is Promised, aided by Lute, Lyre, Lips and Tongue.

[Lm.] By David—To bring to remembrance.

1 Be pleased,[a] O God, to rescue me,
Jehovah! <to help me> oh make haste!

2 <Put to shame and abashed>[b] be they who are seeking my life,[c]
<Turned back and confounded> be they who are taking pleasure in my hurt,[d]

3 Let |them| turn back, on account of their own shame,
who are saying[e]—"Aha! Aha!"[f]

4 <Glad and joyful in thee> be all who are seekers of thee,
and let |them| say continually "God[g] be magnified!"[h]
who are lovers of thy salvation.

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[a] So *Gk.*: cp. 40^{13}—Gn. Cp. throughout w. 40^{13-17}.
[b] Cp. 71^{24}.
[c] U.: "soul."
[d] Cp. $71^{13, 24}$; also $35^{4, 26}$, 40^{14}.
[e] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.) add: "of me"; cp. 40^{12}—Gn.
[f] Cp. 35^{21}.
[g] Some cod. (w. Aram. and Vul.): "Jehovah"; cp. 40^{16}—Gn.
[h] Cp. 35^{27}.

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5 <Since ||I|| am humbled and needy, O God, do haste for me!
<my help and my deliverer> art |thou|,
Jehovah![a] do not tarry.

[Nm.]

PSALM 71.

[Nm.]

1 <In thee, Jehovah> have I taken refuge,
let me not be put to shame, to the ages:
2 <In thy righteousness> wilt thou rescue me, and deliver me,
incline unto me thine ear, and save me:
3 Be thou unto me a rock of refuge,[b]
a place of security[c] for saving me,
because <my cliff[d] and my fastness> art |thou|.[e]

4 My God! deliver me from the hand of a lawless one,
from the grasp of a perverse and ruthless one;
5 For ||thou|| art mine expectation, Sovereign Lord,
||Jehovah|| my trust from my youthful days:
6 <On thee> have I stayed myself from birth,
||thou|| art he that severed me from the body of my mother,—[f]
<of thee> shall be my praise continually.

7 <A very wonder> have I been to multitudes,
but ||thou|| hast been my strong refuge.
8 My mouth |shall be filled| with thy praise,
<all the day> with thy splendour.[g]
9 Do not cast me off in old age,[h]
<when my vigour |faileth|> do not forsake me.

10 For mine enemies |hath said| concerning me,—
yea ||the watchers for my life||[i] have taken counsel together,—
11 Saying, ||"God himself|| hath forsaken him,
pursue and capture him, for there is none to rescue him!"
12 O God! be not far from me,
my God! <to help me> oh make haste.[j]
13 <Put to shame and confounded>[k] be they who are accusing my soul,
<covered with reproach and confusion> be they who are seeking my hurt.[l]

14 But ||I|| continually will hope,
and will add to all thy praise.
15 ||My mouth|| shall record thy righteousness,
<all the day> thy salvation,—
though I know not how to record it.[m]
16 I will enter into the mighty doings of Adonai,
Jehovah! I will mention thy righteousness, thine alone.

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[a] Some cod. (w. 6 ear. pr. edns. and Syr.): "O my God"; cp. 40^{18}—Gn.
[b] So in some cod. (w. 6 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Vul.); cp. 31^{2}—Gn. M.T.: "rock of habitation."
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.); cp. 31^{2}—Gn.
[d] Cp. 42^{9}.
[e] Cp. $31^{2,3}$.
[f] Cp. 22^{9}.
[g] Or: "beauty," "adoring."
[h] Cp. ver. 18.
[i] U.: "soul."
[j] Cp. $70^{1,5}$.
[k] So some cod.: cp. 35^{4}—Gn.
[l] Cp. $35^{4,26}$, 40^{14}, 70^{2}.
[m] Ml.: "numbers" or "records."

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17 O God! thou hast taught me from my youthful days,
and <hitherto> have I been declaring thy wondrous works:
18 <Even now, therefore, that I am old and grey-headed>[a]
O God! do not forsake me,—
until I declare thine arm to a [new] generation—[b]
<to everyone who is[c] to come> thy might.
19 And <as for thy righteousness, up to the height,
wherein thou hast done great things>
O God! who is like unto thee?

20 <Whereas thou hast let me[d] see many distresses and misfortunes>
thou shalt again restore me[d] to life,
yea <out of the deeps of the earth> shalt thou again bring me[d] up:
21 Increase thou my greatness,
and <on every side> console me.
22 ||I also|| will thank thee, by the aid of the lute, for thy truth, O my God,
I will make melody unto thee, with a lyre, O Holy One of Israel!
23 My lips |shall ring out their joy| when I make melody unto thee,—
||yea, my soul which thou hast ransomed||:
24 ||My tongue also|| <all the day> shall talk to me of thy righteousness,
because <put to shame>, because <abashed> are they who were
seeking my hurt.[e]

[Nm.]

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[a] Cp. ver. 9; also 1 Sam. 12[2].
[b] Sep.: "to every generation that is coming."
[c] A sp. vr. (sevir): "all who are"—Gn.
[d] *Written* "us": *read* "me" (w. Sep. and other authorities)—Gn.
[e] Cp. 70[3].

EXPOSITION.

Although by this time the general terms and tenor of this compound psalm have become so familiar as to render detailed exposition needless, yet are there several most interesting questions which cluster around this composition as a whole. And first there is the position that it *is* a compound psalm—in other words that the two psalms are really one. Dr. Thirtle comes to the natural conclusion that, lacking any inscriptional line to divide them, they should be conjoined; and when we examine the contents in quest of confirmatory internal evidence, the result must be pronounced satisfactory, as the references appended to the two psalms will sufficiently indicate.

We next observe that, with a single exception, this psalm stands alone in its specific allusions to old age, and absolutely alone in the pathetic character of those allusions. In Ps. 92 the reference is wholly triumphant, as an outburst of joy in the assurance that the righteous do still bring forth fruit in old age. Here a very different note is struck. It is the plaintive appeal of an old man, that he may not be **forsaken** now that his vigour is departing from him. This

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note is the more touching in that it is deliberately repeated, and is set in striking contrast with the memories of a long and chequered life.

In point of fact, this feature of the psalm at once raises the familiar question of authorship, investing it, in the present instance, with an especial interest; inasmuch as we at once become inquisitive as to what psalm-composing saint of those olden times is likely to have been so deeply moved and so clearly depressed by the consciousness of advancing years, as the writer of this psalm manifestly is. The ascription of the psalm to **David**, naturally reminds us that this famous singer himself lived to become an old man; and the example of Ps. 39 would have prepared us for a sombre outlook, had that been all that is here in evidence; but it certainly would not have led us to look for an apprehension of being **forsaken!** The glimpse given us in Chronicles of the venerable monarch dedicating his bountiful gifts and those of his people for the building and furnishing of the Temple (1 Ch. 29), utterly forbids the supposition that David could have feared being forsaken in his old age. We are not surprised, therefore, that these critics who are pre-disposed to post-date the authorship of the Psalms, should think of Jeremiah rather than of David as the writer, nor are we much surprised to find so conservative a critic as Delitzsch strongly inclining to that opinion: the drawback against that hypothesis being the not very serious one, that there is nothing beyond conjecture, or at most plausibility, to sustain the thought that the "weeping prophet" continued weeping till the last—though, even had he done so, it may be surmised it would rather have been over Jerusalem than over himself. But now, further noticing that, according to its superscription, this pathetic psalm was designed **To bring to remembrance**, the suggestion arises whether it may not enshrine **memorials** of the prophet **Samuel** himself: leaving David as the actual writer of the psalm, even as many of the incidents alluded to are Davidic, and much of the imagery is Davidic; still, embodying strains with which the youthful harpist first became familiar from the lips of the venerable president of the school of the prophets. The more we think of it, the more this supposition attracts us, at least as an alternative opinion—not the less so in that such a persuasion strikes a companion note to that which would trace to Samuel the first beginnings of the so-called Wisdom Literature. What, if in Samuel's long and consecrated life, should be discovered the seeds of Sacred Song and the training of Sacred Minstrels, as well as the shaping of proverbs and aphorisms, and the evolution of Sacred Drama? How did those sons of the prophets cultivate their gifts; they used musical instruments—therefore they sang, therefore they must have had, and probably

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composed, songs for singing. If his pupils did this must not he, their president, have had the gifts needed for their guidance? Assuming this probability, it is obvious to remark next, that Samuel had much in his old age to sadden him and to draw from him on a memorable occasion a pathetic reference to his grey hairs (1 Sam. 12^2): his sons not following in his steps, the people becoming envious and discontented, Saul a failure as king. We know that Samuel and David came into contact; and we ask whether it is not within the bounds of likelihood that, on some never-to-be-forgotten occasion, the forebodings of Samuel's troubled heart found rhythmical utterance in terms which made a profound impression on David's mind; and that, although the latter may never have used them hitherto, yet now at length, when his own age is advancing, with sufficient self-consciousness to move his sympathy for other ageing men, these strains are revived with sufficient strength to urge him to embalm them in a psalm of exquisite tenderness and deep pathos. As soon as this likelihood finds lodgment in our minds and we again peruse the psalm under its influence, expression after expression leaps out into vividness as even more suited to Samuel's story than to any other with which we are familiar. Who, more fittingly than he, could claim that Jehovah had been his trust and his teacher from his youthful days? Who, so justly as he, could assert that he had been spending his life hitherto in declaring God's wonders? Who, so well as the trainer of prophets and minstrels, could plead with such force to be spared yet a little longer to prepare instructors for coming generations? We do not dogmatise; nor do we more than suggest the traces of an influence affecting the avowed singer's mind. The psalm is David's—at least, it has upon it the tokens of his experience, the abounding of his figures of speech; but it is enriched with memories other than his own, memories which strengthen rather than weaken the claims of the psalm to be attributed to him.

There is one other matter claiming attention before this psalm is dismissed, namely, its assertion of a hope of resurrection (71^{20}). The surprising thing about this is the degree to which such an assertion has been obscured by translators and expositors; by translators, in softening down, to the ambiguous idea of "quickening," of a word which primarily means to restore to life; and by expositors, in a rather hasty and needless turning aside to a mere national resuscitation. The correct principle of interpretation surely is—first, fact—then figure; first, the individual—then the national. Who would speak of the *birth* of a nation, to whom the birth of an individual was not familiar? In like manner, who would think of the *re*-birth, or resurrection, of a

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nation, to whom the re-birth or resurrection of the individual was not already pre-supposed, as the more familiar conception? It might have been thought that in a text like this, wherein the parallel of resuscitation is the being **brought up out of the deeps of the earth**, in clear recognition of the Hebrew doctrine of Sheol or Hades (cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Hades"), the assertion of individual resurrection would have been allowed a chance of asserting itself. But no! Delitzsch, Perowne, and Kirkpatrick all fail us; and even the Massorites are blamed for preferring the singular "me" to the plural "us" in their various readings, notwithstanding the admitted fact that they had the Septuagint and other ancient versions to justify their preference, and the further fact that—according to the confession of Dr. Briggs—"the first person singular best suits the context." The last-named critic does not hesitate to apply the entire Psalm to the Hebrew nation, with regard to its old age as well as with regard to its youth. Now, we can understand how a nation may not hesitate to count itself to be still young; but it is by no means so easy to acquiesce in the likelihood that it would complacently and pathetically confess itself to be aged and nearly worn out. In fact we cannot help wondering, at what precise stage of *this* nation's existence, it settled down so easily to the admission that it had become decrepit, as to find heart *to sing about its pitiable senility!* And this concerning a race remarkable for its longevity, and whose embodied nationality may, after more than five-and-twenty centuries' further lapse, be only in abeyance. Would it not be better to admit frankly, that a nation may quite easily, in song, regard itself as summed up in the persons of its chief heroes, without wiping those heroes out of personal existence, or assuming that they had no individual experience worth recording? And further, in the admitted infrequency of O.T. allusions to a future life and to incorruption, is it worthy of Christian scholars to pare down those allusions to the lowest possible number? Rather let us hear an individual hope, whether voiced by Samuel or by David or by Jeremiah, triumphantly expressing itself by saying:

> **Whereas thou hast let me see many distresses and misfortunes,**
> **Thou shalt again restore me to life,**
> **Yea out of the deeps of the earth shalt thou bring me up.**

And then, if you will, leave it to Hezekiah, to bring up **lute** and **lyre** and **lips** and **soul** and **tongue** to celebrate the glowing expectation.

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PSALM 72.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A People's Prayer for a Perfect King.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Prayer for King of Royal Descent, that the Divine Attributes of Justice and Righteousness may be Given Him, and that he may exercise them with Fruitfulness and Efficiency. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Unlimited Continuance, Penetrating Gentleness, Abounding Fruitfulness, and Universal Extension, desired for his reign. Strophe III., vers. 9—11, The Submission to Him of All Enemies and Rivals, is besought. Strophe IV., vers. 12—15, these Petitions are based upon the King's Effective Interposition for the Needy and Helpless. Strophe V., vers. 16—17, Material Prosperity and the Brightening of City Life, entreated; as Redounding to the Perpetual Praise of the King, and as Realising Ancient Covenant Blessing. Benediction: Closing this Second Book of Psalms, and therewith associating the God of Israel and his wondrous doings with all the Earth, which is thus filled with his glory.

[Lm.] By Solomon.

1 O God! <thy justice>[a] <to the King> do thou give,
and thy righteousness unto the son of a king;
2 May he judge thy people with righteousness,
and thy humbled ones with justice:
3 May the mountains |bear[b] tidings| of welfare to the people,
and the hills in righteousness:
4 May he vindicate the humbled of the people,
bring salvation to the sons of the needy;
and crush the oppressor.

5 May he continue[c] as long as the sun,
and in presence of the moon,—
to generation of generations.
6 May he come down as rain on meadows to be mown,
as myriad drops replenishing the earth.
7 May there be a springing forth in his days of righteousness,[d]
and an abundance of welfare until there be no moon.
8 And may he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

9 <Before him> may adversaries[e] |kneel|
and ||as for his foes|| <the dust> may they lick!

---

[a] "So Sep. and Jerome in accordance with the parallel 'righteous.'" — Br. M.T.: "just decisions" ("rights"—Del.)

[b] "The mountains are personified for the messengers who come over them, proclaiming from all parts the prevalence of peace and righteousness.—Br. Otherwise, if the verb be rendered "bear" = "bring forth": "May peace or well-being be the fruit that ripens upon all mountains and hills"—Del.

[c] So Sep. (*sunparamenei*).

[d] So in some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.

[e] "So most moderns"—O.G. 850. Reading *ṣarim* for *ṣûm*. M.T.: "desert dwellers."

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10 ||The Kings of Tarshish and the Coastlands|| <a gift> may they render,
||the kings of Sheba and Seba|| <a present> bring near.
11 And <may there bow down to him> all kings,
||all nations|| do service to him.

12 Because he rescueth the needy from the mighty,[a]
and the humbled, when there is no helper for him:
13 Hath pity on the weak and the needy,
and <the lives[b] of the needy> saveth:
14 <From oppression and violence> redeemeth their life,[c]
and <precious> is their blood in his sight:
15 "Let him live, then! and let there be given to him of the gold of Sheba;"
so will he pray for him continually,
<all the day> invoke on him blessing![d]

16 May there be an expanse[e] of corn in the earth, unto the top of the mountains,
and the fruit thereof |rustle like Lebanon|;
and they of the city |bloom| like fresh shoots of the earth.

17 Be his name to the ages,
<in presence of the sun> <fruitful>[f] be his name!

May all the families of the grounds[g] |bless themselves in him|
||all nations|| pronounce him happy.
18 <Blessed> be Jehovah, God of Israel,[h]
who doeth wondrous things by himself alone;
19 And <blessed> be his glorious name to the ages,
and <filled with his glory> be all the earth:
Amen and amen!

20 <Ended> are the prayers of David son of Jesse.

[Lm. None; unless ver. 20 be one.]

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[a] So it shd. be (w. Sep. Syr. Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "him that crieth out.
[b] U.: "their souls."
[c] U.: "their soul."
[d] "The poor man is he who revives and is endowed, who intercedes and blesses; while the king is the beneficent giver. It is left for the reader to supply in thought the right subjects to the separate verbs"—Del.
[e] "An abundance that occupies a wide space"—Del. "Expanse(?)"—Dr.
[f] Ml.: "propagate," or "be propagated." Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.)—"be established"—Gn.
[g] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn. Cp. Gen. 12[3].
[h] M.T.: "Jehovah God, God of Israel;" but some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) omit first occurrence of "God"—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

If we assume that behind this psalm lay many prayers by David, taking effect in the mind of Solomon his son by fostering a worthy ideal of what a good king might do for his people and a determination to fulfil that ideal; and that the youthful heir to the throne himself

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embodied that ideal and that determination in a prayer to be used by his people on his accession to the throne,—we shall probably form a correct conception of the origin of the psalm. The deep and wide desire here expressed is worthy of David; the form it assumes is Solomonic to a marked degree; and if, beyond this, there are conceptions going far beyond any which we should have thought it likely that Solomon would entertain,—these we may attribute in part to the educative influence which we have elsewhere seen cause to attribute to the Davidic Kingly covenant communicated through Nathan the prophet, and partly to the free action of the inspiring Spirit on the psalmist's mind. There is certainly one element in the psalm, which might have seemed at first sight better suited to a later reign, such as that of Hezekiah—following the declension of King Ahaz's days, or even of Josiah—succeeding to the corruptions of the reigns of Manasseh and Amon; namely, a background of existing oppression and wrong, loudly calling for relief, and which we can with difficulty imagine David to have bequeathed to his son Solomon. If, notwithstanding this, we feel, as well we may, that at no later period than that immediately succeeding David's day, could there have been, in the atmosphere, such a constellation of bright hopes, ready for recognition in psalmody, as here bursts upon our view, then we must needs see, once more, the Antitype breaking loose from the Type, and going beyond it. And this is, in all probability, what we are here called upon to recognise; for, if, with the Targum, we hold that this Ideal King is ultimately the Messiah, and if we look for Messiah's manifested reign to follow upon the evil domination of Antichrist, it is easy to see what a throng of wicked deeds of oppression, the world over, will be waiting for relief and redress when the Messiah himself ascends the Throne of David.

Not only in respect of manifold oppressions needing royal interposition in order to their removal, do we here perceive an element carrying us beyond Solomon, but in other ways besides; for example, in the universality of his dominion, in the peerless glory of his name, and in the realisation through the Ideal King of the worldwide blessing promised to Abraham. Leaving the thoughtful reader to conceive, as best he may, how mighty the Messianic impulse of the psalm thus appears, it may serve a useful purpose to emphasise one or two of the more obvious characteristics of the Ideal King as here portrayed.

The central position and causal efficacy of Strophe IV. are remarkable. This strophe is introduced by the only **Because** of the psalm. And here let us note what it is that leads up to this stronghold of the logical sense—that it is nothing less than the Imperial Supremacy which is desired for the Ideal King. Let his **adversaries kneel** before

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him; let **his foes lick the dust**; let **distant kings** come to **render him homage** with their **rich gifts**; in short, let **all kings bow down to him** and **all nations do him service**; BECAUSE he deserves it—because he deserves it in a peculiar way, with a worth proved by deeds, deeds of pity and love and matchless generosity; for note how the verbs are accumulated in support of this one strong **because**: "because" he **rescueth, hath pity, saveth, redeemeth,** and, finally, if Delitzsch is correct in the striking climax to which he brings this strophe, **endoweth,** out of his own royal treasury, the lives that he spareth:—THEREFORE let all kings and nations do him willing homage and service, gladly acknowledging that never such a king bare rule before. Not by doings of power, but by deeds of love, is universal dominion here desired.

And yet there is power behind and along with the love: power wielded by love, power giving effect to love—no pity for the perverters of justice, to the extent of sparing them to be perverters again. No! the implied threats to those who wrong their poor neighbours, are strong as iron, fitted to strike terror into cruel hearts. In order that he may **vindicate the humbled** and **bring salvation to the needy,** let him—so it is expressly desired—**let him crush the oppressor! May his foes lick the dust.** Language like this ought to stand high and clear above the possibility of mistake.

Nevertheless, this Ideal King knows how to be gentle. It is desired that his beneficent influence be **like rain coming down on a mowing,** bringing the crop to perfection before it is cut. How much that beautiful phrase, **coming down,** suggests—of efficacious gentleness, descending into all the nooks and crannies and crevices of actual lowly life. Nor does the psalmist shrink from pointing to actual temporal benefits, anticipated to result from this gentle yet strong king's dominion. In language which it would be a sin to spiritualise, he prays, that, instead of uncultivated wastes, agriculture may carry her triumphs, terrace above terrace, to the summits of the mountains; and then, while the breezes of Lebanon are still upon his cheeks, he thinks of the pale-faced **city-dwellers,** and desires that they may **bloom like the fresh shoots of the earth.**

Such is the picture. It is Messianic. But it is unfulfilled. It does not correspond with the spiritual and invisible reign of the Messiah in heaven. It is a mockery of the down-trodden of earth, to treat this psalm as if it were now in course of fulfilment. It is valid, but it is in reserve. It has never yet been fulfilled; but it will be fulfilled in the letter and in the spirit. Why its accomplishment has been so long delayed, must be sought elsewhere. Meantime, a comprehensive study of all the psalms which have a direct bearing on the Kingdom of God,

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will assist the student to get upon the high-road of correct and successful interpretation. When men are ready to do ungrudgingly honour to the God of Israel, then will the time not be far distant when the whole earth shall be filled with his glory. Cp. Intro., Chapter III., "Kingdom."

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THE PSALMS.

BOOK THE THIRD.

PSALM 73.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Temptation, arising from the Prosperity of the Lawless, Triumphantly Overcome.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Under Protest, the Psalmist Confesses how Nearly he had Fallen, by Observing the Prosperity of the Lawless. Strophe II., vers. 6—9, The Evil Wrought in the Lawless Themselves by their Prosperity. Strophe III., vers. 10—14, The Evil Wrought in Others, breeding Sceptical Discontent. Strophe IV., vers. 15—17, The Psalmist's Recoil from the Natural Effect of such a Frank but Incomplete Statement, leads him to Seek More Light. Strophe V., vers. 18—20, The Startling Picture which More Light Reveals. Strophes VI., VII., VIII., vers. 21, 22; 23, 24; 25, 26, The Psalmist Shames Away his Temptation in three strophes of great power. Strophe IX., vers. 27, 28, A Final Contrast, Culminating in Public Song.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph.

1 ‖After all‖ God |is good to Israel|,
‖to the pure in heart‖.
2 But <as for me>
my feet |had well-nigh stumbled|,
my steps |had almost slipped|;
3 For I was envious of the boasters,
<at the prosperity of the lawless> I kept looking.
4 For <unfettered> they are,
<sound[a] and fat> is their body:
5 <Of the travail of common men> have they none,
nor <with the earth-born> are they wont to be smitten.

6 |Therefore| <a necklace for them> is haughtiness,
violence |doth envelope| them as their garment:
7 Their iniquity[b] |hath proceeded from fatness|,
the imaginations of the heart |have overflowed|:

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[a] So *Gt.*—Gn. Cp. O.G. 359a.

[b] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.

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8 They mock, and wickedly speak oppression,
<from on high> they speak:
9 They have set, in the heavens, their mouth,
and ||their tongue|| marcheth through the earth.

10 |Therefore| his people |turn back| hither,
and ||waters of abundance|| are discovered[a] by them;
11 And they say—|"How| doth GOD |know|?
and |is| there knowledge in the Most High?
12 Lo! ||these|| are lawless men;
and yet <secure for an age> they have attained wealth!
13 ||After all|| <in vain> have I cleansed my heart,
and bathed, in pureness, my palms;[b]
14 And been smitten all the day,
and been rebuked morning by morning!"

15 <"If," thought I, "I must recount such things as these>[c]
lo! <the circle of thy sons> shall I have betrayed."
16 So I began to think, in order to understand this,—
<a travail> was that, in mine eyes:—
17 Until I could enter the great sanctuary[d] of GOD,
could give heed to their future.[e]

18 ||After all|| <in slippery places> dost thou set them,
thou hast let them fall into ruins:
19 How have they become a desolation, in a moment,
come to an end, been consumed, in consequence of terrors!
20 <As a dream, by one who awakeneth>
Sovereign Lord! <when thou bestirrest thyself> <their image>
wilt thou despise.

21 <If my heart |should become embittered|,
and <in my feelings>[f] I should be wounded>
22 Then should ||I|| be brutish, and without knowledge,
<a stupid beast>[g] should I have become, with thee.

23 And yet ||I|| am continually with thee,
thou hast grasped my right hand:
24 <By thy counsel> wilt thou guide me,
and <afterwards> gloriously take me.

25 Who [is there], for me, in the heavens?
and <with thee>[h] I have no delight on the earth.
26 <When ||have failed|| my flesh and my heart>
<the rock of my heart and my portion> is God to the ages.

27 For lo! ||they who have gone far from thee|| shall perish,
thou wilt have exterminated every unchaste wanderer from thee.

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[a] So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "drained out"—Dr. "Supped up"—Del.

[b] With special allusion to bribery. "Here evidently referring to the keeping of the palms clean from bribery, robbery and just those forms of violence (ver. 6b) and oppression (ver. 8b) by which the wicked had to a great extent gained their wealth and prosperity"—Br.

[c] So, conjecturally, O.G. 456a.

[d] Ml.: "holy places," or (possibly) "holy things."

[e] Cp. on $37^{37, 38}$.

[f] U.: "reins."

[g] Ml.: "A hippopotamus"—"a plump colossus of flesh . . . emblem of colossal stupidity"—Del.

[h] "Having thee"—Dr.

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28 But <as for me> ||approach to God|| <for me> is blessedness.
I have fixed in Adonai, Jehovah, my refuge,
to tell of all thy praises
in the gates of the daughter of Zion.[a]

[Nm.]

[a] Thus found in Sep. and Vul., as in 9^{14}.

EXPOSITION.

It is fortunate that the uniform rendering of the expressive particle *ak*, in vers. 1, 13, and 18 of this psalm, has led to such a striking commencement of a poem which embraces a precious mental history; since, by the combination, in that little word, of an affirmative with a restrictive meaning, it so happily opens the whole case, as to suggest to Perowne the following amplification: "Yes, it is so; after all, God is good, notwithstanding all my doubts." This entitles him to say of the psalmist: "That the result of the conflict is stated before the conflict itself is described. There is no parade of doubt merely as doubt. He states *first*, and in the most natural way, the *final* conviction of his heart."

The next point of importance is suggested by a comparison of 81^{26} ("To the pure thou didst shew thyself pure") with the final clause of the psalmist's first statement—**to the pure in heart.** Only a pure mind can vindicate a pure God. In confessing how nearly he had lost his confidence in God's goodness, the psalmist admits that his thoughts had, in a measure, become defiled: he had looked, he had lusted—without taking moral quality into account. Happily, he looked again: until he saw something more than prosperity; and that later look helped to clarify his thoughts. But at first he lingeringly viewed the glitter and the show, until he felt his feet slipping from under him. His attention had clearly been arrested by fascinating examples of godless prosperity: examples shewing the absence of fettering restrictions, sound health, freedom from common troubles, immunity from providential inflictions. It should here be noted how a premature and disturbing notice of the "death" of those well-to-do godless men is avoided, by a critical revision of the Hebrew text, which after all amounts to no more than a re-grouping of the Hebrew letters. Premature such an allusion would certainly be; "for surely," says Delitzsch, "the poet cannot begin the description of the prosperity of the ungodly with the painlessness of their death, and only then come to speak of their healthfulness." Moreover, when afterwards,

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in vers. 18, 19, the psalmist does undoubtedly confront the death of the lawless, it is very doubtful whether he intends to imply that it is painless. At all events, in his first strophe he confines himself to the fascination of the godless lives to which his attention had been repeatedly drawn.

In the second strophe, however, while the fascination still lingers, certain repulsive features begin to obtrude themselves. A **necklace** and a **flowing robe** are, no doubt, signs of opulence and social importance; but, when the former of these is **haughtiness** and the latter is **violence**, then, alas! for those who have to suffer from them. **Fatness** generates **iniquity**: perverse **imaginations overflow** in speech. **Mocking** at things sacred and divine, such assuming and insolent men **speak oppression**, as their appropriate dialect. With open profanity, their **mouth** sets divine law at defiance, and **their tongue** presumes to propose laws concerning all men and things in the **earth** to please themselves—in their unmitigated selfishness. Such is the purport of the second strophe. It is the result of a second look at the prosperous ungodly. It is proof of a determination to look even worldly fascinations full in the face. The discovery is already being made that it is not all gold that glitters; and, as the result, the snare is already nearly broken.

But, as strophe three shews, there is another source of danger to be considered: "WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY" sometimes perverts our own judgment. What, then, *do* they say? let us not fear to examine it. That these prosperous lawless ones wield a great influence, is, indeed, too apparent. Not only do they influence their own clan—each wealthy prince **his** own **people**,—as some expositors take ver. 10a to intimate; but even among **His people**—that is, God's,—some there may be who are seduced into the expectation of discovering **waters of abundance** where these enviable wealthy men have already found them: And so these admirers reason themselves into scepticism. It is shallow reasoning, but it is taking. "**Look you**," say these misguided onlookers, "**these** are such as good people call '**lawless men**'; and yet see how they **get on**: see how, **for a life-time, they have been secure** from providential visitation, and to what **wealth they have attained**! Talk of Providence—where is it? Does God—if there be one—know anything about it?" So much for vers. 10—12 of this strophe.

It is probably best to take vers. 13, 14 as still continuing to describe "what other people say" who are unduly under the influence of the prosperous lawless ones: only, now, another class of them comes into view—namely the hitherto punctilious people, more alive to their religious "profit and loss account" than to abstract reasonings about the

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Divine Government. We need not deny that, by voicing the precise difficulty felt by these whining and selfish religionists, the psalmist, at the same time, provides that his own transient doubts of the like kind shall find expression. Suffice it, that the pernicious influence of the ungodly rich has been amply described.

But it is time that the tables were turned, and a decisive solution of the problem were given; and so, here, at ver. 15, we come to the second part of the psalm. It is observable, that the psalmist resumes where he left off; namely, with the consideration of what others would say—only now the "others" are a very different class from those just described. He now brings before him those whom, in their collective capacity, he terms **the circle of God's sons**, amongst whom, therefore, a sense of the Divine Fatherhood is still preserved. "What will these say," he seems to ask, "if I frankly tell them of these admirations of the godless rich, and these shallow reasonings about their example; if, at least, I tell the story as though *I for myself* seriously felt its spell? Will they not be shocked that I have so betrayed the honour of our Divine Fatherhood?" Happy the reasoner who has a circle of brethren from whom such a counteracting and healing influence may be counted upon; so that, to think of frankly telling *them* of his mental difficulties, is to feel those difficulties more than half solved by anticipation. Thrice happy was Asaph, that he was one of such a companionship of **pure hearted** Israelites—the more so, because he was both a *thinker* and a *prophet*: as a thinker, able to appreciate the mental **travail** involved in working out a difficult problem (ver. 16); and, as a prophet, knowing by experience how a sudden flash of light from the Spirit of God could at once remove difficulties which no mere thinking could solve (ver. 17). Hence, as he here intimates, although he at once **began to think**, he was not sanguine of the results to be expected from that process alone: he counted much more for success upon such a REVELATION as he felt would be more likely to be vouchsafed amidst the congenial influences of the **great sanctuary of God** than elsewhere: **the great sanctuary**, with its leisure and quiet, with its sacred associations, with its solemn sacrifices, with its inspiring music, and especially with its songs old and new, some of which, like 37 and 49, might be found to have anticipated his present difficulties, or at least to favour the making of fresh discoveries by his own mind. It should be noted, however, that the psalmist's late experience and present ponderings are already putting him on the right track for search; that, in fact, he knows the precise point on which he needs illumination: namely, the **future** of these ungodly prosperous men: **until I could consider their future.** We do wisely to be thus careful to observe precisely where this strophe

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breaks off—the exact point to which it leads up; and there can be no mistake that now the language of the psalm leads over from reflection and resolve to that of discovery. In ver. 17 it is resolve: in ver. 18 it is discovery. The discovery is introduced by the significant term **after all,** to which reference has already been made; and the disclosure is thenceforward continued in the form of direct address to Deity. Note the wording: **thou dost set them—thou hast let them fall—when thou bestirrest thyself—their image wilt thou despise.** Plainly it is now the confident language of direct address to Deity. But the language is changed, because the scene has changed: the psalmist is now in **the great sanctuary,** and feels himself to be in the very presence of God, and by the confident directness and assurance of his words shews that he has now *received the further light* which he was resolved to seek concerning the future of these ungodly prosperous men. Thus, then, every word of the ensuing strophe demands our most careful attention—and our utmost confidence.

"**After all,**"—he exclaims, in the very language of discovery: "after all the wealth and all the power and show; after all the admiration and envying and vain reasoning; after all the appearance of thine indifference, as though thou knewest not how thou wast being set at nought: **after all,** thou hast been very much in this very thing, carrying forward thy holy designs. For thou hast been **setting** these very men whom their fellows have so much envied, **in slippery places** of uttermost peril." We naturally and rightly supply, in undertone, from our other and it may be fuller knowledge of the fairness and equity of God's ways, the important qualification: "Thus—for sins already committed — hast thou been punishing them for their presumption in wilfully persisting in doing without thee." And it was well, therefore, that we detected, in the first lines sketching the **image** of these men, the note of previous self-determination to evil: they had already become **unfettered,** having brushed aside Divine law and silenced the voice of conscience. "As a punishment for this previous course of sin and self-hardening; and (should we not add ?) as a last Divine resort to convince them of their folly: **thou dost set them in slippery places.**" Alas! in the actual circumstances revealed to the psalmist, this punishment avails nothing for reformation, but takes effect as punishment with destructive effect. With startling fulness and vigour is this disclosure made: "**Thou hast let them fall into ruins**—like a bowing wall which comes down of its own weight with a crash, its ruin being sudden and complete." With this revelation the psalmist's mind is deeply impressed—as its exclamatory form shows: "**How have they become a desolation in a moment**—so complete!

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so sudden!" The final catastrophe is further described by terms piled up for effect: **They have come to an end, have been consumed,** —how could complete destruction be more strongly expressed? But, to this, the significant addition is made: **in consequence of terrors**— who shall venture to say what these terrors are? As in Job $18^{11, 14}$, 24^{17}, 27^{20}, 30^{15}, they may be terrors within the bounds of this life, and closing it; or, as in Ezekiel 26^{21}, 27^{36}, 28^{19}, they may be terrors connected with the Hadean continuation of existence, and ending it. That they do *terminate* the *being* of these erewhile **boasters**, is the one thing which the disclosure makes plain. We have not yet done with this description. Let us complete our notice of it, before we turn back to ask what it all means. With a simple oriental audacity which has in it no particle of irreverence, the psalmist represents the **Sovereign Lord** as having been **asleep** while these godless rich have been indulging their lust of wealth and pomp and power—and cruelty: by all which we understand no more than that Adonai had *interfered* as little *as though* he had been asleep. But, working out this figurative vein, he says: "**as a dream** (is despised) **by one who awakeneth, Sovereign Lord! when thou bestirrest thyself** (to deal with their case as it demands and deserves) **their image wilt thou despise.**" Here, undoubtedly, much depends upon a right appreciation of the word **image**; since, whatever it is, it is something which Adonai **despises**, and it becomes us to be careful how we define an object of avowed Divine **aversion!** Scholars are not quite agreed in their renderings of this instance of the Hebrew *zelem*. The R.V., Perowne and Leeser follow the A.V. in translating it "image"; but Carter and Delitzsch represent it by "shadow," Driver by "semblance," Briggs and Wellhausen (in P.B.) by "phantom." Now, undoubtedly, there is one passage, namely 39^{6}, in which—by reason of the context—some such rendering is required; and it is further undeniable that the notion of "shadow" lies at the root of the original word; for which very reason, however, it is submitted that "image" is the better translation in the present instance; not only as connecting this passage with the account of man's creation in Genesis ($1^{26, 27}$, 9^{6}), and usefully reminding us in passing that even there man's likeness to his Maker— consisting in his capacity to rule (cp. Exposition on Ps. 8) was after all little more than a "shadow" of the Divine capacity and power to govern; but more particularly and most vitally that the very word "image" is *the* term which takes us to the heart of this most weighty passage. "**Their image**—as a mere caricature of thine own, it is, O Sovereign Lord, which **thou wilt despise!**" Assuredly, it is not the mere frailty of man's ordinary mortal condition, which God despises; nor is

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it the attenuated semblance of man's former self which alone can penetrate hades "as far as the circle of his fathers" (49[19]), which God despises. Out of the former, by transformation, he can raise up new men, mighty as angels and immortal as his own Son; and unto the latter, as still "the work of his own hands," he may come to have a "longing," as Job faintly hoped (14[15]). Therefore it is neither of these semblances, as such, that Adonai despises; for despises is a strong word, and in neither of the above cases is it consistent with the known condescension of "a faithful Creator" (1 P. 4[19]). No! far other than merely these, is the object which here starts forth from the canvas as, so to speak, exciting the contempt of an awakened and affronted God. It is the primary image of God, wickedly, wantonly disfigured. Even we, under Asaph's sympathetic guidance, have, already—within the compass of this psalm—looked on that "image" and loathed it: the unfettered free-thinker and free-liver; the fat, sleek pamperer of his precious self; the so-called pet of Providence, stranger alike to ordinary and extraordinary trouble; deeming it an adornment to be haughty, and a becoming robe to be violent; whose gross mind concocts evil schemes; whose vile mouth propounds and promotes and defends unblushing villainies; whose tongue talks as if all the earth had been made for his convenience—a man therefore who practically deems himself to be his own God! *alas turned devil!* Have we by this time learned to detest him? How great a wonder, then, that a holy God should have left him to himself so long!

Such then, in full, is the description given by Asaph of the revelation which he had received in the great sanctuary of God, concerning the future of the lawless rich bearing this debased image of God.

And now what does it all mean? Does it merely mean *sudden* death; or does it rather mean *total* death: an utter destruction of personal being? If any elect to say, "Merely sudden death"; may we not turn upon them with the question, how mere sudden death meets the case? Suppose we could (as we cannot, for want of evidence) accept it as an observed fact, that such presumptuous men do uniformly die sudden deaths; how would that alone solve this mystery of providence? Is there, after all, any such broad distinction to be drawn between slow death and sudden death? What does it signify so much, whether a man is struck down in a moment, or whether he slowly wastes and wears away? It is not at all plain that there is anything material in the difference. Besides, it may with confidence be affirmed, that this is not the direction in which the text points. Certainly, suddenness is there—at least relative suddenness (in a moment). But the point emphasised by the accu-

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mulated terms of the passage is rather the completeness of the destruction, than the suddenness of the death. Indeed, it looks as though the word "death" had been carefully avoided; but while the common word "death" is avoided, the word terrors is emphatically brought in, and some scope must naturally be given in which those terrors may be supposed to effect the terrible overthrow intended: an overthrow so terrible and complete that before the psalm is ended, it is termed both a perishing and an extermination. In fine, the impression made by the whole passage is, that it is not what is understood as an ordinary sudden death that is meant; but an awful infliction of the utter destruction of the whole being by some unendurable manifestation of Divine wrath: as a Christian, availing himself of New Testament language, might say,—the first and second deaths being blended in one, and the terrors including the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. $6^{16, 17}$). These may be regarded as here foreshortened for the practical purpose of summary statement, and because the then current knowledge of the future could not bear the introduction of details. Reverting to what the O.T. itself does teach, we may usefully remind ourselves of that great passage in Isaiah (57^{16}) which plainly intimates that there is possible such a protracted manifestation of Divine anger, as no man could sustain; and though, there, the intention seems to be, to let in a hope of mercy, yet here the intention is equally visible of excluding such hope. Of course, if death were ordinarily to be taken as equivalent to total extinction of personal being, all this would amount to nothing; and our exposition would have to remain unfinished. But, assuredly, we may, with the general consent of Bible readers, dismiss that devastating conception of death as extravagantly unwarrantable; and therefore may reaffirm our present contention that the utter desolation and final extinction of personal being is the true meaning of this passage: first, because it completely fills up the terms employed, and, second, because it solves the providential mystery it was given to explain. After such a revelation, who dare pray to be rich, who can desire to be set in such slippery places? The temptation is gone; and therefore it follows that the answer is complete. In further confirmation of all which, as thus far advanced, suffice it to call attention to the broad, fundamental harmony which this exposition of the Psalms unfolds. In the first of this series of psalms, 37, 49, 73, it was submitted that for the righteous man there is a future: for transgressors there is not! The confident assurance of the truth of that conclusion has helped us so far through this psalm and nothing else could. That conclusion stands as an immovable principle. Details are yet needed, but some particulars are already being supplied. Here

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we see not only the principle confirmed; but the detailed and penetrating lesson taught, that *even in this life the Divine* **image** *may be so defaced and caricatured as to become an offence to the Almighty and ripe for destruction, as a consequence of unknown* **terrors**!

In at length advancing to Strophe VI. of this psalm (vers. 21-22), we have to express immeasurable obligation to Delitzsch for suggesting and defending the hypothetic colouring thrown upon it. How disconcerting it would have been to find the psalmist still floundering in (or, if not floundering in, at least lingering over) the doubts, from which the vision in the great sanctuary was given to deliver him! How delightful, by contrast and by helpfulness onward, to perceive that he is now merely shaming his former doubts into perpetual silence. "How unmanly!" he is now heard saying, "to cherish such feelings any longer! How unworthy of the name of a *man*, to harbour such thoughts any more!" He had modestly assumed to be a *thinker*, before he could find opportunity to go into the great sanctuary of God. But now that he has been thither—or is still perhaps remaining there, since his address to God is as yet unbroken—he thinks again, and to some purpose; and his thought is, what "a colossus of stupidity" he would be, not now to be satisfied: "I, a man, who can converse with thee, and receive such counsel as thou hast now been giving me!" Furthermore, this merely hypothetic repetition of the old temptation enables us to advance at once, at the close of this strophe, to the natural rendering of the preposition (**with thee**—Gk. rough breathing *'immâkâ*) which has to do such important service in the very next line, namely the first of Strophe VII. The old doubt only hypothetically put, enables us to anticipate by saying "with thee," here at the close of ver. 22: "Being, as I am, **with thee**, how stupid such a doubt would now appear." And then he can follow on in ver. 23 by saying, **And yet I am continually with thee** (*'immâkâ*). In contrast with the smoothness of which, how awkward and even suspicious to have to render the same preposition first "before thee" (ver. 22) and then "with thee" (ver. 23). We are thus particular down to a particle, because of the extreme value of Delitzsch's hypothetical translation of vers. 21 and 22: which, thus defended, may now be dismissed.

Strophe VII. thus at once bears us along into the midstream of near fellowship with God and of consequent victorious confidence in Him. "**Thou hast grasped my right hand**, by thus disclosing to me that which for ever shames into silence my doubts. **By Thy counsel wilt thou** (continue to do as thou hast now done) **guide me, And afterwards** (leaving us easily to supply the thought, 'after life's

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journey') **gloriously take me.**" He knows not precisely *how* it will be done, but **glorious in the manner of it** will it assuredly be; and the decisive *act* done, he says, will be to **take me**, even as Enoch was taken to be with God; or, as Ps. 49[15]—if just sung in "the great sanctuary"—may have suggested, "**wilt take me** (out of the hand of hades, whether by transformation preventing death, or by resurrection reversing death)." The point of this revelation clearly cannot lie in details, which are confessedly not supplied; but in the broad and simple fact announced, of being **taken** by God. Obviously all turns on the character of him who takes. He who, as an enemy whom I hate, captures me, makes of me a slave, and excites my utmost fears; but he who, as a friend whom I admire and love, captures me, at the same time enraptures me, delights me, and excites my highest hopes. All, then, here turns on the character of God, and of his relation to me. And of this, the next strophe sings.

In language of extreme simplicity and brevity—like the lispings of a babe that has not yet learned to speak—and yet of extreme beauty, because everything is suggested that is not expressed, the psalmist (Strophe VII.) says, **Who—for me—in the heavens? And—with thee: having thee**—(whether there or here) **I have no delight on the earth** (where are, or have been, all I have known and loved). Of course, the language is comparative, even while it shrinks from comparison; but the one clear thing which it reveals is the delight in his God now felt, as never before, by this pure-hearted Israelite. It is on the tide of this delight in God himself that he is carried over into the unknown, and is moved to express a conception to convey which no exact words had yet been coined; and the approximate words to express which amount to a contradiction in terms: **When have failed my flesh and my heart**—(in other words, my body and my mind)—**the rock of my heart and my portion** (then and on and ever) **is God age-abidingly.** The mind that rests on that rock cannot sink. The essential Ego will somehow survive the wreck: if it have nothing else in which to inhere, it will inhere in God, or else a sorry **portion** would he be! But, indeed, we have gone too far, in saying that for this conception no language had yet been coined—although, it is true, Asaph may not have been familiar with it: "Into thy hands I commit my spirit" (31[5]) probably is a prayer which exactly meets the case, and at all events was honoured by being used by Jesus and by his first martyr Stephen. Nevertheless, in any case, love finds out how to make itself understood; and absolute triumph over death is here radiant as the rising sun. Perfect love to a perfect God gives the victory: the nearest possible **approach** to that God

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(Strophe IX.) constitutes the highest attainable **blessedness**, and must ever prompt the most joyful **songs of Zion** whether earthly or heavenly.

PSALM 74.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Ruthless Injuries to the Sanctuary and Oppression in the Land by an Enemy, call forth Expostulation with God for his quiescence.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3a, In Expostulation for Present Rejection, the Psalmist Reminds God how he had Acquired, Redeemed, and Exalted His Inheritance. Strophe II., vers. 3b—7, Profanation of the Sanctuary Described. Strophe III., vers. 8, 9, Extent of the Desolation. Strophe IV., vers. 10, 11, Renewed Expostulation with God. Strophes V., VI., VII., vers. 12, 13; 14, 15; 16, 17, Divine Activities Aforetime in History and in Creation. Strophes VIII., IX., X., vers. 18, 19; 20, 21; 22, 23, Earnest Pleadings for Divine Interposition.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By Asaph.

1 |Wherefore|, O God, hast thou cast off utterly?
[wherefore] |smoketh| thine anger against the flock of thy shepherding?
2 Remember thy congregation [which] thou acquiredst aforetime?
[which] thou redeemest to be the tribe of thine inheritance,—
Mount Zion, wherein thou didst make thy habitation,
3 which thy footsteps |exalted| to perpetual dignity.[a]

<Everything> hath the enemy |marred| in the sanctuary:
4 <roared> have thine adversaries in the midst of thy place of meeting,
they have set up |their| signs for signs.
5 A man used to become known, as one who had wielded on high
in a thicket of trees, axes![b]
6 But ||now|| <the doors[c] thereof> <all at once>
<with hatchets and hammers> they smite!
7 They have thrust, into the fire, thy holy things,[d]
<to the ground> have they profaned the habitation of thy name.

8 They have said in their heart—"We will force them down altogether!"[e]
they have caused to cease all the festivals of God in the land:[f]
9 <Our signs> we see not,
there is |no longer| a prophet;
nor is there, with us, one who knoweth how long.

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[a] So Br., who says: "Requires no change in the unpointed text."
[b] Supply, perhaps, in thought: "when the sanctuary was built."
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[d] So in some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns.)—Gn.
[e] So Del.
[f] So Sep. M.T.: "They have burned up all the meeting-places of God in the land."

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10 |How long|, O God, shall an adversary |reproach|?
shall an enemy |blaspheme| thy name perpetually?
11 |Wherefore| shouldst thou draw back thy hand?
and <thy right hand in the midst of thy bosom> retain[a]?

12 And yet ||God|| was my king from aforetime,
working victories[b] in the midst of the earth.

13 ||Thou|| didst divide, in thy strength, the sea,
didst shatter the heads of (river-) monsters[c] upon the waters:

14 ||Thou|| didst crush the heads of the crocodile,
didst give him as food to the creatures[d] that dwell in the deserts.
15 ||Thou|| didst cleave open fountain and torrent,
||thou|| didst dry up rivers of steady flow.

16 <Thine> is the day, yea <thine> the night,
||thou|| didst establish light-bearer[e] and sun:[f]
17 ||Thou|| didst set up all the bounds of the earth,
<summer and autumn> ||thou|| didst fashion them.

18 Remember this! ||an enemy|| hath reproached Jehovah,
yea ||the people of a vile[g] person|| have blasphemed thy name.
19 Do not give up, to a wild beast, the life[h] of thy turtle-dove,[i]
<the living host of thy humbled ones> do not forget perpetually.

20 Look well to thy[j] covenant,
for <filled> are the dark places of the land[k] with the habitations of violence.
21 May the crushed one |not turn back| confounded!
<the humbled and the needy> let them praise thy name.

22 Arise! O God, O plead thine own plea,
remember the reproach of thee, from the vile[g] person, all the day:
23 Do not forget the voice of thine adversaries,—
the noise of them who rise up against thee, ascending continually.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] "Do not destroy."

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[a] So Br. "From the midst of thy bosom (pluck it forth) and consume." So Driver and others, following M.T. and supplying "pluck forth." Ginsburg says that *kalleh*, "consume," shd. be *selah* (? "lift up," as in 68[4]).
[b] Or: "a great salvation" (pl. intensive).
[c] So Dr.
[d] Ml.: "people." Dr.: "folk" as in Prov. 30[25, 26].
[e] Prob.: "moon."
[f] Sep.: "sun and moon."
[g] Or: "senseless." Cp. on Ps. 14.
[h] U.: "soul"
[i] Sep.: "a soul giving thanks unto thee."
[j] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[k] Or: "earth." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Earth."

EXPOSITION.

It is clear that the composition of this psalm was occasioned by the desecration of the Temple and the oppression of the Land by some foreign invader; but precisely which event of this kind is here intended, is uncertain. Some have confidently pointed to the time of the Maccabees,

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when the temple was desecrated under Antiochus: against which may be urged the standing unlikelihood that any psalm had so late an origin, and yet found its way as did this, and the rest, into the ancient Septuagint version of the Old Testament; and the particular objection that the very line in the psalm which might otherwise have seemed to point to a Maccabean origin, viz. ver. 8, "And they have burned up all the meeting-places of God in the land," appears in the Sep. in the milder form, **And they have caused to cease all the festivals of God in the land.** It may be true, that the erection of synagogues cannot be traced further back than to the time of the Maccabees; but it is inconceivable that the Greek translators should have obliterated such an allusion, had it existed in their Hebrew exemplars, though quite possible that later Sopherim should have adapted the Hebrew of the old psalm, so as to conform it to later and more startling events. Others, again, have advocated the time of the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar, as having probably given birth to this psalm. And that is a possible date; although the lament over the want of a **prophet** or one who **knew how long** but ill agrees with the presence of Jeremiah and Ezekiel in those days. Even if, to avoid this awkwardness, the origin of the psalm be thrown further down the Exile, and in favour of that time the words be cited, "Lift up thy footsteps to the perpetual desolations," as showing that now the desolation of Jerusalem had lasted a long time,—then it is at least disconcerting to note, what Briggs says, that the same consonants, otherwise vowel-pointed, may be read (surely more in harmony with the immediate context) **Which thy footsteps exalted to perpetual dignity.** Under these circumstances, it may be questioned whether the "Speaker's Commentary" has not more nearly hit the mark in suggesting, as the probable time and occasion of origin, the invasion of the Egyptian monarch Shishak in the days of Rehoboam. In favour of this comparatively early date, may be mentioned: the care which the psalmist observes to express rather a desecration than a demolition of the temple; and the aptness of his language in vers. 5, 6 to apply to a time when the *building* of the temple was yet a comparatively recent event. While yet the honour of having lifted an **axe** in the Lebanon to supply cedar for the erection of the temple was well remembered, here are profane **hatchets and hammers** engaged in ruthlessly tearing off the plates of gold which covered **the doors.** It seems as though the psalm was written while this profanation was going on; and not merely concerning a conflagration viewed from afar! Given, a psalmist well remembering the glory of the erection of the temple; given also, the instinctive horror felt by such a man on occasion of the first intrusion of foreign feet within the

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sacred precincts;—and you have probably a more fitting psychological condition to suit the origin of this psalm than any other that can be imagined with due regard to known facts. It is difficult to say why the psalm does not contain a confession of *sin*, as the true reason why such a foreign invasion was permitted, especially as this is made so prominent in the history; but we may perhaps surmise that this element lay, for the moment, comparatively dormant in the psalmist's mind, because of his ignorance of the lengths to which the invader might be permitted to go, and the vividness with which he saw in those broader views of God's gracious purposes in calling Israel to be his people and in making Mount Zion his dwelling-place, such weighty pleas against the destruction which at the time appeared imminent. Whatever the cause of this absence of confession from the psalm, it should be remembered that the fact of its omission bears as much upon one foreign invasion as another: any such invasion—whether Egyptian, Chaldean or Syrian—must have in reality seemed permissible only because of grievous national sin committed.

The course of thought which the psalm actually pursues is noteworthy, especially in respect of the broad collateral facts in history and in nature by which the psalmist strengthens his pleading with God.

After reminding God of the wonderful way in which he had made the Hebrew congregation peculiarly his own (vers. 1—3a); and then vividly depicting the present devastation of the sanctuary (vers. 3b—7), and the forlorn condition of the land, especially as regards religious privileges (vers. 8, 9); and after pleading with God no longer to delay his silencing of the profanity of the invader (vers. 10, 11);—the psalmist then enlarges on the almighty deeds of Israel's King. He introduces the great facts clustering around the deliverance from Egypt and the admission into the promised land (vers. 12—15)—facts which constituted an almighty handling of the powers of nature and pressing them into the service of creating and redeeming a Nation. At this point, in a strophe of great simplicity and beauty (vers. 16—17) the poet passes on to a notice of the Divine relation to day and night, moon and sun, earth and seas, summer as presupposing spring and autumn as bringing after it winter. These allusions are not only beautiful in themselves, and a poetic relief to the mind of the reader, but they are true aids to devotion, and give pleasing force to the petitions which they introduce. They suggest more than they formally articulate. They seem to say: "Such, O God, are the praises, which habitually ascend to thee from this holy place; but now, only hear the reproaches and the defiance which are from this very spot directed against thy Holy Name! Canst thou be the Divine King whom we thus

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adore, and not be able and willing to hearken to our prayers?" And then follows a volley of petitions: **remember—do not give up—do not forget—look well—arise—remember—do not forget.** The very close of the prayer is intercessionally dramatic. Instead of a final benediction, we hear the gentle but undaunted voice of this petitioner making a last effort to turn the sustained din and roar of the adversary in the sanctuary into so much prayer for speedy Divine Intervention. Noting these things, even Christian intercessors may learn valuable lessons from this psalm, as to the reality, boldness and scope of prayer. Moreover, it would be unpardonable to forget what we owe to Dr. Thirtle for the collateral warrant he affords for moving the inscription **Do not destroy,** from the beginning of the next psalm, where its applicability is not very evident, to the foot of this, where its appropriateness must strike every unprejudiced mind: *that* has really been the prayer of this psalm—**Do not destroy!**

PSALM 75.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — A Song, Enshrining an Oracular Assurance of Equitable Judgment by the Judge of the Earth.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, Congregational Thanksgiving, Promising a Rehearsal of Divine Wonders. Strophe II., vers. 2—4, A Divine Oracle: Declaring that, at the Right Time, Justice shall be Done; and Admonishing that Moral Preparations for Judgment be Made. Strophe III., vers. 5—7, Prophetic Exhortation Enforcing the Oracle. Strophe IV., ver. 8, A Prophetic Warning of Coming Wrath. Strophe V., vers. 9, 10, With Prophetic Exultation, the Psalmist, in the Name of the Nation, Counts on being Employed in the Judicial Adjustment.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph—Song.

1 We give thanks to thee, O God, we give thanks to thee;
and ||they who call on thy name||[a] tell of all thy wondrous works.

2 "Yea! I will seize a right time,
||I|| <with equity> will judge:
3 <Dissolving> may be the earth, and all the dwellers therein,
||I|| have adjusted the pillars thereof: [illegible]
4 have said to boasters—'Do not boast!'
and to lawless ones—'Do not lift up a horn!'"

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[a] So "read probably"—Dr. And so (?)—Gn.

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5 Do not lift up |on high| your horn,
nor speak against a Rock[a] with arrogance.
6 For <neither from the east, nor from the west,
nor from the wilderness>[b] [cometh] lifting up;[c]
7 For ||God|| is judge,
<this one> he putteth down, and <that one> he lifteth up.

8 For ||a cup|| is in the hand of Jehovah, with wine which foameth,
it is full of spiced-wine, which he poureth out—from one to another,[d]
surely <the dregs thereof> shall all the lawless of the earth |drain out and drink|.

9 But ||I|| will exult[e] to the ages,
let me make melody unto the God of Jacob!
10 And <all the horns of lawless ones> will I hew off,
<lifted up> shall be the horns of the righteous.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] With stringed instruments.[f]

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[a] So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.
[b] Prob. = "south." "North" perh. omitted as quarter whence the enemy was coming.
[c] Heb.: *harim*, generally = "mountains"; but, according to a Heb. tradition, exceptionally here = "lifting up" (as derived from *rum*, to be high): which seems to strike the key-note of the psalm, for which cp. vers. 4, 5, 7, 10.
[d] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.
[f] And therefore with all the choirs in the temple.

EXPOSITION.

Standing where it does, this psalm requires but a moderate exercise of the historical imagination, to bring out its practical effectiveness. It follows well the outcry of the previous psalm, "How long?" by declaring that, at the right time, Divine Interposition shall come. With equal fitness, it anticipates the exulting outburst of the psalm which follows it, already calming the souls of those who are yet waiting, to the sore trial of their faith. It may thus be placed historically anywhere between the invasion of Shishak and the overthrow of Sennacherib the Assyrian, and could, with fine effect, be used in temple worship either during the days of trial which befell Jehoshaphat or during those which came upon Hezekiah.

When the dramatic structure of the psalm is perceived, its dignity and force rise to the sublime. The opening strophe reveals the congregation giving thanks as for an answer received, and as if in anticipation of Divine Wonders to follow.

Then, with an effective change of measure, Jehovah is represented as giving, in the first person, his assurance that in due time he will effectively interpose. Society—and perhaps especially the society of nations—may appear to be falling to pieces—dissolving—for lack of the effective grip of the bonds of equity; but already Jehovah prophetically

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declares he has adjusted the pillars of the social structure. That those "pillars" are to be understood as fundamental *moral principles*, is at once intimated by the two Divine behests—**Do not boast, Do not lift up the horn,** which two proclamations may perhaps be distributively applied: the former to Israel and the latter to the nations ready to oppress them; though, indeed, both may well be heeded by all concerned, seeing that boasting and oppression so often go hand in hand.

It is not quite certain at what point the direct Divine address ends; but, having regard to the propriety of letting an oracle appear brief, and to the difficulty of carrying on the direct address to the close of ver. 7, it is probably best to close the quotation at the end of ver. 4. This naturally leads us to take vers. 5—7 as a continuing prophetic address, by the psalmist himself, in enforcement of the Divine Oracle. It seems to be fittingly left to *the psalmist* to emphasise, in amplified hortatory words (ver. 5a), the previous briefer oracular words (ver. 4b); and then that he, *the psalmist*, should go on (ver. 5b) to speak of Jehovah as a **Rock**, in the third person; just as, also, (in ver. 7) he naturally refers to God, in the third person. These niceties may not appear very important, inasmuch as they respect the mere *form* of what must all, in substance, be regarded as a Divine utterance; but an approximately correct settlement of them, sensibly contributes to the impressiveness of the psalm.

The psalmist now, in Strophe IV., gives a highly figurative but effective reason for the urgency of his exhortations to prepare for judgment. Equitable as is the Divine Rule, in the long run, in dealing with both individuals and nations, it nevertheless is framed upon the pattern of "times and seasons,"—"times" of delay, in which God as judge is silent and seemingly inactive, as though he were taking no notice of the moral quality of human conduct; and then, "seasons" of activity, involving the principle of bringing up arrears, and dealing all at once with long series of actions; and implying, where wicked conduct has been in the ascendant, an accumulation of punishment, corresponding with the accumulation of unvisited sin. But an accumulation of punishment implies an accumulation of Divine displeasure, *so far as its manifestation is concerned.* And so we arrive at the conception of stored-up wrath: arrears of displeasure: intensified punishment, involving stroke upon stroke, when it does come. This is the revealed principle of Divine resentment of sin. No doubt this principle could be philosophically defended: as necessitated, not by infirmity in God, but by the limitation of man. But whether or not we can account for such a method of divine government, and successfully defend it, as probably we may; it suffices to

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maintain, that such in fact is God's governmental method of dealing with the moral quality of the actions of men and of nations. This being so, that very fact lies at the root of such representations as that which here confronts us in this psalm: accumulated wrath breaking forth in accumulated punishment, being figuratively represented as a **cup** in the hand of Jehovah, a cup **foaming** in the activity of its contents, **mixed** as with **stimulating spices** in the intensity of its action, and held forth to the individuals who are to drink, and to be compelled to drain their cup to its **dregs**. Such is the figure. We may call it oriental. But, instead of therefore under-estimating it, our wisdom is to accept it as a common, and, in the East, most natural as well as effective style of speech; and at once seek to translate it into our own methods of thought. The following list of passages, alluding to the **wine-cup of wrath**, will shew how familiar the figure is in the Old Testament, and will suggest the deeper principles to which our thoughts are thereby conducted: Job 21^{20}, Ps. 60^{3}, Isa. 51^{17}, Jer. 25^{15}, ^{27}, 49^{12}, 51^{7}, Ob.^{16}.

Glancing, finally, at Strophe v. (vers. 9, 10), and connecting it with Strophe I., as together constituting the devotional framework of the psalm, we recognise the appropriateness of the observations of Delitzsch: "The prophetic picture stands upon a lyric background of gold; it rises up out of the depths of emotion and is withdrawn again into these same depths . . . The psalm closes as subjectively as it began. The prophetic picture is set in a lyric frame." This is well said. But when the same expositor, in calling attention to the obvious fact that the psalmist in ver. 10 ascribes to himself what he in ver. 7 sets forth as God's own doing, associates this human fellowship in the judicial rectification with the reigning "Church," we respectfully withhold our consent; preferring to connect the **hewing off of the horns of the lawless** with the triumphant *nation* of Israel than with the triumphant *ecclesia*. The callings of the two communities are distinct, and as such should be carefully preserved.

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PSALM 76.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Song of Triumph over a Divinely-smitten Foe.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, By reason of a Recent Interposition in behalf of Jerusalem, God has Anew Made Himself Known there, as a Lion Dwelling in his Lair. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, The Majesty of God and the Impotence of the Smitten Enemy contrasted. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, God, Terrible when Arising to Judgment. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, The Wrath of Mankind turning to Give Thanks and Keep Festival. Counsels to Worshippers.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph—Song.

1 God |hath made himself known in Judah|,
<in Israel> <great> is his name:
2 And his covert hath come to be in Salem,
and ||his lair|| <in Zion> hath been placed:[a]
3 He hath shivered the flames of the bow,[b]
shield and sword and battle.[c] Selah

4 <Enveloped in light> art thou, majestic—from the mountains of prey:
5 <They let themselves be spoiled> did the valiant of heart—they slumbered their sleep,
And none of the men of might |could find|[d] their hands:
6 <At thy rebuke>, O God of Jacob—<stunned> were the horsemen.[e]

7 ||As for thee|| <fear-inspiring> thou art:
who, then, shall stand before thee, because of the power[f] of thine anger?
8 <Out of the heavens> proclaimedst thou sentence:
||earth|| feared, and was still,
9 When God |arose to vindication|,[g]
to save all the humble of the land.[h] Selah

10 Surely ||the wrath of mankind|| will thank[i] thee,
||the residue of intense[j] wrath|| will keep festival to thee.[k]
11 Vow and pay to Jehovah your God,
||all ye around him|| bear along a gift to the inspirer of fear,
12 He taketh away[l] the spirit of nobles,
is fear-inspiring to the kings of the earth.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For Jeduthun.[m]

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[a] So Br. revocalises, *sh-m-h*, and brings back to end of this line.
[b] A poetic description of arrows.
[c] Comprehensively, for all other weapons of war.
[d] Far less use them, to arise and grasp their weapons.
[e] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[f] So G. Intro. 144, correcting orthography.
[g] Intro., Chap. III., "Righteousness."
[h] Or "earth."
[i] Cp. 65 n.
[j] "The word WRATH is in the plural, denoting either wrath of every kind, or wrath in its intensity."—Per.
[k] So Sep., implying a difference, in Heb. exemplar, of a single letter.
[l] So O.G. ("cut off=take away"); and so Br. (w. Sep., Vul., Jerome).
[m] Cp. 88 n.

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EXPOSITION.

The reference of this psalm to the overthrow of Sennacherib is so obvious as to explain the unanimity with which expositors find in it that allusion. Doubtless there are some minor points in the psalm which invite discussion, and as to which a difference of final opinion may be expected. But these are of little moment as compared with the remarkable statement regarding **the wrath of man** which occupies the 10th verse, as to which a perplexing amount of diversity exists. This verse stands as follows in the A.V.:—

> **Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee,**
> **The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.**

The assurance thus conveyed may be said to meet with general devout acceptance, as is evident from the frequent acquiescent use of the words in public worship. The only difficulty they present is that scholars are unable to find the word "restrain" in the original of the second line. Accordingly, in the R.V., the following innovation appears:—

> **The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee;**

and with this rendering Dr., Per., Del., and others in the main agree. But it is distinctly unacceptable, apparently far-fetched, and gives rise to endless diversities when exposition is attempted. Whose wrath does God gird about him, whether by way of ornament, or for use? If his own, then why with only a "residue"? to say nothing of the awkwardness of taking the wrath to be human in one line and divine in the next. In short, there can be little doubt that the Sep. has here preserved the true reading, by the use of a word differing only by one letter from the M.T. (*h-h-g-k*) instead of (*h-h-g-r*) **will keep festival to thee.** A renewed study of the passage—giving to it a more literal turn and bringing it into closer touch with the context—brings out the force and beauty of this ancient variation. Note then (1) that **mankind**, instead of "man" (for *a-d-m*) in the first line, widens the outlook, and prepares us to discover that it is the excusable wrath of the down-trodden nations directed against the down-treading world-power, represented by Assyria, which, when Divine interposition effects deliverance, turns to give God **thanks**—"thanks" itself being more literal than "praise"—willing thanks rather than unwilling and merely enforced and constructive praise. (2) That **keep festival**, in line 2, makes a good parallel with **thank** in line 1. (3) That the **intense wrath** of line 2 prepares for the strong verb **keep festival** which follows it; so that the stronger motive power produces the stronger result, implying that there are some among the lately down-

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trodden nations whose "wrath" was so intense that mere "thanks" will not serve for its outlet—it moves to nothing less than the keeping of a **holy festival of praise.** Note (4) how **strongly this** construction works out of the foregoing context and into the succeeding: **Earth feared and was still when God arose to vindication** (vers. 8, 9)—so deep was its emotion, and so potent to turn its wrath of resentment into thanksgiving for deliverance. Will ye, then, **keep festival?** Then, mind ye **pay your vows** (ver. 11). **All ye around him** (*ibid*)—ye smaller neighbouring nations, who, having shared in Israel's peril, now share in her deliverance, **bear along,** in procession, **a gift to the Inspirer of fear,** even Israel's God who has just smitten the Assyrians. **It is** distinctly pleasant thus to get a glimpse of **mankind** lying outside the dominant world-power, sharing in Israel's deliverance, and fulfilling a more hopeful part than merely contributing unwitting and unwilling praise to the God of all the earth. Moreover, the student of unfulfilled prophecy will not fail to observe how, by exchanging **earth** for land in ver. 9, he obtains a most significant adumbration of a time yet to come when God will arise to the vindication of the humble through all the earth.

PSALM 77.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Comfort in Distress Obtained by the Study of a Song.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Introductory—shewing, by quotation of Language and Statement of Fact, that the Psalmist has been Inconsolable. Strophe II., vers. 4—9, In like manner, the Psalmist pursues his Study, rising to an Intense Spirit-Search (indented). Strophe III., vers. 10—15, A second study, conducting to a Satisfying Conclusion (indented): God is Holy, Incomparable, Redeeming. Strophe IV., vers. 16—19, The "String-Song" itself, on which the "Study" has been based (divisible into four sub-strophes — tristichs). Strophe V., ver. 20, Conclusion: The Flock is under the Care of a Divine Shepherd (implied).

[Lm.] By Asaph—Psalm.

1 <"With my voice> <unto God> let me cry:
<with my voice> unto God, and he will give ear to me."
2 <In my day of distress> after <Adonai> I sought,
||mine eye|| poured out, and became not slack:[a]
my soul |refused to be consoled|:—

[a] As in Lam. 3[49]; and so Dr. deems probable. M.T.: "my hand by night was outstretched, and grew not numb."

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3 "Let me remember God, though I moan,
let me soliloquise, though my spirit |swoon|." ☜

4 I anticipated the night-watches with mine eyes,[a]
I was disturbed, and could not speak:
5 I pondered on days out of aforetime:—
<"The years of by-gone ages> let me recall,—
6 ||My string-song||, in the night, is near my heart,—[b]
let me soliloquise, that my spirit may make diligent search.[c]
7 <To the ages> will Adonai |reject|?
and not again grant acceptance any more?
8 Hath his kindness |perpetually ceased|?
is speech |ended| to generation and generation?
9 Hath GOD |forgotten to be gracious|?
or shut up, in anger, his compassions?" ☜

10 And I said[d]—"Now have I made a beginning:—
this changing of the right-hand of the Most High![e]
11 I will commemorate the doings of Yah,—
yea let me recall, out of aforetime, thy wonders;[f]
12 And talk to myself of all thy works,
and <of thy deeds> let me soliloquise:—
13 O God! <in holiness> is thy way[g]
who is a great GOD like unto Elohim?
14 Thou art the GOD that did a wonderful thing,
thou madest known, among the peoples, thy might:
15 Thou redeemedst, with thine own arm,[h] thy people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph."[i] ☜

16 Waters |saw thee|, O God!
waters |saw thee|, they were in birth-throes,[k]
yea <perturbed> were the deeps.

17 Clouds |poured down waters|,
skies uttered ||a voice||;
yea ||thine arrows|| flew hither and thither.

18 ||The voice of thy thunder|| was in the whirlwind,
thy[l] lightnings |illumined| the world,
<perturbed and in commotion> was the earth.

19 <In the sea> was thy way,[m]
and ||thy path||[n] in the mighty waters;
and ||thy footprints|| could not be known.

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[a] So, nearly, Br. (w. Vul. and some cod. of Sep.).
[b] Or: "mind"—so that I can easily recall it.
[c] N.B.: this "spirit-search" begins with the next line.
[d] Renewing his "soliloquy."
[e] So after Sep. Other renderings: "This is my sickness"—"sorrow"—"cross." Also: "The years of thy r-h," instead of "changing."
[f] So (pl.) (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[g] Anticipating ver. 19 a.
[h] So Sep. M.T.: "w. an arm."
[i] So far, appar., the "spirit-searching soliloquy." Now comes the "string-song"—confident, joyous: in tristichs which mark it off as a song in itself. "The whole strophe [vers. 10—15] is an overture to the following hymn of praise of God the Redeemer out of Egypt"—Del.
[j] In the cloud, as thou camest up to the sea.
[k] About to bring forth a nation of freed-men.
[l] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[m] "In the sea thou didst tread with thy horses"—Br., after Hab. 3[15].
[n] So to be *read*. Some cod. (w. 5 ear. pr. edns.) both *write* and *read*: "path" (sing.)—Gn.

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20 Thou didst lead, like a flock, thy people,
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

[Nm.]

EXPOSITION.

This is emphatically a psalm of moods and tenses, so delicately expressed in the Hebrew that only clumsily and by the aid of quotation-marks can they be represented in English, and then not without risk of overdoing. The key to the psalm lies in this: That memories which ultimately yield consolation, when first recalled aggravate present sorrow. **The right hand of the Most High**: this is what, after diligent search, stays and consoles the psalmist's mind—a hand put forth with redeeming efficacy in the doings that gave the nation birth. But the first apprehension concerning it is, the contrast between its former activity and its present supineness: a contrast so painful that the psalmist, though resolved on the contemplation, anticipates that it will cause him to moan in anguish, even to the extent of causing his spirit to swoon—to be enshrouded in mental darkness, to be able to think no more.

A day of anguish seems to have culminated in a night of agony. The outspoken petitions with which his prayers had been begun, not without hope of being heard, falter on his lips, and he can no longer pray—he can only ponder; but those apparently long-lost days culled out of aforetime are his theme, and he is determined, at whatever cost, to recall them. Fortunately, there comes back to his mind a string-song of his, embalming memories of those ancient redeeming days. He does not start *singing* that song forthwith. No! he is too gloomily critical for that; but he will recall it—he will study it—he will soliloquise on that as a text, talking aloud to himself as the manner of study then was. He can at least ask questions—his spirit shall make diligent search. And then the questions follow. They are so framed as to indicate that the psalmist's mind is in process of recovering its balance. The answer suggested, without being expressed, is—"Surely not!" He cannot have rejected for ever! His kindness cannot have perpetually ceased! He may have changed his dealings; but surely He himself remains unchanged!

He takes breath. He feels he has made a beginning. Encouraged, he follows it up. He looks in the face the conception which like a spectre had projected itself before him. "**This changing of the right hand of the Most High!**" he seems to say, "let me examine it more closely!" And this he does, by thinking of its doings, its wonders,

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its works, its deeds. He is fortified to think out these topics, because he already sees that a change of *dealings by* God, does not necessitate the admission of *a changed God!* It is true (we may admit in passing) that the Hebrew word *sh'noth* may be rendered by the word "years" as well as by the word changing; but since the recalling of the "years of the right hand of the Most High" seems to bring with it, as an undertone, the change made between those ancient days of activity and the present days of inactivity, we may continue to let our thoughts run on the thread of the Septuagint rendering.

To resume, then. The study of the string-song is renewed to such good effect, that, whereas the previous strophe culminated in questions, this one rises to conclusions, confidently addressed to God himself, conclusions indicating a rest of spirit in them on the part of the psalmist. The very first word set after the Divine name in these conclusions is reassuring: O God <in holiness> is thy way—whether in manifest mercy or not. Again, it is what God *is* which leads on to what he has *done;* and what he *is* remains for renewed manifestation. Moreover, what *was* it that God *did?* Was it not to reveal himself to the nations around, and that, as redeeming for Himself a people—*the* people for whom the present petitioner is pleading? Clearly, this is logically the conclusion of the soliloquy—of the study! It is all reflective thus far. And it is a great gain to recognise this conclusiveness here, inasmuch as the apparent abruptness of the formal conclusion is thereby explained.

In fact, the four tristichs which now follow, so far from being out of place or a mere afterthought, are the very forethought of the whole psalm: at least from the moment when the favourite old string-song came up to the surface of the poet's memory. Happy is it for men in a storm, to recall the charm of the still sunlit waters through which they have passed; who have something better than "dead selves" to help them to survive the stress of present trouble. This psalmist Asaph had improved an earlier and more auspicious time for song-making and song-singing and song-memorising; and now his song comes back to him in his night of agony, and he knows it well enough to hold it before his mind's eye while he ponders and reasons and questions and summarises and concludes. And then he gives the string-song itself—altogether and compact, and of a sufficiently peculiar formal structure, as—without the aid of quotation marks or altered type, of which, of course, he was innocent—to make it recognisable by us after a long lapse of ages.

The Song speaks for itself. It is too boldly and elementally poetical to need detailed comment. Only in its final triplet (ver. 19)

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does it betray as much subjectivity as to amount to a symbolical undertone. **In the sea was thy way**—as how often it is! **And thy path in the mighty waters**—too mighty for us to control! **And thy footprints could not be known**—and so it ever is, something withheld, something unknown. The work remains: the Worker disappears. When—where—how will he next reveal his right-hand! O Asaph! wait: wait until the Assyrian draws nearer, and thou shalt see!

After the four triplets of the **string-song**, comes a couplet—only—in conclusion. How little it says, and yet how much: it seems to say everything needing to be added. Under the Divine Shepherd's care, it starts the flock on its journey to its home. That flock is in itself a moving appeal to its Divine Redeemer.

With respect to the origin of this psalm, it may be added: That while, so far as direct evidence is concerned—"it remains obscure what kind of national affliction it is which impels him [the singer] to betake himself in flight from the God who is at present hidden to the God who was made manifest in olden times" (Del.); yet the earlier period of the Assyrian invasion probably afforded more than one conjuncture during which prophecy was silent, and it appeared to the strained hearts of the faithful that **an end** had come to prophetic **speech**, and **God had forgotten to show favour.** It is certainly "shown by the comfort sought in the revelations of power and grace made in connection with the earlier history of his people," that it was "an affliction shared in common with the whole of the nation." The place of this psalm, and the indications afforded by several of its companions, point in this direction.

PSALM 78.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Didactic Poem, Counselling the Re-union of the Tribes.

ANALYSIS.

Part I.—THE PRELUDE.

(1) An Invitation to Attend to a Series of Problems Drawn from Antiquity—vers. 1, 2.

(2) An Appeal to the history-reciting instinct: sustained by the claim that Jehovah's Might and Wonders are to be Seen in This History—vers. 3, 4.

(3) Divine Authority pleaded for such Historical Recitations—ver. 5.

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(4) Their Utility for the purposes of Knowing, Believing, Observing and Avoiding: Grave Ancestral Faults implied—vers. 6—8.

Part II.—THE COMPLAINT.

Specially lodged against Ephraim, first named with Honour, but charged with Disappointing Expectation — with being Unfaithful, Disobedient, and Forgetful—vers. 9—11.

Part III.—SUGGESTIVE HISTORICAL REMINISCENCES.

(1) Divine Wonder-Working in Egypt: Deliverance—the Exodus: Guidance: Provision of Water—vers. 12—16.

(2) Sinful Doubts about Food, Provokingly Expressed—vers. 17—20.

(3) Divine Displeasure, yet Provision of Manna—vers. 21—25.

(4) Provision of Flesh, followed by Outburst of Divine Anger—vers. 26—31.

(5) Further Sin brings Further Punishment, with Speedy but Superficial Reformation—vers. 32—37.

(6) Divine Compassion and Forbearance; followed by People's Sin, causing Divine Pain—vers. 38—41.

(7) Forgetfulness, writ large: concerning the Plagues of Egypt, and the Exodus (probably extracted from an older document)—vers. 42—53.

(8) The Home-Bringing into Canaan: followed by Provoking Disobedience in the form of Idolatry (? suggesting without naming the Ephraimites as Chief-Offenders)—vers. 54—58.

(9) In Divine Anger, Israel is Largely Rejected, the Tent of Shiloh Abandoned, the Ark Suffered to go into Captivity, and Priests and People are Slain—vers. 59—64.

Summary of above details as suggesting "problems": *Time*—from Moses to the Judges; *Place*—Egypt, the desert, Canaan; *Freedom of Divine Action*—alternations of Anger, Punishment, Mercy, Deliverance.

Part IV.—CLOSING INDIRECT APPEALS.

New Divine Activity as to Enemies—vers. 65, 66; Tribe—vers. 67—68a; Sanctuary—vers. 68b, 69; and King—vers. 70—72.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By Asaph.

[Part I.—THE PRELUDE.]

1 Oh give ear, my people, to mine instruction,[a]
incline your ear to the sayings of my mouth:
2 Let me open, in a poem,[b] my mouth,
let me pour forth problems[c] out of antiquity.

3 <What we have heard, and come to know,
and ‖our fathers‖ have told us>
4 We will not hide from their sons,
<to an after generation> telling the praises of Jehovah,
both his might and his wondrous works which he wrought;

[a] U.: "law."
[b] "After the manner of an epic. The individual historical statements have a gnome-like finish, and a gem-like elegance"—Del.
[c] So Sep. "Riddles"—Del., Dr., Leeser. "Similitudes"—Carter. "Weighty lessons"—P.B.

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5 So he raised up a testimony[d] in Jacob,
and <an instruction>[e] set he in Israel;
Which he commanded our fathers,
to make them known to their children.

6 To the end an after generation |might know|,
||children who should be born|| might rise up and tell their children;
7 That they might set in Elohim their confidence,
and not forget the doings of El;
but <his commandments> might observe;
8 And not become like their fathers,
a generation rebellious and insulting,[f]
a generation that set not aright its heart,
nor <faithful with God> was its spirit.

[Part II.—THE COMPLAINT.]

9 ||The sons of Ephraim armed and shooting with the bow||
turned in the day of battle:
10 Kept not the covenant of God,
and <in his instruction> refused to walk;
11 But forgat his doings,
and his wondrous works which he caused them to see.

[Part III.—HISTORICAL PARALLELS.]

12 <Before their fathers>[g] wrought he wonderfully,[h]
in the land of Egypt, the country of Zoan[i]:
13 He clave open the sea, and let them pass through,
and reared up the waters as a mound;
14 And led them, with a cloud, by day,
and <all the night> with a light of fire.
15 He used to cleave open rocks[j] in the desert,
and let them drink as of the deeps abundantly;
16 And brought forth streams out of a cliff,
and caused waters to flow down |like rivers|.

17 Yet went they on still to sin against him,
to disobey[k] the Most High in a thirsty land;
18 And put GOD to the proof in their heart,
by asking food to their liking;[l]
19 And they spake against God, they said,—
"Will God |be able| to lay out a table in a desert?
20 Lo! he hath smitten a rock,
and |there have gushed out| waters,
and ||torrents|| roll along,—
<Bread also> will he be able to give?
or provide flesh for his people?"

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[d] Cp. 81[5], 122[4].
[e] U.: "law."
[f] Cp. Deu. 21[20].
[g] A compliment to Ephraim.
[h] Or: "he did wonders."
[i] "The district of which Zoan, ancient name for *Tanis* was the capital, situated on the east bank of the Tanitic arm of the Nile"—Br.
[j] Exo. 17[6]. Tense (cp. ver. 29) and number (pl.) prob. a poetic generalisation.
[k] "Defy"—Dr.
[l] Dr.: "appetite." U.: "soul." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."

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21 |Therefore| Jehovah |heard|, and was indignant,
and ||a fire||[m] was kindled against Jacob,—
||yea even anger|| mounted up against Israel:
22 Because they believed not in God,
nor trusted in his salvation.
23 Yet commanded he the skies above,
and <the doors of the heavens> he opened;
24 And rained on them manna to eat,
and <the grain of the heavens> gave he unto them;
25 And <the bread of the mighty>[n] did they eat every one,
<a supply of food>[o] sent he them to the full.

26 He put forth[p] an east-wind in the heavens,
and drave on[p], by his might, a south-wind;
27 And rained on them flesh |like dust|,
and <like the sand of the sea> winged fowl;
28 Which he let fall in the midst of his camp,
round about his habitations;
29 So they did eat, and were filled to abundance,
since <their desire> he would bring to them:[q]
30 <They were not estranged from their desire,
|yet| was their food in their mouth>
31 When ||the anger of God|| mounted up against them
and he slew of their vigorous ones,
yea <the young men of Israel> bowed he down.

32 <For all this> they sinned still,
and did not believe in his wondrous works:
33 So he ended, with a breath, their days,
and ||their years||, in dismay.[r]
34 <If he slew them> then they inquired after him,
yea they turned, and early sought GOD;
35 And remembered that ||Elohim|| was their Rock,
yea ||El, Most High|| their Redeemer:
36 So they spake him fair with their mouth,
and <with their tongue> were ready to lie unto him;[s]
37 But ||their heart|| was not steadfast with him,
nor were they trusty in his covenant.
38 But ||he|| <*full of compassion*>[t]
would[u] cover[v] iniquity, and not destroy;
Yea ||many a time|| turned he back his anger,
and would not stir up all his wrath;
39 But remembered that <flesh> they were,
breath[w] departing, which could not return.

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[m] Cp. Num. 11[1 ff].

[n] "*Angels' food* (Sep., Vul., Syr.) is probably a right paraphrase of the words *the bread of the mighty*, though the term is nowhere applied to the angels. But cp. 103[20]"—Kp.

[o] Cp. Exo. 12[39].

[p] As though the elements were flocks under Divine direction.

[q] Or: "he brought to them." But, strictly, the Heb. verb is so used here as to denote either *repetition* or *modality*, that is, to express the feeling of those concerned; as if to imply that the expected the supply of quails would be repeated.

[r] So Dr. "Made to haste away in suddenness'—Br. "in sudden haste"—Del. Cp. Num. 14.

[s] See note on ver. 29.

[t] Cp. Exo. 34[6,7].

[u] Again see note on ver. 29. Driver and others prefer to regard the verb as expressing a standing truth: "cancelleth." The context, however, rather favours conception of *habit at that period*.

[v] See 65[3] (note).

[w] Or: "wind."

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40 ||How often|| used they to disobey[x] him in the desert,
to grieve him in the wilderness!
41 Yea they again put GOD to the proof,
and <to the Holy One of Israel> caused pain.[y]

42 They remembered not his hand,
the day when he ransomed them from the adversary:
43 When he set forth, in Egypt, his signs,
and ||his wonders|| in the country of Zoan:—[z]
44 When he turned, into blood, their Nile-streams,
and <their own rivers> could they not drink:
45 He would send[a] among them the gad-fly, and it devoured them,
and the frog, and it despoiled them;
46 And he gave, to the corn-locust, their produce,
and ||their toil|| to the swarming-locust:
47 He would kill,[a] with hail, their vine,
and ||their sycamores|| with frost.
48 And delivered up, to hailstorms, their beasts,
and ||their cattle|| to pointed flames:
49 He would send among them the glow of his anger,—
wrath and indignation and distress,
a mission of messengers of misfortune!
50 He would level a path for his anger,
withheld not, from death, their soul,
but <their life> <to the pestilence> delivered;
51 And smote every first-born in Egypt,
||the beginning of their strength|| in the tents of Ham.
52 And he put forth,[b] like sheep, his own people,
and led them on, like a flock, in the desert;
53 Yea he guided them securely, and they dreaded not,
and <their enemies> the sea |covered|.

54 So he brought them into his own holy bounds,
the mountain-range which his right-hand |acquired|;
55 And drove out, from before them, nations,
and allotted them, by line, an inheritance,
and caused to dwell, in their homes,[c] the tribes of Israel.
56 But they put to the proof and disobeyed[d] God Most High,
and <his testimonies> did not observe;
57 But drew back and proved treacherous, like their fathers,
they turned aside, like a deceitful bow;
58 And provoked him to anger with their high-places,
and <with their images> used to move him to jealousy.[e]
59 God |heard|, and was indignant,
and largely[f] rejected Israel;
60 And abandoned the habitation of Shiloh,
the tent he had set up among men;
61 And gave, to captivity, his strength,[g]
yea ||his glory||[h] into the hand of the foe;

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[x] "Defy"—Dr.
[y] So O.G., w. Sep. A.V.: "limited." Tregelles (in T.G.): "*to set marks* or *limits* gives a good sense in the passage." Thrupp: "crossed."
[z] Cp. ver. 12.
[a] See note on ver. 29.
[b] "Moved forth by stages"—Dr.
[c] Ml.: "tents."
[d] "Defied."—Dr.
[e] Cp. note on ver. 29.
[f] Ml.: "with muchness," gen. = "greatly."
[g] Cp. 132^{8}.
[h] Or: "beauty." Cp. 89^{17}, 96^{6}.

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62 And delivered up, to the sword, his people,
and <with his own inheritance> was indignant:
63 A fire devoured ||his young men||,
and ||his virgins|| were not praised in song:
64 ||His priests|| <by the sword> did fall,
and ||his widows|| could[i] not bewail.

[Part IV.—CLOSING INDIRECT APPEALS.]

65 Then awoke, as one sleeping, the Sovereign Lord,
as a hero that shouteth from wine;
66 And smote his adversaries behind,[j]
<the reproach of ages> laid on them;
67 But rejected the tent of Joseph,
and <of the tribe of Ephraim> made not choice;
68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
the mountain of Zion, which he loved;
69 And built, like the heights, his sanctuary,
<in[k] the earth> founded it, to the ages:—
70 And made choice of David his servant,
and took him from the folds of the sheep;
71 <From after suckling ewes> brought him in,
to be shepherd over Jacob, his people,
and over Israel, his inheritance;
72 And he tended them according to the blamelessness[l] of his heart,
and <with the discernment of his hands> he guided them.

[Nm.]

[i] Cp. note on ver. 29.
[j] "Backward"—Dr. "God smote the Philistines most literally *in posteriora* (LXX., Vulg., Luther). Still ver. 66 embraces all the victories gained by Israel in the time of Samuel, Saul and David, from I. Sam. 5 onwards and still later"—Del.
[k] So some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "Like."
[l] Or: "devotion," "singleness," (ml.) "wholeness."

EXPOSITION.

To judge aright of the design of this psalm, it is important to notice both what it includes and what it omits; as well as to observe the special adaptation of its several parts to secure its main purpose. The psalm was most probably composed to promote the efforts of the good King Hezekiah to secure the reunion of the Twelve Tribes. As Thrupp has well said, the king himself sought to bring the Northerners to worship at Jerusalem, modestly saying nothing of himself as their rightful monarch (2 Ch. $30^{6,9}$). The psalmist goes further: claiming not only the Divine preference of Judah over Ephraim (the leading tribe of the north), and of Jerusalem over Shiloh (the first resting-place of the ark); but of David as the appointed Shepherd-King over all Israel.

It is observable that, though the psalmist goes back to the time of Moses, he comes no further forward than to the time of the Judges: an excellent stroke of policy, since the period thus spanned was abundantly sufficient to afford the historical parallels of which he desired

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to make use, while he could nevertheless avoid irritating references to later events, of which the Northerners had no need to be reminded. Again, the omission of Saul and Solomon on either side of David—to whom so much prominence is given at the close of the psalm—justifies itself in each case as a wise omission: of Saul, because the kingship was taken from him and his heirs, and because the opposition which had for a time lingered in the tribe of Benjamin (the tribe of Saul) against the Davidic Royalty had now died away; and of Solomon, because any allusion to him might have revived inconvenient memories of those oppressions of his which clearly paved the way for the great disruption. It was enough, for the end in view, to set David high on the pedestal of Divine approval and appointment: all hearers of the psalm could in a moment pass from David to David's loyal and worthy son, Hezekiah—and that was enough. But though Solomon is not named, yet the Temple he built is brought into prominence: thus supporting the invitation to renewed worship there—in a shrine so magnificent and to all appearance so abiding.

Then if we pass on to notice the manner in which the assumed design of the psalm is sought to be obtained, we shall be able to detect many tokens of exquisite adaptation. Not only is there, in the psalm, all the winsomeness of poetic form and beauty; but a skilful appeal is at once made to the patriotic sentiment which loves to hear the story of one's ancestors, especially as entwined around the formation of a unique nationality; which appeal is made the more telling when the poet avows that he is about to bring forth from the venerated past problems of present-day application.

It is true that the psalmist's serious purpose compels him to lodge a grave complaint against one of the most powerful of the Northern Tribes—that of **Ephraim**; but both the way in which he leads up to this complaint and the terms in which he expresses it, are well fitted to secure for it attention. He breathes not a word against any single tribe, until he has first made against the nation's ancestors as a body an indictment expressed in the startling terms in which parents were authorised by Moses to bring their refractory sons as rebellious and insulting before the elders of their city for condign punishment in the event of continued obstinacy. Then, although he does level his charge against the tribe of **Ephraim** thus early in the psalm (vers. 9—11), —without which specification it is not easy to see how he could have quickened the apprehension of the Ephraimites to see their own likeness in the mirror which he was about to hold up to their gaze,— yet it is not difficult to detect in his allusion to their proficiency with the bow, a compliment, and a reminiscence of their father Joseph

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which were not likely to be lost upon them (Gen. 49[23, 24]). If their bow was no longer "abiding in strength," was that not due to moral defection? If they had **turned in the day of battle** (which, in the absence of specification, one may perhaps refer broadly to the day of entrance into the land under Joshua, followed by sinful compromise with idolatry), were they not the more chargeable with blame by reason of their high national aspirations?

There is no need here to dwell in detail on the historical reminiscences to which attention has been called by our "Analysis." The one obvious thing to do, if we would use the "mirror" of history to profit, or at least perceive how the Northerners might be expected so to use it,—is to go back to the "prelude" and fetch up therefrom the significant term **problems** (ver. 2) as applied to the history here in Part III. recited. In what way does this application of the word **problems** to the history furnish a suitable appeal to the Ten Tribes? This has already been suggested by the aforesaid Analysis. High above the limitations of "Time" and "Place" there sufficiently alluded to, stands the great question of the "Freedom of Divine Action." Let us assume—as we reasonably may—that, at the time this psalm is composed and sent forth on its mission, the North has been overrun by Assyria, and that Samaria is already in siege, or if we would make the picture still blacker, that that city has already capitulated,—how and where do the **problems** find application? Look back over those historical details with this especial feature in view: How did God *act* in those sinful and perilous times of old? and note especially this: That the Divine action is various: always doubtless holy, always right; yet, in its springs, far above, out of our sight; in its activities and modifications, many a time taking us by surprise. Sometimes he is angry, and yet grants the blessing; sometimes his rising displeasure is checked—he will not **stir up all his wrath**; sometimes, pent-up wrath suddenly breaks forth as if to bring up arrears of displeasure, and make a clean sweep of the rebels whose insults can no longer be endured. Behind all these adjustments and adaptations, lies the great primal fact of Divine Redemption out of Egypt; and high above all is descried the Divine fountain-head of **compassion** and the Divine remembrance of human frailty. This, God never forgets. So that, as applied to Ephraim, the lesson briefly is this: It is yet **problematical** how Jehovah may deal with you: he may smite and yet spare; may carry away and yet bring back. Do not *despair:* Jehovah of old brought out of Egypt; and even now he can deliver from Assyria. Do not *presume:* beware of pent-up wrath; do not provoke once too often. Humble yourselves AND RETURN (2 Ch. 30[6, 9]).

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And, in your thoughts of return, forget not, that some forfeited honours may never be restored, some past provisions may never be renewed. Your leadership in Israel has been forfeited for ever. Shiloh has been abandoned for ever. You have lost the ark, and to you it may never return. The Shepherd of Israel may be now leading his flock to fresh pastures." But this brings us up to Part IV., on which a few words will suffice.

If we wisely avoid resenting the anthropomorphism which likens Jehovah to a waking hero, and honestly endeavour to enter into the spirit of the teaching thereby conveyed, we shall not fail to perceive the new tone which now makes itself manifest. We have done with problems, so far as the poetic development of them is concerned; and are now brought face to face with facts—facts calculated to urge on a settlement of the great practical problem of the then immediate future: *to return or not to return.* It was time that the old enemies, the Philistines, were decisively dealt with; and so reproach was cast upon them when they were ignominiously smitten before the very ark they had taken captive; and later on (as we may supply) when they were finally subjugated at the hands of a shepherd stripling that reproach has been made notorious and age-abiding. But it was also time that the historic claims of Joseph and his son Ephraim were disposed of for ever by the choice of Judah, by the erection of the temple in Jerusalem, and by the selection of David as King for all Israel; and so the psalm comes to a powerful conclusion. It was left to silence, and other psalms, and other agencies, to do the rest.

PSALM 79.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Invasion, Desecration, Demolition, Massacre and Derision call forth Lamentation, Expostulation, Petition and Pleading; and the Hope of Deliverance evokes a Promise of Perpetual Praise.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Lamentation; Strophe II., vers. 5—8, Expostulation and Petition; Strophe III., vers. 9—12, Pleading; Strophe IV., ver. 13, Promise of Perpetual Praise.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph.

1 O God! nations[a] |have entered| into thine inheritance,
have made unclean thy holy temple;[b]
have made Jerusalem heaps of ruins:[c]
2 have given the dead bodies of thy servants[d] as food to the bird of the heavens,

[a] Or: "Gentiles."
[b] Cp. 74^{4-8}, Lam. 1^{10}.
[c] Mi. 3^{12}, Jer. 26^{18}.
[d] Deu. 28^{26}, Jer 7^{33}, 16^{4}, 19^{7}, 34^{20}.

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the flesh of thy men of kindness,[e] to the wild beast of the earth;
3 have poured out their blood, like water,
<round about Jerusalem> with none to bury.[f]
4 We have become a reproach to our neighbours,
a mockery and derision, to them who are round about us.[g]

5 How long, Jehovah, wilt thou be angry utterly?
[how long] shall thy jealousy |burn like fire|?
6 Pour out thy wrath on the nations that have not known thee,
and on the kingdoms which <on thy name> have not called;[h]
7 For they have[i] devoured Jacob,
and <his homestead>[j] have laid waste.
8 Do not remember, against us, the iniquity of former times![k]
haste thee! let thine acts of compassion |come to meet us|;
for we have been brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, on account of the honour[l] of thy name
and rescue us, and put a propitiatory covering over[m] our sins, for the sake of thy name.
10 |Why| should the nations[n] |say|—"Where is their God?"
let the avenging of the blood of thy servants which hath been poured out
||be made known among the nations, before our eyes||.[o]
11 Let the groaning of the prisoner |come in before thee|,
<according to the greatness of thine arm> set thou free[p] the sons of death.[q]
12 And return to our neighbours,—sevenfold into their bosom,—
their reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, Sovereign Lord!

13 So ||we||, ||thy people, and the flock of thy shepherding||[r]
will give thanks[s] unto thee, to the ages,
<to generation after generation> will tell of thy praise.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For "Lilies of Testimony" = the Feast of Weeks.

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[e] Heb. *hasidim*. "In the age of the Maccabees (B.C. 168 and following years) the term was adopted as the title of the patriotic party in Israel, who were faithful to the national religion, and resisted the attempts that were made to overthrow it—see 1 Macc. 2^{13}, 7^{13}, 2 Macc. 14^{6} (where '*Hasidaeans*' is the Heb. *hasidim*, the plural of this word. It is possible that 'godly' is already used in this sense in Ps. $149^{1,5,9}$, if not in 116^{15} as well"—Dr.

[f] Jer. 14^{16}, 16^{4}.

[g] Ps. 44^{13}, 137^{7}.

[h] Cp. Jer. 10^{25}.

[i] M.T. ml.: "he hath." But some cod. (w. Aram., Sep. Syr., Vul.): "they have." Cp. Jer. 10^{25}—Gn.

[j] So Dr.; "cp. Jer. 10^{25}."

[k] So O.G. But Dr.: "(our) forefathers."

[l] Or: "glory."

[m] (Simply) "cover"—Per.; "expiate"—Del.; "pardon"—Carter; "atone for"—Leeser; "purge away"—Kp.; "cancel"—Dr., cp. 65^{3} (note).

[n] Or: "the Gentiles," cp. ver. 1.

[o] Deu. 32^{43}.

[p] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Syr.). Cp. 105^{20}, 146^{7}.—Gn. M.T.: "leave remaining." "Reprieve"—Dr.

[q] Cp. 102^{20} (2 Sam. 12^{5}).

[r] As in 74^{1}; cp. 77^{20}, $78^{52,70}$. "The favourite Asaphic way of looking at Israel as a flock"—Del.

[s] Cp. 6^{5} n.

EXPOSITION.

If this psalm now appears as it was first composed, its date must be assigned to the time of the Maccabees; since the time of the Chaldean invasion under Nebuchadnezzar does not suit all its leading

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features, whereas the persecutions and profanations of Antiochus Epiphanes, against which the Maccabean resistance was directed, serve to supply in counterpart the finishing-touches to this picture of Israel's troubles. Such a late time of origin does, indeed, leave little space for translation into the Septuagint; but, as the date usually assigned to the execution of this Greek Bible does not necessarily apply to all the sacred books, and some of them, including the Psalms, may well have been added at a somewhat later time, candour must admit the practical possibility of a Maccabean origin of this psalm consistently with its appearance, in the Septuagint where it now stands, in close conformity with its Hebrew original. The alternative theory—that it was originally composed soon after the Chaldean invasion and subsequently freely adapted to the later time—is not wildly improbable, as the known free action of the Sopherim on the Sacred Text sufficiently shews; but, on the other hand, the unity and symmetry of the psalm as we have it, make strongly for one spirit working at one time in its production. In either case, an extract or two from the first book of Maccabees will be acceptable to the general reader. "And there came forth out of ['them the servants of Alexander the Great, who bare rule in his place'] a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage in Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of [the Greeks, *circa* B.C. 176] . . . And Antiochus, after that he had smitten Egypt, returned in the hundred and forty and third year [*circa* B.C. 170] and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and entered presumptuously into the sanctuary, and took the golden altar, and the candlestick of the light, and all that pertained thereto, and the table of the shew-bread, and the cups to pour withal, and the bowls, and the golden censers, and the veil, and the crowns, and the adorning of gold which was on the face of the temple, and he scaled it all off. And he took the silver and the gold and the precious vessels; and he took the hidden treasures which he found. And when he had taken all, he went away into his own land, and he made a great slaughter and spake very presumptuously . . . And the land was moved for the inhabitants thereof, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame . . . And after two full years the king sent a chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Judah, and he came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude. And he spake words of peace unto them in subtilty, and they gave him credence; and he fell upon the city suddenly, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people out of Israel. And he took the spoils of the city, and set it on fire, and pulled down the houses thereof and the walls thereof on every side . . . And they shed innocent blood on

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every side of the sanctuary, and defiled the sanctuary. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them . . . And on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the hundred and forty and fifth year [*circa* B.C. 168], they builded an abomination of desolation upon the altar, and in the cities of Judah on every side they builded idol altars. And at the doors of the houses and in the streets they burnt incense. And they rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, and set them on fire . . . On the five and twentieth day of the month they sacrificed on the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God" (1 Mac. $1^{10, 20-24, 29-31, 37, 38, 54-56}$) . . . "And Jerusalem was without inhabitant as a wilderness, there was none of her offspring that went in or went out; and the sanctuary was trodden down, and the sons of strangers were in the citadel, the Gentiles lodged therein; and joy was taken away from Jacob, and the pipe and the harp ceased" (3^{45}).

The structure of the psalm, according to Del., followed above, is interesting; as revealing three strophes of nine lines each, closed by a simple tristich.

The course of thought running through the whole is natural and easy to follow.

The first strophe is filled with lamentation, which takes the obvious course of describing, step by step, Israel's deep humiliation; the invasion of the **land**, the defiling of the **temple**, the demolition of **city**, the massacre of the **inhabitants**—especially of the **godly**, the contemptuous treatment of the **slain**, the disregard of the heavy responsibility of shedding **blood**. This last might have seemed the fitting climax; but, as in Ps. 40 there was to be added "Many shall see, &c." though in a totally different strain to that found here; so here there fell to be added a couplet describing the effect of Jerusalem's humiliation upon the onlooking neighbouring nationalities, as to the renewed reference to whom in ver. 12, Delitzsch well says: "That the prayer comes back in ver. 12 to the neighbouring peoples, is explained by the fact that these, seeing they might the soonest have attained to the knowledge of the God of Israel as the one true and living God, bear the greatest guilt on account of their reviling of Him."

Naturally, a strophe follows, taken up with expostulation (**How long?** ver. 5), and petitions (**Pour out—Do not remember—Haste thee**, vers. 6—8), sustained, no doubt, by *reasons*, expressed and implied; among which may be singled out the prayer against heathen nations, for the purpose of interposing the caution to be careful not to exaggerate these imprecations, seeing that the simplicity of poetically expressed Eastern thought clearly allows us to understand *positives* as amounting to *comparatives*: "If thy wrath must be outpoured, let it be rather on the nations," &c.

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But these reasoned petitions, are, in the third strophe, followed by yet more urgent pleadings; which may usefully remind us how much of this element is to be found in the prayers of the faithful throughout the Holy Scriptures; as witness, especially, the prayers of Abraham (Gen. 18), (Daniel 9) and the writer of Ps. 119; and though, at first sight, it might appear to have been discountenanced by our Lord (Mt. 6^{7-13}), yet both his own teaching (Lu. 11^{8}, 18^{1}) and example (Jn. 17, Mk. 14^{22-39}) caution us to bear in mind that all repetition need not be "vain." Indeed it may safely be said: That he who has not learned to plead in prayer, has not yet learned to pray at all—especially by way of intercession (1 Tim. 2^{1-8}). It will not be lost labour, if the devout reader look through this third strophe afresh, in order to note in how many directions there is an outgoing of sympathy to his suffering brethren, on the part of the psalmist, prompting to a holy boldness in drawing near to his God.

PSALM 80.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer for the Flock and Vine of Israel.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, By Three Significant Titles, Jehovah is besought to interpose for Salvation, before Three Significantly Selected Tribes. Strophe II., vers. 4—7, Remonstrance with God for the length of His Manifestation of Displeasure. Strophe III., vers. 8—11, The Vine—Transplanted out of Egypt and Prosperous in Canaan. Strophe IV., vers. 12—15, The Vine—Endangered and Damaged: Prayer that it be Inspected and Protected. Strophe V., vers. 16—18, In order that the Destruction of the Vine may be Averted, Representation and Restoration are Besought.

[Lm.] By Asaph—Psalm.

1 Shepherd of Israel, oh give ear!
leader of Joseph as a flock,
throned on the cherubim, oh shine forth!
2 <Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh>
oh stir up thy heroic strength,
and oh come to our salvation!
3 *O God! restore us,*
And light up thy face,
And we shall be saved.

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4 Jehovah, God of hosts!
|how long| hast thou been angry[a] in spite of[b] the prayer of thy people?
5 [How long] hast thou fed them with the bread of tears,
given them to drink of tears in large measure?[c]
6 [How long] wilt thou make us a strife to our neighbours,
or shall ||our foes|| laugh at us?[d]
7 *O God of hosts! restore us,*
And light up thy face,—
And we shall be saved.

8 <A vine> <out of Egypt> thou didst lift,
didst drive out nations, and plant it:
9 Didst clear a space before it,
so it rooted its roots, and filled the land:
10 <Covered> were the mountains with its shade,
and <with its boughs> the cedars of GOD:
11 It thrust forth its branches as far as the sea,
and <unto the River> its shoots.[e]

12 |Wherefore| hast thou broken down its fences,[f]
so that all who pass along the way |have plucked of its fruit|?
13 The boar out of the forest[g] |gnaweth it|,
and ||the roaming beast of the field|| browseth on it.
14 O God of hosts! return, we pray thee,
look around, out of the heavens, and see,—
and inspect this vine;
15 And be thou the protection[h] of that which thy right-hand |hath planted|,
and over the bough[i] thou hast secured for thyself.

16 It is to be burned with fire, it is to be cut down,
<at the rebuke of thy face>[j] they will perish!
17 Let thy hand be over the man of thy right hand,
over the son of mankind[k] thou hast secured for thyself:
18 So shall we not draw back from thee,
thou wilt restore us to life,[l] and <on thy name> will we call.
19 *Jehovah, God of hosts, restore us,*
Light up thy face,—
And we shall be saved.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the Wine-presses = Feast of Tabernacles.

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[a] Ml.: "snorted" or "fumed."
[b] Or: "during."
[c] Ml.: "by the tierce." "The third part of some larger measure, perhaps the bath (Ez. 45^{11}), and if so equivalent to nearly three gallons,—a large measure for tears, though a small one for the earth, Is. 40^{12} ('measure')"—Dr.
[d] So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "laugh to themselves" ("mock as they please"—Dr.).
[e] Or: "suckers."
[f] Or: "walls."
[g] That is = symbol of Rome. Or: "river: (= symbol of Egypt). See G. Intro., 338—340.
[h] So Del. and others.
[i] Ml.: "son." Some cod. (w. Sep, Syr., Vul.) "son of man (*adam*)"—Gn.
[j] *Gt.*: "mouth"—Gn.
[k] Heb.: *Adam.*
[l] Or: "quicken us."

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EXPOSITION.

The exceeding beauty of this psalm is obvious at a glance,—with its striking invocation, its threefold refrain, and its exquisite allegory of the Vine. Its power, however, cannot be felt to the full until its scope is observed and its spirit perceived. Its scope is, to reconcile all the tribes of Israel to each other and to their God: its spirit is, on the one hand, one of absolute loyalty to Jehovah, in his preference for Judah as the leading tribe, and to the house of David as the divinely appointed reigning dynasty; and, on the other hand, one of tender regard for the susceptibilities of the northern tribes. Whether **Asaph**, the author of this psalm, be Asaph the Second or Asaph the Seventh matters little, so long as we take him to have been the prophet compeer of King Hezekiah. While the King was *inviting* the tribes to come to Jerusalem, the psalmist was *singing* them in to Jehovah's royal seat.

Viewed from this standpoint, what address is discovered in the opening invocation. When the term "Israel" did not mean the whole nation, it specially meant the Ten Tribes; and of "Joseph" the same may be said, with the especial consideration added, that as both Ephraim and Manasseh were integral members of the northern kingdom, "Joseph" would more emphatically point "North." So far, then, the invocation counts two for the "North"; but when the third Divine Title is added, "Throned on the cherubim," then, as the holy cherubic Throne was now located in Jerusalem, that was emphatically one for the South. So that, while this invocation, in the order of mention, yields the leading place to the North, and then weightily gravitates to the South, it may be truthfully described as a tribe-uniting Invocation.

In the same spirit the psalm proceeds, with the tact of a Divine winsomeness: "Thou who art throned in the South, before the North shew forth thy glorious presence!" "Before the North": more in detail, **Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,**—Ephraim and Manasseh being, of course, the two sons of Joseph; with little Benjamin placed between them, with exquisite good taste and with striking historical reminiscences clustering about the arrangement; first, as all being the descendants of the two sons of Rachel; and second, as having been placed in the rear of the Ark in the appointed order of march through the wilderness: "Thou who art throned in the Ark before them, before them shine forth, as thou leadest them on to victory and glory." Nor was this association of Benjamin with Ephraim and Manasseh without historical propriety or hortatory necessity. "At first sight," says Kirkpatrick, "it may seem strange that Benjamin is reckoned among the northern tribes, for partially at any rate it sided with Rehoboam (1 Kings 12^{21}, 2 Chr. $11^{3, 23}$, $15^{8, 9}$); but the one tribe

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remaining to David was Judah (1 Kings $11^{13, 32, 36}$), and Benjamin must be reckoned to the Northern Kingdom to make up Ten tribes, for Simeon had become merged in Judah and is not counted. The principal Benjamite towns of Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho belonged to the Northern Kingdom." To which we may add a sentence from Delitzsch as to these three cities: "But, like Ramah (1 Kings $15^{21f.}$), not without being contested (cf. 2 Chr. 13^{19}); the boundaries were therefore fluctuating."

Thus wooed into united supplication, the twelve-tribed nation is led forward in impassioned pleading, as the repeated use of the "*h*-paragogic" shews: **Oh give ear! Oh shine forth! Oh stir up! "Oh come!"**

The refrain too is worthy of its place as the triple crown of the psalm. **O God! restore us**: or, **bring us back**—which would especially suit those who were in banishment;—or, **bring us back** to our former estate, **Restore us**—which would suit all who lamented their degeneracy and disunion. **And light up thy face**—with that smile which so gladdens all such as love thee. **And**, thus gladdened—united—guided, **we shall be saved** from foes and dangers and sins.

To this strophe of invocation and petition, succeeds a strophe of invocation and remonstrance. Only, now, the invocation is shorter: **Jehovah**=the Becoming One; **God of Hosts**, with saints and angels and elements at thy command, waiting to do thy will.—Invocations are useful, as the natural outcome of earnestness; as apt reminders, to the petitioner and his fellow-worshippers, of the nature of the weighty business in hand—that we are neither dreaming nor soliloquising, nor aimlessly wandering: we are in the court of the Divine Presence, speaking to the Almighty—*that* is our one present business. Moreover, Invocations are turned into pleadings by the choice of epithets to suit our need, and by the accumulation of them as so many avenues of approach to him whom we worship.—**How long?** is the key-note of the remonstrance, the spirit of which should undoubtedly be carried through the remainder of the strophe: up to and preparing for the supplicatory refrain. **How long** hast thou been thus angry and wilt thou continue to be? **How long hast thou fed us with the bread of tears**—so that our hungry lips open in vain for food, only to taste the salt tears that fall upon them? **How long** art thou going still further **to make us a strife** to our smaller **neighbours**, who are quarrelling among themselves as to who first and who most shall insult us in our humiliation? **How long** are our more formidable **foes** to be permitted to turn on us with a scornful **laugh** when we groan under their unchecked atrocities?—Thus are we permitted to interweave the

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element of time with our prayers: **How long?** The longest may seem but "a small moment" to Him who sees the end from the beginning; but, to us, creatures of a day, it is a serious aggravation to our troubles that they are so long continued. And what we are here taught by Asaph is, that we may dare to remonstrate with God over the almost unbearable protraction of our trials. Thus, at least, shall we find an intensified refrain of petition welcome, as a relief to the burden which weighs down our spirits: **O God of Hosts, restore us, And light up thy face, And we shall be saved.**

And now comes the Vine—the parable, the allegory of the Vine—and let us remember that we are still, in prayer, speaking to Him whose vine it is: its Owner, its Planter and Transplanter, its Waterer and Fencer, its Devastator, its seeming Neglecter, its severe Inspector, its true and only Protector, its Redeemer and Restorer.

It is thus that this Vine comes before us:—1. Transplanted and Prosperous, 2. Endangered and Damaged, 3. Inspected and Protected, 4. Represented and Restored. Although these headings are not exactly conformed to the strophical divisions of the psalm, they may be helpful as a basis of study. While paying a passing regard to the framework of the Allegory, let us chiefly endeavour to get at its true meaning.

1. The Vine—Israel: *Transplanted and Prosperous.* It began its growth in Egypt. But in Egypt there was neither room for its growth, nor an atmosphere to make it fruitful. Egypt was peopled by an oppressing nationality, unfavourable to the growth within it of a free nation; and Egypt was poisoned with idolatry, unfitted for the development of a pure nation. Jehovah desired a nation both free and pure: fitted to be a channel of blessing to all the other nations of the earth. Therefore he transplanted his Vine—lifted it, as a vine is lifted with its roots, or a vine-layer is lifted, and laid in its ample bed.

But it must have **a cleared space** to receive it. The Owner of this Vine foresaw this need and provided for it. Hence the psalmist says: **Didst clear a space before it.** And the Divine directions were, that the space should be cleared. The iniquity of the Amorites was now full; and therefore, being mindful that the space they occupied should be filled to better purpose, the Disposer of Nations commanded them to be extirpated—a severe but needful mandate; "severe," because it involved the destruction of the innocent with the guilty; "needful," because the seven nations of Canaan had become a pest and a peril to the world. Unmerciful? Verily! it would have been more merciful, if the terrible Divine Behest of Destruction had been sternly executed. It would have saved the lives as well as the morals of generations yet unborn.

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Nevertheless, space was made; so that this Vine, transplanted from Egypt, grew rapidly: in the picturesque language of the psalm, **it rooted its roots, and filled the land.** As if on purpose to recall and amplify the blessings on Joseph which fell from his father Jacob's lips (Gen. 49), the psalmist proceeds: **Covered were the mountains with its shade**—the mountains of the South, **And with its boughs the cedars of God**—on the Lebanon to the North, a feat which the Vine, as a climbing plant, is able to accomplish; **It thrust forth its branches,** with the true thrusting power of growth, **as far as the sea**—the Mediterranean, to the West; **and unto the River** (*Nahar*=the Euphrates) **its shoots** (or **suckers**). Great (outward) prosperity, nearly if not quite realised in the days of Solomon. Is it strange that such prosperity should not have endured? Alas! there was a worm at the root of this Vine. Idolatry—the very thing that the God of Israel would not tolerate—had entered and was making rapid advances even in the days of Solomon.

2. *Endangered and Damaged.*—Inwardly, the danger was Sin—flagrant national Sin. The outward danger followed. The Owner of the Vine himself **broke down its fences.** His own character was involved: his purposes were being thwarted: there was a needs-be that he should interpose. Self-consistency and truth demanded it: all this had been threatened by Moses, and it must come. **All who passed along the way**—Egypt to meet Assyria, Assyria to meet Egypt—**plucked of its fruit;** and verily the fruit of this Vine was luscious and tempting; as, for example, the golden treasures of the Temple! Pity the defenceless Vine! when the **boar out of the forest**=the wild-boar of Assyria, Babylon, Greece or Rome, came that way (the Boar was anciently the symbol of Rome). The Vine, that is the Nation, more frequently pitied itself, than turned in true repentance to its offended God. True to the life it is, that Jewish scholars have punned on the very word which describes their punishment. The essential letters of the Hebrew word for **forest** are יער: if pronounced *yaar*, then it means **forest;** but if pronounced *ye-ôr* then it signifies **river,** and particularly the Nile. Now, they did not fear the Boar of the Nile so much as they stood in awe of the Boar of the forest east or west. The roaming beast of **the field,** in the next line, may mean—either any marauding power, or the smaller neighbouring monarchs ever ready to browse on Israel's most tender and promising **shoots.**

3. *Inspected and Protected.*—No wonder that the psalmist should again and more earnestly than ever betake himself to prayer. And, first, he prays for **inspection: O God of hosts! return, we pray thee look around out of the heavens**—on the various nations; **and see**

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—whether there is any other nation that interests and concerns thee like this; **and inspect this vine—look narrowly** into its condition, and see what, in thy clemency and wisdom, can be done in its behalf. So far, we Gentiles hearken with complacency: it is doubtless right, we are ready to say, that **this vine,** on which so much culture has been lavished should be **inspected!** But are we equally prepared to follow Asaph in the next step which he takes? **And be thou the protection of that which thy right-hand hath planted.** Perhaps we are utterly and genuinely unable to say "what more" the Divine Husbandman "could have done for his vineyard which he has not done for it" (Isa. 5). But how can he protect a nation which cannot and will not protect itself—cannot and will not come under his protection? And so we are straitened, not in God, but in ourselves, and in our own poverty of conception. We think we have reached the end of HIS ways which are "past finding out"! Is there never a **bough** in this Vine, which as a fresh layer can again be transplanted; and so a New Vine be produced therefrom? Perhaps, even to this length, the utmost stretch of our Gentile imaginations may extend. "Yes!" we say; "even that may be. 'Salvation is of the Jews.' The Messiah 'comes of the seed of David.' And, only give to the Messiah a new people: then he and his new people shall form a new Vine; and in that new Vine the old shall live again and so be perpetuated." Good as far as it goes; only it does not go so far as the Apostle Paul would conduct us; for he exclaims, in a passage wherein Israel cannot mean the Church, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Therefore we must yet stand firm to the text of this Asaphic Psalm.

4. *Represented and Restored.*—It was something that at the close of the previous strophe (ver. 15) we saw a **bough** that was not likely to be destroyed, seeing that Jehovah had **secured it** for himself. The psalmist sets the peril of Israel's national destruction clearly before him. The natural doom of such a Vine is **to be burned with fire**; and, with a view to such a burning, **to be cut down**: there is reason, in Israel's persistent sin, for Divine Rebuke stern enough to leave Israel to **perish.** But this apprehension on the part of the psalmist prompts to renewed and more explicit prayer. **Let thy hand be** protectingly **over the man of thy right hand.** Is this **man** an individual or a nation? There is something to be said for the opinion of some that it may be the whole nation of Israel; even as, in ver. 15, that **which thy right hand hath planted** is clearly the nation. Still, we have already had brought before us the separating conception of a single **bough,** or **son,** of the Vine; and Jehovah's **first care** is clearly to protect and preserve that **bough**; and this is the idea which is now, in supplication,

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brought forward anew—brought forward anew and amplified,—and, in the process of repetition and amplification, more fully described and more accurately defined. Even the phrase, **the man of thy right hand** seems irresistibly to carry us forward to the Messiah. But when the duplicate phrase follows, **The son of Mankind—the Son of Adam**; and the striking description is repeated, **whom thou hast secured for thyself** that conclusion is undoubtedly confirmed; so that we are relieved to find that even the Aramæan Targum giving scholarly Jewish opinion in the early Christian centuries is borne along in the same direction with its paraphrase: "And upon Messiah the king, whom thou hast made strong for thyself." Still the question recurs—Does this gravitation of the psalm to the Messiah include or exclude the Nation? If we still follow the psalmist's lead,—to say nothing more now of concurrent Scripture,—we shall undoubtedly answer in the affirmative—It will include and not exclude the Nation. For who are these who now join in the pleading—**So shall we not draw back from thee,** fully and finally. On the contrary, however dead we are at present, yea even generations of our people in Hades (Eze. 37), **Thou wilt restore us to life,** and as the priestly nation we were originally intended to be (Exo. 19) and which prophecy clearly foretells we yet shall be (Isa. 61^6, 66^{20}) **And on thy name will we call. Jehovah, God of hosts, restore us**—us, the nation, inheriting the name and honour of the Vine thou didst lift out of Egypt, **Light up thy face, And we,** the Vine, the Nation, **shall be saved.**

Recurring to the opening of the psalm, a weighty lesson may be drawn therefrom for the guidance of such as would seek the reunion of Christendom. There is in this realm also the unfaithfulness which fears to tell Ephraim his sin. For these the 78th psalm furnishes instruction: showing the possibility of faithfully admonishing Ephraim, that he has "turned back in the day of battle," and yet so administering the lesson as to commend it to his attention. The present psalm furnishes the hint that, besides warning Ephraim, efforts to win him may be alternated with sterner remonstrances. Set the Ark of the Divine Presence before him, and entreat him to follow its lead; at the same time endeavouring to convince him that there are privileges to be enjoyed in Judah which Ephraim has forfeited. Let us hold fast the honour of having first denounced Divisionalism in Christendom: at the same time wooing back wanderers in a generous and winsome spirit.

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PSALM 81.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Mission-Song, to be Sung to the Northern Tribes.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, A Festive Celebration Invoked; in which People, Levites, and Priests can Recall the Early History of the Nation. Strophe II., vers. 6—10, The Voice of the Divine Redeemer of the Nation is Heard; Recounting the Deeds by which He made the Nation His Own, and Summarising the Covenant into which He Entered with it. Strophe III., vers. 11—16, Divine Lamentation over the Nation's Past Failures, with Renewed Invitations and Promises designed to Win the People back to their Allegiance.

[Lm.] By Asaph.

1 Ring out your joy unto God our strength,
give a sacred shout to the God of Jacob:
2 Raise ye a melody, and hold forth[a] the timbrel,
the lyre so sweet, with the lute:
3 Blow, at the new moon, the horn,
at the full moon, for the day of our feast.
4 Because ‖a statute for Israel‖ it is,
a regulation, by the God of Jacob:
5 <A testimony in Joseph> he appointed it,
when he went forth over the land of Egypt:
<the language[b] of One I have not known> I now hear:—[c]

6 "I have removed, from the burden, his shoulder,
<his hands>[d] <from the basket>[e] are set free:[f]
7 <In distress> thou didst cry, and I rescued thee,
I answered thee in the hiding-place of thunder,[g]
I tried thee at the waters of Meribah Selah
8 'Hear, O my people, and I will adjure thee,
O Israel <If thou wilt hearken to me>
9 There must not be, within thee, a strange GOD,
nor mayest thou bow down to the GOD of an alien:
10 ‖I, Jehovah‖ am thy God,
who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill[h] it.'"

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[a] Or: "bring hither"—Leeser, Dr., Per.; "strike"—Carter; "sound"—Del., Kp.
[b] Ml.: "lip."
[c] "The Psalmist, speaking in the name of the nation, says that at the Exodus Israel first learnt to know the voice of its Deliverer"—Dr.
[d] Ml.: "palms."
[e] "Hod"—Thrupp.
[f] Ml.: "passed."
[g] "That is, in the pillar of cloud; cp. 18^{11}, Exo. $14^{19.\ 24}$"—Dr. "The thunder-cloud, in which he at once revealed and concealed Himself, thundering down Israel's foes (which is to be understood more especially of the passage through the Red Sea; *vid.* 77^{19})"—Del.
[h] "A believing yearning, which is hungering for grace and eager for salvation (119^{131})!"—Del.

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11 But my people |hearkened not| to my voice,
and ||Israel|| consented not unto me:
12 So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart,
they might walk in their own counsels!
13 <Oh that ||my people|| were hearkening unto me,
that ||Israel|| <in my ways> would walk!>
14 ||Right soon|| <their foes> would I subdue,
and <against their adversaries> would I turn my hand:
15 ||The haters of Jehovah|| would come cringing unto him,[a]
so let their own time be to the ages:
16 I would feed thee with the choicest[b] of the wheat,
and <out of the rock> <with honey> would I satisfy thee.[c]

[Nm.]

[a] "Should offer flattery unto him"—Leeser; "crouch to him"—Carter; "Their haters would have to fawn on them"—P.B.

[b] Ml.: "marrow-fat."

[c] Cp. Deu. 32[13].

EXPOSITION.

The best introduction to this psalm is the series of Asaphic psalms which leads up to it; yet, when thus reached, this psalm will be found to have features all its own, which immensely add to its interest and to its instructiveness for other times. Its adaptation to the Northern tribes is seen, in part, in the Divine and National titles which it employs—**God of Jacob** (vers. 1, 4); **Israel** (vers. 4, 8, 11, 13), **Joseph** (ver. 5), **My people** (vers. 8, 11, 13): in part also in its omission of any direct allusions to Judah, Jerusalem or the Temple: perhaps, moreover, in the probability that the Feast of Trumpets would be the last to fall out of observance among any of the tribes. It has often been remarked how lively an interest in the Northern tribes Asaph everywhere displays; nor is it difficult to account for this, when we call to mind the non-localisation of the tribe of Levi, and the distribution of the Levitical cities throughout all the land—North as well as South. It may thus quite easily have happened that this Asaph of Hezekiah's days was, by domicile, a Northerner, while yet loyal to the Divine preference for the South. There needs but one touch further to make the picture live before us; and that is, the conception of a missionary Levite traversing the North, harp in hand, and trying to win back the wanderers by singing to them this song. Other songs of the series there were which he may have sung at other times, or in alternation with this. His was a harp of many strings. At one time he would gently remind Ephraim how he had "turned in the day of battle," and how Joseph had irrevocably lost the honour of having the Sacred Tent within his bounds (78). At another time he would boldly

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claim for Judah the supreme honour of having the Cherubic Throne in his midst (80). But, even before he could win attention to those messages, here was one which would strike a winsome herald note, impinging on no susceptibilities save of apostates wholly given to idolatry: containing no allusion to the South, no mention of David. Radical reform, it is true, would demand the declaration of fuller truth in these regards; but all cannot be done at once—it is worth an effort, costing self-restraint, to win the ear of the rebellious, even for a moment, provided some essential thing can be successfully lodged therein. And truly the most essential thing of all, for Israelites wandering away into idolatry, is here: their covenant-relation to Jehovah, and his inexorable claim that their obligations under that covenant be fulfilled. From this point of view, how skilfully the story is told: with all the charms of music, introduced; with all the fascinations of ancient history, the famous and irreversible past, commenced; barbed with pointed reminiscences of old-time refractoriness; merged into the pathos of direct appeal; ascending to the height of positive mandate; coming down again to the attraction of bountiful and all-comprehensive promise; sobered by tones of Divine lament; invigorated by rapid transition from the irredeemable past to present lingering possibilities — **Oh that my people were even now hearkening!** hearkening to **counsels** which must still be maintained, **walking in ways** of obedience that must still be trodden: oh that they were! oh that they would! **Right soon would I subdue their foes:** these Syrians, those Assyrians, yonder Greeks and Romans. Is there nothing here to give point to appeal and make it victorious? Only let Israel RETURN (2 Ch. 30^{6-9}), and all shall yet be well. No real blessing should then be too rich, too good to be bestowed on obedient Israel: **fattest wheat, freshest honey**—nothing too good!

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PSALM 82.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Judgment of Unjust Judges.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, Introductory Vision. Strophe II., vers. 2—7, Reprimand of the Judges by the Judge of Judges. Strophe III., ver. 8, Closing Prayer.

[Lm.] Psalm—By Asaph.

1 ||Elohim|| hath stationed himself in the congregation of GOD,[a]
<in the midst of Divine messengers>[b] he judgeth :—

2 |" How long| will ye judge perversely,
and <the countenances of lawless ones> uplift ?" Selah

3 " Vindicate ye the weak and the fatherless,
<the humbled and the poor> see ye righted :

4 " Deliver the weak and the needy,
<out of the hand of lawless ones> make ye rescue !

5 "They know not, neither can they understand,
<in darkness> they wander,—
all the foundations of the earth |do shake|.

6 ||" I myself|| have said—<' Divine messengers> are ye[c] !
yea <sons of the most high> are ye all ' !
7 |But indeed| <as mankind> shall ye die,
and <as one of the princes> shall ye fall."

8 Oh arise, Elohim ! oh judge the earth !
surely ||thou thyself|| wilt inherit all nations.

[Nm.]

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[a] Heb.: *'El.*
[b] Heb.: *'elohim*—as in 8[5], 97[7].
[c] Cp. Jn. 10[34].

EXPOSITION.

The introductory vision of this psalm serves the important practical purpose of teaching the Divine authority and heavy responsibility of the office of Judge among men. Judges are here (vers. 1, 6) designated by one of the names of Deity (*elohim*) in accordance with Exo. 21[6], 22[9], for the purpose of teaching—that it is from God their authority is derived; that it is his justice they are appointed to maintain; and

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that the wrongs of men, in being referred to them to be righted, are supposed to be referred to Divine arbitrament, and therefore should be adjusted with inflexible impartiality (Cp. Deu. $1^{16, 17}$, 16^{18-20}, 1 S. 8^{3}, 2 Ch. 19^{5-7}, Amos $5^{12, 15}$, Mi. 7^{3}, Isa. 1^{17}, 3^{13-15}, Jer. 21^{12}). At the same time, Judges are hereby reminded, that they themselves are under law, and are liable to be called to an account for the manner in which they discharge the duties of their high office. Hence the Supreme Judge here, in state, appears in their midst, and arraigns them at his bar.

The psalm, being designed for a time of corruption, deals exclusively with Judges who have long been negligent in their office. The words placed in the Divine mouth are weighty in the extreme, and worthy of being prophetically attributed to the Most High. After two lines of expostulation, asking these corrupt Judges how long their perversion of justice is to continue (ver. 2), the Divine Speech, in four strong mandatory lines, charges them to do their duty; which is made to consist in caring for such as are unable to care for themselves (vers. 3, 4). The intention of the next three lines, forming ver. 5, has been variously deciphered; able expositors being of opinion that they form a kind of Divine "aside," in which the corrupt Judges are given up as hopeless, and, with aversion, spoken of in the third person. **They know not**, &c.; nor can it be denied, that to some extent the language applies to them. Nevertheless, a divergent opinion of this verse may perhaps with good reason be maintained; since, on the one hand, it is not certain that these corrupt Judges are quite unaware of the suffering they are inflicting or of the wickedness of their partial and iniquitous decisions; and, on the other hand, an appeal to their compassion, rather than a giving them up as hopeless, seems to constitute a more telling climax to the Divine Expostulation. And when ver. 5 is looked at in this light, it will be seen that every word enhances the weight and pathos of it as a portrayal of the wrong done and the suffering caused by unjust judicial sentences. **They** (the sufferers) **know not, neither can they understand**—how it is that justice has failed them, who it is that is their enemy in court, what are the bribes that have been tendered and accepted to rob them of their rights. **They wander** from the Gate of Justice **in the darkness** of despair, not knowing whither to turn for redress. In fact, **all the foundations of the earth**—of civilised society—seem to be **trembling beneath their feet**:—a circumstance of which their flippant judges, though causing it, may be almost wholly oblivious, and about which, if they have knowledge, they certainly have no solicitude. This exposition of the verse has the further merit, that, without any such break as must otherwise be admitted to occur between the fifth and the sixth verse, this crowning

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touch of Divine Pity for the wronged and suffering, most naturally leads on, without any change of persons addressed, to the indignant protest which closes the Divine Judge's charge: "**I myself said**—by the mouth of my psalmist—**Divine messengers are ye, Yea sons of the Most High all of you**; nor do I withdraw the distinction which I designed to confer upon you; save as I now denounce you as utterly unworthy of it. **As common mortals shall ye die,** yea **as princes** whom I have overthrown in their rebellion **shall ye** ignominiously **fall.**" Some think that the very next psalm supplies the needed examples.

We seem to be carried forward on the wave of a Messianic flood as we read in the concluding couplet: As if to say, **Oh arise, Elohim, oh judge the earth**—thyself, in a clearer and nearer Divine Manifestation than at present; no longer permitting Justice to be perverted as now; and do this the rather that **all nations** are thine by right, thine by the claim of thy birth as earth's King, into the full possession of which wilt thou be pleased soon to enter.

PSALM 83.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Appeal to God for Deliverance from an Impending Invasion.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Israel's Enemies described as the Enemies of God—their Destructive Designs. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, The Parties to the Conspiracy Enumerated. Strophe III., vers. 9—12, Examples of the Overthrow desired, taken from the Book of Judges. Strophe IV., vers. 13—16, Petitions urged for a Complete Overthrow, for High Religious Ends. Strophe V., vers. 17, 18, Re-urged for the Sake of Revealing the Supremacy of Jehovah over all the Earth.

[Lm.] Song—Psalm—By Asaph.

1 O God! let there be no quiet to thee,
do not be silent, neither be still, O GOD!
2 For lo! ||thy foes|| are tumultuous,
and ||they who hate thee|| have lifted up the head.
3 <Against thy people> make they crafty their counsel,
and conspire together against thy treasured ones.
4 They have said—"Come! and let us wipe them out from being a nation,
and let not the name of Israel |be remembered| any more."

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5 They have taken counsel with one heart,
<Against thee> <a covenant> would they solemnise;
6 the tents of Edom, and the Ishmaelites,[a]
[the land] of Moab and the Hagrites,[b]
7 [the lords] of Ammon and Amalek,
the Philistines, with the dwellers in Tyre:
||even Assyria|| hath joined herself with them,
they have become an arm to the sons of Lot.[c]

9 Do to them, as to Sisera,[d]
as to Jabin,[d] at the brook Kishon:
1 Let them be destroyed, as Midian at En (Harod),[e]
let them become as manure for the soil:
11 Make them, [even] their nobles, as Oreb and as Zeëb,[f]
and <as Zebah and Zalmunna>[g] all their princes:
12 Who said—"Let us take it to ourselves for a possession,
let us enjoy the pastures of God!"

13 O my God! make them as whirling dust,
as chaff before the wind;
14 As fire that burneth up a forest,
and as a flame that setteth ablaze mountains:
15 ||So|| mayest thou pursue them with thy tempest,
and <with thy storm-wind>[h] dismay them:
16 Fill thou their faces with dishonour
that men may seek thy name, O Jehovah.

17 Let them be put to shame and dismayed unto futurity,
and let them be abashed and perish:
18 That men may know that ||thou|| whose name is Jehovah—thou—alone,—
art Most High[i] over all the earth.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the Wine-presses=The Feast of Tabernacles. For the sons of korah.

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[a] Gen. 25[12-16]. [b] 1 Ch. 5[10].
[c] "The Moabites and Ammonites, who seem to be singled out as the leaders of the confederacy. Cp. 2 Ch. 20[1]."—Kp.
[d] Jdg. 4[23, 24].
[e] Thus the text shd. be re-constructed in accordance w. Jdg. 7. M.T.: "En-dor"—Josh. 17[11].
[f] Jdg. 7[25]. [g] Jdg. 8[21]. [h] Amos 1[14].
[i] So, in effect: R.V. (text), Kp., Dr., Carter, Leeser.

EXPOSITION.

Of the various dates proposed as suiting the origin of this psalm, the two more probable are the time of Jehoshaphat, and that of Jeroboam II.: the former as represented by the narrative in 2 Ch. 20, the latter not being formally recorded at all, but probably conjectured from various data when brought into historical combination. Delitzsch inclines to the days of Jehoshaphat, in preference to those of the

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Maccabees. But Thrupp, with considerable plausibility, suggests rather the time of Jeroboam II.: arguing that the **Assyrians** could not yet have reached the zenith of their power under Pul and Tiglath-pileser; that **Amalek** could not yet have been destroyed by the Simeonites in the days of Hezekiah (1 Ch. 4^{39-43}); and that "only at this one period have we any indication of the Phœnicians of Tyre being in league with the eastern enemies of the Israelites." He further thinks that "it was probably by the contemporaneous victories of Uzziah and Jeroboam that the confederacy against which the psalmist prayed was finally broken up." The especial feature in Thrupp's view which interests us is his conclusion "that the psalm was composed in reference to a danger which especially threatened the kingdom of the ten tribes," and which he bases on the appeal in prayer being made to events in which the northern tribes were specially interested, coupled with the absence of any allusion to the successes of David. It is true, of course, that Jehoshaphat's prophetic helper was one of the sons of Asaph (2 Ch. 20^{14}), and *he* may have been the author of this psalm; but, at all events, the more interested in the Northern Tribes the composer of this psalm was, the more this song is thrown into line with several which have preceded it, particularly the 78th and 81st.

There is little that needs to be said with reference to the general course and spirit of this psalm. It is obviously the barest justice to those who thus prayed for the destruction of their enemies to remember: That they were a miraculously redeemed and constituted nation; that they were the people of Jehovah, the appointed witnesses of his holiness, power and grace; that his honour was bound up with his people's preservation and well-being; that the haters of Israel were the haters of Jehovah; and that the effacement of this nation meant the silencing of the only national testimony to Monotheism, and the extinction of the race through whom the World's Redeemer was to come. More than this, the psalm contemplates the seeking of Jehovah's face on the part of other nations, as a chief result of the overthrow of those now in conspiracy. Besides all which, there is the ever-present possibility,—mostly unspoken, but always involved in Jehovah's readiness to shew mercy to the penitent,—that even these rebels on whom vengeance is invoked may by prompt repentance turn away Jehovah's wrath.

It may be added, as a matter of translating interest, that the close of this psalm is one of the few instanced in which both A.V. and R.V. have felt constrained to unveil for the English reader the occurrence in the original of the oft recurring but mostly suppressed sacred name JEHOVAH.

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PSALM 84.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Longing of a Levite for the Habitations of Jehovah in Zion, with Inspiring Memories of a Past Pilgrimage and Exultant Joy in Renewed Service.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, In the Intense Longing of his soul, the Psalmist Draws a Picture from Memory of the Joyous Scene in the Temple Courts, where Birds and Men Evermore Offer Praise. Strophe II., vers. 5—9, He traces a Pilgrim Journey Zionwards; recalling the Cheer by the Way, the Growing Enthusiasm, the Final Hope, and the Impassioned Prayer for the King. Strophe III., vers. 10—12, Renewed Experience of his Levitical Duties, leads him to Contrast his Present Privileges with his Past Detention in the Tents of the Lawless; and moves him to Admire the Character and Gifts of the God whom he Serves. A Three-fold *Refrain* Adapts the psalm to the Levites, to the King, and to Every Believer in Israel.

[Lm.] Psalm.

1 |How greatly to be loved| are thy habitations, Jehovah of hosts!
2 My soul |longeth, yea even languisheth| for the courts of Jehovah,
||my heart and my flesh|| ring out their joy unto the God of my life.
3 ||Even the bird|| hath found her a house,
and the swallow a nest for herself, where she hath laid her young:
4 <At thine altars> is praise evermore offered thee,[a] my King and my God.
Jehovah of hosts! |how happy| are they who abide in thy courts![b]

5 ||Highways|| are in their hearts, as they pass through the valley of Baca:[c]
6 <A place of springs> they make it,[d] yea <with blessings> the early rain doth enrobe it.
7 They go from strength to strength[e]—"The God of gods |will be seen| in Zion!"[f]
8 Jehovah, God of hosts! oh hear my prayer,
oh give ear, thou God of Jacob! Selah
9 <Our shield> behold thou, O God, and look well on the face of thine Anointed!
Jehovah of hosts! |how happy| the man whose stronghold is in thee![g]

10 Surely <better> is one[h] day in thy courts, than a thousand,
I choose to be on guard at the threshold in the house of my God,[i]
rather than to be dwelling in the tents of the lawless.[j]

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[a] Two words transposed from next verse: thus avoiding too close an association of the birds with the altars.
[b] As it is the happiness of a Levite to abide.
[c] Or: "balsam-tree"; or, "weeping."
[d] Or (by changing a vowel): "he maketh it."
[e] Or: "from battlement to battlement."
[f] So in Sep. Cp. G. Intro. 457—459; and Ps. 17^{15}, 42^{2}.
[g] Transposed, w. Br., from beginning of strophe; so yielding a three-fold refrain to the psalm.
[h] Found in Sep.
[i] Eminently suited to a Levite.
[j] Sometimes = "foreigner."

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11 For <a sun and shield> is Jehovah my God,
<kindness and faithfulness> he loveth,[a]
<grace[b] and glory> he giveth;
||Jehovah|| withholdeth no good thing from them who walk without blame.
12 *Jehovah of hosts, |how happy| the man who trusteth in thee!*

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For the sons of korah=The venerables of song.[c]

[a] Found in Sep.: apparently original.
[b] "Graciousness"—Dr.
[c] See Intro., Chapter II., 3.

EXPOSITION.

Probably no circumstances better suit the origin of this psalm than those with which the Asaphic psalms have already made us familiar. Given—a time when the Assyrians, after long devastating the North, are in abeyance, and pilgrim-bands are again frequenting the ways to Zion; and given—a Levite singer and door-keeper who has for weary years been prevented from going up to Jerusalem to discharge his duties, but is now fondly counting on a return to his place in the Temple courts; and conditions are provided well fitted to the composition of this beautiful pilgrim-song.

After an outburst of intense love and desire for the holy place where he has aforetime experienced so much blessing (vers. 1, 2), the writer shows his near intimacy with the courts of Jehovah, by one of those touches of memory which only a resident in the Temple-chambers would have had at his command. He had many a time of old watched the little birds building their nests in the nooks and crannies of the Temple courts; and perchance had little by little come to observe that the music of the choirs and congregation was accustomed to provoke the feathered songsters in their own way to join in the strains. Memory brings back the whole scene: Birds, nestling close by—and singing; priests and Levites, officiating—and singing; visiting worshippers, bringing their offerings—and singing: all in delightful unison. His reminiscence includes in it no awkward juxtaposition of the birds, rather than of the men, with the altar; but simply and naturally reproduces the harmonious whole; and excites his intense desire to share in such joy once more (vers. 3, 4).

But he is not there yet, and his mind is drawn to incidents likely to occur in the journey thither. Many a time has he traversed the roads leading to Zion; and he is able to clothe the ascent with probable incidents, such as he had aforetime known, or such as recent events would easily suggest. The highways are in the minds of

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pilgrims long before they start, as they think of the re-unions oft occurring as they go along; or, it may be, they wonder whether the highways will now be safe, or whether prudence may not suggest the preference of by-ways through secluded valleys, one such coming to his mind as his song is evolved—the memorable **Valley of Baca**, or **Balsam-vale**, or **Vale of Weeping**, entered with misgiving overnight in weariness and thirst, only to find that by morning the **early rain** has **filled the pools** and **covered** the sterile valley with a carpet of **blessing**. And, whereas, commonly, travellers become the more wearied the farther they go, he has often noticed that as they near their goal on *this* journey, enthusiasm rises, and **at every step their strength increases**. The alternative rendering of this clause is suggestive: **they go from battlement to battlement**—from one entrenched halting-place to another: which might be very prudent if any of the enemy were still lurking in the land. But the all-animating thought is: **The God of gods will be seen in Zion!**—some reflection of his shekinah glory; and therewith, it may be, some new prophetic discovery of his ways with Israel, and of his gracious purposes for the future (vers. 5—7).

But this Levite thinks of his earthly king as well as of his heavenly; and calling to mind how much all Israel in general and the Levites in particular are indebted to the good King Hezekiah who is shielding them from foreign foes and home neglect, the psalmist waxes importunate in his prayers for him: **Jehovah, God of hosts! oh hear my prayer, Oh give ear, thou God of Jacob**; and do *this* for us—**Our shield behold thou**, and shield *him* in mercy to us, **O God, And look well**, look intently, and with love as thou lookest, **on the face of thine Anointed. Jehovah of hosts! how happy the man**—who is like the good king whom thou hast now given to us—who, in presence of Sennacherib and all his hosts, has found that his **stronghold is in thee.**

But events move on. Our Levite has been once more in his office, and spent a happy day in Jehovah's service. And he seems to say: "How much better this than the life I have lived of late!" Prevented from going up to Jerusalem, owning no possessions among the tribes, and compelled, it may be, to do menial work for a piece of bread in the tents of the invading **foreigners**, he has felt all the humiliation of it, all the bitterness. Better this—better thus—a **thousand times** better! And then in the ecstasy of his joy, his soul rises up to his God, and dwells upon the fruitful theme of his perfections. **For a sun**—giving heat and light, knowledge and love; **and shield**—affording protection from foes without and foes within, is **Jehovah my God. Kindness and faithfulness he loveth**, because they exist in himself,

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and he would have them exist also in me; **kindness**, first, without which he would not have created and redeemed, **faithfulness** also, by virtue of which he fulfils his promises and keeps his covenant. **Grace and glory he giveth: grace**, now, to enable me to resist the enticements of sinners and the clamourings of selfishness, and so become **kind and faithful** like himself; and **glory**, hereafter, when he has completed and perfected my character. For, truly, character he seeks, and hence would teach me to **walk uprightly, perfectly, wholeheartedly, without blame**; and from such he **withholdeth no good thing**: least of all the **glory** of a perpetual, perfected, personal existence. And this is Biblical Immortality. To produce this, is the end of Divine Revelation; and the subjective instrument of its production being faith in a Perfect God, therefore, **O Jehovah of hosts,**—thyself that Perfect One—**how happy the man who trusteth in thee!**

PSALM 85.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Praise, Prayer and Prophecy lead up to the Reconciliation of Earth and Heaven.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Praise to Jehovah for what he has Already Done. Strophe II., vers. 4—7, Prayer for what Remains to be Done. Strophe III., vers. 8, 9, A Divine Word Sought by the Prophet. Strophe IV., vers. 10—13, The Final Reconciliation Announced.

[Lm.] Psalm.

1 Thou hast shewn favour, Jehovah, to thy land,
thou hast restored the fortunes[a] of Jacob,
2 Thou hast forgiven[b] the iniquity of thy people,
thou hast covered all their sin, Selah
3 Thou hast withdrawn all thine indignation,
thou hast turned thee from the glow of thine anger.

4 Restore us, O God of our salvation,
and break off thy vexation with us:
5 <To the ages> wilt thou be angry with us?
wilt thou prolong thine anger to generation and generation?
6 Wilt not ‖thou thyself‖ again give us life,
that ‖thy people‖ may rejoice in thee?
7 Shew us, Jehovah, thy kindness,
and <thy salvation> wilt thou give to us?

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[a] Or: "turned the captivity." | [b] Or: "taken away."

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8 Let me hear what the Mighty One[a] Jehovah will speak:
surely he will speak peace
unto his people,
and unto his men of kindness,
and unto such as turn their hearts unto him.[b]
9 Assuredly <near unto such as revere him> is his salvation,
so shall glory |abide| in our land.

10 ||Kindness and Truth|| have met together,
||Righteousness and Peace|| have kissed each other:
11 ||Truth|| <out of the earth> doth spring forth,
and ||Righteousness|| <out of the heavens> hath looked down:
12 Yea || Jehovah|| giveth that which is good,
and ||our land|| yieldeth her increase:
13 ||Righteousness|| <before him> marcheth along,
and ||Peace|| hath made a path of his steps.

[Nm.]

[a] Heb.: *hâ 'êl.* | [b] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

There is a marked difference between the Praise with which this psalm opens and the Prayer which follows thereon. The Praise says—**Thou hast withdrawn all thine indignation**: the Prayer says—**How long shall thine anger continue?** How is this apparent contradiction to be removed? Some critics have proposed a *time* solution, by rendering—**Thou hadst withdrawn it**; but (as it has returned again)—**How long shall it continue?** And this is a possible reconciliation; since a season of Divine favour may be followed by one of Divine displeasure, and under the displeasure the former favour may be pleaded as a reason for its restoration. But perhaps a *dramatic* solution may be more commended, by supposing two parties to be successively represented: first, those who are elated with what has already been done by restoring mercy, and who simply give thanks; and, second, those who are oppressed with the burden of what yet remains to be done, and who, in view of that, can scarcely believe that Jehovah's displeasure has yet been turned away. To the successive representation of these two classes—the optimists and the pessimists—the well-known antiphonal character of the Temple-worship would easily lend itself; and, after one Choir had offered the Praise, another might give expression to the Prayer, and thus both classes be assisted to address Jehovah in the language which lay nearest their hearts. Perhaps what chiefly commends this *dramatic* solution of the difficulty is, that it thus gives occasion for a prophetic soloist to intervene with

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a proposal to seek a new Divine word which shall meet the whole present situation—**Let me hear what the Mighty One, Jehovah, will speak**; and then, in turn, this solo, in form as well as effect, furnishes a strong lead up to what in any case must be regarded as the climax of the psalm. The soloist says in effect—"**Let me hear** a new Divine word to meet our present need, about which we so greatly differ"; and then, in ver. 10, the Divine Pronouncement begins—perhaps voiced by the united choirs—**Kindness and Faithfulness have met together.**

It is submitted that such a setting as this sends us back to what we have called the *prophetic solo* with new zest, to admire its comprehensive fulness: **Surely he will speak peace, well-being, prosperity** (*shalôm*); and that, with a graciously manifold inclusiveness, **unto his people,** Israel, as a whole; **And unto his men of kindness,** the Levites, in particular, in the centre of his people, to whom many promises await fulfilment (cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness"); **And**—thanks to Dr. Ginsburg for the regrouping of the Hebrew letters whereby we are enriched with this new clause—**unto such as turn their hearts unto him**; including, not only the Ten Tribes, but all in any nation who seek him, especially as the concluding description, **such as revere him,** is in the New Testament the favourite phrase for denoting the reverers of Israel's God lying on the outside of Israel. There is still another hint included in this significant solo which mightily helps us upwards to the high level of the coming climax; and it is found in the words—**So shall Glory abide in our land**; as to which, we could imagine how it would quiver on the lips of Hezekiah, Asaph, Micah and Isaiah in those days of intense excitement, when as yet the **Glory** of the Divine Presence had not departed! Right clearly then follows the climax at last, which assuredly lacks nothing of sublime beauty to render it worthy of being so regarded; namely, as the Divine Response to the Soloist's appeal. We seem to have reached a land of Beulah, in which Angels are hovering around. **Kindness and Faithfulness have met together**—as if after fulfilling divergent missions, or serving opposing interests—have met for friendly parlance at last. Yea **Righteousness**—if anything, sterner than "Faithfulness," and **Peace** if anything more serene and practical than "Kindness," have fallen into each other's embrace, **and kissed each other.** The harmony of divergencies, the reconciling of opposites, is the clear note struck, and far resounding. Full many a time when **Kindness** has cried, "Forgive!" **Faithfulness** has had to protest, "Punish! Thou hast threatened!" When **Righteousness** reminds that there can be no peace while wrongs continue, **Peace** meekly pleads that the

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wrongs be stayed, that evil be overcome of good. And here, see, these heavenly messengers embracing and kissing each other! There can be no mistaking the significance of the representation. But it may be thought: "Yea, as Divine Attributes these are all harmonisable in God." As if to check such a relinquishment of the human and practical, the figure is broken, and the personification of **Faithfulness** is dropped, for the express purpose of conveying the conception of the impartation of the Divine Quality of faithfulness to the hearts and lives of men. Divine faithfulness therefore now becomes a seed for earthly sowing and human growth—rapid, vigorous growth: **Faithfulness out of the earth doth spring forth.** No wonder that when this point is reached **Righteousness,** the sterner brother of Faithfulness, retaining his personality, the better to suit his intelligent survey of the fruitful earth, **looks down from heaven,** with satisfied and delighted gaze on the fair prospect. Nor is all this mere poetic sentimentality: it is spoken to a nation which for the sins of their souls were being punished by the overthrow of their houses and the trampling down of their soil by the hands and feet of invading hosts. And therefore, not to mock such a nation, in whose history the heavenly and the earthly have ever gone hand-in-hand, the advancing promise condescends upon temporalities, first in general terms, seeing that the words **that which is good** will include earthly blessings as well as heavenly, political as well as social; and seeing further that this inclusion of temporalities is further made certain by the specific promise, **And our land shall yield her increase.** The great Reconciling Promise then runs onward in the further proviso, **Righteousness before him**—our heavenly King—**marcheth along,** seeing that nothing less can please him, nothing less durst meet his face; **And Peace**—if so, with Briggs, we should respell the words—**And Peace hath made a path of his steps:** so that as in this inspection of his inheritance he shews himself to be, so all his servants must be also: they must become imitators of Him.

A splendid climax—a worthy ideal—a practical standard—an inspiring prophecy! Yet, alas! largely unfulfilled! "Glory" once essayed to dwell in the land; but there was no room for it: it was veiled, and by the majority it was mistaken for Shame! Such of us as have caught a glimpse of him, as the glory of the Father, feel that all holy Reconciliation lies embosomed in Him. His life and teaching, his Death and Resurrection, and Spirit-ministry from Heaven, have in them the potent charm of the embrace and kissing of Angels. And for the rest we are content to work and wait.

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PSALM 86.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Prayer of a Tried and Faithful Servant of Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—The Psalmist prays to be Heard and Answered and for his Life to be Preserved because of his Need (ver. 1), his Devotion and Trust (ver. 2), his Pleading (vers. 3, 4), Adonai's Goodness (vers. 5, 6), and Incomparable Character and Doings (ver. 8); which are So Great that All Nations will Come and Worship (vers. 9, 10). Pleading for Guidance, he Promises Praise (vers. 11, 12) and Bethinks him of a Past Rescue of His Life (ver. 13), which (life) seems to be Again in Danger from Insolent Foes (ver. 14): in view of whom he Pleads the Character of Jehovah as set forth in "THE REFRAIN of the Bible" (ver. 15). He Prays for Favour, Strength and Salvation, in view of his own Devotion and that of his Mother (ver. 16); asking for Such a Token as shall Shame his Enemies (ver. 17).

[Lm.] Prayer—By David.

1 Incline, Jehovah, thine ear, answer me;
for <humbled and needy> am |I|.[a]
2 Oh guard thou my life,[b] for <a man of kindness>[c] am |I|,
save thy servant ||thou, my God||—who turneth his trust unto thee.

3 Shew me favour, Sovereign Lord,[d]
for <unto thee> do I cry all the day:
4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant,
for <unto thee> Sovereign Lord, <my soul> do I lift.

5 For ||thou, Sovereign Lord||[e] art good, and ready to pardon,
and *abundant in kindness*, to all who cry unto thee.
6 O give ear, Jehovah, unto my prayer,
and oh attend unto the voice of my supplications.

7 <In my day of distress> I cry unto thee,
surely thou wilt answer me.
8 There is none like unto thee among messengers divine,[f] Sovereign Lord,
and there are none like thy works.[g]

9 ||All nations which thou hast made||
will come in, and bow down before thee, Sovereign Lord,[h]
and give glory to thy name;

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[a] Cp. 40^{17}, 70^{5}, 109^{22}: all ascribed, "To David."
[b] U.: "soul."
[c] Heb. *ḥasîdh* = receiving and reflecting kindness. "One whom thou lovest"—Kp., Per.; "Godly"—Dr., Del.; "Pious"—Br., Leeser, P.B.; "Devoted to thee"—Carter. N.B., no psalmist elsewhere makes this claim. Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness."
[d] Heb. *adonai*; and so—rendered "Sovereign Lord"—seven times in this psalm; "Jehovah" occurs four times. But here some cod. (w. 5 ear. pr. edns.): "thee Jehovah"—Gn.
[e] Some cod.: "thou Jehovah"—Gn.
[f] Or: "gods." But see Ps. 8^{5}. Heb. *'elohîm*.
[g] Or: "doings."
[h] Cp. 22^{27}.

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10 For <great> art |thou|, and a doer of wondrous things,
||thou|| art God alone.

11 Shew me, Jehovah, thy way, I would walk in thy truth:
let my heart |rejoice|[a] to revere thy name:
12 I would thank thee, Sovereign Lord my God, with all my heart,
and would fain glorify thy name to the ages.

13 For ||thy kindness|| is great over me,
and thou hast rescued my soul from the lower hades.[b]
14 O God, ||insolent men|| have risen up against me,
and ||a congregation of ruthless men||[c] have sought my soul,[d]
and have not set thee before them.

15 But ||thou, Sovereign Lord|| art *a God compassionate and gracious,*
slow to anger, and abundant in kindness and truth.[e]

16 Turn thou unto me, and be gracious unto me:
oh give thy strength unto thy servant,
and oh bring salvation to the son of thy handmaid.[f]

17 Work with me a token[g] for good,
that they who hate me |may see| and be put to shame,—
in that ||thou, Jehovah|| hast helped me and consoled me.

[CMm.] For the sons of korah.[h]

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[a] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. Cp. O.G. 402. M.T.: "Unite my heart": *i.e.*, concentrate its energies. But Sep., Syr., with other vowels, have, "*Let my heart rejoice*"—Dr.

[b] "The lowest part of the interior of the earth"—Del. "The nether Sheol"—Dr. "The nethermost Sheol"—Kp.

[c] Cp. 54^{3}.

[d] Or: "life"; but the word is *nephesh*, as in ver. 13.

[e] Cp. Exo. $34^{6.7}$. "The Refrain of the Bible"—Emp. Bible.

[f] Cp. 116^{16}.

[g] Or: "sign."

[h] Intro., Chap. II., 3.

EXPOSITION.

By the general consent of critics, this psalm is composite to such a degree as nearly to resolve itself into a mosaic, consisting of extracts from other scriptures; yet "even this psalm is not without a significance and beauty of its own"—Del. The psalmist is in a situation bearing considerable resemblance to that of David when persecuted by Saul. In other respects his position is like that of Hezekiah. The psalm is peculiar in having in it no fewer than seven occurrences of the Divine name *Adonai*, here rendered "Sovereign Lord" (as in $8^{1.9}$). It is notably distinguished by containing a prophecy of the gathering of all nations to worship. Although it takes note of mortal perils past and to come, there is a complete absence from it of pleadings for vengeance: the worst thing this wronged saint desires for his enemies is that they may be put to shame.

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PSALM 87.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Glorious Destiny of Zion as the Metropolis of the Nations.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Jehovah's Preferential Love for Zion Declared. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, The Glorious Things Spoken of Zion. A Chorus of Exultation.

[Lm.] Psalm—Song.

1 (2) <His foundation, on the Holy Mountains> 2Jehovah |loveth|,—[a]
the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3 ||Glorious things|| are spoken of thee, O city of God! Selah

4 "I will mention Rahab[b] and Babylon, as of them who know[c] me,
lo! Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia—||'This one|| was born there!'"
5 And <of Zion> it shall be said—||"One after another|| was born in her!"
and ||he himself|| will establish her as highest.[c]
6 ||Jehovah|| will record, when enrolling peoples, ||"This one|| was born
there." Selah

7 <As well singing as dancing>—||"All my fountains|| are in thee!"

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician. [CMm.] For dancings to responsive songs.

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[a] Or: (taking previous words as an abrupt heading) carry forward "Jehovah loveth" to next line.

[b] That is "Egypt," as in 89^{11}, Isa. 30^{7}, 51^{9}.

[c] Or: "acknowledge," as in 1^{6} and elsewhere.

[d] Cp. Deu. 26^{19}, 28^{1}.

EXPOSITION.

Two chief questions here present themselves: First, *what city* is this of which **glorious things** are said to be spoken? And, second, what is the *sum* of the glorious things affirmed of her?

I. The answer to the first question is easy, to the candid mind: The historical Jerusalem is the city meant,—whether regard be had to the name she bears, to the description given of her, to the countries with which she is here associated, or to the book in which the psalm is found. She is called **Zion**—one of the most familiar names of Jerusalem; she sits on **holy mountains**—a description of the hills of Palestine on which Jerusalem was built, and to no others; she is called **the city of God**, because Jehovah there took up his symbolical abode,

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and made her the seat of his Messianic King; she is brought into comparison with **the dwellings of Jacob**, as more loved than they,—**Jacob** being a favourite name borne by the nation of Israel; she is related here in the psalm to **Rahab** (Egypt), **Babylon, Philistia, Tyre**, and **Ethiopia**: nations known to have existed in the day of Jerusalem's ancient story and to have had dealings with the Hebrew nation. Add the fact, that this psalm is found in a collection of Israelitish songs, and the evidence is as complete as the most exacting could wish: That Jerusalem is the city engemmed in this psalm.—No objection can be raised against this conclusion, by merely alleging that the **glorious things** spoken of this **city of God** are *too glorious* ever to be made good of the earthly Jerusalem, unless we are quite sure that the glorious things are altogether beyond Jehovah's power and will to make her own. In fine, this psalm, if never yet fulfilled, itself implies that Jerusalem *has a future*;—and why should she not? Numerous concurrent prophecies plainly teach the same thing: implies that Jerusalem will be made *more glorious* in the future than in the past,—and why should she not? again, many prophecies point to the same conclusion.

II. What then is the *sum* of the **glorious things** spoken of Jerusalem?

1. Let us remember that we have here a word from Jehovah, the Living God, the God of all the earth: of whom we have lately read: "All nations which thou hast made will come in and bow down before thee, O Lord, and give glory to thy name; for great art thou, and a doer of wonders, Thou art God alone." It may be, then, that here we have an intimation of some of the "wonders" which he purposes to do for and with the nations of the earth.

2. A hint is here given, at the outset of this psalm, to expect something *fundamental* in Jehovah's dealings with Israel and the earth: **His foundation on the holy mountains Jehovah loveth.** "Foundation"—of *what?* Not of his Church; for that has no earthly foundation, and is not an earthly structure—its home is in the heavens. But of his *Kingdom*—yes; seeing that "the kingdom of the world" is to become "the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11[15]). The **foundation**—of his kingdom—**Jehovah loveth**; and that foundation is **Zion, the city of God.**

3. It is clear that pre-eminence of some kind is here reserved for **Zion.** Other places are mentioned as well as "Zion"; but there is a manifest intention to place "Zion" higher than the rest. **Egypt and Babylon** are described as **knowing** or even **acknowledging** Jehovah, and that is much. Nevertheless, it is not regarded as a special privilege to have been **born** in **Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre** or **Ethiopia.**

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It is quite the contrary with Zion. For, although Jehovah is represented as taking a census of the peoples in general, and thereby shewing an interest in them all, yet it is only when he comes to the names of certain individuals among the rest, that he exclaims—as if with the joy of a proprietor discovering his own property, or of a father detecting the names of his own children—**This one was born there.** That is, not "here" in Egypt (or, as the case may be); but **there**—in Zion. When, however, Zion herself is passed in review, the language is intentionally different: it is no longer "This one"; but, more sweepingly, (lit.) **Man and man = man after man = one after another —was born in her.** The *multiplication* of Zion's children is the least that can be intended: their *indefinite* multiplication, as in a series ever running on, may very well be meant, as many critics suppose. In this concrete and dramatic way the preference of "Zion" to all other cities is plainly shewn.

4. But we are not left to inference in concluding this intention to be dominant: the second half of ver. 5 appears to have been expressly intended to put this beyond doubt. If, with most critics, we render that clause, **He himself, the Most High, will establish her,**—it is still obvious that this is said of no other city or nation. Even then—taking the clause at its minimum value—it seems expressly designed to guard against the fear of Zion's supremacy being endangered by her very prosperity, by the very multiplication of her children: a natural fear, surely,—if such children are *adopted* children, that is, Gentile converts counted as citizens of Zion; in which case, it might be feared that, with so *many* adopted children scattered throughout the nations of the earth, Zion herself would be de-Zionised, and made nearly as much Gentile as any avowedly Gentile city. No! says this clause: **the Most High himself** will guard against that danger—will see to it that she does not lose the pre-eminence he designs her to have: He will **establish her in it.** So much, *at the least*, this clause means. But it is now submitted with confidence that, rightly rendered, it says more: it says—**And he himself will set her up (or establish her) as highest.** This point could scarcely have been missed if it had been observed that the same word (*'elyôn*) is not only employed of the Messianic King in David's line "Highest (*'elyôn*) of (or to) the kings of the earth" (89^{27}) but is actually twice used of Israel *as a nation* in Deu. 26^{19}, 28^{1}—"Jehovah (hath avowed) that he will set thee (*'elyôn*) on high, above all the nations of the earth." There can therefore be no reasonable doubt, especially if the order of the words here in the psalm is considered—that this clause should be rendered: **And he himself will establish her as highest:** namely, he will do that which the psalm as

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a whole attests to be his purpose; and so he will guard against the danger of Zion's being lowered by the very multiplication of her citizen-converts. Jehovah intends her to be **highest**; and will take care that his intention in this respect is not frustrated.

5. But the more clearly this leading point in the psalm is discriminated, the more urgent does it become to grasp with firmness and tenacity a position already taken in passing: namely, that this psalm fully and directly, in its length and breadth, relates, not to the Church of Jesus, but more broadly to the Kingdom of God. For, let it be well observed, there is neither Jew nor Gentile in the Church; and, in the Church, certainly no such pre-eminence can be assigned to the *literal Zion* as is here assigned to her. Let us make up our minds. Does membership in the Church of Christ constitute us citizens of the earthly Jerusalem? So few will dare to say "Yes" to this question, that they may safely be disregarded. Practically, all Christians, with one voice, admit and proclaim that *our* "new birth" makes us citizens, not of the earthly Jerusalem, but of the heavenly. To abide by that conclusion, is no doubt to cut ourselves logically free from this psalm, since, as we have seen, IT unmistakably refers to the earthly Jerusalem. To be firm here, is to lose nothing of value, forasmuch as we can still use the psalm *by analogy* as a suggestion of things in the heavens. But, while we shall lose nothing of value, we shall lose much that is an encumbrance, apt to lead us continually into contradicting our heavenly standing and privileges. On the other hand, our gain will be immense: the Church of Christ being safe in her own New Testament rights, as based upon her peculiar promises, we can look beyond the completion of the present Church into the Kingdom which is to follow; and see a large territory of blessing in those regions beyond; and humbly claim a general right to those blessings in the name of our Heavenly Lord, who owns earth as well as heaven; and is the Redeemer of Israel and Jerusalem's King-elect, as well as Head of his Ecclesia.

6. With the ground thus cleared of misconception, we can rejoice exceedingly in the prospect of blessings, in the coming Kingdom, which thus opens out before us. Jerusalem, restored—to her God, to her Messiah, to her Land—thus becomes the spiritual Metropolis of the peoples that are spared to enter into this latter-day comity of nations. Citizens of the honoured city Jerusalem will be found scattered through the nations. Jerusalem will be their spiritual home: frequently will these citizen converts go up to Jerusalem to worship: the mountain of the Lord's House—the Temple restored—will be lifted up above the hills, and all nations will flow unto it. The Messiah will reign there:

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his will—his law—his instructions for the guidance of the nations—will be made known there, and propagated from thence. To fill out the picture would require the transcription of the prophecies in Isaiah and elsewhere. See especially Isa. 2^{2-4}, 4^{2-6}, 19^{21-24}, 25^{6-9}, 54, 60, 66^{7-22}; Zeph. 3^{14-20}: with respect to which it should be observed—that they have only to be taken in their natural and obvious sense to suit them for being set in the frame-work which this psalm affords:—"their natural and obvious sense"—as opposed on the one hand to the purely allegorical and prematurely spiritualised interpretation, from which nothing comes out as it goes in, nothing really means what it appears to mean; and, on the other hand, as opposed to the *slavishly* literal, which, for example, insists that this enumeration of nations (in Ps. 87) must be pressed just as it stands, although it had of necessity to be fitted to the time when the psalm was composed, and be intelligible then, and that it may not be taken as indicating generally the larger and smaller nations by whom Zion is surrounded in the latter day. Holding thus to "the natural and obvious sense" of this psalm, and of the prophecies which properly go with it and explain it,—we can enter with appreciation into the concluding verse of the psalm.

7. Though other interpretations have been put upon ver. 7, the following appears to be its meaning. We are allowed to catch a glimpse of a procession of Zion's citizens—if of such as ordinarily dwell in foreign lands so much the better—drawing near to enter into her **gates.** They are full of joy: they **sing** and **play** and **dance** as they move along. And, looking to the city before them, they exclaim in their song, each speaking for himself: "All my fountains are in thee"—"all my sources of privilege, all my springs of delight **are in thee, O city of God.**" "Better than **the dwellings of Jacob,** better than our homes in **Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia,** where we commonly live and labour,—better far than all these, art thou, **O Zion,** object of Jehovah's especial love!"

Logically, we thus close the psalm: analogically we still, for a moment, linger over it. This earthly Jerusalem reminds us of the heavenly; and it is the heavenly that is "our mother" (Gal. 4^{26}). Just as the earthly Jerusalem is constituted the Metropolis of the earth, so the heavenly Jerusalem is constituted the Metropolis of earth and heaven, brought into a higher unity, including angels and men. We who are now being born from above, are enrolled in Heaven (Heb. 12^{23}); we are called to become the Bride of the Lamb: all the rights and possessions of our espoused Lord are to be made our own. He is the Son of God as well as the Son of David; and therefore *we* are to "inherit all things." The earthly enrolment lingers: the heavenly is

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proceeding. Earth, for the present, has refused her King; but Heaven has given him welcome (Acts 3^{21}); and now, for the present, the heavenly advance has taken the precedence of the earthly. Instead of looking forward into the future to discover *our* Mother-city, *we* look straight up into the skies, and there by faith we behold her, with open arms waiting to receive us. And, as we look up, we exclaim with ecstasy—**All my fountains**—God, Christ, the Spirit, angels, the heirship of the Universe—**all my fountains are in thee.**

PSALM 88.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Anguished Cry of one Smitten and Forsaken.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Urgent Prayer to be Heard. Strophes II., III., IV., V., vers. 3, 4; 5; 6, 7; 8, 9, The Sufferer Pleads his Pitiable Case. Strophe VI., vers. 10—12, The Incapacity of the Dead to know God's Mercies and Praise Him. Strophes VII., VIII., vers. 13—15; 16—18, Prayer Renewed and Continued, with Further Pleadings urged.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By Heman the Ezrahite.

1 Jehovah, God of my salvation!
<by day>[a] I make outcry—[yea] in the night in thy presence.[b]
2 Let my prayer |come in before thee|,
Incline thine ear to my piercing[c] cry.

3 For <sated with misfortune> is my soul,
and ||my life|| <at hades> hath arrived:
4 I am reckoned with them who are going down to the pit,
I have become like a man without help.[d]

5 <Among the dead> am I free,[e]
like the slain who are lying in the grave,—
whom thou rememberest no longer,
since ||they|| <away from thy hand> are cut off.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lower pit,
in dark places, in the gulfs:[f]
7 <Upon me> |hath pressed down| thy wrath,
and <with all thy breakers> hast thou caused humiliation.

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[a] M.T. (prob. by losing a letter): "When."
[b] "Read probably with very slight changes,—'Jehovah, my God, I cry for help by day, (and) in the night my calling is before thee'"—Dr.
[c] Ml.: "ringing." "Yell"—Br.
[d] "Without God"—Br.
[e] "That is, adrift, cut off from Jehovah's remembrance"—O.G. Some read: "is my soul."
[f] Or: "deeps." "Dense darkness" (transp. letters)—Br.

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8 Thou hast far removed my familiar friends from me,
thou hast made me an abomination unto them,—
shut up, and I cannot come forth.
9 ||Mine eye|| hath languished by reason of humiliation,
I have cried unto thee through every day;
I have spread out unto thee my palms:—

10 <"For the dead> wilt thou do a wonder,
or shall ||the shades|| arise, give thee thanks?[a]
11 Shall thy kindness |be told in the grave|,
thy faithfulness in destruction![b]
12 Shall a wonder of thine |be made known in the dark|,
and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"

13 But ||I|| <unto thee, Jehovah> have cried for help,
and <in the morning> |my prayer| cometh to meet thee.
14 |Why|, Jehovah, rejectest thou my soul,
hidest thy face from me?
15 <Humbled> have |I| been, and ready to breathe my last from my youth up,
I have borne the terror of thee, and am benumbed.[c]

16 <Over me> have passed thy bursts of burning anger,[d]
||Thine alarms|| have exterminated me:
17 They have surrounded me, like waters, all the day,
they have come circling against me together.
18 Thou hast put far from me lover and companion,
||my familiar friends|| are—darkness![e]

[CMm.] For the sons of korah.[f]

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[a] Cp. 6^5 n.
[b] Heb. *'abaddon*; only in Job 26^6, 28^{22}, 31^{12}; Ps. 88^{11}; Prov. 15^{11}, 27^{20}; "Place of ruin in Sheol for lost or ruined dead"—O.G.
[c] "I must be distracted"—Del. "I endure, I am brought low, I am turned backward"—Br.
[d] "Thy fires of wrath"—Del.
[e] Some cod. (w. Syr.): "restraint"—Gn.
[f] See Intro., Chapter II., 3.

EXPOSITION.

This is the gloomiest psalm in the book, and one of the most touching; if not, also, one of the most encouraging—when all things are considered. It is an elaborate description of almost hopeless sorrow; but its spirit is peculiarly gentle and patient. It contains no reproaches of men, and no upbraidings of God. The sufferings portrayed are not traced to man's infliction, but exclusively to the Divine hand; and yet the psalmist does not speak against God, far less does he turn away from him. He still clings to him,—it may be with a slender hope, but with evident tenacity. His hope is inarticulate; for he does not once say what it is he hopes for. Evidently he wishes not to die; and yet the life he has been living appears, from his own description of it, to have been little better than a living death—from

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which he might not unnaturally have desired to be freed once for all. But no! he unmistakably clings to life; and,—on the principle that, while there is life there is hope, we may fairly infer that restoration to health is tacitly included in his longing.

What is his affliction? Almost certainly, it is leprosy. With this agrees his separation from his **friends**, which he most bitterly feels; and his assertion that he has become to them **an abomination**. His separation from his friends involves confinement: he is **shut up**, and **cannot, must not, go forth**. This separation moreover is complete. They treat him **as dead**—are every day expecting to hear of his decease. They hold no communication with him. His leprosy is of long standing: it has plagued him **from his youth up**. Yet it seems to have fluctuated in intensity; coming back on him like surging **fire**, like returning **breakers**, by their violence ready to dash him in pieces. Connecting—as he does and as was commonly done in his day, especially in this disease—his affliction with the punitive hand of God, he terms the renewed onsets of his trouble **bursts of Divine anger**. They are alarming, from them there is no escape. Full many a time he has given himself up for lost—has, to his feeling, been **exterminated**. He is at **death's door** now: he has anticipated being dead—being in **hades**—nay being in the **lower** hades: among those cast off and down into the **lower pit of hades**, among the especial objects of Divine **indignation**.

And yet he prays. He has been accustomed to pray every day; and especially of a morning: **in the morning my prayer** regularly **cometh to meet thee**—on thine approach in the daylight. And though, as regularly as he prays, he is rejected, still he prays.

And truly he has prayed to some purpose—to better purpose than he knows. This we have already seen in his restraining himself from reproaching either man or God; but we have yet to see it in the tenor of his prayer as he stands before Jehovah with uplifted palms (vers. 10—12). He prays against Death: but why? What is the predominating motive pervading these six sustained interrogatories? *Why* does he pray against death? Self may run through all—this was inevitable; but self never once comes to the surface: it is Jehovah, his perfections and works; the fear that Jehovah should lack his due praise; these are the sentiments which animate these questions. They take for granted that such grounds for praise exist: that Jehovah is a **doer of wonders**, one who deserves **thanks**; a God of **kindness** and **faithfulness** and **righteousness**, manifested in such acts as can be enumerated and remembered. The psalmist clearly craves to take part in such thanks and praise. He may even be credited with a hope of adding to the sum of reasons for

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such praise by his own improved and brightened history. At all events, this is the sustained feeling which inspires this series of interrogations. He may be right, or he may be wrong, in assuming that such praise cannot be given by the dead—by the shades—in the grave, in destruction, in the dark, in the land of forgetfulness. At least, that is the view he entertains,—the groundwork of his conclusions; and he is anxious that his God should not be robbed of the praise due to him. And, therefore, on all grounds—because he incriminates neither man nor God for his lifelong sufferings, and also because he desires God to be praised—we conclude that he has not prayed in vain.

Probably he was not wholly wrong in assuming that God can gather no harvest of praise from the dead; that is, from the dead so long as they continue dead. What he needed was, to have "life and incorruption brought to light"—to have the prospect of Resurrection introduced into his thoughts, and therewith the conception of a revival of memory and a resumption of praise. Whether, to us who live after "life and incorruption" have been disclosed in Christ, there comes a double relief,—not only the prospect of an end to the hadean state and light at the end, but a decided lessening of the intermediate gloom, is an interesting question. It is hard to think that those ancient saints, so favourably commended to our respect as this great sufferer, were wholly wrong. They may have been nearly right as far as they were able to go. Right: if they thought of death only as a suspense of active memory and of public praise; the which, combined, do not amount to a final cessation of being,—an extreme view which few if any saints of old entertained, certainly as regards such as revered God. But always deficient: so long as they failed to grasp the prospect of a complete restoration to life, and therewith the revival of active memory and the resumption of the delightful duty of public praise. It is suggested, that, along lines such as these, a complete harmonisation of Old Testament and New may, after the vacillation and oscillation of centuries, be reasonably expected to come. Meantime it is permitted us to hope, that this ancient psalmist, who suffered so much and knew so little, has already become conscious of Messiah's triumph over death, and has the prospect —if not yet the realisation—of sharing therein. So chastened a sufferer as Heman the Ezrahite will assuredly "stand in his lot at the end of the days."

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PSALM 89.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Covenant with David Contrasted with the Present Dishonour of David's Heir.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, The Keynotes of the psalm—Jehovah's Kindness and Faithfulness. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Brief Summary of Jehovah's Covenant with David. Strophes III.—VII., vers. 5—14, The Character, Court Works and Dominion of the Covenant God. Strophes VIII., IX., vers. 15—18, The Happy Estate of the Covenant People. Strophes X.—XIX., vers. 19—37, The Provisions of the Covenant, Poetically and Prophetically Amplified. Strophes XX.—XXIII., vers. 38—45, The Dishonour Permitted to David's Heir Pathetically Described. Strophes XXIV., XXV., vers. 46—51, Remonstrance against the Continuance of this Dishonour, urged by the Shortness and Vanity of Life, the Certainty of Death, the Memory of Former Kindnesses, and the Unanswerable Insults heaped on David's Heir—Jehovah's Anointed.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By Ethan the Ezrahite.

1 <The kindnesses of Jehovah> <to the ages> let me sing,
<to generation after generation> let me make known thy faithfulness with my mouth.
2 For I have said[a]—<"To the ages> shall kindness be built up,
‖the heavens‖—thou wilt establish thy faithfulness therein."

3 "I have solemnised a covenant for my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
4 <'Unto the ages> will I establish thy seed,
and will build up, to generation after generation, thy throne.'"

5 And the heavens |will confess|[b] thy wonder, O Jehovah,
yea ‖thy faithfulness‖ in the assembly of thy holy ones.
6 For whom, in the skies, can one compare to Jehovah?
can liken to Jehovah, among the sons of the mighty?[c]

7 A GOD inspiring awe[d] in the great circle of the holy ones,
and to be feared above all who are round about him.
8 Jehovah, God of hosts! who <like thee> is potent, O Yah?
with thy tokens of faithfulness surrounding thee?

9 ‖Thou‖ rulest the proud swelling of the sea,[e]
<when its waves rise high> ‖thou‖ stillest them.
10 ‖Thou‖ didst crush—as one deadly wounded—Rahab,
<with thy strong arm> thou didst scatter thy foes.

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[a] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "thou saidst"—Gn. Following this reading, some begin the Divine speech here, with the necessary changes.
[b] Or: "celebrate" (so Dr.).
[c] Or: "God." Heb.: *'élim*.
[d] Or: "fear-inspiring."
[e] "It is Thou that tamest the insolence of the sea"—Del.

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11 <Thine> are the heavens, yea <thine> the earth,
<the world and its fulness> ||thou|| didst found them:
12 <North and south> ||thou|| didst create them,
||Tabor and Hermon|| <in[f] thy name> ring out their joy.

13 <Thine> is an arm [endued] with might,
thou strengthenest thy hand, exaltest thy right hand:
14 ||Righteousness and justice|| are the foundation of thy throne,
||kindness and truth|| come to meet thy face.

15 |How happy| the people who know the sacred shout!
Jehovah! <in the light of thy face> they firmly march along,[g]
16 <In thy name> they exult all the day,
and <in thy righteousness> are they exalted.[h]

17 For <the beauty of their strength>[i] art |thou|,
and <by thy favour> thou exaltest our horns;[j]
18 For <to Jehovah> belongeth our shield,
and <to the Holy One of Israel> our king.

19 ||Then|| spakest thou in vision, to thy men[k] of kindness, and didst say:—
"I have laid help[l] on a hero,
I have exalted one chosen from the people.

20 "I have found David, my servant,
<with my holy oil> have I anointed him:
21 With whom |my hand| shall be established,
yea, ||mine own arm|| shall strengthen him.

22 "An enemy |shall not make exactions| of him,
nor ||a son of perversity|| humiliate him:
23 But I will shatter, from before him, his adversaries,
and <them who hate him> will I smite.

24 "And ||my faithfulness and my kindness|| shall be with him,
and <through my name> shall his horn |be exalted|;
25 And I will set, on the sea, his hand,
and <on the rivers>[m] his right-hand.

26 ||"He|| shall cry out to me—<'My father> art |thou|,
my GOD, and my rock of salvation.'
27 ||I|| also will grant him to be ||first-born||,
most high,[n] to the kings of the earth.

28 <"To the ages> will I keep for him my kindness,
and ||my covenant|| is made sure to him;
29 And I will appoint, to futurity, his seed,
and ||his throne|| as the days of the heavens.

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[f] "At"—Dr., Del.
[g] "Said of walking along in a self-assured, solemn manner"—Del.
[h] *Gt.*: "they ring out their joy."
[i] "Their strength, which turns out, proves, to be their ornament"—Del.
[j] So (pl.) in many MSS., and in 4 ear. pr. edns.; but "horn" (sing.) in 7 ear. pr. edns.—Gn.
[k] So (pl.) in many MSS., 3 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Vul.: but "man" (sing.) in some cod., w. 7 ear. pr. edns.—Gn.
[l] *Gt.*: "a crown" (cp. 132^{18}); or "strength"—Gn.
[m] "A poetic generalisation of the 'River' (i.e., the Euphrates); cp. Exo. 23^{31} and Ps. 72^{8}"—Dr.
[n] Cp. 87^{5}.

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30 <"If his sons |forsake| my law,
and <in my regulations> do not walk:
31 If <my statutes> they profane,
and <my commandments> do not keep>

32 "Then will I visit with a rod their transgression,
and <with strokes>[o] their iniquity;
33 But <my kindness> will I not break off[p] from him,
nor falsify my faithfulness.

34 "I will not violate my covenant,
nor <that which hath issued out of my lips> will I change.
35 <One thing> have I sworn by my holiness,
surely <unto David> will I not be false:—

36 ||"His seed|| <to the ages> shall remain,
and his throne be as the sun before me:
37 <As the moon> be established to the ages,
and ||the witness in the skies|| is faithful." Selah

38 Yet ||thou thyself|| hast cast off and rejected,
thou hast been indignant with thine Anointed:
39 Thou hast spurned the covenant of thy servant,
thou hast profaned to the ground his crown.

40 Thou hast broken down all his fences,
thou hast laid all his fortresses in ruins:
41 All the passers by the way |have plundered him|,
he hath become a reproach to his neighbours.

42 Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries,
hast gladdened all his enemies:
43 Yea thou turnest back the edge of his sword,
and hast not made him stand in the battle.

44 Thou hast made him lose his lustre,[q]
and <his throne> <to the ground> hast thou hurled:
45 Thou hast shortened the days of his youth,
thou hast wrapped him about with shame. Selah

46 How long Jehovah wilt thou hide thyself utterly?
[how long] shall thy wrath |burn like fire|?
47 Remember, Sovereign Lord,[r] what duration is,
<for what unreality> hast thou created all the sons of men![s]
48 Who is the man that shall live and not see death,
that shall deliver his soul from the hand of hades? Selah

49 Where are thy former kindnesses, Sovereign Lord,
which thou didst swear to David in thy faithfulness?

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[o] "Scourges"—Del. N.B., the word associated with leprosy: Lev. 13, 14; 2 Sam. 7^{14}, Pss. 38^{11} (note), 39^{10}.

[p] Some cod. (w. Aram., Syr.): "take away." Cp. 2 Sam. 7^{15}.—Gn.

[q] By emendation: "Thou hast taken away the sceptre of majesty"—Br.

[r] So several critics, by supplying a letter. "O remember how short my time is"—Dr. "Remember I—how short my time is!"—Del. "Of what duration I am"—O.G.

[s] Or: "Adam."

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50 Remember, Sovereign Lord, the reproach of thy servants,[t]
I have put in my bosom the insult[u] of the peoples:
51 Wherewith thine enemies |have reproached|, O Jehovah,
wherewith they have reproached the footsteps[v] of thine Anointed!

<Blessed> be Jehovah, to the ages![w]
Amen and Amen!

[Nm.]

[t] Some cod. (w. Syr.): "servant" (sing.)—Gn.
[u] So it shd. be (w. Aram.). Cp. Eze. 36[15]—Gn.
[v] "Pursue and persecute him, wherever he goes and whatever he does"—Del.
[w] Ml.: "to concealed duration."

EXPOSITION.

It is not difficult for the patient and thorough reader to grasp the scope of this psalm; but very easy for anyone perusing it in haste to miss its great argument, owing to the length of the psalm, and to the extraordinary development given to the Covenant made with David—a development so enthusiastic and long sustained as scarcely to suggest that a companion picture is to follow towards the close of the psalm, one of deep gloom, to which all the previous dazzling brightness is intended to serve as a mere foil. At the lowest estimate, this long delay to reveal the true object of the poem, springs from the consummate art of the poet: at the higher estimate of Divine intention, it suggests that there is more of the Plan of Redemption wrapped up in the Davidic Covenant than Gentile Christians are apt to suppose. Be that as it may, under patient observation this psalm discloses not only its high poetic merit, but the power of its pleading viewed as an Intercession, in behalf of the now Dishonoured Heir of David's Throne.

After striking the Keynotes of the psalm—Jehovah's Kindness and Faithfulness (vers. 1, 2)—around which all the psalmist's pleadings revolve, and to the express mention of which a return is made as far on as ver. 49; and after, in vers. 3, 4, briefly summing up the Davidic covenant as made known through Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 7),—the psalmist then (vers. 5—14) eloquently enlarges on the incomparable excellences of the Covenant God, as known in heaven and on earth, as shewn in Israel's history and displayed in Palestine, bringing this description to a climax by presenting as a bright constellation the four fundamental Divine attributes of **righteousness, justice, kindness** and **faithfulness.** He then (vers. 15—18) by a natural transition passes to the enviable **happiness** of a people having such a God as their God;

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inferring their joy in worship, the strength of their national movements, and their sense of security under their **king**, who is to them Jehovah's **shield**. From this second climax, the poet moves forward into an elaborate amplification of the Davidic Covenant (vers. 19—37), taking especial care to emphasise its perpetual and unalterable character, by detailing the Divine provision made for punishing unworthy heirs to the Davidic Throne without abrogating the Covenant which secures it to David's seed in perpetuity. From the past and the normal, the psalmist now (vers. 38—45) passes to the abnormal and perplexing present. It is true he does not charge God with folly, nor at any point assert that Jehovah was shewing himself unfaithful to his covenant; but he goes as far in this direction as reverence permitted leaving no feature of the pitiable condition of David's present son unnamed. Indeed the picture given of the existing heir is very pathetic: especially if, with many, we think of him as being the young king Jehoiakim, who, after reigning only three months in Jerusalem, was carried away to Babylon. And if, in addition to his youth, he was apparently virtuous and promising, and had already drawn forth the affections of his people, the pathos of this description becomes unspeakably touching.

It is natural enough that such a description of present calamity should issue in expostulation and entreaty that such an anomalous state of things should be ended; but we are scarcely prepared to find the shortness and vanity of life and the inevitableness of death brought into the pleading. In truth, there seems something flickering and uncertain in many O.T. references to this subject, as we realised when studying Pss. 39, 49, and others; and we can never be thankful enough for the clearer light which we now enjoy. We have forgotten, or have never realised, what it is to be shut up, as these ancient saints seem to have been, to the apprehension that *now or never* must the great promises of God be fulfilled.

A final word as to the extraordinary importance which this psalm attaches to the Covenant made with David. How best can we bring ourselves into sympathy with the undeniable fact, that such importance is attached to it? Is it enough to say that Jesus of Nazareth, whom we recognise as Son and Heir of David, has redeemed these lapsed promises? Or must we not go a step further, and discover in the Davidic Covenant provisions which, though now in abeyance, are awaiting a plenary fulfilment in the very region to which they appear to belong;—in a kingdom not *of* this world but nevertheless *in* it and *for* it, in which the Messiah shall in undeniable fact be **Most High to the kings of the earth**?

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THE PSALMS.

BOOK THE FOURTH.[a]

PSALM 90.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Prayer Against the Dominion of Death.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, A Foundation for Prayer, sought in the Proved Kindness and Abiding Might of the Sovereign Lord. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, The Theme of the Psalm: a Two-fold Return. Strophe III., vers. 5—12, The Dominion of Death; described mainly in its Divine Appointment, and its Origin in Human Sin and Divine Displeasure; and calling forth a Transitional Prayer for Divine Guidance, How to Number our Days. Strophe IV., vers. 13—17, A Plea for the Overthrow of Death's Dominion.

[Lm.] Prayer—By Moses, the Man of God.

1 Sovereign Lord!
<a dwelling place>[b] hast ||thou thyself|| become to us,
in generation after generation.
2 <Before |mountains| were born,
or ever were brought forth the earth and the world—
yea, from age even unto age>
|Thou| art the MIGHTY ONE.

3 Thou causest man to return even unto atoms,[c]
and (then) sayest—"Return! ye sons of men."[d]
4 For ||a thousand years in thine eyes||
are like yesterday when about to pass away,
or a watch in the night.

5 Thou didst flood them away with a rain-storm—<a sleep> they become,
<In the morning> they are <like grass> which sprouteth again,—
6 <In the morning> it blossometh—and hath sprouted again,
<by the evening> it is cut down—and hath withered!

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[a] See Table II., *ante*.
[b] So M.T. (*ma'on*), as in 91[9]. Some cod. (w. Sep. Vul.): "refuge" (*ma'oz*), as in 27[1], 28[8], 31[5, 4], Isa. 25[4], Joel 3[16], Na. 1[7].
[c] So Driver. "Dust (as pulverised)"—O.G.
[d] "Again thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men."—P.B.V.

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7 For we waste away in thine anger,
and <in thy wrath> are we dismayed:
8 Thou dost set our iniquities before thee,
our secret, near the lamp[a] of thy face.

9 For ||all our days|| decline,
<in thy wrath> we end our years;
(10) <Like a murmured meditation> are 10 the days of our years:[b]
<in them are seventy years,
or <if in full strength> eighty years;
Yet ||their extent||[c] is travail and trouble,—
for it passeth quickly, and we have flown away.
11 Who can know the strength of thine anger,
or whether <like the fear of thee> is thy wrath?

12 <How to number our days> |so| make thou known,
that we may get[d] a mind that hath wisdom.

13 Oh return thou, Jehovah!—how long?
and have compassion concerning thy servants:
14 Satisfy us, in the morning,[e] with thy kindness,
that we may ring out our joy and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad, according to the days thou hast humbled us,
||the years|| we have seen misfortune:
16 Shew, unto thy servants, thy work,[f]
and ||thy majesty||[g] upon their children.[h]

17 And let the delightfulness of the Sovereign Lord our God be upon us,
and <the work of our hands> oh establish thou upon us,—
yea <the work of our hands> establish thou it.

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "luminary."
[b] The words of these three lines are redistributed for better balance.
[c] M.T.: "pride." More probably (reading *rḥb* instead *rhb*): "width, extent"—O.G.
[d] Ml.: "bring in" (i.e. from the field of our study).
[e] Or: "early."
[f] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "works"—Gn.
[g] Or: "state."
[h] Cp. Isa. 4[4-6].

EXPOSITION.

That **Moses the Man of God**, the Leader of Israel out of Egypt, did write this psalm according to the inscriptional headline, is strongly confirmed by internal evidence, especially by the lonely sublimity and strong originality of the psalm; and nearly all the objections against such authorship are met by carrying back the time of its composition to the close of Moses' sojourn in Midian, instead of assuming that he wrote it at the end of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. This modification of the opinion which adheres to the Mosaic authorship, not only removes the difficulty of supposing that Moses wrote of

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seventy or eighty years as the common length of human life when he himself was *nearly a hundred and twenty*, but fully accounts for the absence of any allusion to the Exodus and the marvellous incidents of the journey through the desert. Not only so, but this slight shifting back of the presumed time of authorship intensifies the cry of the writer, **How long?** (ver. 13), by placing behind it, not merely *forty* years' seeming delay, but nearly *four hundred*. It is not likely that, in sight of Canaan, Moses would have said, "How long?" when he very well knew that the crossing of the Jordan could not be much longer delayed; whereas, at the close of nearly forty years' waiting in Midian, and still no commission received *to go and deliver Israel*,—nothing could have been more natural than so to express himself respecting the threatening flight of years. **Let thy work appear!** would come with a hundred-fold more force from his pen when the first step in that "work" had not as yet been taken by the Divine Deliverer, than it would when a substantial and irreversible portion of that "work" like that of the Exodus had already been accomplished.

A FOUNDATION LAID FOR PRAYER (Strophe I., vers. 1, 2).—Most appropriately does the Divine governmental name *'Adonai*, **Sovereign Lord,** stand as the first word in a psalm which touches some of the weightiest problems in the Divine government of mankind. **A dwelling-place** comes with peculiar pathos from a homeless sojourner belonging to a homeless race. A sense of being at home with God, impresses the writer with the Divine kindness in drawing so near to him; and at the same time brings him into conscious fellowship with the men of the past to whom the Sovereign Lord had in like manner drawn near: hence, most comprehensively, he says: **A dwelling-place hast thou thyself become to us in generation after generation.** This is indeed a broad stepping-stone to prayer, which plants Moses, the Exile, beside Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other men spiritually akin, and comprehended under the uniting pronoun **our: our dwelling-place.** A sojourner among the **mountains** of Arabia, who, guided by the sacred books in his possession, had many times pondered on the birth of the world, finds it natural to go back—behind the race of believing servants of the Sovereign Lord to which he belongs—to the contemplation of the **Mighty One** Himself whose existence antedates both men and mountains: **Before Mountains were born, Or ever were brought forth the earth and the world** (THEN Thou wast, as Thou art still) **the Mighty One.** But, instead of taking two sentences to say the two things (**wast—art**), the writer,—taking advantage of the Hebrew custom of merely implying the verb "to be",—crowds into one sentence what might have made two: **Thou wast—Thou art.** Before

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the mountains were born, &c., thou wast 'El, the Mighty One. Yea, from *'olam* to *'olam*—from æon to æon—from concealed time in the past to concealed time in the future—or (more simply) from age to age, thou art 'El, the Mighty One: the father of all existing things, yea also the father of all coming times. Thus broad and firm is a foundation here laid for prayer.

THE THEME OF THE PSALM (Strophe II., vers. 3, 4.)—**Thou causest man to return even unto atoms, And (then) sayest—"Return ye sons of men"** (ver. 3). Are there here two **returns**, or is there only one? Is there first a "return" *to* dust, and then a "return" *from* dust? In other words, are the two clauses of which the verse is composed to be regarded as synonymous, both saying substantially the same thing; or as consecutive? With some confidence we reply, "consecutive." There are two "returns." The first clause expresses a "return" *to* dust; and the second, a "return" *from* dust. But the difference in result is so great as to lead us to ask how we may be sure which construction to prefer. Now there are two leading indications to guide us: first, the relation of these two clauses to each other, and then the connection between this verse and the next. First, as to the relation between the two clauses to each other: notice that the former clause expresses a fact, or states a Divine act, simply something done—**Thou causest**, &c.; whereas the latter tells, not of something done, but of something said, a Divine word or decree: **Thou sayest—Return.** Mark this well: first a Divine act, then a Divine decree. Now, is it likely that they would stand in this order, if they both referred to the same thing? Is it not more probable that they would have stood in the reverse order,—first the decree, and then the act carrying out the decree? Would it not seem very awkward to represent God as first doing the act—inflicting death, and then passing the decree calling for the infliction. The very order of the clauses, therefore, already makes for the conclusion that there are two "returns" in the verse—one return executed, and then another decreed. But there is a second indication to help us; and that is, the connection between this third verse and the one which immediately follows it—the fourth. Evidently, there is a connection between the two, and that a logical connection; seeing that ver. 4 opens with the important logical link **For**, thus shewing that the fourth verse gives a *reason* for the third. Hence, if we can seize upon the nature of this connection, we may hope to obtain further guidance as to how the point before us should be decided: namely, whether ver. 3 speaks of two "returns" or of only one. What then, let us ask, is the general sense of ver. 4 when put into simple language? That general

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sense is plainly this: *That a long time in God's sight is like a very short time in ours.* Such being the case, Does that sense of ver. 4 make for two "returns," or for only one, in ver. 3? Let us try these issues one by one. Assume that there is but one "return" in ver. 3—that it speaks of the return to dust and nothing more; and then how does our "For" carry us forward: "Thou hast inflicted death on man, Because 'a long time in thy sight is as a short time in ours'"? What reason is there in that? There is none, that we can discover. What has length of time—longer or shorter—to do with the one fact or process of inflicting death? It has no relation, that we can see. The infliction of death is going steadily on, occasioning no such sense of *delay* as to call for any explanation. Therefore, if *only* the infliction of death is comprehended in ver. 3, ver. 4 is wholly irrelevant. Now let us try the second issue, by asking: If there are two "returns" intended in ver. 3, will that create a sufficient sense of delay, as to make welcome the soothing consideration supplied by ver. 4? Obviously it will; seeing that, by including two great Divine processes, the second of which has scarcely if at all been begun, it instinctively calls forth the reflection: "Yes! but *what a long time* such a double process bids fair to demand: a first process of causing man to return to dust is itself filling ages; but the second process—bringing mankind back from the dust—why, it has not yet commenced. **How long** will it be ere it is begun? How much longer, before it is finished? Just the very feeling to which the consideration in ver. 4 is fitted to be addressed; because its purport is: "A long time—perhaps thousands of years. Yea; but no length of time involved affects the Divine Worker: no amount of delay can either disable him or cause him to forget!" On these sure grounds may we regard as settled the grave point at issue: concluding with confidence, both from the order and nature of the clauses in ver. 3, and from the logical connection between vers. 3 and 4, That it is even so; and that the worthy theme of Moses' mighty prayer is nothing less than a pleading protest against the prolonged and unbroken dominion of death. We have thus discovered the poles on which the whole psalm turns, and are prepared to see all the remainder of the psalm naturally resolve itself, as it does, into—The Dominion of Death described; and, A Plea for the Overthrow of that dominion.

THE DOMINION OF DEATH DESCRIBED (Strophe III., vers. 5—12).—And, first, it is *Divinely caused.* The "theme" itself has already stated this: **Thou causest man to return to atoms.** And now, at the very entrance on this description of death's dominion, the same thing is reasserted: **Thou didst flood them away with a rain-storm.** It

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matters not at all whether this is an allusion to the Flood: the point is, that this "flooding away" is executed by the Sovereign Lord addressed, even by him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday. It will not do to try to break the force of these statements by reminding us that "every creature of God is good." True! but death is not a CREATURE: it is neither person, place nor thing—it is essentially a negation, a negation in the sense of a withdrawal of life. It is therefore unwarranted, and indeed reckless, to assert that God cannot withdraw life when once he had bestowed it. It may be good for him to give it; and yet be both good and wise for him to withdraw it, after a time, longer or shorter. It may be good to withdraw it; either because it has served its purpose, or because it has been abused and forfeited. It may be just and wise and merciful, yea even necessary, to withdraw life as a Divine protest against sin already committed, and as a Divine prevention of further sin. It is, therefore, as unwise as it is unwarranted to allege that *God cannot inflict death.* It is taught here, and in endless other places of Holy Writ, that, in point of fact, God *does* inflict death.

Still, not without reason does he inflict it. In the case of other creatures, God may have other reasons for withdrawing life—that is, inflicting death; but, in the case of *man,* there is a revealed reason, and that reason is—SIN: **Thou dost set our iniquities before thee, Our secret near the lamp of thy face.** The "iniquities" here intended are the iniquities of the race; since individual iniquities do not count, as witness the death of infants and of the forgiven. In like manner, in all probability, "our secret" is the secret of our race; which, when "Genesis" was barely written and certainly not published, was in all likelihood in the keeping of Moses alone. This may seem a great and indeed startling thing to say; but let any man, with some strength of historical imagination, give a more likely application to this remarkable phrase, of which, be it observed, the plural word "sins" forms no part. This psalm, then, itself guides us to find the special reason for man's death in man's sin.

Nor is this all. Man's sin is the occasion of God's displeasure. With surprising strength is this taught in the present psalm. Five times is this explicitly asserted during the course of this single strophe dealing with Death's Dominion: **anger, wrath; wrath, anger; wrath** (vers. 7, 9, 11). It really appears as though the writer gave up all attempts to measure the intensity of God's anger against man's sin —the sin of the race—by taking refuge in a question: **Who can know the strength of thine anger?** And, if we rightly decipher the force of the duplicate question, it abundantly confirms the first member of the

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interrogatory: **Or whether like (—or according—to) the fear of thee is thy wrath.** Of "the fear" which unlimited power revealing itself by the infliction of death inspires, we all have some knowledge; and we can easily increase our apprehension thereof, either by studying ordinary histories of mankind or by noting this feature as seen for instance in such a classic as the Book of Job. Suffice it to claim that, according to this psalm, it is very unlikely that any of us can over-estimate the intensity of the Divine Displeasure with the sin of our race. We may make a one-sided study of it; we may omit to pass on to view the other side of the great complex question; we may amiably, but quite needlessly, plead man's frailty—which assuredly God never forgets; —but we cannot be too deeply penetrated with the impressively taught truth that *the reason for man's death as a race, is man's sin as a race.* The more vividly you portray the ravages of death, the more cogently do you demonstrate God's anger against our racial sin: comprehending, as that racial sin does, alike the **secret** offence of our first father and the resulting **iniquities** of his descendants.

We might here look back, for the purpose of observing what a peculiar flickering of lights and shadows is cast over vers. 5—11 by what we might call the variations seen in the incidence of Death: the sweeping away of masses of men, as in the flood; the silent falling asleep of individuals who unobservedly fall out of the living race of men; and especially the remarkable way in which generations succeed each other. Also: we might point out how the **travail** and **trouble** of life enhance the impressiveness of its brevity. Life is slow and bright in coming, but swift in departing, and shadowed in retrospect. **Seventy** or **eighty years** seem long to the young; but to the aged they appear but as a few days. Many besides Jacob when brought before Pharaoh (Gen. 47^9) have, in the time of retrospect, been ready to exclaim: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life!"

But, instead of lingering over these details of the Strophe before us, it is more important to give good heed to the pivot prayer which forms the transition to the great prayer of the psalm. This pivot prayer is the outcry of the careful scholar, that he be not suffered to miss the main lesson for which he came into the Divine school: **How to number our days, so make thou known, That we may get a mind that hath wisdom.** The first point to note here is that there is an apprehended *difficulty* in making the desired calculation; and the next is, that Divine *illumination* is sought in order to overcome the difficulty. Let us carefully consider these two points in succession.

The words of this transitional little prayer do properly suppose a difficulty; nor does it seem legitimate to tone down and modify its

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point. The psalmist does not ask to be guided to apply his mind to a wise object: in other words, he does not say: "Having numbered my days, and easily discovered how frail and shortlived I am, teach me to regulate my life accordingly." It is the wise mind itself which he covets; and he seeks it in a definite way, namely by numbering, and not by means of reflection. It is the *numbering itself* which occasions his difficulty. He wishes to know how to make the successful calculation—how to do the necessary sum. What is it? Is it to find out what is the average duration of human life? But he knows that already. Is it to discover what point he has reached in the scale of possibility? But he can find that out, if he has lost count, by domestic repute or an appeal to the family register. Is it to know, whether he personally shall reach the average outside limit? But no amount of counting can inform him of that. No man, starting from the known average, can say: "Therefore I have ten or twenty more years to live." And though God could reveal it to him, that is not at all the point of the prayer.

And yet it is true, that it is a revelation—or at least instruction or information—which the psalmist seeks; for he says: **Make known.** He clearly, then, wishes to know how to do the successful **numbering.** For this he feels he needs Divine guidance, and hopes for such guidance to be vouchsafed by way of **making known** to him something which at present he does not know, or as to which he feels uncertain.

Put these simple things together, and then see whether the solution will not appear. The psalmist desires **a wise mind**: he hopes to gain it by a process of **numbering**: he humbly seeks **information** that he may do the numbering **aright.** *What, then, is the information he seeks? What does he need to know?*

The whole psalm is eloquent with the answer. And, first, it is very plain that the psalmist gets his answer: the way in which his tone at once changes and deepens, and he forthwith opens up and boldly carries forward his great prayer against the continued dominion of Death, shews this. The informal way in which the result discloses itself, naturally suggests, that he obtains his answer by immediate—though perhaps unconscious—revelation. The materials for his answer already lie within the area of his mind. He is guided to put them together correctly; and the result is—a REVELATION: the thing he wished to **know** has been made clear!

Yes! he may and should take both "returns" into account: the little figures of this life and the large figures of the life to come. His survey must take in, not only the possible **seventy** or **eighty years,** with the uncertainties and humiliations and sorrows attendant on them, which are occupied in returning *to* dust, but the **thousands,** the

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thousands upon thousands, the illimitable **ages of ages** to be entered upon after returning *from* dust. *Then* and *so* he will indeed get **a wise mind.** The man who gets no further than the **seventy or eighty years** of this life, may, by thinking and moralising, discover a few stars of prudence twinkling in his midnight sky; but the man who by faith leaps forward into the **renewed life** that is to be, is greeted at once with the effulgence of a sun of Divine Wisdom which illumines all the heaven of his soul, and which will never set.

A PLEA FOR THE OVERTHROW OF DEATH'S DOMINION (Strophe IV., vers. 13—17). **Oh return thou, Jehovah! how long?** It only needs that this outcry should be interpreted in the light of the context, to perceive its amazing breadth and boldness. It is then seen to mean no less than this: "Return from the anger with which, during generation after generation, thou hast been inflicting death: Reverse thy procedure. Thou hast long been turning frail man to atoms: wilt thou not now, with effect, say—**Come again, ye sons of men?** Thou hast been **flooding them away**: wilt thou not bring them back as a great army? Thou hast been putting them to **sleep**: wilt thou not awaken them? Shall the **iniquities** of our race never be adequately covered? Shall its **secret** shame and wrong never be expiated, by the morning of glory enough to redound to thy praise?

"**And have compassion on thy servants,** who have all along through these dark ages been serving thee. Pity them for their ill requital—for their unfinished tasks—for the obloquy they have endured. **Satisfy us**: we are hungry for fulfilment. We are longing for the turn of **the morning.** We are looking for the morning of a new day. We are expecting a day in which **thy kindness** shall be as publicly demonstrated as thy **wrath** has been during the long reign of death. Infants have been taken captive by premature removal: shall they never come back from the land of the enemy? Thy servants have been publicly dishonoured: they have fallen asleep unrewarded: shall they never be owned and crowned: We are looking for the morning that shall usher in that new day that shall make us feel we are *but beginning our existence;* being ushered into which, we shall give one long **ringing shout for joy,** and then go forward with **gladness** unto length of **days.**"

Granted, that this is, to some extent, necessarily, imaginary paraphrase: the only serious question is whether, in a form we can understand, it gives embodiment to the *spirit* of this prayer. But let us humbly endeavour to be more logical.

Make us glad, according to the days thou hast humbled us, The years we have seen misfortune. There is here a principle involved,

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as the ground of petition: it is the principle of proportion. Lest we should lose ourselves if we go so far afield as to keep the ancients in view, such as Noah and Abraham, although we ought to do that,—let us confine ourselves to the outlook of Moses himself. When *he* uses this language, what does he naturally mean? **The days thou hast humbled us**: how many have they been? **The years we have seen misfortune**: how long have they now lasted? Let us say, in round numbers: Four hundred years. Well, then, his petition cannot signify less than this: "Make us glad, for four hundred years, in the good land into which thou dost intend to bring us according to the promises made to our fathers." But, after all, is this the rule of proportion between the gracious Jehovah and his loyal servants? Is it simply so much reward for so much suffering? Who can think it, of Him who in the natural world gives to some kernels, cast into the earth, thirty, to some sixty, and to some a hundred fold. Will he who takes four hundred years to form the sons of Israel into an organised nation, be content to give them a four hundred years' run of national prosperity? No such conclusion can commend itself.

Shew unto thy servants thy work. What work has Jehovah in hand in forming this people? Is it not to make of them "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation"? (Exo. 19). And is this work never to be finished? **And thy majesty upon their children.** And will the promised cloud of glory (Isa. 4) never rest upon them? And when it does, will the fathers and founders of the nation not be given to behold the ravishing sight?

And let the delightfulness—surely not for ever, the **anger**, the **wrath**; not merely the **kindness**, though that is bounded only by righteousness and is age-abiding; not alone the majesty, though that is awe-inspiring; but the **delightfulness**, comprehending all the beauty of form that can please the eye, all the sweetness of taste that can suggest entire mental satisfaction. "The delightfulness" of **the Sovereign Lord**—whose governmental designs are receiving satisfying accomplishment: "the Sovereign Lord" **our God**—approving himself to the nations of the earth, as the God of Israel. Let this **be upon us**: not merely "on them." **And the work of our hands.** When the delightfully kind and gloriously majestic Jehovah shews *his* work unto his servants, his servants will be permitted to discover *their own* humble share therein—Moses his leadership and laws, Joshua his victories, David his songs and the like. This work of ours, which thou art pleased to accept as thine own: let it be **established upon us**, both on our children and on ourselves. This is the solidarity—this the fellowship—this the fruition in thine abiding Kingdom, for which we pray.

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In submitting the foregoing as a fair exposition of the 90th psalm, it is deemed proper to guard against extravagant expectations, which can only yield disappointment. It should be remembered: That this psalm is poetry, and not didactic teaching, and therefore must be handled with such lightness of touch as allows for figures of speech and dramatic changes of points of view; That this is but a single, very early psalm, which may naturally have left in doubt what subsequent psalms and prophecies have made clear; and especially That it was penned centuries before "light and incorruption were illumined by the Gospel," and hence cannot be expected to have formulated a consecutive account of that great process of Bringing Back from the dust of death the race of mankind which even now is only just begun. It is, however, claimed—and it is for the candid student to judge whether the claim has been made good—that here, thus early in the history of Divine Revelation, the theme of a General Resurrection is effectively broached; and that the Initial Stages of that Resurrection are clearly implied—if, at least, the recall of Jehovah's **Servants** from the dust of death bears any pledging and causal relation to the Bringing Back of the remainders of men. That the uplifting of the Nation of Israel to the high level of their national calling, is to issue in the Birth from the Grave of the nations of the world, is now seen by independent students to be really taught in Isaiah 26 (cp. Ps. 48 end). *Why* Israel has not yet been able to respond to her call; and *why*, therefore, she has not yet wrought such "deliverance in the earth" as awaits her accomplishment, are questions most vitally at issue between Jews and Christians. When Israel finds her Leader in **the Great Return—the Coming Again**—of this psalm, she will further find that He is not only by appointment a Sufferer, but that He is also the First, the Chief, the Leader of an illuminating Resurrection from the dead, who proclaims Light to both the people of Israel and to the remaining Nations of the earth. So, at least, we have been taught by a Jew who was also a Christian (in Acts 26^{23}).

PSALM 91.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Personal Application of the Foregoing Psalm.

ANALYSIS.—Prelude, Commending the Initial Sentiment of Moses' Prayer. Strophe I., vers. 2—8, Exhortation to Make this Sentiment One's Own: sustained by Expanding its Implied Promises. Strophe II., vers. 9—13, To One who has Obeyed the Exhortation, a Further Expansion of the Promises is made. Strophe III., vers. 14—16, Jehovah, in Love, Responds to the Love Set Upon Him.

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[Lm.—None.][a]

1 *How happy*[b] *is he that abideth in the hiding-place of the Most High,*
<in the shadow of the Almighty> he tarrieth!—

2 Say thou[c] to Jehovah—"My refuge and my fastness,
my God, in whom I trust."
3 For ||he|| will rescue thee from the trap of the fowler,
from the pestilence that engulfeth:
4 <With his pinion> will he cover thee,
and <under his wings> shalt thou take refuge,—
<a large shield and buckler> is his truth.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid of the dread of the night,
of the arrow that flieth by day:
6 Of the pestilence that <in darkness> doth walk,
of the destruction that despoileth at noon.
7 There may fall, at thy side, a thousand,
Yea ||a myriad|| at thy right hand,—
<Unto thee> shall it not draw near:
8 ||Only|| <with thine own eyes> shalt thou look on,
and <the recompense of lawless ones> shalt thou see.

9 <Because ||thou|| hast said[d]—"||Jehovah|| is my refuge,"
hast made ||the Most High|| thy dwelling-place[e]>
10 <There shall not be suffered to meet thee> misfortune,
and ||plague||[f] shall not draw near in thy tent.[g]
11 For <his messengers> will he charge concerning thee,
to keep thee in all thy ways:
12 <On their palms> will they bear thee up,
lest thou strike, against a stone, thy foot:
13 <On reptile[h] and cobra> shalt thou tread,
shalt trample on young lion and serpent.[i]

14 <"Because |on me| he hath set his love>[k] I will deliver him,
I will set him on high, because he hath come to know my name:
15 He shall cry unto me, and I will answer him,
<with him> will ||I myself|| be in distress:
I will rescue him, and will glorify him.
16 <With length of days> will I satisfy him,
and will content[l] him with my salvation."

[Nm.]

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[a] N.B. according to rule this psalm should immediately follow the foregoing, without break.
[b] So *Gt.*—Gn.
[c] According to change of vowel points advised by Dr., thereby preparing for second person in ver. 3.
[d] So *Gt.*
[e] As in 90[1].
[f] Or: "stroke." Heb. *nega'*. Cp. 38[11] note.
[g] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. ed., and Aram.): "tents" (pl.)—Gn.
[h] So Br., reading *z-h-l* for *sh-h-l*. M.T.: "lion."
[i] Or: "dragon (as devourer), or (sea)- or (river)- monster"—O.G.
[k] Or: "to me hath become attached." Cp. 18[1] and Expn.
[l] Or (ml.) "saturate." So (*r-w-h*) *Gt.* M.T.: "let him gaze upon my s."

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EXPOSITION.

Two things are clear. This psalm is no part of the Prayer of Moses; and yet it was occasioned thereby. All the evidence that confirms the Mosaic authorship of Ps. 90, turns round and rebuts the assumption that Ps. 91 also was written by him. The lonely grandeur is gone. The large outlook has closed. The sweeping comprehensiveness is at an end. And yet a very close *relationship* is evident. The first verse of this psalm might have been written as a label on the previous one; and for a time left in that form; tautological,—probably because incomplete; a mere suggestion to be expanded at a more convenient season. It is as though Samuel, or David, or Hezekiah had just perused afresh his precious treasure, handed down from the great Lawgiver; and, impressed with its sublime beauty and power and its fitness to be turned to practical use, had penned on it just the two lines which now open it: which lines, by himself or some other prophetic singer, were afterwards taken up, in *hortatory* mood, not improbably addressed to the fortunate royal possessor himself: Say thou ("O my master"; or, **Say thou,** O my soul")! We thus reach the idea that Ps. 91 is strictly an Appendix to Ps. 90: which hypothesis at once accounts for the fact that it has no inscription above or below. It is quite easy, and not altogether vain, to think—how aptly Nathan may have addressed Strophe I. (vers. 2—8) to his royal master David, or how readily David himself may thus have addressed his own soul—in either case naturally introducing **large shield and** (smaller) **buckler.** It is equally feasible to think of some such poet as Isaiah adding another strophe or two to this Appendix; and, if we could imagine *him* as striking in at ver. 9 with Hezekiah in view,—that would quite well account for the otherwise unaccountable emphasis on the pronoun **thou!** As much as to say: "My royal Master! thine ancestor David full well knew what it was to be preserved from **dread** and **arrow** and **pestilence** and **destruction**—to be saved alone while **thousands were falling by his side**; and he did indeed live to see **recompense falling upon lawless ones.** But **thou,** too, even as he did, hast said, 'Jehovah is my refuge.' Nor shalt THOU be disappointed." Not necessarily vain, are such imaginings, if they hover over the realm of actuality, and rebuke the dry dogmatism that is so very sure that things hinted at could never have happened.

There is probably a further and deeper reason why it cannot be vain to seek to actualise such poetic writings as these; and that is, to check the easy assumption that there can be no fulfilment at all of such promises as these, unless, without break, fulfilment runs steadily on

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and up to the climax of complete accomplishment. A moment ago, we suddenly pulled up in sight of the word **plague**, remembering that, literally, and for the time, the **plague** did **draw near in the tent** of Hezekiah. Was this Appendix-writer — therefore — dishonoured? Surely we have need to follow our Lord's own example, by saying "It is written again!" Yea, it *is* written again, *in this same Appendix*, **He shall cry unto me**; and truly Hezekiah *did* cry (2 K. 20^3, Isa. 38^2); **and I will answer him**; and truly Jehovah *did* answer (2 K. $20^{5,6}$, Isa. 38^{4-8}): in short, was **with him in distress**—did **rescue**—did **glorify**. Whether the restored monarch was actually **satisfied** with his fifteen additional years and **content** with the remainder of his life, history informeth us not. Possibly he was *not;* because nearly all such promises as these have in them an element of extension and expansion ever ready to require more than this life to fill to the full their accomplishment. In other words, **the length of days** of these ancient Hebrew songs is ever crying out—dumbly but really—for Resurrection and Incorruption!

In now taking a retrospect of this psalm, it is extremely important to remark—that its promises are essentially *conditional:* they all depend on actually making the Most High a **refuge**—a **habitation**. The opening inscription of ver. 1 calls for this. So does the injunction of ver. 2. So also does the emphatic and extended reason given in ver. 9. And this condition, be it carefully noted, consists of a living experience: of an intention, carried out; of a believing recognition of the all-encompassing and protecting **presence of the Most High**. And this goes far beyond the heathenish employment of this psalm, or any other formula of words, as a protection from evil. It is not: He that carries in his pocket a piece of paper or parchment containing these words, or any such words. It is not: He that carries these words in his memory: which may be nothing more than a clever feat of formalism. But: He that does the thing described; which cannot mean less than an habitual and believing walk with God. Moreover: He who is walking with God, can neither knowingly step aside from the path of duty; nor, uninvited, make experiments with God. If God really commands his servants to prove him, then doubtless they may obediently respond. Otherwise, they cannot go along that path; because, in the absence of any such Divine challenge, the *prohibition* comes in:— "Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the proof." Neither Satan nor the Scientific Doubter has authority to suspend this Divine Prohibition. The Almighty does not put his power into commission, to be used at any creature's pleasure. It is well he does not. This is not to deny that there is a charm in the promises of God, but it is to

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protest that their true charm comes from treating them not as mere charms, but as the living words of a living God.

But this psalm furnishes another lesson: it puts before us, with all the vividness of an object-lesson, the importance of setting the various commands and promises of Scripture side by side, that we may gather their true sense and make of them a legitimate application. The final strophe of this psalm comes before us with an especial appealing force, because it purports to give us Jehovah's own direct words, revealing the response of his love to his servant's love: **Because on me he hath set his love.** Being at the same time the close of the psalm, it is in every way fitting that this strophe should be invested with any explaining and harmonising power needed for practical guidance. From this point of view, note especially, that Jehovah himself prepares his loving servants for the possibility that—after all the promises which have gone before—they may yet come into **distress.** For such a temporary non-fulfilment of his promises, Jehovah holds himself responsible—**with him will I myself be, in distress.** He makes our distresses his own. He bears the burden of his unfulfilled promises. He says: "Wait! and I will more than fulfil them all." And then to Grace he adds **Glory!**

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PSALMS 92 to 97.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Service of Song for a Sabbath Day.

ANALYSIS.

Psalm 92: Personal Song—Probably by a King.
Psalm 93: Jehovah Proclaimed King.
Psalm 94: Prayer for Vengeance on the Lawless.
Psalm 95: Invitation—"O Come!" "Come in!" Warning: "Harden not your Hearts!"
Psalm 96: The Land called upon to Sing to Jehovah, and to Proclaim his Kingship to the Nations.
Psalm 97: Third Proclamation—Decisive Results, by way of Joy, Fear. Conviction, Shame, Homage, Thanks, Exhortation and Triumph.

[Lm.] Psalm—Song—For the Sabbath-day.

PSALM 92.

1 It is <good> to give thanks to Jehovah,
and to make melody[a] unto thy name, O Most High!
2 To declare, in the morning, thy kindness,
and ||thy faithfulness|| in the nights: [b]
3 With an instrument of ten strings, and with a lute,[c]
with murmuring music[d] on a lyre.

4 For thou hast made me glad, Jehovah, by thy doings,
<in the works of thy hands> will I ring out my joy.
5 <How great> have grown thy works, Jehovah!
<how very deep> have been laid thy plans!
6 ||A man that is brutish|| cannot get to know,
and a ||dullard|| cannot understand this:—

7 <When the lawless |bud| like herbage,
and all the workers of iniquity |have blossomed|>
It leadeth to their being destroyed for ever.
8 But ||thou|| art on high[e] to the ages, O Jehovah!
9 For lo! ||thine enemies||, Jehovah,
For lo! ||thine enemies|| shall perish,
<scattered abroad> shall be all the workers of iniquity.[f]

10 But thou wilt uplift, like [those of] a wild ox, my horn,
I am anointed[g] with fresh oil;
11 And mine eye |shall gaze| on my watchful foes,
<of them that rise up against me as evil-doers> mine ears |shall hear|,
12 ||The righteous|| <like the palm-tree> shall bud,
<like a cedar in Lebanon> become great.

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[a] Or: "to sweep the strings."
[b] So Dr.; "night-seasons"—Del.; "dark night"—(plural of intensification)—Br.
[c] Ml.: "with ten and with a lute."
[d] "with murmuring sound"—Dr.; "with skilful music"—Del.
[e] Ml.: "a height." "Exaltedness"—Del.
[f] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. 94[4, 16, 23].
[g] "The passage is doubtful"—O.G.

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13 <Transplanted into the house of Jehovah>
<in the courts of our God> shall they shew buds.
14 <Still> shall they bear fruit in old age,
<full of sap and of bloom> shall they be:
15 To declare that <upright> is Jehovah,
||my Rock|| with no injustice in him.

[Nm.]

PSALM 93.

[Nm.]

1 ||*Jehovah*|| *hath become king*[a]—<in majesty> hath he clothed himself,
Jehovah |hath clothed himself|—<with strength> hath he girded himself:
surely he hath adjusted[b] the world—it shall not be shaken.
2 <Established> is thy throne from of old,[c]
<from age-past time> art |thou|.

3 The streams |have lifted up|, O Jehovah,
the streams |have lifted up| their voice,
the streams |lift up| their crashing:
4 <Beyond the voices of many waters,
more majestic than the breakers of the sea>[d]
<Majestic on high> is Jehovah.

5 ||Thy testimonies|| are confirmed with might,
<to thy house> |befitting| is holiness,—
O Jehovah! to length of days.

[Nm.]

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[a] "Is now king"—Del. "Hath proclaimed himself king"—Kp. The same 1 Ch. 16[31]; Pss. 47[8], 96[10], 97[1], 99[1]; Isa. 24[23], 527.

[b] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[c] Ml.: "from then."
[d] So *Gt.*

PSALM 94.

[Nm.]

1 O GOD of avengings, Jehovah!
O GOD of avengings, shine forth!
2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth:
bring back a recompense on the proud.

3 |How long| shall lawless ones, Jehovah,
|how long| shall lawless ones exult?
4 They pour forth, they speak arrogancy,
<vain-glorious> are all the workers of iniquity.[b]

5 <Thy people> O Jehovah, they crush,
and <thine inheritance> they humble;
6 <The widow and the sojourner> they slay,
and <the fatherless> they murder;

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[a] Or: "dire vengeance."
[b] Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.), and cp. 92[9] and vers. 16, 23.

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7 And say—"Yah |seeth not|,"
and "The God of Jacob |perceiveth not|."

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people,
and, ye dullards, when will ye comprehend?
9 ||He that planteth the ear|| shall he not hear?
or ||that fashioneth the eye|| not look on?[a]
10 ||He that correcteth nations|| not shew what is right,—
||he that teacheth men knowledge||?
11 ||Jehovah|| knoweth the devices of men,
for ||they themselves|| are a breath![b]

12 |How happy| the man whom thou correctest, O Yah,
and <out of thy law> dost instruct:
13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of misfortune,
till there be digged, for the lawless one, a pit.
14 For Jehovah |abandoneth not| his people,
and <his inheritance> doth he not forsake;
15 For <unto righteousness> shall judgment[c] |return|,
and <be following it> all the upright in heart.

16 Who will rise up for me against evil-doers?
who will make a stand for me against the workers of iniquity?[d]
17 <Unless ||Jehovah|| had been a help to me>
<soon had sunk into silence> my soul!
18 <If I say—<"Slipped> hath my foot!"
||thy kindness|| Jehovah! stayeth me.
19 <In the multitude of my disquieting thoughts[e] within me>
||thy consolations|| delight my soul.

20 Can the throne of engulfing ruin |be allied to thee|,
which frameth mischief by statute?[f]
21 They make a raid on[g] the life[h] of the righteous one,
and <innocent blood> they condemn.
22 Nay! Jehovah |hath become| for me a lofty retreat,
and ||my God|| my rock of refuge.
23 Nay! he hath brought back, on themselves, their iniquity,[i]
and <through their own evil> will he exterminate them,—
<exterminate them> will Jehovah our God.

[Nm.]

---

[a] "Have power of sight"—O.G.
[b] Or: "are vapour."
[c] Or: "sentence."
[d] Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. ver. 23.
[e] As in 139[23].
[f] "Under the pretext of right"—Del.
[g] "They gather themselves in bands against"—Dr. "They rush in upon"—Del.
[h] U.: "soul."
[i] Or: "mischief." ("Naughtiness"—Dr.). Cp. ver. 16.

PSALM 95.

[Nm.]

1 O come! let us ring out our joy to Jehovah,
let us shout to the rock of our salvation;[a]
2 Let us come to meet his face with thanksgiving,
<with psalms> let us shout unto him.

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[a] Or: "our rock of safety."

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3 For <a great GOD> is Jehovah,
and a great king, above all messengers divine :[a]
4 <In whose hand> are the recesses[b] of the earth,
and ||the summits of the mountains|| belong to him :
5 |Whose| is the sea, and ||he|| made it,
and <the dry land> |his hands| formed.
6 Come in ! oh let us bow down, and bend low,
oh let us kneel, before Jehovah our maker ;
7 For ||he|| is our God,
and ||we|| are the people of his hand, and the flock of his shepherding.[c]

||To-day|| if <to his voice> ye would but hearken !
8 "Do not harden your heart, as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah, in the desert :
9 When your fathers |put me to the proof|
tested me, although they had seen my work.
10 <For forty years> loathed I that[d] generation,
and said—' <A people going astray in heart> are |they|,
even ||they|| have not known my ways : '
11 So that I sware in mine anger,
' Surely they shall not enter into my place of rest ! ' "

[Nm.]

---

[a] See 8^5. Heb. : *'elohim*.
[b] "Lit. *places to be explored* ; cf. Job 38^{16}"—Dr. *Gt* : "distant parts"—Gn.
[c] So *Gt*. Cp. 79^{13}, 100^3. M.T.: "people of his shepherding and flock of his hand."
[d] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn.

PSALM 96.

[Nm.]

1 Sing ye, to Jehovah, a song that is new,
sing to Jehovah, all the land :
2 Sing to Jehovah, bless ye his name,
proclaim the glad-tidings, from day to day, of his victory :[a]
3 Tell, among the nations, his glory,
||among all the peoples|| his wondrous works.

4 For <great> is Jehovah, and to be highly praised,
<Fear inspiring> is |he| above all messengers divine ;[b]
5 For ||all the gods[c] of the peoples|| are nothings,[d]
But ||Jehovah|| made the heavens.
6 ||Majesty and state||[e] are before him,
||Strength and beauty||[f] are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe, unto Jehovah, ye families of the peoples,
ascribe, unto Jehovah, glory and strength :
8 Ascribe, unto Jehovah, the glory of his name,
bring ye a present,[g] and come into his courts :[h]

---

[a] Or : "salvation."
[b] Heb.: *'elohim*. Cp. 8^5. Clearly some *'elohim* are more than "nothings."
[c] Heb. : *'elohim*. The addition "of all the peoples" is deemed enough to turn the scale in translating.
[d] "Nothingnesses"—Dr. "Idols"—Del. (who thus comments: "nothings and good-for-nothings, without being and of no use.")
[e] "Glory and grandeur"—Del.
[f] "The word used here denotes glory which is also a decoration or ornament (Is. $60^{7, 19}$)"—Dr.
[g] Heb. : *minḥah*. "Viz. to secure admission to His presence. Cf. 2 Sam. $8^{2, 6}$, Jdg. 3^{18} end"—Dr.
[h] Some cod. (w. Aram.): "come in before him"—Gn.

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9 Bow down, unto Jehovah, in the adornment of holiness.[a]
be in birth-throes[b] at his presence, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations—||"*Jehovah*|| *hath become king*:[c]
Surely he hath adjusted the world, it shall not be shaken,
He will minister judgment unto the peoples with equity."

11 Let the heavens |be glad|, and the earth |rejoice|,
let the sea |thunder|, and the fulness thereof:
12 Let the plain |exult|, and all that is therein,
Yea[d] let all the trees of the forest |ring out their joy| :—
13 Before Jehovah, for he is coming,[e]
for he is coming,[f] to judge the earth:
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And peoples, with his faithfulness.

[Nm.]

---

[a] Cp. 29[2].
[b] Cp. 77[16].
[c] See 93[1], 97[1], 99[1].
[d] So *Gt.*
[e] So (participle) Del. "Is come"—Dr. and others.
[f] In some cod. this clause is not repeated. Cp. 1 Ch. 16[33]—Gn.

PSALM 97.

[Nm.]

1 ||*Jehovah*|| *hath become king*[a]—let the earth |exult|,
let the multitude of coastlands |rejoice|.
2 ||Clouds and darkness|| are round about him,
||righteousness and justice||[b] are the foundation of his throne:
3 ||Fire|| <before him> proceedeth,
and setteth ablaze round about his adversaries.

4 His lightnings |illumined| the world,
the earth |saw and was in birth-throes| :[c]
5 ||The mountains|| <like wax> melted at the presence of Jehovah,
at the presence of the Lord[d] of the whole earth:
6 The heavens |declared| his righteousness,
and all the peoples |saw| his glory.

7 <Put to shame> are all they who were serving an image,
who were boasting themselves in nothings:[e]
All messengers divine[f] |bow ye down to him|.
8 Zion |heard and was glad|,
and the daughters of Judah |exulted|,—
Because of thy righteous decisions,[g] O Jehovah.

9 For ||thou, Jehovah|| art Most High over all the earth,
<greatly> hast thou exalted thyself above all messengers divine.[f]

10 Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong.
He preserveth the lives[h] of his men of kindness,
<from the hand of lawless ones he rescueth them.

---

[a] As in 93[1], 96[10], 99[1].
[b] Or: "judgment."
[c] Cp. 90[2].
[d] Heb.: *'adôn.*
[e] "Nothingnesses"—Dr.
[f] Or: "gods." Heb. *'elohim.* But see 8[5], 96[4].
[g] Or: "thy judgments."
[h] Or, "persons": Heb. *naphshoth*; U.: "souls." Intro., Chap. III., "Souls."

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11 ||Light|| hath arisen[a] for the righteous one,
And <for such as are upright of heart> gladness.
12 Be glad' O ye righteous, in Jehovah,
and give thanks unto his Holy Memorial.
[Nm.]

[a] So in some MSS. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. 112[14]—Gn. M.T.: "is sown."

EXPOSITION.

It will be observed that there is but one original headline to Pss. 92 to 97; and therefore it will be no great strain on our credulity if, from this circumstance, we assume that these psalms, thus undivided from each other in the Hebrew text, at a very early period in their history formed one continuous Service of Song for a **Sabbath Day.** That the series was composed of several distinct psalms, probably written by two or three psalmists, is clear from internal evidence.

Ps. 92 is intensely *personal:* as witness the phrases **hast made me glad—I will ring out my joy** (ver. 4)—**my horn—I am anointed—mine eye—my lurking foes—my wicked assailants—mine ears** (vers. 10, 11). It is at the same time thoroughly *experimental:* which is evident, not only from the above expressions, but also from the writer's **thankfulness** (ver. 1), and from his persuasion that he has been blessed with some insight into Jehovah's **works** and **plans** (ver. 5), as well as from that sense of nearness to God which leads him to designate him **My Rock** (ver. 15). The writer of the psalm is probably a *king* in the line of David: which accounts for his expectation that his **horn** will be exalted, in spite of his unscrupulous **foes** (vers. 10, 11). He is not only a king, but an enthusiastic *musician:* understanding what it is to **sweep the strings** (ver. 1), and appreciating differences in musical instruments, as his selection of the deep-toned **lyre** to accompany his poetic soliloquy in his royal chambers sufficiently indicates. Out of these observations emerges the natural conclusion, that its writer was King Hezekiah.

Ps. 93 forms a striking contrast. It is by no means personal; but public, lofty, grand. It propounds a thesis worthy of the most far-seeing prophetic gift: for it tells of nothing less than an especial assumption of sovereignty by **Jehovah himself,** who on the basis of his **ancient rule and being** makes a new Divine advance to manifested kingship over the earth. The psalm is but brief, calling **sea-streams** to witness to the Divine Majesty, and claiming that the Divine **Testimonies** and **Temple-worship** are confirmed by Jehovah's Royal Proclamation. The two most remarkable things about this short psalm

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are: *first*, that it gives the key-note of the series; in which, be it noted, Jehovah is proclaimed King three times, which key-note is carried over to the abbreviated Sabbath Service of Song which we may assume to be formed by Pss. 98, 99; so that *four times* in the double series is this Proclamation made; *second*, another remarkable thing is that King Hezekiah—himself a king in the royal, covenant line of David—should have given so much prominence to such a theme, if he prepared this Service of Song, a theme to give currency to which looks greatly like an act of self-effacement on his part, *as though* neither he nor any of his descendants could be regarded as **The Coming King.** Not only, then, does this psalm demand a lofty prophetic gift for its production, but it requires a prophet of unquestionable standing and commanding weight to secure its insertion in this Service of Song. These conditions are remarkably well fulfilled in ISAIAH; especially if we may safely come back—as it would appear we may—to the old-fashioned custom of regarding *him* as the author of the whole of the book which goes under his name. For, in that case, we have not only the vision of Isaiah, chapter 6, to give a commanding place to the conception of Jehovah's becoming King of all the earth, but we have patterned by Isaiah himself—of course under Divine guidance—in 52^7 almost the exact formula for proclaiming Divine Kingship which stands out so prominently in these psalms. Isaiah is the man who has had the vision, and who is possessed by the conception which the vision conveys. And he has the age, the standing, and the unquestionable spiritual authority to secure Hezekiah's ready acceptance of Jehovah's own Royal proclamation of Himself as suitable for a large place in this Sabbath Service of Song. From this point of view, the bringing together of the two men—Isaiah and Hezekiah—under the dominancy of a great expectation, throws an unexpected but most welcome side-light on that strange wail of disappointment issuing from Hezekiah's sick-room (Isaiah 38) that now—if he must at once die—he will "not see Yah in the land of the living," as under Isaiah's tuition he had conceived that he might. So that any imagined unlikelihood that Hezekiah would make such a theme so prominent in his Sabbath Service of Song, is completely overborne by the evidence which shews how naturally he might have done this very thing.

Ps. 94 differs from both the preceding: from 92 by not being mainly joyous, and from 93 by rather lamenting that Jehovah has not become King, than by proclaiming that he has ascended his earthly Royal Seat. This psalm, again, has a rather strong personal note, and may very well have been written by Hezekiah himself or at his dictation. If so, however, its totally different tone would drive us to

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conclude that it must have been written at another and probably an earlier time, evidently a time of sore national trouble. Indeed, so predominant is the note of lamentation throughout this psalm, that some critics have concluded it to be wholly out of its place where it now stands. Perhaps they have been hasty in their judgment. But let us glance through the psalm. Three strophes (vers. 1—7) suffice to make it clear that Israel's foes are dominant, relentless and persecuting. That they are foreigners is already made probable by their being called **lawless** (ver. 3) and practically certain by the way they speak of **the God of Jacob** (ver. 7). Their doings are so wicked as to call for the **vengeance** of the Judge of all the earth, and so protracted as to lead the sufferers to cry out **How long, O Jehovah!** Their **pride** and **arrogance** strongly remind us of the haughty speeches of that "villain" Rabshakeh, the Assyrian general. Strophe IV. (vers. 8—11) induces the belief that even some Israelites were in danger of falling away to the foreigner, and needed to be severely reasoned with. Strophe V. (vers. 12—15) might have been a photograph for which Hezekiah himself sat; and goes far to persuade us that the actual writer of this psalm was one of Hezekiah's men, who could say of his master what his master would scarcely have said of himself. In Strophe V. (vers. 16—19) the voice of Hezekiah is again plainly heard: the drawing is true to the life—Hezekiah has confronted the **silence** of death—has **slipped**—has had **disquieting thoughts** and restorative **consolations.** Strophe VI. (vers. 20—23) reminds us that all the while, behind the arrogant menaces of Rabshakeh, stood the iniquitous **throne** of Assyria, which, as cruel and God-defying, could well be described by a godly Israelite as a throne of **engulfing ruin.** Suffice it to remind ourselves of the signal way in which these perfect tenses of prophetic certainty—**hath become a lofty retreat, hath brought back on themselves their trouble** were at least typically fulfilled in the overthrow of Sennacherib. Such is the psalm. Is there need any longer to ask, what it does here in this Sabbath-day Service of Song: as though the Jewish Sabbath were not, above all things, a day of hallowed memories? On what principle it appears so interlocked, as it does here, with Jehovah's Royal Advent, we may yet discover. After this, we need not concern ourselves further with the question of authorship in its bearing on this Sabbath-day Service of Song. With Hezekiah and Isaiah at work in its production, we are ready for any contingency which Hezekiah's Chief Musician could suggest; since we can conceive of no suggestion as to either words or music, which Hezekiah and his godly helpers could not easily supply. But let us rapidly push forward this survey to a conclusion.

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Ps. 95 is remarkable for the facility with which, after a 4-line invitation to worship, it resolves itself into two 10-line strophes, the former joyous, and the latter admonitory. As to the fitness of the latter to find place here,—with such waverers in view as the previous psalm reveals (94^{8-11}), it cannot be said that the solemn warning of this psalm (95^{7-11}) is in any wise out of place. It is, further, something to remember—that this Sabbath-day's Service of Song points onwards to a Divine Sabbath of Sabbaths, which undoubtedly will be inaugurated by the Coming Divine King.

Ps. 96 enriches us with fresh thoughts: by bringing us into sight of a **new** manifestation of Divine Kingship, calling for **a song that is new**; that it commissions a particular **land** to herald the glad-tidings of the Coming Divine Reign to the other **nations** of the earth (vers. 2, 3, 10); that, while there are Divine *representatives* (Elohim) who are real beings (ver. 4), there are other so-called Elohim ("gods") who have no existence (ver. 5); that even in the Coming Divine Reign, there will be a **sanctuary** (ver. 6) into which the **families of the peoples** (ver. 7) can enter with their presents (ver. 8) and there **worship** (ver. 9); and that such a changed state of things will amount to a **New Birth** for or a **Readjustment of the world** (vers. 9, 10), whereat all Nature—including the **heavens**, the **earth**, the **sea**, the **plain**, the **forest**—may well go into ecstasies; for the good reason that Jehovah is **coming to reign** over all the **peoples** of the **world in righteousness and faithfulness** (vers. 10, 13).

Ps. 97, the last of this longer Sabbath-day series, is notable in that, whatever cause for fear and trembling any of the individuals and nations of the world may have, in prospect of this **new** and immediate Divine Rule, the great event itself is mainly an occasion for joy: **Let the earth exult.** Probably not without peculiar interest to Europeans (and it may be Americans also) the West—under the significant Biblical name of **Coastlands**—is particularly called upon to **rejoice**:—a glimpse into the future which was, as we know, vouchsafed to Isaiah, independently of this psalm (Isaiah 24^{15}, 41^{1}, 42^{4}, 49^{1}, 59^{18}, 60^{9}, 66^{19}). Other things observable in this closing psalm of the first series are: that the promised Divine Advent is to be, in some way, open and palpable to **the whole earth**; conveying its testimony of Divine **righteousness** to all men's minds (vers. 4—6); that it will be sufficiently sudden to put some **boastful** idolaters to **shame** (ver. 7); sufficiently demonstrative to cause **all** true **messengers divine** to prostrate themselves before the world's Divine King (ver. 7); and yet sufficiently local in some phases of its manifestation to give occasion to carry the joyful tidings thereof to **Zion** and the **daughters of Judah** (ver. 8).

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Real **divine messengers,** such as kings and judges, will be permitted to govern longer, only on condition of being manifestly in subjection to **Jehovah** as **Most High over all the earth** (ver. 9). No wonder that such good news as this should be finally employed by way of admonition: **Ye lovers of Jehovah! hate ye wrong** (ver. 10). They who persist in wrong will be punished. The wronged—the imperilled—are to be **preserved,** to be **rescued** (ver. 10). Truly we may say, **light** has **arisen** for the **righteous** king Hezekiah (ver. 11), and for myriads besides who will open their eyes. And, ye **righteous,** who are made **glad** in **Jehovah,** forget not to **give thanks to his Holy Memorial;** with the understanding that "his Holy Memorial" is "his Holy Name," **Jehovah** (Exod. 3^{15}, Ps. $135^{1\text{-}3}$); that is, **Yahweh;** that is, **the Becoming One;** and that here, in this beautiful Sabbath Service of Song, He hath prophetically **BECOME the King of all the earth,** as unveiled to your believing and rejoicing eyes.

For further "General Reflections," see at the close of Ps. 99.

PSALMS 98 and 99.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Shorter Service of Song (for a Sabbath Day).

ANALYSIS.—Psalm 98: An Invitation to Sing the New Song of Jehovah's Victory in behalf of the House of Israel.
Psalm 99: Jehovah's Assumption of Kingship Proclaimed: with a Renewed Call to Worship.

[Lm.] Psalm.

PSALM 98.

1 Sing ye, to Jehovah, a song that is new,
for <wondrous things> hath he done,—
his own right hand and his holy arm |have gotten him victory|![a]
2 Jehovah |hath made known| his victory,
<to the eyes of the nations> hath he unveiled his righteousness:
3 He hath remembered his kindness and his faithfulness to the house of Israel,
all the ends of the earth-|have seen| the victory[a] of our God.

4 Shout ye, to Jehovah, all the earth,
break forth and ring out your joy and make ye melody:

[a] Or: "salvation."

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5 Make ye melody, to Jehovah, with the lyre,—
with the lyre, and the voice of psalmody;
6 <With trumpets, and the sound of the horn>
shout ye, before the King—Jehovah!

7 Let the sea |thunder|, and the fulness thereof,
the world, and they who dwell therein:
8 ||The streams||—let them clap their hands,
<together> ||the mountains||—let them ring out their joy:—
9 Before Jehovah, for he is coming to judge the earth:
he will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

[Nm.]

PSALM 99.

[Nm.]

1 ||*Jehovah*|| *hath become king*[a]—let the peoples |tremble|,
enthroned on cherubim—let the earth |quiver|.
2 ||Jehovah|| <in Zion> is great,
and <high> is |he| above all the peoples.
3 Let them thank thy name, great and fearful:
(4) <"*Holy*> *is* |*he*| !—[4] and strong,
a king who loveth |justice|."

||Thou|| hast established equity,
<justice and righteousness in Jacob> hast ||thou thyself|| wrought.
5 *Exalt ye Jehovah our God,*
and bow down at his footstool:
<"*Holy*>[b] *is* |*he*| !

6 Moses and Aaron, among his priests,
and Samuel, among the callers on his name,—
callers [were they] unto Jehovah, and he used to answer them:
7 <In a pillar of cloud> used he to speak unto them:
they kept his testimonies,
and <a statute> he gave to them.
8 Jehovah our God! ||thou thyself|| didst answer them,
<a forgiving GOD> becamest thou unto them;
but one taking vengeance on the evil deeds of them.
9 *Exalt ye Jehovah our God,*
and bow down at his holy mountain;
For <holy> is Jehovah our God.

[Nm.]

[a] As in 93[1], 96[10], 97[1].

[b] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "For holy"—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

The warrant for regarding Pss. 98 and 99 as a Shorter Service of Song for Sabbath Worship is informal, but probably sufficient. The

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comparative brevity of this "Service" is obvious. Its distinctness from what has gone before is marked by the superscribed word **Psalm** over 98. Its substantial identity of theme with Pss. 92—97 is easily perceived; and chiefly appears in the recurrence of the Proclamation of Jehovah's Kingship, sustained by similar invitations to worship, and a repetition, in 98^9, of the herald note of 96^{13}.

Ps. 98 opens like 96, only with a clearer statement of the precise nature of Jehovah's **victory**: that it amounts to an **unveiling** of his **righteousness**, by fulfilling his promises to **the house of Israel**.

Ps. 99 contains a considerable amount of new matter: as, for example, Jehovah's occupancy of his **cherubic throne**; **Zion** being the especial place where his **greatness** is displayed; with a tolerably clear reminder of the "trisagion" or "thrice holy" cry of the Seraphim in Isa. 6. Again, it is very pointedly said that Jehovah **himself** has wrought **justice and righteousness in Jacob**—the use of which name, for "Israel," offers a further assurance that it is to the historic nation of the Twelve Tribes that the psalm refers. It is perhaps a little difficult to determine the motive for referring by name to **Moses, Aaron** and **Samuel**: probably not so much to generalise, by intimating that even now they have among them *a* Moses, *an* Aaron, and *a* Samuel to intercede for them (as Kp. suggests) as to connect, in a more general way the old history with the new, and to enjoin the lesson of holy fear as not out of place in the coming glorious time.

The foregoing rapid survey of the two Sabbath Services of Song has been submitted for the purpose of preparing the reader for the following

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

on the entire twofold series of psalms whose Keynote is **Jehovah hath become King.**

The *first* reflection is: That here we have intimated some NEW DIVINE ACTION based upon the abiding and unalterable Sovereignty of God, but in advance of it; coming into effect at a special time and place and under special circumstances; and furthermore leading to results so stupendous as naturally to raise the question how far they have even yet been fulfilled. It is satisfactory to observe with what practical unanimity Expositors agree that such "New Divine Action" is affirmed by the great words of proclamation four times over used in these psalms: **Yahweh malak = Jehovah hath become King.** Thus the "Speakers' Commentary" says: "The verb rendered 'is (now) king' is here used in reference to the inauguration of the Theocracy in its final and complete manifestation." Similarly Perowne: "Is KING.

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More exactly, 'hath become King,' as if by a solemn coronation (comp. the same expression of a new monarch ascending the throne, 2 Sam. 15[10], 1 Kings 1[11], 2 Kings 9[13]). He has been King from everlasting, but now His kingdom is visibly set up, His power and His majesty fully displayed and acknowledged." More fully Delitzsch: "Heretofore Jahve's rule, seeing He has waived the use of His omnipotence, has been self-abasement and self-renunciation; now, however, He manifests Himself in all His majesty, which soars above everything; He has put this on as a garment; He is King and now shows himself to the world in His royal robe." In like manner Thrupp: "There is in the words themselves, as Hengstenberg justly remarks, an allusion to the form used at the proclamation of the commencement of the reign of an earthly sovereign; and hence it follows that the language does not apply to the constant government of God, but to a new glorious manifestation of his dominion." With equal explicitness, Briggs: "Not the assertion of his everlasting royal prerogative, but the joyous celebration of the fact that He has now shown Himself to be King by a royal advent, taking His place on His throne to govern the world Himself, and no longer through inefficient or wicked servants." (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom.")

The *second* reflection is: That these psalms are JEHOVISTIC RATHER THAN MESSIANIC, as a glance through them will at once shew. No Messiah, no Son of David, is once named in them. At first this is startling: ultimately it seems less strange. For, let us consider: Since "No man can see God and live" (Exo. 33[20]), since "No man hath seen God himself at any time" (John 1[18]), it follows that whenever men have been held to have seen him, it can only have been through a veil. It is well known that there are incidents and suggestions even in the Old Testament looking in this direction, particularly with regard to the Messenger in whom is the name Jehovah (Gen. 16[10-13], 19[24], Exo. 23[20, 21], 33[14, 15]). Then, too, Christians, holding Jesus of Nazareth to have been the Messiah, consistently conceive of him as the veiled manifestation of Deity—veiled "in self-renunciation and self-abasement"; and therefore no man was compelled to see his glory; which glory, now, for the present, is "hid in God" (Col. 3[3]) and ready at any time to burst forth *as in these Theocratic psalms.*

A *third* reflection naturally follows: That these psalms, for their fulfilment, await THE MESSIAH'S SECOND ADVENT. The psalms are highly poetic, and even dramatic, as all sober interpreters admit. Still, it by no means follows that they have no clear burden to deliver; and therefore the dictate of sanctified common sense would appear to be to say, Will the burden of these psalms, when due allowance has been made

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for figures of speech, be well met when the Messiah returns, according to the plain sense of his own and his apostles' sayings about his Second Coming?

We may here strengthen these reflections by quoting the weighty words of Delitzsch: "In addition to such psalms as behold in anticipation the Messianic future, whether it be prophetically or only typically, or typically and prophetically at once, as the world-overcoming and world-blessing kingship of the Anointed of Jahve, there are others, in which the perfected theocracy as such is seen beforehand, not as the parousia of a human king, but as the parousia of Jahve himself, as the kingdom of God manifest in all its glory. These theocratic psalms form along with the Christocratic two series of prophecies, referring to the last time, which run parallel with one another. The one has for its goal the Anointed of Jahve, who from out of Zion rules over all peoples; while the other has Jahve, seated above the cherubim, to whom the whole world pays homage. Although these two series converge in the Old Testament, they do not come together; it is the historical fulfilment that first of all makes it clear that the parousia of the Anointed One and the parousia of Jahve are one and the same. It is only at a few climaxes of prophecy that this thought flashes forth in the Old Testament"—Intro. to Ps. 93.

A *fourth* reflection is: That as soon as the ultimate blending of the Theocratic and the Christocratic prophecies is accepted, and information is accordingly sought in the New Testament regarding the Messiah's Second Coming as destined to fulfil these psalms, particularly as to the Destruction of the Lawless One by that Second Coming, according to 2 Thes. 2,—so soon is THE POSITION OF PSALM 94 IN THIS SABBATH SERVICE OF SONG TRIUMPHANTLY VINDICATED. It cannot be denied that its position here is extraordinary; nor can it be doubted that the psalm itself—both in its description of so gigantic a development of **Lawlessness**, as is portrayed therein, and in its outcries for **Divine Vengeance** thereupon—readily carries us beyond Hezekiah and beyond Sennacherib. It would surpass the wit of man to coin a more apt phrase for describing the COMING LAWLESS ONE, in the awful doings to be permitted him, than as **the Throne of Engulfing Ruin framing Mischief by Statute.** Given, then, the conclusions that this Throne of Iniquity will yet prove specially disastrous to Hezekiah's nation; and that Jehovah's overthrow of that Throne will constitute the great **Victory** by which the Theocracy will be visibly set up on earth, and Jehovah's final reign inaugurated,—then nothing could be more appropriate than the insertion of this psalm just here in Hezekiah's larger Sabbath-day's Service of Song. Indeed, only to see this, is nothing short of discovering a new, unex-

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pected and most welcome proof of Jehovah's wondrous overruling ways; and it may be forgiven any Christian if, under such an impulse, with bowed head he here sends up to heaven his welcome to YAHWEH-CHRIST as EARTH'S COMING KING.

PSALM 100.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Invitation to All the Earth to Come In before Jehovah and Worship.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Invitation to Worship, based on Jehovah's Claims as Creator and Shepherd. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, Renewed Invitation, based on Jehovah's Own Perfections.

[Lm.] Psalm—For a Thank-offering (or For Thanksgiving.)

1 Shout ye unto Jehovah, all the earth!
2 serve Jehovah with gladness,
come in before him with a ringing cry.
3 Know that ||Jehovah, he|| is God,
||he|| made us, and <his> are |we|,[a]—
his people, and the flock of his shepherding.[b]

4 Come into his gates, with thanksgiving,[c]
into his courts with praise,[d]—
give thanks to him, bless his name;
5 For <good> is Jehovah,
<to the ages> his kindness,—
and <unto generation after generation> his faithfulness.

[Nm.]

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[a] So Heb. marg. (*kri=read* preferred by Del., Per., Kp., Br., Dr.). Heb. text (M.T.): "and not we ourselves."

[b] Cp. 79^{13}, 95^{7}, (Isa. 63^{11}).

[c] Or: "a thank-offering."

[d] Or: "a song of praise."

EXPOSITION.

The close connection between this psalm and those immediately preceding it is evident, and at once supplies guidance as to the breadth of the outlook which should be given to the first line as an appeal to **all the earth** rather than to "all the land." It is true that the Hebrew

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word *'erez* means "land" as well as "earth," and further true that once in the foregoing series (96[1]) it has here been rendered "land." But that was for a special passing reason; namely, because of an apparent distinction between a particular "land" and the remaining nations of the earth. Hence, as it cannot be denied that in most of the 15 occurrences of the word in Pss. 94—100, "earth" has far stronger claims to stand in English than the more limited word "land," it is submitted that "earth" is the right word here. The dominant thought of the psalms now closing is that Jehovah is lord of the whole earth and has now entered upon the manifest kingship of all the world; and that no sufficient reason comes in here, at the opening of this new and final psalm, to limit the appeal to a smaller sphere than the whole world. We are not just here following Asaph pleading for the reunion of the tribes, as we were some twenty psalms back; but rather are we under the guidance of Isaiah, who is familiar with the conception that Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem is to be "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56[7]) and that Jehovah purposes to "gather together all nations and tongues to come and see his glory," yea and that "all flesh shall come in and bow down before me, Saith Jehovah" (Isa. 66[18, 23]). Hence we may with reasonable confidence give the fullest possible breadth to the opening invitation: **Shout ye unto Jehovah, all the earth.**

The more firmly we take up this position, the more frankly it becomes us now to submit that the language of the psalm points to the gathering, periodic or otherwise, of all the earth to a local centre: **Come in before** Jehovah—**Come into his gates, into his courts** (ver. 4). And this too is in the spirit of the psalms which have gone before, in which are many local indications: such as **the house of Jehovah, the courts of our God** (92[13])—**Come to meet his face, Come in, let us kneel** (95[2, 6])—**Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary** (96[6])—**Bring ye a present and come into his courts** (96[8])—**Jehovah in Zion is great** (99[2])—**Bow down at his footstool** (99[5])—**Bow down at his holy mountain** (99[9]). So that it is entirely in the vein of these Sabbath-day Services of Song to abide by the local indications in the psalm now before us. These psalms deal with Israel and the Nations. They have already carried us beyond the present intermediate dispensation, having transported us beyond Messiah's Second Advent into the Coming final Theocracy. The Church, indeed, has no local centre, unless it is in heaven. But here we are in touch with the final, earthly Jerusalem; and clearly it does not follow that because the Church has no local, earthly centre, therefore there will be no such centre of worship in the Coming Kingdom. Unless we are

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prepared to turn the whole Old Testament into allegory, a hundred texts are at hand to shew that there will be such a centre in the Final Theocracy. Still (speaking here to Christians), on the principle that "all things are ours" we can rejoice in all that here unveils itself to our admiring eyes; and even in the Ecclesia, we can, in the spirit of trustful anticipation, sing the Songs of the Kingdom. (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom.")

Note, then, what it is which is here set before us: it is nothing less than a worshipping world—a world worshipping with unspeakable gladness, because of what at first sight appear as two primordial truths, which however ultimately resolve themselves into one; namely the relationship to the world as both Creator and Shepherd sustained by Jehovah. This is the inspiration: this the gladness: this the motive and theme of praise. "Ye men of **all the earth, know** this: that **Jehovah**, God of the Hebrew nation, of grace and revelation and redemption is **God** of all the earth; **He made us, and His we are—His people, and the flock of his shepherding.**" If **all the earth** is appealed to, to **shout with gladness** and give **a ringing cry**,—this of necessity is to be the burden of that "ringing cry": which prophetically implies that when this song is sung according to its main intention, all the earth will have come into line with all who know God and rejoice in him as their Shepherding Creator. As Delitzsch has well said: In this announcement, **He made us, and His we are,** "lies a rich store of comfort and warning; for the Creator is also the Owner; His heart clings to his creature; while the latter owes himself entirely to Him, without whom he would neither have had being nor continue to exist." It is worth while to ensure perfect correctness by observing that the Divine relationships to all the earth here celebrated are essentially one. It does not say, "He created us all, and some of us are his people and the flock of his shepherding." That may be the exact truth now; yea, and may have been the exact truth in all past ages. But it is not the whole truth as it is to be realised and rung out with joy in the Final Theocracy; for it is not the whole truth as here set forth by prophetic anticipation. The "various reading" here preferred itself carries us further: **He made us, and His we are—His people.** Not merely "his creatures"; which of itself turns the broader word **made** to excellent account. He made us—what we are, **His people**; He made us—what we are, **His flock.** This opens our eyes to see that **to make** here means more than to create: it includes tending, training, forming our characters. What he makes us to be is not mere men; but good men, communing with him, like him; otherwise we could not be **His people, the flock of his shepherding.**

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Does this lofty conception, when applied to **all the earth**, introduce confusion? It may: if we make of the past an iron-mould for the stereotyping of our thoughts; otherwise, there is no necessity for confusion. God has already had more than one people on the earth: the Jewish nation—now alas in a great measure in abeyance; the Christian Church—sometimes too wise in her own conceits, as for instance when she so far forgets herself as to affirm that "the Church Catholic has been manifestly revealed as that 'mountain of the Lord' unto which, according to prophecy, all nations were to flow."* We have only to let in the thought that as God has had more "peoples" than one in succession to each other, so he may yet have many peoples simultaneously whom he may graciously acknowledge as his own. Of this prospect we have distinct intimations both in Old Testament and New: In the former, in such remarkable words as these—"In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria,—a blessing in the midst of the earth: whom Jehovah of hosts hath blessed saying,—Blessed be my people—the Egyptians, and the work of my hands—the Assyrians, and mine own inheritance—Israel" (Isa. 19^{24}). And in the latter, in such ravishing words as these—"Lo! the tent of God is with men, And he will tabernacle with them, And they shall be his peoples [mark the plural!], And he shall be God with them, And he will wipe away every tear out of their eyes" (Rev. $21^{3,4}$). Confusion disappears when the right perspective is obtained. The glorious prospect therefore is: That in the Final Theocracy all the earth will be able to shout **—Jehovah made us and his we are,—his people and the flock of his shepherding.**

We may perhaps revert to Israel as again singing to all the earth in the words of the second strophe of this delightful psalm: **Come into his gates.** But, in any case, we are prepared for the final observation, that here we have "renewed invitation based on Jehovah's own perfections": **For good is Jehovah, Age-abiding his kindness, And unto generation after generation his faithfulness**; and can weld the essential thoughts of the psalm into a unity by observing that even Divine Creatorship so involves Divine Promise as to give scope to Divine faithfulness; and thus can, with a sense of triumph, point to the harmony of scripture with scripture, by reminding ourselves of the fact that to the Christian Apostle Peter (I. Eph. 4^{19}) we are indebted for the blended noun and adjective which yield the much forgotten but most welcome appellation "FAITHFUL CREATOR."

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* Thrupp, Vol. II., 147.

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PSALM 101.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A King's Resolve to have a pure House and Court and Royal City.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—2a, The Theme of Song Announced and Applied to the Conduct becoming, and based upon, Jehovah's Presence. Strophe II., vers. 2b—4, Personal Blamelessness Outlined. Strophes III. and IV., vers. 5—8, The Blamelessness Demanded of Others to secure a City Worthy of Jehovah.

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.

1 *<Of kindness and justice> fain would I sing,*
<to thee, O Jehovah> would I sweep the strings.[a]
2 *I would act circumspectly in a blameless way—*
When comest thou unto me?

I will behave in the blamelessness[b] of my heart—
in the midst of my house:
3 I will not set before mine eyes—
a thing that is vile:[c]
<The doing of swerving deeds> I hate—
it shall not cleave to me;
4 ||A crooked heart|| shall depart from me—
<wrong> will I not approve.

5 ||He that slandereth, in secret, his friend||—
<him> will I exterminate:
||The lofty of eyes and arrogant of heart||—
<him> will I not suffer.
6 ||Mine eyes|| are on the faithful of the land—
to dwell[d] with me,
||He that walketh in a blameless way||—
||he|| shall minister unto me.

7 <There shall not dwell[e] in the midst of my house>—
a doer of deceit:
||A speaker of falsehoods|| shall not be established—
before mine eyes,
8 <Morning by morning> will I exterminate—
all the lawless of the land,
To cut off, out of the city of Jehovah—
all the workers of iniquity.[f]

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "harp," or "play."
[b] Or: "singleness," "devotion," (ml.) "wholeness."
[c] Ml.: "an affair of Belial (The abandoned one)."
[d] Or: "to sit" (as assessors in judging).
[e] Or: "sit down" (as a guest).
[f] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm, it will be noticed, is attributed **To David**; and there seems to be no good reason why this assignment should not be trusted. The lofty moral tone which breathes through it, is in every way worthy of the Son of Jesse in his young and noble days, when he came to the throne of Israel, and particularly when he brought the Sacred Ark up to Jerusalem. The **kindness** and **justice** of Jehovah's own character, when reflected by a King and his Court, would call forth just such resolute purity and nobleness of conduct as are sketched through the psalm. We can almost feel the hand of Jehovah upon his servant David; and can easily believe that by this time the trembling fear caused by the visitation upon Uzza is being mellowed by patience into a longing desire that Jehovah would without further delay come and dwell in the city of his choice. He thinks of the scrupulous conduct which would become himself in welcoming so Holy a Guest; and then suddenly prays for that supporting Presence which could alone enable him to reach his ideal: **When comest thou unto me?** The language vibrates between fear and hope. Hope becoming the stronger feeling, the psalmist arises to the occasion and promises the personal conduct which he knows will alone please: **I will behave in the blamelessness of my heart.** And first in his **house**—his home! in himself. His ideals should be lofty; his deeds unswerving; his mind straight; his approbation reserved for that only which was right. From himself he passes to those he must have about him. He had suffered enough from **slanderers** in the court of Saul to think of trusting them now, even though they might fawn upon him. The **conceited**, the **assuming**—these he knew he could not endure. He would keep his eyes open and draw to himself the right men from among **the faithful of the land.** Whether as **assessors** on the seats of justice or as **guests** in his home he would call to himself the men who would create the desirable atmosphere, guard him from his weaknesses, gladly help on his plans: especially the men who would tell him the truth. Probably with the early morning tribunals in mind, and in the full consciousness of his autocratic power, he almost alarms us by declaring that **morning by morning** he **will exterminate all the lawless of the land.** We may sufficiently reassure ourselves, not to draw hasty inferences in favour of indiscriminate autocracy, by noting well that the sphere of this King's action is **the city of Jehovah**: Jehovah's own representative, acting in Jehovah's presence, in Jehovah's city. These are not conditions that can be reproduced anywhere, any day, by any one. In point of fact: If we have here speaking, either David personally, or any of David's Sons, then we have speaking a type of the

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Messiah: who shall one day autocratically govern in that Final Theocracy of which we have been recently reading. At the same time we do well to remind ourselves that Government, when most Divine, is least arbitrary; and that this whole psalm, forcible as it truly is against evil-doers, is dominated by the word with which it begins; and that the Theocracy which Divine justice regulates Divine Kindness founds.

PSALM 102.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Prayer of a Humbled One brings a Threefold Answer of Peace.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—11, A Humbled One's Complaint. Strophe II., vers. 12—17. The FIRST CONCLUSION, Adapting the psalm to the Close of the Captivity in Babylon. Strophe III., vers. 18—22, The SECOND CONCLUSION, Adapting the psalm to a Future Generation. Strophe IV., vers. 23—28, The Original Conclusion now placed at the Close of the Composite Psalm.

[I.m.] **Prayer—By the Humbled One when he fainteth and before Jehovah poureth out his Soliloquy.**[a]

1 Jehovah! oh hear my prayer,
and let ||my cry for help|| <unto thee> come in.
2 Do not hide thy face from me,
<in the day of my distress> incline thine ear unto me;
<in the day I keep calling> haste thee, answer me;
3 For <vanished in[b] smoke> are my days,
and ||my bones|| <like a hearth> are burned through.[c]
4 <Smitten like herbage and withered> is my heart,
for I have forgotten to eat my bread.
5 <By reason of the noise of my groaning>
cleaveth my bone to my flesh.
6 I am like a pelican of the desert,
I am become like an owl of the ruins:
7 I have watched and moaned,[d] like a solitary bird on a roof.
8 <All the day> have mine enemies |reproached me|,
||they who are mad against me|| <by me> have sworn.[e]
9 For <ashes like bread> have I eaten,
and <my drink with my tears> have I mingled,—
10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath;
for thou hast lifted me up and flung me away.
11 ||My days|| are like a shadow that is stretched-out,
and ||I myself|| <like herbage> shall dry up.

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[a] Or: "murmuring," "complaint."
[b] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.); "like"—Gn.
[c] So Dr., Del.
[d] So *Gt.* Cp. Ps. 55[17]—Gn.
[e] Cp. Isa. 65[15], Jer. 29[22], "He who swears by one in misfortune says 'May I bear the like if I break my faith.'"—T.G. 802.

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12 But ||thou, Jehovah|| <to the ages> sittest (enthroned),
and thy memorial[a] is to generation after generation.
13 ||Thou|| wilt arise, and have compassion upon Zion,
for it is time to shew her favour,[b] for the set time |hath come| :
14 For thy servants |take pleasure| in her stones,
and <on her dust> look with favour.
15 So will the nations |revere| the name of Jehovah,
and all the kings of the earth, thy glory :
16 Because Jehovah |hath built up| Zion —
hath appeared in his glory,
17 Hath turned unto the prayer of the destitute—
and hath not despised their prayer.

18 Let this |be written| for a generation to come,
and let ||a people to be created|| offer praise unto Yah :
19 That he hath looked forth from his holy height,[c]
||Jehovah|| <from the heavens unto the earth> hath directed his gaze :
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner,[d]
to loose such as are appointed to die :[e]
21 That they may tell, in Zion, of the name of Jehovah,
and ||his praise|| in Jerusalem :
22 When the peoples |are gathered| together,[f]
and ||the kingdoms|| to serve Jehovah.

23 He hath humbled,[g] in the way, my[h] strength,[i]
he hath shortened my days.
24 I say—"My GOD! do not take me away in the midst of my days,
<through the generation of generations> are thy years:
25 <Of old, the earth> thou didst found,
and <the work of thy hands> are the heavens:[j]
26 ||They|| shall perish, but ||thou|| shalt endure,
and ||they all|| <like a garment> shall wear out,—
<as a vesture> shalt thou change them and they shall vanish ;
27 But thou art ||the Same||,[k]
and thy years shall have no end :
28 ||The sons of thy servants|| shall abide,
and ||their seed|| <before thee> shall be established."

[Nm.]

[a] Cp. Exo. 3[15]. Some cod. "thy throne"—Gn.
[b] Or: "to be gracious unto her."
[c] Cp. Isa. 63[15].
[d] Isa. 42[7], 61[1], Ps. 79[11].
[e] Ml.: "the sons of death."
[f] Isa. 60[4].
[g] The Heb. word here may be either "humbled" or "answered."
[h] Ancient authorities are divided between "my" and "his."
[i] For the effect of these variations see Exposition.
[j] Cp. Isa. 48[13], 44[24].
[k] Ml.: "he" "That is He who *is* (as opposed to the transitory fabric of the world)" —Dr. Cp. Deu. 32[39], Isa. 41[4], 43[10], 46[4], 48[12].

EXPOSITION.

The marked structural peculiarities of this psalm are probably best explained by the supposition that it was at first the soliloquy of an individual, and was afterwards adapted for national use on two successive occasions. The first and last strophes (vers. 1—11 and

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23—28) in all likelihood constituted the original psalm. The former of these is mainly a prolonged *complaint*, which may well have been written by or for King Hezekiah, since it strikingly meets his case, and runs closely parallel with his prayer as preserved in Isaiah 38. Throughout this strophe the personal note predominates—it is **I** and **me** all the way through; and the observable thing is, that there is no return to this personal note until verse 23 is reached, on the recurrence of which, however, we are again reminded of Hezekiah,—for, who so likely as he to have said—**Take me not away in the midst of my days!** and although, even then, the psalm does not close exactly as we might have expected Hezekiah to close it, yet nothing inconsistent comes in: the personal note still prevails, though only in the lofty strain which sets the abiding personality of Jehovah over against the frail and fleeting personality of the suppliant. Precisely how this contrast could have seemed to be a pertinent Divine response to the long drawn-out wail of the personal sufferer, it may be that a sacrificed line or phrase would have clearly shewn. As a working hypothesis, however, we can easily assume that these two personally dominated strophes formed the original Hezekian psalm.

Time rolls on. The great exile to Babylon for seventy years takes place. Towards the close of this period, some gifted scribe observes the striking *parallel* between the afflicted *king* and the afflicted *nation;* and, to adapt the old psalm to new conditions, especially to hearten and prepare his people for a return to the Fatherland to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, he introduces the present Second Strophe (vers. 12—17). It would seem to be prejudiced and arbitrary *not* to suppose some such occasion for the touching allusions to Jerusalem's **stones** and **dust,** and especially the inspiriting belief that the **set time** to **compassionate Zion** had now arrived, which this strophe includes. Looking again through this second strophe with these thoughts in mind, we are, on the one hand, no longer surprised to find in it no further reference to the original suppliant King; but, on the other hand, we easily realise how perfectly in keeping it is with the national intention suggested that the psalmist should indulge in a purely national outlook; a sort of glorified forecast of the grand things now to be expected by the redeemed and renewed Chosen People. The poet rises to a prophetic anticipation of those coming good things, when not only should **Zion** have been **re-built,** but **Jehovah** have **appeared in his glory,** and in every way have signally **turned to** and **not despised** the prayer of the as yet **destitute** nation.

But as time passes, it is realised that the *Return itself* is only feebly and by instalments accomplished; and especially that, as yet,

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there are no signs of the friendly **gathering of nations** to witness **Jehovah's glory** and **to serve him** which the prophets—especially Isaiah—had led them to expect. Hence a further addition is made to this now national psalm, by a significant intimation that the main fulfilment of it awaits **a coming generation**: even if a new Israel has to be **created** to witness its complete accomplishment, the promises of Jehovah shall be ultimately fulfilled. Jehovah, meanwhile, is not indifferent; but wherever, under the whole heavens, there are prisoners belonging to Israel crying to him in their misery, there his eye rests, thence the cry comes into his ears. The prisoners are to be released—to come to Zion—to rehearse in Jerusalem Jehovah's praise under circumstances most auspicious: **When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.** No doubt the picture is an *ideal* one: only to be made *real* after unforeseen delays. For, as Kirkpatrick well says, in abatement of our surprise that, "As a matter of fact the return was an insignificant event, and no startling results immediately followed it":—"*Prophecy constantly combines in one view the nearer and the remoter future, depicting the eventual result, without indicating the steps by which it is to be reached.*"

Another easy movement, and the structure of the whole psalm is accounted for. After the two additions contained in Strophes II. and III. had been made, it may then have been observed by a final editor that the original close of the personal psalm still held good, furnishing a most fitting conclusion for the whole composite psalm; which was therefore added,—quite possibly by Ezra, with or without a finishing touch to complete the unification of the whole as one of the Songs of Zion.

Probably there are but few present-day readers of the psalms who cannot find assistance in some such modest theory of origin of this psalm as the foregoing. Better far so to apprehend how the psalm *may* have assumed its present form, than to be driven to the unwelcome conclusion that it is radically and irremediably incoherent; seeing especially that such a conclusion is likely to foster the deplorable habit of regarding Holy Scripture as a mere fetish, whose chief value lies in a meaningless repetition of sounds in which sense is at a discount.

The reasons for regarding ver. 23 as originally continuous with ver. 11 will become more and more evident on examination. Not only does the personal element then reappear after being so long in abeyance, but it reappears with the same theme uppermost: ver. 11 is speaking of **my days**, and it is to **my days** that ver. 23 returns.

It is no doubt a little disconcerting to observe that, just where this junction reveals itself, there some difficulty should appear as to both

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"rendering" and "reading." As to "rendering," attention may be called to the undoubted fact that the very first word in verse 23 (*'anah*) may be rendered either "humbled," as in this translation, or "answered," as in the ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. As to "reading," it is not to be denied that on the length of a single down-stroke it depends whether the affixed pronoun to the noun "strength" be "my" or "his" —"my strength" or "his strength." If the latter were clearly ruled out by the context, we might serenely disregard it; and, as a fact, it is declined in this translation on the ground of a smaller amount of probability in its favour. Yet by no means so decisively declined as to make it unworthy of further notice. Not only is there the circumstance to be reckoned with that in some Hebrew copies and in the Sep. and Vul. versions the pronoun "his" is preferred; but there is the further stubborn fact to be admitted that the Septuagint has woven out of the two doubtful elements an entirely different result from that which appears above and in our public versions (A.V., R.V., and P.B.V.); the Septuagint rendering being as follows: "He answered him in the way of his strength: tell me the shortness of my days. Do not take me away," &c. It is perhaps impossible to be quite sure that there is nothing of importance in this ancient result; although, of course, it *may* be merely an ancient mistake in construing the original Hebrew text: hence it is here passed on for the respectful consideration of candid critics; and the more readily, because of a slight misgiving that something further than now appears originally stood here—something *possibly* tending to set forth Hezekiah as a type of the Messiah in respect of **the shortening** of his **days**. Suffice it to have called attention to this remarkable variation; in order now to resume a working assurance, sincerely felt, that in the "rendering" and "reading" followed in the text of this translation, as near an approach to absolute truth is made as our present means admit. It may be reassuring to observe that nothing further is here at stake than simply the precise terms in which verse 23 should appear as the original continuation of verse 11. Even the Septuagint rendering could still be said to resume the *personal* strain of the psalm in respect of the **days** of the individual sufferer. These nice points being thus disposed of, we are fairly entitled to review the psalm as a whole in regard to its larger outstanding features.

The one thing which nothing can hide is the grandeur of the psalm: the way in which it sets over against the afflictions of the man and the afflictions of the nation, the eternity and elevation of Jehovah. Because of the stability of his throne and the inexhaustible resources of his being, there is hope for the nation; and because of the eternity of his

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years, there is solace for the individual—though *this* is implied rather than expressed in the present psalm. It seems to be implied in the sudden transition made by the suppliant (in ver. 24) from his own **days** to the eternal **years**: as much as to say—"Why needest thou, whose **years** run on from generation to generation, cut down by one half my allotted **days**, few as they are at most?" That, after all, the hope of the individual should be left thus, rather implied than expressed, may be attributed to the fact that as yet "life and incorruption have not been illumined by the Gospel."

No such feebleness of expression can be affirmed of this psalm as regards the *national* hope. It is marvellous how strongly these holy men of old assert and reassert this. Zion is to be so favoured as to cause **the nations to revere the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth his glory.** Not only will Jehovah **build up Zion,** but he himself **will appear in his glory.** When the imprisoned Israelites are released, they will come to Zion and rehearse their story. Concurrently with this—so the psalmist intimates—there will be **a gathering of peoples of kingdoms—to serve Jehovah.** The significance of these assurances ought on the face of them to be beyond dispute or doubt; especially when viewed in the light of Isaiah's predictions and of the Theocratic psalms (92—99) which we have lately studied. To allege that these foretellings are now being fulfilled in the Church, is not only to rob Israel, but it is to degrade the Church from her heavenly calling and to throw all scripture into confusion. It is respectfully submitted that Christian theologians ought to know the Pauline Epistles better than thus to teach.

The above allusion to the "Theocratic Psalms" suffices to remind us that, here as well as there, what is affirmed of Jehovah in the psalm is in the Epistle to the Hebrews alleged to have been spoken "of the Son." Some expositors of the Psalms have shewn solicitude to discover this reference to the Son in this psalm as clearly as by the statement in the Epistle it might seem it ought to be discoverable; and it was partly from sympathy with that expectation, that care was taken to admit that all doubt could not at present be said to have been conclusively set at rest as to the exact terms of the original resumption of Hezekiah's psalm at verse 23. One able critic, at any rate, sees in the circumstance that the Divine name in verse 24 is *El* rather than *Elohim*, a probable note of transition to "the Son." However this may be, it will probably be a relief to plain Christians to rest in the apparently well-warranted conclusion, that the radical significance of the **Memorial** name **Jehovah** —as "Yahweh," "the Becoming One," renders the transition easy, when context and circumstance require it, to Him who in the fulness of time

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"*became* flesh and tabernacled among us." As already suggested when expounding the Theocratic psalms, whenever visible Divine Manifestation is implied, then some veiling of Absolute Deity must also be understood; and this veil Christians already possess in Jesus on whom our Apostle Paul explicitly teaches "was graciously bestowed The Name which is above every name" (Philippians 2^9).

PSALM 103.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Bless Jehovah; for He is Worthy.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Bless Jehovah: For his Personal Dealings. Strophe II., vers. 6—10, For his Revealed Character. Strophe III., vers. 11—14, For his Kindness, Forgiveness, Compassion, and Considerateness. Strophe IV., vers. 15—18, For the Continuity of his Dealings, in Contrast with Man's Frailty. Strophe V., vers. 19—22, For the Permanence and Universality of his Kingdom, let All his Creatures Bless Him.

[Lm.] By David.

1 *Bless Jehovah, O my soul,*
and all within me, his holy name:
2 *Bless Jehovah, O my soul,*
and forget not any of his dealings:—
3 who pardoneth all thine iniquities,[a]
who healeth all thy diseases,
4 who redeemeth, from the pit, thy life,
who crowneth thee with kindness and compassions,
5 who satisfieth, with good, thy desire,[b]
thy youth |reneweth itself like an eagle|.[c]

6 <A doer of acts of righteousness> is Jehovah,
and acts of vindication, for all who are oppressed:
7 Who made known his ways to Moses,
||to the sons of Israel|| his doings:—
8 <*Compassionate and gracious*> *is Jehovah,*
slow to anger, and abundant in kindness.[d]
9 <Not perpetually> will he contend,
nor to the ages retain [anger]:
10 <Not according to our sins> hath he done to us,
<nor according to our iniquities> hath he dealt with us.

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[a] So (pl.) some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Sep., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "iniquity" (sing.)
[b] So Sep. "Supplication"—Del. "Age"—Carter. "Spirit"—Leeser.
[c] Or: "vulture." So Dr.
[d] Cp. Exo. $34^{6.7}$. The Refrain of the Bible (see "The Emphasised Bible").

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11 For <as the heavens |are exalted| over the earth>
<exalted>[a] is his kindness over such as revere him:
12 <As |far| as the east is from the west>
hath he put |far| from us our transgressions:
13 <Like the compassion of a father on sons>
is the compassion of Jehovah on such as revere him;
14 For ||he|| knoweth how we are formed,[b]
putteth himself in mind, that <dust> are |we|.

15 ||Weak man||— <like grass> are his days,
<Like the blossom of the field> <so> doth he blossom:
16 <When ||a wind|| hath passed over it> then it is not,
nor <acquainted with it any more> is its place.
17 But ||the kindness of Jehovah|| is from age to age,
on such as revere him,
And ||his righteousness|| is unto children's children,
18 unto such as keep his covenant
and unto such as remember his precepts to do them.

19 ||Jehovah||— <in the heavens> hath he established his throne,
and ||his kingdom|| <over all> hath dominion.
20 *Bless Jehovah*, ye[c] his messengers,
heroes of vigour, doers of his word,—
hearkening to the voice of his word:
21 *Bless Jehovah*, all ye his hosts,
his attendants, doers of his pleasure:
22 *Bless Jehovah*, all ye his works,
in all places of his dominion:
Bless Jehovah, *O my soul.*

[Nm.]

[a] So *Gt.*—Gn. M.T.: "Mighty"
[b] Ml. "our formation."
[c] Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "all ye"—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

The superscription of this psalm is **By David**, and the few grammatical peculiarities found in the psalm itself are probably insufficient to discredit this ancient literary tradition; since, according to Chwolson, quoted by Thirtle (O.T.P. 29), those peculiarities may be merely "genuine ancient Hebrew grammatical forms accidentally retained." By whomsoever written, this sacred song breathes a deeply devotional and tenderly trustful spirit: whoever has sins to mourn or sorrows to carry may find therein solace or instruction.

I. Bless Jehovah, for his Personal Dealings.

Ver. 1. **Bless**, as on bended knee, **Jehovah** *(Yahweh)* "the Becoming One," who, out of his own Divine resources, can supply all creature-need: **O my soul**, my true inner self, realising thy complete person-

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ality in and through all the parts and powers wherewith thou art endowed. **And all within me,** especially my "heart" or *mind,* and my "reins" or *impulses;* (bless) **his holy name,** as the summarised expression of his revealed person and character.

Ver. 2. **Bless Jehovah, O my soul;** for thus again I address thee, that is myself; "I" being subject and object, inspector and inspected, teacher and taught in one; able to project myself from myself, to look at and examine myself, to encourage and admonish myself; and, therefore, by reason of the mysterious complexity of my being, responsible for my state and conduct before God. Thou, O my soul, thus gifted, use the ready instrument of self-discipline, thy memory: **Forget not any of his dealings:** his **benefits,** if thou wilt,—but have not all his "dealings" been "benefits," though sometimes in disguise? forget not **any** of his dealings, for whereas it would be difficult to forget them "all," be it thy care, as far as may be, that thou forget **none,** since the forgotten mercy or chastisement may be that which thou dost now most need to recall. (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul.")

Vers. 3—5. **Who**—that is **Jehovah** (five times repeated!). By the help of these pronouns, catechise thyself, O my soul! How many of these appeal to thee? Knowest thou nothing of **the pardon of thine iniquities**—thus searchingly put first, as most concerning thee? Even of **the healing of thy diseases** art thou unmindful? Has **thy life** never been **redeemed** from **the pit** of Hades? Have no garlands of Divine **kindness** and **compassions** ever decked thy brow? On what numberless occasions have not thy lawful **desires** been **satisfied**—desires for food, sleep, rest and countless other mercies; and canst thou forget **Who** it is that, through all channels, has been the bountiful satisfier of thy craving? Dost thou arise each morning a **new** man, still in thy **youth** right down to old age, and canst thou forget whose recreative energy it is that thus worketh within thee?

II. For his Revealed Character.

Vers. 6—10. Nor is this all, O my soul. He who has become all this to thee, has revealed and made public his character; by **acts of righteousness** fulfilling his promises, by **acts of vindication for all who are oppressed,** chiefly by bringing Israel out of Egypt, approving himself of old to the confidence of his people, **making known his ways unto Moses, and his doings to the sons of Israel;** especially proclaiming himself to the former as **Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger and Abundant in Kindness;** thereby giving occasion to "The Refrain of the Bible" (see Emphasised Bible on Exo. $34^{6\ 7}$)—of which hast thou not heard, O my soul?—a Refrain running through

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the Holy Scriptures, and shewing how holy men remembered and pleaded it in times of national trouble? In harmony with which Refrain, thou mayest confidently reckon, O my soul, that although Jehovah may long complain, yet will he **Not perpetually contend**; although he "leave not altogether unpunished, but visiteth the iniquity of fathers on sons and upon son's sons unto a third and unto a fourth generation," yet **Not age-abidingly, Not age-without end,** will he **retain** the sinner in being, and his **anger** against the sinner; seeing that he himself has declared that before his perpetual wrath no spirit could abide (Isa. 57^{16}). Therefore, be thou sure, O my soul, that even in his most awful visitations he never ceases to deserve thy praise; while, as to thyself and thy brethren, thou canst still say, **Not according to our sins hath he done to us, Nor according to our iniquities hath he dealt with us.** For his revealed character, then,—**Bless Jehovah, O my soul.**

III. For his Kindness, Forgiveness, and Considerateness.

Ver. 11. Lift up thine eyes on high, O my soul, and see how **lofty** are those overarching **heavens**: in like manner, **lofty** beyond all thought and hope is Jehovah's **kindness** over **these who revere him.**

Ver. 12. Canst thou measure from **east** to **west,** when each recedes as thou approachest? So neither canst thou mete the distance to which he removes from thee the transgressions which he forgives. "The wages of sin is death"; but "in his favour is life"; and these can never meet and mingle.

Ver. 13. Thou knowest **the compassion of a father on his sons,** how like it is to the compassion (from *r-ch-m* = "womb") of a mother for her babe. Thou, then, only **revere him** and such tender Divine compassion shall rest on thee.

Ver. 14. Do thy source in **dust,** and thy continued kinship therewith, ever enfeeble and hamper thee, in the service thou wouldst fain render him; doth thy temper fail because thy nerves are unstrung; hast thou to cease from work, even for him, because thou art weary, hungry, cold? Be of good cheer: he knows it all, he made thee thus. **He puts himself in mind** that, even where the spirit is willing, the flesh may be weak.

IV. For the Continuity of his Dealings in Contrast with Man's Frailty.

Vers. 15 and 16. Art thou discouraged, O my soul, because of the frailty of thy being and the brevity of thy **days,** so like the withering **grass** and the fading **blossom**? Shrinkest thou from the nipping **wind** that shall cut thee off, and from the thought that the vacancy

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thou leavest will soon be filled and thou shalt be missed no more? Yet hear thou again.

Vers. 17, 18. Not so is **the kindness of Jehovah**, even with regard to thee. It has perpetuating ways of its own. It descendeth from generation to generation. Thy progenitors are gone? Yea, but leaving behind for thee a legacy of blessing, in so far as they revered Jehovah in their day. Thou, therefore, in like manner, mayest leave a blessing behind thee: only teach thou thy children how to inherit it. And of this be sure: that in the end **righteousness** and **faithfulness** and **obedience** shall prove stronger than sin. Therefore still "Bless Jehovah."

V. For the Permanence and Universality of his Kingdom.

Ver. 19. The object of thine adoration is supreme, for it is **Jehovah** himself whom thou wouldst bless. Beyond him is there none; outside his **dominion** is there none: **in the heavens,** high above this earth, **hath he established his throne;** just to the degree, therefore, to which he comes to reign on earth, he must needs bring heaven with him. **And his kingdom over all hath dominion;** therefore are there no beings unaccountable to him, therefore is there no creature-freedom uncircumscribed by him, therefore can there never be any events not subservient to his rule. Moral evil can only enter and stay in his dominions as long as he permits. This, O my soul, is thy safety and stay. My soul, thou art the richer, that there are heavens, within the compass of which are gathered subjects of thy King; for, although the Creator might be above all locality, yet not so the creature; and therefore it is a joy to thee to think of inhabited heavens, especially if and so far as they are peopled by loyal fellow-subjects of thine. Thine emotions must needs go forth to them. They may not hear thine appeal to them, save through their Sovereign and thine; yet wouldst thou fain emulate or even provoke their devotions, and feel the ecstasy of fellowship as they bless Jehovah.

Ver. 20. **Bless Jehovah, ye his messengers** whose privilege it is, when ye have entered his presence and listened to his commanding **word,** to depart on your several errands of state, thus making good your official name, in which alone ye appear to delight: with swiftness ye fly, with **heroic vigour** ye execute, with loyal promptness ye return **to hearken again** to your Sovereign Lord.

Ver. 21. **Bless Jehovah, all ye his** waiting **hosts, his attendants,** abiding more continually in his presence, **doers of his pleasure,** howsoever made known, by look, by hint, by perceived need and fitness, by inward impulse—**his** pleasure, not your own.

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Ver. 22. **Bless Jehovah, all ye his works, in all places of his dominion**: whether with reason, or with instinct; or with neither, leaving it to more favoured ones to perceive your use and beauty and render praise for the same, becoming interpreters of your parts and powers, and employing you to rise the higher towards the Divine Throne. And, both first and last, chiefly thou, finding thyself in such large and glorious fellowship as thou humbly tenderest thine adorations, —**Bless Jehovah, O my soul.**

PSALM 104.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Creation Hymn.

ANALYSIS.—It is difficult to frame an Analysis of this psalm. The course of thought and observation followed therein bears Some Resemblance to the Method Pursued in Gen. 1^1—2^3; but the Differences are Considerable. So far as the psalm submits itself to external measurement, it may be said that 10-line strophes prevail; but two out of the six run up to 20 and 17 lines respectively. The chief *refrain* of the previous psalm is repeated here. There is here no Superscribed Line, as to the previous psalm there was no Subscribed Line: probably furnishing evidence that the Two Psalms at an early time became Practically One.

[Lm. None]

1 *Bless Jehovah, O my soul!*
Jehovah, my God, thou art exceeding great,
<Majesty and state> hast thou put on:
2 Wrapping thyself in light as a mantle,
stretching out the heavens as a tent-curtain:
3 who layeth, in the waters, the beams of his upper-chambers,
who maketh the clouds his chariot,
who walketh on the wings of the wind:
4 Making his messengers winds,[a]
his attendants fire [and] flame.[a]

5 He hath founded the earth on its bases,
it shall not be shaken, to the ages and beyond:
6 <With the deep, as a garment> hast thou covered it,
<above the mountains> the waters take their stand:
7 <At thy rebuke> they flee,
<at the voice of thy thunder> they hurry away—
8 Mountains |rise|, valleys between them |sink|—
into the place which thou hast founded for them:
9 <A boundary> hast thou set, they shall not overpass,
they shall not again cover the earth.

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[a] Or: "Making his messengers of winds His attendants of fire and flame."

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10 Who sendeth forth springs into the torrent-beds,
<Between the mountains> they flow along:
11 They give drink to all the wild beasts of the plain,
the wild asses |break| their thirst:
12 <Above[a] them> |the bird of the heaven| settleth down
<from amidst the foliage> they utter a voice.
13 He watereth[b] the mountains out of his upper chambers,
<of the fruit of thy works> the earth taketh her fill.
14 He causeth[c] grass to spring up for the cattle,
and herb for the service of man,[d]
that he may bring forth[e] bread out of the earth;
15 And ||wine|| rejoiceth man's heart,
that he may cause[f] [his] face to shine with oil;
and ||bread|| sustaineth |man's heart|.
16 The trees of Jehovah |take their fill|,
the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted:
17 Where |the birds| build their nests,
||as for the stork|| |fir trees|[g] are her house:
18 ||Mountains that are high|| are for the wild-goats,
||the crags|| are a refuge for the rock-badger.[h]

19 He hath made the moon for stated seasons,
||the sun|| knoweth his place for going in:
20 <Cause thou darkness> and it becometh night,
<in it, creepeth forth> every wild beast of the forest:
21 ||The young lions|| are roaring for prey,
and seeking, from GOD, their food:
22 <Let the sun |arise|> they withdraw,
and <in their lairs> they lay them down:
23 <Forth goeth> man to his work,
and to his labour until evening.

24 |How many| are thy works, O Jehovah!
<all of them, in wisdom> hast thou made;
the earth |is full| of thy possessions.[i]
25 ||Yonder|| is the sea, great, and broad on both hands,
||There|| are gliding things innumerable;
Living things, small with great:
26 ||There|| |ships| sail along,
leviathan[k], which thou hast formed to play therein:[l]
27 ||All of them|| <for thee> do wait,
that thou mayest give [them] their food in its season:
28 Thou givest unto them, they gather,
thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good:
29 Thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed,
thou withdrawest their spirit,[m] they cease to breathe.
and <unto their dust> do they return:
30 Thou sendest forth thy Spirit,[m] they are created,
and thou renewest the face of the ground.

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[a] Or: "Beside."
[b] Ml.: "Watering."
[c] Ml.: "Causing."
[d] Or: "mankind."
[e] Or simply: "To bring forth."
[f] Or simply: "To cause."
[g] Or: "cypresses."
[h] So Del. (adding "rather *Hyrax syriacus*") "Rock-rabbit"—Dr.
[i] Or: "acquisitions." Or (Dr.) "productions." Some authorities have the word in the sing.
[k] "Whale"—O.G. "A general term for all 'sea-monsters'"—Per.
[l] Or: "with him."
[m] Or: "breath"—so Dr. and Per. twice. Shd. be both alike.

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31 Let the glory of Jehovah be age-abiding,
let Jehovah |rejoice| in his works:
32 Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,
he toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.
33 I would fain sing to Jehovah while I live,
I would harp to my God while I continue:
34 <Pleasing unto him> be my soliloquy,
||I myself|| will rejoice in Jehovah.
35 Let sinners |come to an end|[a] out of the earth,
and ||lawless ones|| |no longer| exist.
Bless Jehovah, O my soul!

[Nm.][b]

[a] "Be consumed" —Per., Dr. "Vanish"— Del.

[b] See 105 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

In the words of Perowne, "here we have a picture which for truth and depth of colouring, for animation, tenderness, beauty, has never been surpassed." Leaving the reader to mark and admire the poetic features of the psalm for himself, attention may be called to the weighty theologic lessons here taught.

1. In the *first* place: Jehovah is here represented as BEFORE, ABOVE, AND BEYOND his works. The **honour and majesty** in which he reveals himself are external to himself—he **puts** them **on**; **light** is the **mantle** in which he **enwraps himself**. Yet there are means by which he makes himself known; and they suggest the idea of eyes needed to observe them, minds susceptible of being impressed by them—they are relative terms.

2. In the *next* place: Jehovah is revealed as PRESENT in the midst of his works. The space curtained in by the outspread heavens is his tent, wherein he dwells; for no other Presence is suggested in that connection. Yet he is himself unseen. The wind itself we see not, save in its effects: how much less can we behold him who **walks** on its **wings**. Even this tent, indeed, cannot contain him: he has **upper chambers** into which our eyes cannot penetrate.

3. Nevertheless, it is HERE that the interest of the psalm is CONCENTRATED. This sun and moon, these stars, those mountains, yonder sea, together with the living creatures large and small thus brought under our notice: these are sufficient to impress the psalmist with their **number**, with the **wisdom** displayed in their formation, with the **richness** of their Creator in possessing them, and with the **pleasure** he takes in them. It would be rash to infer, alone from this concentration of

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interest, that this world is eternal; but assuredly we are led to expect that it is destined to become the theatre of important Divine dealings.

4. Noting, in passing, that the position assigned to MAN in this psalm is—if not exactly a subordinate one—certainly one less exalted than that assigned him in the Genesis account—it becomes the more observable how prominent a place is given to the ANIMAL WORLD. It is not simply that animals are here seen lovingly gathered around their Creator, feeding as it were out of his hand; but that, in them, the alternations of life and death are illustrated in a remarkably suggestive manner. Animals are sentient beings; they are breathing creatures, whose breath is in their nostrils; and in these respects they are akin to man. It would almost appear as though their kinship with man were utilised to furnish object-lessons for man himself. Animals live as long as they breathe: so do men. The breathing power of animals is a divine gift; and, when it is withdrawn, they cease to breathe: so it is with men. Man's breath or spirit, answers to, or is correlated with God's breath or spirit. The same word *ruah* expresses either "breath" or "spirit" or both. The consecutive use of the term in this psalm is profoundly suggestive; because the law of continuity strongly operates to bring the breath of the creature into line with the breath of the Creator; and the breath of the Creator is itself creative. **Thou withdrawest their ruah, they cease to breathe: thou sendest forth thy ruah, they are created.** It does not matter which English word is used, provided the continuity is kept up. Say—"their breath . . . thy breath," then the phrase "thy breath" is uplifted into the significance of "thy life-giving spirit," for it cannot be less than that. Say—"their spirit . . . thy spirit," then "spirit" in the former member of the sentence must be lowered sufficiently to allow animals to partake of it, *at least as a loan from God.* To deny "spirit" to animals is to deny them life. To assert that, because man has "spirit," therefore he is deathless, is by consequence to assert far too much of animals, unless we are prepared to affirm that they too are immortal. Beyond all this lies the weighty question—How far "spirit" enters into the individuality of animals—the personality of men: as to which, Biblical evidence must be elsewhere sought. But just here, in this and similar texts, the alphabet of the subject is to be found—at least if it is Biblical psychology we seek.

5. Of like interest and value is the side-light here thrown on the essential meaning of the word "CREATION": **Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; Thou renewest the face of the ground.** This is startling: it is nothing less than subversive of certain popular but very superficial views on the subject of creation. If creation is

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essentially *the making of something out of nothing*, then creation denies procreation; and assumes that every new generation of animals comes direct from God, without parentage after its kind; inasmuch as we have here presented, not the original stocking of the earth with animal life, but the **renewal** which is continually supplying the vacancies caused by death. The fact is, that God holds all life in his own hand: all living things "live and move and have their being in him." If this is true of animals, much more is it true of men. God is "the God of the spirits of all flesh": in every living thing save the first, concur both procreation and creation, the parental contribution and the divine. God is the father of our spirits. I am God's creature, as well as my parent's child. If to create is to make a new thing—to embody an original idea—then there is something new and distinctive in every creature which Jehovah has made. Probably no two animals were ever perfectly alike: one may feel certain that no two men ever were. The differentia of men should amplify as well as radiate the glory of God.

6. There is something singularly IMPRESSIVE in the last strophe of this magnificent psalm. Therein the personality of the psalmist starts forth afresh into bold relief. The psalm started with emotion, brought over from the previous psalm. Then for a moment it flashed forth (in 1b and following lines) with a direct address to Jehovah, so supplying an element remarkably wanting in the foregoing psalm. But, having offered this personal greeting to his God, the psalmist's own personality quietly falls into the background; and, though you follow the pointing of his finger as he directs you to look at object after object, and do just perceive the vibration of his voice as he bursts out in adoration at ver. 24, he gives you no time to turn round and look him in the face. Now, however, at ver. 31, pent-up feeling rises to the poet's lips, seeking an utterance which it scarce can find. As if apprehensive that Jehovah might lose some of the glory which is his due and in some way be grieved with his own handiwork, he adopts the language of *desire:* **Let the glory of Jehovah be age-abiding, Let Jehovah rejoice in his works.** As if admonished of the lowering possibility of Divine displeasure, he introduces a couplet which sounds like a dark hint: **who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.** It is like the muttering of distant thunder, while as yet the sky is all blue. Then, as if unable to endure the thought of a hiding of Jehovah's face, he moves himself, by the significant "cohortative" mood, to keep voice and harp attuned to high praise: **I would fain sing to Jehovah while I live, I would harp to my God while I continue. Pleasing unto him be my soliloquy, I myself will rejoice in Jehovah,**—drinking in my joy at the fount of his joy

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—only let *him* rejoice: but are there, then, works in which he cannot rejoice? **I myself**, he says with formal emphasis, **I myself** will rejoice —whatever *others* may do. So then, alas! there *may be*—there *are*—others not likeminded! Out of the blue, the bolt falls: **Let sinners come to an end out of the earth, And lawless ones no longer exist.** It was remarked above that the trend of this whole psalm seemed to betoken that this earth is designed to be the theatre of important Divine dealings. This ominous couplet confirms that impression: unless, indeed, we are warranted in thinking of sinners as merely banished to some other place, as if there were some such place not included in Jehovah's dominions (cp. 103[19]). Still, that is not what is either said or suggested in this psalm; and it would seem dutiful to accept the natural interpretation of the solemn words before us. Suffice it that "there is a future for the righteous" (Ps. 37, 73); and that the overthrow of moral evil will so be accomplished as to call forth the self-incited refrain—**Bless Jehovah, O my soul!**

PSALM 105.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Hymn of Praise to Jehovah for Giving Israel a Covenant Land in which to Observe His Law.

ANALYSIS.—The Main Design of this Psalm is clearly to Endear the Land to the People for whom it was designed, that therein they should Observe Jehovah's Law. To attain this end the History of their First Fathers is traced as Circling Round this Land, and then the Steps are Traced by which the Nation was Brought Into the Land to Dwell There.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah![a]

1 Give ye thanks to Jehovah, proclaim his name,[b]
make known among the peoples his doings:
2 Sing to him, harp to him,
soliloquise[c] of all his wondrous works:
3 Make your boast in his holy name,
<joyful> be the heart of such as seek Jehovah
4 Search out Jehovah and his strength,
seek diligently his face at all times:

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[a] That is, "Public Reader's Invitation." "There can hardly be a doubt," says Ginsburg, "that this [a sentence and not a mere single word] exhibits the primitive reading.' Ginsburg further expresses the confident conclusion that the phrase was originally the prelector's [the public reader's] invitation to the worshippers to join in the public responses.—G. Intro., pp. 375—81. Hence the omission of the phrase at end of this psalm, as there acknowledged.

[b] So Dr. Cp. Isa. 12[4].

[c] "Compose a song"—Br. "Discourse"—Del. "Muse ye"—Dr.

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5 Commemorate his wondrous works which he hath done,
his tokens, and the just decisions[a] of his mouth.

6 Ye seed of Abraham, [b] his servants,[c]
ye sons of Jacob, his chosen ones:
7 ||He, Jehovah|| is our God,
<through all the land>[d] are his regulations.[e]
8 He remembereth, to the ages, his covenant,
the word he commanded to a thousand generations:
9 Which he solemnised with Abraham,
and his oath unto Isaac;
10 And he confirmed it to Jacob, as a statute,
unto Israel, a covenant to the ages,—
11 Saying— "<To thee> will I give the land of Canaan,
the lot of your inheritance."

12 While as yet they[f] were men easily counted,
indeed few[g] and strangers therein:
13 And they wandered[h] from nation unto nation,
from a kingdom unto another people:
14 He suffered no son of earth to oppress them,
and rebuked, for their sakes, kings: [saying]
"Ye may not touch mine anointed ones,[i]
nor <to my prophets> do harm."

And he called a famine on the land,
<all the staff of bread> he brake:
17 He sent, before them, a Man,[k]
<as a slave> was he sold—[even] Joseph:
18 They humbled, with fetters, his feet,[l]
<into iron, entered his soul:[m]
19 Until the time, when came in, his word,
||speech of Jehovah|| had tested him:
20 A king |sent| and released him,
a ruler of peoples, and unloosed him:
21 He made him lord of his house,
and ruler over all his possessions:
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,[n]
and <unto his elders> to impart wisdom.
23 So Israel |came| into Egypt,
and ||Jacob|| sojourned in the land of Ham.

24 <When he made his people very fruitful,
and made them stronger than their adversaries[o]>
25 Their heart |turned| to hate his people,
to deal treacherously with his servants.

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[a] Or: "judgments."
[b] Some cod.: "Israel." Cp. 1 Ch. 16[13]—Gn.
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr.)—Gn.
[d] Or: "earth."
[e] That is, "by-laws," "code of laws"—as in Exo. 21—23. Or: "just decisions"—as in ver. 5 above.
[f] Some cod. (w. Aram., Syr.): "ye." Cp. 1 Ch. 16[19]—Gn.
[g] "Caph veritatis"—O.G. 454.
[h] "went to and fro"—Per.
[i] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Anointed."
[k] Almost="great man."
[l] Written "feet": read "foot." Some cod. both read and write "foot"—Gn.
[m] "Pathetic circumlocution for personal pronoun"—Dr. Prob. not merely his "person" physically; but all his sense of humiliation: "Joseph's whole sensitive personality"—Kp.
[n] Mi.: "according to his soul"="liking."
[o] Cp. Exo. 17.

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26 He sent Moses, his servant,
Aaron, whom he had chosen:
27 He[a] set among them the threat of his signs,[b]
and his tokens in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark,
but they rebelled[c] against his threats.[d]
29 He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.

30 Their land |swarmed| with frogs,
in the chambers of their kings:
31 He spake, and there came in the gadfly,[e]
gnats,[f] in all their bounds.

32 He made their showers to be hail,
a fire of flames, throughout their land;
33 And smote down their vine and their figtree,
and brake in pieces the trees of their bound.

34 He spake, and there came in locusts,
and young locusts, without number;
35 And devoured all the herbage in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.

36 And he smote all the firstborn in their land,
the beginning of all their strength:
37 And brought them out with silver and gold,
and there was none, among his tribes, that faltered.

38 <Glad> was Egypt when they went forth,
because <fallen> was the dread of them upon them,
39 He spread out a cloud for screen,
and fire, to give light by night.

40 They asked,[g] and he brought in the quail,
and <with the bread of heaven> he used to satisfy them:
41 He opened a rock, and there gushed forth waters,
they flowed along, through parched places, [as] a river.

42 For he remembered his holy word
with Abraham his servant;
43 And brought forth his people with gladness,
<with a cry of joy> his chosen ones;
44 And gave unto them the lands of the nations,
and <of the toil of the peoples> they took possession:
45 In order that they might observe his statutes,
and <over his laws> might keep watch.[h]

[Nm.][i]

[a] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): Cp. 78^{43}.
[b] N.B. that the signs were threatened before they came.
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Syr.)—Gn.
[d] Same word as in ver. 27.
[e] "Dog-fly"—Dr.
[f] Meaning dubious—O.G. Prob. "gnats" as Exo. $8^{12\ 13,\ 14}$.
[g] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "he asked."
[h] Here follows, in M.T., "Praise ye Yah"—prob. by erroneous anticipation of the following at the beginning of Ps. 106. See note at the beginning of this psalm.
[i] See 106 (beginning).

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EXPOSITION.

A sense of the value of these historical psalms grows upon us as we proceed with their study. Books were few, and comparatively inaccessible: hence, if history had to live for practical ends, it must be lodged in the memories of the people; and poetry was well adapted to effect that lodgment—especially poetry such as we here find, with its sententious brevity of expression, its happy use of parallelism, its abounding figures of speech, its picturesque brightness, its easy and rapid flow. Such poetry puts history "into the mouths" of the people (Deu. 31[19]) by fixing it in their memories, enabling them readily to repeat it, and encouraging them to sing and harp its strains. It was a history worth repeating, not only because it was *their* history and was unique, but because there ran through it the golden thread of Divine interposition. If God is revealed in all history, he is pre-eminently revealed in Israel's, since He was ever and anon giving them new epochs, new starting points of development; as well as constant watchful care. But it was so full and significant a history as to abound with lessons of a most varied description—fitted to warn, to encourage, to move to devotion in prayer and praise. Hence it was a task worthy of gifted psalmists, so to select and epitomise, so to bring to the front and leave in the background, as to point the moral as well as adorn the tale. These historical psalms thus became national stories told with a purpose. This becomes clear when the three leading historical songs (78, 105, 106) are laid side by side as to their main scope and design. Thus the 78th gains immensely in interest when viewed as an Asaphic appeal put forth in the time of Hezekiah for the purpose of encouraging and cementing the Reunion of the Tribes. The present psalm, the 105th, is mainly devotional, it is true; but it clearly has, as its didactic purpose, so to foster confidence in the covenant faithfulness of Jehovah, as to encourage the spirit of obedience, and the desire on the part of the people to dwell in their own land for the very purpose of having perfect freedom to observe all Divine ordinances. The psalm which immediately succeeds this, the 106th, while equally devotional in its setting with its predecessor, is wholly different in its chief aim. It is, as we shall see, above all things, an admonitory psalm: its warnings are loud and long, and that they should ever have been turned into measure for psalm-singing, redounds to the everlasting praise for honesty of the psalmist that durst compose it and of the people who were willing to sing it.

Settling down for a little on the particular psalm now before us, it is observable (vers. 1—5) with what fulness of appeal the psalmist seeks to kindle the devotional spirit: **give thanks—proclaim—make**

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known—sing—harp—soliloquise—boast—be joyful — search — seek diligently—commemorate,—note after note of invitation is struck till every ear is attent, and every mind is fixed on Jehovah as the one object of worship.

Then observe, with what force of appeal (vers. 6—11), the fathers of the nation are introduced; and how these worshippers now addressed are reminded of the fact that they are the children of those patriarchs, and are themselves chosen to be the people of their father's God—that they are a covenant people, inheritors of the covenant **land.**

It is needless to recapitulate the psalm. But note how attention is for awhile held on the story of their first fathers (vers. 12—15); then (vers. 16—23) on the providentially over-ruled famine in Canaan, on the touching story of Joseph—whose name, it will be observed, is quite dramatically introduced, and to whom are devoted no less than twelve most effective lines. The remarkable providences are thus displayed by which the man **Jacob—Israel,** whose names become those of the nation, is brought down into Egypt: And so at length (vers. 24, 25) the familiar story is begun of the dangerous increase of Israel, the mission of Moses and Aaron (ver. 26), the threatening of the plagues (too often overlooked) as well as the infliction of them (ver. 27) of which a selection is then given (vers. 28ff.),—a selection only, it is true, but sufficiently full and detailed to raise the whole question of historicity to the high level of perpetual national celebration; and to challenge the modern sceptical mind to say whether such a story—so detailed, so significantly dovetailed into the history, so celebrated down to the present day—had, after all, no solid foundation in fact. And finally observe how the land-covenant, introduced as early in the psalm as the eighth verse, is reintroduced as far on as at the forty-second verse, so leading up to the unifying theme and climax of the psalm—the LAND as the Divinely ordained sphere of the full and unmolested observance of the LAW.

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PSALM 106.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Humbled Israel Confessing Her Sins as a Nation.

ANALYSIS.—Enclosed within an Introduction of Praise and Prayer, vers. 1—5, and a Conclusion of Prayer and Doxology, vers. 47, 48, stands a National Confession of Sin, vers. 6—46, Relieved only by the Merciful Deliverances of Jehovah, the Intercession of Moses, ver. 23, the Interposition of Phinehas, ver. 30, and the Compassion of Israel's Captors, ver. 46. The Sins Confessed are chiefly the following:—Incredulity, ver. 7; Murmuring for Food and Drink, ver. 13; Rebellion against their Leaders, ver. 16; Worship of the Golden Calf, ver. 19; Refusal of the Land, ver. 24; Worship of the Moabitish Baal, ver. 28; Rebellion against Moses and Aaron, ver. 32; Non-Extermination of Idolatrous Peoples, and the Taking Part in their Licentious and Cruel Idolatry, vers. 34—40.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah![a]

1 Give ye thanks unto Jehovah, *for he is good,*
for <to the ages> is his kindness.[b]

2 Who can express the mighty deeds of Jehovah?
cause to be heard all his praise?
3 |How happy| they who observe justice,
he that doeth[c] righteousness at all times!

4 Remember me,[d] O Jehovah, when thou favourest thy people,[e]
visit me[e] with thy salvation:
5 That I[f] may gaze upon the good things of thy chosen ones,
may rejoice in the rejoicing of thy nation,
may glory with thine inheritance.

6 We have sinned[g] with our fathers,
we have acted perversely, have been lawless:
7 ||Our fathers in Egypt|| heeded not thy wondrous works,
they remembered not the abundance of thy kindnesses,
but rebelled against the Most High[h] at the Red-sea.[i]

8 Yet saved he them, for the sake of his name,
to make known his heroic might:
9 So he rebuked the Red-sea, and it dried up,[j]
and he led them in the deeps as a wilderness.[k]

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[a] Cp. 105 notes at beginning and end.
[b] Cp. refrain of 136; also 1 Ch. 16[34], Ezra 3[11], Jr. 33[11].
[c] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "They that do"—Gn.
[d] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "us"—Gn.
[e] "When thou again (cp. ver. 47) showest thyself gracious unto them"—Del.
[f] Or: "we" (according to the pronoun adopted above).
[g] Here begins the confession of sin. Cp. 1 K. 8[46-53], Neh. 9.
[h] So *Gt.* Cp. 78[17, 56]—Gn. So also Br.
[i] Cp. Exo. 14[11, 12].
[j] Exo. 14[21-29].
[k] Isa. 63[13].

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10 Thus saved he them from the hand of a hater,
and redeemed them from the hand of a foe;
11 And the waters |covered| their adversaries,
not ||one from among them|| was left:
12 So they believed in his words,[a]
they sang his praise.[b]

13 They soon forgat his works,[c]
they tarried not for his counsel:
14 But longed a longing in the desert,
and put GOD to the proof in the waste;[d]
15 And he gave them their request,
and sent them food[e] to their desire.[f]

16 And they were jealous of Moses in the camp,
of Aaron, the consecrated one of Jehovah:[g]
17 Earth |opened| and swallowed up Dathan,
and covered the company[h] of Abiram;
18 And a fire consumed their company,[h]
||a flame|| licked up the lawless ones.

19 They made a calf in Horeb,[i]
and bowed down to a molten image;
20 And changed my[j] glory—
for the similitude of an ox eating herbage.

21 They forgat GOD their saviour,
though he had done[k] great things in Egypt,
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
fearful things at the Red-sea.

23 Then would he have commanded to destroy them,
had not ||Moses his chosen||
stood forth in the breach before him,
to turn back his wrath from inflicting ruin.

24 Moreover they refused the desirable land,[l]
they believed not his word;
25 And they murmured in their tents,
they hearkened not unto the voice of Jehovah.

26 Then lifted he his hand unto them,—
that he would let them fall[m] in the desert;
27 And would disperse[n] their seed among the nations,
and would scatter them through the lands.

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[a] Exo. 14[30, 31].
[b] Exo. 15.
[c] Or: "doings."
[d] Exo. 15, 16, 17; Num. 11.
[e] So Br. "The most probable reading of a difficult passage" [*mason* for *razon*]. Maclaren, content with *razon* ["leanness," "wasting"] smartly says: "Full-fed flesh makes starved souls."
[f] Ml.: "soul." Cp. 78[18].
[g] Num. 16, 17.
[h] U.: "congregation."
[i] Exo. 32; Deu. 9[8-12].
[j] So it was originally; but was changed by the Sopherim to "their glory." G. Intro., 360. Cp. *ante*, Intro., Chap. I., Obs. 1.
[k] Ml.: "Doing."
[l] Num. 13, 14.
[m] The permissive *hiphil*. There is no need to introduce active causation here.
[n] So it shd. be (w. Syr.; cp. Eze. 20[23])—Gn.

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28 And they joined[a] themselves to Baal-peor,[b]
and did eat the sacrifices of the dead:
29 So they gave provocation by their doings,
and a plague |made a breach among them|.

30 Then <stood forth> Phinehas,[c] and interposed,
and <stayed> was the plague;
31 And it was accounted to him as righteousness,
to generation after generation, unto the ages.

32 And they gave provocation at the waters of Meribah,
and it fared ill with Moses for their sakes;
33 For they embittered his spirit,
and he spake rashly with his lips.[d]

34 They did not destroy the peoples,
of whom Jehovah had spoken to them;[e]
35 But had fellowship with the nations,
and learnt their doings.

36 And they served their idols,
and they[f] became to them a lure;
37 And they sacrificed their sons
and their daughters unto demons.[g]

38 And they poured out innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and their daughters,—
whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan,
and <polluted> was the land with bloodshed:

39 And they became unclean in their deeds,
and unchaste in their practices;
40 And the anger of Jehovah |was kindled| against his people,
and he abhorred his inheritance.

41 So he gave them over into the hand of the nations,
and they who hated them |ruled over them|;
42 And their enemies |oppressed them|,
and they had to bow down under their hand.

43 <Many times> he rescued them,
but ||they|| rebelled in their counsel,
and sank low in their iniquity.

44 Then looked he on the strait they were in,
when he heard their piercing[h] cry;
45 And he remembered, for them, his covenant,
and was moved to pity, according to the abundance of his kindnesses;[i]

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[a] Points to the prostitution with which Baal Peor, this Moabitish Priapus, was worshipped "—Del.
[b] "Baal of Peor"—Dr. Num. 25[3-5].
[c] Num. 25[7-13].
[d] Num. 20[11f], Deu. 1[37], 32[51].
[e] Exo. 23[33], 34[12], Deu. 7[16], Jdg. 1—3[6].
[f] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "it"—Gn.
[g] "Unto Shedim": Or: "*demi-gods*; mentioned besides only in Deu. 32[17]"—Dr. Cp. Deu. 12[31].
[h] U.: "ringing." "As in 1 K. 8[38] . . . *rinnah* is a loud lamentation"—Del.
[i] Authorities divided between singular and plural.

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46 And gave them to be objects of compassion
before all their captors.

47 Save us, Jehovah, our God,
and gather us from among the nations:
to give thanks unto thy holy name,
to make our boast of thy praise.

48 |Blessed| be Jehovah, God of Israel,
from antiquity even unto futurity![a]
and let all the people |say|—"Amen."[b]

[Nm.]

[a] Ml. (as at the close of Book I., Ps. 41): "From the age (concealed duration in the past) even unto the age (concealed duration in the future)."
[b] M.T.: "Praise ye Yah" (not found in Sep. or Syr.—Gn.) carried forward to head of next psalm. See notes at beginning and end of Ps. 105.

EXPOSITION.

Attention has already been called to this psalm (see Exposition of 105) as not only one of a series of historical psalms—and as such serving an important purpose in the training of the people,—but especially as a national confession of sin. This characteristic is so marked, and morally so significant, as to be worthy of further thought. Not only are our minds arrested by the evident honesty of the nation, and especially its prophets, in thus recording their own shame; but we are made to pause and ponder in presence of this spiritual phenomenon. If we try to conceive of this psalm as being originated earlier than the Exile, we shall probably fail. We can easily imagine an Isaiah or a Jeremiah charging sin home upon the people; but we find the greatest difficulty in representing it to ourselves as possible that they could have led the way in a national confession such as this psalm supplies. The time was not ripe for this: the atmosphere of public confession did not yet exist. As we read the great national confession of sin preserved in Nehemiah 9, or that found in the early part of Daniel 9 which though not national in form is nevertheless intensely and intentionally national in spirit, we feel at home in the prayer and realise that the prayer is at home in its historical and literary surroundings. It fits in with the time: is the genuine product of the strange and startling events which have come to pass in Israelitish history. There had been earlier invasions of the holy land, and the lessons of Divine providence had sunk deep into the best and most thoughtful minds in Israel; but nothing like this had happened before: that Jerusalem itself should be overthrown, and the whole land

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permanently brought under the heel of the Foreigner. The effect on the minds of the people must have been profound. There was no denying the great, sad fact of Hebrew humiliation; and though many of the people may have shrewdly and stoically adapted themselves to this revolutionary change in their environment, yet the moral only needed to be pointedly drawn and strongly driven home by prophetic voices in and after the Babylonish Exile, to carry home conviction to the average Hebrew mind. This is not to say, that the spiritual sense of humiliation was equally deep in all minds; but it is to say, that when prophets declared—"Our sins as a nation have brought these evils upon us," the general conscience must have responded—"There is no denying it!" This acquiescence in the undeniable, it was, which created the atmosphere in which public confession of national sin could live; for it should be well noted that both these elements—that the confession is public and the sin national—are involved in the case now before us. Its being publicly made with general consent silences cavil; and the sins being national lifts them up to the level of undeniable notoriety. From this point of view, survey the long catalogue of sins, beginning with the first protests of incredulity in Egypt, down to the latest practices of licentious cruelty perpetrated in Palestine. Imagine the humiliation and severe spiritual discipline involved in reciting so many national sins in a single psalm. What spiritual authority in these Western Isles would dare to draw up such a catalogue of national offences against the laws of God and man? How can we picture to ourselves congregations throughout our land publicly humbling themselves under the piled-up iniquities of many centuries? The attempt to conceive these things may open our eyes to something of the startlingly unique spiritual phenomenon which the ancient temple-use of this psalm presents to our view. No man can study the Hebrew nation successfully who does not study its solidarity; and no man can appreciate its solidarity in the highest realm of the spirit, who does not bend his mind to the spectacle of a nation confessing the sins it had committed from the Exodus to the Exile. That is the spectacle we have here.

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THE PSALMS.

BOOK THE FIFTH.[a]

PSALM 107.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Examples of Men's Straits, leading to Prayer; and of Jehovah's Deliverances, calling for Praise.

ANALYSIS.—After a Summons to Thanksgiving addressed to the Redeemed, vers. 1—3, Examples are given:—

1. Of Hungry Wanderers, vers. 4—9;
2. Of Guilty Prisoners, vers. 10—16;
3. Of Dying Transgressors, vers. 17—22;
4. Of Imperilled Sailors, vers. 23—32;

whose Straits move them to Prayer, and whose Prayer brings them from Jehovah Deliverance. Further Examples are suggested:—

5. Of a Fruitful Land, first Sterilised, then Blessed, vers. 33—38;
6. Of Nobles, first Diminished, then Multiplied, vers. 39—42.

(These suggestions are without the *Refrains* with which the previous "Examples" are "finished.") A Brief Admonition Closes the Psalm.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah![b]

1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,*
for <to the ages> is his kindness.
2 Let the redeemed of Jehovah[c] |say|—
whom he hath redeemed out of the hand of the adversary;
3 And <out of countries> hath gathered them,—
out of the east, and out of the west,
out of the north, and out of the south.[d]

4 <Men have wandered about in a desert, in a waste,
<way to a city to dwell in> have they not found:
5 <Hungry, yea thirsty>
||their soul within them|| fainteth.>
6 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah, in the strait they are in,*
that <out of their distresses> he will rescue them.
7 And he leadeth them in a way direct,
that they may come to a city to dwell in.
8 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,*
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:

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[a] See Table II., *ante*.
[b] See notes to Ps. 105. Sep. and Vul. have this "P.R.I." here.
[c] Cp. Isa. 62^{12} (also Isa. 63^{4}, 35^{9}).
[d] So *Gt.*—Gn. And so Dr. M.T.: "the sea."

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9 Because he hath satisfied the longing soul,
and <the hungry soul> hath filled with good.

10 <Men are sitting in darkness and death-shade,
prisoners in humiliation and iron,—
11 Because they have rebelled against the sayings of GOD,
and <the counsel of the Highest> have spurned,[a]
12 And he humbleth, with travail, their heart,
they have staggered, and there is no one to help.>
13 *So they cry out unto Jehovah, in the strait they are in,*
that <out of their distresses> he will save them.
14 And he leadeth them forth out of darkness and death-shade,
and <their bands> he bursteth asunder.[b]
15 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,*
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men:
16 Because he hath shattered the doors of bronze,
and <the bars of iron> hath hewn asunder.[c]

17 <||Foolish men|| <because of their way of transgression,
and because of their iniquities> bring on themselves humiliation:
18 <All food> their soul |abhorreth|,
and they draw near unto the gates of death.>
19 *So they cry out unto Jehovah, in the strait they are in,*
that <out of their distresses> he will save them.
20 He sendeth forth his word,[d] and healeth them,
and rescueth [them] out of their pits.[e]
21 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his kindness,*
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;
22 And let them sacrifice sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and tell of his works[f] with jubilation.[g]

23 Men go down to the sea in ships,
doing business through great waters:
24 ||They|| have seen the works of Jehovah,
and his wondrous doings in the deep;
25 And he commandeth, and there ariseth[h] a tempestuous wind,
and it lifteth on high the waves thereof:
26 They mount the heavens, they descend the deeps,
||their soul|| <by trouble> dissolveth:
27 They reel and stagger like a drunken man,
and ||all their wisdom|| is engulfed.>
28 *So they make outcry unto Jehovah, in the strait they are in,*
that <out of their distresses> he will bring them forth.
29 He stilleth the storm to a whisper,[i]
and <silent> are their waves:
30 Then are they glad, because they subside,
and he guideth them to their desired haven.[j]
31 *Let them give thanks to Jehovah for his goodness,*
and his wondrous doings for the sons of men;
32 And let them extol him in an assembly of people,
and <in a seated company of elders> let them praise him.

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[a] Or: "despised."
[b] Or: "he teareth open."
[c] Isa. 45[2].
[d] Job 33[23], John 1[1].
[e] "That is, *their graves*"—Dr. "Pitfalls"—Del. "From the pit their life"—Br. (conj.).
[f] Or: "doings."
[g] Or: "a ringing cry."
[h] So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.
[i] "He husheth the storm to a gentle air"—Per. "He turned the storm into a gentle breeze"—Del.
[j] "Longed-for haven"—Del. "Haven of their desire"—Dr. "City of their desire"—O.G.

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33 He turneth rivers into a desert,
and springs of water into thirsty ground:
34 A land of fruit into a waste of salt,—
for the wickedness of them who dwell therein.
35 He turneth a desert into a pool of water,
and a parched land into springs of water;
36 And causeth to dwell there the hungry,
and they establish a city to dwell in;
37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,
and obtain fruits to be gathered in.
38 So doth he bless them, and they multiply greatly,
and <their cattle> suffereth he not to be few.

40 He poureth contempt upon nobles,[a]
and letteth them wander in a pathless waste;[b]
39 And they become few, and are brought low—
by the pressure of misfortune and sorrow.[c]

41 And he setteth the needy on high out of humiliation,
and maketh families like a flock.[d]
42 The upright |see|, and are glad,[e]
and ||all perverseness|| hath shut her mouth.[f]

43 Who is wise?—let him observe these things,[g]
and diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.

[Nm.]

[a] Vers. 39 and 40 are transposed according to the judgment of Ginsburg on the inverted *nun* found here in the margin.
[b] Heb. *tohu*: cp. Gen. 1[2]. Cp. Job 12[21-24].
[c] So Del. "Through coercion, adversity, and sorrow"—Dr.
[d] Cp. Job 21[11].
[e] Cp. Job 22[19].
[f] Cp. Job. 5[16].
[g] Cp. Ho. 14[9].

EXPOSITION.

This psalm stands high for its artistic beauty and for its broad applicability to the experiences of men, as well as for the same lofty devotion as that by which most of the psalms are distinguished. Its artistic beauty is greatly owing to the two refrains which adorn each of its four principal strophes, one refrain shewing how trouble leads to prayer, and the other suggesting that answered prayer calls for praise; and, though this feature is missing from the concluding strains of the psalm (vers. 33—42), yet this absence ceases to appear as a blemish, when once it is apprehended that the lack was intentional, and that the supernumerary lines were merely intended to shew, by two further examples, in how many other ways than those above wrought out, the prayers of men might be called for and their praises evoked. Such an apprehension enriches us by revealing *psalmody in the making* as well as psalmody fully prepared for public use. We first think we can see whereabouts amidst the supplementary lines the refrains might have been inserted, and then reflect on the numberless other ways in which

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the ever-varying experiences of life may with equal fitness fan the flames of petition and adoration. Let **the redeemed** from every other conceivable **distress** *say* whether it is not still true of **Jehovah**, that **he is good, For to the ages is his kindness.**

By this very suggestiveness—of other like experiences—is the *breadth* of this psalm discovered; as also by the typical character of the instances actually given. In the first and fourth refrained strophes, we have instances of men in distress through no apparent sin or fault of their own: in the second and third finished strophes, are given examples in which it was sin that brought on the suffering. We can choose between them, according as we apprehend our own troubles to be punitive as well as disciplinary, or the latter only. We may be passing through trouble—not because we are bad, but that we may be better. Besides this, some troubles read like parables of others to which they bear a striking resemblance. Many a man seems to himself to be like a prisoner with no imaginable way of escape; and many another, like the mariner whose **soul by trouble dissolveth, And all his wisdom is engulfed.** Courage, brother! He still liveth who can **still the storm to a whisper.** Sooner than thou thinkest, thou mayest have cast anchor in thy **desired haven!**

Among other manifestations of the devotional spirit which pervades the psalms in general, this psalm is delightfully conspicuous in that, instead of employing inferior deities, one to send a trouble and another to remove it, all the vicissitudes of life are traced ultimately to Jehovah's holy will. He mercifully overrules the troubles which he inscrutably permits: he raises the storm which he abates. In no case are we debarred from recognising his hand in the controlling and moulding of our lives. **Who is wise? let him observe these things, And diligently consider the kindness of Jehovah.**

There is not a word in the body of this psalm to suggest a late date for its composition; and though the Sopherim may very well have adapted it for a post-exilic time by the prelude which amplifies the gathering of scattered Israel, yet it should not be forgotten that Israel suffered extensive deportations even before Hezekiah's day. Those readers who will be at the trouble of looking up the numerous references to Job and Isaiah here supplied will of course be struck with the coincidences thereby brought to light. At the same time there are two weighty considerations to be borne in mind: the one is the brightening evidence that the latter part of Isaiah was after all mainly written by the man whose name it bears; and the other the much forgotten circumstance that the Great Return from Exile from the four quarters of the earth is manifestly an event which has yet to be fulfilled.

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PSALM 108.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Two Fragments of Earlier Psalms.

ANALYSIS.—Vers. 1—6 are taken from Ps. 57[7-11]; and vers. 6—9 from Ps. 60[5-8]. For Exposition, see those psalms. Probable Occasion for this Composite Psalm: Danger from Edom, Not so Acute as in Ps. 60.

[Lm.]—Song—Psalm—By David.

1 <Steadfast> is my heart, O God![a]
I would fain sing, and would play,—yea, my glory![b]
2 Oh awake, lute and lyre!
I would fain waken the dawn:
3 I would thank thee among the peoples, O Jehovah,
I would celebrate thee in psalm[c] among the races of men.

4 For <great, above the heavens> is thy kindness,
and <as far as the skies>[d] thy truth.
5 Be exalted above the heavens, O God,
and <above all the earth> be thy glory,

6 <To the end thy beloved |may be rescued|>
oh save with thy right hand, and answer me.[e]
7 ||God|| spake in his holiness:—
"Let me exult, let me apportion Shechem,
And <the Vale of Succoth> will I measure out:
8 <Mine> is Gilead, and <mine> Manasseh;
But ||Ephraim|| is the defence of my head,
||Judah|| is my commander's staff:
9 ||Moab|| is my wash-bowl,
<Unto Edom> will I cast my sandal,
<Over Philistia> raise a shout of triumph."

10 Who will conduct me to the fortified city?[f]
Who will lead me as far as Edom?
11 Hast not thou,[g] O God, rejected us?
and thou wilt not, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 O grant to us help out of distress,
since <unreal> is a victory[h] by man:
13 <In God> we shall do valiantly,
||he himself||, therefore, shall[i] tread down our adversaries!

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.) repeat the clause: "steadfast is my heart." Cp. 57[7]—Gn.
[b] See Ps. 16[9] note.
[c] Or: "make melody unto thee."
[d] Or: "fleecy clouds."
[e] Written "us," but read "me;" and so most authorities.
[f] Some cod: "city entrenched," exactly as Ps. 60[9].
[g] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "||thou||" emphatic as 60[10].
[h] Or: "deliverance," "salvation."
[i] Cp. on 60[12].

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PSALM 109.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—David, Rehearsing how His Enemies have Cursed him, Refers his Cause to Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—5, The Psalmist Entreats Jehovah to speak up for him against his Accusers, of whose Groundless Hatred he Complains. Strophes II.—VI., vers. 6—15, He Records, at length, his Enemies' Imprecations; and, Strophe VII., vers. 16—19, Their False Accusations, regarding these as Permitted by Jehovah. In Strophes VIII.—XII., vers. 21—31, the Psalmist prays for rescue from Troubles inflicted by Jehovah's Own Hand, for which he Promises to Render Public Thanks.

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.

1 O God of my praise, do not be silent:
2 for ||the mouth of a lawless one and a mouth of deceit||
<against me> are open,
They have spoken with me with a tongue that is false;
3 And <with words of hatred> have they compassed me about,
and have made war upon me without cause:
4 <For my love> they accuse me, though ||I|| am all prayer,[a]
5 Yea they have returned[b] unto me evil for good, and hatred
for my love [saying:—]
6 "Set in charge, over him, a lawless one,
and let ||an accuser|| take his stand at his right hand:
7 <When he is judged> let him go forth condemned,
and ||his prayer|| become sin.[c]

8 "Let his |days| become |few|,
<His oversight> let |another| take:
9 Let his |children| become |fatherless|,
and his |wife| a |widow|.

10 "And let his children ||wander|| and beg,
and be driven out[d] of their desolate homes:
11 Let the creditor |strike in| at all that he hath,
and strangers' |prey| upon his' toil.

12 "Let him have none to prolong kindness,
and be there none to be gracious unto his fatherless children:
13 Let his posterity[e] be for cutting off,
<In a[f] generation> let his[g] name be wiped out.

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[a] So Del. "But I am (given unto) prayer"—Dr. "But I (give myself unto) prayer"—Per. And cp. ver. 7.
[b] So it shd. be (w. Syr.)—Gn.
[c] "And let the decision of his case be his guilt"—Br.
[d] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. And so O.G., Br.
[e] Or: "latter end."
[f] M.T.: "another." Sep. and Vul.: "one."
[g] So some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "their."

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14 "<Remembered> be the iniquity of his fathers unto Jehovah,
and ||the sin of his mother||—let it not be wiped out:
15 Let them be in the sight of Jehovah continually,
that he may cut off, out of the earth, their memory.

16 < "Because he remembered not to do a kindness,
but pursued the man who was humbled and needy,
and <the downhearted> was ready to slay outright,—
17 And loved cursing, and so it hath come upon him,
and delighted not in blessing, and so it hath gone far from him,
18 And clothed himself with cursing as his outer garment,
and so it hath entered, like water, into his inward parts,
and like oil into his bones >
19 Be it his, as a garment he wrappeth around him,
and for the girdle he, at all times, girdeth on."
20 ||This|| is the recompense of mine accusers from Jehovah,
and of them who are bespeaking calamity upon my soul.[a]

21 But ||thou, Jehovah, Sovereign Lord|| deal effectually with
me for the sake of thy name;
<because |good| is thy kindness> O rescue me;
22 For <humbled and needy> am |I|,
and ||my heart|| is wounded within me.

23 <As a shadow, when it stretcheth out> have I vanished,
I am shaken out like a locust:[b]
24 ||My knees|| totter from fasting,
and ||my flesh|| hath become lean after fatness;[c]
25 And ||I|| have become a reproach to them,
they see me, they shake their head.

26 Help me, Jehovah my God,
save me, according to thy kindness:
27 That they may know that <thine own hand> is this,—
||Thou, Jehovah|| hast done it.

28 ||They|| will |curse|, but ||thou|| wilt bless,
||mine assailants|| will be put to shame, but ||thy servant|| will
rejoice:
29 Mine accusers |will be clothed| with confusion,
and will wrap about them, as a cloak, their own shame.

30 I will give great thanks[d] unto Jehovah with my mouth,
Yea <amidst multitudes> will I praise him;
31 Because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy,
to save [him] from them who would judge his soul.

[Nm.]

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[a] Cp. 105[15] (note).
[b] "I am shaken when the light grows stronger"—Br.
[c] "And my flesh without oil is as one hasting away"—Br.
[d] So Dr., after P.B.V.

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EXPOSITION.

The key which opens this psalm to general edification is the perception that its long string of curses are those of David's enemies and not his own. The considerations which lead to this conclusion are the following:—(1) The sudden and sustained change from the plural of vers. 1—5 (**they**) to the singular of vers. 6—19 (**he, his, him**); the former referring to David's enemies, and the latter referring to David himself on his accusers' **false tongue**. (2) The fierce and sweeping vindictiveness which piles up imprecations against father, mother, wife, children, possessions and memory in a manner unexampled in any other utterance attributable to David. (3) The similarity of tone between the verses which lead up to the cursing and those which follow after it—a tone of humble and prayerful trust in Jehovah, whose **effectual working** is not only strongly urged but patiently awaited: suggesting how unlikely it is that the cursing of the middle of the psalm proceeds from the same mind as the dignified predictions of its close. (4) The devotion to **prayer** claimed by the psalmist in ver. 4 as making his enemies' hatred without excuse, seems to be hurled back by his enemies in mockery in ver. 7. (5) The **recompense** of ver. 20 seems like a resumption of the **return of evil for good** mentioned in ver. 5; as much as to say: **This**—*the long string of curses*—is how they **recompense** me for my past kindness; the allusion taking on a striking verisimilitude when the known kindness of David for the house of Saul is recalled, and when we think how easily Shimei the Benjamite might in his bitterness have exaggerated some oversight on David's part to shew his wonted kindness to some member of Saul's family: the addition **from Jehovah** in ver. 20, being a recognition such as we have in 2 Sam. $16^{5\text{-}13}$, that David's enemies had been permitted by Jehovah to do him this wrong, leaving the wrong remaining as wrong, the cursing being still theirs and not his. (6) On the background of his enemies' cursing there is something peculiarly life-like and pathetic in the unrestrained prayer which he pours out before Jehovah as to his whole position: his position, as he is driven from Jerusalem, is indeed desperate, and he may well pray for **rescue**; he is **poor and needy**, and will soon be glad to accept of hospitality from one of his subjects; his **heart** was **wounded within him**, as well it might, with memories of Uriah and Bathsheba recalled, the revolt of Absalom staring him in the face, and now the cursing of Shimei to add bitterness to his cup. These verses, 20—25, compel us to think of David's journey up the slope of Mt. Olivet. Then there is the distinct recognition of Divine chastisement, lying behind the cursing (ver. 27)

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and as we read on, **They will curse, but thou wilt bless**, we feel certain that the lips that utter these words of resignation are not the same as those which have just been cursing so very fiercely.

PSALM 110.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Revelation, THROUGH David TO his "lord," the Messiah.

ANALYSIS.—(See the lines prefixed to the Strophes of the Psalm.)

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.

[1. David records a Revelation concerning his lord.]

1 The revelation[a] of Jehovah to my lord[b]:—
"Sit thou at my right hand
until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet."

[2. Foretells that a Commission will be given to his lord.]

2 <Thy sceptre of strength>[c] will Jehovah stretch forth out of Zion:—
"Rule thou in the midst of thy foes."

[3. Describes the Appearance of the Army of his lord.]

3 ||Thy people|| are most willing[d] in thy day of warfare:[e]
<in holy adorning,[f] out of the womb of the dawn>
<to thee> [cometh forth] the dew of thy young men.

[4. Proclaims an Oath addressed by Jehovah to his lord.]

4 <Sworn> hath Jehovah, and will not regret:
"||Thou|| art a priest to the ages
after the manner of Melchizedek."

[5. Portrays the Overthrow of the Foes of his lord, and his lord's consequent Exaltation.]

5 ||The Sovereign Lord[g] at thy right hand||
hath crushed,[h] in the day of his anger, kings,
6 He judgeth[i] among the nations—full of dead bodies!
hath crushed the head over a wide land:
7 <An inheritance, on the way> he maketh it,[j]
||therefore|| he exalteth the[k] Head.

[Nm.][l]

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[a] "Utterance, declaration, revelation"—O.G. "Oracle"—Del., Per. "Utterance"—Br. For use and misuse of the formula, cp. Jer. 23[31-33].
[b] Heb.: *'adoni.*
[c] = "Thy strong sceptre:" cp. Ps. 2[9].
[d] Heb. pl. abstract of intensification: "willingnesses."
[e] "Of thy power. Or, *of thy host;* in either case the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle"—Dr. "Of thy host"—Br. "In the day that thou warrest"—Per. "In the day of thy warfare"—Del.
[f] Ml.: "In stateliness of holiness."
[g] Heb. (M.T.): *'adonai.* In some cod. "Jehovah"—Gn.
[h] Or: "shattered."
[i] Or: "will judge."
[j] So Br. (with very slight emendations).
[k] Or: "a."
[l] See Ps. 111 (beginning).

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm being ascribed to **David**, we have a prescriptive right to endeavour to interpret it accordingly; and the measure of our success may be regarded as confirming or discrediting this superscription.

Ver. 1. **The Revelation of Jehovah to my lord.**—As a revelation, the psalm as a whole and its leading announcement in particular may be expected to make a disclosure unknown before. We already know of the choice of David in preference to Saul; of his anointing and ascension to the thrown of Israel; of his prophetic gifts; of the covenant made with him, through Nathan the prophet, touching his sons as destined heirs to his kingship: which covenant, therefore, must have made him aware of the continuance of his kingdom under other rulers than himself. It was not to be his privilege to carry the Representative Kingship with which he was invested to its climax, by bearing it for ever, or by himself bringing all nations into perfect obedience to Jehovah. He would have to bequeath his throne to his sons, some of whom, Nathan suggested to him, would probably prove unworthy of that honour. He himself, in any case, was not the Messiah. So much we knew from previous Divine communications to David. But we did not know—however naturally we might have conjectured it—that David's royal line would at length be consummated in the person of one of his race to whom he himself would own allegiance and whom he would willingly call his "lord." But this is implied in the first line of the psalm. David shall have such an heir—an heir whom he can call his "lord"; and inasmuch as a living son can exercise no lordship over a dead father,—even as, on the other hand, a dead father cannot give allegiance to an as yet unborn son,—we are irresistibly carried forward to Resurrection days; unless, indeed, David is not to die until this his Greater Son appears. We find ourselves, therefore, to say the least, well within the scope of a revelation—a disclosure—a discovery.

But this discovery, though made *through* David, directly concerns David's *lord*—his Messianic Son. This, precisely, is what David here tells us. He does not say: **The revelation of Jehovah** UNTO ME, but **The Revelation of Jehovah to MY LORD**; that is, to MY SON, THE MESSIAH. In short, then, we have here a revelation *to* the Messiah; and being a revelation written down and preserved until the Messiah's days, will it not, in the event of his reading it, become at once a revelation **for** him and a revelation to him? Jesus of Nazareth believes himself to be David's Messianic Son: his nation are about to reject him: meantime this revelation comes to him—to his notice, to his reflection, to his need. All who truly believe in the *kenosis*—the self-emptying—of

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which the Apostle Paul (Phil. 2) speaks, cannot fail to become aware that already the atmosphere of the psalm has become charged with intense spiritual emotion. No wonder that, on receiving this revelation, Jesus is so profoundly moved that, to the Pharisees, he can only put questions!

So far we are assured that a revelation to the Messiah is coming, but are not told what it is. Of this the next words inform us: **Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.** This informs us that the Messiah will have foes; but that, instead of at once contending with them and overcoming them, he is to be taken out of their midst; to be so taken, by being invited to a post of highest honour; in short, to be exalted to the right hand of Jehovah in heaven. We say, advisedly, "in heaven,"—first, because we know that heaven is the place of Jehovah's fixed abode (1 K. 8^{30}, etc.); and, secondly, because it is not easy to see how a mere elevation to the right hand of the sacred *ark in Jerusalem* could have the effect of removing the Messiah from the midst of his enemies. Here, again, it is not without emotion that we conceive of Jesus of Nazareth receiving such an invitation from Jehovah. For him to take in its purport, could fall nothing short of his discovering something of "the joy set before him," fitted to embolden him "to endure the cross, its shame despising."

But this elevation is not to be for ever: it is for a definite object; and, therefore, for such time as the accomplishment of that object shall require: **Until I make thy foes a stool for thy feet.** It is JEHOVAH who undertakes to reduce Messiah's foes to such a humiliating condition. The foes are spoken of collectively and as a complete class. And the subjugation is to be thorough. Jehovah promises that he will bring down the Messiah's enemies to *abject submission* to his, the Messiah's, will. They shall be publicly humiliated—totally crushed. They shall be able to rise in rebellion no more. Their being made **a stool for the Messiah's feet** cannot mean less than this.

Ver. 2. **Thy sceptre of strength will Jehovah stretch forth out of Zion.** It is Jehovah who will place the Messiah's enemies under his feet; but, not necessarily and to the end of the process, without the Messiah's participation. **Thy sceptre of strength** is, naturally, the Messiah's sceptre; although, still, it is Jehovah who stretches it forth out of Zion, the which continued activity of Jehovah is to be carefully borne in mind. *What* sceptre, then, is this? And *whence* is it to be wielded? The phrase **Thy sceptre of strength** is of the same meaning as "Thy strong sceptre;" for the Hebrew tongue delights in using abstract nouns of quality where we mostly use adjectives. Messiah, then, is to wield "a strong sceptre;" that is, to exercise a strong rule,

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to enforce obedience, to compel submission. We are entitled to say: Messiah's "strong sceptre" is the "iron sceptre" of Psalm the Second, otherwise the practice of comparing scripture with scripture might as well cease. Now, an "*iron* sceptre" is the fit emblem of PHYSICAL FORCE. This, therefore, the Messiah will have at command, and will employ. Yet will he do this strictly under Jehovah's direction, pushing his dominion through openings which Jehovah has made, and forcing submission by means which Jehovah will supply. It is Jehovah who is to **stretch forth** Messiah's "strong sceptre." Moreover, also, that sceptre is to be stretched forth **out of Zion.** And therefore its enforcing activity is to start from Zion. Its holder and wielder is to be located in Zion. But *what* "Zion" is this? It is the earthly Zion. And is this movement, by consequence, a descent of enforcing power from heaven, and its centralisation on earth? It can be nothing else;—for this sufficient reason, that never once in the Old Testament does "Zion" mean heaven, or is "Zion" located in heaven. No real or imaginary figurative use of "Zion" or "Jerusalem" in the New Testament can control us here. We are, in this psalm, on Old Testament ground, and must therefore keep to the Old Testament use of words. Hence the legitimate inference is, that, in the meantime, the centre of Messianic activity has been transferred from heaven to earth. The Messiah is now again "in the midst of his enemies;" which agrees with the commission here given him: **Rule thou in the midst of thy foes.** It would be more like a parody than a fair exegesis of these words to make them equivalent to—"From thy safe retreat in heaven, at the right hand of Jehovah, where thine enemies cannot reach thee, nor for a moment suppose they can reach thee, rule thou in the midst of thy foes." The *power* might be in the midst of the foes, but the *Presence* would not be —the *Manifested* Presence; without which—how are the unbelieving enemies,—who, as such, do not believe that there *is* a Messiah concealed in the skies,—to connect the power on the earth with the Presence in heaven? No: plainly, the Messiah's special *refuge-and-waiting* session at the right hand of Jehovah, in heaven, IS AT AN END, and he is once more "in the midst of his foes" on earth: in Zion, the historical Zion, the only Zion of which the Old Testament knows anything, the very Zion in which long ago the Father declared he would enthrone him (Ps. 2). Being in Zion, in the midst of his foes, he there wields his iron sceptre; and Jehovah will see to it that its enforcing activity shall be **extended,** at least over **a wide land;** and undoubtedly, ere its triumphs cease, be stretched forth "from the River unto the Ends of the earth" (Zech. 9^{10}).

Ver. 3. But the Messiah, now seated in Zion, has a **people,** who are

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here described in strikingly beautiful and suggestive terms. They are **most willing**: they are **volunteers** in the service of Zion's king; for, by general consent, this is the force of the abstract plural of intensification (**willingnesses**), here employed. They are not mercenaries; they spring to their feet with alacrity when the time comes for them to offer their services. The seasonableness of their volunteering is expressly noted; for they thus come forth for service just when their services are needed, or when at least the offer of them seems fitting to the time: **in thy day of warfare**—"the meaning being, on the day when thy forces muster for battle" (Dr.). David's lord, the Messiah, therefore, *has* a "people," who with alacrity press into his service "on his day of warfare"; i.e., the day when his warfare breaks out "in the midst of his foes." How long they have been his "people" is not stated: they are his people now when his "forces muster for battle," and they act in character *as* his people by volunteering for service now that the time for warring has come.

Their appearance is next described: that is, if we follow the Massoretic text—they appear **in holy adorning**, as it were in priestly robes. If, however, with some able critics we prefer the various reading which (substituting an "r" for a "d," the difference in Hebrew being very small) yields the very dissimilar clause **On the holy mountains** instead of "In holy adorning," then we find in this phrase a notification of the *place where* these volunteers gather: they gather on the holy mountains—about Jerusalem, naturally—for we know of no other "holy mountains"; and this seems strikingly agreeable with the circumstance that the Messiah has now fixed his headquarters in Jerusalem, since it is *from thence* that his strong rule is to be "extended." Still, it is not certain that this various reading is to be preferred, for a reason to be given in a few moments. Hence, for the present, we leave that an open question, by saying: If the word is *harre*, then the rendering must be —**On the holy mountains**; but if *hadre*, then the proper English is— **In holy adorning.** We wish to find out precisely—if we may—who these "people," these Messianic "volunteers," are: does this clause say they are a priestly people; or does it indicate the place of their gathering? Let us follow on with the text, in the hope of coming near to an answer.

Out of the womb of the dawn, Thou hast (or **to thee** cometh forth) **the dew of thy young men.** Sudden and striking, bright and beautiful, and wholly unexpected, as a revelation of innumerable dewdrops in the morning when the sun rises, is the appearance of this army of volunteers. They are born out of the foregoing night. They suddenly start forth as the Messiah's allies "on the day of his warfare,"

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when his "strong sceptre" is about to be "stretched forth out of Zion" by Jehovah. So far our text leads us. Still it does not define, beyond doubt, who this "people" are.

But just here comes in a remarkable text from the prophet Micah (5[7]) which looks as if it might have been written as a commentary on this verse of our psalm. The reference is to "the Shepherd of Israel." That this Shepherd should appear as a deliverer from ASSYRIA, will not hinder students of prophecy from associating him with the final deliverance of Israel from the Gentile world-power, first represented by Assyria. But here is the language in question:—"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, As dew from Jehovah, As myriad drops on plants, Which tarrieth not for man, Nor waiteth for the sons of Adam." Even so far, the parallel is very striking; and already begins to make us question whether the "volunteers" of our psalm are not this very "remnant of Jacob in the midst of many peoples," quietly awaiting the auspicious morning of Messiah's manifestation in Jerusalem. How greatly the quiet deposit of them "among many peoples" seems to add to the formidableness of their presence, provided they are destined to be *more aggressive than* "*dew*": the very thing of which the prophet immediately proceeds to assure us: "And the remnant of Jacob"—the same remnant—"shall be among the nations"—the same position, stated in duplicate: "among the nations, in the midst of many peoples:" in what character? as gentle "dew" merely? nay! "as a lion among the beasts of the jungle, As a young lion among flocks of sheep, Who if he passeth by, both treadeth down—and teareth in pieces—and none can deliver." How wonderfully, though poetically, do those features of the psalmist's description here reappear, which intimate that in spite of their "holy adorning" and their fresh and brilliant beauty, the newly revealed army of volunteers are volunteers of a king whose iron sceptre is now, on this "his day of warfare," to be "stretched forth" by Jehovah "out of Zion"! We tenaciously adhered, a little way back, to the fact that, although the "iron sceptre" was the Messiah's, yet it was JEHOVAH who would stretch it forth from Zion to the ends of the earth. And is not this our reward—namely, to discover in this "remnant of Jacob" the very means by which Jehovah will extend that resistless sway of which the psalmist had spoken?

Thus, then, we appear to be absolved from any need to push further our quest after the Messiah's volunteering people as referred to in the third verse of our psalm. They are the "remnant of Jacob" "among the nations," "in the midst of many peoples," sustaining the well-known characteristics of "dew"—"that tarrieth not for man," and of

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"lions" from whose down-treading and tearing prowess the sheep cannot escape. If the provision of such a people for the crisis is not a stretching forth of Messiah's strong sceptre out of Zion to the ends of the earth, we should like to know by what more striking and powerful metaphor such an idea could be conveyed. For the present, then, we are well content with the Massoretic text, which spells with a "d" and not with an "r"; and so are prepared to rest in the descriptive clause "In holy adorning" as applied to the "remnant of Jacob"; rather than "On the holy mountains," which would have confined their gathering to a single spot. Such volunteers are a thousand times more formidable where they are, scattered among the nations; unnoticed, forgotten, trampled under foot; and yet able,—in the strength of Jehovah their God and in their new-born enthusiasm for their Anointed King newly seated in Zion,—to utter a roar which shall make all the continents of the world tremble. By what means Jehovah will clothe this scattered "remnant of Jacob" with garments of "holy adorning," so that like Jehoshaphat's Levites of old (2 Ch. 20^{19-22}) they shall go forth singing to the battlefield, perchance to find the foe already demolished, we know not; but if Jehovah here declares that he will so stretch forth his Messiah's strong sceptre to the ends of the earth, we can calmly await the fulfilment. The morning which shall witness that army's birth has not yet dawned. We are the more content to abide by the "holy adorning" clause of the Massoretic Hebrew text, in that, besides its immediate application to the Messiah's volunteers, it gives forth in advance something of the fragrance of the Messiah's own Kingly priesthood, with the revelation of which a march has now to be stolen upon us. The Volunteer Army is ready, so far as the psalm itself is concerned: ready, in that with more or less of vividness it now stands before the mental eye of the sympathetic reader. But meanwhile a promotion has come to the Messiah during his absence in heaven at Jehovah's right hand. An immeasurable honour has been conferred upon him.

Ver. 4. **Sworn hath Jehovah, and will not regret: THOU art a priest to the ages After the manner of Melchizedek.** Note that this statement is not made in terms which describe a proceeding now to take place, but in terms which express accomplishment already completed. The words are not—"Jehovah sweareth," or "now proceedeth to swear"; but **Jehovah hath sworn.** The constituting mandate (or oath), making the Messiah priest, has already been uttered; and, having regard to the place occupied by this report of that mandate, we may reasonably conclude that the priestly instalment took place in heaven, when the Messiah sat down at Jehovah's right hand. Of this instalment, how-

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ever, no details are given. They are left over for a Christian Writer to supply; and right worthily has the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplied all necessary details; as to the grounds on which this honour was conferred on the Messiah—how he who now is made priest had previously offered himself as a sacrifice,—and as to the abolishing effect of this decree on the Levitical priesthood. No such details, be it well observed, are here given. The installing announcement alone is here made, in briefest terms, and as of an event already accomplished. This last point is the matter to be emphasised here. The new King has come to Zion; has received his commission to subdue and humiliate his foes; and his army of volunteers is ready. At this juncture the action of the poem is stayed, to make way for this brief and authoritative announcement of the accomplished fact of the installation of David's "lord" into a Kingly Priesthood resembling that of Melchizedek. Now, as the action of the psalm is immediately resumed as soon as ever this heavenly event is proclaimed; as the strong sceptre of the Messiah is immediately stretched forth out of Zion; and as the foes are immediately put beneath the Messiah's feet,—the proper effect of the interpolated priestly announcement is to call attention to *the kind of King* which earth receives in now submitting to the all-subduing Messiah. In sitting on David's throne, which is his own earthly throne in Zion, David's "lord" sits there as a priest upon his throne: as at once priest and king, exercising simultaneously and harmoniously the functions of both offices,—perfectly representing and effectuating Jehovah's rule over men, and as perfectly representing and presenting men's need to Jehovah. He will thus, in his own person, give a strong lead to Israel in becoming, according to her original mission (Exo. 19), "a kingdom of priests" to all nations. He will thus become the Antitype of the "Sign-men," Joshua and his friends in the prophecies of Zechariah, by permanently bearing both offices (Zech. 3^{8}, 6^{9-13}). He will thus, far surpass his father David, who once or twice in a passing way, served as a High Priest to the priests of Israel (2 S. $6^{5,14}$, 1 Ch. 15, 16). Especially will he thus become, to the whole earth and for ever, what Melchizedek was for a short while to a small area around Salem of old (Gen. 14).

Vers. 5—7. The climax of the whole psalm comes at last. The climax is a crisis. The crisis is a battle which decides the fate of the world by subduing it to the final reign on earth of its Priestly King. The whole psalm leads up to this terrible crisis. The first verse characterises it as the time of bringing Messiah's enemies beneath his feet, until which the invitation extends to sit down at Jehovah's right hand in heaven. The second verse centralises the crisis in Zion. The third verse definitely names it Messiah's "day of warfare." The fourth

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verse, as we have said, stays the action of the psalm for the purpose of announcing an already accomplished heavenly fact. Having done this, the fifth verse unmistakably resumes the action of the psalm by further naming the coming day as Jehovah's **day of anger** and by plunging into the actual crushing of the foes, giving us to witness STROKE AFTER STROKE of Jehovah's activity in fulfilling the promise made at the outset to David's "lord." The first stroke is the crushing of kings. The second stroke is the filling of the nations, or of the battle-field of the nations, with dead bodies. The third stroke is the crushing of an individual **head,** who, however, is head **over a wide land.** These three strokes complete the down-treading action of the psalm—complete the overthrow and trampling underfoot of Messiah's foes—complete the rescue of Messiah's inheritance. The single remaining verse celebrates the victory.

We have characterised this as a "terrible" crisis, and so it is. But, unless words are to be tortured, it is THE CRISIS OF THE PSALM: moreover, it is the crisis of the Bible—of other psalms, as the second with its dashing in pieces, the forty-fifth with its sharp arrows in the heart of the king's enemies whereby peoples fall under him, the seventy-second where the king's enemies are made to lick the dust; and of the prophecies generally, such as Isaiah Second, Twenty-fourth, Sixty-third, Sixty-sixth, and others too numerous to be mentioned; of several significant places in the Gospels and the Epistles, reappearing with an accession of heavenly terror in the Apocalypse. It *is* a "terrible" crisis, but no daring criticism can root it out of the Bible. And, though "terrible," it seems to be a *needful* crisis. For, truly, the witness of nineteen centuries seems to declare that it may be absolutely needful that Jehovah's PHYSICAL FORCE through means of Messiah's **iron sceptre** should maintain and enforce the moral suasion of many foregoing centuries. And, once more, though "terrible," thank God it will be *final and efficacious.* For, thereby, the Messiah will "speak peace to the nations" in terms which will compel war to cease and clear the way for gentler forces to operate to the ages.

Ver. 5. Before noticing, in a little detail, the three strokes of displeasure with which the foes of the Messiah are actually made his footstool, it is desirable to assure ourselves that those three strokes are here attributed to JEHOVAH HIMSELF rather than to the Messiah. Whether this is the case, turns upon the nice and rather critical question—Who is intended by "**The Lord** at thy right hand" of ver. 5? Is it Messiah on Jehovah's right hand, or is it Jehovah on the Messiah's right hand? And, as involved in this broader question, is the narrower one—Who is the person whose **right hand** is here spoken of? In other

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words, to whom is this line (with the following lines) addressed? If Jehovah is addressed, then "the Lord at his right hand" will be the Messiah—"The Messiah hath crushed kings," &c.; whereas, if the Messiah is addressed, then it will be Jehovah who crusheth kings, &c. Now, notwithstanding the plausibility of the contention that the word A-D-N-I should be pronounced *adhoni* ("my lord"), and so be regarded as a repetition of the word standing at the end of the first line of the psalm, yet as this would probably necessitate another change, which neither the Hebrew text nor the ancient versions sustain, "My lord at HIS right hand"; we shall do well to pause and look well to the context, before we decide this nice point. Now the opinion is here submitted, that the better conclusion is: That the Messiah is here directly addressed, and therefore that "the Lord at Messiah's right hand" is Jehovah. And, though this may be said to involve a change of their relative position—so that, in ver. 1, Messiah is seen on Jehovah's right hand; and, in ver. 5, Jehovah is discovered on the Messiah's right hand,—yet there can be no valid objection to this. The scene has changed, and with it the relative positions; and there is nothing whatever incongruous, but rather everything befitting, that in heaven the Messiah should be on Jehovah's right hand, and on earth Jehovah should be on the Messiah's right hand; especially as this very representation has already and so lately been made as in vers. 30, 31 of the next preceding psalm: "I will thank Jehovah . . . because he taketh his stand at the right hand of the needy." There is therefore plainly nothing incongruous, if in this place, the representation is, that Jehovah, here, on earth, on **"the day of Messiah's warfare,"** takes his stand at the Messiah's right hand to direct and aid him in overthrowing his foes, and letting the world and all future generations see that it was JEHOVAH'S hand that did it. And as, on the one hand, there is nothing incongruous to be alleged against this conclusion, so on the other, there are these reasons to be urged in its favour: (1) that the vowel-pointing of the Massoretic text can stand—*Adonai*—**Sovereign Lord,** equivalent to Jehovah; (2) that those codices which actually have Jehovah (see *Gn.* under text) will be substantially correct; (3) that no change further on in the line, from "thy" to "his" will be required; and (4)—most weighty reason of all—that continued prominence will thereby be given to the feature made prominent at the beginning of the psalm, That it is emphatically JEHOVAH who places the Messiah's enemies beneath his feet. *He* does this, because he it is who provides the Messiah with his wonderful army of volunteers, he it is who crushes kings, judges nations, crushes the head over a wide land. This then may be regarded as provisionally settled, that the fifth verse

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opens by declaring that Jehovah, on the Messiah's right hand, does the things that follow, to each of which we may now devote a moment's attention.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, **crushes Kings**—literally **hath crushed,** the well-known perfect tense of prophetic certainty. Then there *are* "kings" in the final opposition raised against the Messiah's wielding his strong sceptre out of Zion. There *are* "kings" who have not shewn the "prudence" urged upon them in the Second Psalm. They will have dared an impious, desperate thing: and for it they will be "crushed."

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, **judgeth (proceedeth to judge, will judge) among the nations,**—the tense being here changed to the so-called "imperfect," more exactly, the initiative, incipient or incomplete, precisely suited to indicate a further and perhaps prolonged process. No details, saving one, are here supplied as to the nature of this judging among the nations. The one which is supplied is sufficiently startling: throughout the nations which are being judged, or on the battlefield to which the nations gather, there is a filling of the places of conflict (or the one battlefield) with the slain—the dead bodies —the corpses—the *g'wîôth*. Let him who dares, attempt to spiritualise and thereby evaporise this! Beware how you minimise the Divine wielding of Messiah's "iron sceptre"! This is the second stroke. The third follows.

Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, **hath crushed** (again the perfect of certainty) **the head over a wide land.** The rebellious **kings** have a "head": the infatuated **nations** have a head. That "head" has become "head"—"over a wide land," or has gone up to do battle, "over a wide country." The student of prophecy does not need to inquire who that head is. Even the thoughtful reader who has got no further than this psalm may surmise that here at last is the key that unlocks the secret of that "throne of iniquity" which so unaccountably started out into prominence in Ps. 94: "Can the throne of engulfing ruin be allied to thee, which frameth mischief by statute?" It would not be surprising if the instructed Bible student were to exclaim without more delay: "Yes! I see: this other **head** that is to be crushed is none else than Antichrist or the Man of Sin or the Lawless One whom 'the Lord Jesus is to destroy by the breath of his lips and to paralyse with the brightness of his coming.'" Nor would he be wrong. Nevertheless, it may be a useful throwing of ourselves upon Old Testament testimony, if we simply confirm our apprehension by ye another reference to it as set forth by the prophet Isaiah (30^{29-33}):—
"A song shall ye have, As in the night of hallowing a festival, And

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gladness of heart as when one goeth with the flute To enter the mountain of Jehovah Unto the Rock of Israel." Language, this, which appears as if expressly framed to suit those "Volunteers," coming forth "out of the womb of the dawn," "robed in holy adorning" of which we read in the third verse of this psalm. "Then will Jehovah cause to be heard the resounding of his voice, And the bringing down of his arm shall be seen, In a rage of anger, And with the flame of a devouring fire, A burst, and downpour and a hailstone! And at the voice of Jehovah shall Assyria be crushed, With his rod will he smite, And it shall come to pass that every stroke of the staff of doom which Jehovah shall lay upon him shall be with timbrels and with lyres, when with battles of brandished weapons he hath fought against them. For there hath been set in order beforehand a Tophet, yea the same for the king hath been prepared, He hath made it deep, made it large, —The circumference thereof is for fire and wood in abundance, The breath of Jehovah like a torrent of brimstone is ready to kindle it." Assyria first—Assyria last: that came out in the quotation from Micah. The overthrow of Sennacherib a type—the overthrow of Antichrist the antitype. But note, as the supreme thing in relation to our psalm, the activity of Jehovah: Jehovah's voice—Jehovah's arm—Jehovah's rage —Jehovah's rod—Jehovah's strokes of doom—Jehovah's enkindling breath; and say whether it does not read as if expressly intended to be a commentary on our Psalm—on Jehovah's opening revelation to David's "lord" our Messiah. Here is the king—the "head" king of iniquity; here is the day of anger; here, the making of the Messiah's foes a stool for his feet. Ye forthcoming army of volunteers, yet to spring sparklingly forth from the womb of the dawn! get ready your flutes and timbrels and lyres; for although the slaughter will be terrible, yet the joy will be great, and the songs that will be evoked will continue to resound through the after ages.

Ver. 7. After the battle, the restoration of the inheritance! And so, by the help of Dr. Briggs, we read from a critically emended text: **An inheritance on the way he maketh it, Therefore he** (Jehovah still, as all along so far in these concluding verses) **exalteth the Head**—the true Head, the Messiah, the rightful Head of a ransomed and delivered world. Of course, if anyone choose to abide still by the Massoretic Hebrew text,—down to the last verse and to the minutest letter, including the editorially supplied vowel points, he can do so with very little disturbance to the general effect; and, bringing the Messiah to the front as an exhausted warrior, snatching a refreshing drink of the brook by the way, and then lifting up his head to pursue the flying foe and so completing his conquest—to which he will naturally give a

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fitting explanation. But probably a goodly contingent even of conservative critics will prefer the more dignified and commensurate ending suggested above, especially when they discover the minuteness of the changes involved, probably imperilling not more than a single consonant in the original text, in the process of copying which such an error might easily be made. An excellent, dignified, and adequate conclusion to the psalm, will certainly be realised if we thus read and expound the seventh verse. **An inheritance on the way** (at once) **he** (Jehovah) **maketh it,** (namely) **the wide land** rescued from Antichrist, or even the whole earth occupied by the nations previously mentioned as having to pass through Jehovah's refining judgment; handing it over to him, the Messiah, in pursuance of the offer of the Second Psalm—"Ask of me, and I will give nations as thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as thy possession." Thus will Jehovah make good the very last line of the psalm also: **Therefore** (and thus) **he** (Jehovah) **exalteth** the (rightful and all worldly) **Head** (of the world redeemed by him, even the Messiah, David's long-looked-for **lord**: to whom and for whom this sublime and significant revelation was made by the Holy Spirit speaking by David).

The references to this psalm in the N. T. demand a brief notice. "No psalm is more frequently quoted and alluded to in the N. T. It was, as we have seen, quoted by our Lord (Mat. 22^{44}, Mk. 12^{36}, Lk. $20^{42,43}$); and His use of its language as recorded in 26^{64} (=Mk. 14^{62}, Lk. 22^{69}) clearly involved (since its Messianic significance was acknowledged) an assertion of His Messiahship in answer to the High-priest's adjuration. Ver. 1 is applied by St. Peter to the exaltation of Christ in his Resurrection and Ascension (Acts $2^{34,35}$) and is quoted in Heb. 1^{13} to illustrate the superiority of the Son to Angels. Cp. also Mk. 16^{19}, Acts 5^{31}, $7^{55,56}$, Rom. 8^{34}, 1 Cor. $15^{24\,ff}$, Eph. 1^{20}, Col. 3^{1}, Heb. 1^{3}, 8^{1}, $10^{12,13}$, 12^{2}, 1 Peter 3^{22}, Rev. 3^{21}. Ver. 4 serves as the basis of the argument in Heb. $5^{6\,ff}$, 6^{20}, $7^{17\,ff}$ concerning the superiority of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical priesthood"—Kp. in "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." In accordance with the lofty outlook of some of these references, it would not have been improper to render the second line of this psalm —"Sit thou enthroned at my right hand," only that such a prominence given to heavenly kingship would have been a little beyond the scope of the psalm, and was by no means demanded by the Hebrew word employed. Carefully followed, the context suggests no more than honour, rest, and waiting; in exact accordance with Heb. 10^{13} ("waiting henceforth"). In point of fact, the Son of David is also the Son of God; and the heavenly honour, rest, and waiting secured by his session at the right hand of God, are coincident with heavenly activity, in other

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capacities and for other ends than those brought into view by the psalm. In like manner, it would probably have been premature, had we, in seeking for the "volunteers" of ver. 3, referred to the army seen in heaven in Rev. 19. The coincidence is indeed striking, especially as between the "holy adorning" seen by the psalmist and the "fine linen, white and pure" described by the seer in Patmos. The happy medium to be desired in adjusting the revelations of the Old and New Testaments is to make haste slowly; not to hurry the elder scriptures into disclosures quite beyond their scope, nor yet to overrule, and far less to suppress or make of no effect their communications.

PSALM 111.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—The Psalm is composed of Ten Verses: vers. 1—8 have Two Clauses each, Initialled by 16 successive letters of the Hebrew Alphabet; and vers. 9 and 10 have Three Clauses each, Initialled by the 6 remaining letters of the Alphabet: thus making, in all, 22 lines; and employing the entire alphabet as initials. The First Verse states the THEME of the psalm, and the Last Verse supplies the THEME for the Next Psalm; so that the Second of the pair Begins where the First Ends.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

א 1 I will thank Jehovah with a whole heart,
ב In the council[a] of the upright and the congregation.

ג 2 <Great> are the works[b] of Jehovah,
ד Studied by all who take pleasure therein.

ה 3 <Majestic and stately>[c] is his work,
ו And ||his righteousness|| standeth fast for aye.

ז 4 <A memorial> hath he made for his wondrous works,
ח *<Gracious and compassionate>*[d] is Jehovah.

ט 5 <Prey>[e] hath he given to them who revere him,
י He remembereth, to the ages, his covenant.

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[a] Or: "confidential gathering"—Dr.
[b] Or: "doings."
[c] Mi. or: "majesty and stateliness."
[d] Cp. Exo. 34[6].
[e] Or (mf.): "food."

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נ ל 6 <The might of his works[a] declared he to his people,
In giving them the inheritance of the nations.

מ נ 7 ||The works of his hands|| are truth and justice,
<Trustworthy> are all his precepts.

ס ע 8 Sustained are they to futurity, to the ages,
Wrought out in truth and uprightness.

פ צ ק 9 <Ransom> sent he unto his people,
He commanded, to the ages, his covenant;
<Holy and to be revered> is his name.

ר ש ת 10 <The beginning of wisdom> is the reverence of Jehovah,
<Excellent insight> have all they who do those things,[b]
||His praise|| standeth fast for aye.

[Nm.][c]

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[a] Or: "doings." [b] Heb.: "them." [c] See 112 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

Considering how artificial is the structure of these twin psalms, it is remarkable how little sense has been sacrificed to form: perhaps **prey** (ver. 5) is the only instance in this psalm in which a less happy word seems to have been used owing to acrostic exigencies. It is further observable that notwithstanding the proverbial style of sentiment which prevails, the striking history of Israel has, in this psalm in particular, furnished several couplets: as probably the "passover" memorial of ver. 4; the grant of Canaan in ver. 6; and again the deliverance out of Egypt and covenant at Sinai in ver. 9. An allusion to Exo. 34 ("the Refrain of the Bible") may be detected in ver. 4. The subtle difference between **deed**—thing done—and **work**—"thing made"—may also repay reflection. Jehovah is worthy to be praised both for his "deeds" and his "works." The practical trend of both psalms, and the especial link between the two, clearly proclaim: "I am holy, therefore be ye holy." It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the character of the God whom we worship.

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PSALM 112.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of the Man who Revereth Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—The structure of this Psalm exactly corresponds with that of the foregoing (of which see the "Analysis").

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

א 1 |How happy| the man who revereth Jehovah,
ב <In his commandments> he delighteth greatly:

ג 2 <Mighty in the earth> shall be his seed,
ד ||The generation of the upright|| shall be blessed:

ה 3 ||Comfort and riches|| are in his house,
ו And ||his righteousness|| standeth fast for aye:

ז 4 <He hath arisen in darkness>a light to the upright,
ח *Gracious and compassionate*[a] and righteous:

ט 5 <Well> is it with the man who is gracious and lendeth,
י He shall maintain his words in the judgment:

כ 6 For <to the ages> shall he not be shaken,
ל <An age-abiding remembrance> shall the righteous man become:

מ 7 <Of evil tidings> will he not be afraid,
נ <Steadfast> is his heart, led to trust in Jehovah.

ס 8 <Sustained> is his heart, he is not afraid,
ע Until that he gazeth on his adversaries:

פ 9 He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the needy,
צ ||His righteousness|| standeth fast for aye;
ק ||His horn|| shall be exalted with honour:

ר 10 ||A lawless one|| shall see, and be vexed,
ש <His teeth> shall he gnash, and shall melt away;
ת ||The desire||[b] of lawless ones shall vanish.[c]

[Nm.][d]

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[a] Cp. Exo. 34[6] and Ps. 111[4].
[b] *Gk.*: "The hope." Cp. 9[18]. Prov. 10[28]—Gn.
[c] Cp. 1[6].
[d] See 113 (beginning.)

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EXPOSITION.

Although the course run by this psalm naturally differs from that of its predecessor, yet the correspondences between the two, both in thought and language, are numerous. Note the identity of line ver. 3b in the two psalms; also the recurrence of the "refrain" snatch in ver. 4b of this psalm as well as that; which, in this second case, is the more remarkable, because it probably applies to MAN that which was originally spoken by Jehovah concerning HIMSELF: as much as to say—"I am **gracious and compassionate,** be ye the same." Then comes the question whether, if line *b* of this verse is transferred to man, line *a* also should not be applied in like manner. If so, we reach the rather startling comparison of the Jehovah-revering MAN to **a light arising in the darkness** enshrouding his afflicted but **upright** brother. This is a by-no-means incredible result; and the strong current man-ward of this whole psalm appears to warrant our resting in it. The quotation of ver. 9 in 2 Cor. 9^9 may usefully remind us how strongly the great exponent of justification by faith teaches Christians, that they have been "created in Christ Jesus upon a footing of good (and noble) works, which God prepared beforehand, that therein we might walk" (Eph. 2^{10}).

PSALM 113.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Song of Sublime Simplicity: reaching its Climax by Rejoicing with a Glad Mother!

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Praise Invited from Jehovah's Servants, for All Time, through All the World. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Jehovah's Incomparable Loftiness and Condescension in Contrast. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, The Lowly are Exalted and the Barren Wife made Glad.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

1 Praise, O ye servants of Jehovah,
  praise the name of Jehovah:
2 Let the name of Jehovah be blessed
  from this time forth and to the ages:
3 <From the rising of the sun unto the going in thereof>
  <worthy to be praised> is the name of Jehovah.

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4 <High above all nations> is Jehovah,
<above the heavens> is his glory
5 |Who| is like unto Jehovah our God,—
that |on high| sitteth,
6 that |down low| looketh,—
In the heavens and on the earth?

7 Who raiseth out of the dust the poor,
<from the dunghill>[a] uplifteth the needy:
8 To seat [him] with nobles,
with the nobles of his people.
9 Who giveth an abiding home to the barren of the house,
[now] mother of the sons to her joy!

[Nm.][b]

[a] Or: "ash-heap." | [b] See 114 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

This is a Song of exquisite simplicity and grace. The momentary feeling that it starts with mincing steps, quickly gives place to the perception that its stairlike advances soon mount from the simple to the sublime. The **servants of Jehovah** are the only safe custodians of his **praise.** But, instead of keeping his praise to themselves, they are called upon to give it wing through all time and to the ends of the earth. So much already the first strophe embraces.

Jehovah is related to **all nations,** but **high above** them all: indeed, **above the heavens is his glory**—his Messengers and Ministers are far beneath him—his throne is ever above them. Even in heaven, although **he goeth high to sit,** yet he **bendeth low to look,**—which appears to settle a nice point as to the construction of the second strophe, and to intimate that even in heaven the condescension of Jehovah is recognised, and not merely here on earth. He is therefore incomparable both **in the heavens and on the earth.**

But **the dust** and **the dunghill** especially savour of earth. It is here that patience and hope especially need to be nursed; and silent sorrow most strongly commands our sympathy. "Depressed in spirit" was Hannah, before she became the mother of Samuel; and, in another way, more sorely tried, still, was Mary the mother of Jesus. The praises of Israel have been composed to help out the sorrows of sufferers into soothing and helpful expression; and the language of both Hannah and Mary is reflected or anticipated here, where, with striking significance, the last word is **joy!** (Cp., for the Mother City, Isaiah 60^{14-22}; 66^{7-14}).

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This psalm is the first of the series called "The Hallel"—sometimes "The Egyptian Hallel"—sung on occasion of the three great national festivals, the new moons and (portions of it) at the commencement of the New Year. At the Passover, this psalm and the next were sung at the beginning of the celebration, and the remaining four psalms (115—118) after the pouring out of the "fourth" cup. That such a psalm as this should have been made the first of such a series is profoundly significant. Only to think it possible that a King wrote this psalm while waiting in patience for the birth of his Firstborn, is to catch a glimpse of Sacred Romance.

PSALM 114.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Passover Song.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, The Deliverance out of Egypt set forth as the Basis of Jehovah's Worship and Reign in Israel. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Nature's Excitement over the Birth of the Nation. Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, Nature Interrogated as to the Cause of her Excitement. Strophe IV., vers. 7, 8, The Psalmist Answers for Nature: Jacob's God is Nature's Lord!

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

1 <When Israel came forth out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob, from a people of unintelligible speech>
2 Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel, his realm.

3 ||The sea|| saw and fled,
||the Jordan|| turned backward;
4 ||The mountains|| skipped like rams,
||the hills|| like the young of the flock.

5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest?
thou Jordan, that thou turnest backward?
6 Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
ye hills, like the young of the flock?

7 <At the presence of the Lord> be in birth-throes, O earth!
at the presence of the God of Jacob:
8 Who turneth the rock into a pool of water,
flint into a fountain of water.

[Nm.]

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EXPOSITION.

The exceeding beauty of this psalm must be confessed by all who, being able to appreciate poetry as such, at the same time possess an historical imagination. The moment this little poem is regarded as written for a passover celebration, and therefore as one of a series let into the midst of historical readings and accompanied by ceremonial actions,—not only is its beauty seen, but its brevity is saved from all suspicion of baldness. Each strophe says so little; and yet, for such an occasion, there is in that little so much that is to the point. The first strophe covers at once the birth of the nation, and its orderly establishment in the Holy Land under David and Solomon. The second strophe comprehends the miracles at the Red Sea and the Jordan, and the agitations of Sinai which attended the bringing of the nation into Covenant. In the third strophe, the poet interrogates the Sea, the River, the Mountains and Hills, as though he were there on the spot as a witness of their actions. In the fourth strophe, he justifies their excitement, by charging them to do the very things of which he has been witnessing; only with the understanding that these things are the legitimate concomitants of such a nation's birth. Even this he says in suchwise as to convey two further truths: namely, that the **Lord** (*Adôn*) of nature is the **God** (*Eloah*) of Jacob, and no mere tribal Deity,—as moderns too hastily assume; and, by expressing the action of Omnipotence on **rock** and **flint** by means of a timeless participle (**who turneth**) further intimates that such manifest control over nature's laws merely awaits Jehovah's sovereign will.

This psalm being anonymous and the immediate occasion of its composition being unknown, dogmatism is precluded; but, if conjecture may sometimes serve useful ends, it may be asked,—Could any author more likely than ISAIAH be named? or any occasion more probable be suggested than Hezekiah's Great Passover? Its position in "The Hallel" could have been assigned to it at a later date.

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PSALM 115.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Not for Her Own Glory but for His, Israel moves herself to trust in Jehovah to Shew his Superiority over Idols.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Introductory appeal to Jehovah. Strophe II., vers. 4—8, Idols Disparaged. Strophe III., vers. 9—11, With Alternate Voices, the Choir encourages Israel to Trust. Strophe IV., vers. 12, 13, The Congregation Proclaims its Confidence. Strophe V., vers. 14, 15, A Priest Blesses the Congregation. Strophe VI., vers. 16—18, A United Chorus of Praise.

[No "P.R.I." here in M.T.]

1 <Not unto us>, Jehovah, <not unto us>
but <unto thine own name> give glory,
because of thy kindness, because[a] of thy truth.
2 ||Wherefore|| should the nations |say|—
"Where, pray, is their God?"
3 When ||our God|| is in the heavens,
<all that he pleased> hath he done?

4 ||Their|| idols are silver and gold,
the work[b] of the hands of men:—
5 <A mouth> have they, but do not speak,
<Eyes> have they, but do not see;
6 <Ears> have they, but do not hear,
<A nose> have they, but do not smell;
7 Their hands! but they do not feel,
Their feet! but they do not walk,
They make no murmuring sound with their throat.
8 <Like them> shall become they who make them,
every one[c] who trusteth in them.

9 O Israel![d] trust thou in Jehovah,
<Their[e] help and their shield> is he!
10 O house of Aaron! trust ye in Jehovah,
<Their help and their shield> is he!
11 Ye that revere Jehovah! trust in Jehovah,
<Their help and their shield> is he!

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[a] So M.T. (without "and"). Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "and because"—Gn.

[b] Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "works" (pl.)—Gn.

[c] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "And every one"—Gn.

[d] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr. Vul.): "O house of Israel"—Gn.

[e] That "our" does not stand here, as in 33[20], "may be explained from the antiphonal singing; so far, however, as the psalm supplicates God's protection and help to a military expedition, the declaration of assured hope, *their Help and Shield is He*, may be referred with Hitzig to the army that has gone or is going forth"—Del.

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12 ||Jehovah|| hath remembered us, he will bless—
will bless the house of Israel,
will bless the house of Aaron,
13 *will bless them who revere Jehovah,*
the small as well as the great.

14 Jehovah |will add| unto you—
unto you and unto your children.
15 <Blessed> are |ye| of Jehovah,
maker of heavens and earth.

16 ||The heavens|| are the heavens of[a] Jehovah,
but <the earth> hath he given to the sons of men.
17 It is ||not the dead|| who praise Yah,
nor any that go down into Silence;
18 But ||we|| will bless Yah,
from this time forth, and to the ages.[b]

[Nm.][c]

[a] "Are assigned to"—Br. (reading SiMiM instead of SHaMaiM).
[b] Cp. Isa. 38[18, 19].
[c] See 116 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

The fact that this psalm is without head-line to divide it from the foregoing, confirmed as it is in many ancient authorities by being run on as a continuation of that which has gone before, is of sufficient force to shew at what an early date this sequence was effected; but can scarcely prevail to over-ride internal evidence in favour of an independent origin. In its contents this psalm strongly asserts its individuality; and, indeed, points clearly to a situation so much like that formed by the league of surrounding nations against King Jehoshaphat (2 Ch. 20), as to throw any other theory of origin into the shade. That it came into further use with great acceptance at the time of the return from the Babylonish Exile in nowise conflicts with this theory of its original composition. It will be noted that the tone of the psalm is peculiar: it is neither despairing nor triumphant. Honour is anticipated, but rendered in advance to Jehovah himself. Idolatry presents itself forcibly enough to call forth elaborate sarcasm; yet it would seem as though the worshippers of Jehovah were not out of peril, hence they encourage each other to have confidence—**trust ye in Jehovah**; but they encourage each other in song—in responsive song! All the essential conditions for this peculiar state of things may be found in the critical condition of affairs when nations of idolaters were surrounding King Jehoshaphat; when his army in going forth against its

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enemies was assured it would not have to fight; and when bands of singing Levites were provided, well able to raise responsive song on what might have been a battlefield, for they went forth before the armed men! In point of fact, we can almost see the turning point of affairs on that memorable day reflected in the psalm itself at ver. 12. For if,—when the history records that "Judah came near the watch-tower of the wilderness (and) they turned towards the multitude, and lo! there they were, dead bodies fallen to the earth, with none to escape;"—if, just then, a priest had broken the silence by exclaiming in changed tense and in a tone of triumph,—**Jehovah hath remembered us!** could anything have been more appropriate or more dramatic? It is quite true that many able critics, who cannot see behind the return from the Exile, find another and a not unsuitable crisis of affairs, to fit in with that change of language in the psalm: they picture a public Temple service as in progress, and that when the sacrifice is laid on the altar and Jehovah as of old lights the flame of acceptance on the altar, the priest then exclaims—**Jehovah hath remembered us!** But surely it would have been all the more remarkable if the language to express that Divine manifestation had been provided some centuries earlier, when a wide land constituted the altar and holocausts of idolaters were the victims.

Possibly another link of connection is lying to our hand. Jehoshaphat lived before Hezekiah. Hezekiah, through means of his royal library, must have been acquainted with the songs of his predecessors. What if,—in providing for his Great Passover, to which he was so anxious to bring, in reunion, all Israel,—what if he discovered and brought into passover use this song of Jehoshaphat's days, weaving it into the service, with probably some of his own compositions,—would not such an appropriation of this psalm help to fix it in the "Hallel" for ever?

PSALM 116.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Individual Thanks for Deliverance from Peril of Death.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, With Profession of Love the Psalmist Describes his Peril and Prayer. Strophe II., vers. 5—9, In Glowing Terms describes Jehovah's Answer. Strophe III., vers. 10—14, Reviewing his Trial, he Desires to Return Public Thanks. Strophe IV., vers. 15—19, The Costliness of Death Intensifies his Desire for Publicity in Thanksgiving.

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[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.

1 I love—
For Jehovah |heareth| my voice, my supplications;
2 For he hath inclined his ear unto me,
and <throughout my days> will I call.[a]
3 <There encompassed me> the meshes of death,
and ||the straits of hades|| overtook me;
<distress and sorrow> I found:
4 And <with the name of Jehovah> I called,[b]
"Ah now! Jehovah! oh rescue my soul!"

5 <*Gracious*>[c] is Jehovah, and righteous,
and ||our God|| is *compassionate*;[c]
6 <Preserver of the simple-minded> is Jehovah:
I was brought low, and <to me> he brought salvation.
7 Turn in, O my soul, to thine abiding rest,[d]
for ||Jehovah|| hath dealt bountifully with thee
8 For he hath rescued my soul from death,
mine eyes from tears,
my foot from thrusts:[e]
9 I will walk to and fro[f] before Jehovah,
in the broad lands[g] of the living.

10 I have kept my faith, so I will speak:
||I|| was humbled greatly,—
11 ||I|| said in mine alarm:
"||All mankind|| are a delusion!"[h]
12 How can I repay Jehovah
all his benefits upon me?
13 <The cup of deliverances>[i] will I lift,
and <with the name of Jehovah> will I call;
14 <My vows, to Jehovah> will I pay,—
may it be before all his people!

15 <Costly, in the eyes of Jehovah>
is ||death|| to his men of kindness:
16 Ah now! Jehovah, for ||I|| am thy servant,
||I|| am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid,—
thou hast loosened my bonds.
17 <To thee> will I sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and <with the name of Jehovah> will I call.
18 <My vows, to Jehovah> will I pay,
may it be before all his people!
19 In the courts of the house of Jehovah,
in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem!

[Nm.][j]

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[a] Or: "invoke."
[b] Or: "invoked."
[c] Exo. 34[6].
[d] Ml. "rests"—prob. pl. of intensification.
[e] Cp. 56[13].
[f] "The Hithpa, *'ethhallĕk* denotes a free and sprightly walking along"—Del.
[g] Ml. "lands."
[h] Cp. Isa. 58[6].
[i] Or: "a great salvation" (pl. intensive).
[j] See Ps. 117 (beginning).

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EXPOSITION.

The personal note running through this psalm is so clearly that of an individual as distinguished from the **people** (vers. 14, 18), and so vividly recalls the known experiences of King Hezekiah, that we may fairly be excused from going any further in quest of the probable author. The modernisation of the original language to suit a later time (to which critics call attention), is so well within the editorial freedoms known to have been taken by the ancient Sopherim, as not to raise an argument in favour of a later origin. Starting from the presumption that Hezekiah wrote this psalm, we soon meet with indications confirming this conclusion; and those indications afford help to the more complete understanding of this deeply experimental composition.

The opening line has greatly puzzled critics by reason of its abruptness. May not that abruptness,—probably amounting to a broken construction,—be best accounted for as a manifestation of overwhelming affection? **I love,** says the writer, and then as good as says —"How MUCH I love, let the following song reveal." The circumstance that he presently uses language closely akin to that which stands at the opening of Ps. 18, to which we have already seen cause to think Hezekiah prefixed a line expressive of tender affection, makes us the more persuaded that this psalm is his.

Then, too, there is a line further on (ver. 11) which, even as conceived in bitter disappointment, seems—as usually translated—to contribute very little to general edification. It is quite true that either Hezekiah, or any other tried saint, *might* by repeated betrayals have been tempted to conclude that "All men are false." But if we put this to the test, by asking whether it is *likely* that Hezekiah, either as prince or king, had ever been so utterly bankrupt of trusty friends as this utterance of despair seems to imply,—we are compelled to admit it to be very unlikely indeed. So, apprehending some error in translation, we hail from the pen of Aglen, in Ellicott's Commentary, the suggestion of quite a different turn to the passage: "In an ecstasy of despair, I said, 'The whole race of mankind is a delusion.'" And again—"Once in distrust I thought that God did not care for man, and that the whole of humanity was a failure." Well, take this hint, and transplant it into the circumstances of Hezekiah; and then say, whether it does not savour of a very possible temptation. Childless, facing death, the Davidic heirship and covenant in peril of extinction and dishonour; and if the promise to David fail, where will be that to Abraham; what will become of the promise to the Race? "Is not the whole race of mankind a delusion?" Diseased thought, illogical, gratuitous? Yes! but—as a *temptation*, to be afterwards recalled with shame, and only to be

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divulged when faith has consciously revived,—is it not possible, with a verisimilitude which remarkably well fits the extraordinary circumstances?

Once more: there are those singular lines—**Costly in the eyes of Jehovah Is death to his men of kindness** (ver. 15). A glimmer of their meaning has dawned on several commentators; but how that meaning is intensified when the lines are put into a Hezekian setting! "It is no light thing," says Perowne, "in the sight of God that his servants should perish." With clearer apprehension, Delitzsch observes: "The death of His saints is not cheap to God; He does not lightly suffer matters to come to such a pass; He does not suffer His own to be torn from Him by death." True, in no case, can it be said that his saints are "torn" from him by death, since their spirits return to him, and remain in his safe-keeping; nevertheless, they are certainly "torn" from his kingdom here on earth; and the point is that he rightly estimates the sacrifice. It is a **costly** process to let them die as they do: their service is lost, their praises are hushed, their complete personalities are in abeyance until the Resurrection. To forget this would be to unlearn and practically contradict the close of the psalm (115) we so lately studied; and it would be prematurely, yea and violently, to cut ourselves adrift from the keen and clear perception possessed by Hezekiah himself, as seen in Isa. 38[18,19], that it is the especial function of THE LIVING—*not* of the dead—to praise Jehovah. Reverting to the **costliness** of death in the eyes of Jehovah,—two reflections appeal to us forcibly: How incalculable is the price which Jehovah is paying by permitting so many generations of his saintly ones to die—must it not be with a view to some commensurate end? And, again, if Jehovah counts **costly** the death of his ordinary, imperfect **men of kindness**; how costly does he reckon the death of Him who was the perfect reflection of this love and whom He raised from the dead?

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PSALM 117.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—All Nations Invited to Join in Israel's Tribute of Praise.

ANALYSIS.—By Synonyms of Unmistakable Universality, All Nations are Invited to Praise Jehovah for his Kindness and Faithfulness to Israel.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

1 Praise Jehovah, all ye nations,
laud him, all ye tribes of men:
2 For his kindness |hath prevailed over us|,
and ||the truth of Jehovah|| is to the ages.

[Nm.][a]

[a] See Ps. 118 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

This is the shortest psalm, and it has frequently been described as the grandest: it certainly is very significant. On the one hand, its appeal for universal praise to Jehovah is unequivocal: on the other, the ground of that appeal is abundantly worthy, though perhaps not at once perceived to be so special as it really is. As soon, however, as due prominence is given to the undoubted facts—that Israel as a nation is the speaker giving this invitation to the other nations of the earth; that the invitation comes from the heart of a nation met in solemn festival especially to memorialise and celebrate the Divinely achieved triumphs of her own history; and then the precise terms are given their proper value by which the especial reason for universal praise is conveyed, then it must be admitted by the candid and trained reader—trained in the history of Israel and in the course of the psalms hitherto—that the pronoun us of the psalm means specifically ISRAEL. The speakers say—**His kindness hath prevailed over US**, and there is no reason to doubt that they mean exactly what they say; and though to some minds, this conclusion may occasion a feeling of momentary disappointment, that the basis of invited praise is not made wider, as by saying—**For His kindness hath prevailed over YOU**, yet a few moments' reflection may suffice to convert this feeling into one of admiration for the very precision of the reference to Israel. There need, of course, be no apprehension—that the nations whose mouths are to be opened to celebrate Israel's mercies will be closed to the joyful acknowledgment of their own. But the point of the psalm is,—

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and it is in every way a triumphant point—a note worthy to be resounded through all the earth,—that Israel belongs to the nations, that her triumph is their triumph and benediction; that in her national history more than in their own, the **kindness** and **faithfulness** of Jehovah will have been displayed in a manner worthy to occasion, not only universal, but never-ending, adoration. We of the nations to whom the privilege has been given to anticipate that coming triumph, —how can we enter into the spirit of this psalm unmoved? By all our grief over Israel's long-protracted obstinacy, and over the suffering judicially permitted for that obstinacy,—are we moved with joy to look forward to this coming Divine triumph: when Jehovah's kindness will—deep down in Israel's heart, and all abroad in unmistakable openness of national demonstration—PREVAIL OVER ISRAEL. To look forward to such a Victory of Love, is to know a feeling akin to ecstasy; and that we should receive an invitation to indulge in so unselfish an anticipation from Jewish lips, in Jewish homes and Jewish synagogues, is to be conscious of an additional satisfaction which will one day be appreciated by our brethren of the Twelve-tribed-nation. We heartily thank them for this their Passover Invitation preserved in their Hallel.

PSALM 118.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Passover "Hosanna"-Song.

ANALYSIS.—(See bracketed Headlines let into the Psalm).

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah!

[Part I.—INVITATIONS TO PRAISE.]

[First in Standing Refrain: then in Appeal to Three Classes.]

1 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,*
for <to the ages> is his kindness.

2 Pray you, let Israel' |say|—
For <to the ages> is his kindness.

3 Pray you, let the house of Aaron' |say|—
For <to the ages> is his kindness.

4 Pray you, let them who revere' Jehovah |say|—
For <to the ages> is his kindness.

[Part II.—THE PROCESSION SONG.]

[Answer to Prayer Acknowledged.]

5 <Out of the strait> called I on Yah,
Yah |answered me with a roomy place|.[a]

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[a] That is, "(by granting me) a roomy place." Cp. 18^{19}, 31^{8}. Or (metaph.): "with freedom."

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[Sentiments Occasioned.]

6 ||Jehovah|| is mine, I will not fear,
what can man' |do unto me|?
7 ||Jehovah|| is mine, as my great Helper,[a]
so ||I|| shall gaze on them who hate me.
8 <It is better> to take refuge in Jehovah,
than to put confidence in man:
9 <It is better> to take refuge in Jehovah
than to put confidence in nobles.

[Entangling Alliances Severed.]

10 ||All nations|| compassed me about,—
<in the name of Jehovah> verily I cut them off:[b]
11 They compassed me about, yea they encompassed me about,—
<in the name of Jehovah> verily I cut them off:
12 They compassed me about, as bees (encompass) wax,[c]
they blazed up[d] as the fire of thorns,—
<in the name of Jehovah> verily I cut them off.

[An Unnamed Enemy Addressed.]

13 Thou ||didst thrust sore|| at me, that I might fall,
but ||Jehovah|| was my helper.

[Snatch from the Song of the Exodus.]

14 *<My might and melody> is Yah,*
and he hath become mine by salvation.[e]

[Jubilation in the Homes of the Righteous.]

15 A voice! a ringing cry and salvation[f] in the homes[g] of the righteous!
"||The right hand of Jehovah|| is doing valiantly!"
16 "||The right hand of Jehovah|| is exalting itself!"
"||The right hand of Jehovah|| is doing valiantly!"

[A Nation's Inference.]

17 I shall not die, but live,
And tell of the works[h] of Yah.
18 Yah ||chastened me sore||,
But <unto death> did not give me over.

[Part III.—REQUEST FOR ADMISSION INTO THE TEMPLE.]

19 Open unto me the gates of righteousness,
I would enter by them, I would thank Yah.

[Part IV.—REPLY FROM WITHIN.]

20 ||This|| is the gate of[i] Jehovah:
||Such as are righteous|| may enter thereby.

---

[a] Ml.: "my helpers." Prob. pl. of intensification.
[b] "Will cut them to pieces."— "Will mow them down"—Dr. "Will circumcise them"—O.G. Prob. better as above, and (w. Kp.) tense rendered as a "graphic imperfect" (Cp. vers. 5, 18).
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep.)—Gn.
[d] So it shd. be (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.)—Gn.
[e] Cp. Exo. 15[2], Isa. 12[2].
[f] Or: "victory."
[g] Ml.: "tents."
[h] Or: "doings."
[i] Or: "for."

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[Part V.—PRAISE IN THE TEMPLE.]

[All Israel as One Man.]

21 I would thank thee, that thou hast answered me,
and hast become mine by salvation.[a]

[A Voice Announces.]

22 ||A stone the builders' |rejected|||
hath become head of the corner!

[The People respond.]

23 <From Jehovah> hath this' |come to pass|:
||it|| is wonderful in our eyes!

[A Voice]

24 ||This|| is the day Jehovah' |hath made|!

[The People Respond]

Let us rejoice and exult therein.[b]

[United "Hosanna"[c]-Prayer.]

25 Ah pray, Jehovah! do save, pray!
ah pray, Jehovah! do send success, pray!

[Priest, as if Noticing the Approach of a Distinguished Worshipper.]

26 <Blessed> is he that entereth, in the name of Jehovah![d]

[Levites, as if Welcoming his Retinue.]

We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah!

[Priest and Levites when Proceeding to Sacrifice.]

27 Jehovah is ||the Mighty One||[e], and he hath kindled a light[f] for us,—
bind the festal sacrifice with cords!—
up to the horns of the altar.

[Doxology by the People as One Man.]

28 <My Mighty One>[e] art thou, and I will thank thee,
<my Adorable One>[g], I will exalt thee.

[The Temple Refrain.]

29 *Give ye thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,*
for <to the ages> is his kindness.

[Nm.]

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[a] Cp. ver. 14.
[b] Or: "in him."
[c] "Hosanna" Heb. word, meaning *save now! save, we pray*"—Liddell and Scott.
[d] Matt. 23[39]: "Until ye say," "Until that day, the subject of all prophecy, when your repentant people shall turn with true and loyal Hosannas and blessings to greet 'Him whom they have pierced': see Deut. 4[30,31], Hosea 3[4,5], Zech. 12[10], 14[8-11]. Stier well remarks, 'He who reads not this in the prophets, reads not yet the prophets aright'"—Alford *in loco*.
[e] Heb.: '*El*.
[f] Mal. 1[10].
[g] Heb.: '*Elohim*.

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm forms a worthy climax to the Hallel. Its leading voice —the "I" of the psalm—appears to be that of the Restored Nation, since no known individual wholly answers to its use through this particular psalm. If any individual voice is heard in it, it is that of Nehemiah, and that only near the beginning. As to the question of authorship,—whether or not Hezekiah or Isaiah began to write this psalm, as the conclusion of the Passover Hallel of their day,—this much is clear, that it was at least completed after the Exile and was expressly adapted for the consecration of the Second Temple. Zechariah, or Haggai, or both, may have composed it; or at least have given to it those exquisite finishing-touches which so admirably adapt it to that auspicious event.

It is obviously a *processional* psalm, and in the highest degree dramatic. The general course of it is clear; and the sound of several voices can be plainly heard, though precisely *who* speaks in the several divisions of the psalm is, naturally, to some extent, a matter of conjecture. Our headlines will therefore be accepted as exegetical suggestions, rather than as authoritative determinations—which, in no case, could they pretend to be.

Part I.—The standing "Refrain" of Temple psalmody which both opens and closes this psalm constitutes a remarkable testimony to the goodness of Jehovah, as a settled conviction in the heart of the Nation. However severely Jehovah had dealt with them, his abounding and abiding goodness to them was a fixed article of their faith.

The threefold appeal (vers. 2—4) which prolongs the national Refrain, is for several reasons interesting: partly because this is the second instance of its occurrence, the first being found at 115^{9-11}, and the third (amplified) at $135^{19,20}$; partly also because of its recognition of proselytes, as forming the third division, a class lying on the outside of Israel proper, and yet attached to them in the same general bonds of worship,— a recognition which reappears in the New Testament (Acts $13^{16,26}$, 16^{14}, 17^{17}, 18^{7}; cp. I K. 8^{41}, Isa. 56^{6}).

Part II.—It is not quite clear whether the **strait** and the **roomy place** of ver. 5 are anything more than picturesque phrases for expressing, in contrast, "distress" and "deliverance"; so that it may be needless to ask *what* **strait**? *what* **roomy place**? Deliverance from the irksome conditions of captivity would in any case justify the contrast; but, partly influenced by what has shortly to follow in the psalm, we can scarcely avoid reflecting how miserably hampered for

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want of elbow-room were the returned exiles, for carrying forward the work of restoration. How serious this difficulty was, and at how severe a cost it was overcome, the psalm itself will in a little vividly remind us.

The circumstance that, for *two* lines announcing the *facts* of prayer and deliverance (ver. 5), our song devotes *eight* lines to the expression of **sentiments** thereby demanded (vers. 6—9) may usefully remind us of the need there is that the Divine facts of Redemption should find fruitful lodgment in appreciative hearts. Of Nehemiah, we are already reminded (in 9b). He had occasion for putting only a very little confidence in **nobles** (Neh. 6^{17}).

Is it too much to say that by finding in the next strophe (vers. 10—12) rather "the severance of entangling alliances" than the raising of a fierce battle-cry, we avoid the rock on which many expositions have split; and are wholly left without excuse if we incontinently hurry down the centuries to the time of the Maccabees to discover an atmosphere of defiance in which these lines, as commonly understood, could have originated? In any case, it was not until we observed, with acquiescence, Kirkpatrick's suggestion, that the context is better consulted by taking the verb variously rendered "will cut to pieces," "will mow down," "will circumcise," rather as vividly descriptive *past* tenses than as threatening *futures*,—it was not till then that everything in the psalm seemed naturally to fall into its right place. "Cut off" and "circumcise" of course go hand in hand thus far: that there is "a cutting off" in "circumcising." Only, instead of supposing this psalmist to threaten to "circumcise" Israel's enemies (or else, as the word may be otherwise rendered, to "cut them to pieces," or "mow them down" by the edge of the sword),—if, rejecting these applications of the word, we take the "circumcising"-knife as sternly turned, by penitent Israel, against herself, in the way of cutting herself free from the entangling alliances which nearly strangled her on her return from captivity,—in that case, we reach a result worthy of the best of Israel's psalmists; worthy of Israel herself as now, at last, profiting by the chastising hand of her God; and worthy of being embalmed in song as a morally heroic act to be ever afterwards imitated, especially at Passover times. Let anyone read through the book Nehemiah with this thought before him, and he must be rather wanting in discernment if the spectacle that most impresses him be not just this—the awful flashing of the Pasha's terrible circumcising-knife as he unsparingly cut off Israel from her entangling alliances: foreign traders, foreign wives, all must go, if Israel is to be saved! We have only to imagine a poet-scribe, aware of Nehemiah's resolute doings and in full sympathy

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with the spirit that actuated them, setting himself to memorialise them in Passover Song,—and what could be wished for more appropriate than the wonderful strophe before us? Those buzzing **bees** and lacerating **thorns** of would-be helpers, anxious only to thwart and hinder,—here we have them, photographed for all time, in this Passover Song!

It was a terrible ordeal for Israel! Nor is it at all incredible that the poet—in concentrating all the stinging of the bees and all the piercing of the thorns into the personification of one unnamed enemy—**Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall** (ver. 13)—was thinking of an enemy, not only unnamed, but also *invisible!* Zechariah, at all events, knew of an "Accuser" who durst present himself at the right hand of the Angel of Jehovah (Zech. 3[1]); and the **sore thrust** at Israel's fidelity, which Nehemiah resisted, was probably as determined as SATAN himself could make it.

The Song of Triumph, sung on Deliverance from Egypt, in its sublimest sentiment (ver. 14), well becomes this new Triumph for Israel. Jehovah ("the Becoming One") having "become" the **might** of his people in trial, and the **melody** of his people in triumph, Israel more firmly than ever before, now becomes His in the strong ties of gratitude: **Mine by salvation!** It is all there.

The **jubilation** of vers. 15, 16 possesses quite a fascination, by reason of its highly dramatic record. It must be confessed, however, that it severely taxes the power of sober exegesis. In the first place, it is not clear whether the more literal meaning **tents** should be pressed: if it should, then the thought of the reader is carried away to an army camping out, to whom is brought news of victory, as if achieved by a relieving force in some other part of the field; since men actually engaged in fighting are not found in their "tents," and yet it would seem that the battle is actually being waged somewhere when these outbursts of triumph are heard in the **tents** alluded to—if such be intended. It is so easy in Hebrew story to take "tents" as simply standing for "homes" that we are tempted to simplify in that direction. But then, again, why are the "tents" or "homes" termed those of **the righteous?** Are they **the homes of the righteous** "nation preserving fidelity," of which we read in Isa. 26[1]? It may be so; and it would not be very wild so to conclude, seeing that that phrase occurs in a song to be sung "in the land of Judah." Of course, those who fly from the nation of Israel to the Church of Christ for relief from every difficulty in Old Testament interpretation, need not feel any difficulty here. They could say: "Ah, yes! during the present dispensation, there have been rousing outbursts of jubilation **in the**

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homes of the righteous as news has arrived of the conversion to Christ of the South Sea Islanders, the Chinese, etc., etc. And the righteous dwellers in those homes have exclaimed—just like this in the psalm—**The right hand of Jehovah is doing valiantly!"** Now we have to confess that we could envy the facility with which many enliven Old Testament exegesis by such natural sallies of Evangelical fervour as this; but then we are sharply called to account by the context, here in this psalm, and are admonished that, after all, such imaginative applications *are not exegesis*. For what is it that follows? Is it, or is it not, "a Nation's Inference" (vers. 17, 18), drawn from the exploits of **Jehovah's right hand** of which they now hear, that they, the Nation, **shall not die but live, And recount the doings of Yah?** Besides: these extracts are taken from the Passover procession-song of Israel; and as the procession slowly moves up to the gate of the Temple to seek admission, is it not the obvious dictate of candour to enquire, WHOM the processionists represent: is it their own nation or is it not? At least, if we demur to this, let us in all consistency accept the peril of **national extinction** and **sore national chastening from hand of Yah,** of which the context here speaks, before we foist any Gentile nation or Church into Israel's place as pictured in this psalm. She has had her centuries of humiliation and shame and sore sorrow. Of **jubilation,** in the past, she confessedly has had but few and short-lived occasions. If, therefore, it be seemly that we should conclude that Israel as a nation will yet repent; and that thereupon the "set time" for Jehovah to make bare his arm on her behalf will come, let us reverently let be, and see whether, even yet, in the future, this bright vision of national joy shall not be filled to the full. We are not even sure that it may not be necessary to restore the "tents" in their literality; seeing that, according to the prophet Zechariah (12^7), Jehovah intends, *in the yet future siege of Jerusalem*, "to save the tents of Judah first," and what precisely that may mean, perhaps only fulfilment can shew. In spite of the outstanding grounds for suspending our judgments seen in this part of our psalm, let us note well that the loud note of jubilation has in it the following clear significance, namely: That at the very time that these shouts of triumph are being raised in the **tents** or **homes** of the righteous, Jehovah is glorifying his power on Israel's behalf. To that conclusion we are bound by the language employed.

Parts III. and IV. need but little comment. It is only dramatically that they come into great prominence. Still they are not without significance for exegesis. As, just now, the "tents" or "homes" through which victory resounded were described as those of "the

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righteous," so now the same moral quality is again brought into prominence. The gates into which the processionists desire to enter are frankly admitted to be **gates of righteousness**; and by giving them this designation, the applicants acknowledge that only in the character of "righteous" men can they expect to enter; as, on the other hand, they seem to protest that, conceding them this claim, admission cannot be denied them. This moral prerequisite is abundantly confirmed by the answer which comes from within. This particular gate is, for some reason, described as in an especial way belonging **to Jehovah** or as reserved for his use; and then it is added that **such as are righteous may enter thereby,** no doubt implying that none others may. All of which goes strongly to protest to Israel that her worship makes for righteousness; that Jehovah is a righteous God; that sin must be put away if the worshipper is to have any communion with Him. The interest of these verses, however, is mainly dramatic. Silence gives consent. No protest comes from within, to the effect that the applicants cannot be allowed to enter; and as (in Part V., ver. 21) the I of the applying nation is resumed in the language of direct address to Jehovah, the inference is that the entrance has now been effected, and that it is *within the sacred precincts of the Temple* that this voice is raised. The language is that of thanksgiving: **"I would thank thee**—this is wherefore I have come into thy presence—**that thou hast answered me;** thou hast saved me—**thou hast become mine by salvation."** And thus again the climacteric language of the Exodus is used, now for a second time; and as no further words are added as following in sequence as part of Israel's praise, we are perhaps entitled to say that this Refrain from the song of the ancient Exodus is felt to be too expressive to need further addition. Such, at least, is our decipherment of these dramatic words. There can be nothing further for Israel than that Jehovah **should have become hers by salvation**: provided, always, that the salvation itself has at last answered to the ideal of Jehovah's own kindness and faithfulness as expressed in his promises. So that, until this goal is reached, every returning Passover should become another rung in the ladder of national advance.

We cannot doubt that we are justified in thus regarding ver. 21 of our psalm as leading us up to *a resting and breathing place,* if for no other reason than this: that the remainder of the psalm seems to be broken up into something like a rather fragmentary and conversational *retrospect.* Henceforth the building — whether the literal Second Temple, or Israel herself under the notion of a temple—is complete; and the assembled people give themselves up to the pleasure of admiring it. As they view the FINISHED EDIFICE, a voice breaks in,—we

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prefer to regard it as a *prophetic* voice, the voice of a Haggai or a Zechariah:

> **A stone the builders rejected**
> **Hath become the head of the corner!**

There it is, *in situ*, in its place in the building, before all eyes, challenging examination. Can any fail to note the present prominence of that **Stone**, or deny its past history of **rejection**? Can any word of excuse be offered to shield those mistaken **builders** who formerly set it aside? Silence leaves those builders to bear the blame of their mistake. But if the builders, whose province it was to know and act, set aside that most magnificent Corner Stone, Whose doing is it that it is now in its right place? The answer comes from the beholders, with firm conviction and undisguised admiration:

> **From Jehovah hath this come to pass:**
> **It is wonderful in our eyes!**

Is all this a parable? And, if so, what does it mean?

History records no such literal incident in connection with the building of the Second Temple. Surely then, the Temple must be Israel! Besides, if the insertion of this Rejected Stone in the Temple was effected by Jehovah's own hands, apparently without human instrumentality,—then again must we not conclude, for this reason also, that the Temple is the nation of Israel? And if, by the Temple, the Nation itself is here ultimately meant, then Who was this CORNER-STONE, first rejected and then accepted?

We have said that history records no such incident in connection with a literal Stone. It is easy, with Thrupp and Plumptre, to conjecture that such an incident may have happened; nor is it at all unwarranted to imagine such a thing, so long as the only object is to form clear conceptions of what ideas the language fairly conveys. But the point of importance just here is, to keep open the natural connection between the literal and the metaphorical in interpretation. It is right to cling to literal interpretations whenever they will fairly stand; but it is also right, and at times very important, to recognise that when the literal will not fairly stand, then the metaphorical conception should be frankly adopted. It is so here. The very form of the saying—so terse, so telling—almost reduces it to a proverb, convenient for conveying forcibly the familiar occurrence of the promotion to power of the person or party that had previously been set aside through prejudice or enmity. That it is proverbial here, and so also prophetic, we have already seen cause to conclude. The correctness of such conclusion is further confirmed

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by the fact that a celebrated prophet before the Exile (Isa. 28^{16}) had already familiarised the minds of the people with this very metaphor in a most impressive manner, and for most serious educational ends: "Therefore, thus saith the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah,—Behold me founding in Zion a stone, a stone of testing, a costly corner of a well-laid foundation: he that trusteth shall not make haste." This, be it remembered, is said long after Solomon's temple had been built: therefore the foundation here is metaphorical—one for men themselves to be builded upon. "He that trusteth" is plainly he that comes to rest on this foundation: therefore, again, this promised new foundation, spoken of by Isaiah, is metaphorical. The proposal to lay this foundation in Zion is plainly the fundamental part of a great moral testing, to which it is proposed that the "scoffing rulers of Jerusalem" (Isa. 28^{14}) shall be brought. With all this teaching, Israel had now for centuries been familiar: as also she had been made familiar—still under the figure of a sacred edifice, because an ASYLUM—with "a stone to strike against and a rock to stumble over" to the testing of "both houses of Israel" (Isa. 8^{14}). To which may be added that Zechariah, one of the post-exilic prophets (cp. Ezr. 5^{1}, 6^{14}), is manifestly quite familiar with this metaphorical style of teaching; since he knows not only of a Living foundation stone below, but of a Living Cope or Gable-stone above—one with seven eyes! (Zech. 3^{9}). To come back to our psalm, there can be no doubt that the builders who rejected the very Stone that Jehovah afterwards made head of the corner, were thereby themselves tested and proved incompetent builders of Israel.

Yes! it is a parable, here in the psalm; and, to the Christian Expositor, its meaning is as clear as day:—Israel, as a nation, first rejects her own Messiah; and then, by a series of providences which mark out the entire revolution as Jehovah's own doing, accepts him as the chief corner-stone of her national structure. But, such is the power of this same testing-stone, that, in the very process of reversal, Israel herself becomes a new, a regenerated, Nation.

Here again, as in expounding Ps. 110, we come upon an occasion of deep emotion, as we think of the mighty ministry of the already written word to the mind of Jesus of Nazareth in giving him solace as his Rejection drew near! (Mat. 21^{42}, Mk. $12^{10, 11}$, Lu. 20^{17}).

This is the day Jehovah hath made! says another (or the same) prophetic voice (ver. 24); meaning thereby, naturally, the day when these things are fulfilled by the national regeneration of Israel: to which the people—being at length the entire nation—will respond: **Let us rejoice and exult therein!** as well they may!

But that day has not come yet; and until it does come, Israel is

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taught, at every passover celebration, to pray with an importunity of pleading touchingly expressed in the quaint words—

> Ah pray, Jehovah! do save, pray!
> Ah pray, Jehovah! do send success, pray!

That the three English words, **do save, pray,** in the above quotation, are an exact rendering of the Hebrew compound-word *hoshiah-na* which constitutes our adopted word "hosanna," may be news to more than a few English readers. At first, this may seem to be a mere curiosity of literature, and of no further importance. But further reflection will dispel this easy-going conclusion. As reappearing in the Gospels in connection with the story of what is called "the triumphal entry" of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mat. 21[9], Mk. 11[9], Lu. 19[38], Jn. 12[13]), it may turn out to be something more than a curiosity of literature to be informed that *hosanna*, instead of being a mere flourishing banner-word of PRAISE, really constitutes a PRAYER of the most importunate significance. For who does not see, that to cry out to this Nazarene Claimant to the Messiahship, "Do save, pray!" constituted a far graver offence in the Jewish rulers' eyes than merely to flourish a comparatively unmeaning compliment of praise by way of welcoming him to the holy city? The jealous rulers of Jerusalem may very well think: This prophet of Galilee may be able to speak beautiful parables and even to heal a few sick folk,—but who is HE that he should be able to "save" Israel? No wonder that those rulers were vexed beyond measure. Not on this man, as a Corner Stone, do these "builders" desire Israel to build!

Even in this ancient literary museum of wonders, we now come upon a line or two of surpassing interest. We have presumed to place ver. 26 in a headline setting, which, if correct, may cause it to burst forth with a blaze of light, by bringing it into touch with the most thrilling biography of the world. Or rather, perhaps, it should be said that, with or without explanation, it already stands in vital connection with the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

It will be remembered that, according to the scenic plan of this Temple Procession, the main body of processionists have already come up to the Temple Gates—requested admission—been answered from within by the laying down of the great condition of entry—have gone triumphantly through those jealous gates—and, *within*, have raised their final Song of Triumph. And yet now, after this,—after the Retrospective Dialogues of prophet and people as to the admired **Corner Stone,** and as to the New Dispensation **Day** that has dawned, and after the united importunate "Hosanna" Prayer that all the Con-

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gregation of Israel have offered,—after all this, a strange incident happens! It would seem as though an unexpected arrival catches the High Priest's eye. Some distinguished Stranger has, thus late, presented Himself at the Temple Gate: to whom the observant priest cries out in holy ecstasy—

Blessed is he that entereth in the name of Jehovah!

And then the attendant Levites, observing further that the distinguished Stranger has with him a body of Attendants,—with a like inspiration, but changing the singular **he** to the plural **you**,—called for by the shifted application of the welcome,—exclaim:

We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah!

Do we dream? Or are we suddenly precipitated into the Spirit-land of the Unfulfilled? In any case, here are the words, in their precise significance. And here is the setting of scenic crisis in which the words fall upon our wondering ears. We have not invented these arresting conditions. These materials for thought have been lying, waiting, embedded, here for long centuries. Is it possible at last to wake up to their true significance?

We must be forgiven if we avow our overwhelming conviction, that we do here catch a glimpse of a thrilling incident yet, in the future, to be fulfilled; and to the certain fulfilment of which the four Gospels in our hands give us not only the clue but the positive assurance. The event which here casts its shadow before, is nothing less than this: The sudden arrival of the Lord (*hâ-'âdhôn*) whom Israel all along in her better moments has been "seeking," "even the Messenger of that (New) Covenant" which shall yet be solemnised with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Mat. 3^{1}, Jer. 31^{31}).

How come we by the courage to say this? Where is our "gospel" evidence which furnishes the link which connects these things together? In reply, we simply point to the words of our Lord Jesus which he spoke to the Jewish rulers when he bade them officially his solemn farewell. "Henceforth," said he (Mat. 23^{39}), "ye shall not see me until ye say:—

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

using the very words by which the Septuagint translates the line in this psalm which is now engaging our attention; and which Westcott and Hort and Nestle in their Greek Testaments print in special O.T. quotation-type, the Ginsburg-Salkinson Hebrew New Testament giving the identical Hebrew words that stand in the psalm—*Bârûk habba' b'shêm Yahweh.* So that, in point of fact, what Jesus here says

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amounts to this—"Ye reject me now: henceforth ye shall not see me until ye welcome me with especial and official Temple Greetings!" That glad day has yet to come; but when it does come this incident in our psalm, we may well believe, will be fulfilled with perfect precision and undoubtedly with an excitement which will thrill through all earth and heaven. We must not forget that, when Jesus used these words from the psalm (Mat. 23^{39}), they had already been employed (Mat. 21^{9}), some days before, by the multitude and the children, to give emphasis to their welcome of Jesus as the Messiah. While this fact goes to show plainly that our psalm had come by that time to be regarded as undoubtedly Messianic,—the two incidents, when set side by side, have a deeper lesson to convey. The welcome which the *multitude* gave to Jesus, the Jewish *rulers* took care *not* to extend to him. But could Jesus be satisfied without receiving such an official welcome? Could he pass the matter by as an incident of no importance? Could he be content with the welcome of the unlettered throng, and treat an official welcome as unnecessary? He could not. He knew that an official welcome was what the psalm had foretold; and he knew that what was denied him then should be accorded him thereafter. 'Tis as if he had on occasion of his finally leaving the temple said:—"Ye have not yet said these words; but you or your successors *will* say them. Till then, we part: you go your way—I go mine." That is the lesson which this second quotation of those words in the psalm by Jesus himself warrants us to learn. And therefore we confidently claim that our Master himself confirms our interpretation of this remarkable verse (26) in our psalm, as betokening nothing less than a national welcome to the Messiah, a national acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as the once rejected Corner-stone.

The next section of the psalm (ver. 27) need not detain us, notwithstanding that endless conjectures have been offered by expositors as to its precise meaning. We have ventured to suggest the general conception of the verse by heading it, "Priests and Levites when proceeding to Sacrifice"; as good as to say, these words appear suitable for them to utter when about to offer the Chief Sacrifice of the day. The first line is not so very difficult; especially if we accept the suggestion of Thrupp, in which, by reference to Mal. 1^{10}, he obtains for the close of the line this allusion—"and he hath set alight the fire on our altar which is approvingly to consume our sacrifice." And then this turn of *line one* may help us to obtain a feasible sense for *line two*, which has been the most troublesome to interpreters—"**Bind the festal sacrifice**—which consists of many victims that have come crowding into the temple court about the altar ready to be slain—**Bind** these

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with cords, so as to have all ready. The Divine fire is even now alight in the wood; therefore, lose no time; proceed rapidly with the immolation. Pile up the sacrificial pieces up to the horns—and so to the complete circumference—of the altar." Or, throwing in the middle line of the verse as parenthetical, "The fire of approval which Jehovah the Mighty One hath kindled upon our altar hath already reached even to the horns; therefore pile up the victims on the altar without delay." To all appearance, it is a ceremonial allusion, to which some simple act on occasion of an ordinary passover might do sufficient justice, so as to prevent its seeming to be unmeaning. But, if we are right in throwing the chief fulfilment of it into the future; then, like the Corner-Stone, this Sacrificial part of the Great Ceremonial may prove to be wholly metaphorical, and its Lesson be evolved in a manner which no human eye has ever witnessed and which no imagination can conjecture. We need not be further anxious about this confessedly puzzling verse. Some day it may be that we shall simply smile at our dulness of perception.

The conclusion of the psalm is abundantly worthy of its main burden; and consists of a Special Doxology for the occasion, and then of the standing Temple Refrain. Respecting the former (ver. 28), our only regret is, that, owing to our not being accustomed to discriminate, in English, between the two Hebrew Divine names *'El* and *'Elohim*, we are without the linguistic means, in strict verbal translation, to give effect to the probable climax which their parallelistic use here constitutes. Still, as there is a perceptible ascending force in the other members of the lines, by which **thank thee** is intensified into **exalt thee**; we may perhaps complete the discrimination between the two lines, if, for *'El*, we say **Mighty One,** and, for *'Elohim*, **Adorable One.** The main thing to note is that now again, once more, the whole nation is speaking as one man in language of blissful appropriation:—

> **My Mighty One art thou, and I will thank thee,**
> **My Adorable One, I will exalt thee.**

When that Doxology is really and realisingly uttered in fulfilment of the prophecy of this Passover Psalm, Heaven and Earth will be nearer to each other than they have ever been before.

> **Give ye thanks to Jehovah, for he is good,**
> **For to the ages is his kindness.**

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PSALM 119.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Jehovah's Will in Relation to Human Character and Conduct, celebrated in Twenty-two Alphabetical Strophes, and by the aid of Eight Comprehensive Synonyms.

ANALYSIS.—(The analysis of this Psalm may be seen in its superficial structure, and further discovered by an examination of the following Table of Synonyms.)

Synonyms expressive of Jehovah's Will in relation to Human Conduct as celebrated in Psalm 119.

Table of Principal Words and Phrases used in connection with Each Synonym.

English.	Hebrew.	No. of oc. in M.T.	No. Emended.	
1. Commandments ...	*miẓwah*	22	22	look well to, 6; go astray from, 10, 21, 110; run in way of, 32; lead in path of, 35; delight in, 47, 143; keep, (55), 60; believe in, 66; understand in order to learn, 73; are faithfulness, 86, 151; broad, 96; make wise, 98; observe, 115; love, 47, 127; long for, 131; quicken, (156), done, 166; not forgotten, 176.
2. Decisions ... (appointments)	*mishpat*	23	22	learn, 7; rehearse of thy mouth, 13; long for, 20; esteem, 30; good, 39; wait for, 43; remember, 52; thanks for, 62; better than g. and s., 72; righteous, 75; execute on (just decision), 84; h. and earth stand by, 91; not turned aside from, 102; keep, 106; afraid of, 120; done, 121; shew favour ac. to, 132; equitable, 137; quicken ac. to, 149; righteous and age-abiding, 160; praise for righteous, 164; sing of, 172.
3. Law... ... or instruction	*torah*	25	22	walk in, 1; delight in, (16), 70, 77, 92, 174; discern wonders out of, 18; favour with, 29; observe, 34; keep, 44, 136; forsake, 53; not forgotten, 61, 109, 153; men not ac. to, 85; love, 97, 113, 165; frustrate, 126; truth (or faithfulness), 142; go far from, 150.
4. Precepts ... or charges	*piḳḳudh*	21	22	keep, 4, 63, 128, 134, 168; soliloquise in, 15, 78; observe, (22), 56, 69, 100; cause to understand, 27; long for, 40; sought out, 45, 94; not forsaken, 87, do, (112); stray from, 118; not forgotten, 141; know from, 152; love, 159; choose. 173.

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TABLE OF PRINCIPAL WORDS AND PHRASES USED IN CONNECTION WITH EACH SYNONYM—*continued.*

ENGLISH.	HEBREW.	No. OF OC. IN M.T.	No. EMENDED.	
5. PROMISE ... OR SAYING	*'imrah*	19	22	keep, (5), 67; treasure, 11; not hide, (19); quicken ac. to, (25), 107, 154; leadeth to revere, 38; salvation ac. to, 41; hath quickened, 50; shew favour ac. to, 58; comfort ac. to, 76; eyes bedimmed for, 82, 123; to gen. after gen., 90; smooth (sweet), 103; uphold ac. to, 116; direct footsteps in, 133; love, refined, 140; soliloquise in, 148; joyful over, 162; deliver ac. to, 170.
6. STATUTES ...	*hoḳ huḳḳah*	19	22	keep, 8; teach me, 12, 26, 64, 68, (108), 124, 135, 172; soliloquise in, 23, 48; point out to me the way of, 33; become melodies, 54; be thorough in, 80; not forgotten, 83, 93; get understanding out of, (104); delight in, 117; righteous, (144); observe, 145; not sought after, 155; love, 163.
7. TESTIMONIES	*'edah 'eduth*	23	22	observe, 2; rejoice in, 14; delight, 23; keep close to, 31; incline heart to, 36; speak of bef. kings, 46; swerved from, 51, 157; turned feet to, 59; learn, (71); know, 79; keep, 88, 146, 167; dil. consider, 95; are soliloquy, 99; take as inheritance, 111; love, 119, 167; get to know, 125; wonderful, observe them, 129; commanded as righteous and faithful, 138; help me, (175).
8. WORD ...	*dhabhar*	22	22	walk in, (3); take heed ac. to, 9; keep, 17, 57, 101; raise up ac. to, 28; quicken, 37; trust in, 42; remember, on wh. hope, 49; deal well ac. to, 65; wait for, 74, 81, 114, 147; stationed in heavens, 89; lamp and light, 105; surety with, (122); opening giveth light, 130; forgotten, 139; not kept, (158); stood in awe of, 161; cause understanding ac. to, 169.

[1. The Eightfold Aleph (ℵ).]

Each verse in the Hebrew beginning with the letter Aleph; and so with the rest.

1 |How happy| the blameless in behaviour—[a]
who walk in the **law** of Jehovah.

2 |How happy| they who observe his **testimonies**—
<with a whole heart> do they seek after him.

3 Yea they have not wrought perversity—
<in his (**word**)>[b] have they walked.

4 ||Thou thyself|| hast commanded thy **precepts**—
to be kept[c] diligently.

5 Ah! that my ways might be established—
to keep thy (**promise**).[d]

6 ||Then|| shall I not be put to shame—
when looking well unto all thy **commandments.**

[a] U.: "way."
[b] M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight synonyms: "word" otherwise missing from strophe.
[c] Ml.: "to keep."
[d] M.T.: "statutes," in ver. 8: "promise" not otherwise in strophe.

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7 I will thank thee with uprightness[a] of heart—
when I learn thy righteous **decisions.**
8 <Thy **statutes**> will I keep—
do not forsake me utterly.

[2. The Eightfold Beth (ב).]

9 |Whereby| shall a young man keep[b] pure his path?—
by taking heed, according to thy **word.**[c]
10 <With all my heart> have I sought after thee—
let me not go astray from thy **commandments.**
11 <In my heart> have I treasured thy **promise**—[d]
to the end I may not sin against thee.
12 <Blessed> art |thou|, Jehovah—
teach me thy **statutes.**
13 <With my lips> have I told
of all the **decisions** of thy mouth.
14 <In the way of thy **testimonies**> have I rejoiced—
as over all riches.
15 <In thy **precepts**> will I soliloquise—
that I may discern thy paths.
16 In thy (**law**)[e] will I delight myself—
I will not forget thy word.[f]

[3. The Eightfold Gimel (ג).]

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, I shall live—[g]
so shall I keep thy **word.**[h]
18 Unveil thou mine eyes, that I may discern
wonderful things[i] out of thy **law.**
19 <A sojourner>[j] am |I| in the earth—[k]
do not hide from me thy (**promise**).[l]
20 <Crushed> is my soul with longing
for thy **decisions** at all times.
21 Thou hast rebuked the insolent as accursed—[m]
who go astray from thy **commandments.**
22 Roll off from me reproach and contempt—
for <thy (**precepts**)>[n] have I observed.
<Although princes |have| taken their seat, <against me> have talked>—
thy servant doth soliloquise in thy **statutes.**
24 Yea[o] ||thy **testimonies**|| are my delight—
[they are] my counsellors.[p]

[4. The Eightfold Daleth (ד).]

25 My soul |cleaveth unto the dust|—
quicken me according to thy (**promise**).[q]

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[a] Or: "straightforwardness."
[b] Or: "make."
[c] Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.
[d] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "promises" (pl.)—Gn.
[e] M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 12: "law" not otherwise in str.
[f] In some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.
[g] Cp. Isa. 38[19].
[h] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "words" (pl.)—Gn.
[i] Cp. ver. 27.
[j] Cp. ver. 54, Ps. 39[12], Gen. 47[9].
[k] Or: "land."
[l] M.T.: "commandments" — in ver. 21: "promise" not otherwise in str.
[m] Or: "insolent—accursed are they who," etc.
[n] M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 24: "precepts" not otherwise in str.
[o] So Dr., Br.; also Per.; "Nevertheless" (thus connecting vers. 23, 24)—Del.
[p] Ml.: "my men of counsel" = "my counsellors" = "my counsellors."
[q] M.T.: "word"—in ver. 28: "promise" otherwise not in str.

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26 <My ways> I recounted, and thou didst answer me—
teach me thy **statutes**.
27 <The way of thy **precepts**> cause thou me to understand—
so will I soliloquise in thy wondrous things.[a]
28 My soul |hath wept itself away| for grief—
raise me up according to thy **word**.[b]
29 <The way of falsehood> remove from me—[c]
and <with thy **law**> be gracious unto me.[d]
30 <The way of faithfulness> have I chosen—
<thy **decisions**> do I esteem.[e]
31 I have kept close to thy **testimonies**—
Jehovah! do not put me to shame.
32 <The way of thy **commandments**> will I run—
for thou wilt enlarge my heart.[f]

[5. The Eightfold He (ה).]

33 Point out to me, Jehovah, the way of thy **statutes**—
and I will observe it unto the end.
34 Cause me to understand that I may observe thy **law**—
and I will keep it with a whole heart.
35 Lead me in the path of thy **commandments**—
for <therein> do I find[g] pleasure.
36 Incline my heart unto thy **testimonies**—
and not unto covetousness.
37 Cause mine eyes to pass on from beholding unreality—[h]
<by thy (**word**)>[i] quicken thou me.
38 Confirm unto thy servant thy **promise**—
which leadeth men to revere thee.[j]
39 Cause to pass away my reproach which I have feared—
for ||thy **decisions**|| are good.
40 Lo! I have longed for thy **precepts**—
<in thy righteousness> quicken thou me.

[6. The Eightfold Waw (ו).]

41 And let thy kindness reach me, O Jehovah—
thy salvation, according to thy **promise**.
42 And I will make answer to him that reproacheth me—
for[k] I trust in thy **word**.
43 And do not snatch away from my mouth a truthful word utterly—
because <for thy **decisions**> have I waited.
44 And I will keep thy **law** continually—
to the ages[l] and beyond.
45 And I will walk to and fro in a roomy place—[m]
because <thy **precepts**> have I sought out.[n]

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[a] Cp. vers. 18, 129.
[b] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "according to thy words" (pl.). But other cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "in (or 'by') thy words" (pl.)—Gn.
[c] Cp. Mt. 6^{13}.
[d] "And favour me with Thine instruction" ("*torah* not having the notion of fixed doctrine, but that of living empirical instruction")—Del. "Grant me thy law graciously"—A.V., R.V., Dr. "With thy law be gracious to me"—Br., Per. "Bestow upon me thy law"—Carter. "Be gracious to me according to thy law"—Aglen.
[e] So Dr. "Have I set before me"—Del.
[f] "That is, cause it to swell for joy." Cp. Isa. 60^{5}—Dr. Cp. I. Watts' hm. "My God the spring," ver. 4.
[g] Or: "have I found."
[h] So Dr. "Without real, *i.e.* without divine substance; God-opposed teaching and life"—Del. "Worthlessness"—Br. "Delusion"—Carter. "Perhaps *from looking on idols*"—Aglen. And cp. Mt. 6^{13}.
[i] M.T.: "ways"—not one of the eight: "word" not otherwise in str.
[j] Cp. 130^{4}.
[k] Or: "that."
[l] U.: "to times age-abiding."
[m] Cp. 18^{19}, 31^{9}, 118^{5}.
[n] Or: "studied."

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46 And I will speak of thy **testimonies** before kings—
and shall not be put to shame.
47 And I will delight myself in thy **commandments**—
the which I have loved.
48 And I will lift up mine open hands[a] unto thy commandments—[b]
and will soliloquise in thy **statutes**.

[7. The Eightfold Zayin (ז)]

49 Remember the **word** to thy servant—
seeing that thou hast caused me to hope.
50 ||This|| is my comfort in my humiliation—[c]
that ||thy **promise**|| hath quickened me.
51 ||Insolent men|| have scorned me exceedingly—
<from thy (**testimonies**)>[d] have I not swerved.
52 I have remembered thy **decisions** [that have been] from antiquity, Jehovah—
and have consoled myself.
53 ||A raging heat|| hath seized me, by reason of the lawless—
forsakers of thy **law**.
54 <Melodies> have thy **statutes**' |become to me|—
in my house of sojourn.[e]
55 I have remembered, in the night, thy name, Jehovah!
and have kept thy (**commandments**).[f]
56 ||This|| hath become mine—
that <thy **precepts**> have I observed.

[8. The Eightfold Ḥeth (ח).]

57 My portion, Jehovah!
I have said[g] I would keep thy **words**.
58 I have sought the smile of thy face[h] with a whole heart—
be gracious unto me according to thy **promise**.
59 I thought on my ways—
and turned my feet unto thy **testimonies**.
60 I have hastened and not delayed—
to keep thy **commandments**.
61 ||The meshes of lawless men|| have enclosed me—
<thy **law**> have I not forgotten.
62 <At midnight> I arise to give thanks to thee—
because of thy righteous **decisions**.
63 <Companion> am |I| to all who revere thee—
and to them who keep thy **precepts**.
64 <Of thy kindness> Jehovah, the earth |is full|—
<thy **statutes**> O teach me.

[9. The Eightfold Ṭeth (ט).]

65 <Well> hast thou dealt with thy servant—
O Jehovah, according to thy **word**.

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[a] Ml.: "palms."
[b] M.T. adds: "which I have loved"—"repeated probably by error from ver. 47"—Dr.
[c] Cp. vers. 67, 71, 75, 92, 107.
[d] M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "testimonies" not otherwise in str.
[e] Cp. ver. 19, Ps. 39[13], Gen. 47[9]. Or—may not the allusion be to a temporary banishment? Cp. and consider Pss. 42, 43.
[f] M.T.: "law"—in ver. 53: "commandments" not otherwise in str.
[g] Or: "promised." Cp. 1 Ch. 27[23], 2 Ch. 21[7], Est. 4[7], 2 K. 8[29], Neh. 9[25]; hence *'imrah* easily becomes "promise" where context favours.
[h] "Lit. make the face of any one sweet pleasant"—O.G. 318b.

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66 <Good perception[a] and knowledge> teach thou me—
for <in thy **commandments**> have I believed.
67 <Before I was humbled>[b] ||I|| was going astray—
but ||now|| <thy **promise**>[c] have I kept.
68 <Good> art |thou| and a doer of good—[d]
teach me thy **statutes**.
69 Insolent men |have plastered falsehood over me|—[e]
||I|| <with a whole heart> will observe thy **precepts**.
70 <Unfeeling like fat>[f] is their heart—
||I|| <in thy **law**> have found delight.
71 <Well> was it for me that I was humbled—[g]
to the end I might learn thy (**testimonies**).[h]
72 <Better to me> the (**decisions**)[i] of thy mouth—[j]
than thousands of gold and silver.

[10. The Eightfold Yôdh (י).]

73 ||Thine own hands|| made me and established me—
cause me to understand, that I may learn thy **commandments**.
74 ||They who revere thee|| shall see me and rejoice—
that[k] <for thy **word**> I waited.[l]
75 I know, Jehovah, that <righteous> are thy **decisions**—
and <in faithfulness> didst thou humble[m] me.
76 Let thy kindness, pray, serve to comfort me—
according to thy **promise** to thy servant.
77 Let thy compassions reach me, that I may live—
for ||thy **law**|| is my delight.
78 <Put to shame>[n] be insolent men, that <with falsehood> they deprived me of justice—[o]
||I|| soliloquise in thy **precepts**.
79 Let those who revere thee |turn[p] unto me|—
and they shall[q] know thy **testimonies**.
80 Let my heart be blameless[r] in thy **statutes**—
to the end I may not be put to shame.

[11. The Eightfold Kaph (כ).]

81 My soul |languisheth|[s] for thy salvation—
<for thy **word**> have I waited.
82 <Bedimmed> are mine eyes for thy **promise**—
saying, When wilt thou comfort me?
83 <Though I have become like a wine-skin in smoke>
<thy **statutes**> have I not forgotten.
84 |How many| are the days of thy servant?
|when| wilt thou execute on my persecutors a **decision**?[t]

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[a] ML.: "taste" = quick moral perception.
[b] Cp. refs. to ver. 50.
[c] "Promise"—if understood as conditional or directory: else, "saying."
[d] Cp. Wesley's hymn: "Good thou art."
[e] So Dr.
[f] "Impervious to good influences; cp. Isa. 6[10]"—Dr.
[g] Cp. refs. to ver. 50.
[h] M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 68: "testimonies" not otherwise in str.
[i] M.T.: "law"—in ver. 70: "decisions" not otherwise in str.
[j] Cp. vers. 13, 88.
[k] Or: "because."
[l] Cp. 35[27].
[m] Cp. refs. to ver. 50.
[n] Cp. 35[26].
[o] So (prob.)—O.G.
[p] Or: "return."
[q] Or: "who"—ancient authorities divided.
[r] Or: "thorough"; cp. ver. 113.
[s] Cp. 84[2].
[t] A pos. error for the customary "thy decisions."

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85 Insolent men |have digged for me| pits—
who are not according to thy **law**.
86 ||All thy **commandments**|| are faithfulness—
<falsely>[a] have they persecuted me, help me!
87 ||Almost|| had they made an end of me[b] in the land—[c]
but ||I|| forsook not thy **precepts**.
88 <According to thy kindness> quicken me—
that I may keep the **testimony**[d] of thy mouth.

[12. The Eightfold Lamedh (ל).]

89 <To the ages>[e] O Jehovah—[f]
||thy **word**|| is stationed in the heavens.
90 <To generation after generation> is thy **promise**—[g]
thou hast[h] established the earth, and it standeth.
91 <By thy **decisions**> they stand to-day—
for ||they all||[i] are thy servants.
92 <Unless thy **law** had been my delight>—
||then|| should I have perished in my humiliation.[j]
93 <To the ages> will I not forget thy **statutes**—[k]
for <by them> hast thou quickened me.
94 <Thine> am |I|, O save me—
for <thy **precepts**> have I sought out.[l]
95 <For me> have lawless men waited, to destroy me—
<thy **testimonies**> do I diligently consider.
96 <To all completeness> have I seen an end—
<broad> is thy **commandment** exceedingly.

[13. The Eightfold Mêm (מ).]

97 |Oh how| I love thy **law**!—
<all the day> |is| it my soliloquy.
98 <Beyond mine enemies> shall thy **commandment** |make me wise|—
for <age-abidingly> |it| is mine.
99 <Beyond all my teachers> have I shewn understanding—
because ||thy **testimonies**|| are a soliloquy to me.
100 <Beyond elders> do I get understanding—
because <thy **precepts**> have I observed.
101 <From every path of wickedness> have I restrained[m] my feet—
to the end I might keep thy **word**.
102 <From thy **decisions**> have I not turned aside—
for ||thou thyself|| hast directed me.
103 <|How pleasant|[n] to my palate> is thy **promise**—[o]
more than honey to my mouth.
104 <Out of thy (**statutes**)>[p] do I get understanding—
|therefore| do I hate every path of falsehood.

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[a] Cp. ver. 78: and 35[19].
[b] Cp. 35[25].
[c] Or: "earth."
[d] "Read 'testimonies' as usual"—Br.
[e] U.: "To times age-abiding."
[f] "For ever is Jahve"—Del.
[g] M.T.: "faithfulness"—not a syn.: "promise" not otherwise in str.
[h] Or: "didst."
[i] "All things"—Dr. "All beings"—Del.
[j] Cp. refs. to ver. 50, and cp. Gen. 8[21, 22], also Ps. 33[6-9].
[k] M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 94: "statutes" not otherwise in str.
[l] Or: "studied."
[m] Dr. after P.B.V.: "refrained."
[n] Ml.: "smooth."
[o] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "are thy promises" (pl.)—Gn.
[p] M.T.: "precepts"—in ver. 100: "statutes" not otherwise in str.

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[14. The Eightfold Nûn (נ).]

105 <A lamp to my foot> is thy word—
and a light to my path.
106 I have sworn and have confirmed it—
to keep thy righteous decisions.
107 I have been humbled[a] exceedingly, Jehovah!
quicken thou me according to thy (promise).[b]
108 <The freewill offerings of my mouth> accept, pray, Jehovah!—
and <thy (statutes)>[c] teach thou me.
109 ||My life||[d] is in mine open hand[e] continually—
yet <thy law> have I not forgotten.
110 The lawless |set| a trap for me—
yet <from thy commandments>[f] I went not astray.
111 I have taken as an inheritance thy testimonies to the ages—
for <the exultation of my heart> are |they|.
112 I have inclined my heart to do thy (precepts)—[g]
a reward to the ages.

[15. The Eightfold Sâmech (ס).]

113 <Half-hearted ones>[h] do I hate—
but <thy law> do I love.
114 <My hiding-place and my shield> art |thou|—
<for thy word> have I waited.
115 Depart from me, ye evil-doers—
and I will observe the commandments of my God.
116 Uphold me according to thy promise, that I may live—
and do not shame me out[i] of my hope.
117 Support me, that I may be saved—
and I will delight in thy statutes continually.
118 Thou hast made light of all who stray from thy (precepts)—[j]
because of the falsehood of their deceit.[k]
119 <Dross> have I accounted[l] all the lawless of the land—[m]
|therefore| do I love thy testimonies.
120 My flesh |hath bristled up from dread of thee|—
and <of thy decisions> have I been afraid.

[16. The Eightfold 'Ayin (ע).]

121 I have done (thy righteous decisions)—[n]
do not leave me to mine oppressors.
122 Be thou surety (with thy word)[o] for thy servant for good—
let not insolent men |oppress me|.
123 ||Mine eyes|| have become dim for thy salvation—
and for thy righteous promise.
124 Deal with thy servant according to thy kindness—
and <thy statutes> teach thou me.
125 <Thy servant> am |I|, cause me to have understanding—
so shall I get to know thy testimonies.

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[a] Cp. refs. to ver. 50.
[b] M.T.: "word"—in ver. 105: "promise" not otherwise in str.
[c] M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 106.
[d] U.: "soul."
[e] Mi.: "palm."
[f] M.T.: "precepts"—"commandments" not otherwise in str.
[g] M.T.: "statutes"—(nqw) in ver. 108.
[h] Cp. ver. 80 n.
[i] Or: "on account."
[j] M.T.: "statutes"—in ver. 117: "precepts" not otherwise in str.
[k] Cp. 85[19].
[l] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.
[m] Or: "earth."
[n] M.T.: "justice and righteousness"—in which case no synonym in ver.
[o] So Br. M.T.: no synonym.

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126 |It is time| for Jehovah |to act|—
they have frustrated thy **law**.
127 ||Therefore|| do I love thy **commandments**—
more than gold, yea than fine gold.
128 ||Therefore|| <all thy **precepts** concerning me> have I kept—[a]
<every path of falsehood>[b] do I hate.

[17. The Eightfold Pê (פ).]

129 <Wonderful>[c] are thy **testimonies**—
||therefore|| hath my soul' observed them|.
130 ||The opening of thy **word**||[d] giveth light—
causing the simple to understand.
131 <My mouth> have I opened wide, and panted—[e]
because <for thy **commandments**> have I longed.
132 Turn to him that loveth thy name—
and <according to thy **decisions**> be gracious unto me.[f]
133 <My footsteps> direct thou in thy **promise**—[g]
and let no iniquity[h] |have dominion over me|.
134 Ransom me from the oppression of man—
and I will keep thy **precepts**.
135 <Thy face> light thou up on thy servant—
and teach me thy **statutes**.
136 ||Streams[i] of water|| have run down mine eyes—[j]
because they have not kept thy **law**.

[18. The Eightfold Ṣadhe (צ).]

137 <Righteous> art |thou|, Jehovah—
and <straightforward>[k] are thy **decisions**.
138 Thou hast commanded, as[l] righteousness, thy **testimonies**—
and as[l] exceeding faithfulness.
139 My zeal |hath undone[m] me|—
for mine adversaries |have forgotten thy **word**|.[n]
140 <Refined>[o] is thy **promise** to the uttermost—
and ||thy servant|| loveth it.
141 <Young>[p] am |I| and despised—
<thy **precepts**> have I not forgotten.
142 ||Thy righteousness|| is right to the ages—[q]
and thy **law** is truth.
143 ||Strait and stress|| have found me—
||thy **commandments**|| are my delight.
144 <Righteous> are thy (**statutes**) to the ages—
give me understanding, that I may live.

[19. The Eightfold Ḳôph (ק).]

145 I have called with a whole heart, answer me, Jehovah!—
<thy **statutes**> will I observe.

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[a] So *Gt.*
[b] Cp. ver. 118, Ps. 35[19].
[c] Cp. vers. 18, 27.
[d] M.T.: "words" (pl.).
[e] Cp. Pss. 42, 43.
[f] Verse emended after Br., restoring synonym.
[g] "Promise"—if understood to be conditional and directory: otherwise "saying."
[h] "Naughtiness"—Dr.
[i] "Rills"—Dr. Cp. 42[3].
[k] "Upright"—Dr. "Straight"—Del. Cp. 19[8].
[l] Or: "in."
[m] U.: "exterminated."
[n] M.T.: "words" (pl.). Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Syr.): "word" (sing.)—Gn.
[o] "Sterling metal"—Dr. Cp. Pro. 80[5]. "Is very pure"—Del.
[p] So Del. "Small"—Per., Kp., Br., Dr. ("or young"). "Little"—Carter. "More often of age"—O.G.
[q] U.: "to times age-abiding."

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146 I have called upon thee, O save me!—
and I will keep thy **testimonies**.
147 I am beforehand with the morning twilight, and cry for help—
<for thy **word**>[a] have I waited.
148 Mine eyes |forestall| the night-watches—
to soliloquise in thy **promise**.
149 <My voice> O hear, according to thy kindness—
Jehovah! <according to thy **decisions**>[b] quicken me.
150 <They have drawn near> who·persecute[c] with infamous devices—
<from thy **law**> have they gone far away.
151 <Near> art |thou|, Jehovah—
and ||all thy **commandments**|| are truth.
152 <Long> have I known from thy (**precepts**)—[d]
that <to the ages>[e] thou didst found them.

[20. The Eightfold Rêsh (ר).]

153 O see my humiliation, and rescue me—
for <thy **law**> have I not forgotten.
154 Plead my cause, and redeem me—
<by thy **promise**> O quicken me.
155 <Far from lawless men> is salvation—
for <thy **statutes**> have they not sought out.[f]
156 ||Thy compassions|| are many, Jehovah—
<according to thy (**commandments**)>[g] quicken me.
157 <Many> are my persecutors and mine adversaries—
<from thy **testimonies**> have I not swerved.
158 I beheld traitors, and felt loathing—
because thy (**word**)[h] had they not kept.
159 O see, that <thy **precepts**> I have loved—
Jehovah! <according to thy kindness> quicken me.
160 ||The sum of thy word|| is truth—
and <to the ages> are all[i] thy righteous **decisions**.

[21. The Eightfold Sin (or Shin) (שׂ).]

161 ||Princes|| have persecuted me without cause—
but <of thy **word**>[j] hath my heart |stood in awe|.
162 <Joyful> am |I| over thy **promise**—
like the finder of spoil in abundance.
163 <Falsehood> I hate and abhor—
<thy (**statutes**)>[k] I love.
164 <Seven times a day> have I praised thee—
because of thy righteous **decisions**.
165 <Blessing in abundance>[l] have the lovers of thy **law**—
with nothing to make |them| stumble.
166 I have hoped for thy salvation, Jehovah—
and <thy **commandments**> have I done.

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[a] MSS. and versions vary between "word" and "words"—cp. Gn.
[b] So (pl.) in some cod. (w. 6 ear. pr. edns.)—Gn. M.T. sing.
[c] Some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.): "persecute me"—Gn.
[d] M.T.: "testimonies"—in ver. 146: "precepts" otherwise not in str.
[e] U.: "to times age-abiding."
[f] Or: "studied."
[g] M.T.: "decisions"—in ver. 160: "commandments" not otherwise in str.
[h] M.T.: "promise"—in ver. 154: "word" not otherwise in str.
[i] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.): "all"—Gn. M.T.: "is each of."
[j] MSS. and versions vary between "word" and "words"—cp. Gn.
[k] M.T.: "law"—in ver. 165: "statutes" not otherwise in str.
[l] Or: "great peace," "great prosperity."

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167 My soul |hath kept| thy **testimonies**—
and I have loved them greatly.
168 I have kept thy **precepts** (and thy testimonies)—[a]
for ||all my ways|| are before thee.

[22. The Eightfold Tau (ת).]

169 Let my ringing[b] cry |come near| before thee, Jehovah!—
<according to thy **word**> cause me to understand.
170 Let my supplication |come in| before thee—
<according to thy **promise**> deliver me.
171 Let my lips |pour forth| praise—
because thou teachest me thy **statutes**.
172 Let my tongue |sing| (in faithfulness)
of thy righteous **decisions**.[c]
173 Let thy hand be ready to help me—
for <thy **precepts**> have I chosen.
174 I have longed for thy salvation, O Jehovah!
and ||thy **law**|| is my delight:
175 Let my soul |live| and it shall praise thee—
and let ||thy (**testimonies**)||[d] help me.
176 I have strayed, <like a wandering sheep> seek thou thy servant—[e]
for <thy **commandments**> have I not forgotten.

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[a] Clearly redundant. "Implying variant readings at an early date"—Br.

[b] Or: "piercing."

[c] M.T.: "Let my tongue sing thy promise—for all thy commandments are righteous." "Promise" is in ver. 170; and "commandments" in ver. 176.

[d] M.T.: "decision." In some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Vul.): "decisions" (pl.)—Gn. "Decisions" needed in ver. 172.

[e] "If I should go astray—like a lost sheep seek thy servant; for," etc.—Del. "I wander like a lost sheep; seek thy servant"—Carter. "I have gone erringly astray like lost sheep: seek thy servant; for," etc.—Leeser. "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost; O seek thy servant: for," etc.—Dr.

EXPOSITION.

The "Descriptive Title" prefixed to this psalm may make the inadequate impression, that here we have an excessively artificial composition; and a cursory perusal of the psalm itself may awaken the further apprehension, that this artificially constructed series of sayings is wearisomely monotonous. The instant correction of these plausible forebodings is desirable. The monotone, whose existence cannot be denied, is that of a lullaby by which a troubled soul may be softly and sweetly hushed to rest. The art is so exquisite that, when familiarised, it not only gratifies the taste, but aids the judgment, and ministers to the hunger of the spirit. This psalm, so far as it is a song at all, is one composed in mournful measure. It is, however, a soliloquy rather than a song. It is a study set to the murmuring of the sea. Its repetitions are like the recurring waves of light by which new satellites are discovered in the ancient heavens. In truth, it reveals a soul in close communion with God; and its art resolves itself into the measured

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movements of an eagle's wings by which is sustained its nearness to the sun.

The art is undeniably there: *visibly* there—in the eight-fold *aleph*, the eight-fold *beth*, and so on to the end of the Hebrew alphabet of twenty-two letters, yielding in all one hundred and seventy-six verses; *credibly* there—in the eight synonyms which continue changefully pealing like so many bells till full measure has been given; and *possibly* there—in the closing assonances in *ka* and *ee* which some critics deem they discover in the original, though now buried beneath numberless transpositional inadvertences committed by editors and copyists not sufficiently on the alert to safeguard so many stylistic beauties.

But the art is subservient to the sense. Even the grouped initial letters are luminous with concentrated rays of light. For instance, the *aleph* bursts forth, once and again, with impassioned benedictions on the head of the man of God—at once rebuking those who fancy that art cannot minister to devout feeling; the humble linguistic "peg," *waw*, shews how nimbly it can suggest logical continuity of thought; the serpent-like *ṭeth*, harmless as a dove, and full of all "goodness," makes the dweller in its strophe feel that it is "good" to be here; the *ayin* has an "eye" to the beautiful, and opens fresh "fountains" of gladness; and, to name no more, the *ṣadhe* looks well to it that "righteousness" shall be strong, and "right" on every side be done.

Then those eight synonyms—even though we have lost for the present the poetry of the system by which, chorus-like, they change places—how logically expansive and expanding they are! They are the sworn foes of over-narrowness of definition, and irresistibly demand that grace be permitted to temper law. For what, let us ask, is the master-thought of the psalm? A weighty question truly, and one to which the synonyms must be heard in reply. The verbs—to **love**, to **hate**, to **run**, to **keep**, to **quicken**, etc.—all have their quota of evidence to tender; but they cluster about their nouns, and chiefly about those sturdy synonyms—**law**, **precept**, **word**, etc.—which dominate the landscape. If we start with ever so narrow a concept of **law**, for example, —then we have to hearken to **testimony**, with its "witness" to the love of God as well as to the duty of man. If we begin with the *written* "word," as we very well may, by starting at **statute**, from a root meaning "to engrave,"—then the question comes—whether we must not include the *oral* "word" as well, seeing that the psalmist speaks of **waiting for it** (74, 81, 114, 147), which he would not need to do if it were already in his hand. *The word written and oral*—so far, at least,

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we must go. But we find the word stationed in the heavens; its synonymous promise assuring us that Jehovah hath established the earth so that it standeth; and its synonymous decisions evidently applying to all created things in heaven and earth, and causing them all to obey as Jehovah's servants. We are thus uplifted to the altitude of Jehovah's WILL—*written*, *oral*, or *effectuated* only, by the silently working power of God. THE KEY-NOTE OF ALL THE SYNONYMS IS, THEREFORE, JEHOVAH'S WILL HOWEVER MADE MANIFEST.

This conclusion at once places us at the psalmist's own angle of vision, and explains how it is that his whole soul is aflame with affection for an object so variously named as by these eight synonyms. But it does more. It justifies our adoption of a new synonym—or at least it vindicates our search for one, so as not to render both *dâbhâr* and *'imrâh* by the one English term "word." The presumption is that in some way they perceptibly differ, or they would not both be employed. "Saying" for *'imrah* would have commended itself but for the feeling that it leaned over too much to the sense of "familiar proverb." Finding, therefore, that the usage of this term has generally an especially gladsome set of words in association with it (as tracing it through the Table will shew), we have ventured on the welcome word promise as its suitable English representative. There is one restriction to be placed on all these synonyms; and that is, that they must be held to have a regulative bearing on human character and conduct. The manner of the man they make is always an essential question throughout the psalm. The psalmist's one absorbing passion is to be conformed to Jehovah's will. The word "promise," therefore, can only be accepted in so far as it submits to this limitation. But, to this rule, it easily conforms; since divine "promises" are often, in their very wording, directory of human conduct; and even when no condition is expressed, one nevertheless is mostly implied. Indeed, it may perhaps safely be said, and dutifully borne in mind, that as a rule Jehovah's promises *are* conditional; and only when it is distinctly protested by Himself that they are absolutely unconditional, can they wisely be so held. There is perhaps not more than a single instance to be discovered in the accompanying Table in which the rendering of *'imrah* needs to be subdued to "saying."

Thus far our effort after exposition has been directed chiefly to the helping of the student to use the Table of Synonyms with pleasure and profit. It is needless to remind him that there are several other veins of interest running through the psalm: as, for instance, the words descriptive of sacred study and meditation, and those displaying the moods and tenses of affection and devotion and holy living.

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But all these lines of inquiry fall into a secondary place when compared with the familiar question of authorship; which, in this case, becomes one of unusual interest—unless, indeed, it is at once vetoed as a bootless inquiry. The present writer,—forgetting that he had already, when commenting on Pss. 1 and 19, committed himself to an opinion as to the authorship of this psalm also,—started to deal with this extraordinary composition with an open mind as to its probable author; and could not help being at once rather fascinated by the opinion of Thrupp that Daniel wrote it. But, little by little, the plausibility of this conclusion melted away before continuous meditation on the circumstantial evidence, which, it should be noted, is in this case unusually voluminous. Here is a man admitting us into his closet, and permitting us to hearken to the prolonged outpouring of his soul before Jehovah; in the course of which he not only reflects the character and aspirations and struggles of his own soul, but makes so many allusions to his enemies and affords so many indications of his relations to them and their attitude and endeavours regarding him, that it becomes feasible that with due patience we shall discover with something like moral certainty *who he is*. And, in point of fact, the situation ultimately becomes so patent, that we are persuaded that only one man in the field of sacred story fits the situation and fufils its many-sided demands. But, in order to make this discovery, we need to have studied the psychology of the previous psalms with some persistence and insight. If we have already caught glimpses of THE MAN, without foreseeing whither they would lead us; but now at length realise a SITUATION exactly fitted for him, and, so far as we can judge, for no other possible writer of a psalm like the present, we may hope for the patience of our readers, before the strength of our persuasion that we have found the author, is condemned. Those fellow-students who have accompanied us in our investigation of Pss. 31, 35, 42, 43, will anticipate the avowal that here again we are on the track of PRINCE HEZEKIAH. We say "prince" advisedly; for it is only by antedating Hezekiah's ascension to the throne; by reflecting that he must have been prince before he became king; by assuring ourselves that he must have had a history before he began to reign, that certainly he did not burst forth from oblivion an already strong man of God without decision of character previously formed or moral culture previously pursued; that probably he had had a godly mother; that possibly he had quite easily and naturally come under the tutorial care of the prophet Isaiah with whom we know he was intimate in after years; that, almost certainly, he had long had access to the royal library in which the archives of Israel and the psalms of David were stored; that as a king's son he would be

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well-educated, would have leisure at command, and could easily secure assistance in any pursuit in which he might care to indulge;—it is only when we put these things together, that we begin to conceive of the situation as it really must have been formed by the circumstances and conditions of Hezekiah's younger days. These are by no means all the formative influences on which we can reckon. The life and doings of his father Ahaz are known to us: his vanity—his timidity—his inclinations towards idolatry—his readiness to use his priests as patrons of his apostate doings and his ministers as the tools of his innovating designs: these things are well known to us. Then we have our knowledge of human nature to furnish an element of guidance. We can readily conceive how the pious and faithful Hezekiah would be a thorn in his father's side; a reflection on his father's instability; a rebuke to the sycophantic courtiers who would be only too ready to connive at his father's questionable courses; and, moreover, how, *less than a word* from such a father against such a son would serve as a cloak under which those courtiers who chiefly wished to curry favour with the reigning monarch would little by little develop into persecutors of the pious prince and, it may be, secure his banishment from court, or at least his retirement into country life. Then, too, we must remember that Hezekiah did not begin to reign till he was twenty-five; and if we date his conscious manhood and perceptible self-assertion no further back than to eighteen years of age, that gives us seven ample years for culture in music and song, abundant leisure for searching among the library scrolls and tablets, and for *writing acrostics of any length*. Hezekiah, at five-and-twenty, would practically be as old as most of his compeers at fifty.

If now we bring into comparison with these conditions the indications afforded by the psalm itself, we become more and more amazed at the correspondence between the two sets of circumstances. Daniel, it is true, had enemies of high rank (23, 161) watchful and treacherous (61, 85, 110, 150; 118, 158): Hezekiah's enemies were all this; and, besides, had one characteristic which Daniel was not confronted with in Babylon: Hezekiah's enemies were faithless to the Divine Law, which they nevertheless knew (118, 150, 158); and this alone puts Daniel out of court as having any claim to be considered the author of this psalm. Not only were this writer's enemies acquainted with the law of Jehovah, but they were frustrators of it (126); and it is no wonder that our author was both indignant at their conduct (53) and deeply grieved by it (136). Hezekiah's privileged position, in having access to the Library of the Law, fully justified him in promising that those who **turned** (or **returned**) to him should know Jehovah's

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testimonies (79). He could tell them as well as any scribe. Accustomed, as prince, to enjoy the benefit of competent counsellors, in dark days of apostacy he would be glad to find **counsellors** in his much-loved sacred books (24). His position made him well aware of the value of wealth; and, therefore, it was no empty comparison when he preferred the knowledge of Jehovah's will to **all riches**, to **thousands of gold and silver** (14, 36, 72, 127). If Hezekiah was ever banished to the upper reaches of the Jordan, as appears probable (Ps. 42), we can perceive an especial fitness in the allusion here (54) to his "house of sojourn," made vocal with "melodies" in honour of Jehovah's "statutes"; and at the same time can appreciate his sense of distance from Jehovah's house which he so greatly loved (41, 77). It is only needful to add, that in spite of the appearance of age in the author of this psalm which has persuaded several commentators into the inference that he was at least a middle-aged man, the balance of evidence contained in the comparisons and positive assertion of the psalm itself (99, 100, 141) is decidedly in favour of the conclusion that he was still a young man when he composed it; and we can well believe what an unspeakable solace it was to the banished prince Hezekiah thus to beguile the weary hours in constructing this work of sacred art—which probably, merely as literature, has few if any equals in the world. The references appended to the text above, calling attention to the third strophe of Ps. 35, will add another item of circumstantial evidence, which tends to make the inference, that Hezekiah wrote this psalm as well as that strophe, well-nigh irresistible.

It was hoped to close this merely introductory "Exposition" with the foregoing paragraph. But the psalm refuses to be hastily dismissed. By this time it has cast over us a spell which is not easily broken. We began with something akin to a defence of the psalm from the suspicion of necessarily being dry, because so obviously artificial and inevitably monotonous. But, little by little, how completely has such an anticipation vanished. How full the psalm is of passion; how many sidelights on character does it convey; how gem-like many of its single sentences have come to sparkle in our eyes, commending themselves as texts and mottoes, memorable words of warning and cheer; how charmingly its biographical contributions, profusely scattered through its strophes, have opened up to us the engrossing incidents which probably bestudded a single good man's life; and especially how profound are the historical and theological problems to which it effectively introduces us. Only to instance a single biographical suggestion, and an unexpected theological inquiry:—What have we before us in the way of personality, but a young man, who at least once

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went astray; whose sin seems to have become known to those who wished him ill, who very probably magnified his offence, procuring by their evil tongues a punishment which, directly or indirectly, nearly cost the young prince his life: this same young man, being led to bethink him of his ways, to turn his feet into the way of Jehovah's testimonies, and ever after to serve his pardoning God with an enthusiasm and thoroughness which converted his ill-wishers into crafty and persistent persecutors. Some such personal history as this floats before us, as the kaleidoscope of alphabetical reminiscence continues its aphoristic suggestions. The theological inquiry alluded to is no less profound than that which concerns itself with the beginnings and fluctuations of the divine life in the human soul. This same young man, was he already a backslider in the divine life when he first egregiously went astray; or did he suddenly fall into unforeseen and unexpected temptation and as quickly experience recovery to Divine favour, thenceforth to walk more guardedly than before in the narrow way of Jehovah's commandments? We cannot exactly know; nor would we, if we could, brood over the diagnosis of his sin. The thing that interests us is, the simple fact, that eleven times over in the course of this psalm is reference made to the quickening of the spiritual life within him (namely in vers. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156 and 159); which interest is intensified into sustained wonder, that the contact of Jehovah's WILL, which we are so ready to denominate LAW, and to regard as "killing" rather than "giving life," should have been so largely instrumental in bringing this psalmist's soul into conscious nearness to God. As closely related Scripture words often qualify each other; so it would seem do related human experiences, though far removed in point of time and condition, limit each other so materially as to require careful adjustment before we finally pronounce on the whole psychological question involved. In other words: How can we harmonise the condemnatory and slaying effects of "law" as portrayed in the Seventh of Romans with the life-giving functions discharged by "law" in the one hundred and nineteenth psalm? Doubtless, there is perfect harmony between them: but how seldom do we allow a steady eye on that harmony to guard us from exaggerations when we are engrossed in either the one sphere of thought or the other. It may be added that, intimately entwining itself with these biographical and theological questions, is another, which, though closely related, is nevertheless distinct: namely, the historical problem of growing spirituality in the nation of Israel. Many writers plausibly argue that these remarkable approximations of Old Testament spirituality to that of New Testament times, can only

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have resulted from the long and severe discipline of the Exile. Grant that assumption, as regards the nation as a nation, does it hold good also and equally of individuals? We need not disturb the foregone conclusion which goes so far to solve the mystery of pain, namely that the highest form of goodness can be produced only from the refining process of suffering; and yet we may discover, that the painful schooling of a nation is mostly or always heralded by the stern discipline of individuals. From this point of view, the enquiry becomes pertinent, how far the best of the pre-exilic kings were perfected by suffering; or, to close in upon the problem offered by this psalm: If we assume that such a chastened composition as the one-hundred-and-nineteenth psalm could only have sprung from the soil of sanctified suffering, it is still open to us to conclude that the Young Prince Hezekiah had himself graduated in that school; and that he, out of the treasuries of a varied and instructive experience, stored and wrought up into exquisite form during a period of ample leisure, produced this unique sacred composition—which not being a Temple Song was not earlier introduced in the Psalter, and being in an especial sense a piece of private autobiography was not readily placed at the public service; but which some such discerning Scribe as Ezra has, under Divine Guidance, saved from permanent oblivion.

PSALM 120.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Peace *versus* War.

ANALYSIS.—(See Inserted Headlines.)

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

[A Grateful King's Memorial.]

1 <Unto Jehovah in the distress that befell me>
I called, and he answered me:—
2 "Jehovah! oh rescue my soul—
from the lip of falsehood,
from the tongue of deceit."

[A Belligerent Counsellor's Warlike Speech.]

3 "What shall one give to thee, and what shall one add to thee,
thou tongue of deceit?
4 Arrows of a warrior—
sharpened with glowing coals of broom!"[a]

[a] "The broom shrub makes the best charcoal, and therefore the best coal to burn and glow"—Br.

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[The Peaceful King's Lament.]

5 "Ah! woe is me! that I sojourn with Meshech—[a]
that I dwell among the tents of Kedar![b]
6 <Full long> hath my soul had her dwelling
with haters[c] of peace!
7 ||I|| [am] peace! but <when I speak>
||they|| [are] for war!"

[Nm.]

[a] "The Moschi . . . in Assyr. times they dwelt in W. (or N.W.) Armenia"—O.G.
[b] "Tribes of nomads in Arabian desert"—O.G.
[c] So (pl.) some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "a hater" (sing.)

EXPOSITION.

If we assume the correctness of Dr. Thirtle's solution of the title of the following fifteen psalms, as on broader grounds we deem ourselves entitled to do, we ought to find the contents of the psalms themselves continually verifying that conclusion. We shall accordingly call attention, in the quietest way possible, to the passing indications afforded, that the so-called "Songs of Degrees," or "Songs of Ascents," more exactly **Songs of the Steps**, are commemorative of the two-fold deliverance—of Israel from the Assyrians, and of Israel's King from the premature death with which he was threatened by Jehovah. We need not suppose them all composed in celebration of the particular crisis when the sign of the Dial-steps was vouchsafed, so long as, in a general way, they are all such as Hezekiah might have either written or adapted to the various events of his reign, and employed especially to commemorate its crowning deliverance. Should two or three of these psalms approve themselves as written to celebrate Hezekiah's great Passover-feast to which he invited the Northern Tribes with a chequered and yet encouraging response, so much the better; since no one can doubt that the king would naturally desire to memorialise his efforts after the reunion of the Tribes; and then, besides, the larger the area from which our circumstantial evidence as to authorship is derived, the more convincing ought to be the result when the converging rays of light are brought to a focus.

It is easy to recognise the probability that, for some time after he began to reign, Hezekiah had about him counsellors who, without being actually disloyal to him, were quite unable to take his exalted views of the reality of Jehovah's protection of Israel; and, consequently, how naturally it came about that when, in the earlier days of the Assyrian Invasion, the King's whole soul was set for **peace**, by reason of his confident trust in Jehovah, his courtiers were some of them utterly unable to follow his counsels; and, indeed, were only moved by

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his pacific assurances to fiercer denunciations of the foe. This apprehension of the state of the atmosphere at Hezekiah's Court, forms an apt preparation for the first psalm in the series. Kirkpatrick's explanation of the strikingly figurative language employed in the course of this psalm may usefully guard us from stumbling at the outset.

"**Meshech,** mentioned in Gen. 10^2 as a son of Japheth, was a barbarous people living between the Black Sea and the Caspian, probably the Moschi of Herodotus (iii. 94) and Mushki of the Assyrian inscriptions: *Kedar*, mentioned in Gen. 25^{13} as the second son of Ishmael, was one of the wild tribes which roamed through the Arabian desert, 'whose hand was against every man' (Gen. 16^{12}). Obviously the psalmist cannot mean to describe himself as actually living among peoples so remote from one another, but applies these typical names of barbarian tribes to his own compatriots, as we might speak of Turks and Tartars."

These "Turks and Tartars" were in Hezekiah's Court, and the king was getting weary of them. It is submitted that the very terms of the psalm exactly suit such a situation, and not at all the state of affairs during the Exile, or after it in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

PSALM 121.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Jehovah the True Helper and Keeper of Israel.

ANALYSIS.—(See Inserted Headlines.)

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

[The King, seeing Jerusalem Surrounded by an Army.]

1 "I keep lifting mine eyes unto the mountains—
whence cometh my help?"

[Strong Counsellor's Assurance.]

2 "Help[a] is from Jehovah—
maker of heaven and earth!"

[Weak Counsellor's Pious Wish.]

3 "May he not[b] suffer thy foot |to slip|!
may he that **keepeth**[c] thee |not[b] slumber|!"

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[a] Merely omitting the suffix *yod* from the noun for "help" thus converts this verse into a timely positive assurance.

[b] The subjective or deprecative negative is here used, and by the headline is dramatically accounted for.

[c] N.B. how the "strong counsellor" catches up this word and repeats it five times.

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[Strong Counsellor's Re-assurance.]

4 "Lo! <neither[a] will slumber nor[a] sleep>
the **Keeper** of Israel.
5 ||Jehovah—thy **Keeper**—Jehovah||
is thy shade on thy right hand:
6 <By day> |the sun| shall not smite thee,
nor |the moon| by night.
7 ||Jehovah|| will **keep** thee from every evil—
he will **keep** thy person,[b]
8 ||Jehovah|| will **keep** thy going out and thy coming in—
from henceforth and to the ages!"[c]

[Nm.]

[a] In contrast with the negative in ver. 3, that here used is positive, and states a fact.
[b] Heb. *nephesh*: U.: "soul." We need to be reminded how frequently *nephesh* means "person"—in good contrast, here, with "goings."
[c] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Ages."

EXPOSITION.

Notwithstanding his strong faith in Jehovah, Hezekiah's confidence would naturally be tried as the Assyrians approached the sacred city. Jerusalem was surrounded by mountains; and to these the King would instinctively lift up his eyes to see whether the Assyrians were coming; and, in moments of distress, might well ask—whence his **help** could come. Such a strong man as Isaiah would be at hand to assure him; and ver. 2 would be worthy of *him* and of the occasion. It is easy to apprehend how a weaker counsellor might thereupon express the pious wish that Jehovah's help might not fail, but in such terms as tended rather to weaken the King's faith than to strengthen it. The first adviser, therefore, renews his assurances of Jehovah's help in more vigorous and ample terms. **Lo!** says he,—**Look you!**—as of some open and manifest truth—and then he proceeds with his re-assurance in positive terms of utmost vigour; accumulating the Divine titles to confidence, figuratively picturing the pervading presence of Jehovah's protection, playing with the word employed by his weaker friend—**Keeper**—till it echoes with triumphant faith. Then, too, the very word **keep** is exquisitely fitted to the position of a king who could not move—but must wait till he should "see the salvation of God." How much easier thus to apply the words, than to force the accustomed thought of help coming from the mountains of Judæa to bring the returning exiles out of Babylon.

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PSALM 122.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Tribes Welcomed to the Passover.

ANALYSIS.—(See Inserted Headlines.)

[Lm.] Song of the Steps—By David.[a]

[A Pilgrim's Reminiscence of the Start from Home.]

1 I rejoiced with those who were saying to me :—
<"To the house of Jehovah> we go!"

[A Band of Pilgrims' Outburst of Triumph on Arrival.]

2 <Standing> are our feet—
within thy gates—
O Jerusalem!

[The Pilgrims, Admiring the City, are Reminded of its Religious Use.]

3 Jerusalem!
She that hath been built up a veritable city,
Joined, for her part, into a unity:
4 Whither have come up tribes—
The tribes of Yah—
A testimony to Israel—
To give thanks to the name of Jehovah.

[Surprised Observation of Judicial Preparations.]

5 Surely <there> have they placed seats[b] for justice!
seats[b] for the house of David!

[Prayers suggested for Jerusalem's Peace.]

6 Ask ye the peace of Jerusalem :—
<"Quiet> be they who love thee!
7 let there be peace within thy walls!
quietness within thy palaces!"

[An Individual's Eagerness to Join.]

8 <"For the sake of my brethren and my friends>
do, pray, let me speak:—
'Peace be within thee!
9 <For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God>
let me seek to secure a blessing for thee.'"

[Nm.]

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[a] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.) omit: "By David"—Gn.

[b] Or: "thrones."

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EXPOSITION.

It will be noticed that some authorities omit the ascription of this psalm to **David**; and, judging from internal evidence, nothing can well be imagined more perfectly fitting, for its primary occasion, than to view it as King Hezekiah's welcome to the Northern Tribes whom he had invited to join in the celebration of his great Passover. The completeness of its adaptation to that memorable occasion cannot be exaggerated. Down to the minutest detail, it approves itself as worthy of the man who conceived it, and the occasion for which it was first intended.

Imagine, then, the profound satisfaction with which a godly Northerner heard one after another of his neighbours declaring his intention to respond to good King Hezekiah's invitation, by going up to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem. That gives the *motif* of the first brief strophe, ver. 1.

Think, further, of the feelings of a band of such pilgrims when they first found themselves standing within the gates of the Sacred City. Naturally, the first person singular has given place to the first person plural—the **I** of isolated reception of the news of intention to go, is exchanged for the **our** of companionship in the triumph of actual arrival. Every word tells exactly as written: **Standing—are our feet—within thy gates—O Jerusalem!** We can perceive the thrill of emotion with which the feet of the pilgrims press the hallowed ground. That is our second strophe.

The newly-arrived gaze around them in silent astonishment and admiration, as if perchance they had hitherto only been accustomed to the straggling houses of a country village, and had never seen a real city before. "**Jerusalem!** and this is she!—**she that hath been built,** compact and continuous, as **a city worthy of the name**; every dweller in close touch with his neighbour, for fellowship in need, in worship, and in mutual defence; Jerusalem—striking *symbol of* **unity.** We, of the Tribes have been scattered and divided,—but our beloved Jerusalem is ONE!" So may we appreciate the first half of the third strophe.

Fine the tact of poetic vision, that sees the chance of here introducing a skilful and strong reminder of the duty of the Tribes to their Mother City. Nothing so prosy and pedagogic as to say, "Whither the tribes ought regularly to come up, as for centuries they have not done": nothing so *awkward as that* comes from the poet's pen; but rather the gracious recognition that they *have responded* to the King's invitation; since here, in fact, they are; as Northerner, having already greeted Northerner in Jerusalem, rejoices to know: **Whither have**

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come up tribes. Moreover, these **tribes** that **have come up,** are **not** aliens and rebels; oh no! **but tribes of Yah,** that had a right to come—**a testimony to Israel,** by the original ordinance, making for national unity; and how much more telling a **testimony** now, when men from all quarters are once more joining in bearing it. They have come, not to be reprimanded for their long absence, but to join in the soul-cementing bonds of united **praise to Jehovah**—their ancestors' still Living God. That excellent stroke of poetic policy completes our third strophe.

If any one thing, more than another, should elicit our admiration of the Divine Tact of this psalm-writer, it is the way in which he succeeds in bringing in—as by means of a casual observation—the most delicate of reminders that the holy people, who are *religiously* one, should be *judicially*, and therefore *civilly*, one also. It is not hinted that a notice had been seen exhibited at the street-corners, to the effect that "All coming to Jerusalem to worship are expected to bring with them their civil causes to be tried by the rightful present Representatives of the Beloved King David." No! it is—as to its actual poetic form—not an authoritative notice at all; but merely a sojourner's surprised and significant observation of something in the city he has seen. But what has he seen? Nothing more than *empty chairs*, placed in the public area set apart as forum. But those empty chairs are eloquent; for they are chairs of state. **"Surely, there, have they placed seats for justice: seats for the house of David!"** so remarks the pilgrim as he passes by, impressed by the sight, the profound meaning of which he thoughtfully ponders.

But a truce to object-lessons and moralisings prompted by them. The great Feast is rapidly reaching its climax of UNITED INTERCESSION. Here are fitting prayers suggested. The city as a whole filling every mind, **"Ask ye the peace of Jerusalem,"** says the poet: and in so doing, such things as the following, it will be seasonable that ye say:—**"Quiet be they who love thee:** may they 'lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and gravity.' **Let there be peace within thy walls,** O Jerusalem—whatever storms may rage in foreign lands. And **quietness itself**—in purest distillation—**be within thy palaces** of state and power." All of which, the student of the psalm can amplify according to his own sense of fitness.

But the closing strophe must not be missed nor slurred over; for, in truth, it asks to be read with a delicate meaning discovered between its lines. For who is the INDIVIDUAL that closes the psalm? Who is he that, having so thoughtfully provided for the spiritual wants of others, now begs to be heard for himself:—"begs," we say, advisedly; since

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no scholar can deny that a homely *passion of importunity* is there, in the Hebrew, which sooner than let the mere English reader miss we have ventured to represent by the quaint form of request, "**Do_ pray_ let me speak**"? Who is this, then, with a heart so large that he can, within the compass of two closing sentences, take in with loving embrace his **brethren and friends** and likewise, with worshipful concern, **the house of Jehovah**? Is it not the author of the psalm himself, who can no longer be restrained from speaking for himself; and who, for some of us, by the fitness of every word of the psalm to the man and to the occasion, has virtually signed his name, KING HEZEKIAH?

PSALM 123.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The King's Response to the Injunction to Lift up his Eyes as High as Heaven.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, An Individualistic Couplet by way of Response to the Exhortation in Ps. 121[2]. Strophe II., ver. 2, Israel unites in getting into an Attitude of Earnest Waiting on Jehovah; which, in Strophe III., vers. 3, 4, Finds expression in Importunate Entreaty.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 <" Unto thee> have I uplifted mine eyes,
O thou who art enthroned in the heavens!"

2 Lo! <as the eyes of menservants_ unto the hand of their lord,
as the eyes of a maidservant_ unto the hand of her lady>
||So|| |our eyes| are unto Jehovah our God,
until that he be gracious unto us.

3 "Be gracious unto us_ O Jehovah_ be gracious unto us,
for <greatly> are we sated with contempt:
4 <Exceedingly sated_ on her part> is our soul—[a]
with the scorn of the arrogant,
the contempt of the proudest oppressors."

[Nm.]

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[a] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."

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EXPOSITION.

Most naturally, King Hezekiah, who is a skilful leader in psalmody as well as a worthy example of devotion, leads off this psalm; which comes out well as a Response to the Assurance in 121^2—"Help is from Jehovah—maker of heaven and earth."

The second verse gathers up into congregational expression a representation of a waiting and watching attitude towards Jehovah which is at once homely, beautiful and suggestive. These worshippers, though on earth, are led to regard themselves as attendants in presence of their Heavenly King; full in his view; awaiting his pleasure. As personal attendants await in silence the slightest expression of the will of their superior; watching the pointing finger which says "Go," the open palm which says "Bring," the beckoning movement which says "Come"; so, says the psalmist, even with such profound respect and watchful attention, are **our eyes unto Jehovah our God, until that he be gracious unto us.** Surely, a comparison as suggestive as it is beautiful. Such servants know their master's or mistress's ways—the meaning of each familiar gesture. They need no loud word of formal command: all they require is, to catch the slightest hint of the superior's WILL as the sufficient signal for obedience. And so, the least word from Isaiah for instance, would be intimation enough for both the King and his people:—without (say) going to the Pentateuch, or to Mount Sinai, for a formal "Thus saith the Lord."

This adjustment of the mental attitude of the worshipping nation towards Jehovah is then at once merged in importunate entreaty. The plea is pointedly put—**Be gracious unto us, O Jehovah,**—and emphatically repeated—**be gracious unto us**; and then weighted with a reason: **for greatly are we sated with contempt.** "Oh! we have had enough of this vile and blaspheming Rabshakeh and his imperious master." We all know the story. Fancy the foreigner on our own soil; and ourselves at the time in certain and miraculously attested covenant relation with the Maker of heaven and earth! and should *we* not have importuned our God in some such strains as these?

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PSALM 124.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — Sudden and Complete Deliverance Acknowledged as Jehovah's Own Work.

ANALYSIS —Strophe I., vers. 1—5, Israel taught to Recognise and Remember the Extent of her Danger as figured by On-rushing Waters. Strophe II., vers. 6—8, Praise offered for Deliverance as from a Beast of Prey and from a Fowler's Trap.

[I.m.] Song of the Steps.

1 <"If it had not been |Jehovah| who was for us"> —
oh let Israel |say|—
2 <"If it had not been |Jehovah| who was for us,
when man |rose up against us|>
3 ||Then|| <alive> had they swallowed us up,
in the glow of their anger against us;
4 ||Then|| |the waters| had washed us away,
the |torrent| had gone over our soul;
5 ||Then|| <had gone over our soul> |the waters so proud|."

6 <Blessed> be Jehovah!
who gave us not over as a prey to their teeth.
7 ||Our soul, like a bird|| hath escaped from the trap of the fowlers,
||the trap|| is broken, and ||we|| are escaped.
8 ||Our help|| is in the name of Jehovah,
maker of heaven and earth.

[N.m.]

EXPOSITION.

Of the three conceivable situations which have been thought of as originating this striking and beautiful psalm, the first fits not at all, the second fits but awkwardly, the third fits admirably—as glove to hand for which it was made. The first, is the deliverance from Babylon; the second, that from the conspiracy of the little surrounding nations to Nehemiah and his brethren after their return to the home-land; and these, it will be perceived, are exilic and post-exilic: of comparatively late date for inclusion in Israel's Psalter. The third, is the deliverance of Judah from the Assyrian invader Sennacherib, which carries back the psalm into Hezekiah's times, and places it alongside of its companions, the other "Songs of the Steps."

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As to the first of these occasions, suffice it to say that Judah was not about being **swallowed up** in Babylon since they had long sojourned there, had built houses, and practised their religion in their foreign home; and on the other hand their return from Babylon was not in the least like being snatched from the teeth of a beast of prey or being set free from a broken **trap** or **snare** with an instant and complete liberation. Kirkpatrick plainly sees this, and his words are worth recording here. "It is commonly supposed," says he, "to be the thanksgiving of the returned exiles for deliverance from the Babylonian captivity. No less event, it is urged, could have evoked such strong emotion." It is well that he notes this strong emotion. "But the language of the psalm," he continues, "points rather to some sudden danger which had been providentially averted, than to a blow which had actually fallen." And then he goes on to emphasise "the danger which menaced the restored community when Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem." But neither was this danger so sudden, nor was deliverance so definite, instant, and complete as to answer to the description of the psalm. Turn back to the deliverance from the Assyrian invasion and the Divine overthrow of Sennacherib's army in a single night, and then how apt and impressive the Psalmist's description of both danger and deliverance; how abundantly justified the "strong emotion" which the psalm unmistakably betrays. More than this. The invasion of Palestine by Assyria had been actually foretold by Isaiah (8^{6-8}) in terms precisely similar to those of the first strophe of this psalm; so that when the psalmist speaks of **the waters so proud** which had threatened to engulf Judah, he may excusably be thought to have had the very terms of Isaiah's prediction in mind, as he had spoken of "the waters strong and many of the River (Euphrates)," rolling on throughout Judah, overflowing and passing along "till unto the neck he shall reach." Thirtle is amply justified in thus commenting upon the psalm before us:—"It is all true of Hezekiah and his experiences during the Assyrian invasion. The first four verses reflect the desperate character of the situation, when there was no resource but Jehovah. David was enabled to effect many escapes; the great escape of Hezekiah is outlined in his remarkable story. That it was comparable to a bird securing its freedom after being imprisoned in a cage (ver. 7^a) may be gathered from the boastful words of Sennacherib himself, as appearing in the well-known Taylor cylinder ('Records of the Past,' Second Series, vol. vi., pp. 90, 91): 'Hezekiah of Judah . . . I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his royal city . . . He was overwhelmed by the fear of the brightness of my lordship (lines 11—30)'"—Thirtle, "Old Testament Problems," pp. 41, 42.

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PSALM 125.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Trust in Jehovah Encouraged in Presence of the Invader.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Jerusalem Safe under Jehovah's Protection. Strophe II., ver. 3, The Sceptre of the Lawless One will be Removed. Strophe III., vers. 4, 5, Prayer for the Good, a Threatening for Such as Yield to the Enemy, and a Benediction on Israel.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 ||They who trust in Jehovah||
are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken.
(2) <To the ages> sitteth [2] Jerusalem enthroned—
||mountains|| round about her;
And ||Jehovah|| is round about his people—
from henceforth and to the ages.

3 Surely he will not let the sceptre of the lawless one[a] |rest|—
on the lot of the righteous,
To the end the righteous may not thrust forth
on perversity their hand.

4 Oh do good, Jehovah, unto such as are good—
even to such as are upright in their hearts;
5 But <as for such as turn aside their crooked ways>
Jehovah |will lead them forth| with the workers of iniquity![b]
Peace upon Israel!

[Nm.]

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[a] So some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T. (changing a vowel-point): "lawlessness."

[b] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.)

EXPOSITION.

Each strophe in this psalm bears witness to the presence of the Invader. The word for **trust** in ver. 1 is the same as that found in 2 Ch. 32^{10}. Ver. 3 assumes that the sceptre of the foreigner is at present resting on Israel's inheritance; but is a source of danger to the wavering. In ver. 5 we catch sight of those who are coquetting with the enemy and running into the danger of being involved in his ruin: as the Assyrians—such as are left—are about to be led away in shame to their own land, so let all renegades in Israel beware lest they

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too be led forth with the authors of all this trouble. Mount Zion itself stands firm amidst her surrounding mountains: so let Jehovah's people rest trustful under Jehovah's strong protection. "The political situation was one which called for the encouragement ministered by the words; and the conduct of Hezekiah in the day of adversity shows the mighty influence of Isaiah's advice and the prevailing efficacy of his prayers"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 44.

PSALM 126.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Invader Gone: the First Sowing Begun.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, The Deliverance of Zion calls forth the Jubilations of her People, and the Frank Acknowledgment of Neighbouring Nations. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Prayer for the Renewed Culture of the Devastated Land.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 <When Jehovah turned the fortunes[a] of Zion>
we became like men dreaming:
2 ||Then|| was filled, with laughter, our mouth,
and ||our tongue|| with ringing cries.
||Then|| said they among the nations—
<"Great things> hath Jehovah done with these!"
3 <Great things> hath' Jehovah done with us—
we are full of joy!

4 Oh turn, Jehovah, our fortunes—
as channels, in the south country.
5 ||They who are sowing with tears||—
<with ringing cries> may they reap!
6 <Though one ||goeth forth and weepeth||—
bearing a trail of seed[b]>
Let him ||come in|| with ringing cries—
bringing his sheaves.

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: (ml. though less prob.): "the captivity"—see Exposition.

[b] That is, a small quantity, which can ill be spared because of the want at home, bringing tears to the eyes of the sower.

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EXPOSITION.

It may readily be conceded that, if the opening line of this psalm had been followed by a suitable sequel, the reference might easily have been to a return from literal captivity. But when we examine the usage of the expression "to turn captivity" in various places,—including especially Job 42^{10} and Ezekiel $16^{53, 55}$,—and find how "captivity" came sometimes to mean great misfortune or misery, and "turning captivity" to express the idea of turning the fortunes of any one to a former condition of prosperity,—we may well hesitate long enough to examine the context. Now it cannot be denied that the context, in this case, points to some sudden turn of fortune, or relief from distress, such as to appear incredible to the recipients of the blessing; and, at the same time, such as to be so patent to onlooking nations as to call forth their frank and admiring acknowledgment of the signal interposition of Israel's God. We need not deny the possibility, or probability, that when the successive companies of Jewish captives in Babylon received permission to return to their own land, the news may have appeared to them to be too good to be true, and they may have seemed to themselves like men who were dreaming; nevertheless, we are not aware that we possess any historical record to that effect. And when we further inquire into the allusion, supposed to be made in this psalm, as to the effect of Israelitish emancipation on surrounding and observant nations, we must acknowledge that nothing in the Ezra-Nehemiah narratives in anywise appears like a verification of this glad song. Here, in this psalm, we have an apparently frank and ungrudging acknowledgment, by foreigners, of Jehovah's interposition for his people; and this acknowledgment is gladly repeated and confirmed by the beneficiaries, as though with a smile of recognition at the courtesy of the admission. Anything more unlike this than the snarling and suspicious and intriguing behaviour of Sanballat and his associates cannot be imagined. There may, of course, have been a brief and passing smile on the face of the neighbouring nations, when they witnessed the arrival of the Jews in their own land; but history is as silent as the grave about it, and therefore it is hard to believe that it should have thus become embalmed in one of Israel's songs.

A similar line of observation may be taken with respect to the second half of the psalm. It is quite true, that returned captives would naturally, soon after their home-coming, have to turn their attention to the cultivation of their recovered lands; and it is possible, that they had to go about their task with aching hearts. But, again, we have no record of all this; and least of all have we any reason to suppose that the returned exiles were so nearly confronted by *famine*

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as to find it difficult to procure seed for sowing. And yet that is precisely the view which this psalm presents.

On both counts, therefore, we have reason to suspect the view-point afforded by the assumption that these psalms are post-exilic.

Take back the origin of this psalm to the days of Hezekiah, and all is changed; both strophes of the psalm find firm bases of fact on which to rest. We *know* that the nations honoured Hezekiah and Israel after the overthrow of the Assyrians (2 Ch. $32^{22\ 23}$); and we *know* that, before the deliverance, Israel had begun to suffer severely from famine (2 Ch. 32^{11}); and that it was an anxious question how the people should be fed until they could again grow their own corn (Isa. $37^{30,\ 31}$).

And thus the evidence of the pre-exilic origin of these beautiful psalms grows upon our hands.

PSALM 127.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—In Relief of Domestic and Civic Anxiety.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Jehovah's Blessing Succeeds our Endeavours, Allays our Anxieties, and Gives us Sleep. Strophe II., vers. 3—5, Children a Gift from Jehovah.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps—By Solomon.

1 <Except ||Jehovah|| build the house>
  <in vain>[a] will its builders |have toiled| thereon:
 <Except ||Jehovah|| watch the city>
  <in vain>[a] will the watchman |have kept awake|.
2 <It is vain>[a] for you, who |early| rise, who |late| take rest,
  who eat the bread of wearisome toil:
  ||So|| would he give his beloved ones[b] sleep.[c]

3 Lo! <an inheritance from Jehovah> are sons,
  <a reward> is the fruit of the womb:
4 <As arrows in the hand of a warrior>
  ||so|| are the sons of the youth.
5 |How happy| the man who hath filled his quiver with them!
  they shall not be put to shame.—
  Surely they will speak with enemies in the gate.

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "For unreality."
[b] So (pl.) some cod. (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T. (sing.).
[c] Thus w. Per., rather than "in sleep"—preferred by O.G. 446a, Dav. Heb. Syntax 97, Br. and others.

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EXPOSITION.

The object and argument of this psalm are plain. Its object is, to allay carking care; and its argument is, that Jehovah cares for us—that the need of his blessing in order to the prosperity of our most arduous enterprises, should lead us to rest in him, since that is his way of leading us, that is how he would have us shew our trust in him. His benefactions are not depreciated: on the contrary, their value is picturesquely and impressively extolled; for how could anything surpass, for beauty and force, the picture of a yet able but ageing father, emboldened by the rally to him of stalwart sons, ready to speak with the enemy, either in judicial witness and plea on the forum, or by bold parley with the foe before striking the ready blow? Yet at the root of even this imposing tree of prosperity lay Jehovah's blessing. For it is thus that we grasp the unity of the psalm, in dissent from those critics who would divide it into two incoherent portions.

In vain, says the poet with threefold emphasis, your most toilsome work, your most wearisome watch, your most protracted restlessness, except you have Jehovah's blessing. It is by teaching you this lesson,—it is *thus*,—it is **so**,—that your loving heavenly Father **would give you sleep.**

This construction of the first strophe is surely sufficiently satisfying to lead us to acquiesce in the conclusion of A.V., R.V. (text), P.B.V., Perowne, Carter,—that the noun "sleep" is what is called "the accusative of object"; in other words, that "sleep" is the very blessing which Jehovah is here represented as giving to his beloved ones. Nevertheless, it may be conceded to be, not only grammatically possible, but exegetically plausible and in a good degree satisfying, to render the word "sleep" as an "adverbial accusative" of time or manner—**in sleep**,—with R.V. (marg.), O.G., Davidson, Briggs, Leeser (**during sleep**); since it is perfectly true that the operations of nature are many of them still active, some of them especially active, while the worker is asleep, and not infrequently the plans of those with large enterprises on hand are advancing by leaps and bounds when the busy brain that originated them is sweetly at rest. Practically, the two constructions come nearly to the same thing; seeing that the likeliest way to get "sleep," is to be assured that all is going on well "during sleep." But *are* they going on well? Who knows, except Jehovah who never slumbers or sleeps (121[4])? Who can effectually prosper them, save the Maker of heaven and earth? Therefore, trust thou in Him—and rest.

The very geniality of this psalm, makes easy its assumed original application and intention, according to the theory favoured by the

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expositor. Quite taking is the suggestion of those who, from this psalm, picture the exiles rebuilding Jerusalem—the father aided by his numerous sons, speaking with and putting to shame or flight the troublesome Samaritans and others at Jerusalem's gate. Perhaps even more taking is the hint—that this psalm was first meant to encourage the building of an *ancestral* house, even the family of David, by one who had remained unmarried or a widower until about the time this Song of the Steps was written! This suggestion may attract to itself an especial interest if, with Thirtle (O.T.P. 49), we credit the Jewish tradition that King Hezekiah, after his recovery, married Isaiah's daughter Hephzibah; and if we conjecture, as we then may (2 K. 21[1]), that this good king had yet to wait two or three years before there was born to him an heir! Even learned critics may forget to allow for the touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. In any case we have not yet felt any literary compulsion to carry the dating of these "Songs of the Steps" to a period so late as the Exile.

PSALM 128.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Happy Home and a Prosperous Commonwealth.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, The Happy Home Described. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, The Interest of the Commonwealth in Such a Home.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 |How happy| every one who revereth Jehovah—
who walketh in his ways!
2 <The toil of thine own hands> when thou eatest—
|how happy| for thee! and |good| for thine!
3 ||Thy wife||—
like a fruitful vine in the recesses of thy house!
||Thy children||—
like plantings of olive-trees around thy table!
4 Lo! surely |thus| <shall be blessed> the man who revereth Jehovah.
5 May Jehovah bless thee out of Zion;
and gaze thou upon the prosperity of Jerusalem,
6 and see thou sons to thy sons.
Peace be upon Israel!

[Nm.]

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EXPOSITION.

Every one can see how delightful a companion picture this psalm forms to that which has immediately preceded it. It overflows with tender admiration for the man who, in his home, realises to the full the richness of Jehovah's blessing: **How happy** (ml., **Oh the blessednesses of**) twice exclaims the psalmist: first thinking of the devout mind and the well-ordered life of the chief recipient of Jehovah's blessing; then passing on to the sturdy independence of the man in being permitted to earn his own livelihood and that of his wife and children. No idler is he: no mere dependant. **Happy for thee** to gain thine own bread by thy toil, and to have loving ones to share it with thee, and **good for thine**, to nestle under thy wing and multiply thy blessings: **thy wife, like a vine**—graceful, dependent, fruitful—**in the recesses of thy house**, her sheltered heaven on earth, where she prefers to be; **thy children like plantings**—still young—**of olive-trees** on the way to transplantation into homes of their own, but at present placed around thy table as its richest ornament.

His neighbours call attention to him (**Lo!**) as a witness to Jehovah's kindness and faithfulness, and as an encouragement to others. In fact, the State sends blessings into the Home; and the Home—such a home returns blessings to the State. On such homes, worshippers implore benedictions from Jehovah: out of such homes welcoming eyes behold **the prosperity of Jerusalem**. And so, back and forth, the blessing goes and comes: from **thee** outwards to **Jerusalem**, from Jerusalem inwards and upwards to thy **grandchildren**. Out of such happiness, in giving and receiving, come finally devout good wishes for all the people: **Peace be upon Israel!**

PSALM 129.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. Israel's Thanks for Past Deliverances, and Prayer for Continued Vindication.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, Israel's Experience of Vexation and Deliverance. Strophe II., vers. 5—8, The Shame and Chagrin Awaiting all the Haters of Zion.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 <"Full much> have they harassed me from my youth"—
pray let Israel |say|:

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2 <"Full much> have they harassed me from my youth—
but they have not prevailed against me.
3 <Upon my back> |have ploughed| the ploughers—
they have lengthened their field.[a]
4 ||Jehovah|| is righteous—
he hath cut asunder the cords of the lawless."

5 <Let them be put to shame and retreat backward>—
all the haters of Zion!
6 Let them become as the grass of housetops—
which <before it hath unsheathed> doth wither,[b]
7 Wherewith <hath filled his hand> no reaper,
and <his bosom> no binder:
8 Neither <have said> the passers-by—
"The blessing of Jehovah be unto you!"
[Nor heard in reply]
"We have blessed |you| in the name of Jehovah."[c]

[Nm.]

[a] "Furrow-strip"—Del. A highly poetic description of the extent of country occupied by an invader.

[b] As much as to say: "As grass withered before it unsheaths its ear, so let the Assyrians vanish before they unsheath a sword against Jerusalem."

[c] "The last line should be printed as a return greeting from the reapers—Aglen.

EXPOSITION.

The solidarity of Israel as a nation is here strikingly and even pathetically set forth. The youth of the nation is by implication traced back to Egypt; and her experience since then of trouble from without is gathered up into one sad memory. That is one aspect of the figure—the nation represented as an individual. Then the individualised nation is identified with the land in which she dwells; and the rude dealings of the invader with the land are figured as the ploughing of long furrows upon her bare back. How pathetically this latest memory pictures the ruthless doings of Sennacherib is evident. But deliverance has come; and the sudden liberation of the land from the invader is vividly set forth as the cutting asunder of the cords by which the slave had been held bound while the cruel lash was laid on. It was emphatically JEHOVAH who cut asunder those cords. The deliverance was not obtained by battle, nor by long journeying out of a foreign land.

So let all Israel's enemies be vanquished, like these Assyrians, who have been put to shame and have retreated backward (comp. 2 K. 19[36]). And now, further, Assyria is paid back in her own coin: she had spoken of the nations who were unable to resist her might as "grass on the housetops" (2 K. 19[26], Isa. 37[27]); and here she is herself made the

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object of the contemptuous comparison, with an additional stroke of wit at her expense: **Let the haters of Zion be as the grass of the house tops, which before it hath unsheathed doth wither.** Assyria had not unsheathed her sword against Jerusalem! And no friendly greetings were likely to congratulate her on the harvest she had reaped in Jehovah's inheritance.

PSALM 130.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Ransomed out of the Depths.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—2, The Fact of Supplication Narrated. Strophe II., vers. 3—4, The Terms of the Supplication Stated. Strophe III., vers. 5—6, The Urgency of the Supplication Described. Strophe IV., 7—8, An Extension of the Supplication Urged.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 <Out of the depths> called I upon thee, Jehovah!

2 "Sovereign Lord, oh hearken unto my voice,
let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications:—

3 <If <iniquities> thou shouldst mark,[a] O Yah!>
Sovereign Lord![b] who could stand?

4 Surely <with thee> is Pardon—[c]
to the end thou mayest be revered."[d]

5 I awaited Jehovah—
my soul |waited| for his word:[e]

(6) My soul |shewed her hope| for Jehovah—
more than watchers for the morning—
‖watchers for the morning‖.

7 Hope thou, O Israel, for Jehovah;
for <with Jehovah>[f] is Kindness,[g]
and <plenteously, with him> is there ransoming:

8 ‖He himself‖ then, will ransom Israel from all his iniquities.

[Nm.]

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[a] Ml.: "watch." "Retainest"—Del.; "treasure up"—Leeser; "Wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss"—P.B.V.

[b] Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns.): "Jehovah"—Gn.

[c] Ml.: "the pardon"—qy. supply: "which we need."

[d] Cp. 119[38]. And see Exposition.

[e] Here shd. be the verse division.—Gn.

[f] So some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.)—Gn.

[g] Ml.: "the kindness"—qy. supply: "on which we rely."

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm is known as one of the Seven Penitential psalms. It is in fact penitential, and therefore this classification need not be disturbed; but it might as accurately have been described as a Plea for Ransom, and in any case has characteristics all its own.

The course of our Expositions hitherto has specially prepared us for this psalm. Presuming that King Hezekiah wrote or selected it for a place in his series of "Songs of the Steps," we have only to turn to his commemorative "Writing" preserved in Isaiah 38, to discover a note harmonising with the present composition, in the grateful acknowledgment there preserved: "Thou hast cast, behind thy back, all my sin." The "sin" acknowledged there, prepares us for the iniquities presupposed here. Moreover, when we were led to attribute the authorship of Ps. 119 to Hezekiah, it was impossible not to be impressed with the well-known phenomenon of a good man passionately devoted to "Jehovah's will," and yet bearing about with him a chastening memory of personal sin. These two lines of observation respecting Hezekiah prepare us to expect that no collection of psalms would be considered by him even approximately complete, that did not include at least one penitential psalm.

Reaching the present psalm thus, by a path which quickens our expectation of discovering something fresh and valuable, we are not disappointed. It is indeed a remarkable composition: simple, beautiful, profound. It says but little, but it implies more than we can easily grasp. Its most striking feature is its twofold reference, first to an individual, and then to a nation. Neither of these references can justly be denied; although, in point of fact, the former has been strangely doubted, and the latter is perhaps seldom pressed home to its legitimate conclusion.

The precise nature of the junction between the national lesson and the individual, is perhaps not demonstrably clear. Did the psalmist leave his own petitions in the waiting stage, as requests not as yet answered; and so incite his people to join him in blended pleading for answers yet to be vouchsafed both to him and to them? Or does he, rather, as we incline to think—from his somewhat exuberant lingering over the watchers for the morning—give us leave to interpolate *there* his own implied reception of an answer of peace; in the inspiring strength of which he at once proceeds strongly to urge Israel to take heart and plead for *national* redemption? It is a nice point, but important to the translator; who, according to his solution of it, may, in ver. 1, say called, as of petitions by this time answered; or else, "have called," as of petitions still urged before the Divine throne.

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Again, in ver. 5, he may either say **I awaited**, as though now "awaiting" no longer, or "I have awaited"—implying the undertone, "and am awaiting still." Notwithstanding the fact that thus, throughout the psalm, there are delicate shades of meaning needing to be discriminated with unusual care, it would be quite a mistake to infer that there are no broad lessons plainly conveyed.

At every turn, there are suggestions which instantly strike and deeply impress, notwithstanding an affluence of meaning which is not put into words. For example: the familiar term **mark** referring to **iniquities** in ver. 3, seems to be as good a word as can be selected; and yet it is seen by every thoughtful reader to convey nothing less than this: "to **mark**, in order to remember; and to remember, in order to punish."

So, again, there is an exquisite fineness of implication in the delightful turn of the phrase **with thee**, which the Hebrew emphasises by the position assigned to it: **with thee is Forgiveness**, rather than, "thou dost forgive," or "thou canst forgive." No, **with thee**. It is as though Jehovah had a store of forgivenesses, as though he had a cherished delight in forgiving; as though it were just *like* him. And so, in the last strophe: **with Jehovah is kindness, and plenteously with him is there ransoming**—a little awkward, perhaps, in English; yet how richly suggestive: it seems to tell of that, *and the like of that*, continually going on. Phases of truth, these, which penitent souls sorely need to make their own.

Of another order, perhaps, is the profound statement of design in the Divine forgiving: **to the end thou mayest be revered.** We should not have been surprised to read, "to the end thou mayest be LOVED"; but **revered!**—that demands a little thought. Is it that we poor erring ones could not think of mere Infinite Power without hardening our hearts? As soon, however, as we admit the concurrent conception of Infinite Pity, then we dare *think*, then our adoration rises, then we **revere!**

Already we have caught a foreglimpse of the weighty close of the psalm. It is indeed a worthy close. Sudden is the transition from the individual to the nation, and yet not so sudden and strange as to throw doubt on the unity of authorship. Indeed, it is easy to see, that the mind at work in the second strophe is at work in the fourth; and that the **Forgiveness** of the second is worthily matched by the **Ransoming Kindness** of the fourth. Still, it is a climax. The forgiven individual ascends to a mighty daring when he addresses his *nation* in such terms as these. He has experience—he has faith—he has inspiration. He clearly means his own nation; for he beholds

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them laden with their own long-accumulated national burden of iniquities. What other nation under the sun would consent to be charged with those iniquities? It is only as the poet suns himself in the conception of ransoming being *at home with Jehovah*, that he rises to the crowning thought that Jehovah himself will ransom Israel from all his iniquities; and, if from his iniquities,—then why not also from his shame before the nations, his long, long exile from his own land?

Of the two great Old Testament words for redeeming, one (*gâ'âl*) "implies relationship" (O.G. 145), and the other (*pâ dhâh'*, that used here) carries with it the "underlying thought of payment" (O.G. 804). Jehovah is Israel's Kinsman-Redeemer; and he who of old gave Egypt for Israel's ransom (Isa. 43[3]) will be able to find if he has not already "found a ransom" of such abiding worth that—in view of it, as a public justification—"Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with salvation to the ages" (Isa. 45[17. 25]).

PSALM 131.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Sinking of Self in Seeking Israel's Welfare.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., ver. 1, Direct Protestation of Humility. Strophe II., ver. 2, The Weaning from Selfishness. Strophe III., ver. 3, Israel again Encouraged to Hope.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps—By David.

1 Jehovah! <not haughty> is my heart—
<nor lofty> are mine eyes;
Neither have I moved among great things—
or among things too wonderful for me.

2 |Surely| I have soothed[a] and stilled[b] my soul—
like a weaned child concerning his mother:
<Like the weaned child, concerning myself> is my soul.[c]

3 Hope, O Israel, for Jehovah—
from henceforth and unto the ages.[d]

[Nm.]

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[a] Ml.: "smoothed."
[b] Some cod. (w. Sep. and Vul.): "uplifted" (w[e]Romamti instead of w[e]Domamti)—Gn. True in itself, and tempting; but, in view of context, not so likely.
[c] "Like a weaned upon his mother, my soul is upon me as a weaned child"—Dr. So, in effect, Del., Per. Kp.; but Br.: "so is bountiful dealing upon my soul."
[d] U.: "and unto times age-abiding."

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EXPOSITION.

The conclusion has everything in its favour, that David began this psalm, and Hezekiah finished it. The first strophe strongly commends itself as probably reflecting the feeling of David in view of the unlooked-for honour conferred on him when taken from the humble occupation of tending his father's sheep to be king over Israel. He had had no thought, no ambition, for such **great things**: they would have appeared **too wonderful for him.** So, we may well believe, David subsequently wrote—and sang; though how his little song originally ended we cannot know. Hezekiah, it would seem, discovered the unconsidered trifle, and added to it an adaptation which made it suit his own case with exquisite precision. If he had never felt the stirrings of personal ambition before, he was certainly lifted off his feet when he showed the messengers from Babylon all his treasures. He was sternly rebuked, prospectively punished, and—he humbled himself; but not without a struggle: he had to be weaned from Self, and has here described the process, with unsurpassable insight and delicacy. He had had to smooth and soothe his ruffled soul; and wean himself from any longer drawing sweet satisfaction from what Self could afford. Henceforth he must take a manlier part than nestle on the soft bosom of Self. He was weaned. And now he would wean Israel. Trouble awaited her in the future—this also now he knew. But, having in his previous song sung of ransom from iniquities, and of Jehovah himself as Ransomer, he must needs now again urge Israel, with tenderer pathos and with longer outlook than before, **to hope for Jehovah, from henceforth and unto the ages.** This loving call still woos Israel to hear.

PSALM 132.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Davidic Dynasty Humbled and Exalted.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe, vers. 1—10, Prayer by the Typical Messiah. Anti-Strophe, vers. 11—18, Promise for the Antitypical Messiah.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

1 Remember, O Jehovah, unto David—
all his humiliations:—
2 What he sware unto Jehovah—
vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob;

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3 "|Verily| I will not enter into the tent of my house—
I will not go up on the couch of my bed,
4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes—
nor <to mine eyelids> slumber:
5 Until I find a place for Jehovah—
habitations for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6 "Lo! we heard of it in Ephrathah—
we found it in the fields[a] of the forest:
7 'We would fain enter into his habitations!
we would bow down at his footstool!'
8 'Arise! Jehovah, to thy resting-place—
||thou|| and the ark of thy strength:
9 ||Thy priests|| let them be clothed with righteousness—
||thy men of kindness|| let them ring out their joy.'"
10 <For the sake of David thy servant>
do not turn away the face of thine Anointed One.[b]

11 Jehovah |sware| to David—
<in truth> will he not turn back from it:
<"Of the fruit of thy body>
will I seat on a throne for thee:
12 <If thy sons |keep| my covenant—
and my testimonies which I shall teach them>
||Even their sons|| <unto futurity>—
shall sit on a throne for thee."
13 For Jehovah |hath chosen| Zion—
hath desired it as a habitation for himself:

14 "||This|| is my resting-place unto futurity—
<here> will I dwell, for I have desired it:
15 <Her provision> will I abundantly bless—
<her needy ones> will I satisfy with bread;
16 <Her priests also> will I clothe with salvation,
and ||her men of kindness|| shall |indeed| ring out their joy.[c]
17 <There> will I cause to bud a horn unto David,
I have set in order a lamp for mine Anointed One:
18 <His enemies> will I clothe with shame—
but <upon himself> |shall blossom| his crown!"

[Nm.]

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[a] Some cod. (w. 8 ear. pr. edns.): "field" (sing.)—Gn.

[b] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Anointed."

[c] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness."

EXPOSITION.

Again are we enabled to realise how truly and helpfully previous psalms lead us forward to what still awaits us. That little snatch of a song, in praise of humility, which we have just dismissed,—how truly does it prepare us for the humiliations of David, with a reference to which this psalm opens.

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But Jehovah humbles his loyal servants in order to fit them for the greater things to which they may not prematurely aspire; and if the Son of David who pens this psalm has schooled himself successfully into the spirit of the psalm we have just admired for its lessons of humility, he is thereby only the better prepared to lead us forward to the "wonderful things" to which this psalm conducts us.

Though he now only introduces it into his series of **Step Songs**, it has probably lain in his repertoire since those early days of his reign when, having cleansed the Temple, he anew dedicated it to the worship of Jehovah; installing priests and Levites in the zealous discharge of their duties, taking care suitably to clothe them with official garments, and bountifully to provide for their temporal needs. We can imagine no more congenial occasion than this, for the origin of this intensely Messianic psalm. Everything in that occasion and in this psalm favours their being thus brought together. Newly come to the throne, after some years of reproach and patient waiting, and godly self-discipline, the author cannot forget that he now stands in covenant line with his revered ancestor David, whose songs he has so often studied with delight. Having found vent for his reforming zeal by cleansing the temple and restoring its inspiring ritual, now to be renewed with accompanying songs,—what more natural to a born poet and an anointed prophet-king than to compose a psalm like this: a psalm in every way worthy of such an auspicious occasion? Note, especially, in glancing through the psalm with these incidents in view, how, notwithstanding the unfeigned humility which restrains him from once formally alluding to himself or indulging in so much as a first personal pronoun, the profound consciousness of Messianic heirship is upon him. For to whom but to himself can we suppose him to refer at the close of the first strophe, when, gathering up all that has gone before, he pleads: **For the sake of David thy servant—do not turn away the face of thine Anointed One.** With the fitting occasion for this prayer in our minds, we instinctively supply the unspoken burden of it: "Do not turn away his face, when he thus presents anew to thee thine own holy temple, cleansed, and vocal with thy praise."

By connecting this first climax, in ver. 10, with the opening words of the psalm, we grasp the indisputable fact that *this first strophe is a prayer:* **Remember . . . do not turn away.** All that comes between is pleading. As much as to say: "By all the devotion and enthusiasm and energetic service and consecrating forethought of my revered ancestor David, whose words and deeds I this day recall, and humbly mention as my pleading before thee,—O Jehovah, do not turn away my face."

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Once we grasp the firm logic of this intercession, we can easily allow for the poetic freedom with which the details are filled in. Whether we are to accept the allusion to **Ephrathah** as to the name of a district large enough to include Kirjath-jearim where the ark was, or to understand David to refer to tidings of the whereabouts of the ark with which they were familiar in his youth in Bethlehem-ephrathah, becomes a matter of small importance. With a like sense of freedom as to details, we can, without disturbance to the general sense, understand the **we** of vers. 6 and 7 as proceeding originally from David, in recognition of the people who accompanied him when he went to fetch up the ark to Jerusalem; and, then, again we can hear David's own voice of invocation in vers. 8 and 9 even though the terms of the invocation were taken from the story of the original journeying of the ark through the wilderness, and again employed by Solomon on an intermediate occasion. All this poetic and highly picturesque filling in of the argument drawn from David and his times by no means robs this part of the psalm of its force as a mighty plea urged by King Hezekiah.

In like manner, the general sense of *promise granted in answer to prayer*, becomes evident as dominating the second half of the psalm (vers. 11—18), notwithstanding the sweep of its contents and the loftiness of its closing aspiration. The first half of the psalm led off with what David **sware** to Jehovah; the second half begins, its response, with what Jehovah **sware** to David. And therein—in that covenant-oath to David—lay promises yet unexhausted and which guarantee to Hezekiah, as being in the line of the covenant, all the favour he might need for himself and for the temple he this day hallows to Jehovah.

It is worthy of note how the interests of the throne and of the temple here again intertwine. The covenant, through Nathan, points to the throne (vers. 11 and 12); and then immediately the temple is introduced as in some way supporting the throne: **For Jehovah hath chosen Zion—hath desired it as a habitation for himself.** Such intertwining of the two interests has characterised the Davidic Covenant from the first; for was it not just when David proposed to build a *temple* that Jehovah promised him an abiding *throne?* Possibly there is in this more than meets the eye. Be that as it may, the blending of interests goes on quite to the end of the psalm: ver. 14—place; ver. 15—place; ver. 16—place; ver. 17—throne; ver. 18—throne and **crown!** That is the climax—**crown** the final word.

In these last 5 verses of 10 lines, the whole passion of the psalm is expressed; and the expression is in every way most beautiful and impressive. As to form, it is all direct divine speech: Jehovah's voice

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alone is heard throughout; and if the speech as a whole was never uttered before, then it may be taken as a new and complete revelation of things never before so connectedly divulged.

The original petitions of David are hereby represented as granted—reaffirmed—amplified. The **resting-place** reappears as **desired, found, perpetual.** The **priests** and **Levites** are heralded by **provision** in abundance and **satisfied needy ones.** The very clothing of the priests is enhanced from **righteousness** to **salvation.** The official **men of kindness,** the Levites, do INDEED **ring out their joy,** with reduplicated emphasis. Not only is what was asked in David's petitions now abundantly given; but more than was asked, at least so far as this psalm is concerned. For again, as already observed, the temple gives place to the throne: **There** (in that place) **will I cause to bud a horn unto David**—a living symbol of power. **His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall blossom his crown**—a living symbol of royalty. Bold metaphors truly; but for that very reason fitting the ultimate climax of the psalm and causing us to feel instinctively that a greater than Hezekiah is here. They are, indeed, things "too wonderful" for him; and, therefore, here he leaves them unexplained. The THRONE in its PLACE, and the final HEIR on the throne, would all in due time be revealed.

PSALM 133.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Brethren in Fellowship: a Charming Spectacle.

ANALYSIS.—A Glimpse of Fraternal Reunion (ver. 1) suggests Comparison: (ver. 2) with the Descending Oil of Sacred Consecration; and (ver. 3) with the Descending Dew of Natural Refreshing.

[Lm.] Song of the Steps—By David.

1 **Lo! <how good and how delightful>—**
the dwelling[a] of brethren |all together|;[b]
2 **Like the precious oil upon the head—**
flowing down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron—
which floweth down over the opening of his robe:

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[a] Or: "remaining," "abiding."

[b] "For brethren to dwell also together"—Dr.

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3 Like the dew of Hermon—
which floweth down over the mountains of Zion;
For <there> hath Jehovah |commanded| the blessing—
life unto the ages!

[Nm.]

EXPOSITION.

This beautiful psalm was manifestly prompted by a spectacle actually beheld. It points with the finger to some memorable scene, which lingers in the poet's mental vision. Probably nothing so perfectly answerable to the enthusiasm of this little snatch of song, has ever been suggested, as the Reunion of the Tribes on the occasion of Hezekiah's great passover. It is true the Northern Tribes were not so extensively represented at the feast as was desired; but those who came were welcome; and it is given to a seer to behold the ideal in the actual.

The stay in the sacred city was not long, but it was an **abiding** while it lasted: it brought brethren face to face who had never before seen each other; and, sweeping away prejudices and misunderstandings, cementing holy friendships by sacred service and song and by the giving and receiving of domestic courtesies, made the participants realise how truly they were brethren.

The comparisons employed to celebrate such reunion, converge to a single point, without losing their native attributes of many-sided suggestiveness. The precious perfumed oil, poured on Aaron's head, and not merely sprinkled on his garments as in the case of his sons, would naturally retain its symbolic fitness to suggest a gracious, delightfully fragrant, unseen influence; and in like manner the dew of Hermon would not lose its inherent adaptedness to convey the subsidiary ideas of copiousness and invigoration because of a further main point to be emphasised. Nevertheless, while these clustering conceptions around the figures employed need not be stripped off them, the single point to which both figures are directed should be firmly grasped. That point is the expansive and diffusive **descent** of the influence—of the invigoration—which is unmistakably urged home by the threefold use of the words **flowing down** or **descending.** The sacred oil **flows down** from the head to the beard, from the beard to the robe, and so by implication embraces and consecrates the whole man. The dew from the lofty summits of Mount Hermon **flows down** or **descends** (at times) not merely down upon that mountain's own spurs, but further and further down, until it reaches and rests upon the lowly

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Mount Zion in the south: which last point has been distinctly made credible by the observations of travellers in Switzerland and in Palestine. So, the poet would have us observe, the realisation of brotherly fellowship by those who are brethren, is an expanding and descending force, however gentle and unobserved; which reaches down far below the point of original bestowment of the grace. By the help of these simple analogies the mind of the reader climbs to higher things: to the rich influences descending from public worship into family life and into civic communities. The Christian will be forgiven if he is reminded of the ever descending grace which flows down from his Head in heaven: if a poetic Christian, he may indulge in a smile at the psalmist's adroitness in fetching one of his similes from the far North beyond where the Northern tribes dwelt, to their quite legitimate gratification; and, if at the same time he is a breezy Christian, possessing some breadth and flexibility of apprehension, —he will be unable to restrain himself from a feeling of additional pleasure that the spell of the psalmist's genius, having first appropriated a *sacred* symbol, then goes farther afield and presses a *secular* symbol into his service; reflecting that, even the dew of Hermon may benefit Zion, even as Christ is head over all things to his Church. Yet, when all comes to all, lowly Zion will be loftier in his eyes than Lebanon; **for, there, in Zion, hath Jehovah commanded the blessing even life for evermore.**

PSALM 134.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—The Night Service in the Temple.

ANALYSIS.—(See inserted headlines.)

[Lm.] Song of the Steps.

[Addressed to Night-watchers in the Temple.]

1 Lo! bless ye Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah,
who stand in the house of Jehovah in the dark night:[a]
2 Lift up your hands in holiness,[b] and bless ye Jehovah.

[Their Reply.]

3 May Jehovah [bless thee] out of Zion—[He who is] Maker of heaven and earth!

[Nm.][c]

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[a] So Br. "in the nights"—Dr.
[b] Or: "unto the sanctuary."
[c] See Ps. 135 (beginning).

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EXPOSITION.

The purpose and structure of this psalm are simple and evident. There is in the Temple a Night-service, which becomes the occasion of a charge from the people to the Levites who represent them, and of a benediction from the Levites on the people before they depart to their homes. There is a probable reference to such a service in 1 Ch. 9^{33}; and the priestly response is after the manner of Num. 6^{24}. The stair-like movement characteristic of the previous "Step-Songs" is perceptible in this psalm also, as witness the five-fold repetition of the name **Jehovah**, which, reverently uttered, would impart to this final song a suitable solemnity. That the **standing in the house of Jehovah** points to the ministrations of the officials of the Temple, is sufficiently evident from the following passages; namely, Deu. 10^{8}, 18^{7}, 1 Ch. 23^{30} and 2 Ch. 29^{11}. Concerning the lifting up of hands in worship, Pss. 28^{2}, 44^{20}, 63^{4}, 88^{9}, 119^{48}, and 141^{2}, may be profitably compared; while, as to the accompanying words "in holiness" or "to the sanctuary," the preference of Delitzsch, with R.V. text, for the "accusative of direction" = **unto the sanctuary**, is perhaps not quite so plainly correct as the "accusative of definition" = **in holiness**, with R.V. margin; although the reason given by Aglen for the latter is scarcely conclusive. He says: "Since the servants of Jehovah are here addressed as standing in the sanctuary, this direction seems unreasonable." The unreasonableness disappears if we remember that the ministrants might be already standing within the Temple courts, and yet direct their uplifted hands toward the holy shrine. Still, **in holiness** appears the more obvious rendering; which becomes doubly acceptable when viewed as supplying the idea of "holy hands" in 1 Tim. 2^{8}. It remains only to add: that the simple structure of this psalm by no means pre-supposes the elaborate ritual of perambulating the Temple courts during the night, which the Talmud connects with the Second Temple. There is nothing here which the reforming King Hezekiah might not have arranged or restored.

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PSALM 135.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Call to Temple-Worship.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—4, A Charge to the Levites to Lead in the Delightful Duty of Praise. Strophe II., vers. 5—7, A Personal Enforcement of this Duty—based on the Works of Creation. Strophe III., vers. 8—12, The Same—based on Israel's History. Strophe IV., vers. 13, 14, Jehovah's Name and Memorial a Guarantee of Future National Blessing. Strophe V., vers. 15—18, Reproach cast on Idols. Strophe VI., vers. 19—21, Four Classes called upon to Bless Jehovah.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.[a]

1 Praise ye the name of Jehovah,
praise, O ye servants of Jehovah:
2 Who stand[b] in the house of Jehovah,
in the courts of the house of our God.
3 Praise ye Yah, for <good> is Yahweh,[c]
make melody to his name, for it is full of delight.
4 For <Jacob> hath Yah |chosen for himself|,
<Israel> as his own treasure.[d]

5 For ||I|| know that <great> is Jehovah,
and ||our sovereign Lord|| is beyond all gods:
6 <All that Jehovah |pleased|> hath he done—
in the heavens and in the earth,
in the seas and all resounding deeps:
7 Causing vapours to ascend from the end of the earth,
<lightnings for the rain> hath he made,
Bringing forth wind out of his treasuries.

8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt—
from man unto beast,
9 He sent signs and wonders into thy midst, O Egypt,
on Pharaoh and on all his servants.
10 Who smote great nations,
and slew mighty kings:
11 Reaching to Sihon king of the Amorites,
and to Og king of Bashan,
and to all the kingdoms of Canaan;
12 And gave their land as an inheritance—
an inheritance to Israel his people.

13 Jehovah! |thy name| is to the ages,
Jehovah! |thy memorial|[e] is to generation after generation;

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[a] See Ps. 105 headline [P.R.I.].
[b] For this word, see Exp. of Ps. 134.
[c] =Jehovah; but spelled thus to shew its relationship to "Yah."
[d] Cp. Exo. 19[5].
[e] Cp. Exo. 3[14, 15].

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14 For Jehovah |will vindicate| his people,
and <on his servants> have compassion.[a]

15 ||The idols of the nations|| are silver and gold,
the work[b] of the hands of men :
16 <a mouth> have they—but do not speak,
<eyes> have they—but do not see,
17 <ears have they—but do not give ear,
nay there is no breath at all in their mouth.
18 <Like them> shall become they who make them—
every one who trusteth in them.

19 O house of Israel, bless ye Jehovah,
O house of Aaron, bless ye Jehovah,
20 O house of Levi, bless ye Jehovah.
O ye who revere Jehovah, bless ye Jehovah.
21 <Blessed> be Jehovah out of Zion—
who inhabiteth Jerusalem.

[Nm.][c]

[a] Cp. Deu. 32[36].
[b] Some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.): "works" (pl.)— | Gn.
[c] See Ps. 136 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

With this psalm, we return to the series distinctively named "Hallels"; and may, from that circumstance, judge with considerable probability as to the bearings of the contents we may find in them. They are pre-eminently Temple psalms, almost certainly composed and not merely adapted for that purpose; and were probably written or collected and edited by King Hezekiah for the re-opening of the Cleansed Temple. How well—let us ask—do they answer to such an origin and design? Do they contain any features from which fitness for such an intention can fairly be inferred? Leaving these questions to receive incidental answers, let us look at the psalm now before us.

It is obviously fitted for its purpose. It is, as to contents, manifestly a *public* psalm, appealing to the whole people. It celebrates their favoured position (ver. 4); extols their covenant God, both as the God of all Creation (vers. 5—7), and as Author of their national Redemption, in bringing them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land (vers. 8—12); it brings up from Mosaic times (Ex. 3[14, 15]), in its rich significance, the "Memorial" Name of their covenant God, which it sets forth in its promissory significance (vers. 13, 14); it pours reproach upon the idols of the nations, in a manner fitted to impress on Israelites the preciousness of their knowledge of the one Living and

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True God (vers. 15—18); and then, having previously at the outset, charged the Levites to lead in such delightful worship, it closes by solemnly calling upon the whole people, even including Gentile proselytes, to sustain **the house of Aaron** and **the house of Levi** in Jehovah's praise (vers. 19—21). It is, therefore, emphatically a *national* song. Indeed, it has not a private or personal allusion in it—with one exception. That exception, however, is very observable. It consists of the sudden introduction, at ver. 5, of a personal note, on which probably no one lower than a King would have adventured. Who is this that presumes to say—**I know that great is Jehovah?** Any godly *monarch* in Israel, it is true, might thus have made prominent his own individuality. A Jehoshaphat, for example, on the one hand, or a Josiah, on the other, might have thus *authenticated* Jehovah's praise; or, of course, a Hezekiah—no smaller man nor less godly. Indeed, even for Hezekiah, one could almost wish for circumstantial evidence, dating this psalm late enough to clothe the speaker with such a strong assurance as would naturally spring from a recent recovery from sickness or a recent rescue from a foreign invader; and it is only when we recall our late conclusions respecting Hezekiah's youth, and the strong presumption thence arising that he experimentally **knew** Jehovah's power,—that we become reconciled to his thus magnificently saying "**I** know." But recalling this, we do feel content to leave it as the greater probability that the good King did, for the occasion named, compose this psalm: the more so, for that we have no knowledge of the poetic and musical accomplishments of either Jehoshaphat or Josiah.

PSALM 136.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Second Call to Temple-Worship, with Responses Inserted.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, A Threefold Call for Thanks, based on the three leading Divine Names. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, the Call Continued, based on the General Wonders of Heaven and Earth. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, On the Ruling Lights of the Heavens. Strophe IV., vers. 10—12, On the Exodus from Egypt. Strophe V., vers. 13—15, On the Passage through the Red Sea. Strophe VI., vers. 16—22, On Guidance through the Wilderness into Israel's Promised Inheritance. Strophe VII., vers. 23—26, On Subsequent Deliverance from Low Estate, Adversaries, and Famine.

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[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.

1 Give ye thanks to Jehovah—for he is good,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
2 Give ye thanks to the God of gods,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
3 Give ye thanks to the Sovereign Lord of lords,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
4 To him that doeth great wonders |by himself alone|,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
5 To him who made the heavens with understanding,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
6 To him that stretched out the earth upon the waters,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
7 To him that made great lights,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
8 The sun to rule over the day,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
9 The moon and stars to rule over the night,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
10 To him that smote the Egyptians in their firstborn,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
11 And brought forth Israel out of their midst,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
12 With a firm hand and an outstretched arm,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
13 To him that divided the Red Sea into parts,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
14 And caused Israel to pass over through the midst thereof,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
15 And shook off Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
16 To him that led his people in the wilderness,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
17 To him that smote great kings,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
18 And slew majestic[a] kings,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
19 Even Sihon king of the Amorites,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
20 Also Og king of Bashan,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
21 And gave their land for an inheritance,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
22 An inheritance to Israel his servant,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
23 Who <in our low estate> was mindful of us,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
24 And rescued us[b] from our adversaries,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
25 Who giveth bread to all flesh,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.
26 Give ye thanks to the GOD of the heavens,
For <to the ages> is his kindness.

[Nm.]

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[a] Br.: "noble." [b] Ml.: "tare us away."

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EXPOSITION.

Though, in general purpose and in leading characteristics, this psalm is much like the preceding one, it nevertheless has several features of its own. It is a Hallel like the foregoing: that is, it is expressly adapted to Temple worship; and, like that, broadly bases Jehovah's claims to worship on creation and (national) redemption. It is, however, special, in that it formally introduces, as ground for adoration, the three leading Divine names—**Jehovah, Elohim** ("God") and **Adonai** ("Sovereign Lord"); deals with the passage through the Red Sea by three distinct movements (**divided—caused to pass—shook off**); and, after falling back on the previous psalm by way of abbreviated quotation as to taking possession of Canaan, lastly brings forward *three* reminiscences, which throw a welcome sidelight on the time at which the psalm was probably composed. These three reminiscences are concerned with: (1) a **low estate**, (2) a **rescue from adversaries**, and (3) a supply of **bread**: just these—no others—no more: a cluster of coincidences, finding a striking verification in the times of King Hezekiah. (1) The **low estate** of the nation during the presence of the Assyrians in the land is manifest (cp. 2 K. $17^{19\text{-}23}$, 19^{3}, 2 Ch. $29^{8,9}$); and is a phrase more exactly fitted for that application than for the Exile in Babylon, which surely was something more than a "low estate." (2) The **forcible rescue** from the Assyrians was unique; and the word is more suited to allude to that event than to permissions to captives to return to their land of their own free will. (3) As we have already been reminded by Ps. 126, there was a near approach to famine when the Assyrians were gone; and though the statement as to the provision of **bread** is here couched in general terms, yet a recent event might well have suggested such a grateful acknowledgment just here. Even Delitzsch, though clinging to a post-exilic origin to the psalm, sees here a reference "to a time in which they suffered from famine as well as slavery." "Invasion" and "famine" wholly meet the case, and then there is the "forcible rescue": respecting which Aglen's note is suggestive: "**Redeemed.**—Better, as in original, *snatched us from.* (Compare Ps. 7^{2}, used of a lion suddenly seizing his prey.)" So suddenly did Jehovah seize Sennacherib!

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PSALM 137.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE. — A Returned Levite's Memories of Babylon, Apostrophe to Jerusalem, and Imprecations on Edom and on Babylon.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, A Returned Captive's Record of the Declinature of Himself and Brethren to Sing Songs of Zion on Foreign Soil. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, To his Brethren, he excuses the Refusal and Apostrophises Jerusalem. Strophe III., ver. 7, He prays for the Punishment of Edom's Perfidy. Strophe IV., vers. 8, 9, He Bitterly Apostrophises Babylon.

[Nm.]

1 <By the streams of Babylon>
<there> we sat down, yea we wept—
when we remembered Zion.
2 <On[a] the poplars,[b] in the midst thereof>
we hung up our lyres.
3 For <there> asked our captors of us—
words of song!
And our spoilers—[c]
of gladness![d]
"Sing to us of the Songs of Zion."

4 |How| could we sing the songs of Jehovah—
on a foreign soil?—
5 <"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem>
let my right hand |play me false|![e]
6 let my tongue cleave to my palate—
‖If I lift not up Jerusalem above mine own crowning gladness."‖[f]

7 Remember, O Jehovah, to the sons of Edom—
the day of Jerusalem!
Who kept saying "Lay bare!" "Lay bare!"
"as far as the foundation within her!"

8 O despoiling[g] daughter of Babylon!—
|how happy| he who shall repay thee
the dealing which thou didst deal out to us!
9 |how happy| he who shall snatch away—
and dash to pieces—thy children—against the crag!

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "by." So Br.

[b] So O.G. "'*Arab*, as is now established by botanists, denotes the *Populus Euphratica*, very young specimens of which with their narrow leaves may easily be confounded with willow underwood, upon a superficial inspection"—Delitzsch.

[c] So *Gt.*; and so ("prob.") Dr.

[d] Cp. ver. 6, same word. Here prob. "words" that is "of gladness" shd. again be understood from previous line.

[e] So *Gt.* (ml.) "fail" or "deceive." M.T.: "forget."

[f] Same word as in ver. 3; and shd. by all means be rendered both times alike.

[g] So *Gt.* "Targ., Peah. and many moderns, read (with different vowels), *thou waster*"—Dr. M.T.: "that hast been despoiled."

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EXPOSITION.

Is this the voice of a returned captive, or of one still in Babylon? If the former, as appears the natural conclusion from the references to a past time and a distant place—**there we sat down,**—then the further question arises, whether this sounds like the voice of an aged man who has dwelt nearly a lifetime in captivity, and who is therefore old and feeble, whose hand and tongue now falter from playing and singing the songs of Zion as once they did; or of one who has been permitted to return with vigour and delight to the crowning joys of home and the still higher joy of Levite work in Jerusalem? To this question also it will be easy to give the obvious answer, once we realise the strength of the position taken up by Thirtle, when he reminds us of the devastation of many cities of Judah by the Assyrians in the days of King Hezekiah before Jerusalem was approached; of the fact that the kings of Assyria were also kings of Babylon; and of the likelihood that dwellers in the cities of Judah would actually be deported to Babylon, long before the great Exile in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. For certainly it is the obvious answer—to say, that the poet who writes this vigorous psalm has manifestly been a captive only long enough to realise the bitterness of exile and to return to the joys of home and the exhilaration of renewed Levitical functions in Jerusalem. Everything, down to the minutest shade of language and feeling, agrees with such an outlook.

Before verifying this, we may quote from Delitzsch his beautiful picture of the mourners by Babel's streams. "The psalm is evidently a song not written during the time of the Exile, but in recollection of it. The banks of rivers, like the shores of the sea, are a favourite haunt of such as deep grief drives away from the tumult of men into solitude: the boundary line of the river gives to solitude a secure background; the monotonous splashing of the waves nourishes the dull, melancholy alternation of thoughts and feelings; and at the same time the sight of the cool, fresh water exercises a soothing influence upon the consuming fever in the heart. The rivers of Babylon are the Tigris and Euphrates along with the tributary streams that feed them and the canals that connect them . . . As soon as they sat down in the loneliness of the river's banks they immediately began to weep, inasmuch as, at the sight of the so totally different nature around them, the remembrance of Zion only forced itself upon them all the more strongly, and their sorrow at being cut off from their native land indulged itself all the more freely, where no hostilely observant eyes repressed it."

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How easily grafts itself into this picture the persuasion that these captives were Levites; and so, as practised singers, wedded to their lyres, had them with them in the land of their banishment; and were prone to use them, if only by stealth; sometimes in snatches of Temple-songs of joy, when secure in their homes, or otherwise, and indeed oft, for improvising dirges suited to their sorrow. They were skilled musicians, with melodious **tongues** and skilful **right-hands**, wherewith to lift the song and sweep the strings. Their furtive exercises in their favourite work had revealed their musical accomplishments to their heathen neighbours; who, following them to their lonely water-side haunts, begged of them to let them hear some of those ravishing strains of sacred joy which they had occasionally overheard. The request was pointed: not wailings by the water-side, was the kind of song requested; but genuine **songs of Zion**, which the harpists well knew meant the sacred **songs of Jehovah's** joyful praise.

This was a form of request with which compliance was not possible: the only answer was, with respectful but mournful gesture, to **hang up** their **lyres** on the neighbouring trees, as emphasising decisively the impossibility of granting that pointed request. The connecting **For** which opens the third verse of the psalm sufficiently indicates that such decisive action was the only reply then given; and, indeed, it is not easy to see how the words of the fourth verse could have been then spoken without needlessly provoking **captor-spoilers**; far less would prudent captives there and then indulge in the patriotic outburst of vers. 5 and 6; which, indeed, could not but have seemed to the ears of foreign masters to breathe defiance. How unspeakably more natural to postpone the apostrophe to Jerusalem to a point of time after the accomplished return; and, with that transfer, to regard the preceding question also as spoken to the sympathetic ears of brethren at home, causing it to mean: "The feeling, that compliance would have been profanation, as you brethren can at once appreciate, is why no other answer to our captors was possible but to hang up our lyres on the neighbouring poplars."

It serves as an independent confirmation of this exegesis to rescue from dislocation the two connected occurrences of the word **gladness** as found in both ver. 3 and ver. 6. It is an exegetical sin against continuity of thought to render the original word first as **mirth** and then as **joy**. It was not mere secular "mirth" that was requested in ver. 3; but, as the parallelism shows, the sacred **gladness** audible in **the songs of Zion**, which were at the same time **the songs of Jehovah**. Every sensitive mind instinctively feels that, second only

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to the joy of regained Temple worship, would be, to the psalmist, the crowning joy of his recovered home; and that it is something worth saying to aver that the supreme joy of sacred service towered above even domestic blessedness.

This song has been described as "blended of tears and fire." We are easily touched by the "tears"; but the "fire" finds us less sympathetic. Nevertheless a strong appeal is made to our respectful considerateness, both by the prayer against Edom, and by the apostrophe to Babylon. Edom, the near neighbour and blood relation of Israel, brought on herself the bitter resentment of the prophets, as their piled-up reproaches attest (Amos 1^{11}, Obad. 10^{ff}, Joel 3^{19}, Jer. 49^{7ff}, Lam. 4^{21f}, Eze. 25^{2ff}, 35^{12ff}, Isa. 34, 63^{1f}), and Babylon had already begun those cruelties in Israel and Judah (Jer. 50-51, Hab. 1^{6-11} and others), which were yet to serve further as Jehovah's chastising rod on his faithless people. "The barbarous customs of Oriental warfare spared neither women nor children in a war of extermination. Cp. Isa. 13^{16}, Hos. 10^{14}, 13^{16}, Nah. 3^{10}, 2 Kings 8^{12}, Hom. II. 22^{63}. The stern law of retaliation demanded that Babylon should be treated as she had treated Jerusalem"—Kp. We cannot wonder that the demand of "blood for blood" had not then been hushed, when we consider how often even now, in cases of excited racial hatred, it still makes itself heard. The people of Jehovah had not then been led up to those difficult heights from which alone can come the prayer, "Father! forgive them; they know not what they do!" But Israel's Messiah has already led the way.

PSALM 138.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A King's Public Thanks for Advancement in Royal Dignity.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Public Thanks for Unexpected Advancement and for the Lofty Feeling thereby imparted. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, Anticipations of the Homage of Other Kings to Jehovah, which is Traced to its Moral Cause. Strophe III., vers. 7—8, Assurance of the Coming Completion of Jehovah's Promises.

[Lm.] By David.

1 I will thank thee[a] with my whole heart,
<before messengers divine>[b] will I make melody unto thee:

[a] Some cod. (w. Aram., Sep., Vul.) add: "Jehovah"—Gn. [b] Cp. 8^{2}, 29^{1}, 89^{6-9}.

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2 I will bow down towards thy holy temple,[a]
and thank thy name, for thy kindness and for thy faithfulness;
for thou hast magnified, above all thy name, thy promise:[b]
3 <In the day that I called> thou didst answer me,
didst embolden me, in my soul, with strength.[c]

4 All the kings of the earth |will thank thee, Jehovah|,
when[d] they have heard the sayings of thy mouth;
5 And will sing of the ways of Jehovah,
because <great> is the glory of Jehovah:
6 Though <lofty> is Jehovah, yet <the lowly> he regardeth,
but <the haughty, afar off> doth he acknowledge.

7 <If I walk in the midst of distress> thou revivest me:
<over the wrath of mine enemies> thou stretchest forth thy hand,[e]
and thy right hand |saveth me|.
8 ||Jehovah|| will complete (all things)[f] on my behalf:
Jehovah, |thy kindness| is to the ages,—
<the works[g] of thine own hands> do not discard.

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Cp. 57.
[b] So Del.; and cp. 119 (Table) for "promise." Well explained: "The fulfilment of Thy promise surpasses the renown of all Thy former mercies"—Dr.
[c] "Didst inspire me with courage—a lofty feeling permeated my soul"—Del.
[d] Or: "because."
[e] Some cod. (w. 2 ear. pr. edns. [1 Rabb.], Sep.): "hands" (pl.)—Gn.
[f] So Dr. Cp. Ps. 57[2].
[g] Some cod. (w. Syr.): "work" (sing.)—Gn.

EXPOSITION.

The sudden reappearance of psalms ascribed **To David**, together with a survey of the literary field in which they present themselves, suggests the obvious conclusion, that an early psalter was concluded with the Hallel psalms 105—107; 111—118; 135—136; and 146—150; and that, subsequently, other psalms were inserted among them. Of these subsequently inserted psalms, there are two groups assigned to "David"; namely, 108—110 and 138—145. Why they thus appear in two groups, rather than in one, is uncertain; but may easily have arisen from the order in which they were found, or the sources from which they were taken. The more urgent question is, how they came to be so belated in finding their way at all into the collected Praises of Israel.

Let us assume that we cannot now get to know this: is our ignorance material? There are many possible reasons why such a thing as so late a discovery of certain psalms might easily have

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happened. These two groups of Davidic psalms might have already appeared in other connections, and been regarded as sufficiently well preserved already; or they may have been stored at some spot or treasured in some library inaccessible to the earlier collectors of psalms. But the important point to note is, that no incident or accident of this kind is of sufficient weight to throw the smallest doubt upon the incorporated literary assignment of these psalms to David.

Because they are attributed to David, in closely-written and even continuous headlines, the presumption is that they came from his pen; and, unless we can establish the existence of an amount of Librarian carelessness or audacity which is inherently improbable, we ought not to set aside this presumption, save for good and strong cause.

Minute differences of style or orthography are seen to be insufficient reason for such discredit, as soon as proper consideration is given to the liberty known to have been taken by the Sopherim in controlling the Sacred Text. In the one known process of transliteration alone, they may have introduced orthographic peculiarities which it would be a great mistake to ascribe to a higher or earlier source, so as to disturb the question of original authorship.

Again: similarities to other psalms, may be due to such a cause as duplicate production from the author's own pen, who may have more than once given expression to similar sentiments, while in the same circumstances or in the same vein of feeling.

Once more: in some of these similar strains there may be special features which nowhere else appear: why not?

How these possibilities and cautions apply to the matter in hand will presently be seen.

We have here more psalms attributed to David: are they sufficiently like him to allow us to accept them on their own profession? Do they dovetail into what we know of him already and into what we have from him elsewhere? In our many-sided care not to be misled, may we not justly beware of being prejudiced against an addition to our autobiographical materials? Let this be the spirit, then, in which we proceed to the consideration of this new and important batch of psalms ascribed "To David."

The first of the present series, namely the 138th, strikes us as not only an exceedingly bright and acceptable addition to those which have gone before; but as at once harmonising with what we know of David, and at the same time taking us a little beyond it.

The first strophe strikes just such a note as would be congenial to David's circumstances and sentiments soon after the communication to him of the Divine Oath by Nathan respecting the permanent con-

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tinuance in his house of the Throne of Israel (2 Sam. 7). Just as here portrayed, he would then worship before the newly brought-in Ark; and it commends itself to us as eminently fitting, that such an advance in Jehovah's self-manifestation as was constituted by the new and unexpected promises contained in his newly received Covenant, should have at this time found unique expression in the line (ver. 2):

for thou hast magnified, above all thy name, thy promise;

as to which see Driver's excellent comment at the foot of the text above. Corresponding with this, it is easy to conceive how almost dangerously life-like was the enhanced sense of *royal importance* as, in Delitzsch's apt words, "a lofty feeling permeated his soul."

In the second strophe of the psalm, we come upon something which seems at once new and apt: a sentiment not so clearly expressed elsewhere, but which nevertheless we are glad to perceive could find lodgment in David's mind. That the kings of the earth should do homage to David's Heir—this we have already perceived, as from Pss. 72 and 89; but that those kings should, for themselves, rejoice in the sayings of Jehovah's mouth, and should, in the right of their own joy, sing of his ways because of the greatness of his glory—this is peculiarly acceptable: most of all acceptable, and of charming interest, because of the implied peculiarity, that such enthusiasm would be roused even in the minds of kings by Jehovah's supreme regard for the lowly. How this strikes a note not unknown to David, because probably taught him by Samuel, may be seen by reference to 18^{20-27} with our Exposition thereof.

But, as the third strophe makes us feel, we have not done with David — the historical David — who, by little turns of expression peculiarly his own, lets us know that, while he is not yet finally out of trouble, he is confident that his covenant God will complete all things on his behalf. As in the earlier psalms of David which passed under Hezekiah's co-editing care, so this also is well handed over to the Chief Musician, which makes us feel quite at home, satisfied that the choirs will be well instructed how to deal with this addition to their Temple treasures.

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PSALM 139.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Individual submits Himself to Jehovah's All-Searching Eye.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—6, Jehovah's Knowledge considered as Taking into View every Form of Human Activity. Strophe II., vers. 7—12, There is No Escaping that Knowledge by Distance or Darkness. Strophe III., vers. 13—18, Based upon the Creatorship of Each Individual, Jehovah's Knowledge rises to Precious Purposes Realisable by Fellowship with Him in a Higher Life. Strophe IV., vers. 19—24, The Lesson thus Learned produces a Passionate Espousal of Jehovah's honour, which feeling, however, is Jealously Guarded by Prayer.

[Lm.] By David—Psalm.

1 Jehovah! thou hast searched me, and knowest:—
2 ||Thou|| knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
thou understandest my purpose from afar.
3 <My journeying and my resting> hast thou traced out,[a]
and <with all my ways> art thou familiar.
4 <When (as yet) there is no speech in my tongue>
lo! Jehovah, thou knowest it all.
5 <Behind and before> hast thou shut me in,
and hast laid upon me thine outspread hand.
6 <Too wonderful> is thy[b] knowledge for me,
inaccessible! I cannot attain to it.

7 |Whither| can I go from thy spirit?
or |whither| <from thy face> can I flee?
8 <If I ascend the heavens> |there| art |thou|,
and if I <spread out hades as my couch> behold thee!
9 <I mount the wings of the dawn,
settle down in the region behind the sea>
10 <Even there> |thy hand| leadeth me.
and thy right hand |holdeth me|.
11 <If I say—"Only let |darkness| shut me in,[c]
and the light about me be ||night||">
12 ||Even darkness|| would not darken from thee,
and ||night|| <like day> would shine,—
|so| the darkness, |as| the light.

13 For ||thou thyself|| didst originate the first rudiments of my being,[d]
didst weave me together[e] in the womb of my mother.
14 I thank thee, that thou hast shewn thyself fearfully wondrous,—[f]
<wonderful> are thy works,
and ||my soul|| knoweth [it] well.

---

[a] So Sep. Or (Heb.): "winnowed."
[b] "Thy" in Sep. and Vul.
[c] So *Gt.* M.T.: "bruise me."
[d] Ml.: "my reins."
[e] Or (less prob.): "screen me."
[f] So it shd. be (w. Sep. and Syr.)—Gn.

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15 My frame[a] was not hid from thee,
when I was made in secret,
was skilfully wrought[b] in the underparts of the earth:[c]
16 <Mine undeveloped substance>[d] thine eyes |beheld|,
and <in thy book> all of them were written—
even days preordained,—
<and for it>[e] one among them.
17 <To me> then, |how precious| thy purposes, O GOD!
|how numerous| have become their heads!
18 I would recount them—<beyond the sands> they multiply!
I awake—and |my continued being|[f] is with thee.

19 Wouldst thou, O God, slay the lawless one!—
then, ye men of bloodshed, depart from me!—
20 Who speak of thee wickedly,
have uttered, for unreality, thy name.[g]
21 Must not I hate ||them who hate thee||, O Jehovah?
And <them who rise up against thee> must I not loathe?
22 <With completeness of hatred> do I hate them,
<as enemies> have they become to me.
23 Search me, O GOD, and know my heart,
try me, and know my disquieting[h] thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
and lead me in a way age-abiding.[i]

[Lm.] To the Chief Musician.

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[a] Ml.: "my bone."
[b] If the initial "r" in Heb. was an accidental repetition from the previous word (wh. ends w. that letter), then we might render the word so shortened: "I arose." And this might convey a double allusion to race origin and individual origin.
[c] "The secret laboratory of the origin of earthly existence"—(Cp. Job 1[21], Sir. 40[1])—Del.
[d] Ml.: "my ball"—as yet unrolled! Br. conjectures *g'rl* (instead of *glm*) "my lot."
[e] Namely, "for my undeveloped substance": "one among them," namely, "among preordained days." So, prob., if w. Del. we prefer the Heb. marginal reading (in one recension) w'lo=*waw, lamed, waw*; otherwise, if we follow M.T., w'lo'=*waw, lamed, aleph* (same pronunciation), we must say: "And NOT one among them."
[f] Ml.: "my continuance."
[g] So *Gt.*: cp. Exo. 20[7].
[h] Cp. 94[19].
[i] That is, "a way enduring or holding on to the ages." In contrast with the "way" that "vanishes," 1[6]. Cp. "the path of life," 16[11].

EXPOSITION.

This beautiful and heart-searching psalm may be conveniently regarded as resolving itself into four Strophes of six verses each, as set forth in our Analysis.

I. *Jehovah's Knowledge considered as taking into view every form of human activity.* A survey which includes a man's **downsitting** when his day's work is done, his **uprising** when his night's rest is over, and his chief **purpose** during the twenty-four hours; which traces his **journeying** from place to place, his **resting** at noon and at night, and his **ways** of deporting himself wherever he may be,—may be said to touch in general terms on all the forms which individual activity can

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assume. If, to these specifications, are added those processes of the mind which prepare for **speech**, and which prompt and guide the **tongue** in its utterance,—we may conclude that nothing of importance remains uncomprehended in this brief enumeration. Nevertheless, there is yet another aspect under which individual activity may be viewed; and that is, its narrow limitation. There are on every side bounds which it cannot overpass; an individual's downsittings and uprisings can only attain a certain number, and then they must cease; and so with all his forms of activity. Such limitation is graphically set forth in the simplest and most picturesque language: **Behind and before hast thou shut me in, and hast laid on me thine outspread hand.** This reflection, by so far, enhances the thoroughness of Jehovah's knowledge of me. He knows all the movements I can make, and he himself strictly limits those movements; which emphasises the main point, which is, that Jehovah knows every individual thoroughly: knows, with first-hand knowledge; as the result of personal search and tracing and testing; knows, by anticipation, even the as yet unspoken words that are coming. It is not surprising that the psalmist realises how such knowledge surpasses any knowledge which he himself possesses: **Too wonderful is thy knowledge for me.**

II. *There is no Escaping that Knowledge by Distance or Darkness.* The psalmist first tests the question, whether by *Distance* he can hide himself from God. No: not by distance: whether the distant *height*, or the distant *depth*, or the distant *breadth:* the distant and dazzling height of **heaven**; or the dim, dark depth of **hades**, the underworld of the dead; or the hazy remoteness of the shores and islands **behind** the **hinder** Mediterranean **Sea**: escape to any of these distances will be no escape from Jehovah; who is above, below, beyond; present everywhere—present, in the diffused vitality of his **spirit**, present, in the personal capacity of revealing his **face** in wrath or love. The poet is only testing the question in all the forms his thought can appreciate. He does not say he wishes to escape: in fact, he almost implies that he does not; for, in putting the case, merely to test the possibility, he rather assumes the love than the wrath of the Omnipresent One: **There, thy hand leadeth me, and thy right hand holdeth me.** But, if he *would* escape, he *could* not—that is his main point.

Having tested the question of escape from God's knowledge by means of "Distance," he next propounds the question whether by means of **Darkness** such escape were possible. Again he concludes in the negative. **Darkness is no darkness to Jehovah.**

III. *Based upon the Creatorship of Each Individual, Jehovah's Knowledge rises to Precious Purposes realisable by Fellowship with Him in a Higher Life.*

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This comprehensive summary of the third strophe of our psalm is not more comprehensive than the particulars which it seeks to express. Nevertheless, being highly charged with meaning, it may be helpful to draw out its main points in the form of three distinct propositions.

1. Jehovah's knowledge of men is based upon his creatorship of each individual.

2. His creatorship of each individual comprehends benevolent purposes with respect to them.

3. His benevolent purposes with respect to each individual require for their realisation the advantages of a higher life than the present.

1. *Jehovah's knowledge of men is based upon his creatorship of each individual.* The causal word **For=Because**, which opens this strophe, strictly and properly leads up to this conception: "Thou hast such an intimate knowledge of me as neither change of activity, nor distance, nor darkness can obstruct, **because** thou didst make me: **because** I am thy creature: **because** thou art my creator." This is the first strong and clear point in this third strophe of our psalm. Observe that it is clearly and strongly expressed. It is expressed by almost every form of language by which the idea could be conveyed: **He originated the first rudiments of my being.** Then he carried on the formative work so begun: He **wove me together.** He constructed my **bony framework.** Moreover he yet further advanced his handiwork to completion, by **skilfully** imparting the whole **variegated web-work** of nerves and blood-vessels. We need not trust too much to a single form of expression; but it may safely be said that at least three times over in this short paragraph is Jehovah's creatorship of the human body affirmed. Sum them all up, and put them in their proper connection of thought, by saying: He knows me thoroughly because he made me. He made, not only my spirit, but my body also.

We are not going too far when we individualise, and say: "He made *me*. He made *my* body." We are not going too far, because *precisely that* is what the psalmist says.

But does he not also generalise, and speak of the origin of the *race* under cover of the origin of the *individual?* The correct answer to that plausible question would seem to be this: Yes, he does also generalise; but without withdrawing his individualisation. He refers to the literal **mother's womb** of the individual, as well as—probably and allusively—to the figurative mother's womb here glanced at under the terms **underparts of the earth.** We need not deny the allusion. It is the easiest and happiest way of accounting for the introduction of that remarkable expression; which it may be observed is also found in the Septuagint and Vulgate: As the race was originally brought forth

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out of the underparts of the earth, so the individual is, at birth, brought forth from the maternal concealment answering thereto. But such an allusion does not dominate the passage: the psalm distinctly and repeatedly affirms the Divine Creatorship of the body of each individual human being.

The importance of this teaching will be evident to every thoughtful mind. The consequences which follow from it may, without exaggeration, be described as tremendous. To say that BEHIND EVERY HUMAN BIRTH DIVINE CAUSATION IS IMPLIED is to make a statement which may undoubtedly be abused. But, on the other hand, still more deplorable consequences will result from denying it. The alternative—that of cutting any single creature adrift from its Creator—must at all costs be avoided.

Jehovah created the race: Jehovah creates every individual of the race. Jehovah is the Father of our spirits—doubtless with special immediateness, beautifully symbolised by the directness with which each breathing thing draws its breath from God. But, though not without creaturely intervention, yet through "the fathers of our flesh," Jehovah's creatorship takes effect: his power and wisdom and love are operative in the production of our individual bodies also. It is this which the third strophe of our psalm so strongly teaches, and the more thoroughly and fearlessly we appropriate the solemn thought, the more shall we have ultimate cause for rejoicing.

Jehovah knows me thoroughly, because he made me; and he made my body as well as my spirit—he made the whole man, the entire compound psychic individual.

This is not to say that even he, at my first birth, brought a clean thing out of an unclean; but it is to say, that my first birth, with all its drawbacks, lays a foundation for a second: a second birth whose very object will be to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. Creation may be followed by destruction; but that is not its object. Creation may be followed by salvation.

2. *Jehovah's creatorship of each individual comprehends benevolent purposes respecting each.* What is it but Jehovah's individual creatorship which calls forth the significant line which now comes before us?

> To me, then, how precious thy purposes, O God!

Having employed the word "purpose," in ver. 2, in relation to man, we are bound in consistency to use it now, in ver. 17, in relation to God, the word being the same in the original. God has not only "thoughts" about us when individually creating us, but purposes, and, because these purposes are precious, therefore we must assume

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them to be benevolent: purposes of good and not of evil; of salvation, and not of destruction. Some, indeed, prefer the qualifying word "weighty" here instead of "precious"; but as "precious" is the more customary and obvious rendering, we shall hold ourselves warranted to abide by that more inspiring word until driven out of it. Inasmuch, however, as the immediately following context confirms the preferred and customary rendering, we have no fear of being driven out of the welcome conception of a benevolent Divine purpose in connection with every human birth.

It is quite true that the psalmist with great emphasis asserts the individuality of his own appreciation of God's benevolent purposes in his creation. **To me, then, how precious!** and he had every right to do this. "**To me**, knowing thee as I know thee;" "**To me**, then, considering this matter as I have done, and pondering deeply upon it as I have pondered,—how precious thy purposes are!" But is this to shut others out from the same appreciation; or, is it, rather, to invite them to follow him? Let us beware of narrowing the ground of the exclamation so as to cut it away from under any man's feet. Suffice it, then, to observe—that the psalmist neither says nor implies, "Because I am a good man, therefore are thy purposes such as they are, therefore are they precious to me." No! the whole spirit of the strophe, and of the psalm hitherto, suggests the simpler and broader ground: "Because I am a man, and because thou didst make me to be a man, therefore are thy purposes to me as man so precious."

3. *Jehovah's benevolent purposes with respect to each individual require for their realisation the advantages of a higher life than the present.* Nearly everything here turns on the bearing of the word **awake**; although something also turns upon the fact that the words **I am still** may give place to a more literal rendering, **my continuance**, which more literal rendering may justly assume the significant form, **my continued being**, as we see from Ps. 104[33]: **I awake—my continued being is with thee.** Chiefly, the decision turns upon the scope or intention of the word **awake.** Does the psalmist intend to imply that he had nearly or quite fallen asleep under the weight of his profound meditation, but that when he roused himself he still found himself revolving the old problem,—found him **with God** in the sense of still thinking about him? Or does he rather rise to a higher thought —that of awaking to a higher life than the present?

We may and must dismiss the former as purely fanciful: there is nothing sleepy about what has gone before—all is alert, wakeful; with no indication even of weariness in the mind of the psalmist. Besides which, there is something essentially feeble in reducing the weighty

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words **with thee** to mean no more than thinking about thee; since they more properly mean in company with thee—in thy presence.

On the other hand there are attractive parallels for investing the word "awake" with a far richer meaning; such as, "Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust" (Isa. 26^{19}), "many of the sleepers in the dusty ground shall awake" (Dan. 12^{2}), and especially—

> **As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness,**
> **I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.**
> —Ps. 17^{15}.

Who can deny that, so to understand the words of our psalm, is to bring its third strophe to an altogether worthy conclusion? The whole context is strong, and favours a strong conclusion. Particularly strong and suggestive are the two lines falling between the two great words **purposes** and **awake: how numerous have become the heads of them,** namely thy **purposes**; and—**I would recount them—beyond the sands they multiply.** Only regard the **purposes** as finding final culmination in the bestowment of IMMORTAL LIFE; only regard the **awaking** as being the GREAT AWAKING to that life; and then this multiplication of the Divine "purposes" is abundantly accounted for. The "purposes" culminating in the Great Awaking naturally multiply on both sides of that climax: on this side, and on that; as leading up to it, and as carrying us beyond it. He who "purposes" to bestow on me immortality, will he not "purpose" to prepare me for that priceless boon? Will he not "purpose" redemption, "purpose" sanctification, "purpose" the necessary discipline of suffering, "purpose" victory over temptation? So that we may well exclaim, **How numerous the purposes** *leading me up to* the Great Awaking! And, again, will that Great Awaking not itself lead on to further and higher and still multiplying results? Does Jehovah "purpose" to awake me to an idle, sterile life? When I am awakened, will there be nothing for me to do, no lost ones to seek and save, no new worlds to conquer, no new victories to achieve, no new songs to sing, no new book of nature's secrets to open? Verily, it is as the psalmist says, How the heads of coming possibilities in the future **multiply beyond the sands?**

On every ground, therefore, are we emboldened to conclude, that this **Awaking** is THE GREAT AWAKING TO IMMORTALITY. On the ground of the utter feebleness of the alternative view, which fancies that this wakeful psalmist fell asleep; on the ground of the felt **preciousness** of these Divine **purposes**; and on the ground of their abundant **multiplication,** which can never so prolifically multiply as when clustered about Jehovah's greatest gift, age-abiding life:—on all these substantial grounds we choose this conclusion, and rest in it, that the

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climax to this third strophe does really mean—I awake to immortal life—and find that my continued being is to be enjoyed in fellowship with thee my loving Creator!

IV. *The lesson thus learned produces a Passionate Espousal of Jehovah's honour: which feeling, however, is Jealously Guarded by Prayer.*

That is what we really have here, in the final strophe of our psalm: let us brush aside everything which hinders our seeing it.

Granted that the language employed is, some of it, such as we could not use: simply because we are not in the psalmist's circumstances. What were those circumstances?

As this question necessarily throws us back on the problem of authorship, it may be permitted us to say: that this "Study" was commenced under the impression that DAVID HIMSELF was the Writer of the whole of this psalm, the manifest difference in tone between the first three strophes and the last being sufficiently accounted for by the easy supposition, that three-fourths of the psalm were written by David in his comparatively early and untroubled days, and the last part, after his days of conflict had set in; but that, on closer consideration of the peculiar language of the fourth strophe and contemplation of the circumstances—the whole state of things—thereby implied, the modified conclusion was reached, that, while David probably wrote the major part of the psalm, namely its continuously calm strophes one, two, and three, being probably the whole original psalm, and abundantly entitling the psalm as a whole to bear his honoured name, it was his descendant HEZEKIAH who, having drunk in the existing psalm, in letter and spirit, then added to it the present fourth strophe. The sufficient reason for this modification may be allowed to stand thus: the fourth strophe does *not exactly suit* any known circumstances through which David passed, but *does exactly and most wonderfully fit* the peculiar condition of things which existed in the days of Hezekiah. So much for clearness being premised, the case may be thus stated, looking steadfastly and with a single eye to the exact language of this the fourth strophe of the psalm.

These are the words of a responsible King in Israel: with a foreign invader trampling down the land; leaving his subjects little chance of exercising the most ordinary rights of citizenship, and still less of maintaining the appointed central worship in Jerusalem; many of the Levites being beleaguered in the cities where are their homes, and consequently being unable to ascend to the holy city to attend there to their sacerdotal duties. All this, observe, simply because of this same Invader—this lawless foreigner—who will, if he can, dethrone Israel's

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rightful monarch, and draw the people away from their allegiance to Jehovah himself. And now the question is:—If, under these circumstances, the King prays—**Wouldst thou, O God, slay the lawless one!** is he doing wrong? Deserves he to lose our sympathies? Can we condemn him? Note, that he does not propose to **slay the lawless one** himself; he merely commits him to the judgment of God: **Slay him, O God!** Is that a wrong prayer for Israel's King, under such circumstances.

But let us be at pains to take in the whole situation. There is a war-party in Israel, who are prepared to rush forward into **blood-shed**, with or without Jehovah's permission. We know them; we have met with them before: we have heard their peace-loving King lament that he dwelt among them: bitterly complaining of them in such terms as these, "*I* am peace; but when I speak, *they* are for war!" (Ps. 120). These are the men to whom the devout monarch here says threateningly in a significant aside: **then, ye men of blood-shed, depart from me!** As much as to say, "Once the Lawless One is slain by God's hand, your excuses for plunging into a wilful war will be silenced; and, depend upon it, I shall hasten to rid myself of your hated presence in my Court."

Not only was there a war-party in Israel, but that war-party was composed of *profane* men—men **who spake** of Jehovah **wickedly**, who tried to maintain **falsehoods** by the irreverent use of **his** holy **name**: men, in a word, who **hated** Jehovah! Those are the men whom this praying, Jehovah-loving monarch has to confront. And we ask, was he wrong in drawing a line at them? Could he do otherwise than exclaim, in loyalty to the God whom he adored and loved: **Must I not hate them who hate thee, O Jehovah?** There is no paltry, personal animosity in the language. In point of fact, these men might have been the king's own enemies, but of that he takes no account. Wholly on public grounds—solely for Jehovah's sake—he *accounts* them as his own enemies. That—no more, no less—is what the language expresses.

And so we claim to have brushed aside all obstruction to the reception of the large and solemn lesson here conveyed. It is an object-lesson; and is nothing less than this: That when a man rightly appreciates the **precious purposes** which his Creator cherishes towards him, then is he propelled by the highest moral compulsion to love him in return; to vindicate his honour; and to count his Creator's enemies as his own.

Yet, in such a passionate espousal of Jehovah's honour, there undoubtedly lurks a subtle danger: lest the public hate should take up

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into itself personal animosity; lest an abhorrence of men's godless principles and animus should overlook the yet lingering preciousness of their personalities, not yet, it may be, wholly corrupt and finally abandoned.

And it is submitted, that this is one of the finest things in this matchless psalm; namely, that the psalmist is fully aware of this danger; and makes a determined stand against it, by voluntarily submitting himself to the searching eye of his heart-searching God; imploring to know whether there is in him—even by way of mixed motives—any hurtful way; and seeking to be Divinely led into a way—up to and through the great Awaking—to the pure life that shall abide to the ages.

PSALM 140.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Deliverance from Slanderous and Violent Enemies Implored and Expected.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Rescue from Violent Slanderers Besought. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, The Plottings of the Slanderers Indicated. Strophe III., vers. 6—8, Personal Relation to Jehovah and His Past Mercies Pleaded. Strophe IV., vers. 9—11, Prayer becomes Impassioned Imprecation. Strophe V., vers. 12, 13, Calm Assurance at length comes of Complete Vindication.

[Lm.] A Psalm—By David.

1 Rescue me, Jehovah, from evil men,
<from the man of violent deeds> wilt thou preserve me:
2 Who have devised evil things in [their] heart,
<every day> they stir up wars:
3 They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent,
||the venom of the viper||[a] is under their lips. ☜

4 Keep me, Jehovah, from the hands of the lawless one,
<from the man of violent deeds> wilt thou preserve me,—
who have devised to give a thrust unto my footsteps.
5 Proud men |have hid| a trap for me, and nooses,
they have spread a net by the side of the track,—
<lures> have they set for me. ☜

6 I have said unto Jehovah—<"My GOD> art |thou|!
oh, give ear, Jehovah, to the voice of my supplications.
7 Jehovah, Sovereign Lord, my stronghold of salvation,
thou hast been a screen to my head in the day of arms.

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[a] Or? "spider"—O.G. "The meaning of the Heb. word is uncertain"—Dr.

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8 Do not grant, Jehovah, the desires of the lawless one,
<his device> do not promote." Selah.[a]

9 <If they who encompass me |lift up their head|>[b]
let ||the mischief of their own lips|| cover them:
10 Let him rain upon them[c] live coals,
<into the fire> let him cast them—
into the place of flowing waters, that they rise not again.
11 ||The slanderer||[d] shall not be established in the land,
||the man of violence|| let calamity hunt him in great haste.[e]

12 I know that Jehovah |will execute| the right of the humbled,
the vindication of the needy.
13 Surely ||righteous ones|| shall give thanks unto thy name,
upright ones |shall dwell| in thy presence.

[Nm.]

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[a] Cp. Intro. Chap. III., "Selah."
[b] So Del. divides the verses.
[c] So *Gt.*, cp. 117.
[d] Ml.: "man of tongue."
[e] So Del. "With thrust upon thrust." — O.G., Dr

EXPOSITION.

The situation indicated by this psalm is clearly Davidic. The very fact that slander is the primary weapon relied upon by the writer's enemies is enough to make us suspect who the writer is; and when violence is seen waiting on slander, ready to strike as soon as slander has succeeded in doing its poisonous work, we have instantly all the conditions required by the psalm vividly brought before our minds: that is, as soon as we think of *David at Saul's court* as the sufferer and Petitioner of the psalm. There is no need to risk a universal negative, by denying that any other man ever lived in whose history these peculiar conditions met; but the doubt may be confidently expressed, that it would be extremely difficult to imagine a second hero able to meet the requirements here indicated. He must be a believer in Jehovah—a man of prayer—a man who has been under arms—a man who can point to past divine deliverances—a man whose life is at the mercy of a slanderous tongue—and, to forbear further specification, a man whose rescue from present peril will cause righteous men to thank Jehovah and dwell securely in his presence. David fulfils all these conditions; and, not knowing where to find another who does this, we may well hold ourselves justified in accepting the traditional ascription of authorship to be well sustained.

The reader who pleases to turn to our exposition of Ps. 69 will see how far we are from offering an unqualified defence of the impre-

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cations which several of the psalms contain; but the above considerations respecting the peculiar conditions which met in David, may suggest in great strength the plea that it is no wonder that, *in his circumstances*, he did call to Jehovah for heavy judgments on his enemies. David—notwithstanding his reverent and tender scruples against lifting up a finger to injure his tyrannical master, Saul—was, after all, looking forward to the personal occupancy of the throne of the kingdom, and where, then, could he naturally desire these turbulent enemies to be, if not swept away by the judicial visitations of Jehovah? How else could he look forward to a kingdom in which the **humbled** and **needy** should be **vindicated**, and men be free to **dwell** in safety and **thankfulness** in Jehovah's **presence**? In those circumstances probably no man living is now placed.

PSALM 141.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A Temptation to Conspiracy Shunned.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, Prayer for Guarded Speech. Strophe II., vers. 4, 5, Danger from Proffered Hospitalities. Strophe III., vers. 6, 7, Guarded Admissions. Strophe IV., vers. 8—10, Prayer for Personal Preservation.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 Jehovah, I have called upon thee, oh haste thou unto me:
oh give ear to my voice, when I call unto thee.
2 <Prepared> be my prayer, as incense before thee,
the uplifting of my hands, as the grain-offering of the evening.
3 Oh set thou, Jehovah, a guard to my mouth,
oh watch thou over the door of my lips.

4 Let not my heart |incline| unto a matter of wrong,
to practise practices in lawlessness, with men who are working iniquity,—[a]
so shall I not taste of their dainties.
5 Let a righteous man |smite me| in kindness and rebuke me,
but ||the oil of the lawless|| let it not anoint my head;[b]
for <still> |my prayer| must be against their wrongs.

6 <"When their judges |have been let fall by the side of a crag|>
then have they hearkened to my sayings, in that they are mild:"[c]
7 <"As one plougheth and furroweth the earth>
<scattered> are our bones at the mouth of hades."

---

[a] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).
[b] So Sep.: thus intelligibly leading on to what follows.
[c] So Fuerst. U.: "sweet," "pleasant," "delightful."

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8 For <unto thee, Jehovah, Sovereign Lord> are mine eyes,
<in thee> have I taken refuge, do not pour out my life.[a]
9 Keep me out of the clutches of the trap they have laid for me,
and the lures of the workers of iniquity.[b]
10 Let lawless men |fall into the snares thereof| :
||I|| shall rejoice[c] while I pass by.

[Nm.]

[a] U.: "soul."
[b] Or: "mischief" ("naughtiness"—Dr.).
[c] So Br., reading *'ḥd* instead of *yḥd*. "So by an easy emendation of a difficult text, which varies in Heb. and Sep., and is variously interpreted in versions."

EXPOSITION.

Some close connection between this psalm and the previous has been generally seen by Expositors, and indeed must be admitted on the evidence; but the situation has materially changed. There—in the foregoing psalm—the danger to the psalmist arose from the slanderous tongues of others; here, the danger apprehended is from an incautious use of his own tongue. And this perception helps us to seize the nature of the change which has come over the psalmist's enemies. Before, they wished to ensure his downfall by falsely accusing him to his master, whose permission they sought to employ violence towards the object of their hatred. Now, however, a deeper plot endangers his life. It it not for their royal master that they really care, but for themselves; and they have conceived the dark project of employing David to assassinate Saul. With the assassin, indeed, they will make short work, and place their nominee on the throne of Israel. Such is the plot.

The evidence of it is not historic, but circumstantial, and springs exclusively from the thoroughness with which such a situation accounts for the extraordinary difficulties which attach themselves to the language of the psalm: whose words, though obscure in places, are by no means so difficult to decipher, as is the connection of thought which binds them together. The psalm, in fact, is incoherent, until its main drift is detected; but, when that is discovered, difficulties materially diminish.

There were men at Saul's court wicked and unscrupulous enough for any crime consistent with their own safety and ambition: to wit, Cush the Benjamite and Doeg the Edomite.

David may have unwittingly so far put himself into their power as unintentionally to lead them to contemplate the possibility of making him wholly subservient to their nefarious designs. It would be

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surprising if he had never betrayed, in their presence, how sorely he felt the wrong that Saul was all along doing him; and, in particular, the king's cruel slaughter of the priests of Nôb may have extorted from his noble soul—in his enemies' hearing—some such identification with the sufferers as is implied in the fraternising language of one significent line in our psalm:—

> Scattered are our bones at the mouth of hades;

for, in truth, the slaughter at Nôb was great, and in the hasty burial of the slain, it may easily have happened that the bones of the victims were left to be upturned by some neighbouring farmer as he made his furrow in the field. How easily may David have more than once expressed so keen a regret over this horrible incident, as to betray the undoubted truth, that his sympathies were much more with the slain than with the slayer; and, so, how plausibly may an occasion have been given to those whose hatred of him was very much in the proportion of the love of others, his friends.

Only, now, their policy is not so much the slanderous use of their own tongues to Saul, as the inducing of David so to add to his lamentations over his master's cruelty as to improve their chance of inciting him to conspire against him. To this end, they flatter and court him; they invite him to a feast, and will undoubtedly entertain him well, not forgetting to anoint his head as an honoured guest!

This is the plot, through which the psalmist sees; of which he stands in wholesome dread; against which he prays in tones of rhythmic passion, to which he attunes his inevitable lyre. *That*, we instinctively feel, is how this psalm was produced.

Look through it carefully from this point of view and see how naturally it yields up at least the principal portion of its contents when set to this key-note, and how eloquently forcible those contents, in that case, become.

Like Daniel, at a later time, David feels that he must needs be circumspect even in his prayers; lest his enemies, overhearing him, manufacture treason out of his devotions. He is therefore urgent in this particular request:

> Jehovah, I have called upon thee, oh haste thou unto me:
> oh give ear to my voice, when I call unto thee.

He proceeds to crave that there may be no unguarded word in his devotions, but all be as orderly and circumspect as the ordering of a morning or evening sacrifice.

> Prepared be my prayer, as incense before thee,
> the uplifting of my hands as the grain-offering of the evening.

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How so? the answer immediately follows:—

Oh set thou, Jehovah, a guard to my mouth,
oh watch thou over the door of my lips.

The reason for this prayerful caution has already become obvious.

The second strophe is naturally a little more explicit:—

Let not my heart incline unto a matter of wrong;

and would it not be "WRONG" to take away Saul's life? We know how David's soul would recoil from the thought!

Moreover, there will be foreigners in this feast whose heathenish practices cannot for a moment be trusted. The whole thing is lawless; and by teachings and ceremonies of lawlessness will it be sustained. So the psalmist apprehends, and wisely resolves:—

So shall I not taste of their dainties.

"I will come under no social obligation to them."

Let a righteous man smite me—it were a kindness,—let him even rebuke me!

"It would do me no harm."

But the oil of the lawless—let it not anoint my head!

"By such courtesies I might be overcome; and I would by no means have it so: I cannot consent to unnerve my soul from praying continually against the enormous wrong which they are plotting."

Is the next strophe enigmatic? It may be so; and may have been intentionally so left.

"When their judges have been let fall by the side of a crag,
then have they hearkened to my sayings, in that they are mild."

"Did I ever say this? And do they, according to the idiom of our tongue [as plural of intensity], take me to have meant, that Our great Judge, Saul, might be let fall from a crag? And do they suppose that my further meaning was: That, when the present monarchy is removed by Divine Visitation upon the Great Offender, then they will turn to me in approval of my sayings; will admit that what I had repeatedly said was well within bounds,—was reasonable,—was mild in comparison with what I might have said?" It is conceivable, that, while the psalmist saw how easily his enemies could thus intensify and exaggerate the meaning of these sayings so as to make them appear treasonable, the Spirit of Prophecy may have prevented his withdrawing them.

It is further possible that some link of speech has fallen out of this strophe, which, if recovered, would make easily intelligible the present bare four lines: of which a merely conjectural paraphrase has thus

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been submitted. And it is highly probable, as a little ago was suggested, that the psalmist would have frankly admitted that he had identified himself with the priests who had so fearfully suffered for his sake at Nôb.

Our admission that this short strophe of the psalm is decidedly enigmatic, and may include one or even two proverbial sayings to which we have lost the clue, does not by any means throw the remainder of the psalm into obscurity. In any case, if the glimpse we have obtained of the origin of this psalm be correct—we cannot be surprised to find the psalmist moved by the gravity of his danger to renewed entreaties for Jehovah's protection. If his enemies could only involve him in a plot TO TAKE AWAY SAUL'S LIFE, the pouring out of his own life would speedily follow! Cruel, indeed, were the clutches of the trap they had laid for him. But by Jehovah's help in keeping his heart right, and his eyes open, and his resolve firm not to accept of their festivities—either their anointing oil for his head or their dainties for his palate—he could calmly hope to pass by the danger unharmed.

Perhaps it may, without presumption, be allowable to submit in conclusion,—that the dating by some eminent critics of the composition of this psalm within that period of David's life covered by the revolt of Absalom, utterly fails to find foothold in the first strophe of the psalm. The fundamental presupposition furnished by that strophe is by no means thereby met. No such critical danger at that time attached to any words which might fall from David's lips: no emissaries were waiting to run and report them to Absalom; and, if there had been, Absalom had not yet obtained any power to avenge them. By throwing the scene back to the days of Saul, all is changed; and the feasibility of thus obtaining a suitable situation to call forth the psalm is so patent as to render inexcusable the resort of some critics to a post-exilic period, and the violent expedient of turning the suppliant of the psalm into a nation. Leave the individualistic feature of the psalm intact; and the nation can then help itself by appropriating to its own condition whatever it finds likely to contribute to its edification.

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PSALM 142.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Loud Outcries in a Cave Succeed Guarded Petitions at Court.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, A Loud-Voiced Prelude. Strophes II. and III., vers. 3, 4, Severity of the Late Trial at Court. Strophe IV., ver. 5, Final Prayer before Flight. Strophe V., ver. 6, Want Before, Pursuers Behind. Strophe VI., ver. 7, Faith Brightens the Prospect.

[Lm.] An Instructive Psalm—By David—When he was in the Cave—a Prayer.

1 <With my voice>[a] <to Jehovah> I cry,
<with my voice>[a] <to Jehovah> I make supplication:
2 I pour out, before him, my complaint,[b]
<my distress> <before him> I declare.

3 <Though my spirit |fainted upon me|>
yet ||thou|| approvedst my path:
<In the way which I was accustomed to walk>
they had hidden a trap for me.

4 I looked to the right-hand, and saw—[c]
that there was none who <for me> had regard.
Escape |had vanished| from me,
there was none to care for my life.[d]

5 I cried unto thee, O Jehovah,
I said—||"Thou|| art my refuge,
my portion, in the land of the living."

6 Oh attend unto my piercing cry,
for I am brought very low:
Rescue me from my pursuers,
for they are stronger than I.

7 Oh bring forth, out of the dungeon, my soul,
to give thanks to thy name.
<For my sake> will the righteous |wear crowns|,[e]
for thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

[Nm.]

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[a] Or: "aloud.
[b] Or: "murmuring," "soliloquy."
[c] "The ancient versions, nearly without exception, have here the first person"—Per. The imperative—which Per. himself, after Jerome, approves—brings forward the request into the cave, and thereby renders it so unmeaning as to discredit the ancient headline. See our Exposition.
[d] U.: "soul." See Intro., Chap. III., "Soul."
[e] "On account of me the righteous shall adorn themselves as with crowns, *i.e.*, they shall triumph on account of me"—Del. 'Crown themselves because of me"—R. V. (marg.). "Put out crowns because of me (*i.e.*, appear wearing crowns, fig. for 'triumph')"—Dr.

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EXPOSITION.

This psalm triumphantly vindicates its library head-line, both as to author and as to occasion. The slandering of David to his master had already done its deadly work, and probably led to previous flights from Saul's presence. But now, to slanders, have succeeded flatteries, and deep-laid schemes to involve David in conspiracy, as revealed in the previous psalm. To aggravate the perils of David's position, Jonathan seems to have been absent from Court, probably sent on some expedition which kept him away from Saul's right-hand, and deprived David of the one friend at Court on whom he could rely. Under these circumstances, David—no doubt with a chosen band of men around him—betook him to flight: this time probably to the caves of En-gedi (1 Sam. 24), if we may assume that his resort to the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22) had fallen earlier in his chequered career. It is surprising how thoroughly this psalm yields up its varied contents to our apprehension when once it is let into a situation substantially such as is thus indicated. Each strophe contributes something to the verisimilitude of the whole.

Strophe I. is a mere prelude, but at once affords a contrast to the extreme caution in prayer revealed in the foregoing psalm. That prayer, we may well believe, was uttered, not only in circumspect words, but in subdued tones; but the caution of that prayer now gives place to the abandon of this, and twice over we are assured that this psalm was uttered aloud. Far away among the south-eastern hills, interned in the far-reaching caves of En-gedi (according to Del., "such a labyrinthin maze of passages and vaults, that the torches and ropes of explorers have not to the present time been able to reach the end"), his faithful scouts ready to give him warning of the least appearance of danger, the psalmist could here sweep his strings with a will and plainly reveal in words the varying moods of his deeply exercised mind.

Strophe II. records from the recent past a violence of mental disturbance consistent with an instinctive and almost unreasoned but strong concentration of resolve, taking the short form: "Not treason, but flight." That plot was too infamous for parleying: flight only could be trusted to parry the insidious blow.

Strophe III. strikingly suggests, that, if only Jonathan had been at his father's right-hand, the extremity of flight might have been averted, or at least postponed. Who, that remained, cared for the Bethlehemite's life?

Strophe IV., which gives meaning to the flight, suggests, by its unexpected brevity, the connecting link between the past and the pre-

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sent in the form of an unexpressed sequel, furnishing a strong lead up to what is to follow. As much as to say: "My flight, O Jehovah, is into thine own arms: because thou art **my refuge**, I thus take refuge in thee; because thou art **my portion in the land of the living**, my trust is, that I shall not find these caves to be the caves of death: therefore am I here."

Strophe v. picks up the thread. Companions in arms cause their leader anxious care. Among rocks and caves, provisions soon run short. Of this, David is well aware; and his trust is in Jehovah for his men as well as himself. But the emergency is great, and prayer becomes a **piercing cry**; **for**, says the careful commander, **I am brought very low**. Besides, discovery by Saul's soldiers might mean unequal battle or renewed flight. **Rescue me from my pursuers, for they are stronger than I.** All is vivid: realistic. This is no child's play. These are not dreams.

But Strophe VI. reminds us that, in this prolonged conflict, great moral issues are at stake. Saul stands for force and self-will: David, for faith and the will of Jehovah. "The poet's way of looking at his own fate and that of his enemies in a not merely ideal, but in a divinely ordained causal, connection with the general end of the two powers that are opposed to one another in the world, is one of the characteristic features of the Psalms of David written at the time of his persecution by Saul"—Del. Hence, in passing, the importance of holding fast the true Davidic origin of these psalms; hence moreover, the cogency of the reminder, in this final strophe, that David is being Divinely enabled to grasp the issues involved. Not without a struggle, but with it; not without prayer, but with it and through it, does David here rise to the assurance that he shall yet be **brought out of this Dungeon**, for such literally it is; that, for his deliverance, he will **give thanks unto Jehovah's name**; and that **the righteous**, who, though conspicuous by their absence from Saul's Court, are nevertheless to be found scattered throughout the land, shall joyfully acknowledge how **bountifully** Jehovah hath **dealt** with the hero who is now leading them on to the abiding victory of faith and patience.

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PSALM 143.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Continued Concealment in the Cave: its Griefs and its Gains.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Remarkable Pleadings and Deprecation. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, How the Trial Tries. Strophe III., vers. 5, 6, How the Student Studies. Strophe IV., vers. 7—12, How the Petitioner Perseveres in Prayer.

[Lm.] Psalm—By David.

1 Jehovah, hear thou my prayer,
oh give ear unto my supplications,—
<in thy faithfulness> answer me, in thy righteousness;
2 And do not enter into judgment with thy servant,
for no one living |can appear just before thee|.

3 For a foe |hath pursued| my soul,[a]
hath crushed, to the earth, my life;
hath made me dwell in dark places—
like the ancient dead;[b]
4 And my spirit |hath fainted upon me|,
<in the midst of me> |astounded| is my heart.

5 I have remembered the days of aforetime,
I have talked to myself of all thy doings,—[c]
<on the works[d] of thy hand> I soliloquise:
6 I have spread out my hands unto thee,
my soul is like[e] a weary land for thee. Selah

7 Haste thee, answer me, Jehovah, my spirit |languisheth|,—
do not hide thy face from me,
or I shall be made like them who are going down into the pit.
8 Let me hear, in the morning, thy kindness,
for <in thee> do I trust:
Let me know the way wherein I should walk,
for <unto thee> have I uplifted my soul.
9 Rescue me from my foes, Jehovah!
<for thee> have I waited.[f]

10 Teach me to do thy pleasure, for ||thou|| art my God,
let ||thy good spirit||[g] lead me in a level land.[h]

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[a] Or: "person."
[b] Or: "like the dead of (by-gone) ages."
[c] So (pl.) some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "doing" (sing.)
[d] So (pl.) some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns., Aram., Sep., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "work" (sing.)
[e] So M.T. Some cod. (w. 7 ear. pr. edns.): "in"—Gn.
[f] Or: "hoped"—so *Gt.* M.T. (obscure).
[g] Ml.: "Thy spirit, a good one."
[h] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.): "way." Others (w. Syr.): "path." Cp. 27[11]—Gn.

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11 <For the sake of thy name>, Jehovah, wilt thou revive me?
<in thy righteousness> wilt thou bring forth, out of distress, my soul?
12 And <in thy kindness> wilt thou exterminate my foes,
and destroy all the adversaries of my soul:
because ||I|| am thy servant.

[Nm.]

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is obviously an advance upon the previous. The psalmist is still **dwelling in dark places**; but his continued hiding among the rocks leads him to compare himself with **the ancient dead**, forgotten of their old associates. The protraction of this state of things brings peculiar trials and special exercises of mind. It is one thing to take flight from foes, and put forth those active powers of mind which are roused to meet emergencies as they arise; but quite another thing to remain for some time in banishment. When long-looked-for deliverance is delayed, the most heroic may become impatient; and a more leisurely consideration of the causes and ends of protracted trial may favour an anxious weighing of problems not before pondered. It is evident that David found it so; and, accordingly, this psalm gives tokens of the stress and strain upon his mind; and, amidst the overhanging gloom, freshness of thought is seen in exercise, grappling with old problems in new forms and pondering questions not before considered.

Strophe I. of this psalm urges pleas which have not quite lately come before us; and one, besides, which, when let into David's living and connected history, may be regarded as newly projected into his experience. In other words, the pleas that Jehovah would be **faithful** and **righteous** in delivering his servant, may on reflection be recognised as forms of thought with which the psalter has already made us familiar. Even when blessings sought originate in purest favour, as soon as they are held forth in *promises*, the holder of the promises may plead with Jehovah to be "faithful" to his word. And where, as in David's case in contrast with that of Saul, loyal devotion is regarded as putting Jehovah to the test, to sustain the devotion he himself has called into exercise, even a humble petitioner may wax bold to remind Jehovah of his "righteousness," as a reason for not failing to rescue him from trials which fidelity has occasioned. So far we readily recall reflections which make us feel to be on familiar ground.

It is true that *the sense of sin which shrinks from the severity of Divine justice* is, in like manner, not at all a new concept to the student

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of the psalter; for this is only the last of a *series* of penitential psalms. But the point of our present reflection is, that, though last in the order of place in the book, this penitential psalm is probably the first in the order of experience in the life of the psalmist—so far as we can judge. David is yet a young man. The great and deplorable sins of his later life have not yet cast their shadows over his soul. But here, in the gloom of the rocks amongst which he is hiding, the seeming delay of Jehovah to deliver him, drives him into himself with such heart-searching as to draw from him the protest, that, when all comes to all, **no one living can appear just before a holy and heart-searching God.** It is well to note this psychological moving force, in estimating the contribution which the psalter makes to our knowledge of the human soul and Jehovah's general dealings with the consciences of men.

Strophe II. sharply recalls us to the actual world in which David lived. To all appearance, his **foe**, Saul—of whom it would be pedantic not to think in this connection—has the upper hand of him: it is *he* who is **crushing his life to the earth** and driving him to hide in these **dark places.** At times his **courage** forsakes him: his **mind** is bewildered. Was it for this that he had been anointed of Samuel; for this, that the Spirit of Sacred Minstrelsy had so oft and so mightily come upon him?

Strophe III. widens our outlook: it reveals the banished young soldier as a man of meditation. How many of its treasures Sacred History had laid at his feet we know not; but a sufficient selection of them, evidently, to enable him to **remember the days of aforetime.** Some familiarity with the contents of the Book of Exodus, would warrant him to say to Jehovah—**I have talked to myself of all thy doings**; and a similar general knowledge of the story of Genesis, complemented as it must have been by his own open-air observations of nature by day and by night, would naturally prepare him to add—**On the works of Thy hands I soliloquise.** With oriental proneness to gesture in devotion, and with a shepherd's alertness to observe when a land wants water and how barren it is without it,—his meditations prompt his prayers as he adds—**I have spread out my hands unto thee, my soul is like a weary land for thee.** Very natural—if the devoutness was there, to awaken his thoughts and unseal his lips.

We may not be too sure that the mysterious word **Selah**, which our sign ☞ represents, has yet yielded up its secret; but, assuming, as our sign by its form is intended to suggest, that it somehow has practically the effect of at once pointing backwards and forwards, as if to say, "These things being so, then note well what follows," we are

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entitled to note how suggestive is the transition which is now made in the psalm (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Selah"). All, so far, may be regarded as preliminary; but now, with rapid movements of desire, petition follows petition, at the rate of two per verse, to the very end of the psalm,—which, therefore, we have not cared to subdivide: **Haste thee, answer me—do not hide—let me hear—let me know—rescue—teach—lead—revive—bring forth—exterminate—destroy:** each petition being sustained by a cogent reason why it should be granted; and all wound up with the crowning reason, which explains so much: **because ‖ I ‖ am Thy servant.** There are several salient points in this volley of petitions: among which should be noted the firm grip taken of facts, for, to all seeming, David and his men were *at death's door;* the care with which conduct is placed under Divine direction—"Shall I go further away? remain where I am? or hope shortly to return?" **Let me know the way wherein I should walk;** and the facility with which the psalmist's mind ascends to the high level of Divine teaching, which, under the circumstances, cannot mean less than—"So may **thy spirit** influence my spirit, that my ways, in the whole scope and drift of them, may **please thee;** and I meanwhile may find the **way** of Duty to be **plain and accessible.**" For the most startling thing of all, we are by this time measurably prepared: To David's quick vision, it by this time began plainly to appear, that either he or Saul must be slain. How far he was, by word or deed, from himself moving a finger to slay Saul; how far from tolerating the doing of the deadly deed by others; all this we well know. All the same, as surely as he knew he was **Jehovah's servant,** and his cause Jehovah's cause, so surely is now borne in upon him the conviction, irresistibly intensified into a prayer: **And in Thy kindness wilt thou exterminate my foes, and destroy all the adversaries of my soul, because I am thy servant.** Let no man repeat this prayer until he is as sure as David was that no other issue is possible. Nevertheless, let no man shrink from appropriating and administering the spiritual tonic consisting in the assurance, soon to come before us in the most benevolent and sympathetic of Spiritual Songs: **Jehovah preserveth all them who love Him—but all the lawless He destroyeth.**

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PSALM 144.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—From David's Psalms are Selected Strains, by one of his Sons, Emboldening him to Plead for Deliverance from Foreigners. An Appendix anticipates Happy Times.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1, 2, Blessing rendered to Jehovah in language taken from Psalm 18. Strophe II., vers. 3, 4, Confession of Man's Insignificance and Frailty, as found in Psalms 8 and 39. Strophes III. and IV., vers. 7—11, Petitions for Deliverance from Foreigners in Terms Suggested by Psalm 18 and rising to *Refrain* fervour. Strophe V., vers. 12—15, An Appendix, picturing the Temporal Benefits Resulting from the Realisation by a People that Jehovah is Their God.

[Lm.] By David.

1 <Blessed> be Jehovah, my rock!
who teacheth my hands to war,
my fingers to fight:
2 My kindness and my fastness,
my lofty retreat, and my deliverer—||mine||,
my shield, and he in whom I have taken refuge,
who subdueth my people[a] under me.

3 Jehovah! what was an earth-born, that thou shouldst acknowledge him?
the son of a mere man, that thou shouldst take account of him?[b]
4 ||An earth-born|| resembleth |a vapour|,[c]
||his days|| are like a shadow that passeth away.

5 Jehovah! bow thy heavens, and come down,
touch the mountains, that they smoke:
6 Flash forth a flash, and scatter them,
send out thy arrows, and confuse them:

7 Stretch forth thy hand[d] from on high:—
Snatch me away and rescue me—
out of many waters,
out of the hand of the sons of a foreigner:
8 *||Whose mouth|| speaketh unreality,*
and ||whose right-hand|| is a right-hand of falsehood.

9 O God! <a song that is new> would I fain sing unto thee;
<with a lute of ten-strings> would I fain play unto thee:—
10 Who giveth victory[e] to kings,
who snatched away David, his servant, from the hurtful sword.

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[a] A sp. vr. (sevir): "subdueth peoples" (pl.). In some cod. (w. Aram. and Syr.): "peoples" is both written and read. Cp. 18[47]—Gn.

[b] Cp. 8[4].

[c] Or: "breath."

[d] So (sing.) in some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn. M.T.: "hands" (pl.)

[e] Or: "salvation."

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11 *Snatch me away and rescue me*
out of the hands of the sons of a foreigner:
Whose |mouth| speaketh unreality,
and whose |right-hand| is a right-hand of falsehood.

12 <When ||our sons|| are like plants, well-grown while yet young,
||Our daughters|| like corners, carved, according to the construction of a palace;
13 ||Our garners|| full, pouring out from one kind to another,
||Our flocks|| multiplying by thousands, by myriads in the open fields,
14 ||Our kine|| great with young, no premature births,—[a]
With no goings forth to war, and no cries of alarm in our broad-ways>
15 *|How happy| the people, when they have it |thus|!*
|How happy| the people, when |Jehovah| is their God!

[Nm.]

[a] So Br. with probable correctness.

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is manifestly both adapted and composite. It is seen to be *adapted*: inasmuch as Strophes I. and II. are based upon Davidic psalms, altered to suit a later set of circumstances than those to which the original psalms applied; and inasmuch as these are followed by special petitions, in Strophes III. and IV., directly springing out of those altered conditions. On the face of it, the psalm is *composite*; the Appendix speaking for itself, as being, both in form and substance, disjointed from what has gone before, couched in a wholly different vein, with no formal allusions to anything which has preceded it, and not only disconnected, but clearly incomplete, having no introduction of its own: nevertheless a most pleasing and worthy Appendix, with a reason for its present position which the thoughtful mind can easily supply—as much as to say, "Only let our God answer our foregoing petitions, and then we may hope for the realisation of the happy state of things which the following extract so beautifully portrays."

We need not hesitate long before concluding that, in all likelihood, King Hezekiah was the adapter—almost the author—of vers. 1-11; inasmuch as the emergency which prompts the prayer is evidently caused by the presence of the foreigner in the land. Not even the gathering of the surrounding nations against Jehoshaphat so well meets the case; for the extreme annoyance and humiliation caused by the boastful mouth and the tyrannous right-hand of the enemy are far more like the experience due to a present and persistent invader like the Assyrians, than would be the mere gathering of Moab and Ammon, however alarming that gathering might be.

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Assuming, then, that here we see the adapting hand of Hezekiah, it is only due to him to observe how wisely and well he has done his adapting work. If the reader of this Exposition will only have well in mind the sources indicated in our "Analysis" he will be able to appreciate the verifying observations which follow, though briefly expressed.

In Strophe I., the compiler simply pours forth adorations which suggest that he has just been reading the great triumphal song of his ancestor which we know as Ps. 18 : adorations calculated to inspire confidence in the urgent petitions he is now about to urge.

In Strophe II., we have a singular combination of allusions, well befitting the humility of one who realises his personal littleness and unworthiness, in view of the largeness of the mercies for which he is about to ask.

In Strophe III., we come to petitions proper, the boldness of the figures of speech in which would surprise us, even though we know Hezekiah to be a poet, were it not that we can see he has been dwelling on the extraordinary imagery of the 18th Psalm: not exactly quoting its language, which indeed first appeared as thanksgiving for victories and deliverances already vouchsafed, but remoulding it into the form of present petitions to suit the existing dire emergency. As if conscious that he had been drawing largely on an "old" song, the writer longs to launch upon a **new song**; and instantly bounds into the present by recognising victories heretofore granted to kings, and **the snatching away of David, his servant, from the hurtful sword,**—a clear enough indication that it is not the language of David himself that we are now reading, but that of another, who finds inspiration in David's memory.

PSALM 145.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Alphabetical Psalm in Praise of Jehovah's Greatness, Goodness and Righteousness.

ANALYSIS.—Naturally, this psalm falls into 21 Couplets (and Verses), the letter *nun* being absent from the Hebrew Text. Further division is not easy; but by restoring the missing letter, as indicated at the foot of ver. 13, the psalm might be resolved into Three Groups of Seven Couplets each, leaving the letter *tau*—the twenty-second—to head an Application of the Whole Psalm to the Psalmist himself and to All Flesh. Even so, however, this grouping would be merely formal, and not indicated by any corresponding division of topics. By accident rather than design, the dominant subject of each would be Jehovah's Greatness, Goodness, and Righteousness; and it may be of practical service to note this,

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[Lm.] Praise—By David.

א	1	I will exalt thee, my God, O king— and would fain bless thy name, to the ages and beyond.
ב	2	<Every day> will I bless thee— and would fain praise thy name, to the ages and beyond.
ג	3	<Great> is Jehovah, and to be praised exceedingly— and ‖his greatness‖ is unsearchable.
ד	4	‖Generation to generation‖ will laud thy works— and <thy heroic deeds> will they tell.
ה	5	<The stateliness of the glory of thy majesty> will men speak—[a] and <of thy wonders> would I fain soliloquise.
ו	6	And <the might of thy fearful acts> will men affirm— and <of thy greatness> will I tell.
ז	7	<The memory of the abundance of thy goodness> will men pour forth,— and <thy righteousness> will they ring out.
ח	8	*<Gracious and compassionate> is Jehovah—* *slow to anger, and great in kindness.*
ט	9	<Good> is Jehovah to all— and ‖his compassions‖ are over all his works.
י	10	All thy works, Jehovah, |thank thee|— and ‖thy men of kindness‖ bless thee.
כ	11	<The glory of thy kingdom> they affirm— and <thy heroic might> they speak.
ל	12	To make known to the sons of men his heroic acts— and the glory of the stateliness of his kingdom.
מ	13	‖Thy kingdom‖ is a kingdom of all ages—[b] and ‖thy dominion‖ is over all succeeding generations.[c]
ס	14	Jehovah |is ready to uphold| all who are falling— and to raise up all who are bowed down.
ע	15	‖The eyes of all‖ <for thee> do wait— and ‖thou‖ givest them their food in its season.
פ	16	‖Thou‖ openest thy hand—[d] and satisfiest every living thing with good will.[e]
צ	17	<Righteous> is Jehovah, in all his ways— and kind, in all his works.[f]
ק	18	<Near> is Jehovah, to all who call upon him— to all who call upon him in truth.
ר	19	<The pleasure of them who revere him> he fulfilleth— and <their cry for help> he heareth, and saveth them.
ש	20	Jehovah |preserveth| all them who love him— but <all the lawless> he destroyeth.
ת	21	<The praise of Jehovah> my mouth |doth speak|— and let all flesh |bless| his holy name, to the ages and beyond.[g]

[Nm.]

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[a] So it shd. be (and so the verse be divided) (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.

[b] So literally: "of all olamim" (pl.)

[c] In some MSS. this verse is here found:—
<Faithful> is Jehovah in all his words—
and kind in all his works.
and so in Sep., Syr., and Vul.—Gn. This would supply the missing initial letter *nun* (נ).

[d] Some cod. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn., and Sep.): "hands" (pl.)—Gn.

[e] So Dr. But Del: "with favour."

[f] Or: "doings."

[g] U.: "to times age-abiding," &c. Many MSS. (w. 1 ear. pr. edn.) here add:—
And ‖we‖ will bless Yah—
from henceforth and unto the ages—praise ye Yah. Cp. Ps. 115[18]—Gn.

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EXPOSITION.

This delightful psalm, by its contents reminds us of Ps. 103; and, by both its contents and its form, of Ps. 34. It is surprising to find how easily the psalmist follows his alphabetical initialing of the verses without shewing constraint in his composition.

Passing on to the contents of the psalm, considered on their merits, it is eminently satisfactory to observe the restraint to which the enthusiasm of the writer submits itself. This is no mere adulation of the Almighty. The man that wrote this song was not unaware of the shadows which frequently throw this life into gloom. He knew that the **compassions** of Jehovah towards the miserable were often called into exercise: that poor footsore and purblind travellers along life's journey, were not infrequently in danger of **falling**; and many times needed help to prevent their being too long **bowed down**. And this is well: otherwise the very brightness of the psalm might have dazed the eyes of the sick and the weary.

However, behind the sympathetic tenderness of the psalm there is perceptible an element of strength which is fitted to act as a moral tonic on minds afflicted with indecision concerning right and wrong. Jehovah is **righteous** as well as **kind**. The very **heroic acts** by which Jehovah had so often delivered Israel, had undoubtedly fallen as heavy blows on tyrants and invaders who richly deserved to be smitten. It would be culpable carelessness for the singer of this song, utterly to forget the dark side of the cloud whose silver lining now causes him so much genuine delight.

This psalm is noted among psalms for the universality of its terms. Not excluding beasts from the bountiful care of their Creator, how should it exclude men of any name or nation? **Good is Jehovah to all—and his compassions are over all his works**; not over and beyond his works—too high above them to benefit them—but **over**, protectingly and for blessing. That it should be immediately added: **All thy works thank thee**, seems almost too good to be true; too favourable a verdict to be pronounced upon men's response to Jehovah's goodness; too much like a verdict constructively framed in their favour, beyond their deserving. We could more easily accept the verdict if regarded as awarded to the lower creation—to the singing of the bird, the roaring of the lion and even the braying of the ass—than when taken to refer to "men made in the likeness of God"; those inferior creatures after their kind and in their own way, may be regarded as thanking their Creator for what he has done for them; but these intelligent creatures, called men,—how can it be said of *them*—

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all thy works thank thee? As we cannot deny their inclusion among Jehovah's "works," we can only leave the statement, as a condescending construction put by a loving Creator on the common joy which men feel in view of the mercies which bestrew their path. Even beyond their intention, Jehovah will count their instinctive gladness as "thanks" rendered to him: if he can do no better with them he will class them with those lower creatures who *unconsciously* "thank" him. He seeks for more. He would have all men to become receivers and reflectors of his own kindness—his *hasidim*—his men of kindness, in whose hearts gratitude dwells and in whose lives benevolence overflows; men who go beyond thanks, men who bless Jehovah, and speak well of his name.

We confess we are amazed at the latitude of construction to which the psalm itself thus conducts us; but it has sterner things in store for us. There is a discipline in life that lies behind all this. Men cannot go on for ever, receiving God's gifts and remaining unmoved: they must either be melted into saints or hardened—by their own resistance—into sinners. They are under the law of love. Let them resist that—knowingly and persistently—and they must ultimately become lawless! And, against such, the stern announcement of this benevolent psalm has gone forth in tones of thunder:—

> Jehovah preserveth all them who love him—
> but all the lawless he destroyeth.

That is the last word of the last strophe of the psalm. There is nothing beyond it, saving an application by the psalmist to himself and to all flesh: nothing to tone this down or explain it away: it seems and it sounds absolute and final.

It confirms other psalm-deliverances that have gone before. We have already learned (Ps. 37) that "there is a future for the man of peace. But trangressors have been cut off together, the future of lawless men hath been cut off"; and from Ps. 73—"Lo! they who have gone far from thee shall perish, Thou wilt have exterminated every unchaste wanderer from thee." Small reason, then, is there in the Psalms as a collection, to blunt the prudent fear which this psalm is fitted to call into exercise.

And the less so, rather than the more, in consequence of the grandeur and the permanence of Jehovah's Kingdom. Jehovah's rule is all-pervading and ever-abiding. Men cannot escape his dominion. His own character is perfect and unchanging; his aim is to make men morally like himself—to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to reform, remake, renew; to educate for immortality, and then bestow

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the boon. While his own character is perfect and unchanging, its manifestation to finite beings, under discipline, may require ages. To chastise them for their sins, and yet convince them that he is love, and to transform them into his own image,—this *may* be the work of ages: who can tell? Only the Infinite Searcher of Hearts can determine when all hope is past, and nothing is left but to destroy, to exterminate. He can create and he destroy; and none but he. It is something, then, of incalculable moment, to learn from his own lips what are the issues involved.

The close of this psalm goes back to its commencement. It ends with "I"—multiplied into the race, **all flesh**: it began with "I"—**I will exalt, would fain bless; will bless, would fain praise.** But very significantly and instructively was this beginning made; for all at once, by way of *desire*, the psalmist went bounding off beyond the narrow limits of the present life: **I would fain bless and praise thy name to the ages and beyond!** "For ever and ever will the poet thus extol God and bless his name; because the praising of God is his deepest need, in this devotion to the ever-living King he forgets his own mortality—this impulse of the soul, an impulse begotten by God himself, towards the praising of the God to whom the soul owes it origin, in which praise it finds its noblest enjoyment, is indeed a practical proof of a life after death"—Del. So it is indeed, to those in whom it exists; for see with what complete logic this one psalm proves it. Do I really *desire* to bless and praise Jehovah to the ages? Is that, in truth, my feeling towards him? Then the *desire* shall be granted; for again in this psalm it is written—**The pleasure of them who revere him he fulfilleth; and their cry for help he heareth and saveth them.** There is, therefore, both theoretic and practical safety in such a hope.

PSALM 146.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Twelve Reasons for Trusting in Jehovah.

ANALYSIS.—Having, in Response to the Public Reader's Invitation, stirred up his Own Soul to Praise Jehovah all his Life Long (vers. 1, 2), the Psalmist urges a Caution against Trusting in Nobles (vers. 3, 4); and then (vers. 5—10) Felicitates the Man who makes the God of Jacob his Help—for a Series of Twelve Reasons, which he Poetically Unfolds.

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[P.B.I.] Praise ye Yah.

1 Praise Jehovah, O my soul!
2 I would fain praise Jehovah while I live,
I would harp[a] to my God while I have being.[b]

3 Do not ye trust in nobles—
in a son of the earth-born, who hath no salvation:[c]
4 <Forth goeth> his spirit,[d] he returneth to his ground,
<in that day> his thoughts[e] |perish|.[f]

5 |How happy| is he who hath the God of Jacob as his help,
whose hope is on Jehovah his God:
6 who made heavens, and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,—
the One who keepeth truth to the ages;
7 who executeth justice for the oppressed,
who giveth bread to the hungry;
||Jehovah|| who releaseth the bound,
8 ||Jehovah|| who giveth sight to the blind,
||Jehovah|| who lifteth up the bowed down,
||Jehovah|| who loveth the righteous,
9 ||Jehovah|| who preserveth sojourners,—
<fatherless and widow> restoreth;
but <the way of lawless ones> he bendeth aside.[g]
10 Jehovah |reigneth| to the ages,
Thy God, O Zion, to generation after generation.

[Nm.][h]

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[a] Or: "make melody."
[b] Cp. 104[33].
[c] Or: "deliverance."
[d] Or: "breath." Cp. 104[29, 30].
[e] "Fabrications"—Aglen; "purposes"—P.B. R.V. mgn.
[f] Similarly: "Be not afraid . . . To-day he shall be lifted up, and to-morrow he shall in nowise be found, because he is returned unto his dust, and his thought is perished"—1 Mac. 2[63] (R.V.)
[g] Thwarting it, and causing it to vanish. Cp. 1[6].
[h] See 147 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

The indications of authorship contained in this psalm are probably best met by supposing the principal portion of it to have been penned by Hezekiah, and the caution against trusting in nobles to have been added in the days of Nehemiah. Setting aside for the moment the excepted verses (3, 4) the psalm as a whole admirably suits the time and spirit of Hezekiah: the individuality of the opening lines, together with the inclusion of instrumental music, well agrees with the strongly devout and musically accomplished personality of the good King; and so does the enthusiasm with which Jehovah's worthiness of his people's confidence is amplified in the later verses: we can almost hear him saying, **Happy is the man**—"yea! and I am that man"; and then,

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as we read on, we are not only reminded of Hezekiah's favourite habit of alluding to Jehovah as **maker of heaven and earth**, but under nearly all the lines we can feel pulsating the rich experience of the same monarch, not failing to be reminded of the example which he had recently witnessed, in the overthrow of Sennacherib, of a **lawless** foreigner whose way had been **bent aside** into the pathless waste of destruction.

If this conclusion be accepted as sufficiently probable, then we shall naturally conclude that the caution against trusting in nobles—improbable from the pen of Hezekiah—was added after the exile, when, as remarked under Ps. 118, Nehemiah had good cause to distrust the nobles of Judah (Neh. 6^{17-19}).

It is a question of detail—but of some interest in exegesis—to ask in what relation **nobles** (ver. 3) stand to the common **son of the earth-born** mentioned in the next line: are "nobles" distinguished from "common men," or simply declared to be themselves but "common men"—mere mortals like the rest of mankind? If we make two classes out of the verse then "nobles" are left without any reason assigned why *they* should not be trusted. It seems better, therefore, to refrain from supplying a "nor" with the A.V. (and R.V.) (without acknowledgment of its being such) or an ("or") with Dr., and to regard the second line as giving a conclusive reason why even "nobles" should not be trusted: as much as to say—"each of whom is a mere mortal like others, and what he may think to do for you, he may not live to accomplish."

Another question of still greater critical nicety, is whether it is better to translate *ruah* in ver. 4 as **breath** or **spirit**. If the one implies the other, as suggested by a comparison of Gen. 2^{7} with Ec. 12^{7}, then it does not really matter—provided the double inclusion, by marginal alternative or otherwise, be borne in mind.

Delitzsch well reminds us that this "How happy" of ver. 5 is the last of twenty-five occurrences of the original word (which means that) in the psalms. He also beautifully remarks on 9 c: "Only one line is devoted to this manifestation of Jahve in the capacity of penal judge. For He rules in love and wrath, with most delight, however, in love."

The critical reader will excuse the very elementary observation—submitted to help the uncritical—that it is sometimes convenient in the enumerations of the psalms, as elsewhere, to count the *verbs* which in their rich variety impart so much life to the composition: as for instance here:—1. **made**, 2. **keepeth**, 3. **executeth**, 4. **giveth**, 5. **releaseth**, 6. **giveth sight** (lit. *openeth*), 7. **lifteth up**, 8. **loveth**, 9. **preserveth**, 10. **restoreth**, 11. **bendeth aside**, 12. **reigneth**. So that we

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are well within our right in entitling this psalm—"Twelve reasons for trusting in Jehovah."

And finally it may be assumed that no reader will fail to observe the keen appreciation of the gracious name **Jehovah** shewn by its five-fold emphatic repetition in vers. 7—9.

PSALM 147.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Praise for the Restoration of Jerusalem and for Israel's Pre-eminence: with Grateful Recognition of Rain and of Spring.

ANALYSIS.—After the Repetition and Expansion of the "Public Reader's Invitation" (ver. 1), Jehovah is Praised as the Builder, Healer and Restorer of Jerusalem (vers. 2—6); as the Sender of Rain (vers. 7—11), of Security, Peace and Plenty, and of Winter and Spring (vers. 12—18); and as the Author of Israel's Pre-eminence (vers. 19, 20).

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.

1 Praise ye Yah,[a] for it is good,[b]
make melody[c] to our God, for it is full of delight:
<Comely> is praise!

2 <Builder of Jerusalem> is Jehovah,
<the outcasts of Israel> he gathereth:
3 He who granteth healing to the broken in heart
and a binding up to their wounds:
4 who counteth out a number to the stars,
<to all of them> <names> he calleth:
5 <Great> is our Sovereign Lord, and of abounding strength,
and <to his understanding> there is no calculation.[d]
6 <Restorer of the humble> is Jehovah,
abasing lawless ones down to the ground.

7 Respond ye to Jehovah with a song of thanksgiving,
make melody to our God with the lyre:
8 who covereth the heavens with clouds,
who prepareth for the earth rain;
who causeth mountains to sprout grass;
9 who giveth to cattle their food,
to young ravens when they call:

---

[a] Prob. a choir's repetition of P.R.I.—see Exposition.
[b] Cp. 92^{1}.
[c] So *Gt.* [i.e. imper. pl.] as in 135^{3}.
[d] Or: reckoning, ml. number.

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10 Not <in the heroic strength of the horse> doth he delight,
nor <in the legs of a man> hath he pleasure;
11 <Pleased> is Jehovah, with them who revere him,
with them who wait for his kindness.

12 Laud, O Jerusalem, Jehovah,
Praise thou thy God, O Zion,
13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates,
hath blessed thy children within thee:
14 Who placeth as thy boundary peace,
<with the marrow of wheat> doth satisfy thee.
15 Who sendeth his saying to the earth,
<very swiftly> runneth his word;
16 Who giveth snow like wool,
<hoar frost> <like ashes> he scattereth;
17 Who casteth down his ice[a] like morsels,
<Before his cold> who can stand?
18 He sendeth forth his word, and melteth them,
he causeth a blowing of his wind, there's a trickling of waters.

19 Who declareth his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his decisions to Israel.
20 He hath not done thus to any nation,
and <decisions>[b] he maketh not known to them.[c]

[Nm.][d]

[a] "As hailstones or as sleet"—Del.
[b] Cp. 119, Table.
[c] So it shd. be (w. Sep., Syr., Vul.)—Gn.
[d] See 148 (beginning).

EXPOSITION.

Notwithstanding its almost certain post-exilic date and its evidently composite character, this is a beautiful and useful psalm. It would seem disingenuous not to admit that in all probability it received its present form and some of its strains in the post-exilic period, and was provided to celebrate the great Restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. It is almost equally certain that it was constructed, in part, of pre-existing materials: at least, this hypothesis would best account for the incorporation in it of what appear to be two fragments—one by way of thanksgiving for rain after drought, and the other in grateful recognition of the return of spring after a severe winter: both of which are not likely to have appeared side by side in one and the same original psalm.

The opening lines are unusually suggestive as to the remarkable repetition of the compound word—or rather the phrase—"hallelujah" (properly hallelu Yah) in connection with these late Hallel psalms.

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Some critics simply treat them as double "hallelujah" psalms, each one beginning *and* ending with that word. As soon, however, as we accept Dr. Ginsburg's opinion, as an expert, in favour of treating the word as a phrase, and the phrase as constituting the Public Reader's Invitation to join in the responses, we seem to be driven to form some other conclusion as to the reduplication—for as such it appears in Dr. Ginsburg's Hebrew Bible. In the present instance, the simplest theory would appear to be this: the first "hallelujah" may be regarded as the original invitation proper, to be *said* rather than *sung* by the prelector; and the second as a choir's taking up and repeating of the invitation —passing it on to the people, so to speak—at the same time expanding it into a small introductory strophe ending with **Comely is Praise.** The reason which supports this suggestion is, the unlikelihood that a psalm should begin with the word **For** (as Del., Per. and Dr. begin this psalm).

PSALM 148.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—Praise Invoked from All Creation.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—6, All Things in Heaven called upon to Praise Jehovah—for Reasons Given. Strophe II., vers. 7—14, All Things on Earth, in Like Manner: with a Specification of the Special Mercies and Duties of Israel.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.

1 Praise ye Yah.[a]
Praise ye Jehovah, from the heavens,
praise him, in the heights;
2 praise him, all ye his messengers,
praise him, all ye his hosts;[b]
3 praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all ye stars of light;
4 praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
and ye waters above the heavens:—
5 Let them praise the name of Jehovah,
for ||he|| commanded, and they were created;
6 And he stationed them perpetually, to the ages,—
<a statute> he gave, and they do not transgress.

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[a] Possibly a repetition of "P.R.I." by mistake. But prob. a choir's repetition as suggested in Exposition of previous Psalm.

[b] So *read* in cod. wh. write "host" (sing.). Some cod. both *read* and *write* "hosts" (pl.)—Gn.

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7 Praise ye Jehovah from the earth:
sea-monsters,[a] and all resounding deeps;
8 fire and hail, snow and vapour,[b]
blast of tempest, executing his word;
9 ye mountains, and all hills,
fruit-trees, and all cedars;
10 thou wild beast, and all cattle,
crawling creature, and bird of wing;
11 kings of earth, and all peoples,
rulers, and all judges of earth;
12 young men, yea even maidens,[c]
old men, together with children:—
13 Let them praise the name of Jehovah,
for <exalted> is his name alone,—
‖his majesty‖ is over earth and heavens;
14 And he hath uplifted a horn for his people,—
a theme of praise for all his men of kindness,
for the sons of Israel, a people near him.

[Nm.][d]

[a] "Dragons"—Br.
[b] "Or steam, smoke (Gen. 19[28], Ps. 119[83]), alluding probably to phenomena accompanying a thunderstorm in mountain-regions"—Dr.
[c] Or: "virgins."
[d] See Exposition of 147.

EXPOSITION.

This psalm is remarkable for its universal sweep, its unrivalled grandeur, and its national application. With clearly marked consecutiveness, it appeals first to the heavens (ver. 1) and then to the earth (ver. 7). In the fewest possible words it touches upon all things and beings above and below: poetically investing *things* with the intelligence of *persons*, provoking the interesting inquiry how this feature of the psalm is meant to be understood. And yet it finally gravitates to Israel, as the appointed (earthly) leader in the praises of the universe. The filling in of this outline gives occasion for many felicities of order and grouping: the *order* observed, beginning with the heavens and then descending to the earth, by a reverse movement, ascends again from the earth to the heavens (ver. 13). The *grouping* shows such subtle methods as—setting a species first, i.e., messengers (ver. 2a), a species of heavenly intelligences, and then hosts (ver. 2b), including both "messengers" and "attendants" (Ps. 103[20, 21]); and such delightful juxtapositions as young men and maidens, (ver. 12a) and such charming contrasts as old men and children (ver. 12b): in the doing of which, resorting to the refinements of a passing compliment to maidenly modesty, by the delicate touch of a yea even; as much as to suggest that, though maidens may characteristically oft remain silent, yet, when Jehovah's praises call on them to join, they need not hesitate

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to respond; and by the equally delicate **together with** of the next line, which has the effect of summoning groups of little ones to their grandsires' knees. Both order and grouping are honoured by the way in which the breathless enumerations of objects in heaven and on earth are severally followed by deliberately drawn-out and restful reasons *why* those invoked should respond in praise. In the closing of the first strophe, the permanence of law is made prominent: **he commanded—he stationed—a statute he gave**, leading up to the significant fact, so beneficent in its results—**they do not transgress.** Alas for all concerned, if they did! So used as we are to the beneficent regularities of nature that our minds instinctively shrink from the unimaginable crudities and endless mishaps of "chance worlds." "They do not transgress!" And so "the sun knows" the "place" (and the time) of his going in—to the inch and to the moment; or, if *he* does not know, *we* know, for him and of him, that he will not transgress. But when we make the rapid run of the second strophe from monsters to men, we begin to catch glimpses of a still softer light. We are, doubtless, still under the reign of law; but the law is becoming elevated from the law that controls matter to the law that governs mind. And mind perceives the name and fame of Jehovah. The atmosphere in which mind lives is appreciative knowledge. No knowledge in the creature: no name for the Creator. No eye to see: no glory seen, no praise forthcoming: no reciprocal love.

But how of created things that are not endowed with mind? Can *they too* praise? Yea, in their own way. Unconsciously; or, at best, half-consciously: dependent on Man to interpret their sighings and their songs. As the song of the bird is to the songster's uncomprehended ecstasy, so is the intelligent and sympathetic adoration of man to the instinctive impulse of the bird: its expression and interpretation.

This intimate relation between man who knows Jehovah's name and the creatures beneath him who—so far as we can tell—know it not, is deep-seated in the divinely appointed nature of things. As we voice their joys, they share our sorrows. They not only grow and sing, but they also shudder and groan. The sparrow falls dead, leaving its unprotected brood to perish; but not without our Father. And he has appointed that all creation—which at present is "sighing together and travailing-in-birth throes together until the present—shall, at the manifestation of the sons of God, be freed from the bondage of the decay into (not quite the glory, but) the freedom of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. 8^{19-21}). But everything in its own order: the Sons of God first, and creation afterwards. Everything in its own order: Israel first,

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and the nations afterwards. Hence, not by lapse or collapse, this magnificent psalm finds its climax in ISRAEL: prophetically declaring that Israel's God **hath uplifted a horn for his people, (which constitutes) a theme of praise for all his**—*ḥasidhim*—**his men of kindness**; the Levites, first; then, as represented by them, all Jehovah's ideal Israel—for the real will yet be transfigured into the ideal—**a people near him**, and through whom he can act on the nations (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness").

Meantime, where is the Church? Is that forgotten? Nay: but, throwing our minds back into the time and atmosphere of these "songs of Israel" before we give our answer, we reply: The Church is at present "hidden in God"; "hidden away from the ages and the generations" (Eph. 3); and, therefore, "hidden away" from the writers of these psalms. And woe betide us if we exegetically call the Church out of its divine concealment before its time. The presumption of so doing will be avenged at our hands—no later on than in the very next psalm (Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kingdom").

PSALM 149.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—A New Song for Israel, which Others may Not Sing.

ANALYSIS.—Strophe I., vers. 1—3, A Well-Defined People Addressed. Strophe II., vers. 4—6, A Well-Defined Time Indicated. Strophe III., vers. 7—9, A Well-Defined Work Described.

[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.[a]

1 Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new,
  his praise in the assembly of his men of kindness.[b]
2 <Glad> be Israel in his great Maker,
  let ||the sons of Zion|| exult in their King:
3 Let them praise his name in the dance,
  <with timbrel and lyre> let them make melody unto him.

4 <Since Jehovah |is taking pleasure| in his people,
  adorneth the humble ones with victory>[c]
5 Let the men of kindness |exult| with glorying,[d]
  let them ring out their joy at their great Habitation:[e]
6 Let extollings of GOD be in their throat,
  and a sword of two-edges be in their hand.

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[a] Apparently doubled. See Exposition of 147.
[b] Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "Kindness."
[c] Or: "salvation."
[d] Or: "with (ascriptions of) glory"—O.G. 459. Cp. 29[2].
[e] So Br. w. probability: departing by one letter from M.T.: *i.e.*, *sh-k-n* instead of *sh-k-b*.

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7 <To execute an avenging on the nations,
chastisements on the peoples;
8 To bind their kings with chains,
their honourables with fetters of iron;
9 To execute on them the sentence written>[a]
<a stateliness> it is, for all his men of kindness.[b]

[Nm.][c]

[a] "Viz. by prophets, in such passages as Mic. 4[13], Is. 41[15f], Joel 3[12-14]."—Dr.

[b] M.T. adds: "Praise ye Yah."

[c] Apparently doubled. See Exposition of 147.

EXPOSITION.

The well-defined *People* is the Ideal Nation of Israel; the well-defined *Time* is the time of Israel's Restoration to Jehovah's favour, when that people again realise that Jehovah is indeed **their King**; and the well-defined *Work* is the work of punishing Gentile nations. The lines along which legitimate interpretation should run are reasonably clear; but, by a corrupted exegesis, the scope of this psalm has been so perverted, that the **Sword** has been placed in unauthorised hands, and the earth has been drenched with human blood, shed without Divine Authority. The secret of the mischief has lain in substituting the Church for Israel; and this, again, has resulted from the corruption of a Church which has forgotten her own especial calling, and mistakenly deemed herself to be the Kingdom, and has vain-gloriously vaulted herself into a place in the Prophetic Word never designed for her.

Happily, expositors are beginning to discover the mistake, and to trace back to it the deplorable consequences which have ensued; though it may be doubted whether they can be said to have laid the axe to the root of the tree so long as they call the nation of Israel a "Church." The following extract from Delitzsch will lay bare the terrible results which have sprung from this mistaken application of the Word of God:—

"The New Testament spiritual Church cannot pray as the Old Testament state Church prays here. Under the delusion that it could be used as a prayer without any spiritual transformation, Psalm cxlix. has been the pass-word of the most horrible aberrations. By means of this Psalm Caspar Scioppius in his *Classicum belli sacri*, which, as Bakius says, is written not with ink but with blood, inflamed the Roman Catholic princes to the Thirty Years' religious war. And within the Protestant Church Thomas Münzer by means of this Psalm stirred up the War of the Peasants. One can easily see that the

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Christian cannot directly appropriate such a psalm without disavowing the apostolic admonition: *ta hopla tees strateias heemôn ou sarkika* [the weapons of our warfare are not carnal] (2 Cor. 10^4)."

The serious question arises, whether, in view of such consequences of a mistaken exegesis as are here disclosed, it would not be better to leave off altogether the habit of speaking of the Old Testament Nation as a CHURCH; and, instead of merely abstaining from *directly* appropriating such a psalm as this, would it not be more reverent and far safer to *abstain altogether* from appropriating it? Why appropriate it at all? It is not for us. Nevertheless, we can learn much from it. We can gather therefrom lessons which are by no means yet exhausted; and if some "Jew-baiting" communities would only listen to Jehovah's voice ringing through it, they would not be surprised to hear their rulers calling out to them, with genuine concern, "Hands off!"

It may not be out of place to observe that there is enough in this psalm to prevent even the favoured nation itself from hastily taking up the "sword," though it were in self-defence. Let them make reasonably sure that Jehovah is again **favouring his people**, and intends to **adorn the humble ones with victory!** When Jehovah wills them to "thresh," he will not fail to say unto them "Arise!" Besides which, it has yet to be emphasised, that even upon Israel a restriction is placed which further safeguards the power of the "sword," as commissioned by this psalm. This restriction has already been respected by the qualifying term "ideal" in the phrase "ideal Israel": it is only to "ideal Israel" that the commission to use the "sword" is here prophetically given. Now, as the "ideal Israel" is necessarily a purified and godlike Israel—the real nation, indeed, but the real nation as morally qualified for the stern and critical task of punishing Gentile kings and nations,—it is important that this restriction to the mission of the "sword" be thoroughly grasped and tenaciously held.

Note then, first, that the restriction is well in evidence hereabouts in the Psalms. Recall how strongly it appeared at the close of the last psalm (148). The perfect tense there may perhaps be safely taken as the prophetic perfect of anticipation: **He hath uplifted a horn for his people**—the "horn" being a well-known symbol of royal power and prowess. This "horn" Jehovah will have given to "his people": say,—naturally, in a Hebrew psalm,—"to his people *Israel*." But in what moral condition are "his people" to be when this "horn" of power is restored to them? It is to be observed that the restoration is to be **a theme of praise for all Jehovah's men of kindness.** It follows, that it will be an event which will fill Jehovah's "men of kindness" with joy.

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His men of kindness! but *who are they?* They are His *hasidhim:* THE RECEIVERS AND REFLECTORS OF HIS OWN DIVINE KINDNESS. It is not difficult to define them: our only misfortune is, that we have not a single word to denote them; and, in the last resort, *that* is doubtless our own fault; for if we had been awake to the immense importance—within the realm of the Old Testament—of the *idea*, the happy word to express it would surely have been agreed upon before now; and English readers would not have been suffered to lose themselves amid such a variety of renderings of this Hebrew designation as "holy ones," "pious ones," "godly ones," "favoured ones," &c., &c. Surely the idea and the character embodying it, should by no means be allowed to escape us. Just here, the restriction implied is vital.

So, then, Jehovah's "men of kindness" will rejoice and give "praise" when a "horn" is again "uplifted" for "his people"; which presupposes their confidence that "his people" are *prepared* to wield the "sword" in strict accord with Jehovah's will. And the next line in Ps. 148 confirms this confidence; for by the very way in which it follows on, without a conjunction, such as "and" or "moreover," that line—the last of the psalm—is turned into *an expansion of the foregoing*; and so implies that "the sons of Israel," AS A BODY, will have become "men of kindness"; in other words, will have become Jehovah's "ideal nation"; the perception of which prepares us for the splendid climax—**a people near him**—morally near him, and not merely by outward privilege and profession: ONLY TO SUCH A PEOPLE, hath Jehovah here promised to raise up a horn of power and prowess.

All of which brings us, on a full-flowing tide, over the bar at the entrance of our present psalm, the redoubtable 149th: **Sing ye to Jehovah a song that is new**; and indeed it *is* "new," even to Israel,—so new and peculiar that no others than Jehovah's "ideal Israel" *have any right to sing it with self-appropriation.* The same restrictive peculiarity immediately reappears as the psalmist, in the second line, says: **his praise in the assembly of his men of kindness.** These peculiarly godlike men have now become an "assembly"; and, from what follows, we may infer that they are the whole national assembly of humble ones who have borne the sin and the curse and the shame of centuries: JEHOVAH'S IDEAL ISRAEL. These are the men to whom alone it is possible, without fanaticism, to have, at one and the same time, **the extollings of God in their throat, and a sword of two edges in their hand!**

With a remarkable—and indeed quite an unusual—maintenance of descriptive power the final strophe of this ominous psalm conducts us

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steadily up to its unique and amazing climax: **To execute—chastise—bind—execute the sentence written** (and we thank Dr. Driver for referring us to such appropriate parallels for showing what that "sentence" is) **is a stateliness for all his men of kindness!** thus, once more and finally, holding us to the Divinely imposed restriction of this unique commission to *such* men—to *these* men—*and to no others*. "A stateliness": a quite unusual and significant word, whose peculiar value the psalms have recently taught us. As "glory" is an attribute of "majesty," so is "stateliness" an attribute of the "glory" of "majesty" (Ps. 145[5]). Such "stateliness"—such "magnificence," as the Sep. in some places has it—has Jehovah in reserve for "his men of kindness." Some day a relieved world will wake up to discover how Jehovah himself has displayed his own kindness in thus forcibly sweeping away centuries of oppression and wrong. Let all tyrants beware!

PSALM 150.

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE.—An Expansion and Enforcement of the "Public Reader's Invitation" to the People to Join in the Responses in the Temple-Worship.

ANALYSIS.—1. "The Public Reader's Invitation"—*Hallelu-yah*, "Praise ye Yah," is first given in the Usual Way at the Head of the Psalm. 2. Then follow Ten Lines of Expansion: consisting of (*a*) a Ten-fold Repetition of the Invitation *hallelu*, "praise ye"; (*b*) a Ten-fold Statement of the Object of Praise—once by the familiar Divine Name EL, "the Mighty One," and nine times by the use of the pronoun "him," referring back to "El" and virtually repeating it; (*c*) a Ten-fold use of the Hebrew preposition *beth*, "in" or "with"—employed four times to denote GROUNDS OR REASONS for praise, and six times to bring in ACCOMPANIMENTS of praise. 3. These ten steps thus lead up to the Eleventh Line, which constitutes THE CLIMAX OR GRAND IMPERATIVE OF THE PSALM; and consists of another form of the verb *hallel*, "to praise" (namely, the third person feminine imperfect or incipient) agreeing with the feminine noun *neshamah* (literally "breath," more freely "breather"), which—with its qualifying word "all" or "every"—should be rendered, "Every one who hath breath," "Let EVERY ONE WHO HATH BREATH [the 'subject' emphatically preplaced for emphasis] praise Yah. 4. The Twelfth Line of the psalm—whether, with M.T., consisting of one occurrence of the phrase *hallelu-yah*, or, after Briggs' conjecture, of three occurrences, to fill out the line—being, as it is, a bare Repetition of the Primary Invitation, makes no further demand on Exposition, as it can only enhance the General Effect. It is only by close adherence to the true character of (i) the Primary Invitation, and (ii) the Expanded Commentary thereon, that this twelfth line, in either form, is saved from being Superfluous.

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[P.R.I.] Praise ye Yah.[a]

1 Praise ye GOD for[b] his holiness,[c]
Praise ye him for the spreading out[d] of his strength,
2 Praise ye him for his heroic deeds,
Praise ye him for the abundance of his greatness;
3 Praise ye him with[e] the blast of the horn,
Praise ye him with lute and lyre;
4 Praise ye him with timbrel and dance,
Praise ye him with strings and pipe;[f]
5 Praise ye him with cymbals of clear tone,
Praise ye him with cymbals of loud clang:
6 Let ‖every one who hath breath‖ praise Yah.
Praise ye Yah. [Praise ye Yah. Praise ye Yah.][g]

[Nm.]

[a] Apparently doubled. See Exposition of 147.
[b] N.B.: "IN view of" = "for."
[c] So P.B.V. "Sanctity"—Br.
[d] So Br.
[e] N.B.: "IN and through the accompaniment of" = "with."
[f] Or: "flute"; or "organ" in the simple sense of a collection of reeds. See Exposition.
[g] "Should be thrice repeated for measure"—Br.

EXPOSITION.

As this psalm is unique and makes urgent demands on exegesis, the reader will not be surprised if this endeavour to interpret it extend beyond the length which the brevity of the psalm may have led him to anticipate. For clearness, and to enable MORE *and* LESS critical readers respectively to find their own, it will be convenient to divide the Exposition into two parts: I. A Critical Defence of the Title, Text and Translation; and II. A Practical Interpretation of the psalm as thus presented.

I. A CRITICAL DEFENCE OF THE TITLE, TEXT AND TRANSLATION.

1. As to the TITLE here presented, it is respectfully submitted: That this psalm is *not* a "Doxology," and that the continued classification of it as such diverts attention from its true character. As this conclusion rests mainly on Dr. Ginsburg's opinion that the phrase *hallelu-yah* was, originally, not one word but two, which together constituted the "Public Reader's Invitation" to the People to join in the Responses in Temple Worship (Ginsburg's Intro., pp. 375–381), it is necessary that this Expert Opinion be well kept in mind; since it is only when that opinion is accepted as sufficiently valid to form a basis of reasoning, that the character of this psalm as an Expansion and Enforcement of that Invitation can be expected to disclose itself. The thoroughness with which, on that assumption, it does vindicate itself, is the sufficient justification of the ultimate conclusion reached as to the character of this psalm.

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2. Next, as to TEXT, it is necessary to say: That the extraordinary symmetry of this psalm, coupled with the notorious confusion into which the Hebrew letters *beth* (ב) and *kaph* (כ) are known from the ancient versions to have not infrequently fallen, through infirmities incident to copying, conducts to the assured conviction that the NINE occurrences of the preposition *beth* in this psalm must have been originally TEN, and that the Syriac version is right in having preserved the ten intact. This strong conviction is similar to that of which a critic of modern hymns becomes conscious, when, in examining a new hymn-book, he observes a hymn, otherwise perfect in its rhymes, utterly breaking down in one particular verse. As he would exclaim, "Impossible and Incredible!" so any one with a fair amount of sensitiveness to symmetry of form and a passing acquaintance with the incidents of textual transmission, becomes irresistibly possessed by the persuasion that the one straggling *kaph* in this psalm is neither more nor less than a clerical error, however ancient, and the more so, that the irregularity serves no good purpose whatever, seeing that the difference between "in view of," "for" and "according to" cannot in the circumstances be made evident to the common mind.

3. In respect of TRANSLATION, two points claim attention: the rendering of the ten *beths*; and, that of the word *n'shamah* in the climax of the psalm.

(*a*) Manifestly, the ten *beths* should be rendered as uniformly as possible: which at once throws out the "upon" (of A.V. and R.V.) before the two classes of "cymbals," as a perfectly gratuitous variation; seeing that Jehovah may be praised "with" as well as "upon" any musical instrument. Unfortunately we cannot have a perfectly uniform rendering of *beth*, simply because this Hebrew preposition is broader than our "with," easily looking in such two directions as "in view of"="for" and "with" (the help or accompaniment of), but beyond these two meanings there is, in this psalm, no need to go; as will be seen as soon as we are prepared to deal vigorously with lines one and two, and (with Briggs), *without change of consonants*, say: **for his holiness, for the spreading out of his strength.** We shall then have four good, strong, uniform lines:

> **Praise ye GOD for his holiness,**
> **Praise ye him for the spreading out of his strength,**
> **Praise ye him for his heroic acts,**
> **Praise ye him for his abundant greatness.**

Against the introduction—with many translations—of *place* in the first line, may be urged: that it is first, needless; secondly, feeble; thirdly, puzzling: Needless, inasmuch as the extension of Jehovah's

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praise through space (and place) is fully and grandly wrought out in Ps. 148; feeble, because, if we merely say "in his sanctuary," no mention is made of the beings who dwell in that sanctuary; and puzzling, because we are left in doubt *which* sanctuary is intended, the earthly or the heavenly, as to which expositors are very uncertain—at least they come to diverse conclusions. But by accepting the four lines as a four-fold reference to the attributes and activities of the Mighty One, an obviously stable foundation is laid on which His praise may rest. **Praise him in view of = for—all these.**

(*b*) As to the important noun *n^eshamah*, in the climax of the psalm, which—preceded by the little qualifying word *kol*, "the totality of," "the whole of," "all," or "every"—is literally "every breath," more freely "every breather": the one important question is, Does it mean "Every ONE who hath breath," or "Every THING that hath breath"? in other words, Does it (poetically) include animals; or is it strictly and properly confined to mankind? It will probably become evident that it does include all mankind, and is not limited to Hebrew worshippers, even though Temple worship is all the time in view. If we conclude that it is confined to mankind, it will still be left over to ask, in the second part of our Exposition, WHY this peculiar phrase is employed to denote mankind, rather than simply "all nations," "all men," or "all flesh." In answer to the primary question here submitted, it may be said, with confidence: That the word under consideration is here confined to mankind—for the following reasons: (i) it stands alone, and is not one of a *series* which conceivably might leave this term over to mean animals: (ii) the whole context is charged to the full with the notion of human personality. **Praise ye!** eleven times repeated (including the Public Reader's Invitation), so that, if the eleven-fold appeal of the **ye** be to MEN, then the climax, which is the emphasised sum of all that has gone before, must still mean MEN, and cannot be poetically lavished on animals; (iii) other examples may be found in which "every breath" or "every breather" is limited to human kind, as for example Deu. $20^{16, 18}$; Josh. $11^{11, 14}$, confirmed by Isa. 57^{16}, wherein *n^eshahmoth*, the plural of the term before us, is clearly synonymous with the "souls" of men (not animals). We may, then, safely rest in the translation: **Let every ONE who hath breath praise Yah.**

II.—A PRACTICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALM AS THUS PRESENTED.

We at once find ourselves in a practical atmosphere, if we resume where just now we left off. Frankly admitting—as we have already

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admitted—that we are (metaphorically) within the Temple area, that we have just heard the "Public Reader" in the Temple Courts give the "Invitation" **Praise ye Yah**; and that we are now (in all probability) listening to a Levitical or Orchestral *prolongation* of the Reader's Invitation,—granting all this, we are constrained nevertheless to maintain that we have been brought under no restrictive influences which can rightfully cramp the terms "Every one who hath breath," so that they shall mean no more than "Every Hebrew."

In support of this protest we offer the following reasons:—(*a*) The psalmist avoids all the many current designations by which he could have restricted his appeal to Hebrews; such as "Men of Israel," "Sons of Zion," "Seed of Jacob," and the like: instead of which he says, simply and broadly, "Every one who hath breath." (*b*) Previous psalms have already familiarised us with a class of worshippers outside Hebrews; as where (Ps. 115^{9-11}, $135^{19, 20}$)—after exhaustively classifying all Israel—we are taken outside Israel by the familiar New Testament designation, "Ye that revere God." (*c*) Other psalms, unquestionably prophetic (and therefore probably carrying us beyond the present Church dispensation into the coming age of the Kingdom) have thrown open the Temple Courts to all nations, or all the earth; and invited them to enter and bow down (Ps. 100^{1-4}; see "Exposition."). (*d*) The prophetic word from Isaiah's hands (56^{7}) distinctly predicts that "My house, a house of prayer shall be called, for all the peoples" (cp. Isa. 66^{18-23}). For these reasons it is plainly not permissible to restrict the description "Every one who hath breath" to any narrower limits than ALL MANKIND.

But why should this peculiar description have been selected, and not one of the more obvious phrases, such as "All nations," "All men," or "All flesh"? This we now proceed to indicate by submitting the following proposition: *The praises of Jehovah primarily call for Song; and for the production of song* **Breath** *is essential;* hence the inherent fitness of couching the Invitation in these terms rather than any others.

The primary appeal made by the songs of Israel is to the Human Voice, to articulate them. They are not mere sounds, but sense; they celebrate, among other things, the doings and perfections of Jehovah; they appeal to the mind of the listener through his ear. No artificial sounds can articulate them. *Song is essential to the praise of Jehovah; and* **Breath** *is essential to song.*

The present psalm, which may be described as the magnified appeal of Hebrew praise, is absolutely true to this master-thought. The Public Reader's appeal is not to musical instruments, but to musical

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men. He does, indeed, call for "music," because he calls for "praise" in Song; and mere brute sound is not Song; is not, cannot be, intelligent, simultaneous, harmonious, melodious Song. Therefore he appeals to men with minds, men capable of adoring purpose. But MEN stand first and foremost, first and last, in his call. He calls on them for "tuneful" **breath.** But they must *have* breath; and therefore the Orchestral Amplification rises to its climax on that clear note. Eleven times "Praise ye, (O men)": never once, "Praise ye (O instruments)"!

And this reduces all instrumentation to its right dimensions: in rendering the praises of Israel, instrumentation is always, everywhere, evermore secondary and subservient. To guide, prolong, sustain the HUMAN VOICE, is its only place here.

But in this, its legitimate, subservient relation to the human voice, instrumentation is not only permitted but *invited!*—Divinely invited. And there is this further to be said in passing: That no musical instrument can play itself, nor play at all until a human soul moves it to its subservient end.

According to this Divine Ideal of Sacred Song, it is Man who is sounding the high praises of Jehovah all the while: Man *with* the instrument, Man *in* the instrument. All good instrumental music throbs and thrills with human intelligence.

There is something unspeakably pathetic, and immeasurably instructive, in this final appeal to "Every one who hath breath." When a man's "breath" departs, his power of song in this world is at an end. When, amid the advancing infirmities of old age, his "breath" for song fails him, and he is compelled to excuse himself from complying with this Invitation, by pleading: "I would fain, O Divine Master, respond to thy call; but alas, I have no available breath,"—may we not believe that his excuse will be accepted? If he is compelled to lean on OTHERS, but still puts his own mind into the song which he has to leave others to sing,—will he not be accepted? If he has a HARP, and his right hand has not yet lost its cunning, and he throws his soul into the strings and by them climbs to Jehovah's throne in adoration,—will he not be accepted? The very pathos of old age illustrates and accentuates the principle. He who is aged and infirm is, with others, invited to sing; but, if he cannot, what then? He is invited to play; but if he cannot, what then? Is there in the Divine Code no such thing as a "Law of Liberty"? Happily, "to his own Master he standeth or falleth." Meanwhile, and all the while, the gracious Invitation goes on resounding through the ages, and to earth's remotest bounds,—

Let every one who hath breath praise Yah!

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Before we close, a particularisation of the "accompaniments" of praise here enumerated may be acceptable:—

1.—**Horn,** Heb. *shophâr:* the curved horn, prob. at first a ram's horn, which "was used by watchmen, warriors, etc., as well as priests"—O.G., 348. To be distinguished from the straight silver trumpets for the use of the priests (Num. 10^{1-10}, the only instance of which in the Psalms is 98^{6}). It is remarkable that this is the only instrument still in use which goes back to Mosaic times.

2.—**Lute,** Heb. *nêbhel:* prob. smaller than the lyre, and occasionally more elaborate (33^{2}, 144^{9}). In O.G. named also "portable harp, guitar." For uniformity of rendering, see under next word.

3.—**Lyre,** Heb. *kinnôr:* prob. larger than the lute, and fitted by its deeper and louder tones to accompany the bass voices in the Temple worship (1 Ch. 15^{21}). "Lyre" is the only name given it in O.G. Hence, throughout this translation of the Psalms, this distinction has been uniformly observed—"lute" for *nêbhel* and "lyre" for *kinnôr.*

4.—**Timbrel,** Heb. *tôph:* the well-known tambourine or hand-drum, chiefly used as an accompaniment to "dancing"; and, therefore, favouring that translation of the next word.

5.—**Dance,** Heb. *maḥol:* "dance" is the only meaning given in Fuerst, T.G., and O.G.: in the last of which it is followed by the words—"accompanied by timbrel (*tôph*) and sometimes other instruments." Stainer inclines to "flute" (*Bible Educator*, ii., 70): in favour of whose opinion it may be said—that thereby absolute uniformity is secured for all six lines; and, if EIGHT of the items specified are instruments, and not mere accompaniments, why not the NINTH?

6.—**Strings,** Heb. *minnim:* so O.G.; regarded by Stainer as a generic name for stringed instruments (*Bible Educator*, ii., 72).

7.—**Pipe,** Heb. *'ugâbh:* in O.G., "reed pipe or flute," or "a Pan's-pipe" or "organ"—"made up of several reeds together." Stainer evidently concludes that, although the 'ugâbh may have been originally a simple collection of reeds, a syrinx, or Pan's-pipe, yet it afterwards was developed into the parent of our modern organ, and was identical with the *magrepha* mentioned in the Talmud. "This organ," says Stainer, "for it is entitled to the name . . . . was capable of producing 100 sounds. These were brought under the control of the player by means of a *clavier* or key-board. Its tones were said to be audible at a very great distance" (*Bible Educator*, ii., 73).

8.—**Cymbals of clear tone,** Heb. *ṣilṣ'lei-shama'.*

9.—**Cymbals of loud clang,** Heb. *ṣilṣ'lei-t'ru'ah:* There is a general agreement among scholars in favour of substantially the above distinction. It is quite conceivable that the "clanging" cymbals may have found their place in Temple worship by serving to drown and overpower all other noises, and so secure universal silence throughout the Temple courts; in which case the "clear-sounding" cymbals could be appropriated to the service of beating time, and possibly of making other concerted signals.

If the main position respecting the foregoing psalm is correct, several corollaries follow from it: one of them is this—*That we must look elsewhere than here for the actual response of the people.* The

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more sure we are that this psalm is none of it of the nature of a response, but all of it of the nature of a continued appeal for a response, the more urgently it becomes us to indicate the kind of thing which would constitute such a response—in other words, which would serve as an appropriate answer to this appeal. Fortunately, we have not to look far to discover what we seek. The refrain of Ps. 136 is just what we want. On the face of it, that refrain is a people's response. It is in itself, not a call for praise, but praise: what is therein said is evidently uttered in Jehovah's praise, and appears in no other light. Its brevity renders it adapted to a people's lips. Every one, having heard it, could remember it. Its frequent repetition indelibly engraved it on every recollection. Being known to all, and perfectly familiar, it was available on any occasion, at a moment's notice. All could join in it. Infant voices could lisp it; feeble voices could utter it; faltering voices could sustain it; uncultured voices could pronounce it. Calling only for faith and gratitude, and of course the pure intention of obedience to Jehovah's claims—it called for no more, as a condition for the appropriation of its God-honouring sentiment. It was heart-searching enough to test the deeply tried, who would have to draw upon all their faith and patience and hopefulness, before they could sincerely affirm it; and at the same time it was comprehensive and emphatic enough to suit the bounding hearts and hopes of such as realised that they were laden with mercies.

How popular and general it became in the praises of Israel is evident from a comparison of such passages as 1 Ch. $16^{34, 41}$, 2 Ch. 5^{13}, $7^{3, 6}$, 20^{21}, Ezr. 3^{11}, Pss. 106^{1}, 107^{1}, $118^{1-4, 29}$, 135^{3-4}, 136 throughout, Jer. 33^{11}. Some of these passages suggest that the Levites led the people in the rendering of this response, and nothing is inherently more likely. The people would need some signal as to the precise time when their reply should be given; and, it may be, the indication of some note on which they might pitch their voices. Moreover, this hypothesis—that the people's responses were led by the Levites—at once very simply disposes of a difficulty which might otherwise be raised as an objection to the general view of this psalm here given. But for this explanation, it might have been asked—"How can this psalm be a continued appeal to the people? If so, then the people are invited to play the various instruments of music: is not that very unlikely?" The sufficient answer is ready: "They are invited to do this by the hands of the Levites—their Divinely appointed Representatives and Helpers": which explanation falls into line with the general teaching of the Psalms throughout—that the Levites were the tribal embodiment of the Ideal Israel. But none of these considerations would alter the

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character of the popular response itself: it would be and remain brief —direct—comprehensive—fundamental.

Perhaps Israel had other popular responses, worded differently—a little expanded or a little contracted; and it is quite possible that out of the Psalms themselves examples of such other responses may be discriminated and commended to our attention. Meanwhile, the above well-sustained example (from Ps. 136) may settle beyond reasonable question the difference between an Appeal for a Response—whether said or sung, whether coming from one or many voices; and the Reply to that Appeal in the form of the Response itself.

Another thing that follows from our main position respecting the character of this last psalm is this: that *instead of being considered as fixed here by way of a doxology*—a character we have seen it does not bear—*it should be regarded* as well placed here, indeed, for convenience having to appear somewhere,—but as being *by original intention* MOVABLE, *adapted to be lifted into any other position where its presence might be desired.* So that, whenever and wherever the Public Reader might give his Invitation, then and there, by means of this short psalm, A SINGER, A CHOIR, OR THE WHOLE ORCHESTRA MIGHT ENFORCE HIS INVITATION.

This alone would account for the twofold appearance of the original compound hallelujah in connection with these last five psalms; which critics have classified as, so to speak, DOUBLE HALLELUJAH PSALMS. The so-called "Double Hallelujah" may be taken either as a mistaken repetition or more probably as a double putting forth of one and the same Invitation; first to be said, and then to be sung; first to be uttered by one voice, and then to be uttered by many voices—without change of destination or alteration of significance, its destination being, both ways, *to the people*, and its significance being, both times, that of *an Appeal—a Call—an Invitation for a Response.* This disposes of all the "doublings" of the phrase *halleluyah* in this part of the psalter.

In fine, the peculiar character of the last psalm is alone sufficient to account for the appearance of halleluyah at the end of that psalm as well as at its beginning. The psalm itself being nothing else than an Invitation, though Expanded, there could be no possible reason to hinder the repetition of it in brief. It would still remain for the people to respond and say:—

> For he is good,
> For to the ages is his kindness.

With the disappearance of the Hebrew compound word *hallelu-yah* from the end of this psalm, and from all the previous places where it

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occurs, and the setting down in its stead of its exact English equivalent, is completed a process of thoroughness in translation in behalf of which a good defence can be made. No one doubts that proper names should be *transferred* in the process of translation; and therefore it is admittedly right—as indeed it is absolutely necessary—to pass on into English the abbreviated Divine Name **Yah**, a shortened form of Yahweh (commonly pronounced **Jehovah**); but when this is done, there is no more reason for reproducing the Hebrew word *hallelu* twice in this psalm than in the remaining nine (practically ten) times of its occurrence. Now as no one dreams of saying, in ver. 1, "*Hallelu* God," and then "*Hallelu* him" for nine times more in succession,—the inconsistency of retaining *Hallelu* at all becomes evident,—that is to say, becomes evident the moment it is admitted that *hallelu-yah* is a phrase and not a word, a phrase with a meaning, a meaning intended to serve a practical purpose. Not *then* to TRANSLATE it, is to convert it into a flourish, which may mean anything or nothing according to the fancy of the reader; and meanwhile it is to miss, one knows not how much guidance to the knowledge of the ancient Temple worship. If the foregoing Exposition of this mis-named "Doxology" has served its purpose, it has already corrected and safeguarded several phrases in the psalm itself; and has probably further opened the way to valuable conclusions which cannot at present be foreseen. For one thing, it has —even within the compass of this short psalm—emphasised the subserviency of accompaniments of worship, as towards worship proper, to a degree which could not have been attained in any other way. It is only when we know what the Public Reader's Invitation *means*, that we can see how his *meaning* is caught up, repeated, and emphasised by all that follows. Practically the appeal of the psalm might almost as well have been addressed *to* musical instruments, instead of being addressed mainly and sustainedly, throughout, to worshipful and musical men.

In this particular instance, as in so many others, fidelity may appear to entail loss; but let us rest assured that in all such cases, temporary loss means permanent gain. We may lose our blessed word "Hallelujah"; and, after it, several other idols may have gradually to disappear; but lasting advantage will more than compensate for any sacrifice, if we thereby learn more thoroughly than ever how all aids to public devotion may be transformed and uplifted by the devout intelligence and intentions of worshipful men.



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