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THE  
P S A L M S

TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

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# THE PSALMS.

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## PSALM LI.

1, 2. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm. By David. When Nathan the Prophet came unto him, as he (i. e. David) had come unto Bathsheba.* The first inscription was particularly necessary here, to show that the psalm was designed for permanent and public use, since it might otherwise have been regarded as expressive of mere personal emotions. It has reference to the one great crime of David's life, noted as such in the inspired history itself (1 Kings xv. 5), and involving the guilt of both adultery and murder. See 2 Sam. xi and xii. The significant repetition of the phrase *came unto* in v. 2 is lost in the English and most other versions. *As* is not a mere particle of time, simply equivalent to *when*, but suggests the ideas of analogy, proportion, and retaliation. The psalm consists of two parts, a prayer and a vow. In the first, he prays to be forgiven and restored to the divine favour, vs. 3—14 (1—12.) In the second, he shows how he means to testify his gratitude, vs. 15—21 (13—19.)

3 (1.) *Be gracious to me, (oh) God, according to thy mercy; according to the abundance of thy compassions, blot out my transgressions.* In this verse and the next, he presents the petition which constitutes the theme or burden of the psalm. The appeal

to the divine grace, mercy, and compassion, involves a confession of his own guilt and the justice of his condemnation. *According to*, literally, *like thy mercy*, i. e. in accordance with it, in proportion to it. Here again there is a tacit admission of the greatness of his guilt, as requiring infinite mercy to forgive it. *Abundance*, increase, multitude. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) *Compassions*, tender mercies, a term expressive of the warmest and tenderest affections. See above, on Ps. xviii. 2 (1.) *Blot out*, erase, from thy remembrance. The allusion is probably to a record or register of crimes, or to the cancelling of accounts, although the former seems to agree better with ancient and oriental usage. Compare Num. v. 23. *Transgressions*, or with closer adherence to the primary etymological import of the term, *revolts*, *apostasies*. See above, on Ps. xix. 14 (13.) xxxii. 1.

4 (2.) *Thoroughly wash me from my iniquity, and from my sin cleanse me.* The first word in Hebrew is the infinitive or imperative of a verb meaning to increase or multiply, but often used adverbially in the sense of plentifully, abundantly. The verb in the first clause properly denotes the act of washing the garments, as distinguished from that of bathing the body. See Num. xix. 19. The image here presented therefore is the same as in Jude v. 23, sin being represented as a stain, and the grace of God as purifying water.

5 (3.) *For my transgressions I know, and my sin (is) before me always.* His consciousness of guilt is urged, not only as a reason why he should ask forgiveness, but as a reason why God should grant it. As no one is forgiven unless convinced of sin, so this conviction constitutes a kind of claim to pardon, not as being meritorious or intrinsically efficacious, but as an indication of God's merciful intentions, since conviction and forgiveness are alike his gift. The same mutual connection of the two things is uniformly recognized in Scripture. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 5, and com-

pare 2 Sam. xii. 13. Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 9. The future in the first clause is significant. I know it and shall know it; I can never henceforth lose the sense or knowledge of it.

6 (4.) *To thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done the evil in thine eyes, to the intent that thou mayest be just in thy speaking, and be clear in thy judging.* The particle at the beginning denotes general relation, *as to*, or *respecting*. The precise relation meant must be determined by the context. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 19, 24. xxxviii. 17 (16.) It does not therefore directly and explicitly substitute God for man as the injured party, which is the only sense that can be put upon the English phrase *against thee*. This idea, however, is undoubtedly implied, as well as perfectly consistent with the usage of the Scriptures in describing all sin as committed against God. Even murder, the highest crime that can be committed against man, is condemned and punished as the violation of God's image (Gen. ix. 6.) It is also possible to understand *thee, thee only*, as opposed not to other objects, but to the sinner himself, as one of two contending parties. As if he had said, thou hast not sinned against me, but I have sinned against thee, thee only. *The evil*, not *this evil*, which restricts the acknowledgment too much, but *that which is evil*, meaning sin in general. *To the intent that* may have reference to the divine purpose in permitting David's sin to take this aggravated form, so that there could be neither doubt nor transfer nor participation of his guilt, and so that when God spoke in condemnation of it, he might not only be, but appear to be, entirely just. There is no need therefore of adopting the weaker meaning, *so that*, denoting a mere consequence but not a purpose, or of supposing the intention indicated to be merely that of the confession, 'I acknowledge this, that thou mayest be just,' etc. *Speaking*, i. e. speaking as a judge, deciding, or more definitely still, condemning. It is therefore substantially equivalent to the parallel term *judging*.

7 (5.) *Lo, in iniquity I was born, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* The meaning of the first verb is determined by its use in Job xv. 7. Prov. viii. 24, 25, and that of the corresponding active form in Job xxxix. 1. The iniquity and sin meant are not those of his mother, but his own. Having just before confessed his actual transgressions, he now acknowledges the corruption of his nature. This has always been regarded as the *locus classicus* of the Old Testament, in reference to the doctrine of original sin.

8 (6.) *Lo, truth thou hast desired in the inward (or secret) parts, and in the hidden (part) wisdom thou wilt make me know.* The repetition of *behold* or *lo*, at the beginning of the sentence, seems to indicate a close connection with the preceding verse. That connection is most probably as follows: ‘Since I am corrupted in my very nature, and thou canst be satisfied with nothing short of inward sincerity, thou must bestow what thou requirest, by imparting to me heavenly wisdom.’ *Truth*, sincerity, reality, as opposed to hypocritical profession or pretence. The first verb means not merely to *desire*, but to *will*, as in Job xxxiii. 32. The past tense implies that it has always been so, that the requisition is no sudden or capricious one, but an eternal law founded in God’s very nature. The inward and hidden parts are mentioned as opposed to the mere outside. *Wisdom*, divine illumination, without which no correct view either of sin or holiness is possible. *Thou wilt make me know*, involves a prayer, although in form it is an expression of strong confidence.

9 (7.) *Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou wilt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* What he asked in v. 4 (2) he here anticipates with confidence. The verb translated *purge* is very expressive, being a derivative of that which means to *sin* in v. 6 (4) above. It denotes specifically, therefore, purification from the stain of sin, either by actual pay-



ment of the penalty (Gen. xxxi. 39), or by vicarious satisfaction (Num. xix. 19.) *Hyssop* is mentioned as a plant much used in the Levitical purgations, either as a convenient instrument of sprinkling (Ex. xii. 22), or as an emblem of the divine condescension, viewed in contrast with the divine majesty (Isai. lxvi. 1, 2), as represented by the cedar, with which the hyssop is perpetually joined. See Num. xix. 18, and compare 1 Kings v. 13. iv. 33. In either case to *purge with hyssop* necessarily suggests the idea of a purification founded on atonement, as the hyssop was employed to sprinkle purifying substances, and sometimes mingled with them (Ex. xii. 22. Num. xix. 6, 18.) The second future in each clause expresses both consent and expectation. *Whiter than snow* is a natural hyperbole denoting perfect purity. See the same images applied to the same subject in Isai. i. 18. The last verb answers to the English *whiten*, being properly a causative, but sometimes used intransitively, just as we may say, that blushing *reddens* the face, or that the face *reddens* in the act of blushing. ‘Wash me and I shall whiten (become white) from (away from, as distinguished from, and by implication more than) snow.’

10 (8.) *Thou wilt make me to hear joy and gladness ; (then) shall rejoice the bones (which) thou hast broken (bruised, or crushed.)* What is formally expressed is still a confident expectation or assured hope, under which, however, an intense desire is implicitly contained. The *joy* here anticipated is that of pardoned sin. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. He expects to *hear* it, as communicated or announced by God. The word *then* is introduced in the translation for the sake of retaining the original arrangement of the sentence, closing, as it does in Hebrew, with the emphatic figure, *crushed* or *broken*, which expresses, in a very lively manner, the disorder and distress produced by consciousness of aggravated and unexpiated guilt. The change from this condition to a sense of safety and reconciliation with



God, is not too strongly represented by the bold but most expressive figure of broken bones rejoicing. The ellipsis of the relative in this clause is common to both idioms.

11 (9.) *Hide thy face from my sins, and all my iniquities blot out.* The desire implied in the anticipations of the two preceding verses now breaks out into its proper form, that of direct petition. *Hide thy face* from them, so as not to see them, look no longer at them. The same figure is applied, in an unfavourable sense, to God's apparent neglect of his suffering servants, his refusal to behold them or to notice their condition. See above, on Ps. xiii. 2 (1.) xlv. 25 (24.) *Blot out*, expunge, from thy account, or from the book of thy remembrance, as in v. 3 (1) above. What he asks as to his sins is that God will cancel and forget them.

12 (10.) *A pure heart create for me, (oh) God, and a fixed (or settled) spirit renew within me.* The petition in the first clause involves a confession of impurity, and of dependence on almighty power and sovereign grace for its removal. A pure heart is a familiar Scriptural figure for affections free from the taint of sin. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 4, and below, on Ps. lxxiii. 1, and compare Matth. v. 8. Acts xv. 9. While the use of the word *create* implies the necessity of an almighty intervention, the additional phrase *to (or for) me* suggests the idea of a gift, which is often expressed elsewhere in the same connection. See Jer. xxiv. 7. Ez. xi. 19. xxxvi. 26, and compare 1 Sam. x. 9. The gift demanded in the last clause is that of a firm, unwavering spirit, as opposed both to fickleness and cowardice. Compare the use of the same adjective or participle in Ps. lvii. 8 (7.) lxxviii. 37. cxii. 7. The word *renew* implies a previous possession of it, derived not from nature but from grace, and interrupted by his yielding to temptation. Though his faith and love could not utterly fail, his fixedness of purpose was destroyed for

*self so what the force of 'create'?*

the time, and could only be recovered by a new conversion, as in the case of Peter (Luke xxii. 32.) *Within me, in the midst* (or *in the inside*) *of me*. The same Hebrew noun is repeatedly used elsewhere, to denote the inward dispositions and affections, as distinguished from a mere profession or appearance. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) xlix. 12 (11.)

13 (11.) *Cast me not away from thy presence, and thy Holy Spirit take not from me*. As indispensable prerequisites and means to the possession of such a heart and spirit as he had just prayed for, he recognizes intimate communion with God, and the active influences of his Spirit. This prayer, unless we arbitrarily supply *again* or *forever*, seems to imply that David was in actual possession of these blessings and afraid of losing them. There may be an intentional allusion to his own reception of the Spirit and to Saul's privation of it, as recorded in 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 7, 13. Compare 1 Sam. x. 6, 10. Isai. xi. 2.

14 (12.) *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and (with) a willing spirit uphold me*. The first verb is a causative in Hebrew, meaning *make to return*, implying previous possession. The next phrase may be explained, according to a very common Hebrew idiom, *thy joy of salvation*, thy saving joy. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. But the obvious construction seems to yield the best sense, namely, that of joy occasioned by salvation, or relating to it as its subject. This joy was of course incompatible with any interruption of God's presence and the assurance of his favour. The word translated *willing* means spontaneous, prompt, forward to act without coercion; then liberal, generous, noble. See above, on Ps. xlvii. 10 (9.) It may be taken as an epithet of the Holy Spirit; but the omission of the pronoun (*thy*) which determines it in the foregoing verse, and the repeated use of *spirit* in the context to denote his own heart, makes it more probable that this is the sense here likewise. By such a

spirit of spontaneous conformity to God's will he desires and hopes to be *held up*, i. e. preserved from falling as he fell before.

15 (13.) (Then) *will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners unto thee shall return.* Here begins the expression of his thankfulness, or rather a description of the way in which he is determined to express it. The word supplied at the beginning points out the connection of the verses. 'Then, when these petitions have been answered, I will teach, etc.' The form of the Hebrew verb denotes a strong desire and a settled purpose, as if he had said, 'I am resolved to teach.' *Transgressors*, rebels, traitors, apostates. See above, on v. 5 (3.) *Thy ways*, as well the ways in which thou walkest as the ways in which thou requirest us to walk, the course of providence and the course of duty. See above, on Ps. xviii. 22, 31 (21, 30.) In both these senses, he might naturally wish to "vindicate the ways of God to man." Of this resolution a partial fulfilment is recorded in Ps. xxxii. 8, 9. The effect of such instructions is recorded in the last clause of the verse before us. The Hebrew verb there used is not a passive (*shall be converted*) but an active form, *shall turn or return* to the Lord, perhaps with an allusion to the great original apostasy, in which the whole race is involved. See above, on Ps. xxii. 28 (27.) To this verse there seems to be particular allusion in our Saviour's words to Peter, Luke xxii. 32.

16 (14.) *Free me from blood, (oh) God, God of my salvation, (and) my tongue shall celebrate thy righteousness.* The first clause contains the condition of the second, and the whole is equivalent to saying, 'if thou wilt save me, I will praise thee.' *Blood*, literally *bloods*, the plural being idiomatically used when there is reference to murder. See above, on Ps. v. 7 (6.) There may be an allusion to the frequent personification of the victim's blood, as crying out for vengeance on the murderer or pursuing him (Gen. iv. 10. ix. 5, 6.) The verb translated *free* is applied



to deliverance from enemies in Ps. vii. 2 (1), and from sins (as here) in Ps. xxxix. 9 (8.) The strength of the desire here expressed may derive some illustration from the threatening in 2 Sam. xii. 9, 10. *Celebrate*, applaud by shout or song. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) xx. 6 (5.) xxxii. 11. xxxiii. 1.

17 (15.) *Lord, my lips thou wilt open, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.* The relation of the clauses to each other is the same as in the foregoing verse. 'If thou wilt open my lips, my mouth etc.' The first clause, therefore, really includes a petition that his lips may be opened; but it also includes more, to wit, a confident anticipation that his prayer will be granted. The sense is therefore only partially expressed by rendering the future as an imperative (*open thou my lips.*) The exact form as well as the sense of the original is given in the Prayer Book Version (*thou shalt open my lips, oh Lord.*) *Open my lips*, i. e. enable me to praise thee by affording an occasion, and empower me to praise thee, by removing this oppressive sense of guilt, which condemns me to perpetual silence. Compare Isai. vi. 5—7. *Declare*, tell, utter, or proclaim. See above, Ps. xix. 2 (1.)

18 (16.) *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give (it); (in) burnt offering thou delightest not.* He now assigns the reason why he is determined to requite God's favour by becoming praise. The literal translation of the first clause is, *thou wilt not desire sacrifice, and I will give (it)*, i. e. but if thou dost desire it, I will give it. By sacrifice we must here understand the mere material oblation, apart from the penitent and thankful spirit, of which it was the required expression. See above, on Ps. xl. 7 (6.) The parallel terms, *sacrifice* and *burnt-offering*, are commonly regarded as generic and specific expressions of the same idea. But some interpreters deny that they are ever confounded or promiscuously used, and give the first the sense of *thank-offerings*,

which are then joined with expiatory offerings, as a general description of all animal oblations.

19 (17.) *The sacrifices of God (are) a broken spirit ; a heart broken and crushed, (oh) God, thou wilt not despise.* These are natural and perfectly intelligible figures for profound and submissive sorrow on account of sin. There is great significance and beauty in what seems at first to be a solecism in the language of the first clause. *The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit* might seem to be a more correct expression ; but it would have failed to suggest the striking and important thought, that one such heart or spirit is equivalent to all the various and complicated sacrifices of the ritual. *The sacrifices of God* are those which he requires and is willing to accept. The use of the word *contrite* in the English versions mars the beauty of the metaphor, because that term is confined to the dialect of theology, whereas the Latin *contritum*, from which it was borrowed, as well as the original expression, exactly corresponds to *broken*, both in its literal and figurative usage. *Thou wilt not despise*, when it is offered, and especially when I present it, as the solemn expression of my thanks for this deliverance. The substitution of the present for the future would both weaken and obscure the sentence, and the same consideration might be urged in favor of a strict translation in the verse preceding. So far is a habitual sorrow for sin from being inconsistent with the joy of God's salvation, that David here engages to present it as a perpetual thank-offering. Compare the language of Hezekiah, Isai. xxxviii. 15.

20 (18.) *Do good, in thy favour, to Zion ; thou wilt build the walls of Jerusalem.* From his own personal necessities his mind now passes to those of the whole church, of which he was the visible head and representative, thereby implying that his sense of guilt and danger had been aggravated by the thought of his official relation to God's people, who must have shared in his disgrace



and punishment. See above, on Ps. iii. 4 (3.) iv. 3 (2.) The change of construction from the imperative to the future marks a natural transition from importunate desire to confident anticipation. See above, on vs. 9—11 (7—9.) This delicate transition there is surely no need of obliterating by a gratuitous assimilation of the moods and tenses. The building of the walls is a poetical parallel to doing good or showing favour, and the opposite of dismantling in Ps. lxxxix : 41 (40.)

21 (19.) *Then shalt thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness, burnt-offering and holocaust; then shall they offer on thine altar bullocks.* Then, i. e. when thou hast done good to Zion and fortified Jerusalem. *Sacrifices of righteousness*, righteous or right sacrifices. See above, on Ps. iv : 6 (5.) Some have inferred from this verse, that the psalm was written in the Babylonish exile, when the temple was in ruins and the ceremonial law suspended, and that the Psalmist here anticipates the time when both should be restored. But this is forbidden by his saying, in v. 18 (16), that if God desired burnt offerings he would give them, plainly implying the continued observance of the sacrificial system. There is no ground, therefore, for disputing either the correctness of the title, which ascribes the psalm to David, or the genuineness of the last two verses, which some have rejected as an addition by a later hand. These verses are not only appropriate but necessary as a conclusion to the psalm, and every difficulty is removed by giving them their natural but figurative meaning, as an expression of desire and hope that God would favour his own people and graciously accept their service. *Holocaust* is here used to translate a single Hebrew word, meaning a sacrifice entirely consumed upon the altar. It does not describe something wholly distinct from the burnt offering, but the burnt offering itself considered as a complete and unreserved oblation. See 1 Sam. vii. 9. Bullocks are mentioned as the choicest victims in point of species, size, and age. By a slight

change of construction we obtain the bold and striking declaration that the bullocks shall themselves ascend the altar, i. e. as a living and spontaneous sacrifice. Compare Isai. lx. 7.

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### PSALM LII.

THIS psalm, besides the title, vs. 1, 2, contains three stanzas of three verses each. In the first, the Psalmist expostulates with an arrogant, cruel, and deceitful enemy, vs. 3—5 (1—3.) In the second, he foretells the destruction of this enemy by the divine judgments, and the contempt to be excited by his folly, vs. 6—8 (4—6.) In the third, he contrasts this fatal fruit of unbelief with the happy effects of his own trust in God, vs. 9—11 (7—9.) The two *Selahs* in vs. 5, 7 (3, 5), have reference not so much to the form of the psalm as to the feelings of the Psalmist, and are therefore placed irregularly. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.) The variation of the English and the Hebrew Bible, in numbering the verses of this psalm, is the same, and arises from the same cause, as in the fifty-first.

1. *To the Chief Musician. Maschil. By David.* The psalm is expressly designated as a *Maschil* or didactic psalm, because its adaptation to this purpose might very easily be overlooked, in consequence of its avowed relation to a particular event in David's history. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. xlii. 1. xlv. 1. Though occasioned by this incident, however, it was written for the permanent and public use of the ancient church, and is therefore inscribed *to (or for) the Chief Musician*. See above, on Ps. iv. 1. li. 1.

2. *When Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.* This is merely the beginning of the story, which is supposed to be familiar to the reader of the psalm, and which is given at length in 1 Sam. xxii. Doeg is mentioned only as the witness or informer, by whose means the matter came to Saul's knowledge. *When he came*, literally, *in his coming*, the same form of expression as in Ps. li. 2.

3 (1.) *Why wilt thou boast thyself in evil, mighty (man)? The mercy of the Almighty (is) all the day.* The future form of the verb suggests the idea of obstinate persistency. *Boast thyself in evil*, exult or triumph in the injury of others. The *mighty man* is not Doeg but Saul, who, of all the characters in sacred history, approaches nearest to the classical idea of a hero. There is something therefore of respect and admiration implied in the address, as if he had said, 'How can one who might have been so eminent in well-doing, glory in his shame or boast himself in evil?' In the last clause there is an obvious antithesis between the malice of this mighty man and the unfailing goodness of the mighty God. The particular divine name here used therefore is peculiarly significant. See above, on Ps. v. 5 (4.) l. 1. As if he had said, 'Mighty and malicious as thou art, the might and mercy of Jehovah are still greater.' *All the day*, i. e. perpetual, unceasing. See above, on Ps. xlii. 11 (10.)

4 (2.) *Mischiefs will thy tongue devise, like a razor whetted, working deceitfully.* The first word means calamitous events, brought on one man by the malice of another. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) xxxviii. 13 (12), and below, on Ps. lvii. 2 (1.) The distinctive meaning of the future is the same as in v. 3 (1.) The *tongue* is here said to meditate or devise mischief, because it is personified, or poetically substituted for the speaker. The allusion is to Saul's cutting words when he accused Ahimelech

and David of conspiracy against him (1 Sam. xxii. 13.) This false charge, or the tongue which uttered it, is likened to a razor, not merely sharp but sharpened, whetted, for the purpose or occasion. See above, on Ps. xlv. 6 (5.) Similar comparisons occur in Ps. lv. 22 (21.) lvii. 5 (4.) lix. 8 (7.) lxiv. 4 (3.) Jer. ix. 2, 7 (3, 8.) *Working deceitfully*, literally, *deceit* or *fraud*. These words may be grammatically referred to the speaker or his tongue as practising deceit; but it yields a more striking sense to understand them of the razor, as working deceitfully, i. e. moving silently and smoothly, when it cuts most keenly.

5. *Thou hast loved evil (more) than good, falsehood (more) than speaking righteousness.* The past tense, like the futures in the foregoing verses, includes the idea of the present; but unlike them, it represents the love of sin as already long-continued and habitual. Compare the form of expression with that in Ps. xlv. 8 (7.) *Righteousness* includes *truth* or veracity, as the genus comprehends the species. The particular unrighteousness here meant is falsehood, as appears from the antithesis. The *selah* tacitly suggests the writer's abhorrence of that which he describes.

6 (4.) *Thou hast loved all devouring words, tongue of fraud.* This is not so much a continuation of the foregoing discourse, as a resumption or recapitulation for the purpose of drawing a conclusion from it. In periodic style, the connection of the ideas might be thus exhibited: 'Since then thou lovest, etc., therefore God will, etc.' *Devouring words*, literally, *words of swallowing* or deglutition. The second noun occurs only here; but the verb to *swallow up* is continually used in Hebrew to express the idea of complete destruction. See above, on Ps. xxi. 10 (9.) xxxv. 25. *Tongue of deceit* or *deceitful tongue*. This phrase may be governed by the verb, *thou hast loved all devouring words (and or even) a deceitful tongue*. But it adds to the



strength of the expression, and agrees better with the form of the context, to make it an apostrophe or direct address to the deceitful tongue itself.

7 (5.) (*So*) *likewise shall God destroy thee forever ; he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of (thy) tent, and root thee out of the land of life. Selah.* The particle at the beginning, *also, likewise*, shows the dependence of this verse upon the one before it, which is really conditional, though not in form. ‘As thou, on thy part, lovest all devouring words, so likewise God, on his part, will destroy thee.’ No exact translation can convey the full force of the verbs in this verse, which suggest a variety of striking figures for destruction or extermination. The first denotes properly the act of pulling down or demolishing a house (Lev. xiv. 45), and this would also seem to be the primary meaning of the third (Prov. xv. 25), although some suppose it to denote the act of pulling up, and to be the opposite of *plant*, as the first verb is of *build*. The second verb, in every other place where it occurs, has reference to the handling and carrying of fire or coals. See Prov. vi. 27. xxv. 22. Isai. xxx. 14. To a Hebrew reader, therefore, it would almost necessarily suggest not the general idea of removal merely, but the specific one of removing or taking away like fire, i. e. as coals are swept out from a hearth, or otherwise extinguished. The remaining verb adds to these figures that of violent eradication, and is well represented by its English equivalent. The *land of life*, or, as it is commonly translated, *land of the living*, is a poetical description of life itself, or the present state of existence, under the figure of a country. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 13. The quick recurrence of the pause implies excited feeling and invites attention to the threatening which immediately precedes.

8 (6.) *And the righteous shall see, and they shall fear, and at him they shall laugh.* The fear meant is that religious awe produced by any clear manifestation of God’s presence and his



power. In Ps. lxiv. 9, 10 (8, 9), it is assumed to be compatible with joy, and here with laughter at the wicked, not a selfish exultation in his sufferings, which is explicitly condemned in the Old Testament (Prov. xxiv. 17. Job xxxi. 29), but that sense of the absurdity of sin, which must be strongest in the purest minds, and cannot therefore be incompatible with pity, the rather as it is ascribed to God himself (Ps. ii. 4.) The paronomasia of the verbs translated *see* and *fear* is the same as in Ps. xl. 4 (3.) *Shall see*, i. e. the destruction threatened in v. 7 (6.) *At him*, the person thus destroyed, the same who is addressed directly in the foregoing context. The *enallage personae* may be avoided by exchanging *at him* for *at it*, i. e. the destruction itself; but this is not so agreeable to Hebrew usage, which always prefers personal to abstract forms of speech.

9 (7.) *Behold the man (who) will not make God his strength, but will trust in the increase of his wealth, (and) will be strong in his wickedness.* This may be regarded as the language of the laughers mentioned in v. 8 (6.) *Behold the man, see* to what he is reduced. The effect of the *behold* is similar to that of the interrogation in Isai. xiv. 16. The word translated *man* is not one of the usual terms, but one implying strength or power, so that its use here gives a kind of sarcastic import to the passage. See the analogous use of an opposite expression in Ps. viii. 5 (4.) x. 18. The future expresses fixed determination and anticipated perseverance in refusing. *Make*, literally, *place* or *set*. See above, on Ps. xl. 5 (4.) *His strength*, or more exactly, his *stronghold* or fortress. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 1. xxxvii. 39. xliii. 2. *Increase*, or simply, abundance, greatness. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) li. 3 (1.) The word translated *wickedness* is the singular of that translated *mischiefs* in v. 4 (2) above. It seems to signify particularly an inclination to malicious mischief.

10 (8.) *And I (am) like a green olive-tree in the house of God; I have trusted in the mercy of God (to) eternity and perpetuity.* He expects not only the destruction of the wicked but his own salvation. To express the connection of the verses clearly, our idiom would require an adversative particle at the beginning, *but I*. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. A verdant fruitful tree is a favourite emblem of prosperity. See above, on Ps. i. 3. The olive is here specified, as palms and cedars are in Ps. xcii. 13, 14 (12, 13.) The imagery of the verse before us is copied in Jer. xi. 16. *The house of God*, the tabernacle, considered as his earthly residence, in which he entertains his friends and provides for his own household. See above, on Ps. xv. 1. xxiii. 6. xxvii. 4, 5. xxxvi. 9 (8.) The mixed metaphors only show that the whole description is a figurative one and should be so interpreted. *I have (already) trusted*, which includes his present trust, but also includes more, to wit, that it is not a new or sudden impulse, but a settled habit of his soul. The two nouns, *eternity* and *perpetuity*, are combined in the adverbial sense of *forever and ever*. See above, on Ps. x. 16. xxi. 5 (4.) xlv. 7 (6.) xlviii. 15 (14.) This qualifying phrase relates, not to the act, but to the object, of his trust. His meaning is not, 'I will trust forever in God's mercy,' which would have required a future verb; but, 'I have already trusted, and do still trust, in his mercy, as a mercy that will last forever.'

11 (9.) *I will thank thee to eternity because thou hast done (it), and will hope (in) thy name—because it is good—before thy saints.* The common version of the first verb (*praise*) is not sufficiently specific, as it properly denotes a particular kind of praise, namely, that for benefits received. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) vii. 18 (17.) xlix. 19 (18.) The object of the verb *hast done* is to be supplied from the context. See above, on Ps. xxii. 32 (31.) xxxvii. 5. xxxix. 10 (9.) *Thy name*, the manifestation of thy nature. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) xx. 2 (1.)

xxiii. 3. xlviii. 11 (10.) To expect God's name, or wait for it, is to trust in the future exercise and exhibition of the same divine perfections which have been exhibited already. The common version, *I will wait on thy name*, is not so happy as the one in the Prayer Book, *I will hope in thy name*. Here again, as in v. 10 (8), the epexegetical clause, *for it is good*, relates not to the act of expectation but its object. He does not mean, 'because it is good to hope in thy name,' but 'because thy name is good, and is therefore to be hoped in.' This is clear from the analogy of Ps. liv. 8 (6.) lxix. 17 (16.) cix. 21, which also shows that the concluding words, *before thy saints*, are to be construed neither with what follows, *it is good before thy saints* i. e. in their estimation, nor with the remoter antecedent *I will thank thee*, but with the nearer antecedent, *I will wait for thy name before thy saints*, i. e. I will profess my trust in thy mercy, not in private merely, but in the presence of thy people, of the church. Compare Ps. xxii. 23 (22.) *For it is good* must then be read as a parenthesis. *Thy saints*, the merciful objects of thy mercy. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) l. 5. It is here used simply as a general designation or description of God's people.

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PSALM LIII.

A SECOND edition of the fourteenth psalm, with variations, more or less important, in each verse. That either of these compositions is an incorrect copy of the other, is highly improbable, because two such copies of the same psalm would not have been retained in the collection, and because the variations are too uniform, consistent, and significant, to be the work of chance or

mere traditional corruption. That the changes were deliberately made by a later writer is improbable, because such a liberty would hardly have been taken with a psalm of David, and because the later form, in that case, would either have been excluded from the Psalter, or substituted for the first form, or immediately connected with it. The only satisfactory hypothesis is, that the original author afterwards rewrote it, with such modifications as were necessary to bring out certain points distinctly, but without any intention to supersede the use of the original composition, which therefore still retains its place in the collection. This supposition is confirmed by the titles, which ascribe both psalms to David. Of this kind of *retractatio*, which is not unknown to the practice of uninspired hymnologists, we have already met with a remarkable example in the case of David. See above, the concluding note on Ps. xviii, vol. 1. p. 153. As a general fact, it may be stated, that the variations in the psalm before us are such as render the expression stronger, bolder, and in one or two cases more obscure and difficult. To these variations the remarks which follow will be restricted. For the exposition of the parts which are common to both psalms, the reader is referred to that of Ps. xiv.

1. *To the Chief Musician—upon Mahalath—Maschil—by David.* Between the inscription to the Chief Musician and the name of David, which are also found at the beginning of Ps. xiv, we have here two additional expressions. The first of these is by some regarded as the name or description of an instrument; but as it is so used nowhere else, and as forms almost identical occur more than once in the sense of sickness or disease, (Ex. xv. 26. Prov. xviii. 14. 2 Chr. xxi. 15), it seems most natural to take the phrase as an enigmatical enunciation of the subject of the psalm, which is in strict accordance both with general usage and with that of David in particular. See above, on Ps. v. 1. xxii. 1. xlv. 1. By *disease* we may then understand the spiritual



malady with which mankind are all infected, and which is really the theme or subject of the composition. In the only other title where it reappears (Ps. lxxxviii. 1), it denotes corporeal disease. The other addition (*maschil*) describes the psalm as a didactic one. See above, on Ps. lii. 1

2 (1.) *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They have done corruptly, they have done abominable wickedness; there is none doing good.* See above, on Ps. xiv. 1. The only variation in this verse is the substitution of (עָרַב) *iniquity* for (עֲלִילָה) *deed* or *act*. Instead of saying, *they have made (their) conduct abominable*, the Psalmist uses the stronger expression, *they have made iniquity abominable, or done abominably (in their) wickedness*.

3 (2.) *God from heaven has looked down on the sons of man, to see if there is (any) acting wisely, seeking God.* See above, on Ps. xiv. 2. The only difference in the Hebrew of these verses is that the name *Elohim* is here substituted for *Jehovah*. The same change occurs below, in vs. 5, 6, 7 (4, 5, 6.) The name *Jehovah* is not used at all in the psalm before us, but occurs four times in Ps. xiv, and *Elohim* thrice. This difference seems to mark Ps. liii as the later composition, in which the writer aimed at an external uniformity, which did not occur to him at first. This is a much more natural supposition than that he afterwards varied what was uniform at first. The attempts which have been made to account, still more particularly, for the use of the divine names in these two psalms, have entirely failed.

4 (3.) *All of it has apostatized; together they have putrefied; there is none doing good; there is not even one.* See above, on Ps. xiv. 3. For *all of it* we there have *the whole*, i. e. the whole human race. The same thing seems to be intended by the more obscure phrase, *all of it*, in which the pronoun may refer to



*man*, in the collective sense of *mankind* or the human race. The idea of departure from God, apostasy, is expressed in the parallel places by two verbs almost identical in form. (סר and סג), the one of which means properly to turn aside and the other to turn back.

5 (4.) *Do they not know—(these) workers of iniquity—eating my people (as) they eat bread—and on) God call not?* See above, on Ps. xiv. 4. The only variation here, besides the change of the divine name which has been already mentioned, is the omission of the *all* before *workers of iniquity*. This has been noted by some critics as the only case in which the language of the fourteenth psalm is stronger than the parallel expression of the fifty-third.

6 (5.) *There have they feared a fear, because God hath scattered the bones of thy besieger; thou hast put (them) to shame, because God hath rejected them.* See above, on Ps. xiv. 5, 6. The design to strengthen the expression is particularly clear in this case, where two verses are compressed into one, and the other changes all enhance the emphasis. Thus instead of a general assurance of divine protection, *God is in the righteous generation*, we have here a description of their enemies' destruction, in the most poetical and striking terms, *God hath scattered the bones of thy besieger*, literally, *thy encamper*, him that encampeth against thee. So too instead of the complaint, that the wicked treat the faith of pious sufferers with contempt—*the counsel of the sufferer ye will shame because Jehovah is his refuge*—we have here the tables turned upon the scoffers by the scorn both of God and man—*thou hast put to shame* (the individuals included in the collective phrase *thy besieger*), *because God has rejected them*, an act implying both abhorrence and contempt. In this, which is by far the most considerable variation of the two editions, the existence of design is so apparent, that the supposition of an in-

advertent or fortuitous corruption seems preposterous. So far are the two psalms from being contradictory or even inconsistent, that they might be sung together, by alternate or responsive choirs, with the happiest effect. Nothing can be more natural, therefore, than the supposition that David gave the psalm this new shape, to express the same essential feelings in a higher degree and a more emphatic form.

7 (6.) *Who will give out of Zion salvations (to) Israel—in God's returning (to) the captivity of his people—let Jacob exult, let Israel joy!* See above, on Ps. xiv. 7. The only variations are the change of *Jehovah* to *Elohim*, and of the singular *salvation* to its plural, denoting variety and fulness. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) The exact translation is, *salvations of Israel*, and the meaning of the next clause, 'when God revisits, (or in God's revisiting) his captive people.'

## PSALM LIV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. With (or on) stringed instruments. A didactic psalm. By David.* This is the title of Ps. iv, but with a change of the generic term *mizmor* to the specific one *maschil*. See above, on Ps. liii. 1. According to some modern interpreters, the plural *neginoth* does not denote a plurality of stringed instruments, but simply that kind of music, with its complex variety of tones. The psalm consists of a prayer for deliverance from wicked enemies, vs. 3—5 (1—3), with a confident antici-

pation of success and a promise of thanksgiving, vs. 6—9 (4—7.) As to the numbering of the verses, see above, on Ps. li. 1. lii 1.

2. *In the coming of the Ziphites, and they said to Saul, (Is) not David hiding himself with us?* The verse gives the historical occasion of the composition, in the same form as in the titles of Ps. li and lii. Such an occurrence is twice recorded in the history, 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. xxvi. 1. The verbal coincidence is greater in the first case. The words of the Ziphites seem to have been remembered on account of some peculiarity in the expression, perhaps the use of the reflexive participle (מִסְתַּתֵּר) which remains unchanged in all three places, the earliest of which is probably the one before us. The interrogation implies surprise that Saul should be ignorant of what was so notorious. *Hiding himself*, now engaged in doing so, not merely wont to do so, or already hidden. *With us*, among us, or in our land, i. e. the wilderness or pasture-ground of Ziph, (1 Sam. xxiii. 14, 15,) in or near which was a town of the same name (Josh. xv. 55, 2 Chron. xi. 8,) the ruins of which are thought to be still visible, not far from what the natives call *Tell Ziph* or the Hill of Ziph. (Robinson's Palestine, II. 191.)

3 (1.) *Oh God, by thy name save me, and by thy might thou wilt judge me.* The insensible transition from the imperative to the future shows the confidence with which the prayer is offered. *By thy name*, i. e. the exercise of those perfections which have been already manifested. See above, on Ps. lii. 11 (9.) That it is not a mere periphrasis for God himself, is clear from the parallel expression, *might* or *power*. *Judge me*, do me justice, vindicate my innocence, by saving me from spiteful enemies and false accusers. See above, on Ps. vii. 9 (8.) xxvi. 1.

4 (2.) *Oh God, hear my prayer, give ear to the sayings of my mouth.* See above, on Ps. iv. 2 (1.) v. 2 (1.)

5 (3.) *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek my soul (or life) ; they have not set God before them. Selah.* To the earnest petitions in the two preceding verses, he now adds a particular description of his danger. *Strangers*, not foreigners, but aliens in spirit, both to him and to Jehovah, with special reference to Saul. See below, on Ps. cxx. 5. *Oppressors*, persecutors, tyrants. The original expression implies the possession of power and its lawless exercise. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 35. Not to set God before them is to act as if they did not remember or believe in his existence and his presence. The *Selah* indicates a pause of indignation and abhorrence. See above, on Ps. lii. 5 (3.)

6 (4.) *Behold, God (is) a helper for me ; the Lord is among the upholders of my soul.* From the party of his enemies he looks to that of his defenders, and joyfully recognizes God, not merely *with*, but *in* (the midst of) *them*, among them. The *behold* is expressive of surprise, and at the same time of a perspicacious faith. With the form of expression in the first clause, compare Ps. xxx. 11 (10) ; with the second Ps. cxviii. 7. Judg. xi. 35. The upholders of his soul are the defenders of his life against those who seek it. See above, v. 5 (3.) *Adhonai*, the divine name properly translated *Lord*, because expressive of God's sovereignty. It is peculiarly appropriate here, where he is claiming God as his protector.

7 (5.) *The evil shall return to my enemies ; in thy truth destroy them.* The future here runs into the imperative, as the imperative does into the future, in v. 3 (1) above. The imperative in this case is only a stronger form of prediction. *The evil*, which they mean to do me. *Return to* or upon them, i. e. shall befall themselves. See above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.) This is the sense required by the reading in the text (יִשְׁרֹב), which the modern critics commonly regard as the most ancient. The mar-



ginal or masoretic reading (יָשִׁיב) must be rendered, *he will cause to return*, repay, requite. *Thy truth*, the truth of thy promises and threatenings, thy veracity. See above, on Ps. xxx. 10 (9.) The certain foresight of the doom of the wicked, which is expressed in the first clause, makes the prayer (if such it be considered) in the first clause, a mere iteration of the previous threatening. A prayer that God will do what we are certain that he will do can be little more than an expression of that certainty. See above, on Ps. v. 11 (10.)

8 (6) *With a free-will-offering will I sacrifice unto thee ; I will praise thy name, Jehovah, for it is good.* In the confident assurance of a favourable answer to his prayer, he promises a suitable acknowledgment. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) A *free-will* or *voluntary offering*, as opposed to one prescribed by law, not to one rendered obligatory by a vow, for then a voluntary offering would in this case be impossible. The Hebrew word is the technical term applied to such an offering in the Law. See Lev. vii. 16. xxii. 23, and compare Ex. xxv. 2. xxxv. 29, Num. xv. 3. With the last clause compare Ps. lii. 11 (9.)

9 (7.) *For out of all distress he hath delivered me, and on my enemies my eye has looked.* In his confident assurance of a favourable issue, he speaks of it, though future, as already past. The sudden change of person may be avoided by translating the first verb, *it* (i. e. thy name) *has delivered me*, according to the prayer in v. 3 (1.) *My eye has looked* or *gazed*, with an implication of delight, or at least of acquiescence, which is commonly conveyed by this construction. See above, on Ps. l. 23. This kind of satisfaction in the execution of God's threatenings is sinful only when combined with selfish malignity. Apart from this corrupt admixture, it is inseparable from conformity of will and coincidence of judgment with God. The same kind and degree of acquiescence which is felt by holy angels in heaven may surely be

expressed by saints on earth, especially in their collective capacity as a church, in whose name the psalmist is here speaking, and not merely in his own or that of any other individual.

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## P S A L M L V.

1. *To the Chief Musician. With (or on) stringed instruments. A Didactic Psalm. By David.* The psalm is designated as a *Maschil*, because it might at first sight seem to have relation merely to a case of personal maltreatment and distress, whereas it is a general description of the sufferings of God's people, or the righteous as a class, at the hands of false friends and malignant enemies. Although there seem to be allusions to the writer's own experience, in the times both of Saul and Absalom, the whole description can be applied exclusively to neither. The only natural division of the psalm is the one suggested by the fact, that in the first part the sufferer complains of his enemies in general, vs. 2—12 (1—11); in the second, he singles out the case of one who had seemed to be his friend, but treacherously turned against him, vs. 13—16 (12—15); in the third, he confidently anticipates his own deliverance and the destruction of his enemies, vs. 17—26 (16—25.)

2 (1.) *Give ear, oh God, to my prayer, and hide not thyself from my supplication.* This is the general introductory petition, which is afterwards amplified and rendered more specific. The last word strictly means a cry or prayer for mercy. See above, on Ps. vi. 10 (9.) To hide one's self is an expression used in the Law

to describe the act of wilfully withholding aid from one who needs it. See Deut. xxii. 1—4, and compare Isai. lviii. 7.

3 (2.) *Hearken to me and answer me; I will give loose to my thought, and I will make a noise.* The first verb means to *attend*, especially to one speaking, to listen, to hearken. See above, on Ps. v. 3 (2.) x. 17. xvii. 1. *Answer* or *hear*, in the sense of receiving a prayer favourably. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4.) xxxviii. 16 (15.) The literal translation of the next words is, *I will suffer to wander in my thinking*, i. e. I will let my mind wander, or my thoughts rove as they will. He is resolved not only to think freely but to express his thoughts aloud. The same use of the Hebrew verb occurs in Micah ii. 12. The thinking or meditation here meant is reflection on his sufferings, to which the Hebrew verb is specially applied. With the whole verse, and with this clause in particular, compare Job vii. 11.

4 (3.) *From the voice of the enemy, from before the persecution of the wicked; for they will shake over me iniquity, and in wrath will oppose me.* He now declares from what his distress arises. The preposition, in Hebrew as in English, has a causal meaning, or at least suggests a relation of cause and effect. *From the voice*, i. e. because of it. *From before* or *from the face* conveys the same idea still more strongly, by a kind of personification of the evil dreaded. *Persecution of the wicked*: compare the *oppression of the enemy*, in Ps. xlii. 10 (9.) *Shake over me*, or cause to slide upon me, a striking figure for the wilful infliction of evil on another. *Iniquity* may here be put, as it sometimes is, for active wickedness towards others, the cause of suffering rather than suffering itself. With this clause compare Ps. xli. 9 (8.) *Oppose me*, be my adversaries, whether in the way of resistance or assault. The Hebrew verb is a cognate form to that from which comes *Satan* or the *Adversary*.



5 (4.) *My heart writhes in the midst of me, and terrors of death have fallen upon me.* The future form of the first verb implies an apprehension that the pain will continue and be permanent. *In the midst of me*, inside of me, within me. He is not merely involved in outward troubles, but pained at heart. *Terrors of death* might be strictly understood as meaning fear or dread of death; but it agrees better with the strong figurative language of the first clause, to take it in the sense of deadly, mortal terrors. An analogous expression is *death-shade* or shadow of death. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 4. xlv. 20 (19.) The figure of falling necessarily suggests the idea of infliction by a superior power.

6 (5.) *Fear and trembling enter into me, and horror hath covered me.* The future in the first clause represents the action as not yet completed, and might be rendered, they are entering or about to enter. The Hebrew verb with this preposition denotes more than *come upon*; it describes the terror as not only on him but within him. The word translated *horror* is a stronger synonyme of *trembling*, and might be translated *shuddering* or *shudder*. *Covered me*, i. e. overspread or overwhelmed me.

7 (6.) *And I said, who will give me a pinion like the dove? I will fly away and be at rest.* This is equivalent to saying, if I had the pinions of a dove, I would fly away, etc. *Who will give* is an idiomatic optative expression, tantamount to saying, *oh that I had, etc.* See above, on Ps. xiv. 7. The word translated *pinion* properly denotes the penna major or flag-feather of a bird's wing, and is here put poetically for the wings themselves. The two last verbs are in the paragogic or augmented form, expressing strong desire or settled purpose. See above, on Ps. ii. 3. The last verb usually means *to dwell*, but has either the primary or secondary sense of reposing, resting. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 3. The first verb is immediately dependent on the last of the preceding verse, a grammatical relation which may be expressed



thus in our idiom: 'horror hath covered me so that I say, etc.'

8 (7.) *Lo, I will wander far, I will lodge in the wilderness. Selah.* The *lo* or *behold* is tantamount to pointing with the finger, or to saying *there! see there!* The next phrase is highly idiomatic and literally means, 'I will make remote to wander.' To *lodge* is here to take up one's abode, to dwell, as in Ps. xxv. 13. *The wilderness*, not necessarily a barren desert, but an uninhabited region, the essential idea here being that of separation from human society, a strong though indirect mode of affirming its extreme corruption. The strength of the feeling which prompted this desire is indicated by a solemn pause.

9 (8.) *I will hasten my escape from rushing wind, from tempest.* Another construction of the first clause makes the verb intransitive and the noun a local one, as indicated by its form, *I will hasten (to) my refuge.* It is better, however, to give the hiphil verb its proper meaning, and nouns of the form here used denote not only the place of action but the act itself. *My escape*, literally, *an escape for me or for myself.* The preposition in the last clause, though it properly means *from*, is constantly employed in Hebrew to denote or indicate comparison. If thus explained in this case, it would make the clause descriptive of the speed with which he wishes to escape, *more than the rushing wind and tempest.* This sense is preferred by some interpreters; but the other is more obvious and simple, and is also recommended by the frequent representation of calamity under the figure of a storm or tempest, which would hardly have been joined with that of wind, if the only idea meant to be conveyed had been that of great velocity.

10 (9.) *Destroy, oh Lord, divide their tongue; for I have seen violence and strife in the city.* The first word properly means

*swallow up.* See above, on Ps. xxi. 10 (9.) The object to be supplied is not *their tongue* but *themselves*. *Divide their tongue*, i. e. confound their speech or make it unintelligible, and as a necessary consequence confound their counsels. There is obvious reference to the confusion of tongues at Babel (Gen. xi. 7—9), as a great historical example of the way in which God is accustomed and determined to defeat the purposes of wicked men and execute his own. The word translated *cruelty* denotes violent injustice, or injustice accompanied by violence. See above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.) *In the city* is supposed by some to mean nothing more than among men, in human society; but the words could hardly fail to suggest to any Hebrew reader the idea of the holy city, as the place directly meant, although the words themselves may be applied to any other place where the same state of things exists.

11 (10.) *Day and night they will surround her on her walls; and iniquity and trouble (will be) in the midst of her.* The Violence and Strife of the preceding verse are here personified as a besieging enemy. At the same time the interior is occupied by Iniquity and Trouble, no less formidable enemies. *Her walls*, those of *the city* mentioned in the foregoing verse. Iniquity and trouble are here, and often elsewhere, put together as cause and effect, the last denoting the distress or trouble, which the wickedness of one man brings upon another. See above, on Ps. vii. 15 (14.)

12 (11.) *Mischiefs (are) in the midst of her, and from her street will not depart oppression and deceit.* The first word in Hebrew necessarily suggests the two ideas of *calamities* and *crimes*, i. e. calamities occasioned by the crimes of others. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) xxxviii. 13 (12.) lii. 4, 9 (2, 7.) The word translated *street* denotes a wide place and is specially applied to the square or open space surrounding the gates of oriental cities, and used both for markets and for courts of justice. See

Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16. The word therefore very nearly corresponds to the Greek *agora* and the Latin *forum*, and may be here used to suggest the idea both of legal and commercial malfeasance. Neither their markets nor their courts are ever free from these two forms of gross injustice, namely, fraud and violence.

13 (12.) *For (it is) not an enemy (that) will revile me, else would I bear it ; (it is) not one hating me (that) has magnified (himself) against me, else would I hide myself from him.* The Hebrew word answering to *else*, is, in both these cases, the usual copulative particle, and the original construction seems to be, *and (if it is) I will bear it, and (if it is) I will hide myself.* See above, on Ps. li. 18 (16.) The act of reviling here includes both calumny and insult. The future in the first clause suggests the idea of an indignity or injury about to be endured. As if he had said, ‘when I go forth among my neighbours, it is not my open enemy that will malign me.’ But that such treatment had already been experienced, is intimated by the preterite of the last clause. The verb to *magnify* is here used reflexively or absolutely, as in Ps. xxxv. 26. xxxviii. 15 (16.) There is no need therefore of supposing an ellipsis or identifying this form of expression with the one in Ps. xli. 10 (9.) *Hide myself*, literally *be hidden*; but the passive forms in Hebrew not unfrequently imply a reflex act, like the middle voice in Greek. The negation in this verse is of course not absolute but relative, and must be qualified by due regard to the circumstances of the case. That he was reproached and threatened by avowed enemies, is not only a frequent subject of complaint elsewhere, but sufficiently implied in v. 4 (3) above. The true solution of this seeming contradiction is, that he here passes from a general description of the prevalent iniquity to a particular case, in which his feelings were personally interested. In this particular case, it was not an open enemy that slandered or insulted him. It is therefore as if he had said, ‘but it is not of this open and unblushing wickedness



that I especially complain, but rather of the perfidy of false friends.' Thus understood, the verse, instead of contradicting v. 4 (3), presupposes what is there affirmed.

14 (13.) *But thou, a man mine equal, my associate, my acquaintance.* It is a striking illustration of the difference between the Hebrew and English idiom, that the former uses *and* at the beginning of this sentence, where in English *but* is absolutely indispensable. The word for *man* is that denoting frailty and mortality. See above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4.) ix. 20, 21 (19, 20.) x. 18. But it seems to be used here without any emphasis, in simple apposition with what follows, or as a vocative, *thou, oh man, mine equal.* This last expression is in Hebrew, *according to my valuation*, the noun being a technical term of the Mosaic Law, denoting the official estimation of the priest, in certain cases of redemption or pecuniary penalty. See Lev. v. 15, 18. xxvii. 12. The whole phrase here employed is understood by some to mean *one whom I value*, i. e. highly, or more specifically, *one whom I value as myself.* More probably, however, it means one who is (or may be) estimated at the same rate with myself, which is precisely the idea conveyed by the common version, *my equal*, one of my own rank and circle, my associate. This last is the sense put by the modern interpreters on the next word in Hebrew. The old translation (*guide*) rests on a doubtful etymology, and the authority of the ancient versions. (LXX. ἡγεμών. Vulg. *dux*.) *Acquaintance* seems to be a weaker expression than the others; but the Hebrew word always implies very intimate association. See above, Ps. xxxi. 12 (11), and below, Ps. lxxxviii. 9, 19 (8, 18.)

15 (14.) (*With*) *whom we take sweet counsel; in the house of God we march with noise.* The future forms can only be accounted for by supposing that he here anticipates a violation of the laws of friendship which had not yet visibly occurred. The



false friend, of whom he is complaining, seems to be one with whom he was still intimate, but whose defection he clearly foresaw. As if he had said, 'with this man I must still continue to be associated, although he is eventually to betray me.' In this particular, the case described resembles that of our Lord and Judas Iscariot, which may indeed be considered as included in the general description. The form of the first clause is idiomatic and peculiar: *who* (or *as to whom*) *together we will sweeten counsel*, or rather confidential intercourse. See above, on Ps. xxv. 14. The other clause may possibly mean, *we march to the house of God*. But the strict sense of the particle may be retained and the whole referred to solemn processions within the sacred enclosure or court of the tabernacle. *With noise*, i. e. with festive tumult. See above, on Ps. xlii. 5 (4.)

16 (15.) *Desolations (are) upon them! They shall go down to Sheol alive! For evils are in their dwellings, in their heart.* The optative form given to this sentence in most versions is entirely gratuitous. All that the Hebrew words express is a confident anticipation. The common version of the first words (*let death seize upon them*) is founded on the masoretic reading (רָשָׁעִים מָוֶת); but the best critics now prefer the older reading in the text (רָשָׁעִים), which, instead of a verb and a singular noun, exhibits one noun in the plural number, meaning *desolations*, and agreeing with the substantive verb understood. *Upon them*, hovering or impending over them. *Sheol*, the grave, the state of the dead, the wide old English sense of *hell*. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) There is an obvious allusion to another great historical type of God's retributory judgments, the destruction of Korah and his company, who *went down alive into the pit*, Num. xvi. 33. The word *quick*, in the common English version of this sentence, is an adjective synonymous with *living* or *alive*, and not an adverb meaning *soon* or *swiftly*. *Evils*, i. e. evil deeds and evil thoughts. *In their heart*, or inside, inner part, as

in Ps. v. 10 (9.) xlix. 12 (11.) This is a much better sense than *in the midst of them*, among them.

17 (16.) *I to God will call, and Jehovah will save me.* The pronoun is emphatic, I on my part. While they are brought to desolation and to death, I, on the contrary, will call to God. If the use of two divine names has any significance beyond the requisitions of the parallelism, the meaning may be, 'I will call to God, and as the covenant God of Israel he will save me.' Compare Ps. xviii. 4 (3.)

18 (17.) *Evening and morning and noon I will muse and murmur—and he has heard my voice.* The first clause is supposed by some to prove that the observance of three stated hours of prayer was as old as David; others suppose the observance to have been suggested by the clause itself. But the natural and obvious division of the day here mentioned may have given occasion both to the clause and the observance. *Muse and murmur* is a combination descriptive of prayer, both as mentally conceived and audibly expressed. *Murmur* is perhaps not strong enough to convey the full sense of the Hebrew verb, which elsewhere means to make a loud noise. See above, on Ps. xlii. 6, 12 (5, 11) xli. 4, 7 (3, 6.) The assimilation or confusion of the tenses in this verse by some translators is not only arbitrary but injurious to the sense. What is mentioned in the first clause as still future is recorded in the last clause as already past. As if he had said, 'thus did I resolve to pray, and now my prayer has been already made and answered.' Such transitions are among the characteristic beauties of the Psalter, and ought not to be gratuitously sacrificed, still less at the expense of violating usage and the rules of grammar.

19 (18.) *He redeemed in peace my soul from the war against me, for many were with me.* *In peace* or *with peace*, as the result

of this redemption. *Against me*, literally, *to me*, the war that was to me, that I had. The last clause, to an English ear, conveys the idea that his friends or champions were many; but the meaning of the Hebrew is directly opposite, *with me* being used in such connections to denote a relation of hostility, as we speak of fighting, quarrelling, contending *with* one. In either case, the particle expresses really no more than joint or simultaneous action, the idea of enmity or opposition being gathered from the context. The literal translation of the last clause is, *in many were (those) with me*, i. e. consisting in many. The adverse party was composed of many individuals. This usage of the *in* is strictly appropriate only to numerals. See Deut. x. 22. xxviii. 62.

20 (19.) *God will hear and answer them, and (He) inhabiting antiquity* (will hear and answer those) *to whom there are no changes, and (who) fear not God*. As he has heard me in mercy, so will he hear them in wrath. As he has answered my prayer in the way described above, v. 19 (18), so will he answer them in the way described below, v. 24 (23.) In this case, what is heard and answered is not prayer, but *the voice of the enemy*, v. 4 (3), and his malignant slanders, v. 13 (12.) *Inhabiting antiquity*, or as the English Bible phrases it, *he that abideth of old*. The first Hebrew verb however could not fail to suggest its primary meaning, which is to *sit*, and more especially to *sit enthroned*, as a sovereign and a judge. See above, on Ps. ix. 5, 12 (4, 11.) The phrase may therefore be said to represent God as having been a king and a judge from the remotest antiquity. The last clause is by some supposed to mean, that the persons here referred to undergo no moral change, but still persist in their refusal to fear God; by others, that they undergo no outward changes, no vicissitudes of fortune, and for that reason will not fear him. But as the word translated *changes* is repeatedly employed by Job in a military sense, to signify either an



alternate service, as for instance in relieving guard, or a succession in the service, as when one corps is disbanded and another takes its place, some of the best interpreters suppose this clause to mean that those enlisted in this evil warfare have no such reliefs or discharges to expect, but must continue in the unremitted service of sin, and as a necessary consequence cannot fear God. The grammatical structure of the whole verse is peculiar and can be made intelligible only by supplying the ellipses.

21 (20.) *He has stretched out his hands against his allies ; he has profaned his covenant.* This might seem at first sight to refer to God ; but such a reference, if not forbidden by the nature of the acts alleged, would be at variance with the subsequent context, where the subject is undoubtedly the wicked enemy. The sudden change of number is in strict accordance with the usage of the Psalmists in speaking of their enemies, or in this case may arise from the same cause as in v. 13 (12) above. See above, on Ps. x. 10. The word translated *allies* is the plural of one meaning *peace*, but seems to be poetically used here to denote those at peace with him, his friends or allies. Compare the analogous expressions in Ps. vii. 5 (4.) xli. 10 (9.) To *profane a covenant* is to treat it as no longer sacred, and by implication to break it. Compare Isai. xxxiii. 8. This is a varied repetition, under military figures, of the description in v. 13-15 (12-14.)

22 (21.) *Smooth are the butterings of his mouth, and (yet) war (is in) his heart ; soft are his words, more than oil, and (yet even) they are drawn (swords.)* To the charge of violence he adds that of treacherous hypocrisy, thus amplifying the laconic phrase, *oppression and deceit*, in v. 12 (11) above. The English Bible, following some older versions, assimilates the clauses by making both comparative, *smoother than butter, softer than oil*. But in order to sustain this construction of the first clause, it is necessary to change the pointing of one Hebrew word, and to



supply another as the nominative of the plural verb, which cannot without violence agree with *mouth*. The letter prefixed to the first noun is a part of it, and not a particle meaning *than* or *more than*, and the whole word denotes preparations of butter, cream, or rather curdled milk, which is the meaning of the primitive noun. As to the adversative use of *and* in both these clauses, see above, on v. 14 (13.) *War* (is in) *his heart*, or still more simply, because not requiring the insertion of the particle, *war* (is) *his heart*, i. e. his cherished wish and purpose. The word translated *war* is a poetical term, the same that is employed above in v. 19 (18.) In the last clause, *even* is supplied as well as *yet*, in order to convey, as far as possible, the emphasis of the Hebrew pronoun. *And they themselves*, i. e. the very oily words just mentioned, are drawn swords. This last expression is in Hebrew properly an adjective or participial form, but is specifically used in application to the sword, as *brandished* is in English, and so comes to be employed absolutely or as a substantive, expressing the entire complex idea of *drawn swords*, as weapons of attack, ready for use or on the point of being used forthwith.

23 (22.) *Cast upon Jehovah (what) he gives thee, and he will sustain thee; he will never suffer the righteous to be moved.* What he gives thee to endure, what he lays upon thee, cast thou upon him, by trusting in him. The phrase *he gives thee* (or *has given thee*) may also be explained as a noun with a possessive pronoun, *thy gift*, not in the active sense of *what thou givest*, but in the passive sense of *what is given to thee*. *Sustain* does not here mean to hold up or support under the burden, but to nourish or sustain life by administering food and other necessities, to provide for. Compare the primitive use of the Hebrew verb in Gen. xlv. 11. xlvii. 12. l. 21. The common version of the last clause above given is a correct paraphrase of the original, the form of which is highly idiomatic. A literal translation would be, *he will not give forever moving (or movement) to the righteous*. The verb

*to give* is often used in Hebrew in the sense of allowing or permitting. The word translated *moving* is the one so often used to signify the violent disturbance of a person in the midst of his prosperity. See above, on Ps. x. 6. xvi. 8, etc.

24 (23.) *And thou, God, wilt bring them down to the pit of corruption; men of blood and fraud shall not live out half their days.* The first verb is a causative and as such may be rendered, *thou wilt cause them to descend*. The word translated *pit* is the common term in Hebrew for a *well*, but is here used in a wide sense including all such excavations. The next word is (תִּבְּרָה) a derivative of the verb (תִּבְּרַךְ) to corrupt or destroy. The sense of *pit*, as if derived from the verb (תִּבְּרַךְ) to *sink*, would convert the phrase into a weak tautology. See above, on Ps. xvi. 10. Men of *bloods and deceit*, i. e. bloody (or murderous) and deceitful men, as in Ps. v. 7 (6) above. The literal translation of the last words is, *they shall not halve their days*, a form of expression copied in the margin of the English Bible, as well as in the Septuagint (ἡμισέσωσι) and Vulgate (*dimidiabunt*.) The meaning of course is, that they shall not live half so long as they might have lived, but for their bloody and deceitful acts. This is not asserted as a general fact, but uttered as a threatening to the murderers and traitors whom the Psalmist had directly in his eye.

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## PSALM LVI.

AFTER the title, v. 1, comes a general petition for deliverance from persecution and oppression, vs. 2, 3 (1, 2), followed by a strong expression of trust in God, vs. 4, 5 (3, 4), a description

of the malice of the enemy, vs. 6, 7 (5, 6), and a confident anticipation of his punishment, vs. 8—10 (7—9), founded on faith in the divine promise, vs. 11, 12 (10, 11), and a vow or resolution to make due acknowledgment of the mercy experienced, vs. 12, 13 (11, 12.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. Upon Jonath-elim-rehokim. By David. Michtam. When the Philistines took him in Gath.* The last clause of this inscription seems to refer to the incident recorded in 1 Sam. ch. xxi. See above, on Ps. xxxiv. 1. An enigmatical allusion to the same event seems to be latent in the obscure phrase, *Jonath-elim-rehokim*, in which the first word means a *dove*, a favourite emblem of suffering innocence; the second means *silence*, dumbness, sometimes put for uncomplaining submission; and the third means *distant* or *remote*, agreeing with places or persons, probably the latter, in which sense it is applicable to the Philistines, as aliens in blood and religion. Compare Ps. xxxviii. 14 (13.) lvi. 2 (1.) lxxv. 6 (5.) lxxiv. 19. Thus understood, the whole is an enigmatical description of David as an innocent and uncomplaining sufferer among strangers. For the most probable etymology and sense of *Michtam*, see above, on Ps. xvi. 1.

2 (1.) *Be merciful unto me, oh God, for man pants for me (or is gaping after me); all the day, he devouring (or the devourer) is pressing on me.* The word for *man* is that denoting human frailty and implying the unreasonableness of such rage in one so impotent. See above, on Ps. ix. 20, 21 (19, 20.) x. 18. The image here presented is that of a devouring monster or voracious beast. Instead of *pants* or *gapes*, some suppose the second verb to mean *snorts* or *snaps*, as an animal expression of rage. For the meaning of the word translated *devouring*, see above, on Ps. xxxv. 1. *Pressing on me*, or pressing me. See Num. xxii. 25.



3 (2.) *My enemies have gaped upon me all the day ; for (there are) many devourers to me, oh Most High.* The word translated *enemies* is that supposed by some to mean spies or watchers. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 11. liv. 7 (5.) Having first spoken of his enemy in the singular number, he now substitutes the plural, to explain which seems to be the object of the last clause. 'I say enemies, because my devourers are many.' The last word in the verse strictly means a high place, and particularly heaven, but is sometimes applied to God himself. See below, on Ps. xcii. 9 (8.) Some interpreters, however, understand it as an abstract noun meaning loftiness or pride, and then used as an adverb in the sense of arrogantly, proudly. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 8.

4 (3.) *The day I am afraid, unto thee will I confide.* The complaint is followed, as in many other cases, by an expression of his confidence in God. *The day I am afraid* is an unusual expression, meaning simply *when I am afraid*, and probably belonging to the dialect of poetry. *Unto thee* suggests the act of turning and looking towards the quarter from which help is expected. The same form of expression occurs above, Ps. iv. 6 (3.) xxxi. 7 (6.)

5 (4.) *In God I will praise his word, in God I have trusted, I will not fear ; what can flesh do unto me ?* The meaning of the first clause seems to be, that in the general praise of God he will include a particular acknowledgment of his gracious word or promise upon this occasion. The construction of the last clause in the English Bible, *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*, gives substantially the same sense, but does not agree so well with the masoretic interpunction of the sentence. *Flesh*, humanity, as opposed to deity. See below, on Ps. lxxv. 3 (2), and compare Isai. xxxi. 3. xl. 6.

6 (5.) *All the day my words they wrest ; against me (are) all*



*their thoughts for evil.* The word translated *wrest* means strictly *rex* or *pain*, but is here used in the sense of twisting or distorting language by putting false constructions on it. *Thoughts*, purposes, designs. *For evil*, tending to my injury.

7 (6.) *They will gather, they will hide—they, my supplanters, will watch, as they have (already) waited for my soul.* They will gather or combine against me. They will hide (themselves or their devices) they will plot, or lie in wait, for my destruction. The common explanation of the next phrase, *they mark my steps* or *my heels*, does not account for the emphatic pronoun *they*. The Hebrew word has probably the same sense as in Ps. xlix. 6 (5) above. *Waited for my soul or life*, i. e. waited to destroy it.

8 (7.) *By iniquity (there is) escape to them; in anger bring down nations, oh God!* The first clause is obscure, but may mean either that they have hitherto escaped by their iniquity, or that they now depend, rely upon it for deliverance. The interrogative construction commonly adopted ought not to be assumed, in the absence of an interrogative particle, without a decided exegetical necessity. The Hebrew particle at the beginning sometimes indicates the means or instrument, with the additional idea of dependence or reliance, as in the English phrase to live *on* bread and water. See Gen. xxvii. 40.

9 (8.) *My wanderings thou hast told; put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?* The Hebrew words for *wanderings* and *tears* are both in the singular number. See above, on Ps. vi. 7 (6) xxxix. 13 (12.) The first of these words suggests the ideas of flight and exile, and may contain an allusion to the wanderings of Cain in a country designated by this very word, *the Land of Nod*, Gen. iv. 16, although this phrase may really mean nothing more than *the land of (his) banishment* or *exile*. The English word *told* is here retained because the He-

brew one is equally ambiguous. In this case the primary idea is to count or number. See above, Ps. xxii. 17 (16.) xl. 5 (4), xlviii. 13 (12.) The act of counting implies particular attention. The idea of recollection is expressed by the strong figure which follows, *put my tears into thy bottle*, i. e. preserve them in thy memory. This singular metaphor is thought by some to have been suggested by the word for *wandering* (נָדַד or נִדָּד,) which is almost identical with that for *bottle* (בֹּטֶל) The latter strictly means a skin or leathern bottle, such as is still used in the East. See below, on Ps. cxix. 83. The interrogation in the last clause has the force of a direct assertion. *Thy book*, the book of thy remembrance, another figurative expression for the memory itself. Compare Mal. iii. 16.

10 (9.) *Then shall my enemies turn back, in the day I call; this I know, that God is for me.* The particle of time at the beginning of the verse has reference to what follows, *in the day I call*, but as this was to be connected closely with the last clause, the natural order of the sentence was inverted. *Turn back*, be repulsed, defeated, disappointed. See above, on Ps. vii. 12 (11.) ix. 4 (3.) *In the day (that) I shall call*: the ellipsis of the relative is equally common in Hebrew and in English. *Call* may mean simply *call for help* or *pray*; but some connect it with the last clause thus: *in the day that I shall call* (or cry as follows) "*this I know*," etc. There is also an ambiguity in the phrase *this I know*, which may either mean, 'I know that my enemies shall thus turn back, because God is for me,' or, 'my enemies shall turn back when they hear me cry. This much I know, to wit, that God is for me.' The last phrase may be also rendered *to me*, he belongs to me, he is my God, which of course includes the idea of his favour or his being on the speaker's side.

11 (10.) *In God I will praise (this) word; in Jehovah I will*

*praise (this) word.* This unusual form of speech must have the same sense as in v. 5 (4) above. Some understand it to mean *by God's help*, others, *in union with God, I will praise (his) word*. But on the whole, the most natural explanation still seems to be, 'what I shall particularly praise in God, both as God, and as the tutelary God of Israel and my own, is the word of promise, which he has uttered and fulfilled in this case.'

12 (11.) *In God have I trusted; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?* As the foregoing verse is a resumption and emphatic iteration of the first clause of v. 5 (4), so this seems to bear the same relation to the last clause of that same verse. The only variation in the form of expression is the substitution of the literal term *man* (or *mankind*) for the more obscure term *flesh*. See above, on v. 5 (4.) Here again it is a possible construction, although not so agreeable to the masoretic accents, to make the interrogation an oblique one. 'I will not fear what man can do unto me.'

13 (12.) *Upon me, oh God, (are) thy vows; I will pay thanksgiving unto thee.* The first clause represents his vows or voluntary obligations as incumbent on himself and due to God, and he resolves to discharge them by thanksgivings, not merely verbal acknowledgments, but sacrificial tokens of his gratitude, such as were familiar to the ancient saints and recognised in the Law of Moses.

14 (13.) *For thou hast delivered my soul from death; (wilt thou) not (deliver) my feet from falling, to walk before God in the light of life?* The ellipsis in the second clause may also be supplied as follows, *hast thou not delivered*, as the only terms expressed are those of interrogation and negation. The word translated *falling* is a very strong one and means thrusting, casting down. The verbal root occurs above, in Ps. xxxv. 5. xxxvi.



13 (12.) *To walk before God* is to live in the enjoyment of his favour and protection. The *light of life* is opposed to the darkness of death. It may also be and usually is translated, *in the light of the living*, i. e. the light which living men enjoy. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 13.

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## P S A L M L V I I .

IN the first part of this psalm a sufferer describes his own afflictions, occasioned by the malice of his enemies, and earnestly prays to be delivered from them, vs. 2—5 (1—4.) In the second, he anticipates a favourable answer to his prayer, and praises God for it, vs. 6—12 (5—11.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. Destroy not. By David. A Secret. When he fled from before Saul in the cave.* The enigmatical inscription, *Al-tashheth, destroy not*, reappears in the titles of the next two psalms and of the seventy-fifth. As in other cases of the same kind, some interpreters regard it as a musical expression, others as the first words of a well-known poem, to the air of which this was to be sung. The best explanation is the one suggested by the Chaldee Paraphrase, to wit, that the Psalms which bear this title belong to that period of David's history, when he was under the perpetual necessity of saying *Destroy not*, and are therefore suited to all similar emergencies of other saints. It is not at all impossible, that this was a favourite saying of David in real life, the rather as it is borrowed from the prayer of Moses in Deut. ix. 26, of which it may be said to be an abbreviated citation, not unlike the Latin designations, *De Profundis*, *Miserere*, *Venite Exsultemus*, *Non Nobis Domine*, *Tu Deum*, etc.



The explanation above given is corroborated by the obvious allusion in these three psalms (lvii—lix) to the Sauline persecution. The very expression may be traced in 1 Sam. xxvi. 9, where David utters, as a command to his followers, what he so often had occasion to utter as a prayer in his own behalf. The psalm is described as a *mich-tam*, mystery, or secret, on account of the extraordinary consolation and support which he experienced, enabling him to triumph even in the midst of enemies and dangers. See above, on Ps. 16: 1. *In the cave* of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1), or of Engedi (1 Sam. xvi. 1—3), or more indefinitely *in the cave*, equivalent to saying *in caves*, as a generic description of the mode of life which he then led (Heb. xi. 38), not without some reference to the subterraneous cavern, as an emblem of solitude and darkness. Hence the absence of any more specific allusion to particular incidents which occurred in caves, such as that recorded in 1 Sam. xxiv, and the obvious reference to the whole period of the Sauline persecution, as a time of wandering, danger, and distress. Hence, too, the striking similarity, in sentiment and form, between this psalm and the one before it.

2 (1.) *Be merciful unto me, oh God, be merciful unto me, for in thee has my soul sought refuge, and in the shadow of thy wings will I seek refuge, until (these) calamities be overpast.* The repetition of the prayer for mercy shows the intensity of his desire. *Sought refuge* from the persecutions mentioned in Ps. lvi. 2 (1.) *The soul* is mentioned as the object of pursuit. See above, on Ps. liv. 5 (4.) lvi. 7 (6), and compare 1 Sam. xxiv. 12. (11.) *The shadow of thy wings*: the same beautiful figure for protection is presented in Ps. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 8 (7.) *Calamities*, occasioned by the crimes of others. See above, on Ps. lii. 4, 9 (2, 7.)

3 (2.) *I will cry unto God Most High, unto the Almighty, finishing for me, i. e. perfecting what he has begun.* Compare Phil. i. 6. This verse assigns two reasons for his crying unto

God. The first is the supremacy and omnipotence of God himself, the second is the previous experience of his faithfulness in fully performing whatever he has promised. See below, on Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

4 (3.) *He will send from heaven and save me—(when or whom) the devourer reviles, Selah!—God will send his mercy and his truth.* The first verb may govern *hand*, as in Ps. cxliv. 7, or *help*, as in Ps. xx. 3 (2), or be used absolutely, as in Ps. xviii. 17 (16.) *The devourer*, literally the one gaping after me, snorting with rage against me, or panting for my destruction. See above, on Ps. lvi. 2, 3 (1, 2.) Without supplying anything, this clause may be taken as a short independent proposition—*the devourer has reviled*—interposed between the two principal members of the sentence. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 8. xlv. 6 (5.) In the last clause, Mercy and Truth seem to be personified, like Integrity and Uprightness in Ps. xxv. 21, Violence and Strife in Ps. lv. 10 (9.) With this clause compare Ps. xliii. 3.

5 (4.) *My soul (is) in the midst of lions; I will lie down (among) burning ones, sons of man, (whose) teeth (are) spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.* By his soul he means himself, or rather his endangered life. *Lions*, as often elsewhere, means ferocious enemies. See above, on Ps. vii. 3 (2.) xxii. 13, 14 (12, 13.) The form of the verb which follows is the one denoting fixed determination. ‘Though surrounded by lions I will fearlessly lie down, etc.’ *Among* or *upon* them. *Burning* may possibly refer to *lions* and mean *raging*; but the indefinite application is more natural. *Sons of man* is added to show that what precedes is to be figuratively understood; but in the very next clause, the writer relapses into language still more highly metaphorical. In likening their teeth to swords he presents the double image of a wild beast and a warrior. The mention of the tongue has reference, no doubt, to the slander and abuse, which

entered so largely into the Sauline persecutions. These had already been referred to in the middle clause of v. 4 (3), of which this may be regarded as an amplification.

6 (5.) *Be high above the heavens, oh God, above all the earth thy glory!* Some, in the last clause, read *on all the earth* and then explain *on the heavens* to mean nothing more than *in heaven*. The whole verse then is the expression of a wish that God may be exalted both in heaven and earth. But this is far less natural than the usual construction, which supposes a comparison, and makes the verse exalt God above all his works. Compare Ps. viii. 2 (1.)

7 (6.) *A net they prepared for my steps; he pressed down my soul; they digged before me a pit; they fell into the midst of it. Selah.* This verse assigns the reason or occasion of the praise ascribed to God in that before it. The image here presented is the same as in Ps. vii. 16 (15.) ix. 16 (15.) The sudden change of number is particularly common in the psalms when speaking of an ideal person, representing many real individuals. See above, on Ps. lvi. 3 (2.) The phrase *pressed down* is borrowed from the Prayer Book version, and is well suited to convey the idea of an animal caught and held down by a trap or snare. That version is also more correct than the English Bible in giving to the verb an active meaning; of the neuter or passive there is no example elsewhere. *Before me*, in my path, where I am walking. The *Selah* at the close is almost equivalent to an *Amen*, as expressing acquiescence in God's righteous retributions.

8 (7.) *Fixed (is) my heart, oh God, fixed (is) my heart; I will sing and play.* The repetition adds solemnity and force to the declaration. *Fixed*, i. e. firmly resolved and proof against all fear. See above, on Ps. li. 12 (10.) and below on Ps. cxii. 7. The two verbs in the last clause are properly descriptive of the



two kinds of music, vocal and instrumental ; but in the usage of the psalms they always have reference to the praise of God.

9 (8.) *Awake my glory! awake lute and harp! I will awaken morning.* The same idea is now expressed in the form of a poetical apostrophe. By *glory* most interpreters understand the *soul*, as the glory of the whole man, but some the *tongue*, as the glory of the body. See above, on Ps. vii. 6. (5.) xvi. 9. xxx. 13, and below, on Ps. cviii. 2 (1.) It is possible however that it here means that in which he gloried, his inspiration as a sacred poet, and which he personifies, as the heathen poets invoked the muse. *Lute and harp* is the translation in the Prayer Book. Any other combination, denoting two familiar instruments, such as *harp and lyre*, would be here appropriate. The verb in the last clause is a causative of that in the first, and is related to it as the English verb *awaken* to *awake*. Strictly translated, this clause contains a bold but beautiful poetical conception, that of awakening the dawn instead of being awakened by it, in other words, preventing or anticipating it by early praises. In like manner, Ovid says the crowing of the cock *evocat auroram*. We thus obtain the same sense, in a far more striking form, than is expressed by the inexact and prosaic version, *I will awake early*. The intransitive sense given to the verb, and the adverbial sense given to the noun, are both without sufficient authority in usage. From this verse some have inferred, that the psalm was expressly designed to be an even-song ; but he does not say, I will do thus to-morrow. The meaning rather is that he will do it daily. See above, on Ps. xvii. 15. The summons to the harp and lyre may be understood as implying, that they have long slept without occasion for such praise as they are now to utter.

10 (9.) *I will thank thee among the nations, Lord ; I will praise thee among the peoples.* The divine interposition to be



celebrated is so great and glorious as to be entitled to the praises of the whole world. See above, on Ps. xviii. 50 (49.)

11 (10.) *For great unto the heavens (is) thy mercy, and unto the clouds thy truth.* By a natural and favourite hyperbole, God's goodness is described as reaching from earth to heaven. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 6 (5), and compare Jer. li. 9.

12 (11.) *Be thou high above the heavens, oh God, above all the earth thy glory!* The strophe ends as it began in v. 6 (5) above. In the last clause the verb of the first may be repeated, *be thy glory high*; or the substantive verb alone may be supplied, *let thy glory be above all the earth!*

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## PSALM LVIII.

1. *To the Chief Musician. Al-tashheth. By David. Mich-tam.* See above, on Ps. lvii. 1. The Psalmist complains of unjust, spiteful, hardened enemies, vs. 2—6 (1—5), and prays that their power may be broken, vs. 7—12 (6—11.) The contents of the psalm agree with its title in showing that it belongs to the period of Saul's persecutions, when David had to contend with unjust rulers, who were at the same time his personal enemies. But although suggested by his own experience, the psalm was designed for permanent and public use, and is therefore inscribed *to the Chief Musician.*

2 (1.) *Are ye indeed dumb (when) ye (should) speak righteousness (and) judge equitably, sons of man?* The first words

are exceedingly obscure. One of them (דִּבְלִי), not expressed in the English and the ancient versions, means *dumbness*, as in Ps. lvi. 1, and seems to be here used as a strong expression for *entirely speechless*. In what respect they were thus dumb, is indicated by the verb which follows, but the connection can be made clear in English only by a circumlocution. The interrogation, *are ye indeed*, expresses wonder, as at something scarcely credible. Can it be so? is it possible? are you really silent, you whose very office is to speak for God and against the sins of men? See Deut. i. 16, 17. That the speaking here meant is judicial speaking, appears from the more specific parallel expression. The word translated *equitably* is a plural noun meaning *equities* or *rectitudes*. See above, on Ps. xvii. 2. Strictly understood, it is not a qualifying term, but the object of the verb *judge*, as in the other clause *righteousness* is governed directly by the verb *speak*. The address to them as *sons of man* reminds them of their own dependence and responsibility.

3 (2.) *Nay, in heart, iniquities ye practise; in the land, the violence of your hands ye weigh.* The particle at the beginning is as usual emphatic, meaning, not only this but something more. See above, Ps. xviii. 49 (48.) xlv. 10 (9.) Not contented with neglecting their official functions, they were guilty of positive injustice. The Hebrew for *iniquities* is the plural of a word used in Ps. xxxvii. 1. xliii. 1, and denotes various acts of injustice. The future forms (*ye will do, ye will weigh*) implies an obstinate persistency in evil. To do or practise wickedness in heart may mean to plan or contrive it, as in Mic. ii. 1, leaving the execution to be inferred as a matter of course. Or the phrase may be translated *with the heart*, i. e. cordially, *ex animo*, *con amore*, or to use an idiomatic English expression, *with a will*. The first words of the last clause, *in the land*, may seem, from their position, to be in contrast with the phrase *in heart*; but the antithesis, if any, is between the *heart* and *hands*, and *in the*

*land* suggests the aggravating circumstance, that all this was practised by persons in authority under the theocracy, among the chosen people. *Violence*, violent injustice. See above, on Ps. lv. 10 (9.) The last verb in this sentence means to *level* or *make even*, and in that sense is repeatedly applied to paths. See Isai. xxvi. 7. Prov. iv. 26. v. 6, 21. But as the derivative noun (פָּזָז) means a balance (Prov. xvi. 11. Isai. xl. 12), the verb may here denote the act of *weighing*, levelling the balance, rendering it even, which some without necessity ascribe to it in several of the places above cited, where its constant combination with a way or path seems to exclude the idea of weighing as incongruous, and to require that of smoothing or levelling as peculiarly appropriate. This last might be retained even here, and the metaphor be understood to mean that they facilitated or promoted violence (q. d. levelled or prepared its way); but the sense of weighing is equally appropriate and agrees well with the favourite idea of the scales of justice, which is found not only in the classics but in Scripture. See Job xxxi. 6. The meaning then is, that these wicked rulers, instead of weighing out justice to their subjects, weighed out, administered, dispensed, the most violent injustice, and that too devised and practised by themselves.

4 (3.) *Estranged are the wicked from the womb; they go astray from (their) birth, speaking lies.* The first verb in Hebrew is not a passive but a neuter form, denoting the condition of estrangement, alienation, from God and from all goodness. *The wicked* thus described are the whole class, of which his persecutors formed a part. The preterite tense is used in the original (*were estranged, went astray*) on account of the retrospective reference to the beginning of life. The verb translated *go astray* is one frequently applied to moral aberrations. *From their birth*, literally, *from the belly*. See above, Ps. xxii. 11 (10.) *Speaking lies*, or with closer adherence to the form of the

original, *speakers of falsehood*, i. e. habitual liars. The other version seems to mean that they begin to lie as soon as they are born, a hyperbolical expression, of which some interpreters relieve the sentence by making this the subject of the proposition and parallel to *wicked* in the other clause. *Speakers of falsehood go astray from (their) birth*. In this description of the wicked there is nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of universal depravity, as recognised in Ps. xiv. 1. li. 7 (5) above, and in Gen. viii. 21. Job xiv. 4, because the holiness of some men is a mere exception to the general rule, produced by the distinguishing grace of God, which frees them from the paramount influence of that corruption to which others still continue subject.

5, 6 (4, 5.) *There is poison to them like the poison of a serpent, as a deaf adder stops its ear, which will not hearken to the voice of enchanters, of (one) charming charms, (of one) most wise*. The first words are equivalent to the English construction, *they have poison*. The Hebrew noun originally signifies *heat*, and especially the heat of anger, in which sense it repeatedly occurs above, Ps. vi. 2 (1.) xxxvii. 8. xxxviii. 2 (1.) The same sense is retained here by the ancient versions (*θυμός*, *furor*), and agrees well with the popular idea of vindictive spite, as a natural instinct of this class of animals. But most interpreters explain the word, here and in Deut. xxxii. 24, as meaning *venom*, animal poison, so called from its inflammatory effects upon the person bitten. The Hebrew phrase translated *like* means strictly *after* (or *according to*) *the likeness of*. Compare its use in Gen. i. 26. It may be here employed, instead of the simple particle of comparison, for the sake of emphasis, as we say *like*, but more emphatically *just like*. As to the species of serpent mentioned in the second clause of v. 5 (4), all that is necessary to a correct interpretation of the verse is to understand it as denoting a variety regarded as peculiarly malignant, and therefore resisting the incantations by which other species were subdued, especially in



Egypt. See the allusions to this practice in Eccl. x. 11. Jer. viii. 17. This clause admits of a different construction, *like the deaf adder he stops his ear*, which some interpreters prefer because an adder cannot stop its ears, and need not stop them if naturally deaf, whereas it is by stopping his that the wicked man becomes like a deaf adder. The word translated *enchanters* properly means *whisperers* or *mutterers*, in allusion to familiar practices of the ancient wizards. *Charming charms*, laying spells, or as the Hebrew words are commonly supposed to signify originally, *tying knots* with a magical design. The last word in v. 6 (5) is a passive participle, analogous to our word *learned*, and here meaning *skilful*. The English versions and the Vulgate make it an adverb (*sapienter*, *never so wisely*;) but the Septuagint and Jerome give it its proper meaning as an adjective, in which case it is probably in apposition with the nouns preceding, and connected in like manner with the *voice* of the first clause. The general idea of the verse, however construed, is that the malice of his enemies is stubborn and inexorable.

7 (6.) *Oh God, crush their teeth in their mouth; the grinders of the young lions shatter, oh Jehovah!* The complaint is now followed by a prayer, that these ferocious enemies may be disarmed and disabled. This idea is expressed by the use of the same figure as in Ps. iii. 8 (7), that of wild beasts rendered harmless by the breaking of their teeth. Compare Job xxix. 17. Hence in the last clause they are expressly called lions. See above, Ps. lvii. 5 (4.) *Young lions*, not mere whelps, from which they are distinguished in Ezek. xix. 2, 3, but full-grown lions, in the first maturity of their strength, and therefore more to be dreaded than when older or younger. See above, Ps. xvii. 12. xxxiv. 11 (10.) xxxv. 17. The Hebrew verbs in this verse are peculiarly expressive, and, though wholly unconnected with each other, are both used elsewhere to express the ideas of violently breaking, breaking down, breaking out, breaking off, and break-

ing through. See Ex. xv. 7. xix. 21. Lev. xiv. 45. Judg. vi. 30. 1 Kings xviii. 30.

8 (7.) *Let them melt away as waters, let them go their way; let him bend his arrows, as if they were cut off.* The optative meaning of these futures seems to be determined by the imperatives in v. 7 (6.) There is nothing ungrammatical, however, in retaining the strict future sense, and regarding the verse as an expression of strong confidence as to the event. The first verb elsewhere has the sense of being rejected with contempt, and is so used in Ps. xv. 9; but as two of its radical letters coincide with those of a verb meaning to be melted, most interpreters prefer this sense. The other might however be retained, and the phrase explained to mean that they should be cast aside as water, and especially as filthy water, is rejected. *Go their way*, literally, *go to them* or to themselves. Some understand it to mean *for themselves*, i. e. for their own benefit, their destruction being represented, by a sort of irony, as all that they have gained by their hostility. Compare the use of the same phrase in Ps. lxiv. 6 (5.) lxvi. 7 (6.) In the next clause, most interpreters assume a sudden change of number, such as frequently occurs in speaking of an ideal person representing a plurality of real individuals. See above, on Ps. lvii. 4, 7 (3, 6.) *He* (i. e. the enemy) *shall bend his arrows*, literally, *tread them*, i. e. bend by treading on them. This expression is applicable strictly to the bow, and it is so applied repeatedly above. See Ps. vii. 13 (12.) xi. 2. xxxvii. 14. Having thus acquired the secondary sense of fitting, making ready, it is transferred from the bow to the arrows, not only here but in Ps. lxiv. 4 (3) below. If the last verb be construed with the arrows as its subject, they would seem to be described as blunted or deprived of their points, and the meaning of the clause is, that the weapons of the enemy take no effect. The whole clause, however, will admit of a different construction, which refers the singular verb and pronoun

to God himself, and the plural verb to these rebellious sinners. Let him bend his arrows, as if they were cut off, i. e. so that they may be cut off. Notwithstanding the obscurity of this clause, the connection is preserved unbroken by the obvious meaning of the other.

9 (8.) *As a snail melts, let him go; (like) the untimely birth of a woman, they have not beheld the sun.* The idea of speedy and entire disappearance is still more strongly expressed here. The meaning of the word translated *snail* rests upon rabbinical tradition and a doubtful etymology. The point of comparison may relate to some popular belief or to some apparent idiosyncrasy in this class of animals, perhaps to the idea of its losing a portion of its body by locomotion. The next noun primarily signifies what falls from the tree, unripe fruit, and is then transferred to animal abortions. The past tense in the last clause seems to mark it as a kind of reflection introduced into the midst of the prayer. 'So far from living too long, as I feared, they seem scarcely to have lived at all.'

10 (9.) *Before your pots can feel the thorn, whether raw or done, he will blow him away.* This is one of the obscurest and most difficult verses in the book, and yet the general idea is sufficiently clear. The *he* in the last clause relates to God, the *him* to his wicked enemy. The verb translated *blow away* means properly to *storm away*, or carry away with (or like) a tempest. The rapidity of this movement is expressed by a familiar comparison. *Your pots*, your vessels used in cooking. The address seems to be to the sinners, afterwards referred to as a single person. *Feel*, perceive the heat. Compare Job vi. 30. *The thorn*, used as fuel, kindles quickly and immediately burns out, so that this comparison suggests the idea of a very sudden change. The singular expression which follows literally means *as (well) living as heat*; but as the adjective is elsewhere used to signify *raw*,



not cooked (1 Sam. ii. 15), the noun joined with it may be taken in the opposite sense of *cooked* or *done*. This may be a proverbial expression, borrowed from the dialect of common life, to convey the idea of a sudden change, which waits for nothing, but carries men away in the midst of their employments. This, though still an unusual form of speech, will seem less unnatural if we suppose the process of cooking to be here used as a figure for the plots and devices of the enemy, a metaphor by no means far-fetched or unknown to other writers. The idea then is that while these devices, so to speak, are cooking, the cooks are snatched away by a superior power, without caring whether the operation is complete or not. 'Before the seething pot of your contrivances begins to feel the quickly kindled heat which you apply to it, the tempest of divine wrath carries you away, whether your mess be cooked or raw.'

11 (10.) *Rejoice shall the righteous because he has seen vengeance ; his steps he shall bathe in the blood of the wicked.* The vengeance in which he shall rejoice is not his own but God's, in the vindication of whose righteousness and honour all holy beings must rejoice forever, although not in the suffering of those who perish. The same idea is expressed more strongly in the last clause by a martial figure. To bathe his feet (or rather his steps) in the blood of others is to walk where their blood is flowing, to tread the battle-field where they have fallen, to gain a sanguinary triumph over them, or rather it is to partake in the triumph of another. Thus one of the old commentators says, that David washed his feet in Saul's blood, Elijah in Ahab's, Hezekiah in Sennacherib's, without any agency or share in their destruction, and without any selfish or malignant exultation in their ruin. Let it also be observed that in this, as in many like cases, the act is ascribed to an ideal person, and is therefore no example for our imitation.



12 (11.) *And man shall say, yes, there is fruit to the righteous ; yes, there is a God judging in the earth.* This shall be said not by *a man*, nor by any particular man, but by men in general, by man as opposed to God. The particle translated *yes* really means *only*, and denotes that this and nothing else is true. See above, on Ps. xxxix. 12 (11.) *There is fruit to the righteous*, or in our idiom, *he has fruit*, i. e. he reaps what he has sown. Compare Isai. iii. 10, 11. The very power that destroys his enemies is his protector. The idea of existence is expressed in the last clause contrary to usage, and is therefore emphatic. *THERE IS*, notwithstanding all denials, doubts, and false appearances, *THERE* is a God, judging in the earth. Another unusual circumstance in this clause is that not only the divine name, but the participle agreeing with it, is in the plural number. The same thing occurs in Josh. xxiv. 19. 1 Sam. xvii. 26. In this case it may possibly be intended to suggest the idea, that although these earthly representatives of God are so unfaithful, there are nevertheless gods judging in the earth, i. e. one God who possesses in himself the source of all the justice exercised by other beings. See above, on Ps. xi. 7.

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## P S A L M L I X .

THIS psalm consists of two parallel parts, in both which the succession of ideas is substantially the same. A sufferer complains of treacherous and cruel enemies, vs. 2—5 (1—4), prays to be delivered from them, v. 6 (5), and confidently anticipates their ruin, vs. 7—12 (6—11.) In the second part, we have again, in

the same order, the complaint, v. 13 (12) the prayer, v. 14 (13), and the anticipation, vs. 15—18 (14—17.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. Al-tashheth. By David. Mich-tam. When Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.* This remarkable incident in David's life, which was the beginning of his long and painful wanderings, is recorded, almost in the same words, 1 Sam. xix. 11. The title or inscription is the same as in the two preceding psalms.

2 (1.) *Free me from my enemies, my God, from those rising up (against) me thou wilt raise me*, i. e. place me beyond their reach. Here, as often elsewhere, the tone of supplication is insensibly exchanged for that of confident anticipation. But the change is momentary, and the form of supplication is immediately resumed. *My insurgents* or assailants: see above, on Ps. xvii. 7. The idea and expression at the close are the same as in Ps. xx. 2 (1.) Compare Ps. xviii. 49 (48.)

3 (2.) *Free me from workers of iniquity, and from men of blood save me.* The same words and phrases have occurred repeatedly before. See above, Ps. v. 6 (5.) vi. 9 (8.) xiv. 4. xxvi. 9. xxviii. 3. This verse and the one before it constitute the general introductory petition, the ground and reason of which are afterwards assigned.

4 (3.) (This I ask) *because* (such enemies as I have just described) *have laid wait for my soul* (or life); *there assemble against me strong ones, not (for) my transgression and not (for) my sin, Jehovah!* Or, (it is) *not my fault nor my sin, Jehovah.*

5 (4.) *Without iniquity* (on my part, to excuse or even to provoke them) *they run and set themselves* (against me.) Both these are military terms and seem to denote strictly the sealing

of a wall. See above, on Ps. xviii. 30 (29.) *Awake* (arouse thyself from this apparent inactivity) *to meet me* (to respond to my petition), *and see* (my danger and the malice of my enemies.)

6 (5.) *And thou, Jehovah, God, (Lord of) Hosts, God of Israel, awake to visit all the nations; spare not all traitors of iniquity. Selah.* The accumulation of divine names is not unmeaning, but suggestive of reasons why the prayer should be answered, to wit, because He to whom it was addressed was not only the Eternal, Self-existent God, the Sovereign of the Universe, but the God of Israel, and therefore bound by covenant to save his people. *All the nations*, i. e. such as are the enemies of God and of his people; and if whole nations are thus dealt with, how much more may Jehovah be expected to destroy his individual enemies. *Traitors of iniquity*, wicked traitors. The depth of the feeling here expressed is further indicated by the *Selah*.

7 (6.) *Let them return at evening, let them howl like the dog, and go around the city.* The verbs may also be rendered as simple futures, expressive of a confident anticipation: *they shall return*, etc. In either case, the verse contains a metaphorical description of the disappointment of the enemy, who are here compared to the gregarious untamed dogs, by which the oriental cities are infested. As these dogs prowl about the streets in search of food and howl for want of it, so let (or so shall) my wicked enemies. Others, with equal probability, explain this verse as a description of their present fierceness and avidity.

8 (7.) *Lo, they pour out with their mouths; swords (are) in their lips; for who (is) hearing?* He here reverts to his description and complaint of his enemies. The first verb is expressive of a constant flow or gush. See above, on Ps. xix. 3 (2.) What it is that they thus pour out, although not expressed, may be readily gathered from the context, namely, slanders and re-



proaches. The *swords in their lips* are significant of sharp and cutting speeches. See above, on Ps. lv. 22 (21), and compare Ps. lii. 4 (3.) The English version, by supplying "*say they*," makes the last clause the language of these wicked foes, who are then to be understood as denying God's omniscience or his justice. See above, on Ps. x. 11, 13, and compare Ps. xiv. 1. xlii. 11 (10.) But a still more striking sense may be obtained by making this clause the complaint of the Psalmist himself, as if he had said: no wonder that they thus pour out their bitter words; for who is there to observe and punish them? The question implies that God himself had ceased to notice their offences, and the participial form, that this neglect had now become habitual.

9 (8.) *And thou, Jehovah, wilt laugh at them; thou wilt mock at all nations.* The resistance of whole nations, or of all collectively, is but an object of contempt to thee; how much more that of even the most potent individuals. See above, on Ps. ii. 4. xxxvii. 13. The connection between this verse and the one before it depends upon the meaning of the question with which v. 8 (7) closes. If that be regarded as the language of the enemy, the thought to be supplied is, 'but although they thus imagine that thou dost not hear, thou wilt soon undeceive them by deriding them.' On the other supposition it is this: 'although I am continually tempted to say, who doth hear? I am nevertheless persuaded that thou dost hear and despise their impotent malignity'

10 (9.) *His strength unto thee will I keep, for God is my high place.* The first clause is so obscure that some interpreters have thought it necessary to change the text (צִדְּךָ for צִדְּי) and read *my strength*, i. e. thou who art my strength, *for thee will I watch or wait.* Some who retain the common text suppose a sudden change of person, (as for) *his strength*, i. e. God's, *I will watch for thee, oh God!* But this is much less natural than the common

version, (*because of*) *his strength*, i. e. the enemy's, *will I wait upon thee*. According to the first translation above given, the meaning of the clause is, I will reserve the strength and violence of the enemy, to be dealt with and disposed of by Jehovah. *My high place*, beyond the reach of enemies and dangers. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) xviii. 3 (2.) xlv. 8, 12 (7, 11.)

11 (10.) *My God (with) his mercy will meet me; God will make me to gaze upon my enemies*. This translation of the first clause follows the reading in the text of the Hebrew Bible. The common version exhibits the marginal or masoretic emendation, *the God of my mercy*, i. e. my merciful God, or the God who shows me mercy, *shall prevent me*, in the primary and proper sense of coming before me. The idea here is that of coming to meet one in a friendly manner. See above, on Ps. xxi. 4 (3), and compare the unfavourable meaning of the same verb in Ps. xvii. 13. xviii. 6 (5), 19 (18.) *To gaze*, i. e. with joy and triumph. See above, on Ps. liv. 9 (7.) This is equivalent to saying, he will give me the victory. The word for *enemies* is the same as in Ps. v. 9 (8.)

12 (11.) *Slay them not, lest my people forget; make them wander by thy power and bring them down, our shield, oh Lord!* The meaning of the first clause, as appears from the context, is, destroy them not utterly, or once for all. *My people*, i. e. Israel, the chosen race. *Make them wander*, like Cain and like Israel in the wilderness, to both which cases the same verb is applied, Gen. iv. 12. Num. xxxii. 13. These are tacitly referred to, as familiar examples of this kind of punishment, inflicted both on individuals and nations. *Bring them down*, cause them to descend, from their present high position, humble them, and make their humiliation an example and a warning to all others. This was signally fulfilled in the case of Saul and his household, as

well as in that of the nations which resisted the divine will and oppressed the chosen people, to both which cases the expressions of this psalm are designedly appropriate. *Our shield*, our protector; not only *mine* but *ours*; not only David's but all Israel's. The figure of a shield is a favourite one with David. See above, on Ps. iii. 4 (3.) xviii. 3 (2.) xxviii. 7. It is not only striking and expressive, but historically associated with the origin of the nation in the calling of Abraham and the patriarchal promises. See Gen. xv. 1.

13 (12.) *The sin of their mouth—the word of their lips—and they shall be taken in their pride—and from cursing and falsehood they will tell.* This is a close translation of this very obscure verse, that is to say, obscure in its particular expressions, though its general sense is obvious enough. The construction given in the English versions, (for) *the sin of their mouth* (and) *the word of their lips*, *they shall be taken*, either overlooks the copulative particle before the verb or makes it unmeaning, *they shall even be taken*. The latest interpreters prefer to render it, *the sin of their mouth (is) the word of their lips*, i. e. the word of their lips is the sin of their mouth; whatever they speak is spoken sinfully; they cannot speak without committing sin. *They shall be taken*, caught, surprised, as they have sought to surprise others. See above, Ps. ix. 16 (15.) xxxv. 8. It may also be read as an expression of desire, *may they be taken!* *In their pride*, not merely on account of it, although this is included, but in the midst of it, in the act of indulging it. *From cursing* represents their capture as *arising* (or *proceeding*) *from* their cursing, and may therefore be translated *for*, as in the English Bible. *Cursing*, or rather *swearing* in attestation of a falsehood. See above, on Ps. x. 7. The phrase to *tell a falsehood* is common to both idioms. Most interpreters supply a relative, (*which*) *they tell*, or *will tell*. Otherwise, *from* must be understood as meaning *of, concerning*.



14 (13.) *Consume in wrath, consume (them), and let them be no more, and let them know that God (is) ruling in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth.* The first verb strictly means to cause to cease, to finish, to destroy so that nothing is left. *Let them be no more*, let them cease to be. By itself, the Hebrew phrase would seem to mean, *and they are not*, but the tense, which is not expressed in the original, must be determined by the prayer preceding. The last clause might at first sight seem to mean, let my enemies know that God rules not only in Israel but throughout the earth. But this is forbidden by the prayer that they may cease to be, and would require a connective particle of some sort after *Jacob*. The true construction, indicated by the accents, is, *and let them* (i. e. men in general) *know, to the ends of the earth, that God (is) ruling* (i. e. habitually rules) *in Jacob*. This description of the whole world as witnessing and interested in God's dealings with his chosen people, is in strict accordance with the very end for which he chose them, and is particularly characteristic of David. See above, on Ps. xviii. 50 (49.) lvii. 6, 10, 12 (5, 9, 11), and compare his language to Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 46 : "this day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee . . . . . that all the earth may know, that there is a God in Israel."

15 (14.) *Then let them return at evening, howl like the dog, and go around the city.* The first word in Hebrew is a simple copulative, meaning *and* ; but the connection seems to be, since God is my protector and these enemies are doomed to destruction, let them threaten as they will, I shall not fear them. It is equally grammatical, though not so natural, to understand the verse as a prediction or confident anticipation of the miserable state to which these enemies should be reduced, like a herd of oriental dogs without a master or a home, prowling about in search of food, and howling with hunger, but remaining still unsatisfied. See above, on v. 7 (6.)

16 (15.) *They shall wander* (in quest of something) *to eat,* (and) *if they are not satisfied, remain all night.* This sentence is obscure, whether it be understood as a defiance or a threatening, though the latter construction is recommended by the emphatic pronoun at the beginning. *They themselves*, the very persons who now threaten me, shall roam about in search of food, etc. The most probable meaning of the last clause is: and not being satisfied, not finding what they seek, they must continue seeking it by night as well as by day. The conversive particle before the last word seems to be here equivalent to *then* or *still* after a conditional clause—‘if they are not satisfied, *then* they shall remain all night’—or ‘though they be not satisfied, *yet* must they remain all night.’

17 (16.) *And I will sing thy strength, and celebrate in the morning thy mercy; for thou hast been a high place to me, a refuge in my distress.* The pronoun at the beginning is emphatic, I, on my part, as contrasted with these wretches. *Thy strength* or *power*, thus exerted in my behalf. *In the morning*, or *at break of day*, which is the primary meaning of the term. The phrase is in obvious antithesis to *at evening* in v. 15 (14.) There may also be allusion to the frequent use of night and morning, as emblems of suffering and relief. Compare the words of David in 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. *A height*, high place, or place of safety, as in v. 10 (9) above. *In my distress*, or retaining the original construction, *in distress to me*. The form of expression is the same as in Ps. xviii. 7 (6.)

18 (17.) *My strength, unto thee will I sing; for God is my high place, the God of my mercy.* The most natural construction of the first phrase is that which makes it a direct address to God, as the author of his strength. But as the structure of the clause is precisely similar to that at the beginning of v. 10 (9), some adopt a similar construction, *my strength will I sing unto*

*thee.* I will praise my strength to thee, because I shall thereby praise thyself. This is equivalent to saying, I will celebrate thee as my strength. *High place*, place of safety, refuge, or asylum, as in vs. 10, 17 (9, 16.) *God of my mercy*, my merciful God, or the God who shows me mercy. See above, on v. 11 (10.)

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## PSALM LX.

1. *To the Chief Musician. On the Lily of Testimony. A Mystery. By David. To be Learnt.* The *lily* is probably, in this case as in Ps. xlv. 1, an emblem of beauty or loveliness. The *testimony* is a name given to the Law, as God's testimony against sin. See above, on Ps. xix. 8 (7), and compare 2 Kings xi. 12, where the term is applied absolutely to the Law, considered as a book or writing. This enigmatical inscription, therefore, may be understood as representing the theme or subject of the psalm to be the beauty of the law, or something lovely in it, with reference most probably to the gracious promise cited from it. At the same time, there seems to be an allusion to the precept in Deut. xxxi. 19, "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and TEACH it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a WITNESS for me against the children of Israel." To this verse there seems to be a double allusion in the one before us; first in the word *testimony*, which is a cognate form to that translated *witness*, and then in the concluding words, *to teach*, where the verb is the same with that in Deuteronomy. The title before us, therefore, seems to say, this song is like the song of Moses, which was to be taught



to the people, as a witness or testimony against them, in case of unbelief or disobedience. *To teach* then means *to be taught* or *to be learned* by heart, committed to memory. Compare 2 Sam. i. 18, where the English version incorrectly supplies (*use of*) *the bow*, instead of (*song of*) *the bow*, meaning the elegy on Saul and Jonathan which immediately follows, so called, according to an ancient custom, from the mention of Jonathan's favourite weapon in v. 22. See above, on Ps. ix. 1. From this enigmatical allusion, and the disguised form under which the truth is here revealed, the psalm is justly represented as a *Michtam*, mystery, or secret. See above, on the titles of the four preceding psalms. The body of the psalm, apart from the additional title or historical inscription in v. 2, may be divided into three equal stanzas or strophes, each consisting of four verses. In the first, the Psalmist takes occasion from God's seeming desertion of his people, to recall his former interventions in their favour, vs. 3—6 (1—4.) In the second, he pleads an express promise, as a ground of present hope, vs. 7—10 (5—8.) In the third, he expresses his confidence of safety and success, in the proposed expedition against Edom, vs. 11—14 (9—12.) Throughout the psalm the ideal speaker is Israel, considered as the chosen people.

2. *When he conquered Aram Naharaim and Aram Zobah, and Joab returned and smote Edom in the Valley of Salt, twelve thousand men.* The common version of the first verb (*strove with*) seems too weak, as a victory is clearly presupposed, and the idea of contention is conveyed by a cognate form of the same verb. The name *Aram* corresponds to *Syria* in its widest and vaguest sense, and is joined with other names to designate particular parts of that large country. It even includes Mesopotamia, which is a term of physical rather than political geography, and denotes the space between the Tigris and Euphrates, corresponding to *Aram-Naharaim*, or *Syria of the Two Rivers*, in the

verse before us. The king of this country was tributary to the king of Aram Zobah, as appears from the account of David's second Aramean war (2 Sam. x. 16, 19.) It was after the return of the victorious army from this war, that Joab marched against Edom and achieved the victory here ascribed to him, as the leader of the army, but in 1 Chron. xviii. 12, to his brother Abishai, who probably commanded under him, as he did in a subsequent campaign (2 Sam. x. 10), and in 2 Sam. viii. 13 to David himself as the sovereign whom they both represented. The *Valley of Salt* has been identified by modern travellers with a valley south of the Dead Sea, on the ancient confines of Israel and Edom. See Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 483. The number killed on this occasion is stated in 2 Sam. viii. 13 and 1 Chron. xviii. 12 at eighteen thousand. But this diversity might easily arise from different modes of computation, and seems at least to show that the writer of the verse before us did not blindly copy the historical books, while the smaller number which he gives evinces his exemption from all disposition to embellish or exaggerate.

3 (1.) *Oh God, thou hast cast us off; thou hast broken us; thou hast been angry; thou wilt restore to us* (thy favour or our previous prosperity.) Clear as the marks of thy displeasure have been, we still confidently look for thy returning favour. This may refer to disasters experienced in the former part of the campaign. *Cast us off*, with abhorrence and contempt, as in Ps. xliii. 2. xliv. 10, 24 (9, 23.) *Broken us*, or made a breach in us, which appears to be a military figure, and a favourite with David in real life. See 2 Sam. v. 20. vi. 8, and compare Judg. xxi. 15. Job xvi. 14. xxx. 14. The last verb means to restore, as in Ps. xix. 8. (7.) xxiii. 3, but in application to a different object. Compare Isai. lviii. 12.

4 (2.) *Thou hast made the earth quake, thou hast riven it;*

*heal its breaches, for it moves.* The idea of social disaster and calamity is here expressed by the figure of an earthquake and its natural effects, to which God is besought to put an end by the removal of the cause.

5 (3.) *Thou hast made thy people see (what is) hard ; thou hast made us drink wine of staggering (or reeling.)* The meaning of the first clause is, that God had made them experience hardship. See a similar expression in Ps. lxxi. 20. *Wine of staggering*, wine that causes men to reel or stagger, here used as a figure for confusion, weakness, and distress. The same image reappears in Ps. lxxv. 9 (8.) Isai. li. 17, 22. Jer. xxv. 15. xlix. 12. See above, on Ps. xi. 6.

6 (4.) *Thou hast given to those fearing thee a banner to be lifted because of (thy) truth. Selah.* In the sight of thy discomfited and downcast people, thou hast set up a signal, as a rallying point, and an assurance of the truth of thy engagements. The word (נִסִּי) translated *banner* means anything elevated as a signal, being derived from the following verb, which, in the form here used, means properly to *raise itself*, as in Zech. ix. 16. The word for *truth* is not the one commonly so rendered, but has the same meaning in Prov. xxii. 21, and in the Aramaic dialects. See Dan. ii. 47. iv. 34. *Because of*, literally, *from before* or *from the face of*, an expression indicating, as the cause of the effect described, the truth or veracity of God himself. The translation of the last clause in the ancient versions and some modern ones, *to flee from before the bow*, gives an unauthorized meaning both to the verb and noun.

7 (5.) *In order that thy beloved ones may be delivered, save (with) thy right hand and hear (or answer) us.* This is a prayer naturally prompted by the previous experience of God's favour, as recorded in the foregoing verse *Thy beloved*, an epithet



applied to Benjamin in Deut. xxxiii. 12, and forming a part of Solomon's additional name *Jedidiah*, 2 Sam. xii. 25. See also Ps. xlv. 1. The common version of the last words (*hear me*) rests upon the marginal reading or *Keri*.

8 (6.) *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will triumph; I will divide Shechem, and the Valley of Succoth I will measure.* As a further ground for his petition, the Psalmist, speaking in the name of Israel, appeals to the promise of Jehovah, that his people should possess the entire land of Canaan. The reference is not to any insulated promise, but to that pervading the whole Law. There *God had spoken*, uttered his promise, *in his holiness*, i. e. as a Holy God, and as such incapable of failing to perform it. See the similar expressions in Ps. lxxxix. 36 (35.) Am. iv. 2. Some understand what follows as the words which God had spoken; but as v. 11 (9) is confessedly the language of the people or their representative, and as no intermediate point of transition can be well assumed, it seems better to explain these also as the words of David or of Israel. 'God hath spoken in his holiness (and therefore) I will triumph.' Because he has promised me victorious possession of the land, I exult in confident anticipation of it. This idea of triumphant occupation is expressed in terms appropriate to the times of the original conquest, when the land was measured and distributed among the tribes. See Josh. xiii. 7. xviii. 5. The two great divisions of the country, east and west of Jordan, are denoted by Shechem and Succoth, the places where Jacob pitched his tent on his return from exile, as if to claim the Land of Promise as his heritage. See Gen. xxxiii. 17, 19.

9 (7.) *To me (belongs) Gilead and to me Manasseh, and Ephraim the strength of my head, Judah my lawgiver.* The idea still is that the whole of Canaan rightfully belongs to Israel. The form of expression is analogous to that in the preceding

verse, but with a beautiful variation. As the two great divisions of the country, east and west of Jordan, are there represented by detached points, Shechem and Succoth, so here by the names of extensive districts, Judah and Ephraim, the two largest territories on the west, Bashan and Gilead on the east, the latter called by its own name, the former by that of the tribe which occupied the greater part of it. See Deut. iii. 12, 13. The last clause does due honour to the military strength of Ephraim (Gen. xlviii. 19. Deut. xxxiii. 17), but asserts the civil supremacy of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10.) The phrase translated *strength of my head* might seem to mean *my chief strength*; but that would require the terms to be inverted, *head of my strength*. Compare Gen. xlix. 3. It rather means the protection of my head, as *strength of my life* in Ps. xxvii. 1 means that which protects my life, the head being mentioned as the vital part peculiarly exposed. Compare Ps. lxxviii. 22 (21.) cx. 6. Some suppose the figure to be that of a helmet, which is too specific. In the last clause there is obvious allusion to the prophecy in Gen. xlix. 10. *Lawgiver* has its proper sense of ruler, sovereign. That of rod or sceptre, which some give it, rests upon a doubtful explanation of Numb. xxi. 18.

10 (8.) *Moab (is) my wash-pot; at Edom will I throw my shoe; at me, Philistia, shout aloud!* The three hostile powers, with which Israel was most frequently at war, are here put together, as the objects of a contemptuous address. Moab is likened to the humblest household utensil, the vessel in which slaves were wont to wash their master's feet. Edom is likened to the slave himself, to whom or at whom the master throws his shoe when about to bathe his feet. Compare Matth. iii. 11. Acts xiii. 25. This is much better suited to the context than the allusion, which some assume, to the practice mentioned in Ruth iv. 7, where the removal of the shoe is a symbol of renunciation, and could not be here used to express the opposite idea of seizure or triumphant occupation. *Shout aloud, or make a noise*, is by

some explained as an expression of triumph, and the whole clause treated as ironical. Others understand it of the acclamation or shout of welcome and applause by which subjects recognise and hail their sovereign. See above, on Ps. ii. 11, where the exhortation to *rejoice with trembling* is, by the same interpreters, explained in the same manner. In either case, the clause implies superiority in him who speaks, and willing or compulsory subjection on the part of those whom he addresses.

11 (9.) *Who will bring me (to) the fenced city? Who has led me up to Edom?* In reliance on God's promise, and in the possession of the hope and courage just expressed, his people are ready to go forward, and only waiting, as it were, for some one to conduct them into the enemy's country, nay, into his very citadel. The *fenced city*, literally, *city of defence* or *fortification*, a phrase already used in Ps. xxxi. 22 (21,) is Petra, the famous capital of Idumea, hewn in the rock, and almost perfectly impregnable. See Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. II. pp. 573—580. The past tense in the last clause represents the question as already answered. *Up to*, even to, as far as, implying not mere motion or direction, but actual arrival.

12 (10.) (Is it) *not thou, oh God, (who) hast cast us off and wilt not go forth with our hosts?* A simpler construction of the first clause would be, *hast thou not cast us off?* But it seems better to explain the verse as an indirect answer to the question in the one preceding. Who has brought us into Edom, if not He who had rejected us? The terms are borrowed from Ps. xlv. 10 (9), which seems to have been written in the midst of the distress here spoken of as past. 'Wilt not thou, of whom we lately were compelled to say, thou hast forsaken us and wilt not go forth with our hosts?' Compare 2 Sam. v. 24.

13 (11.) *Give us help from trouble (or from the enemy); and*



(the rather because) *vain (is) the salvation of man*, i. e. the deliverance which man affords. The causal particle, *for, because*, which seems necessary to connect the clauses, is implied but not expressed in Hebrew. The second noun (צַר) may either mean *distress*, as in Ps. iv. 2 (1.) xviii. 7 (6), or one who gives distress, a persecuting or oppressing enemy, as in Ps. iii. 2 (1.) xiii. 5 (4.) xxvii. 2, 12. xlv. 6, 8, 11 (5, 7, 10.) Either sense would be appropriate, but the latter is strongly recommended by its occurrence in the next verse.

14 (12.) *In God we will make* (i. e. gain or gather) *strength, and he will tread down* (or *trample on*) *our adversaries* (persecutors or oppressors.) The prayer is followed by the confident anticipation of the answer. *In God*, i. e. in union with him, in possession of him. See above, on Ps. xviii. 30 (29.) The common version of the next phrase (*shall do valiantly*) is vague and dubious, being inadmissible in several of the cases where the phrase occurs, whereas they all admit of the translation *make or gather strength*, in reference to the acquisition or recovery of force by those who had before been in a state of weakness. See below, on Ps. cviii. 14 (13.) cxviii. 15, 16, and compare Ezek. xxviii. 4. Ruth iv. 11. Deut. viii. 17, 18. Num. xxiv. 18, to the last of which places there is obvious allusion here, as relating to the very same enemies. *Treading* or *trampling*, as an emblem of violent subjection, occurs above in a contemporaneous passage, Ps. xlv. 6 (5.) The last eight verses reappear as a part of Ps. cviii, in the exposition of which the points of difference and the general relation of the passages will be considered.

## P S A L M L X I .

1. *To the Chief Musician—on a stringed instrument* (or with an instrumental accompaniment)—*of David*. The peculiar form of the original construction (נְגִינָה לְדָוִד) cannot be reproduced in English, but seems to connect the name of David both with the Hebrew word preceding, as the owner or conductor of the music, and with the psalm itself as the author. That is to say, the words are so combined as to convey both these ideas—a *stringed instrument of David*—and a *psalm of David*. The musical term (*neginath*) is the same as in the titles of Ps. iv, vi, liv, lv, but in the singular number and the construct form. The psalm itself consists of a prayer with an expression of strong confidence, vs. 2—5 (1—4), and an appeal to the divine promise, as the ground and object of that confidence, vs. 6—9 (5—8.)

2 (1.) *Hear, oh God, my cry; attend unto my prayer!* The psalm opens with an introductory petition to be heard. See above, on Ps. v. 2, 3 (1, 2.) xvii. 1. lv. 2 (1), and compare Ps. xxxix. 12 (13.) The word translated *cry*, which sometimes means a joyful shout or thankful song—Ps. xxx. 6 (5.) xlii. 5 (4.) xlvii. 2 (1)—is here determined by the parallelism and the context to denote a cry for help or mercy.

3 (2.) *From the end of the earth unto thee will I call, in the covering of my heart* (when it is covered, i. e. overwhelmed, or

covered with darkness.) *To a rock* (that) *is high from me*, (i. e. higher than I, or too high for me) *thou wilt lead me*. To the saints of the Old Testament exclusion or involuntary distance from the sanctuary seemed equivalent to exile in the remotest countries, sometimes called the *end of the earth* (Deut. xxviii. 64), sometimes the *end of heaven* (Deut. iv. 32), although this last phrase may be understood to mean the sensible horizon or boundary of vision (Isai. xiii. 5.) *A rock*, often mentioned as a place of refuge. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) xl. 3 (2.) *Too high for me* to reach without assistance. In the last clause an earnest prayer is latent under the form of a confident anticipation. The feelings here expressed, and the terms used to express them, are peculiarly appropriate to David's situation during Absalom's rebellion. See above, on Ps. iii. 1. xlii. 1.

4 (3.) *For thou hast been a refuge to me, a tower of strength* (or strong tower) *from before* (from the face or presence of) *the enemy*. He appeals to former mercies as a ground for his present expectation. The verb of existence is here emphatic and cannot, without a violation of usage, be translated as a present, which is almost invariably suppressed in Hebrew. The *enemy* is a collective term, or one denoting an ideal person, including many real individuals.

5 (4.) *I will sojourn* (or *abide*) *in thy tent* (or *tabernacle*) *ages* (or *eternities*, i. e. forever); *I will trust* (take refuge or find shelter) *in the shadow of thy wings*. The first verb is in the paragogic form, expressing strong desire or fixed determination. See above, on Ps. ii. 3. To dwell in God's tent or house is to be a member of his family, to enjoy his bounty and protection, and to live in intimate communion with him. See above, on Ps. xv. 1. xxiii. 6. xxvii. 4, 5. David here tacitly appeals to the promise recorded in 2 Sam. ch. vii. See above, on Ps. xxi. 5 (4.)



The beautiful figure for protection in the last clause is the same as in Ps. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 8 (7.)

6 (5.) *For thou, oh God, hast heard (or hearkened to) my vows (and the prayers which they accompanied); thou hast given me the heritage of those fearing (or the fearers of) thy name*, i. e. the reverential worshippers of thy revealed perfections. See above, on Ps. liv. 3 (1.) The heritage here mentioned is participation in the honours and privileges of the chosen people, with particular though tacit reference to the vicarious royalty conferred on David, and ensured to his posterity in answer to his prayers. See above, on Ps. xxi. 3—5 (2—4), and compare 2 Sam. vii. 16.

7 (6.) *Days to the days of the king thou wilt add; his years (shall be, or, thou wilt multiply) like generation and generation.* The preposition in the first clause strictly means *upon*, and suggests the idea not of mere addition but accumulation, which would also be conveyed in English by the literal translation, *days upon days*. His use of the third person shows that he does not mean himself alone, but the king of Israel as an ideal or collective person, comprehending his posterity. The life of this ideal person would of course not be restricted to a single generation but continued through many, which is the meaning of the idiomatic expression in the last clause.

8 (7.) *He shall sit (enthroned) to eternity before God; mercy and truth do thou provide; let them preserve him (or they shall preserve him.)* The first verb suggests the two ideas of continuance or permanence and regal exaltation. See above, on Ps. lv. 20 (19), and compare 2 Sam. vii. 29. *Before God*, in his presence and under his protection. See above, on Ps. lvi. 14 (13.) *Provide*, prepare, afford, or have in readiness. *Mercy and Truth* are personified, as in Ps. xl. 12 (11.) lvii. 4 (3.) Compare Ps.

xliii. 3. They seem to be here represented as God's messengers or agents in preserving his Anointed.

9 (8.) *So will I celebrate thy name forever, that I may pay my vows day (by) day.* The *so* at the beginning may mean, on this condition, when this prayer is granted ; or more probably, in this assurance, in the confident expectation of this issue. *Celebrate* musically, both with instrument and voice. See above, on Ps. lvii. 8 (7), and compare Ps. lix. 18 (17.) *That I may pay*, literally, *to* (or *for*) *my paying*, or, as some explain it, *by my paying*, which however is a rare and dubious use of the infinitive. *Day (by) day* or *day (and) day*, i. e. one day with or after another, implying not only frequency but regularity. The Vulgate version of this idiomatic phrase is *de die in diem*.

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## PSALM LXII.

1. *To the Chief Musician over Jeduthun. A psalm by David.* Jeduthun seems here to mean the family or choir so called from the Chief Musician of that name. See above, on Ps. xxxix. 1. The psalm consists of three equal stanzas or strophes, each beginning with the particle (יְהִי) *only*, and the first and second ending with *selah*. In all these parts, the theme or burden is the same, to wit, a contrast between God and man, as objects of confidence.

2 (1.) *Only to God (is) my soul silent ; from him (is) my salvation.* The frequent repetition of the first word (יְהִי) is characteristic of the psalm before us. In all these cases it is to be

taken in its strict exclusive sense of *only*. See above, on Ps. lviii. 12 (11.) Only in looking towards God as my Saviour, is my soul *silent*, literally, *silence*. See above, on Ps. xxii. 3 (2.) xxxix. 3 (2.) This trust, and this alone, can set his mind at rest, and free him from the natural disquietude of man when alienated from his God.

3 (2.) *Only He* (is) *my rock and my salvation, my height* (high place, refuge, or asylum); *I shall not be shaken* (moved from my firm position) *much* (or *greatly*.) The adverbial use of *much* is the same in Hebrew and in English. This qualified expression seems to be intended to suggest, that he does not hope to escape all disaster and calamity, but only such as would be ruinous. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 24. As to the figures in the first clause, see above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) xviii. 3 (2.) *He only*, God and no one else, can be such a protector.

4 (3.) *Until when* (how long) *will ye break loose upon* (or *against*) *a man, will ye murder* (i. e. seek to murder him) *all of you* (combined against a single person, who is consequently) *like a wall inclined* (or bent by violence), *a fence* (or hedge) *crushed* (broken down?) That the last clause relates to himself and not his enemies, is clear from the continuation of the same description in the next verse.

5 (4.) *Only from his elevation they consult to thrust* (him, and as a means to this end) *they delight in falsehood*; *with his mouth*, (i. e. with their mouths) *they will bless, and in their inside* (inwardly, or with their heart) *they will curse*. *Selah*. The sudden change of number in the middle of the verse, and indeed the whole description, are like those in Ps. v. 10 (9.)

6 (5.) *Only to God be still my soul, for from him* (is) *my hope*. The view just taken of his fellow men drives him back to God,



and he exhorts himself to cherish the same confidence which he had before expressed. *Be still*, silent, trusting, and submissive. See above, on v. 2 (1), and compare Ps. xxxvii. 7. The meaning of the last clause is, from him proceeds whatever I desire or hope for.

7 (6.) *Only He is my rock* (the foundation of my hope) *and my salvation* (i. e. its source and author)—*my high place* (refuge or asylum)—*I shall not be moved* (or *shaken*.) This more absolute expression, as compared with v. 3 (2), seems to indicate a stronger faith, derived from the previous comparison of God and man as objects of trust and affection.

8 (7.) *Upon God* (i. e. dependent, founded on him) is *my salvation*, *and my honour* (both official and personal); *the rock of my strength* (my strong rock, or the basis upon which my own strength rests); *my hiding place* (my refuge) is *in God*. It is in his presence, favour and protection, that I hide myself from all my enemies and all my dangers. See above, on Ps. vii. 11 (10.) lxi. 4 (3.)

9 (8.) *Trust in him at every time, oh people, pour out before him your heart; God (is) a refuge for us. Selah.* The faith which he cherishes himself he recommends to others also. *At every time*, not merely in prosperity, but even in the sorest trials and the worst extremities. *People*, not merely men or persons, but people of God, his chosen people. To pour out the heart is a natural and lively figure for a full disclosure of the thoughts and feelings. See above, on Ps. xlii. 5 (4), and below, on Ps. exlii. 3 (2), and compare 1 Sam. i. 15. Lam. ii. 19. The last clause gives the reason of the exhortation, and indicates its earnestness by a solemn pause.

10 (9.) *Only vanity (are) sons of Adam, a falsehood sons of*

*Man ; in the scales (they are sure) to go up ; they are of vanity (or less than vanity) together.* As to the supposed antithesis between men of high and low degree in the first clause, see above, on Ps. iv. 3 (2.) xlix. 3 (2.) *Only vanity*, see above, on Ps. xxxix. 6 (5.) *A falsehood*, something that deceives expectation, a false confidence. See above, on Ps. iv. 3 (2.) *Of vanity*, composed of it, containing nothing else ; or giving the particle its frequent comparative sense, (*less*) *than vanity*, or (*vainer*) *than vanity (itself.)* The same doubt exists as to the meaning of the similar expressions in Isai. xl. 17. xli. 24.

11 (10.) *Trust not in oppression, and in robbery become not vain ; (on) wealth, when it grows, set not (your) heart.* The first two nouns are used together in Lev. v. 23 (vi. 4) to signify that which is acquired by violence. They are not therefore to be taken as distinct grounds of confidence, but as different parts or different descriptions of the same. *Become not vain*, by being assimilated to the vain, unsatisfying objects of your love and hope. See 2 Kings xvii. 15, and compare Jer. ii. 5. Job xxvii. 12. The word translated *wealth* means strictly *strength* or *power*, but is applied to pecuniary as well as military force. See above, on Ps. xlix. 7 (6.) *Grows*, literally *sprouts*, or springs up of its own accord, perhaps with an antithetical allusion to wealth gained by violence. Even when lawfully or accidentally acquired, set not your heart upon it. This phrase in Hebrew sometimes means nothing more than to apply the mind or give attention, and so some understand it here, ‘when wealth increases, take no notice, think not of it’ ; but the stronger sense of fixing the affections on it, loving it, and trusting it, is better in itself and better suited to the context.

12, 13 (11, 12.) *One (thing) hath God spoken, these two (things) have I heard, that strength (belongeth) unto God, and (that) unto thee, oh Lord, (belongeth) mercy, (but) that thou wilt*

*render to a man according to his deed (or doing.)* There are really three attributes of God here mentioned, his power, his mercy, and his justice ; but as the last is only introduced to qualify the second, by a kind of afterthought, they may still be reckoned as but two. The construction given in the English and many other versions separates the sentences, and makes the first refer to a repeated utterance or revelation of the one truth there propounded, namely, *that power belongeth unto God.* Instead of *one thing, two things*, we must then read *once and twice.* But this, though favoured by the imitation of the verse before us in Job xxxiii. 14. xl. 5, is not the most obvious construction here. It is evident that *one* and *two*, when absolutely or elliptically used, may sometimes mean *one time*, (i. e. once) and *two times*, (i. e. twice) ; but it does not follow that the same words, in a different connection, may not mean *one word or thing, two words or things.* It is also a familiar practice of the sacred writers to borrow one another's words, or to repeat their own, with some slight change of sense or application. The pronoun (אֲנִי) in v. 12 (11) may be either a demonstrative or relative, and on the latter supposition we may read, *(there are) two (things) which I have heard ;* but the other is a simpler and more obvious construction. The apostrophe or sudden change of person in v. 13 (12) is a figure of speech common in the psalms of David, and indicates a growing warmth of feeling, so that He who had just been calmly spoken of as absent, is abruptly addressed as if seen to be personally present.



## P S A L M L X I I I .

1. *A Psalm by David, in his being* (when he was) *in the wilderness of Judah.* This is the wilderness along the eastern frontier of the tribe of Judah. It is frequently mentioned in the history of Absalom's rebellion and of David's flight before him. See 2 Sam. xv. 23, 28. xvi. 2, 14. xvii. 16. In that history we also meet with several of the very same expressions that are here used, which, together with the strong internal similarity of this psalm to some others having reference to Absalom's rebellion, such as Ps. iii, iv, xlii, lxi, suffice to show that it belongs to the same period, and not to that of Saul's persecution, which is indeed forbidden by the mention of the king in v. 12 (11.) The psalm consists of two parts, each exhibiting essentially the same succession of ideas, but with the variation usual in all such cases. Both begin with the expression of intense desire for God's presence and communion with him, and end with a confident anticipation of his mercy; but in the first, vs. 2—9 (1—8), this is supposed to be displayed in the deliverance of the Psalmist from his sufferings; in the second, vs. 7—12 (6—11), it is viewed as securing the destruction of his enemies.

2 (1.) *O God, my God (art) thou; I will seek thee early; for thee thirsts my soul; for thee longs my flesh, in a dry land, weary, without water.* The second divine name is the one denoting power, and might be translated here, *my Mighty (One).* The

very use of it involves a direct appeal to God's omnipotence. The verb in the first clause is connected in its etymology with a noun meaning the dawn of day, which occurs above, Ps. lvii. 9 (8.) The modern lexicographers exclude the sense of *early*, and suppose the verb to mean nothing more than *seek* in English, or at most to seek with eagerness. But that the notion of time is really included, seems to follow from the antithesis in Isai. xxvi. 9. The act of seeking a thing early implies impatience or importunate desire. The soul and the flesh together mean the whole man. See above, on Ps. xvi. 9. There is evident allusion to the actual privations experienced by David in the wilderness of Judah. See the places cited in the note upon v. 1, to which add 2 Sam. xvii. 2. The Hebrew word for *weary* is there applied to David himself, which requires or allows the same application in the case before us, especially as the form of the adjective is masculine, and *land* is feminine. The strict grammatical concord is perhaps with *flesh*, which is a masculine in Hebrew.

3 (2.) *To see thy power and thy glory, so (as) I have beheld thee in the sanctuary.* The first clause states the object of the strong desire expressed in the preceding verse. To make this connection clear, the clauses are transposed in the common version, which is here retained, as being, on the whole, the best among the many which have been proposed. One of the latest makes the verse an acknowledgment, that he had actually found a sanctuary in the desert, because it is always to be found where God is pleased to manifest his presence. But however sound and scriptural this sentiment may be, it can hardly be extracted from the verse before us without violence.

4 (3.) *Because thy favour is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.* A simpler construction, and perhaps more agreeable to Hebrew usage, is that which makes the first clause give a

reason for the strong desire expressed in the foregoing verses, *for thy favour is better than life*, and the last clause merely add a pledge of thankful acknowledgment, *my lips shall praise thee*. *Better than life*, not merely than the life I now live, which was scarcely entitled to be so considered, but better than any life I could live, destitute of God's favour, which is therefore more than a sufficient substitute or compensation.

5 (4.) *So will I bless thee in my life, in thy name will I raise my hands*. So, that is, according to the gift bestowed. *Bless*, i. e. praise and thank thee. See above, on Ps xvi. 7. xxxiv. 2 (1.) *In my life* may either mean *as long as I live*, which is the obvious and usual interpretation, or *when restored to life*, from this state of living death, which is the sense preferred by some of the best interpreters, on account of the supposed allusion to *better than life* in the preceding verse; but it is far from being the most natural construction. *In thy name*, invoking thee as the object of my worship, and particularly of my thankful praise. *Lift up my hands* in prayer, and more specifically here, in thanksgiving. See above, on Ps. xxviii. 3 (2.)

6 (5.) *As (with) marrow and fatness shall my soul be satisfied, and (with) lips of rejoicing shall my mouth praise (thee.)* He continues the expression of his joyful confidence and hope. *Marrow* and *fatness* are used to represent two Hebrew words both meaning animal fat, here put for rich food, and that for abundant supplies of every kind. *Lips of rejoicings* may denote either joyful lips, or lips by which rejoicings are uttered. The unconditional engagement to praise God implies, as usual, a firm belief that he will have occasion so to do. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.)

7 (6.) *When I remember thee upon my bed, in the watches I will meditate upon thee*. The first word in Hebrew is the one



commonly translated *if*; but the condition indicated by it is sometimes specifically that of time. There seems to be reference in this verse to the old division of the night, for municipal and military purposes, into three watches, the first (Lam. ii. 19), the middle (Judg. vii. 19), and the morning watch (Ex. xiv. 24. 1 Sam. xi. 11.) See below, on Ps. xc. 4. *I will meditate of thee*, or more literally, *in thee*, implying an entire absorption of his powers and affections in the object. See above, on Ps. i. 2.

8 (7.) *For thou hast been a help to me, and in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.* The protection which he has experienced already he is sure of still enjoying in the time to come. The translation of the first verb as a present (*thou art my help*) not only weakens the antithesis but violates a constant usage. See above, on Ps. lix. 17 (16.) lxi. 4 (3.) The image presented in the last clause is the same as that in Ps. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 8 (7.) lvii. 2 (1.) lxi. 5 (4.)

9 (8.) *My soul cleaves after thee, thy right hand holds me.* This is a strong metaphorical description of the mutual relation between God and the believer; a relation of trustful dependence on the one hand, and of constant favour and protection on the other. *Cleaves after* is a frequent phrase for *follows cleaving to thee*. The right hand is the constant symbol of strength. See above, on Ps. xviii. 36 (35.) xlv. 4 (3.) lx. 6 (5.)

10 (9.) *And they to (their) ruin are seeking my soul; they shall go into the depths of the earth.* The phrase *to ruin* has precisely the same sense as in Ps. xxxv. 8, namely, to their own destruction. *Are seeking*, will seek; the idea suggested by the future is, that if they still persist in seeking it, they will do so to their own destruction. Some obtain the same sense by a different construction, *they (shall come) to ruin (who) are seek-*

*ing my soul*; but this supposes two ellipses, which are not to be assumed without necessity. Still less satisfactory is the construction which regards the whole verse as a single proposition: *they* (who) *seek my soul to ruin* (or destroy it) *shall go, etc.* To seek the soul implies a purpose of destruction, without any qualifying adjunct, even in prose. See 2 Sam. xvi. 11. The *depths of the earth*, literally, its lower or lowest parts, which may simply mean the grave (as we say *under ground*), or contain an allusion to the fate of Korah and his company (Num. xvi. 31—34.) See above, on Ps. lv. 16 (15.)

11 (10.) *They shall be abandoned to the power of the sword; the prey of jackals shall they be.* The literal translation of the first clause is, *they shall pour him out upon the hands of the sword*, where the use of the plural verb in an indefinite or passive sense, and the sudden alternation of the singular and plural form in speaking of the enemy, together with the bold and idiomatic figures of a sword with hands and men poured on them, present such a concurrence of apparent solecisms as can be made intelligible only by a paraphrase. The word translated *prey* means properly a *share* or *portion*; it occurs above, Ps. xi. 6. xvi. 5. The other noun in this clause is the common Hebrew word for *foxes*, but is used with so much latitude as to include the jackal, which sense must be here preferred, as the fox does not prey upon dead men, unless the clause be understood to mean nothing more than that they shall be left lying in the desert, where these creatures have their home, which is a good sense, but much weaker than the one just put upon the words.

12 (11.) *And the king shall rejoice in God; (in him) shall every one boast (or glory) that swears by him, because the mouth of those speaking falsehood shall be shut (or stopped.)* Instead of the personal pronoun *he* inserts his official title, *the king*, i. e.

I as king. *Rejoice in God*, i. e. in union with him and in the experience of his favour. *Boast or praise himself*, i. e. felicitate himself on the possession of these glorious distinctions and advantages. *Swearing by him*, i. e. as some suppose, by the king here mentioned, according to the old Egyptian custom (Gen. xlii. 15, 16), of which we find some traces even in Israel (1 Sam. xvii. 55. xxv. 26. 2 Sam. xi. 11.) If this were the true grammatical construction we might perhaps explain the phrase to mean *swearing to him*, i. e. swearing fealty or allegiance, doing homage to him as a rightful sovereign. But there is in fact no sufficient reason for departing from the obvious construction which refers the pronoun to the nearest antecedent, *God*. The last clause assigns the immediate occasion of the joy and triumph here predicted, namely the defeat of false and treacherous insurgents. See above, on Ps. lxii. 5 (4), and compare 2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8.

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PSALM LXIV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.* The correctness of this title is abundantly established by the marked internal similarity between this and other psalms of David. Its very structure is Davidic, exhibiting the two familiar elements of a prayer for deliverance from wicked enemies, vs. 2—6 (1—5), and a confident anticipation of a favourable answer, vs. 7—11 (6—10.)

2 (1) *Hear, oh God, my voice in my complaint; from fear of the enemy thou wilt preserve my life.* Here, as in Ps. liv. 3 (1),



the expression of confidence insinuates itself into the prayer itself. *Complaint*, literally, musing, meditation, but with special reference to suffering and danger. See above, on Ps. lv. 3 (2.) *Fear of the enemy*, that which I have reason to fear from him.

3 (2.) *Thou wilt hide me from the secret of evil doers, from the tumult of the workers of iniquity.* By *secret* we are here to understand their confidential consultations and the devices there matured. See above, on Ps. xxv. 14. The participle *doing evil*, used as a noun (*evil doers*) to describe the whole class of wicked men, is a favourite expression of David's. See above, Ps. xxii. 17 (16.) xxvi. 5. xxvii. 2. xxxvii. 1, 9. As *secrecy* belongs to the formation of the plot, so does *noise* or *tumult* to its execution. The same figures are combined, but in a very different application, Ps. lv. 15 (14.)

4 (3.) *Who have sharpened, like the sword, their tongue, have strung their arrow, bitter speech.* The figure in the first clause is a favourite with David. See above, on Ps. lii. 4 (2.) lvii. 5 (4.) lix. 8 (7.) *Strung their arrow*, literally *trod* (i. e. *bent*) it, which must either be explained as an ellipsis—bent their (bow to shoot their) arrow—or as a poetical transfer to the arrow of what is strictly applicable only to the bow. See above, on Ps. lviii. 8 (7.) The figure of an arrow is peculiarly appropriate to the poignant pain produced by insult and calumny, which is also well expressed by the epithet *bitter*. Compare Deut. xxxii. 24. 1 Sam. xv. 32.

5 (4.) *To shoot in secret places (at) the perfect; suddenly they will shoot him, and will not fear.* With the first clause compare Ps. x. 8. xi. 2. The *perfect*, the sincere and upright servant of God, who is free from all fatal and essential defect of character. See above, on Ps. xv. 2. xviii. 24. (23.) vii. 9 (8.) xxv. 21. xxvi. 1, 11. xxxvii. 37, in the last of which places the Hebrew adject-

tive has the same form as in the case before us. *And will not fear*, i. e. without being deterred by the fear of God or man. See above, on Ps. lv. 20 (19.)

6 (5.) *They will strengthen for themselves an evil word ; they will tell about hiding snares ; they have said, who will see to them ?* To *strengthen* is to make strong, to construct so as to be strong. An *evil word* is an idiomatic phrase for a malignant plot, so called because it is the fruit of mutual discourse and consultation. See above, on Ps. xli. 9 (8.) *Tell about*, count and recount their various devices, past and present. See above, on Ps. lix. 13 (12.) The interrogation in the last clause is an indirect one ; the equivalent direct form would be, *who will see to us*, i. e. regard us ? Compare Ps. x. 11. lix. 8 (7.)

7 (6.) *They search out iniquities ; (they say) We are ready—a consummate plan ! and the inward thought and heart of (every) man (is) deep.* They rack their invention and ransack their memory for modes of doing mischief. *We are ready*, literally *finished*, just as we might say in English, *we are done*. The next phrase consists of a passive participle, derived from the verb at the beginning of the sentence, and a cognate noun. The participle here corresponds to *exquisite*, *recherché*, something not to be had without laborious search, and the noun describes the product of the search itself. The last clause is added to enhance the danger, by representing the device as springing not from shallow, superficial, but profound contrivance. *Inward thought*, literally *inside*, an equivalent to *heart* often used by David. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) xlix. 12 (11.) lv. 16 (15.) lxii. 5 (4.)

8 (7.) *But God has shot them—with an arrow—suddenly—the wounds are theirs.* By an abrupt but beautiful transition he describes the tables as completely turned upon the enemy. The antithesis is rendered very striking by the repetition of

the verb, noun, and adverb used in vs. 4, 5 (3, 4.) Just as they are about to shoot an arrow suddenly at the righteous, God shoots an arrow suddenly at them. The wounds which they intended to inflict on others have become (קָרַךְ) their own. When they thought to strike others, they were struck themselves. The general idea is the same as in Ps. vii. 12—17 (11—16.) liii. 6 (5.) lvii. 7 (6.) The adversative particle at the beginning is substituted for the simple copulative of the Hebrew, to make the transition or antithesis more obvious in English. See above, on Ps. lii. 10 (8.) lv. 14 (13.)

9 (8.) *And he has cast them down; upon them (comes) their own tongue; all shall flee gazing at them.* Cast down, literally, made to fall or stumble. See the use of the same verb in historical prose, 2 Chron. 25. 8, and compare the original of 2 Chron. xxviii. 23. The construction is indefinite, as in Ps. lxiii. 11 (10), *they have cast him down*, i. e. he is cast down, meaning the enemy as an ideal person, who, according to the usage of these psalms, is immediately afterwards referred to in the plural number. *Their tongue*, i. e. the consequences of their false, malignant speeches and their mischievous deliberations. The verb in the last clause is an intensive form of the one used in Ps. xxxi. 12 (11.) lv. 8 (7.) *Gazing at them*, not simply seeing them, but seeing with emotion, whether that of wonder, joy, or terror. See above, on Ps. liv. 9 (7.) lix. 11 (10.) The clause seems to contain an allusion to the flight of the people, when the earth opened to devour Korah and his company, Num. xvi. 34.

10 (9.) *And all men fear, and pronounce (it) God's doing, and his work they understand.* The conversive futures show the dependence of the sentence upon that which goes before it and describe the action not as actually past, but as directly consequent upon the great catastrophe described in the preceding

context. *And declared the work of God*, i. e. pronounced it to be such. Compare Ex. viii. 19. *His work they understand*, i. e. no longer foolishly ascribe it to mere chance or human agency.

11 (10.) *Glad shall the righteous be in Jehovah, and shall trust in him; and (in him) shall boast (or glory) all the upright in heart.* Having described the effect of the divine interposition on the wicked and on men in general, he now shows how it will affect the righteous. *In Jehovah* means, as usual, in union with him and possession of him. The word translated *trust* is that which seems originally to denote the act of seeking shelter under an overshadowing object. See above, on Ps. lxiii. 8 (7.) With the last clause compare Ps. lviii. 11 (10.) lxiii. 12 (11.)

## PSALM LXV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm. By David. A Song*, i. e. a song of praise. See above, on Ps. xlviii. 1. xlii. 9 (8.) God is first praised in general, as a God of mercy and benevolence to all men, vs. 2—9 (1—8), and then in particular, as the giver of fruitful seasons and abundance, vs. 10—14 (9—13.)

2 (1.) *To thee (belongeth) silence, praise, oh God, in Zion, and to thee shall be paid the vow* The two words *silence-praise* form a kind of compound term, like *humility-righteousness* in Ps. xlv. 5 (4,) meaning, as some suppose, *silent praise*, but this is hardly consistent with the fact that the praise here offered is vocal. More probably it means such praise as is accompanied by a cessation of all tumultuous and passionate excitement. See



above, on Ps. lxii. 2, 6 (1, 5.) *In Zion*, as the appointed place of prayer and praise under the old economy. The last clause implies that fresh occasion was continually given for thankful vows and their fulfilment, by the constant repetition of God's providential favours.

3 (2.) *Hearer of prayer, up to thee shall all flesh come.* The first word in Hebrew is a participle, *hearing*, thou who habitually hearest prayer. This is mentioned as one of the divine characters or attributes. *Up to thee*, even to thee, implying actual arrival, and therefore a stronger expression than *unto thee*. *All flesh* sometimes means all animals, all living creatures (Gen. vi. 17, 19), but is here used in its narrower sense of all mankind (Gen. vi. 3, 12.) To thee they shall come, i. e. must come, for the supply of their necessities, the forgiveness of their sins, and in short for every good and perfect gift (James i. 17), both of a temporal and spiritual nature.

4 (3.) *Words of iniquities are too strong for me ; (as for) our transgressions, thou wilt expiate them*, or forgive them for the sake of an atonement. *Words of iniquities* is by some regarded as a pleonastic paraphrase for iniquities themselves. More probably, however, the phrase means the charge or accusation of iniquity. See above, on Ps. vii. 1. xli. 9, (8), and below, on Ps. cv. 27. *Too strong for me*, more than I am able to account for or endure. See above, on Ps. xl. 13 (12), and below, on Ps. cxxx. 3. The last clause contains the encouragement suited to the alarming situation mentioned in the first.

5 (4.) *Happy (he whom) thou wilt choose and bring (him) near*, i. e. admit him to thy presence and to intimate communion with thee, (so that) *he shall inhabit thy courts ; we shall be sated*, satisfied or filled, *with the good*, i. e. the pleasure, the enjoyment, *of thy house, the holy (place) thy temple*, or thy holy temple, thy

sanctuary, an expression used both of the tabernacle and the temple properly so called. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) The privilege described is not merely that of public worship at the place of God's appointment, but of residence in his family and participation in the privileges of his household. See above, on Ps. xv. 1. xxiii. 6. The change from the third person singular to the first plural shows that the former was only an individualization of the church or chosen people.

6 (5.) *Fearful things in righteousness thou wilt answer us, oh God of our salvation, the confidence of all the ends of the land and sea—(even) the furthest.* Thou wilt give us fearful answers to our prayers, i. e. such as are suited to excite religious reverence and awe. *The confidence*, the object of their trust. *Earth* (or *land*) and *sea* are put together to describe the whole world, and the *ends* of both for the remotest countries, which idea is then expressed directly, by the word at the end of the sentence. The superlative cannot be expressed in Hebrew, but is here suggested by the context. The sense is not that all men actually feel this trust in God, but that whether they feel it or not, they are really dependent upon him alone. Compare Isai. xlii. 4.

7 (6.) *Fixing the mountains by his strength, girded with power.* This verse accounts for the dependence of all creatures upon God by a reference to his almighty power, which is not described in general terms, but by one of its effects or acts, the settling of the mountains, as the most solid and immovable portions of the earth. He is then metaphorically represented as *girded* or invested with power. See below, on v. 13 (12.)

8 (7.) *Stilling the roar of seas, the roar of their waves, the tumult of nations.* The sentence is continued from the foregoing verse. God not only formed the material universe at first, but still controls it. There is here a beautiful transition from the literal to the figurative use of the same language. It is true, in

the strict sense, that God stills the raging of the seas; but it is also true that he subdues the commotion of human societies and states, of which the sea is a natural and common emblem. See above, on Ps. xlvi. 3, 4 (2, 3.) Hence he adds in express terms, *the tumult of nations*.

9 (8.) *Then were afraid those inhabiting the ends* (or most distant parts) *of thy signs; the outgoings of morning and evening thou wilt make to shout* (or sing.) *Then* is not expressed in Hebrew, but employed in the translation to show the dependence of the verb on that of the preceding sentence. The sense is that whenever God thus stills the tumult of the nations, even the remotest are affected by *his signs*, i. e. the sensible indications of his presence and immediate agency. *Outgoings* is a local noun in Hebrew, and denotes the places where the evening and the morning come forth or begin, i. e. the points at which the sun sets and rises, the east and west, here put for eastern and western lands, and these for their inhabitants. That the fear mentioned in the first clause is not mere slavish dread, but an affection perfectly compatible with joy, is clear from the remainder of the sentence.

10 (9.) *Thou hast visited the earth and drenched it; thou wilt much enrich it; the river of God is full of water; thou wilt prepare their corn, for thus thou dost prepare it*, i. e. the earth, for this very purpose. God is said to *visit* his creatures when he manifests his presence with them, whether in the way of judgment or of mercy. See above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4.) *Drenched*, soaked, or made to overflow. The word translated *much* is the same as in Ps. lxii. 3 (2.) *The river of God*, as opposed to earthly streams. However these may fail, the divine resources are exhaustless. *Their corn*, that required for men's subsistence. See above, on Ps. iv. 8 (7.) The meaning of the last clause seems to be that

he who provides rain to fertilize the earth, may be expected to provide the fruit itself.

11 (10.) *Its furrows drench, its ridges beat down; with showers thou wilt soften it; its vegetation thou wilt bless.* The first verb means to water abundantly, the second to lower or beat down, implying a great violence of rain. The word translated *showers*, according to its etymology and usage, denotes frequent and abundant rains. *Soften*, dissolve, or loosen it. The Hebrew verb is a derivative of that in Ps. xlvii. 7 (6.) *Vegetation*, germination, that which sprouts or springs up from the seed when sown. Some make the verbs in the first clause infinitives, determined by the finite tenses which precede and follow. But their form permits them to be taken as imperatives, from which the transition to the future is entirely natural and in accordance with the usage of David's psalms, whenever an expression of confident anticipation is to be immediately subjoined to one of strong desire. See above, on Ps. liv. 3 (1.)

12 (11.) *Thou hast crowned the year of thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.* The first clause may either mean, thou hast crowned the year *with* thy goodness, or, as some prefer to construe it, thou hast crowned the year of thy goodness, the year distinguished by thy goodness, with particular instances and proofs of that goodness. The obvious meaning of the strong but beautiful figure in the last clause is, that wherever he appears his movements are attended by a rich and fertilizing influence. *Fatness* is as usual a figure for rich food, and that for general abundance.

13 (12) *They drop—the pastures of the wilderness, and (with) joy the hills are girt.* The word translated *pastures* properly means *dwellings*, but is specially applied to folds and pastures, as the places to which flocks resort. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 1. The word translated *wilderness*, according to its most probable



etymology, originally signifies, not a barren desert, but a tract of country neither tilled nor thickly peopled, though perhaps luxuriant and abundant as a pasture ground. The general metaphor of clothing which occurs in the next verse, is here anticipated by the specific one of a girdle, as that which surrounds the body and confines the dress. See above, on Ps. xviii. 33 (32.)

14 (13.) *The pastures are clothed with flocks, and the vales shall be robed in grain ; they shall shout (for joy), yea, they shall sing.* Some translate the first clause, *the flocks are clothed with lambs*, denying that the first noun in Hebrew ever means pastures. But see above, on Ps. xxxvii. 20. The image presented in the first translation is certainly more natural and beautiful. It also makes the parallelism more complete, the fields being covered by the waving crops in the same sense that the meadows are covered by the grazing flocks. In the last clause the pastures and valleys, by a beautiful personification, are described as breaking forth into shouts of joy and songs of praise. See above, on Ps. lx. 10 (8.)

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PSALM LXVI.

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm. Shout unto God, all the earth !* The second clause of the inscription represents it as a psalm of praise. See above, on Ps. lxxv. 1. This is confirmed by the contents and structure of the psalm itself, in which we have, first, a general celebration of God's wonderful dealings with his people in all ages, vs. 1—7 ; then a similar acknowledgment of what he had done in a particular case,

vs. 8—12 ; and lastly a pledge or promise of thanksgiving, vs. 13—20. The resemblance to the forty-sixth psalm has led some to suppose, that this psalm was occasioned by the same event, or composed in imitation of the other, for the use of the church in similar emergencies. The verb *shout* is plural in its form, which shows that *earth* has a collective sense.

2. *Sing the honour of his name ; give (him) honour, (give) him praise.* The *honour* or *glory of his name* is that due to his manifested excellence. See above, on Ps. xxix. 2. *Give*, literally *place* or *put*, the verbs expressing these ideas being often interchanged in Hebrew. The same phrase that is here used occurs also in Josh. vii. 19. Isai. xlii. 12, and is clearly equivalent to *give honour* in Ps. xxix. 1, 2. lxviii. 35 (34.) Jer. xiii. 16. The form of the last clause is peculiar, *give honour (as or to) his praise*.

3. *How fearful are thy doings ! In the greatness of thy strength shall thine enemies lie to thee.* Here begin, as some interpreters suppose, the words in which the required praise is to be rendered to Jehovah ; an admissible, though not by any means a necessary supposition. The first clause may likewise be translated, *how fearful* (art thou in) *thy doings*, after the analogy of v. 5 below, the ellipsis of the pronoun being similar to that in Ps. lxviii. 36 (35.) *In the greatness of thy strength*, i. e. because of it, or rather in the knowledge and belief of it. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) *Lie to thee*, make false professions of allegiance, yield a feigned obedience, through the influence of fear. See above, on Ps. xviii. 45 (44.)

4. *All the earth shall worship thee and sing to thee ; they shall sing thy name. Selah.* Here again the verbs are plural, showing that *all the earth* is to be taken in a collective sense, as meaning *all lands*, or all the dwellers upon earth. See above, on v. 1.

*Worship thee*, bow or prostrate themselves before thee, as an act both of civil and religious homage. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) They shall not only sing to thee but sing thy name, i. e. not only celebrate thy being but thy manifested nature, the attributes revealed by thy previous works. This anticipation of universal homage to Jehovah is in strict accordance with the whole spirit and design of the Mosaic dispensation.

5. *Go, see the works of God, fearful (in) action on the sons of man.* The verb *go* is often used in Hebrew, as a formula of invitation or of challenge, where in English we say *come*. See below, v. 16, and compare Isai. 2. 3, 5. In this case, however, *go* may be intended to express something more than would have been expressed by *come*. The meaning may be, if you do not believe these general declarations of God's power and dominion, go and see for yourselves the proofs already given in the history of mankind, and more especially in that of Israel: go to Egypt, to the Red Sea, to the Wilderness, to Jordan, and in the wonders there performed and still repeated in the experience of the church, see the evidence that God is indeed possessed of a tremendous power to control and influence mankind. With the first clause compare Ps. xlv. 9 (8), the only other place where the word מפעלות occurs.

6. *He turned the sea into the dry (land); through the river they shall pass on foot; there will we rejoice in him.* There is an obvious allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, not as mere historical events, but as types or samples of God's extraordinary interpositions on behalf of Israel, such as might be realized again in their experience. Hence the promiscuous use of preterite and future forms, as if to say, the God of Israel will again turn the Red Sea into dry land for the passage of his people; if need be, they shall again cross the Jordan dry shod; there, on the scene of these miraculous events, shall we again rejoice in

him. The combination of sea and river seems to show that by the latter we must understand Jordan, and not as some interpreters suppose, the Euphrates, which is commonly so called. But see Isai. xi. 15, 16. Zech. x. 11.

7. *Ruling by his might forever ; his eyes over (or among) the nations watch ; let not the rebels exalt themselves. Selah.* The participle in the first clause is expressive of habitual action, 'he constantly, habitually rules.' See above, Ps. xxii. 29 (28.) *By his might*, with which he was before described as girded. See above, Ps. lxxv. 7 (6.) The noun *eternity* is used adverbially to mean *forever*. The divine inspection here described implies that man can no more evade God's power than resist it. The last clause may be either a prayer to God or an admonition to his enemies. *Exalt themselves*: the Keri or marginal reading is *be high for them* (or *for themselves*) ; the Kethib or textual reading, *lift* (or *raise*) *for themselves*, in which case *horn* may be supplied from Ps. lxxv. 5, 6 (4, 5), or *head* from Ps. cx. 7. The rebels, i. e. against God, his stubborn and incorrigible enemies.

8. *Bless, oh ye nations, our God, cause to be heard the voice of his praise !* To the general description of God's gracious dispensations towards his people there seems now to be added the commemoration of a particular event of this kind ; not one of merely local interest, however, but of such importance, that the nations are invited to unite in praising God for it. See above, on Ps. xviii. 50 (49.) xxii. 28 (27.)

9. *The (one) putting, who puts, our soul in life, and has not given (up) to removal our foot*, has not allowed it to move or slip. The unusual expression in the first clause seems to mean restoration to life, a figure for relief from great distress, which is not unfrequently described as death. See above, on Ps. xxx. 4 (3.) xlix. 16 (15.) *To set in life* is not unlike the phrase to



*set in safety*, Ps. xii. 6 (5.) The form of expression in the last clause is analogous to that in Ps. lv. 23 (22) above, and identical with that in Ps. cxxi. 3 below. *Given up to removal*, suffered to be moved from its firm position or its place of safety.

10. *For thou hast tried us, oh God, thou hast purged* (or *assayed*) *us like the purging of silver*, as silver is purged, with particular reference. as some suppose, to the long continued and repeated process of refinement necessary in the case of silver. See above, on Ps. xii. 7 (6.) xxvi. 2, and compare Isai. i. 25. xlviii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 7. The general idea here is that of affliction, as a means both of trial and purgation, and is carried out in the following verses.

11. *Thou hast caused us to come into the net; thou hast put pressure in our loins.* The first clause is descriptive of complicated difficulties and embarrassments, the second of suffering and weakness. The word translated *net* occurs above in the very different sense of a *tower* or fortress, Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) But even when so used, it strictly means a *hunting tower*, i. e. a post of observation and of safety used by hunters, and from the same root (ציד to hunt) may be deduced the sense of *net* or *snare*, as a customary implement of hunting, in which sense it is certainly employed by Ezekiel (xii. 13.) The word translated *pressure* occurs only here, but its essential meaning is clear from its etymological affinities. Compare the cognate form in Ps. lv. 4 (3.) Some suppose the idea to be that of a superincumbent pressure, load or burden, corresponding to the verb as used in Amos ii. 13. Others make *pressure* mean contraction, stricture, and by necessary implication, pain or anguish. The loins are mentioned as the seat of strength (Deut. xxxiii. (11), an injury to which implies both pain and weakness. See below, on Ps. lxix. 24 (23.)

12. *Thou hast caused* (or *suffered men to ride at our head;*

*we came into the fire and into the waters, and (now) thou hast caused us to come forth to abundance, overflow, i. e. of enjoyment. Man, frail or mortal man, whose tyranny is therefore the more insupportable. See above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4.) This first clause is ambiguous, in Hebrew as in English. To ride at our head, though an exact translation, suggests only the idea of command or guidance, whereas some kind of suffering is required by the context. The common version, to ride over our heads, presents the image of horsemen trampling on their conquered enemies. Some suppose the idea to be that of riding on us, as a man controls and guides the horse that carries him. The head must then be mentioned only as the noblest part, without implying that the rider actually sits upon it. But this very circumstance makes the interpretation an unnatural and forced one. Fire and water, as the two great destroying elements, are common figures for distress and danger. Compare Isaiah xliii. 2. The last Hebrew word in the verse occurs only here and in Ps. xxiii. 5.*

13. *I will come (to) thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay to thee my vows, i. e. the offerings thus promised. His acknowledgments shall not be merely verbal or mental, but ceremonial, i. e. expressed in the symbolical form required by the dispensation under which he lived. The reference is neither to internal feelings nor to outward rites exclusively, but to both together. See above, on Ps. xl. 7 (6.) l. 8. li. 18 (16.) With the last clause, compare Ps. lxxv. 2 (1.) The sudden change of number, from the plural to the singular, shows that what follows is the words of an ideal speaker, representing the same persons who had spoken in the foregoing context, if not identical with them.*

14. *Which my lips uttered and my mouth spake in my distress. The first verb is a very strong and expressive one, in this connection not unlike our familiar phrases, bolted, blurted out, implying that he spoke from some irresistible impulse, and thus sug-*

gesting what is afterwards explicitly affirmed, that the vows in question were occasioned by extreme distress. The Hebrew verb originally means to open or distend the lips, whether as a gesture of mockery (Lam. ii. 16) or menace (Ps. xxii. 14), or for the purpose of articulate speech (Job xxxv. 16.) That its absolute use, in special reference to vows spontaneously and hastily uttered, was familiar to the ancients, may be seen from Judg. xi. 35, 36. *In my distress*: the original expression is, *in the distress to me*. See above, on Ps. xviii. 7 (6.)

15. *Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I offer to thee, with incense of rams; I will make* (an oblation of) *cattle with he-goats. Selah.* The word translated *fatlings* is especially applied to lambs, Isai. v. 17. The verb is the first clause in the one from which the noun rendered *burnt-offering* is derived, and strictly means *I will cause to ascend*, i. e. upon the altar, or in vapour from it. *Incense* may here be taken in its etymological sense of something *burnt* sacrificially, although in usage limited to aromatic fumigations, which is also the case with the Hebrew word in every place but this, where it seems to mean the sacrificial fat that was burned upon the altar. The verb to *make* is absolutely used, as a technical term of the Mosaic Law, to denote the act of sacrifice. See Ex. xxix. 36. Lev. ix. 7, and compare Judg. vi. 19. 1 Kings xviii. 23, 26. The different species of victims are enumerated here, to convey the idea of a regular and perfect sacrifice, implying more than ordinary thankfulness.

16. *Go* (or in our idiom, *come*), *hear, all ye fearers of* (ye that fear) *God, and I will tell you what he hath done to* (or for) *my soul.* The fearers of Jehovah is a common description of believers or the people of God. See Ps. lx. 6 (4.) lxi. 6 (5.) The invitation is like that in Ps. xxii. 24 (23.) *Tell*, in the primary sense of counting or numbering, and the secondary one of recounting or relating. *To my soul*, i. e. to me, whose life or



soul was threatened. *To me* as the object of the act alluded to, or *for me*, as the person to be benefited. This address prepares the way for the ensuing declaration, founded on his own experience, that it is only by sincere submission and devotion to God that his protection is to be secured.

17. *To him (with) my mouth I called, and high praise (exaltation) was under my tongue.* By a slight change in the pointing, or by supposing an irregularity of punctuation, the last clause may be rendered, *he was extolled under my tongue*, i. e. by means of it as an instrument of praise. But as a corresponding plural form occurs below, Ps. cxlix. 6, the Hebrew word (רָחֵם) is probably a noun, meaning lofty praise, or exaltation by means of praise. *Under my tongue* may be simply equivalent to *on* or *with my tongue*, or it may be intended to suggest the additional idea of a store or deposit of such praises still in reserve, to be employed hereafter, which some suppose to be the meaning of the phrase in Ps. x. 7.

18. *Iniquity if I have seen in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* If I had any wicked end in view, God would not hear my prayer. The same idea is expressed in Prov. xv. 29. Isai. i. 15. lix. 2 John ix. 31. 1 John iii. 22. It is here stated as the ground on which he means to argue his own innocence of any such corrupt design, and actually does so in the next verse.

19. (But) *verily God hath heard; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.* The Hebrew particle at the beginning is strictly not adversative but affirmative. See above, on Ps. xxxi. 23 (22.) It is equivalent in force to our expressions, *whereas, really, in fact*, etc. The doubt subjected in the foregoing verse had been removed in his case by the application of the test there mentioned. God had already heard his prayer and thereby borne witness that he was not guilty of the duplicity in question.



(20.) *Blessed* (be) *God who hath not put away my prayer* (from him) *and his mercy from me.* Here as elsewhere, when applied to God, *blessed* can only mean *praised* or entitled to be praised. The double application of the verb in the last clause cannot well be imitated in translation. The same word in Hebrew may be used to express the act of *rejecting* a petition, and that of *withdrawing* or withholding favour.

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## PSALM LXVII.

1. *To the Chief Musician. With* (or on) *stringed instruments.* A *Psalm, a Song*, i. e. a psalm of praise. See above, on Ps. lxvi. 1. For the meaning of the second clause of this inscription, see above, on Ps. lv. 1, and compare Ps. lxi. 1. The psalm before us, like the sixty-fifth, seems to have special reference to the manifestation of God's goodness in the gift of fruitful seasons and abundant harvests. See below, on v. 7 (6), and above, on Ps. lxv. 1. But from this the Psalmist, or the Church, of which he is the spokesman, takes occasion to anticipate the extension of God's covenanted gifts, both temporal and spiritual, to all the nations of the earth. This expectation is indeed the burden of the psalm, its immediate occasion being only mentioned incidentally near the close, yet not so obscurely as to make it doubtful. Any formal division of this short and simple composition can only tend to mar its beauty

2 (1.) *God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us!* The form of expression is evidently borrowed

from the sacerdotal benediction, Num. vi. 24, 25, but with a substitution of the first person plural for the second singular, so as to convert the authoritative blessing upon others into an expression of desire for themselves. The optative meaning of the sentence is determined by the form of the second verb in Hebrew. *Upon us*, literally *with us*, a form of speech probably intended to suggest the idea of the divine presence and communion. As to the figure in the last clause, see above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.) xxxi. 17 (16.)

3 (2.) *That thy way may be known in the earth, in all nations thy salvation.* The original construction of the first clause is, *to know in the earth thy way*; but the sense can only be made clear in English by a passive form. *Thy way*, i. e. thy mode of dealing with thy people, referring more particularly here to providential favours, the knowledge of which he hopes to see extended to all nations, as a means to the promotion of still higher ends. The pleonastic phrase, *saving health*, retained in the authorized version from an older one, has nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew but the single word which always means *salvation* and is commonly so rendered.

4 (3.) *The nations shall acknowledge thee, oh God, the nations shall acknowledge thee—all of them.* The common version of the verb here twice used (*praise*) is too wide. As it is commonly applied to the acknowledgment of benefits, a nearer equivalent is *thank*. See above, on Ps. lvii. 10 (9.)

5 (4.) *Nations shall joy and triumph, because thou shalt judge peoples (in) rectitude, and nations in the earth—thou shalt guide them.* The divine guidance implies protection and control. Compare Isai. lviii. 11. The anticipation of universal happiness, as springing from the judicial acts of the Messiah, is not unusual

in prophecy. See below, on Ps. lxii. 12—14, and compare Isai. ii. 3. The word translated *rectitude* occurs above, Ps. xlv. 7 (6.)

6 (5.) *The nations shall acknowledge thee, oh God, the nations shall acknowledge thee—all of them.* This repetition shows the anticipation here expressed to be the principal though not the primary subject of the psalm. The position of the universal terms, at the close of this verse and v. 4 (3), is highly emphatic, and precludes, in the most explicit manner, all restriction.

7 (6.) *The earth (or land) has yielded her produce; God will bless us, (even) our God.* The translation of the first verb as a future is entirely gratuitous, and therefore ungrammatical. Correctly rendered, it affords a hint of the immediate occasion of the psalm itself. The mutual relation of the clauses is that of a thankful acknowledgment for gifts received already to a joyful and believing expectation of the same hereafter. God has blessed us, and since he is our own God, he will bless us still.

8 (7.) *God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.* The God who has bestowed this harvest on us will continue to afford us tokens of his covenant love and faithfulness; and the day is coming when the intimate relation which we now sustain to him will be extended to all nations. *Ends of the earth*, even the remotest countries, but of course without excluding those at hand. It is really tantamount to saying *all lands* or *the whole earth*. See above, on Ps. ii. 8.

## P S A L M L X V I I I .

1. *To the Chief Musician. By David. A Psalm of Praise.* Literally, a *psalm*, a *song*, but see above, on Ps. lxxv. 1. lxxvi. 1. lxxvii. 1. This psalm, like the eighteenth, which it very much resembles, is a triumphal song, occasioned by some signal victory or success in war, perhaps that recorded in 2 Samuel xii. 26—31, which closed the last important war of David's reign. The psalm opens with a general praise of God as the deliverer of the righteous and destroyer of the wicked, vs. 2—7 (1—6.) This is then illustrated and confirmed by a reference to certain periods in the history of Israel, and first to the march through the wilderness, vs. 8—11 (7—10.) Then comes the period of the judges, vs. 12—15 (11—14.) Then the erection of the monarchy on Zion, and its confirmation by the victory just achieved, vs. 16—20 (15—19.) This is then represented as a part of the general plan of Jehovah's dealings with his people, vs. 21—24 (20—23.) The triumphal procession is described, vs. 25—28 (24—27.) All this, however, is but a specimen or foretaste of a universal conquest yet to come, vs. 29—32 (28—31.) In anticipation of this revolution, the nations are summoned to unite in the praises of Jehovah, vs. 33—36 (32—35.) The resemblance of this last part to the corresponding parts of the two preceding psalms may account for the position of the one before us.

2 (1.) *God shall arise; his enemies shall scatter; those hating him shall flee before him.* This verse propounds, as the theme of



the whole psalm, a fact continually verified in history. There is also an obvious allusion to the form of speech uttered by Moses at the removal of the ark, the symbol of God's presence. See Num. x. 35. The wish there expressed is here said to be realized. Hence the change of the imperative (קִימָהוּ) into a future (יָקִימוּ), showing that this verse has not an optative meaning (*let God arise*), but is declaratory of what certainly will be hereafter, as it has been already, in the case which gave occasion to the psalm. The present time is not excluded, but involved in the general proposition, that it must and will be so. *Shall scatter* is a more exact translation of the Hebrew verb than *be scattered*, although the idea is undoubtedly that of involuntary violent dispersion. *Before him*, from his face, or from his presence. See above, on Ps. ix. 4 (3.) lxi. 4 (3.)

3 (2.) *As smoke is driven, thou wilt drive (them) ; as wax is melted before fire, the wicked shall perish before God.* The form of expression is the same as in the preceding verse, *from the face of fire, from the face (or presence) of God.* The verb in the first clause is the same with that in Ps. i. 4, where the wind, implied here, is expressly mentioned, as the driving or propelling agent. The comparison with wax is a common one in Scripture, and occurs above, in Ps. xxii. 15 (14.) With the last clause compare the conclusion of the Song of Deborah (Judg v. 31), of which there are various imitations, or at least reminiscences, in this psalm.

4 (3.) *And the righteous shall be glad ; they shall triumph before God, and shall joy with gladness.* This is true not only of righteous individuals but of righteous nations, and especially of Israel, as such considered, although many of its members were unrighteous. But these are not considered as really belonging to the church or chosen people, but are classed among the wicked

enemies of God. *Before God* shall the righteous rejoice, as the wicked flee *before him*.

5 (4.) *Sing unto God, celebrate his name, cast up (a highway) for the (one) riding through the deserts, by his name Jah, and exult before him.* The second clause alludes to the opening of roads for kings and armies. See above, on Ps. l. 23, and compare Isai. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. The common version of the verb (*extol*) conveys an idea wholly foreign from the usage of the Hebrew word. *Riding*, i. e. journeying, or giving it a military application, *marching*. The common version of the next noun (*heavens*) is entirely unauthorized by usage. The Hebrew word is one still applied by the Arabs to the region over which the Israelites wandered forty years. The idea here suggested is more fully carried out in vs. 8—10 (7—9.) *By his name Jah*, i. e. in the character denoted by this name, which is an abbreviation of *Jehovah*, peculiar to the song of Moses (Ex. xv. 2) and the later imitations of it. See my notes on Isai. xii. 2. xxxviii. 11. The people are summoned to prepare for the reception of this glorious visitor.

6 (5.) *Father of orphans and judge of widows (is) God in his abode of holiness.* One of the most glorious divine characters is that of a protector of the innocent and helpless. *Judge*, vindicator, patron, one who does them justice. His *abode of holiness* cannot in this connection denote heaven, but must be referred to his peculiar residence among his chosen people. It was there that, both by the provisions of this law and the dispensations of his providence, he asserted his right to the exalted character here claimed for him.

7 (6.) *God makes the lonely dwell in houses, makes the captives come forth into enjoyments; only rebels (still) inhabit a dry-land (or desert).* This, though a general proposition, seems to have a

special reference to the change in the condition of the Israelites, when brought out of the wilderness into possession of the promised land. The participles in the original (*settling, bringing out*) express habitual or customary acts. *In houses*, literally, *in a house*, or still more closely, *to a house*, the idea of removal being really implied. The word might also be translated *homewards* or *at home*. The last word in this clause occurs nowhere else, and has been variously explained to mean *in chains, by force*, and *into pleasures* or enjoyments, which last is now preferred by most interpreters.

8 (7.) *Oh God, in thy going out before thy people, in thy marching through the wilderness, Selah.* The sentence is completed in the next verse, being here divided by a pause of solemn and admiring recollection. The general description of the foregoing verses is now confirmed and illustrated by a reference to the exodus from Egypt and the journey through the wilderness. *Before thy people*, in the pillar of cloud, as their guide and their commander. *Thy marching*, literally, *thy stepping, treading*, or more exactly still, *thy step* or *tread*. To make the allusion still more pointed, the word for *wilderness* is not the one commonly so rendered, but one borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 10.

9 (8.) *The earth shook, nay, the heavens dropped, this Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel. Dropped, discharged drops, rained.* This is mentioned as a natural and usual accompaniment of a thunder-storm. *This Sinai* probably means, *this (was at) Sinai*, and should be read as a parenthesis. The usual construction not only requires a verb to be repeated or supplied, but yields an obscure and doubtful sense, as no reason can be given why Sinai should be called *this Sinai*, and the version *Sinai itself* is unauthorized by usage. The first clause is descriptive of the grand and terrible phenomena attending the theophany at Sinai. See Ex. xix. 16—18.



10. (9.) *A rain of free gifts thou pourest down, oh God ; thine inheritance, and (that) exhausted, thou dost confirm (or strengthen) it.* The first clause probably refers to the abundant and refreshing gifts (of which rain is a natural and common emblem) bestowed upon the people in the wilderness, including manna, quails, and water. The future tense is like those in Ps. xviii. 7 (6.) *Pour down*, literally, *shake* or *shake out*. *Thine inheritance*, thy people. The construction is that of an absolute nominative, (*as to*) *thine inheritance*. The next clause heightens the description by suggesting that the gift came precisely when it was most needed.

11 (10.) *Thy flock hath dwelt therein ; thou wilt provide, in thy goodness, for the wretched.* The first noun strictly means an animal, and more especially a beast, but was probably employed as a collective to denote a herd or flock, in which sense it was figuratively applied in David's time to a company or troop of men, (2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 13.) *Therein*, i. e. in the land of promise, which was present to the writer's mind, though not expressly mentioned in the context. See below, vs. 15 (14) and compare Isai. viii. 21. *Thou wilt provide*, indefinitely, whatsoever may be needed ; or more specifically, *wilt prepare*, i. e. prepare a home, a resting place. The future tense describes it as a customary method of proceeding upon God's part, but specially exemplified in the case of Israel, who, until his settlement in Canaan, might well be called a sufferer, a wretched or afflicted one.

12 (11.) *The Lord will give the word ; the (women) publishing (it) are a great host.* As to the future, see above, on vs. 10, 11. (9, 10.) *Word* here means tidings, news, and, as the whole connection shows, good news, which is also suggested by the word translated *publishing*, but in usage constantly applied to joyful tidings. See above, on Ps. xl. 10 (9.) There is obvious allusion to the ancient oriental custom of women celebrating victories



with song and dance. See Ex. xv. 20. 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. The reference is not to any one occasion, but to an ideal choir chanting all the victories of some great period, perhaps that of the Judges.

13 (12.) *Kings of armies shall flee, shall flee, and she that tarrieth at home shall divide the spoil.* The flight described is not that of kings alone, but of kings at the head of armies. The repetition of the verb denotes the certainty and completeness of the rout. The *dweller in the house* is by some literally understood to mean the woman who takes no part in the battle. But others regard it as a figure for the chosen people, dwelling quietly at home, after the disappearance of their enemies, when "the land had rest," Judg. v. 31. viii. 28.

14 (13.) *When ye lie down between the borders, (ye shall be like) the wings of a dove covered with silver and her pinions with yellow gold.* The general idea seems to be that when "the land had rest," her condition was one of peaceful prosperity. The common version of the first clause (*though ye have lien among the pots*) is justified neither by rabbinical tradition nor the ancient versions. The Hebrew noun occurs only here and in Ezek. xl. 43, where it is equally obscure, and the cognate forms in Gen. xlix. 14. Judg. v. 16 are scarcely less so. The only meaning, besides those already mentioned, which has any probability, is that of *folds* or *sheep-cotes*, lying among which might be viewed as a poetical figure for rural or pastoral repose, thus amounting to the same thing with the first translation, which describes the people as residing quietly *between the borders*, i. e. within the boundaries or frontiers of their territory, now once more forsaken by the enemy. The beautiful allusion in the last clause to the changeable colours of a dove's plumage, seems intended to suggest the idea of a peaceful but splendid prosperity.

15 (14.) *When the Almighty scatters kings therein, it snows in Zalmon.* The change from war to peace is likened to the dazzling whiteness of snow in the midst of blackness or darkness. This last idea is conveyed by *Zalmon*, an unimportant eminence near Shechem, partly perhaps in reference to the dark forests which covered it (Judg. ix. 48), but chiefly to the meaning of the name itself, to wit, *shade* or *shadow*. The parallel term, *snow*, suggests the idea of the brightest light. See Ps. li. 9 (7.) Isai. i. 18. Mark ix. 3. Matth. xxviii. 3. Rev. i. 14, and compare Matth. xvii. 2. Some, with far less probability, explain the verse as meaning that the land was whitened with the slain, as Zalmon was with snow; but this ascribes too great an altitude to Zalmon. The Hebrew construction in the first clause is, *in the Almighty's scattering kings*, i. e. at the time of his so doing. The divine name here used is not the one so frequently translated *Mighty* in the Psalms, but the patriarchal title mentioned in Ex. vi. 3. Compare Gen. xvii. 1. xxviii. 3. It is here introduced because the events in question were remarkable exertions and displays of God's omnipotence. *Scattered* here means routed, put to flight. See above, vs. 13 (12), and compare the use of the same Hebrew verb in Zech. ii. 10 (6.)

16 (15.) *A mount of God (is) Mount Bashan, a mount of peaks (or ridges) is Mount Bashan.* The first phrase means a mountain showing forth the creative power of God by its vastness. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 7 (6.) *Mount Bashan*, not a single eminence, but the lofty range of Antilibanus, also called *Hermon*, and by other races, *Sion* and *Sirion*. See Deut. iii. 9. iv. 48. Ps. xlii. 7 (6.) Ps. lxxxix. 13 (12.) The last two names would be apt to suggest, by a fortuitous resemblance, that of the holy hill of *Zion*. A mount of peaks or ridges, i. e. not a detached mountain, but a chain with many lofty summits, forming the northern boundary of Bashan. At the same time, the expressions of this verse would necessarily suggest the idea of great

states or kingdoms, of which mountains are the standing symbols. See above, on Ps. xlv. 3 (2.) lxv. 7 (6.)

17 (16.) *Why will ye watch, (ye) hills, (ye) ridges, the hill God hath desired for his dwelling? Yea, Jehovah will inhabit (it) forever.* The interrogative form implies disapprobation and contempt. See above, on Ps. ii. 1. The verb occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, but its meaning has been preserved in Arabic, namely, to watch as an enemy, to lie in wait, or, as some allege, to view with envy. Common to both is the idea of hostility or ill-will. The translation of this verb in the English Bible (*leap*) and in the Prayer Book Version (*hop*) seems to rest on mere conjecture. The two nouns, *hills* and *ridges*, are by some supposed to form a sort of compound, *ridge-hills*, i. e. high or rugged hills. Compare the phrase *wine-reeling*, Ps. lx. 5 (3.) The plural form may denote the several peaks, or the whole class which this range of mountains merely represented. Zion is here described as an object of hostility or envy to the mountains of the heathen world, on account of the honour put upon it by its being chosen as the earthly residence of God. Having first poetically said that he *desired* it, i. e. preferred and chose it, to preclude all doubt as to the event, the psalmist adds, not only so, but he does and will dwell there for ever. The verbs of the second and third clause, although synonymous, are not identical in Hebrew. There is evident significance in the choice of the divine names here employed. Not only did he choose it, as Elohim, for his dwelling, but he actually dwells there as Jehovah, as the God of revelation and the covenanted God of Israel.

18 (17.) *The chariots of God (are) two myriads, multiplied thousands; the Lord is among them, Sinai in the sanctuary.* As David's most formidable foes were particularly strong in chariots of war (2 Sam. viii. 4. x. 18), so here God's power of protection is expressed by an innumerable multitude of chariots. The same



mode of representation occurs in the history of Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 17. *Two myriads* is a closer version than *twenty thousand*, because the Hebrew word is the dual of one used both in the vague sense of a multitude, and in the precise sense of a myriad. See above, on Ps. iii. 7 (6), where the plural of the same word occurs. The next phrase strictly means *thousands of repetition or reduplication*, i. e. thousands upon thousands. Compare Dan. vii. 10. There is no mention of *angels* in the text, although interpreters in every age have supposed their presence to be necessarily implied, as the conductors of God's chariots, if not as the chariots themselves, which is the sense put upon the Hebrew phrase by both the English versions (*even thousands of angels*.) There is also an obvious allusion to the giving of the law at Sinai, as described in Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3, the presence of angels at which appears to be assumed in the New Testament, Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2. It is not however the mere number, even of these heavenly hosts, that constitutes the safety of the holy place, but the personal presence of the Lord (*Adhonai*) among them, which is therefore asserted in the next clause. The last words of the verse are obscure, but seem most probably to mean, that the same glorious theophany which once took place on Sinai is now renewed on Zion, with particular reference as some imagine, to the presence of the ark and the tables of stone in the one case, as a perpetual memorial, and even a perpetual renewal, of the legislation in the other. This fine poetical identification of the two mountains hallowed by God's presence may have been in the mind of the apostle when he drew that sublime contrast or parallel between them, Heb. xii. 18—24. Under the law, Sinai was renewed in Zion. Under the gospel, Zion superseded Sinai.

19 (18.) *Thou hast gone up to the high-place; thou hast captured a captivity; thou hast taken gifts among mankind, and (even among) rebels, (so as) to dwell (here), Lord, God! In*



order to carry out his choice and resolution, as recorded in v. 17 (16) above, i. e. in order to establish Zion as his earthly dwelling place, God has encountered all opposing powers, vanquished them, and forced them to pay tribute, even the stoutest and most stubborn. The sign of the conquest being finished is the conqueror's return to his throne, whether upon earth or in heaven. See above, on Ps. vii. 8 (7), and compare Ps. xviii. 17 (16), xciii. 4. cii. 20 (19.) *Captured a captivity*, i. e. taken captive a multitude of enemies. The *gifts* meant are the forced gifts of the conquered. *Among men*, i. e. while present among them as their conqueror, and by implication *from* them. *Even rebels*, even the most rebellious, are compelled to submit. In other words, the conquest is complete. According to the military figures here used, it would seem to be implied that the gifts thus extorted by the conqueror are distributed among his followers. To *receive gifts* on the one hand and *bestow gifts* on the other are correlative ideas and expressions, so that Paul, in applying this description of a theocratic triumph to the conquests of our Saviour, substitutes one of these expressions for the other (Eph. iv. 9.) He also, in his comment on the passage, justly represents the ascension there described as necessarily implying a previous descent. In other words, victory presupposes conflict. The last clause obviously refers back to the corresponding clause of v. 17 (16.) *Lord God*, literally *Jah, God!* See above, on v. 5 (4.)

20 (19.) *Blessed be the Lord, day (by) day*; (whoever) *lays a load upon us, the Mighty* (God is) *our salvation. Selah.* The second clause, which is obscure from brevity, also admits of this translation: (man) may lay a load upon us, (but) God is our salvation. *Lay a load upon us*, literally, *load to us*, or *as to us*. According to both these constructions, loading means oppression. It is possible, however, to attach to it the sense of benefits or favours, put upon it in the English versions, but with a very dif-

ferent construction of the whole clause. *The Mighty (God) will heap upon us our salvation, or, will load us with salvation.* The depth of feeling and the strength of faith, on which this anticipation rests, are indicated or betrayed by the meditative pause which follows.

21 (20.) *God is for us a God of salvation, and to Jehovah the Lord (belong) issues from death.* A more exact translation of the verse, retaining the peculiar idioms, would be this: *the Almighty (is) for us an Almighty for salvation, and to Jehovah the Lord (belong), as to death, outgoings or escapes.* This is only an amplification of the last clause of the verse preceding, *God is our salvation*, or according to the other construction, *God loads us with salvation.*

22 (21.) *Surely God will crush the head of his enemies, the hairy scalp going on in his trespasses.* The first word properly means *only* and is here used to denote that this and not the contrary is true, a purpose which in our idiom may be answered by a particle of strong asseveration, such as *certainly* or *surely*. See above, v. 7 (6), and compare Ps. xxxix. 12 (11). lviii. 12 (11.) *Crush the head*, a strong figure for violent and complete destruction. See below, on v. 24 (23), and compare Gen. iii. 15. Ps. cx. 6. Num. xxiv. 8, 17. The *hairy scalp*, or *crown of hair*, is merely a poetical equivalent or parallel to *head*. The words that follow seem to be applied to it by a kind of personification. Compare Prov. xvi. 31. But this figure, if too bold, may be avoided by supplying *of one* or *of the man* before *going*. This last word does not necessarily mean *going on*, but according to its usage elsewhere may be rendered *going about*, i. e. habitually acting, in a sinful manner. See above, on Ps. xii. 9 (8.) xx. 7 (6.) xxvi. 3. xxxv. 14. xxxix. 7 (6.) xliii. 2 (1.)

23 (22.) *The Lord hath said, From Bashan I will bring (them)*

*back, I will bring (them) back from the depths of the sea.* Some suppose the object of the verbs in this verse to be *Israel* or *my people*, as in Isai. xlix. 12 (compare Gen. xiv. 14.) But as the enemy is still the subject of the following verses, it is better to understand the one before us as threatening to bring them back for punishment and destruction, even when they seemed to have withdrawn in triumph. Here, as in verse 15 (14), *Bashan* is mentioned as a frontier province of the Holy Land. In the last clause there is an obvious climax. I will bring them back, not from Bashan merely, but, if need be, from the bottom of the ocean. Compare Ps. cxxxix. 9, and especially Am. ix. 2, 3.

24 (23.) *In order that thou mayest crush (them)—thy foot in blood—(and) the tongue of thy dogs (in blood) from the enemies, (even) from him.* The general import of this verse is clear, but its construction doubtful and obscure. The first verb cannot mean to *dip* or *wash* without an arbitrary change of text by reading תרחץ as in Ps. lviii. 11 (10.) The original verb (רמחץ) must have the same sense as in v. 22 (21), and may have the same object, namely, the enemies of God and of his people. The next words may then be taken as a parenthetical and qualifying clause, like *sword in hand* and other such forms in English. *Thy foot in blood*, i. e. with thy foot in their blood, or so that thy foot shall tread in their blood. The last word in Hebrew (מִיָּדָה) is by some understood as a noun with a suffix meaning *its portion* i. e. the share of the tongue; but for this there is no authority in usage. Others translate the phrase, *of it*, i. e. of the blood, and the whole clause, *the tongue of thy dogs (shall receive) of it from the enemies.* According to the first version given above, the last phrase is a mere specification of the one before it; *from the enemies, (even) from him*, referring to some real or ideal representative of the entire class.

25 (24.) *They saw thy goings, oh God, the goings of my God,*



*my king, in the holy place.* The subject of the first verb may be either men in general, or the spectators, those who took no part in the triumphal pageant here described. *The holy place*, not in the restricted sense, but in that of the Greek *ιερόν*, meaning the whole of the sacred enclosure, as distinguished from *ναός*, the sacred edifice. Into this enclosure the procession seems to be described as entering, for the purpose of bringing back the ark.

26 (25.) *Before went singers, behind players, in the midst of damsels drumming*, playing upon timbrels, which is still an oriental custom. Some suppose the order mentioned in the first clause to denote the precedence or priority of vocal above instrumental music, as a rational or reasonable service. The English version of the last clause, *among (them were) the damsels*, inverts the true sense by needlessly supplying two words, a construction forbidden by the masoretic pointing. The true sense is, that the singers and performers were themselves surrounded by these players upon timbrels.

27 (26.) *In assemblies bless ye God, the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.* Not only individually, or in triumphal marches, but in the stated convocations of the people at the sanctuary. See above, on Ps. xxvi. 12, the only other place where the Hebrew word occurs, except as a proper name (Num. xxxiii. 25), and where it evidently has the same sense. The only satisfactory explanation of the last words, *from the fountain of Israel*, is that afforded by supplying *ye who are* before it, and applying the whole clause as a description of the chosen people, under the figure of a stream derived or flowing from its fountain. Compare the similar ideas and expressions in Isai. xlviii. 1. li. 1.

28 (27.) *There is little Benjamin, subduing them; the chiefs of Judah, stoning them; the chiefs of Zebulun; the chiefs of Naphtali.* These are named as representatives of all the tribes supposed to



be *there*, i. e. in the triumphal march. They seem to be selected, partly with reference to their local habitation, as the northern and southern extremities of Israel; partly because the most remarkable exploits, from the time of Moses to the time of David, were performed by these tribes. See Judg. v. 18. 1 Sam. xviii. 7. *Little Benjamin*, so called in allusion to Jacob's partial fondness for his youngest son. See Gen. xliii. 33, and compare 1 Sam. ix. 21. *Their conqueror*, or *subduing them*, as Saul did the surrounding nations. See 1 Sam. xiv. 47, 48. *Stoning them*, literally, *their stoning*, from a verb which invariably means to *stone*. The allusion may be to their skill as slingers, or more specifically to the means by which David killed Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 49, 50.) The suffix refers to the enemy, as in the clause preceding. Some interpreters have noted, as an observable coincidence, that our Lord and several of his apostles were of Judah, Paul was of Benjamin (Phil. iii. 5), and the remaining apostles of Galilee, in which lay the domain of Zebulon and Naphtali (Matt. iv. 13.)

29 (28.) *Thy God* (oh Israel) *hath ordained thy strength; be thou strong, oh God, who hast wrought (it) for us*. Ordained, provided and secured by his omnipotence. *Be strong*, i. e. show thy strength by exerting it in our behalf, hereafter as thou hast done heretofore. *Wrought for us*, indefinitely and in general, or *wrought (it) for us*, i. e. this deliverance which we have been celebrating. See above, on Ps. xxii. 32 (31), and compare Isai. xxvi. 12.

30 (29.) *Because of thy temple above Jerusalem, to thee shall kings bring tribute*. The first word properly means *from*; but as the local sense would here be inadmissible, *from* may be understood as in the phrase *arising from*, *proceeding from*, in which the idea is that of an effect or consequence. As the word translated *temple* originally means a *palace*, it is applicable both to the Mosaic sanc-

tuary and to Solomon's temple which succeeded it. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) xlvi. 10 (9.) lxxv. 5 (4.) *Above Jerusalem*, both in a physical and moral sense, as Zion and Moriah overhung the city, and as the presence of the sanctuary was at once its protection and its crowning glory. The last word in Hebrew occurs only here and in passages founded upon this. See below, Ps. lxxvi. 12 (11), and compare Isai. xlviii. 7.

31 (30.) *Rebuke thou the beasts of the reeds, the crowd of strong (bulls) with the calves of the nations, crouching with pieces of silver; he has scattered nations (that) in wars delight.* What he confidently anticipates is prayed for in the first clause, and in the last described as already realized, both common modes of indirect prediction. The word for *beasts* is that translated *flock* in vs. 11 (10) above; but here both senses seem to be suggested, as they may be by the use of the plural in English. The *beast of the reeds* has been variously explained to be the lion (Jer. xlix. 19. l. 44. Zech. xi. 3), the crocodile (Ez. xxix. 3. xxxii. 2), and the hippopotamus, the Hebrew name of which is plural in its form (*Behemoth*) and therefore analogous to the collective term here used. This animal is also represented elsewhere as lying *in the covert of the reed* (Job xl. 21.) Either the crocodile or hippopotamus would necessarily suggest the idea of Egypt, here referred to as the most powerful of heathen states, and therefore a fit emblem of the heathen world. The adjective *strong* is a poetical description of *wild bulls*, as in Ps. xxii. 13 (12.) These may represent the leaders of the nations, and the *calves* their subjects. The participle *crouching* is a singular in Hebrew, *prostrating himself*, the many being suddenly transformed into an ideal individual. See above, on Ps. x. 10. *With pieces of silver*, silver coins, offered as tribute to their conquerors. See above, on v. 19 (18), and compare Isai. lx. 9. In the close of the verse he sees the warlike enemies of Israel already scattered by the hand of God.

31 (30.) *Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* Egypt is again named as the representative of the Gentile world, but in conjunction with the neighboring state of Cush or Ethiopia, often referred to by the prophets as a powerful and splendid empire. See Isai. xviii. 7. xlv. 14. Zeph. iii. 10. The word translated *princes* means originally *fat ones*, elsewhere put for prosperous and potent men. See above, on Ps. xxii. 30 (29.) From this word is supposed to be derived the name *Hasmonean* which was, given to the Maccabees or Jewish princes in the interval between the Old and New Testaments. *Soon stretch out* is not a version but a paraphrase of the original expression, which means strictly, *make its hands to run*, and may perhaps denote the eagerness with which the action is performed.

33 (32.) *Kingdoms of the earth, sing unto God; praise (or celebrate) the Lord! Selah.* In view of the conquests here foreseen, the whole world is summoned to acknowledge the God of Israel as the universal sovereign. Compare Rev. xi. 15.

34 (33.) (Sing) *to the (one) riding in the heavens of heavens of old; lo, he utters his voice, a voice of strength.* This verse is designed to magnify the object of the praise enjoined. *Riding*, as a conqueror in triumph. See above, on v. 5 (4.) *The heavens of heavens* are the highest heavens, the heaven of that which is heaven to us. See 1 Kings viii. 27, and compare Deut. x. 14. xxxiii. 26. *Of old* does not qualify *riding*, as it may seem to do in English, but the nouns immediately preceding, *the heavens of antiquity* or *ancient heavens*. See above on Ps. lv. 20 (19.) In the last clause, he seems to hear an audible response from heaven itself. The *lo*, as usual, implies that something suddenly assails the senses. *Utters his voice*, literally, *gives (forth a sound) with his voice*, as in Ps. lxvi. 7 (6.)



35 (34.) *Give strength to God ! Over Israel (is) his majesty, and his strength in the clouds.* To *give*, in such connections, is of course to ascribe. See above, on Ps. xxix. 1, 2. The remainder of the verse contains the ground of this injunction. God is entitled to the praise of power, because his greatness is displayed in the protection which he extends over Israel. As the sanctuary was above Jerusalem, so God was above the chosen people, their chief and their protector. See above, on v. 30 (29.) At the same time his power is displayed throughout the universe, especially those extraordinary dispensations, in which he appears to speak from heaven or the clouds. See above, on Ps. xxvi. 6 (5.)


36 (35.) *Terrible (art thou), oh God, out of thy holy-places ; the Mighty (God) of Israel—he is (a God) giving strength and forces to the people. Blessed (be) God !* The winding up is like that of the twenty-ninth psalm. *Out of thy sanctuaries*, as displayed thence, in blessings bestowed upon thy people. He is not only mighty in himself but the giver of might to others. Compare Isai. xl. 29, 31.

## PSALM LXIX.

A SUFFERER describes his own condition, vs. 2—5 (1—4.) He represents himself as suffering for God's sake, vs. 6—13 (5—12.) He therefore prays to be delivered, vs. 14—19 (13—18.) He again describes his suffering, but with more explicit reference to its cause, the malice of his enemies, vs. 20—22 (19—21.) He therefore prays that they may be destroyed, vs. 23—29 (22—28.) He anticipates a favourable answer to his prayers and the hap-



piest effect upon his brethren, vs. 30—34 (29—33.) Nay, he expects to see the same mercy exercised towards the church or chosen people, vs. 35—37 (34—36.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. Upon lilies. By David.* The *lilies* probably refers to the delightful consolations and deliverances experienced or hoped for. See above, on Ps. xlv. 1. lx. 1. The subject of the psalm is an ideal person, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers. The only individual in whom the various traits meet is Christ. That he is not however the exclusive or even the immediate subject, is clear from the confession in v. 6 (5.) There is no psalm, except the twenty-second, more distinctly applied to him in the New Testament. 

2 (1.) *Save me, oh God, for the waters are come in, even to my soul*, i. e. so as to endanger my life. See Jer. iv. 10. Jon. ii. 6. The figure for extreme distress is the same as in Ps. xl. 3 (2.)

3 (2.) *I have sunk in the mire of the depth (or deep place) (where) there is no standing; I have come into depths of water, and the flood has overwhelmed me.* The image is that of one sunk in the bottom of a sea or river. *Mire of depth* is not merely deep mire, but the mire found in a deep place.

4 (3.) *I am weary of my crying; parched is my throat; my eyes fail, waiting for my God.* The literal meaning of the first clause is, *I am weary in my crying*, i. e. have grown weary in the act of calling upon God for help. See above, on Ps. vi. 7 (6.) *Parched*, dried, by excessive exertion of the voice, or giving the Hebrew verb the stronger sense which properly belongs to it, *inflamed*. His eyes are represented as exhausted, worn out, by continued looking for God. See below, Ps. cxix. 82, and compare Lam. iv. 17. The participle *waiting* does not agree with *eyes*, as it might seem to do in English, but with the person to

whom they belong, and may be construed absolutely, *I waiting* (*me expectante*), i. e. while I wait.

5 (4.) *More than the hairs of my head (are) those hating me without cause ; strong are my destroyers, my false enemies ; what I did not rob, then must I restore.* With the first clause compare Ps. xl. 13 (12) ; with the second, Ps. xxxv. 9. xxxviii. 20 (19) ; with the third, Ps. xxxv. 11. 2 Sam. xvi. 8. *False enemies*, literally, *enemies of falsehood*, which may either mean in general perfidious, treacherous, or more specifically, using calumny and falsehood as a means for the attainment of their wicked ends. *Then* or afterwards, in reference to the previous innocence which he asserts. Though he took nothing at first, yet afterwards he must restore.

6 (5.) *Oh God, thou knowest of (or as to) my foolishness, and my trespasses from thee have not been hid.* He does not deny his own demerit in the sight of God, but nevertheless prays to be delivered from destruction. See above, on Ps. vi. 2 (1.) xxxviii. 4—6 (3—5.) xl. 13 (12.) xli. 15 (14.) As if he had said, ‘true, I am a sinner ; it is vain to deny it ; thou God, knowest it ; but nevertheless’ &c.

7 (6.) *Let not them be ashamed in me that wait for thee, Lord, Jehovah, of Hosts ; let not them be disgraced in me that seek thee, God of Israel !* He prays that the principle laid down in Ps. xxv. 3 may not be falsified. *In me*, not merely *by me* or *because of me*, but *in me*, as the representative of the whole class. *Ashamed*, disappointed and defeated in their hopes. *Wait for thee*, for thine appearance and the fulfilment of thy promises. *Seek thee*, i. e. seek to know thee and enjoy thy favour.

8 (7.) *Because for thee (or thy sake) I have borne reproach, disgrace hath covered my face.* In his disgrace all God’s servants

must participate, because he is one of them and as such suffers. With the first clause compare Ps. xlv. 23 (22.) Jer. xv. 15, with the last, Ps. xlv. 16 (15.)

9 (8.) *I am become a stranger unto my brethren and an alien unto the sons of my mother.* The literal meaning of the first clause is, *I have been estranged to (or as to) my brothers.* There may be an allusion to the envious treatment of David by the other sons of Jesse. See 1 Sam. xvii. 28. The loss or alienation of the nearest friends is spoken of as one of the severest trials in Ps. xxvii. 10.

10 (9.) *For the zeal of thine house, jealous regard for the honour of the sanctuary, as the visible centre of the true religion, has consumed me,* implying an extreme intensity of feeling; and in consequence of this zeal, *the revilings of thy revilers have fallen upon me.* That such revilers did exist in David's time, we learn from 2 Sam. xii. 14. The first clause of the verse before us is applied to Christ in John ii. 17, and the second in Rom. xv. 3.

11 (10.) *And I wept (away) my soul* or wept myself away, *in fasting, and (even that) was for revilings to me,* even that became a subject of malignant mockery against me. That weeping and fasting, as natural concomitants, were not unknown to David's experience in real life, appears from 2 Sam. xii. 16, 21, 22. The first clause likewise admits of this construction: *and I wept, my soul (was) in fasting*, i. e. fasted. But this though it agrees well with the Hebrew usage which represents fasting as a mortification of the soul (see above, on Ps. xxxv. 13), is neither so natural nor so striking as the first construction above given, which is found in an anonymous translation of the Psalms, published by Bagster, London, 1830.

12 (11.) *And I gave, put on (as) my clothing, sackcloth, and*



*was to them, in consequence, for a comparison, a proverb, by-word, or became a by-word to them.* See above, on Ps. xxxv. 13 and xlv. 15 (14.) The context makes it probable that the mourning described in this and the preceding verse was not in reference to his own sufferings merely, but to the sins of the whole people

13 (12.) *They think of me, imagine things against me, they who sit in the gate; (they imagine) songs, lampoons or satires, they who drink strong drink.* The *gate* meant is that of the city, where the oriental courts and markets were held. Hence some suppose the sense to be, that even in the place of serious business, they indulge their spiteful mirth at my expense. But it seems more natural to make the sitters in the gate mean simply those frequenting public places. See above on Ps. lv. 12 (11) and compare Josh. xx. 4. Ruth iv. 1, 2. Lam. v. 14.

14 (13.) *And I, but as for me, in contradistinction from these mockers, my prayer (is) to thee, I pray to thee in spite of their derision, oh Jehovah; (let there come or let there be) a time of acceptance, in the abundance of thy mercy; answer me, grant my petition, in the truth of thy salvation, or thy truth of salvation, in the exercise of that fidelity which secures the salvation of all who trust it.* Compare Isai. xlix. 8. lxi. 2.

15 (14.) *Deliver me from the mire and let me not sink; let me be delivered from my haters, from the depths of water.* He here returns to the figures in v. 2 (1), where profound suffering is described as submersion under water and in mire. The meaning of the figure is explained in the last clause of the verse before us by the addition of a literal expression.

16 (15.) *Let not the flood overwhelm me, and let not the deep swallow me, and let not the well (or pit) shut its mouth upon*



*me.* In the earnestness of his entreaty, he passes from the figure of a sea or stream to that of a well or cistern, the idea common to both being that of deep water.

17 (16.) *Answer me, grant my prayer, Jehovah ; for good* (or as we should say, great) *is thy mercy ; according to the multitude of thy compassions, turn to me,* or towards me, implying that his looks were before averted. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.) xiii. 2 (1.)

18 (17.) *And hide not thy face from thy servant, for* (there is) *distress to me,* I am distressed, *make haste, answer me,* i. e. grant me what I ask without delay.

19 (18.) *Draw nigh unto my soul,* to me whose soul or life is threatened, *ransom it,* rescue it from ruin ; *because* (or *for the sake*) *of my enemies, redeem me,* so that they may not triumph in my fall. See above, on Ps. xiii. 5 (4), and with the first clause compare Ps. xxii. 2 (1.)

20 (19.) *Thou knowest,* literally *hast known,* as a thing of long standing, *my reproach,* the contempt of which I am the object, *and my shame and my disgrace ; before thee,* in thy sight and known to thee, *(are) all my adversaries,* persecutors or oppressors, not their persons merely, or their conduct in general, but their treatment of me. The conviction that God knows all involves a persuasion that he will do justice to both parties. See above, on Ps. i. 6.

21 (20.) *Reproach,* including calumny and insult, *hath broken my heart,* a common figure for extreme distress, *and I am sick,* sick at heart or sick in spirit, but without excluding the idea of corporeal suffering, as the effect, or as a part, of his distress ; *and I have waited for pity,* literally mourning, i. e. sympathy,

condolence, on the part of my cruel enemies, *and it is not, or there is none, and for comforters*, (those) comforting, *and have not found* (them.) With the phrase, *I am sick*, compare Ps. vi. 3 (2.)

22 (21.) *And*, so far from pitying me they have aggravated my distress, for *they have given in my food, or as my food, gall*, here put for the extreme of bitterness, *and for my thirst*, i. e. to slake it, or *at* (the time of) *my thirst*, in my thirst, when I thirst, *they give me vinegar to drink*. Gall and vinegar are here put together to denote the most unpalatable forms of food and drink. The passion of our Lord was providentially so ordered as to furnish a remarkable coincidence with this verse. The Romans were accustomed to give sour wine with an infusion of myrrh to convicts on the cross, for the purpose of deadening the pain. This practice was adhered to in our Saviour's case (Mark xv. 23.) Though in itself not cruel but the contrary, it formed part of the great process of murderous persecution. On the part of the Roman soldiery it may have been an act of kindness; but considered as an act of the unbelieving Jews, it was giving *gall and vinegar* to one already overwhelmed with anguish. And so Matthew, in accordance with his general method, represents it as a verification of this passage (Matth. xxvii. 34.) He does not contradict Mark's account before referred to, but merely intimates, that the wine and myrrh thus offered were to be regarded as identical with the gall and vinegar of this prediction. And in order to prevent the coincidence from being overlooked, our Lord, before he died, complained of thirst and vinegar was administered. (Matth. xxvii. 48. John xix. 28.) The word translated *food* in the first clause occurs only here, and its verbal root only in the history of David (2 Sam. xii. 17. xiii. 6, 10)

23 (22.) *Let their table before them*, at which they eat and where they are accustomed to enjoy themselves, *be for* (or *become*) *a snare*, an occasion of unexpected danger, *and to those*

*secure*, thinking themselves safe, (let it be for or become) *a trap*. The first word in the last clause is the plural of one meaning *peace*, but seems to be here used, as in Ps. lv. 21 (20), for those who are at peace, at ease, tranquil and secure. Compare 1 Thess. v. 3. The ancient versions give it the equally appropriate sense of *for requitals*, i. e. in recompense of their transgressions. But although this sense may be deduced from the verbal root (שָׁׁן) and belongs to several collateral derivatives (שָׁׁן, שָׁׁן, שָׁׁן, שָׁׁן), it has no existence in the usage of the one before us (שָׁׁן.) The circuitous construction in the English version is not only forced, but wholly unnecessary. The imprecations in this verse and those following it are revolting only when considered as the expression of malignant selfishness. If uttered by God, they shock no reader's sensibilities, nor should they, when considered as the language of an ideal person, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers, and particularly Him, who, though he prayed for his murderers while dying (Luke xxiii. 34), had before applied the words of this very passage to the unbelieving Jews (Matt. xxiii. 38), as Paul did afterwards (Rom. xi. 9, 10.) The general doctrine of providential retribution, far from being confined to the Old Testament, is distinctly taught in many of our Saviour's parables. See Matth. xxi. 41. xxii. 7. xxiv. 51.

24 (23.) *Let their eyes darken*, i. e. be or grow dark, *from seeing*, so as not to see, *and their loins do thou cause to bend*, give way, or swerve, i. e. paralyse their strength. See above, on Ps. lxvi. 10 (9.) The first clause probably does not refer to blindness, but either to the dimness of the eyes in death, or to darkness as a figure for calamity in general.

25 (24.) *Pour upon them thine anger*, and *let the heat of thy wrath*, thy hot wrath, *overtake them*, reach them after they have long seemed to escape it and expected to escape it still.



26 (25.) *Let their home be desolated ; in their tents may there be no one dwelling, or let no one dwell.* The word translated *home* seems properly to mean an *enclosure*, with special reference perhaps to an encampment or collection of tents (Gen. xxv. 16. Num. xxi. 10.) The translation *castle* in the English version of the places just referred to, and that of *palace* in the margin of the one before us, seem entirely conjectural. The Septuagint here has a Greek word (ἐπαυλις) meaning a place to pass the night in, especially for flocks and herds, and thence transferred to farm or country houses. This expression is retained in Acts i. 20, where the verse before us is quoted, in connection with Ps. cix. 8, and applied to Judas Iscariot, not as an individual merely, but as a type and representative of the Jewish people, in their malignant and perfidious enmity to Christ. This does not prove our Lord to be the exclusive subject of the whole psalm, a conclusion forbidden by the confession of sin in v. 6 (5) above ; but it does show that He is not only one, but the chief member, nay the great type and representative, of the whole class of innocent sufferers at the hands of wicked enemies. See also Matt. xxiii. 38.

27 (26.) *For (those) whom thou hast smitten they persecute, have persecuted heretofore and do so still ; and as to the grief of thy wounded they tell or talk.* The pronoun in the first clause is emphatic, ‘ thou and not man, or man only as thy blind unconscious instrument.’ Compare 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12. Job xix. 21, 22. The same persons are described as *thy wounded*, the original expression having commonly the sense of mortally wounded, and being therefore often rendered *slain*. See Isai. lxvi. 16. Jer. xxv. 33. The preposition before *grief* denotes the theme or subject, as it does with the same verb in Ps. ii. 7. To tell about it or talk of it is to make it the subject of unfeeling or derisive comment. See above on Ps. xli. 9 (8.)

28 (27.) *Give (or place) iniquity upon iniquity, and let them*



*not come into thy righteousness.* Luther and others understand the first clause as a prayer that sin may be made the punishment of sin (Rom. i. 28). But there seems to be rather an allusion to the double sense of the equivocal term (יִצְרָא) which properly denotes sin as such or in itself considered, but sometimes seems to mean sin considered in its consequences or effects. Thus understood it is a prayer that sin may be followed by the natural effects of sin. The *righteousness* of God is that which he bestows by the judicial act of justification, including pardon. To *come into* it is to come into possession or enjoyment of it, to become a sharer in it.

29 (28.) *Let them be blotted from the book of life* (or of the *living*), and with the *righteous* let them not be written, registered, enrolled. The *book* is not here a figure for the memory, as in Ps. lvi. 9 (8), but for the divine decree. The primary idea is that of a register containing the names of those who are to live or be preserved alive. The figure is Mosaic, being evidently borrowed from Ex xxxii. 32. The translation *living*, which is given in the ancient versions, is favoured by the parallel expression *righteous (men)*, if not by the analogy of Ps. xxvii. 13. lii. 7 (5.) But the abstract version *life* is equally appropriate, and is recommended by the use of the phrase *book of life* in the New Testament with reference to the future state. See Phil. iv. 3. Rev. xx. 15.

30 (29.) *And I (am) afflicted and suffering ; let thy salvation, oh God, set me on high*, beyond the reach of danger, which is tantamount to saying, in a place of safety. See above, on Ps. xx. 2 (1.) lix. 2 (1.) The verb might also be translated as a future proper, expressive of a confident anticipation, *thy salvation will secure me*. But it seems more natural to understand it as a prayer for himself, subjoined to the foregoing series of prayers for the destruction of his enemies. As if he had said, 'Remember

Lord that I am suffering, and interpose for my deliverance, as well as for their punishment.'

31 (30.) *I will praise the name of God with song, or in a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.* Here, as in many other cases, the certainty of the event is indicated by an expressed determination to thank God for it. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.)

32 (31.) *And it shall be better to Jehovah, this shall please him more, than ox (or) bullock horned (and) hoofed.* The contrast is not between material and spiritual offerings, but between a legitimate offering of both kinds and the mere oblation of a beast, as an opus operatum of intrinsic virtue, or as if God could take delight in hoofs and horns, which are therefore contemptuously specified. See above, on Ps. xl. 7 (6.) l. 8. li. 18 (16.) The last words are highly idiomatic, and scarcely susceptible of close translation, the original forms being those of active participles, *horning, hoofing*, i. e. having or producing horns and hoofs.

33 (32.) *The humble see and rejoice, literally, have seen and will rejoice, in my deliverance, (even ye) that seek God, seekers of God, and may your heart live!* May you be revived and cheered by witnessing this exhibition of God's power and goodness! The wish that it may be so includes a promise that it shall be, as in Ps. xxii. 27 (26), where the form of expression is the same.

34 (33.) *For hearkenings, habitually listening, (is) Jehovah to the poor, i. e. the poor among his people, the righteous, pious, or believing poor; and his prisoners, those imprisoned in affliction by himself, or by human oppressors for his sake, he hath not despised, and therefore never will.* The general inference here

drawn from the speaker's own experience is the same as in Ps. xxii. 25 (24) above.

35 (34.) *Let heaven and earth praise him, seas and every thing creeping in them*, i. e. moving with an animal or vital motion. In the particular mercy experienced by himself he sees a pledge of gifts deserving and demanding universal praise.

36 (35.) *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah, and they shall dwell in them and possess them*. He who is thus faithful to the individual believer must be faithful to the whole church. It is characteristic of the ancient saints to regard every personal mercy as a pledge of greater favours to the body of God's people. This is peculiarly appropriate in such a case as this, where the words are those of an ideal person representing a whole class, and that a class including, as its most conspicuous member, the Messiah himself. There is no need of supposing an allusion, either prophetic or historical, to the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, the rather as the temple is referred to in v. 10 (9) as still standing. *They* in the last clause are *the poor* of v. 34 (33), i. e. the righteous or God's people.

37 (36.) *And the seed of his servants shall inherit it*, i. e. Judah or the land of promise, *and the lovers of his name*, of his revealed perfections, *shall dwell* (quietly and safely) *in it*. The foregoing promises are not restricted to a single generation, but extend to the remotest posterity. *Inherit it*, possess it by hereditary right from generation to generation. As temporal and spiritual blessings were inseparably blended in the old dispensation, the promise of perpetual possession and abode in Palestine is merely the costume in which that of everlasting favour to the church is clothed in the Old Testament.

## I.

## P S A L M L X X.

THE Fortieth Psalm, as we have seen (vol. 1. p. 333), consists of a thanksgiving for deliverances experienced already, vs. 2—14 (1—13), and of a prayer for fresh occasion of thanksgiving, vs. 15—18 (14—17.) The latter portion is here repeated by itself, as a kind of appendix to the Sixty-ninth and preface to the Seventy-first, with both which it has several points of contact and resemblance. The mutual relation of the two editions is the same as that between the Fourteenth and the Fifty-third. The supposition of an erroneous copy or an accidental repetition is forbidden by the fact that both are left on record, and by the appearance of an uniform design in the variations. In this case, as in that of the Fifty-third Psalm, no comments will be made upon those expressions which are common to both forms and have therefore been explained already.

1. *To the Chief Musician. By David. To remind*, i. e. to remind God of the Psalmist's necessities. The same inscription is prefixed to Ps. xxxviii. The phrase *by David* represents him as the author, not of the Fortieth Psalm merely, but of this abridgment. See above, on Ps. liii. 1, and compare vol 1. p. 153.

2 (1.) *Oh God to deliver me, oh Lord to help me, hasten!* The first word of Ps. xl. 14 (13), *be pleased*, is here omitted, for the purpose, as some suppose, of making the commencement more



abrupt, and thereby marking the whole composition as a fragment. Another variation, which interpreters have laboured to account for as significant, is the substitution of *Elohim* in the first clause for *Jehovah*, the only Divine name which appears in the fortieth psalm at all. It is quite as probable, to say the least, that the names were interchanged as *God* and *Lord* are often by ourselves, without special reason or design.

3 (2.) *Ashamed and confounded shall be (those) seeking my soul ; turned back and disgraced shall be (those) desiring (or delighting in) my hurt.* See above, on Ps. xl. 15 (14.) The only variation consists in the omission of the words *together* and *to destroy it*, in accordance with the obvious design of condensation and abridgement.

4 (3.) *They shall turn back on account of their shame, i. e. retreat from their assault on me confounded and ashamed—those saying, Aha, aha !* See above, on Ps. xl. 16 (15.) For the strong expression, *they shall be desolate*, we have a milder one borrowed from Ps. vi. 11 (10.) The only other variation consists in the omission of the unimportant phrase *to me*.

5 (4.) *They shall rejoice and be glad in thee—all (those) seeking thee ; and they shall say always, great be Jehovah—(those) loving thy salvation.* See above, on Ps. xl. 17 (16.) The only variation here is the insertion of the copulative *and* at the beginning of the second clause.

6 (5.) *And I am afflicted and poor—oh God, hasten unto me ! My help and my deliverer (art) thou—oh Jehovah, linger not, do not delay !* See above, on Ps. xl. 18 (17.) Instead of *God*, the parallel passage has *Jehovah*, and instead of *Jehovah*, in the second clause, *my God*. Another variation is that the significant expression, *he will think of me (or for me)*, is exchanged for

the petition *hasten to me*, thus bringing back the prayer to the point from which it started.

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PSALM LXXI.

A SUFFERER from the spite of wicked enemies prays for deliverance, vs. 1—3. He acknowledges God's goodness to him in early life, vs. 4—8, and prays that it may be continued in old age, vs. 9—13. He confidently anticipates an answer to his prayers, vs. 14—21, and promises a suitable return of praise, vs. 22—24.

The psalm bears a strong resemblance to the others in which the sufferings of the righteous are the great theme, such as the twenty-second, thirty-fifth, thirty-eighth, and fortieth, a portion of which last seems to have been prefixed to it, as a kind of text or theme, or for the purpose of connecting it with the whole class of compositions just referred to. This explains the absence of a title or inscription in the psalm before us, as in the case of the second, tenth, forty-third, and others.

1. *In thee, oh Jehovah, have I trusted*, taken refuge; *let me not be shamed*, disappointed and confounded, *to eternity*, forever. This verse and the next two are borrowed, with slight variations, from the beginning of Ps. xxxi.

2. *In thy righteousness thou wilt deliver me and cause me to escape*; *incline to me thine ear and save me*. See above, on Ps. xxxi 2, 3 (1, 2), where the imperative form of the preceding clause is

still retained, instead of being changed, as here, into the future. The verb *deliver me* there occurs in what is here the second clause; and the qualifying term, *haste* or *quickly*, is omitted in the case before us. The division of the sentences is also different, so that the verses do not exactly correspond.

3. *Be thou to me for a rock of habitation*, a rock where I may safely dwell and make my home, (whither I may be able) *to come always*, i. e. whenever it is necessary; *thou hast commanded to save me*, my deliverance is decreed already; *for my rock*, my hiding place, *and my fortress art thou*. The images presented and the terms used are similar to those in Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) *Commanded to save me*: see above, on Ps. xlv. 5 (4.) lxviii. 29 (28.) The imitation of Ps. xxx. here insensibly merges into a new and independent composition.

4. *My God, free me*, cause me to escape, *from the hand of the wicked, from the palm*, a poetical equivalent to *hand*, of the *perverse and corrupt doer*. The last word in Hebrew occurs only here, but from its form appears to be the participle of a verb that means to be (or become) sour, to ferment, to putrefy. The infinitive of the same verb is applied to moral evil in Isai. i. 17.

5. *For thou (art) my hope, oh Lord, Jehovah, my confidence*, the object of my trust, *from my youth*. Compare the combination *Lord Jehovah* with those in Ps. lxviii. 21 (20.) lxix. 7 (6), and the phrase *my confidence* with Ps. xl. 5 (4.)

6. *Upon thee I leaned*, or by thee was held up, sustained, *from the womb; from the bowels of my mother*, a synonymous expression, *thou (art) my bringing out*, the one that brought me out, a different expression of the same idea as in Ps. xxii. 11 (10.) The meaning of the verb here used, both in its transitive and in-

transitive forms, may be gathered from Ps. xc. 10. Num. xi. 31. *In thee is my praise always*; it originates, revolves, and ends in thee. Compare the analogous expression in Ps. xxii. 26 (25.)

7. *As a prodigy*, or wonder, an object of contemptuous astonishment, *was I*, or have *I been to many*, on account of my extraordinary sufferings; *but thou art my refuge of strength*, my strong refuge, at once my protector and my hiding place. With the first clause compare Deut. xxviii. 46. Isai. lii. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 9.

8. *Filled shall my mouth be (with) thy praise, and all the day (with) thy beauty*, or glory, as the subject of that praise. The sight of thine excellency now excites, and will excite forever, my admiration and my praise.

9. *Cast me not off, at the time of old age; as my strength fails*, literally, according to the failure of my strength, *leave me not*, do not thou abandon or forsake me. He here prays that the grace which he experienced in youth, and which he has already acknowledged in the foregoing context, may be continued and extended to his old age. Compare Isai. xlvi. 3, 4.

10. *For my enemies have said (so) to me*, i. e. have told me that God would forsake or had forsaken me, and as a proof that they believe it, *the watchers of my soul*, those who watch and lie in wait for its destruction, *have consulted together*, i. e. against me, which they would not have done if they had really believed me to be under the Divine protection. Instead of *to me* in the first clause, we may read of (i. e. concerning) *me*, without any violation of usage or material change of meaning. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.)

11. *Saying, God hath forsaken him, pursue and seize him, for there is no deliverer*, literally, none delivering. This verse is an amplification of the phrase *they say (so)* in the verse preceeding.



It gives the very words in which they say so. With the first clause compare Ps. iii. 3 (2.) xli. 6 (5), and the words of Ahihtophel in 2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2, to which there may be a direct allusion, as an actual instance of the thing ideally described in David's own experience. With the last clause compare Ps. vii. 3 (2.)

12. *Oh God, be not far from me ; oh my God, to (or for) my help hasten.* Compare the similar expressions of Ps. xxii. 20 (19.) xxxv. 22. xxxviii. 22, 23, (21, 22.) xl. 14 (13.) lxx. 2 (1.) The stronger expression *my God*, in the second clause, urges his covenant relation to God, as a reason for expecting to be heard.

13. *They shall be shamed, they shall cease (or be consumed)—the adversaries of my soul ; they shall put on (or be clothed with) reproach and disgrace—the seekers of my hurt.* The verbs may also be translated as optatives, *let them be shamed*, etc. But this is really included in the strict sense of the future. Compare the parallel passages, Ps. xxxv. 4, 26. xl. 15 (14.) lxx. 3 (2.)

14. *And I will always hope, and add to (literally add upon, accumulate, increase) all thy praise.* To all thy praise which I have uttered hitherto, I will continue still to add.

15. *My mouth shall recount thy righteousness, all the day (long) thy salvation, for I know not numbers (to express them), I cannot number them, they are innumerable.* The *righteousness* or rectitude of God, including his veracity or faithfulness, is here referred to as the cause of his *salvation*, the salvation of which he is the source and author.

16. *I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah ; I will mention (or commemorate) thy righteousness, thine only.* The first phrase may also be translated, *I will enter into the mighty deeds*, etc. as we speak of entering into the particulars of a sub-

the particulars of a subject. But this is rather an English than a Hebrew idiom. The common version, *I will go in the strength of the Lord God*, is at variance with the usage both of the verb and noun, as the former does not mean to *go* absolutely, but either to *enter* or to *come* to a particular place, expressed or understood. The ellipsis here may be supplied from Ps. v. 8 (7) and lxvi. 13, in both which places the same verb denotes the act of coming to God's house for the purpose of solemn praise, and in the second passage cited is followed by the same preposition, *I will come into thy house with burnt-offerings*, i. e. I will bring them thither. This sense agrees well with the vow to praise God in the two preceding verses, and with the promise of commemoration in the other clause of this verse. See above, on Ps. xx. 8 (7.) It also enables us to give the noun (גבורות) its usual sense of God's exploits or mighty deeds. See below, Ps. cvi. 2, and compare Deut. iii. 24. *Thine only*, not my own or that of any creature. See above, on Ps. xlv. 4, 7 (3, 6.)

17. *Oh God, thou hast taught me* (to praise thee) *from my youth*, by thy providential dealings with me, i. e. given me occasion to celebrate thy praise, *and until now I will declare*, i. e. I am still declaring, still have reason to declare, *thy wondrous works*. See above, on Ps. ix. 2 (1.) xxvi. 7. xl. 6 (5.)

18. *And also* (or *even*) *unto old-age and hoary-hairs, oh God, forsake me not, till I declare thine arm*, i. e. the exertion of thy power, *to the* (next) *generation*, (and) *to every one that is to come thy power*. The last clause determines the sense of the indefinite expression, *a generation*. See above, on Ps. xxii. 31 (30.) With the phrase *thy arm*, compare Ps. xlv. 4 (3.)

19. *And thy righteousness, oh God, (reaches) even to the height* (or *high place*), i. e. heaven, (thou) *who hast done great things, oh God, who is like thee?* With the first clause compare Ps.

xxxvi. 6 (5.) lvii. 11 (10) ; with the last, Ex. xv. 11. Deut. iii. 24. 2 Sam. vii. 22.

20. (Thou) *who hast showed us*, made us see, i. e. caused us to experience, *distresses many and severe* (or *many distresses and evils*) *wilt return* (and) *make us live*, revive or quicken us, *and from the depths of the earth wilt return* (and) *bring us up*, make or cause us to ascend. The sudden change from the singular to the plural form, in reference to the same subject, led the authors of the masoretic punctuation to restore the singular in this verse also ; but the reading in the text is no doubt the original and true one. As the word translated *depths* is elsewhere invariably applied to water, some suppose an allusion to the deluge, as in Ps. xxix. 10. xxxii. 6. xxxvi. 7 (6.) Compare Isai. viii. 7, 8. The verb *return*, twice used here, may, agreeably to Hebrew usage, merely qualify the verbs to which it is prefixed, *thou wilt quicken us again, thou wilt bring us again*. But the similar expression in the next verse makes it probable, that the verb was meant to have an independent meaning, and to point out the dependence of the quickening and the restoration here expected on Jehovah's return to his forsaken people. See above, on Ps. xiv. 7.

21. *Thou wilt increase my greatness, and wilt turn* (and) *comfort me*. As the word translated *greatness* is elsewhere applied to the great things done by God for the protection and deliverance of his people (Ps. cxlv. 3. 2 Sam vii. 23), *my greatness* may have here the objective sense of great things done to or for me. See above, on v. 19, and compare Ps. xl. 6 (5.)

22. *Also I will thank thee with a harp-instrument*, i. e. with a harp or lyre as the instrument of praise, (for) *thy truth*, or *as to thy truth*, veracity and faithfulness ; *I will play to thee*, make music to thee, praise or celebrate thee, *with a lyre, (thou) Holy (One) of Israel*, i. e. his peculiar God, possessed of all divine

perfections. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.) From this place the title has been borrowed by the prophets, and by none so frequently as by Isaiah.

23. *My lips shall sing when I play to thee, and my soul which thou hast redeemed.* The first clause, as above translated, seems to promise the combination of vocal and instrumental praise. But as the first verb usually means to shout or sing for joy, and sometimes simply to rejoice, and the second commonly conveys the idea not of music merely but of praise, the clause may be explained, *my lips shall rejoice, for I will sing to thee (or praise thee), and my soul (shall also rejoice.)* With the last clause compare Ps. xxxiv. 23 (22.)

24. *Also my tongue all the day shall muse of thy righteousness, because they are ashamed, they blush—the seekers of my hurt.* The verb in the first clause means to think aloud, to talk to one's self, and therefore suggests the idea both of thought and sound. It is here applied to the tongue, as the instrument by which one's thoughts are thus expressed, not to others but himself. See above, on Ps. i. 2. ii. 1. xxxv. 28. xxxvii. 30. xxxviii. 13 (12.) lxiii. 7 (6), and below, on Ps. xc. 9. The position of the subject at the end of the last clause is emphatic, as in v. 13 above. The preterite form of the verbs represents the effect as one already past, though really still future.



## P S A L M L X X I I .

A GLOWING description of the reign of the Messiah, as righteous, vs. 1—7, universal, vs. 8—11, beneficent, vs. 12—14, perpetual, vs. 15—17, to which are added a doxology, vs. 18, 19, and a postscript, v. 20.

1. *By Solomon. Oh God, thy judgments to the king give, and thy righteousness to the king's son.* The form of expression in the first clause or title is precisely the same as in the phrase so often rendered, *by David*. That it designates the author, may be argued, not only from this usage, but from the fact, that the imagery of the psalm is as evidently borrowed from the peaceful and brilliant reign of Solomon, as that of the second from the martial and triumphant reign of David. The prayer in this verse is virtually a prediction, as the psalmist only asks what he knows that God will give. The judicial power, under the theocracy, was exercised in God's name and by his representatives. See Deut. i. 17. Ex. xxi. 6. xxii. 7, 8. Prov. viii. 15. 2 Chr. xix. 6. The Messiah was therefore expected to exhibit this peculiar character in its perfection. See Isai. xi. 2, 3. By *the king and the king's son* we are not to understand the descendants and successors of David indefinitely, but the last and greatest of them in particular.

2. *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy afflicted*

(ones) *with judgment*. This is stated as the necessary consequence of the granting of the prayer in the preceding verse. 'Give him thy righteousness, and then he shall judge, etc.' There is no need therefore of putting an optative sense upon the future, 'let him judge, etc.,' especially as it would then be necessary to extend the same construction to the verses following, and so long a series of optative expressions is without example.

3. (*Then*) *shall the mountains bear peace for the people, and the hills, by righteousness*. The effect of the divine gift asked at the beginning of the psalm is still described in this verse, under the figure of a general growth or harvest of peace, to spring up in the whole land. *Bear*, in the sense of bringing forth, producing. *Mountains* and *hills* are mentioned as the salient points or prominent features of the country. This was the more natural as the hills of Palestine were carefully tilled in ancient times, as appears from the terraces still visible. See above, Ps. lxxv. 13 (12), and below, Ps. cxlvii. 8, and compare Deut. xxxiii. 15. *Peace*, as opposed to war and its accompanying evils. This is often mentioned as a characteristic trait of the Messiah's reign. See Isai. ii. 4. ix. 6, 7 (5, 6.) xi. 9. lxxv. 25. Mic. iv. 3. Zech. ix. 10. It was typified by the peaceful reign of Solomon (1 Kings v. 4), whose very name suggests it. *The hills*, i. e. the hills shall bear peace or produce it. The words *by righteousness* belong to both clauses and denote that the peace here promised was to be the fruit of righteous government.

4. *He shall judge the afflicted of the people; he shall save (or bring salvation) to the sons of the needy, and shall crush (or break in pieces) the oppressor*. To judge them is to do them justice, to redress their wrongs and vindicate their rights. *The afflicted of the people*, those who suffer among the chosen people. *The needy or the poor man* is an ideal person, representing the whole class, whose individual members are described as his sons or children.

5. *They shall fear thee with the sun, and before the moon, generation of generations.* The first verb may be construed with *the sons of the needy*, or taken indefinitely, *men shall fear thee*, which is nearly equivalent to saying, *thou shalt be feared*. The verb itself denotes religious reverence or awe, and is here put for worship. The object of address, here and throughout the psalm, is God, whose worship is described as one fruit of the righteous reign predicted. *With the sun*, as long as they have the sun with them, i. e. possess or enjoy him. *Before the moon*, in her presence, as long as she continues to be visible, or to afford them light. This is one of the scriptural expressions for perpetual duration, an idea which is also expressed by the idiomatic phrase, *generation of generations*, i. e. through all generations, or from one generation to another.

6. *He shall come down like rain upon mown (grass), like showers, the watering of the earth (or land.)* This beautiful comparison suggests the idea of a gentle yet refreshing and fertilizing influence, to be exerted by the king, whose reign is here foretold. The word translated *showers*, by its etymological affinities, suggests the idea of abundance or copiousness. The noun which follows occurs only here, but may be traced to verbal roots which mean to drop or to flow.

7. *In his days shall the righteous sprout, spring up, or shoot forth, and abundance of peace, till the failure (or cessation) of the moon.* The idea is the same as in vs. 3, 5, with a slight change in the form of the expression. By a lively figure, the righteous man is substituted for righteousness in the abstract, as the fruit of the earth and the productive cause of peace. The idea of perpetuity is again conveyed by repeating one of the comparisons in v. 5.

8. *And he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the*



*ends of the earth.* There is here an obvious allusion to the limits of the land of promise, as defined in Ex. xxiii. 31 ; but that these are not directly intended in the case before us, is clear from the mention of foreign kings and nations in the following verses. The meaning rather is, that as the realm of the theocratic kings was bounded by the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, that of the Messiah, whom they represented, should extend from sea to sea, i. e. from any sea to any other, even the most distant, or from any sea around to the same point again, and from the river (Euphrates), or from any other river, as a *terminus a quo*, to the ends of the earth. In other words, it should be universal. The same mode of describing the extent of Christ's dominion is adopted by the prophets. See Zech. ix. 10, and compare Am. viii. 12. Mic. vii. 12.

9. *Before him shall crouch wild (men,) and his enemies the dust shall lick.* The first noun denotes dwellers in the wilderness, and is applied both to brutes (Isai. xlii. 21. xxxiv. 14. Jer. l. 39) and men (Ps. lxxiv. 14.) The common version of the first verb (*bow*) is too weak in itself and in comparison with the parallel expression, *lick the dust*, implying the most unconditional and abject submission.

10. *The kings of Tarshish and the Islands an oblation shall send back ; the kings of Sheba and Seba a reward shall bring near.* The last noun in the first clause, and the verb in the second, are technical terms of the Mosaic law, the first denoting specially a vegetable offering, and the other the solemn act of presentation in God's presence. The use of these expressions implies that what is here described is not the mere payment of tribute or the presentation of friendly gifts, but a religious offering. It is also worthy of remark, that the verb in the first clause, and the last noun in the second, both suggest the idea, not of a simple gift, but of a recompence or requital, perhaps in



allusion to the benefits which Christ was to bestow upon the nations, and of which these gifts would be a thankful acknowledgment. The verb *return*, however, is used elsewhere to denote the simple act of paying tribute. See 2 Kings iii. 4. xvii. 3. The proper names in this verse are mere specimens or samples of the nations generally. *Tarshish* is mentioned, both as a well known mart or source of wealth, and as a representative of the extreme west. *The Islands*, agreeably to Hebrew usage, include all distant sea-coasts, but particularly those of the Mediterranean. The distant south is represented, in like manner, by *Sheba*, a province of Arabia Felix, and *Seba*, now commonly supposed to be Meroe, a part of ancient Ethiopia, both famous for their wealth and commerce. The obvious allusion to the Queen of Sheba's visit to Jerusalem (1 Kings x. 1—10) is another stroke in this prophetic picture evidently borrowed from the times of Solomon.

11. *And to him shall all kings bow (or prostrate themselves); all nations shall serve him.* That the preceding verse contains only a sample of the nations over whom the Messiah was to reign, is distinctly intimated by the universal and unqualified expressions of the verse before us. The act described in the first clause is one expressive both of civil homage and religious worship. The same thing is true of the verb in the last clause, which may be applied either to the civil service of a sovereign by his subjects, or to the religious service of a deity by his worshippers. In this case, as in v. 10, both were meant to be included.

12. *For he will deliver the needy crying (to him for help), and the sufferer, and him that hath no helper.* The literal translation of the last clause is, *and there is no one helping him*, or, *and there is no helper to him*. By referring the pronoun to *the sufferer* mentioned just before, we may take this, not as the description of

a third class, but as a further description of the second, *the sufferer to whom there is no helper*. The whole verse represents the king in question as the protector, not the oppressor, of his subjects, and assigns a reason for their tribute being represented as a requital of benefits received. See above, on v. 10.

13. *He will have pity on (or spare) the poor and needy, and the souls (or lives) of the needy he will save*. In the first clause the adjectives are of the singular number and properly denote *the poor (man) and the needy (man.)* The change to the plural in the second clause, *needy (ones) or needy (people)*, shows that the singular was not meant to denote a real individual, but rather an ideal person, representing a whole class, which is then directly designated by the plural.

14. *From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and precious shall their blood be in his eyes (or sight.)* This last is an idiomatic expression of the idea, that a person sets such a value on the life of another, that he will not suffer it to be destroyed. See below, on Ps. cxvi. 15, and compare 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. 2 Kings i. 14.

15. *And he, the poor man thus delivered, shall live*, shall be preserved alive, *and*, in token of his gratitude and willing subjection to such a sovereign, *he shall give to him*, as tribute, *of the gold of Sheba*, one of the regions mentioned in v. 10 and famous for its gold; *and he*, meaning still the grateful tributary, *shall pray for him continually*, i. e. for the progress and extension of Messiah's kingdom; *all the day (long) shall he bless him*, i. e. praise him, as well for what he is in himself, as for the gifts which he bestows. By some interpreters the meaning is reversed and the sentence made to signify, that the Messiah shall live again, or live forever, and give precious gifts to the believer, and by his constant intercession secure to him the blessing of Jehovah. This is a good

sense in itself and appropriate to the context ; but the dubious question of construction seems to be determined by the mention of the gold of Sheba, which, in this connection, far more probably denotes the tribute of the subject than the favour of the sovereign. See above, on v. 10.

16. *Let there be (but) a handful of corn in the land, in the top of the mountains ; its fruit shall wave (or shake) like Lebanon, and they shall flourish from the city like grass of the earth.* The first noun in Hebrew occurs only here, and has been taken in senses directly opposite. The rabbinical tradition makes it mean *a handful*, the modern lexicographers *a plenty*, each relying on a doubtful etymology. According to the second explanation, the clause is a direct prediction of abundance and should be translated, *there shall be plenty of corn in the land*. According to the other and more ancient view, the verse contains a beautiful antithesis between the small beginnings and the vast results of the Messiah's kingdom, not unlike that suggested by our Saviour's parable of the grain of mustard seed. This exegetical analogy, together with the striking character imparted to the verse by this interpretation, are sufficient to entitle it to the preference, even without regard to its antiquity and traditional authority. The apocopated future (יִהְיֶה) may then be taken in its proper sense, as a concession or a wish, equivalent to saying, *though there be but a handful of corn in the land*, and that in the least favourable situation, *on the top of a mountain*, which though cultivated (see above, on v. 3,) must of course be colder and less fertile than the plains below. Neither *wave* nor *shake* conveys the full force of the Hebrew verb, which suggests the additional idea of a rushing noise, like that of the wind among the cedars of Lebanon. This comparison is certainly more natural and obvious than that which some interpreters assume with the grain-crops or harvest-fields of Lebanon itself. This would be merely likening one harvest to another, nor is any such allusion ever made elsewhere to



the mountain, though its circumjacent plains and valleys were productive. See Hos. xiv. 5—7. The word translated *flourish* means originally to *shine* or *glitter* (Ps. cxxxii. 18), but is specially applied to the brilliancy of vegetation, and might therefore be translated *bloom* or *blossom*. See Num. xvii. 23 (8), and compare Ps. xc. 6, xcii. 8 (7.) ciii. 15. *From the city* seems to mean from Jerusalem or Zion, as the centre of Messiah's kingdom and his royal residence, out of which this productive influence was to go forth. Compare the form of expression in this clause with Num. xxiv. 19. Job v. 25.

17. *His name shall be forever ; in the presence of the sun, i. e. as long as the sun shines, his name shall propagate (itself) ; and by him shall they* (i. e. men in general) *bless themselves ; all nations shall felicitate him* (or pronounce him happy.) The form of expression in the second clause is borrowed from the patriarchal promises (Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxviii. 14), and is intended to suggest the idea there expressed, that the Messiah should be not only blessed himself, but a source of blessing to all nations. As the happiness of the parent is bound up in that of the children, and the prosperity of the sovereign inseparable from that of the subjects, the one part of this prediction necessarily implies the other. If the head is blessed, so must be the members, the whole body. If all nations are to call Messiah blessed, it must be because he is the author and the giver of their own prosperity, nay more, of their salvation.

18, 19. *Blessed (be) Jehovah, God, the God of Israel, doing wonders alone, and blessed (be) his glorious name to eternity, and filled with his glory be the whole earth. Amen and Amen.* This is commonly explained as a doxology belonging, not to this psalm, but to the second book, of which it marks the close. See above, on Ps. xli. 14 (13.) But as the psalm would end somewhat abruptly with the foregoing verse, and as this addi-



tion carries out the idea there expressed, by giving, as it were, the very words in which the nations shall pronounce him blessed, we have reason to believe that the doxology was added by the author, and that this conclusion of the psalm was not the effect but the occasion of its being placed at the close of one of the traditional divisions of the psalter. The wish in the second clause of v. 19 is borrowed from the promise in Num. xiv. 21, of which this whole psalm is in fact a prolonged echo.

20. *Ended are the prayers of David, Son of Jesse.* The position of this sentence after the doxology, and its prosaic form, show that it forms no part of the psalm, but relates to the whole series preceding. It does not therefore prove, as some suppose, that Solomon was not the author of the seventy-second psalm, since this exception and a very few others could not prevent the collection being called the prayers of David. *A potiori fit denominatio.* In like manner, the whole Psalter is still called the Psalm of David by many who believe it to contain some psalms by other writers. That this is the conclusion of an original and separate collection, is by no means probable, as there is no historical proof that such collections ever existed, and it would not be easy to account for the omission of so many psalms undoubtedly composed by David. On the whole, it is most probable, that these words were added to the first great subdivision of the whole collection, as entirely composed of psalms by David and his contemporaries, with a few added to them on account of some marked similarity in form or substance. The only remaining supposition is that these words are part of the original composition, and were added by Solomon to show that what he here predicts would be the fulfilment of his father's wishes and the answer to his prayers. The objection to this, besides the form and position of the verse itself, is, that the verb is never used to denote fulfilment or accomplishment, except in the Hebrew of the later books. See Ezra i. 1. Dan. xii. 7.

## P S A L M L X X I I I .

1. *A Psalm. By Asaph. Only good to Israel (is) God, to the pure of heart.* This last expression is added to limit or explain the application of the national name *Israel*, as here denoting not the race or nation, simply as such considered, but the true Israel, the sincere and spiritual members of the ancient church. To these God is good, and *only good*, i. e. never otherwise, never unmerciful, or even indifferent. This is the theme of the whole psalm, and the peculiar form in which it is propounded has reference to the previous conflicts and misgivings of the Psalmist, through which he had passed in reaching the conviction here expressed. As if he had said, ‘I once thought otherwise, but now I know that God is only good, and always good, to the true Israel, his real people.’ He then goes on to describe the conflicts thus tacitly referred to, first, by a statement of the facts out of which they sprang, vs. 2—11, then of the effect which these produced upon his mind, vs. 12—16, and then of the means by which he had been disabused, vs. 17—20, and under the influence of which he now condemns his own irrationality vs. 21—22, adores the grace by which he had been rescued from the consequences of his error, vs. 23—24, and concludes with an expression of his hearty reliance upon that grace for his safety and happiness hereafter, vs. 25—28. There is not the slightest ground for doubting the correctness of the title, which ascribes the psalm to Asaph, the contemporary of David and his chief musician, and himself moreover

an inspired Psalmist. This last fact, which is matter of recorded history (see above, on Ps. l. 1), together with the fact that where only one name is mentioned in the title of a psalm it is uniformly that of the writer, may suffice to set aside the supposition, that Asaph is only named as the performer.

2. *And I (or as for me), my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped.* The pronoun in the first clause is emphatic. I, who so confidently make this profession of my faith in God's unchanging goodness, am one whose feet were almost gone, literally, *inclined* or *bent*, either from the straight course or from an erect position. See above, on Ps. lxii. 3 (2), where the same verb is applied to a wall inclined or bent by violence. The phrases rendered *almost* and *well nigh* strictly mean *like little* and *like nothing*, and imply that it wanted little or nothing of a fearful fall on his part, in other words, that he had narrowly escaped it. *Slipped*, literally, *poured out*, which seems to be a figure both for weakness and divergence. Instead of pursuing a direct course, or remaining in a firm position, his steps were scattered and without effect, like water poured upon the ground. See above, on Ps. xxii. 15 (14.)

3. *For I was envious at the proud; the peace of wicked (men) I see (and must see.)* He now proceeds to state more distinctly the nature of the fall from which he had so narrowly escaped. It was the sin and folly of denying the justice and fidelity of God because of providential inequalities and mysteries. *The proud* or *insolent*, a general description of the wicked, as in Ps. v. 5 (4.) The common version in both places (*foolish*) is less probable, but does not materially change the sense. In the last clause, he reverts to his experience at an earlier date, and expresses himself as he might have done at that time. This relation of the clauses may be rendered clearer by supplying a word or phrase between them. 'I was envious at the proud (and said), the peace,' etc.

*Peace*, as the negation and the opposite of all disturbing causes, really suggests the idea of prosperity in general. The future form of the verb has respect, not to the date of composition, but to that of the events recorded, when the Psalmist not only saw, but expected long to see, the undisturbed prosperity of sinners.

4. *For there are no bands at their death ; and fat, i. e. healthy or robust, (is) their strength.* Some understand the first clause to mean that they are not bound or forced to die like other men. The more obvious sense is, that when they do die, they are not in bonds or chains like other men, but free, common figures for distress or suffering and its opposite.

5. *In the labour of man they are not,* they are not partakers in the common troubles of humanity, *and with mankind they are not smitten (or afflicted.)* The use of the future is precisely the same as in v. 3. They are not, and to all appearance never will be, sharers in the common calamities of life.

6. *Therefore pride has enchained them, the garb of violence (injustice or cruelty) covers them.* The first verb strictly means to encircle or adorn the neck, perhaps with allusion to the carriage of that member as indicative of pride. See Isai. iii. 16. Job xv. 26.

7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness ; the imaginations of the heart pass (out, come forth, or are disclosed.)* The common version of the last clause, *they have more than heart could wish,* assumes as the literal meaning of the words, *they surpass the desires of their heart.* According to the other construction above given, the meaning is that as their eyes stand out with fatness, so their hearts overflow with evil thoughts. Compare Matt. xii. 35. xv. 19. Mark vii. 21. Luke ii. 35. vi. 45.



8. *They mock and speak in wickedness (or malice) ; oppression from on high they speak.* To speak oppression is to speak words tending to the injury of others. *From on high*, proudly, with arrogant contempt of others. They speak as if from a superior position.

9. *They set their mouth in heaven, and their tongue goes on earth.* The idea in the first clause is the same as in the last clause of the foregoing verse. They speak as if they thought themselves superior beings, their mouth in heaven and their tongue on earth. *Goes*, runs, is actively employed.

10. *Therefore he brings back his people hither, and waters of fulness are wrung out to them (or drained by them.)* This obscure verse admits of several interpretations, the most natural of which understands the sense to be, that God still suffers or requires his people to survey the painful spectacle and drain the bitter draught presented by the undisturbed prosperity of wicked men. According to the masoretic reading in the margin of the Hebrew Bible, the first verb is intransitive, *his people shall (or must) return hither*. See above, on Ps. xiv. 7. liii. 7 (6.)

11. *And they say, how should God know, and (how) can there be knowledge in the Highest ?* Some interpreters regard these as the words of the prosperous sinners whom he has been describing. But according to the sense just put upon the tenth verse, the eleventh must express the misgivings of God's people, with respect to the providential inequalities in question. When still brought back to the sight of these, they are constrained to ask how they can possibly be reconciled with the hypothesis of God's omniscience. This is much more natural than to suppose that the sinners themselves admit the being of a God, and yet gratuitously question his omniscience. In the latter case the *how* would be unmeaning ; in the former, it is the most natural ex-

pression of the doubt supposed. An atheist, whether theoretical or practical, would hardly ask, how can God know? Even a wicked theist would be rather apt to say, he does not know. But nothing can be more appropriate in the mouth of a perplexed and tempted believer than the question, how can God know this and yet suffer it?

12. *Lo, these are wicked (men), and (yet they are) secure for ever, they increase strength (or substance.)* These are still the words of the perplexed believer, expressing his surprise at the prosperity of sinners. See, these are wicked men, and yet instead of being wretched, or prospering only for a little while, they are *prosperers of eternity*, perpetually prospered and at ease, secure from change. See above, on Ps. xxx. 7. Instead of losing what they have, they still gain more, and go on adding to their wealth and to the power which it gives them. See above, on Ps. lx. 14 (12.)

13. *Only (in) vain have I cleansed my heart, and in innocence have washed my hands.* These may be taken either indefinitely as the words of any person in the painful situation just described, or more specifically as the words of the psalmist, by whom the whole class was in fact represented. They contain the inference which would be naturally drawn in such a situation, even by a true believer, but one tempted to repine and doubt by the sight of providential enigmas. ‘Since then it is the wicked who enjoy God’s favour, all my efforts to avoid sin and to do his will have been gratuitous and fruitless.’ With the first words of the verse compare Ps. xxxix. 6, 12 (5, 11.)

14. *And I have been smitten all the day, and my chastisement (has been inflicted) every morning, literally, at (or in) the mornings.* A similar form of expression occurs twice in Job vii. 18. *Smitten*, literally *touched*, i. e. by the hand of God, a common

expression for affliction, and especially for bodily disease considered as a divine judgment. The same idea was meant to be conveyed by the common version (*plagued*.) The psalmist here contrasts his own afflictions with the undisturbed enjoyments of his wicked neighbours. 'While they, though wicked, still increase in wealth and seem secure for ever, I, who have faithfully endeavoured to avoid sin and to do the will of God, am subjected, every day and all day, to privation and distress.'

15. *If I have said, I will declare thus, behold, the generation of thy sons I have perfidiously treated.* This is equivalent to saying, if I did say so, I should be acting falsely towards thy children. It is indeed the only Hebrew form in which such a hypothetical proposition could well be clothed. *Said*, i. e. to myself, proposed it, formed the purpose. *Thus declare*, i. e. publicly express my doubts and skeptical misgivings. This, as it has been well observed, the true believer never does, until he is able to announce his conflict and his victory together. *Behold* or *lo* is here equivalent to our idiomatic *why then*, meaning *in that case* or *on that supposition*, and expressing at the same time some surprise at his own suggestion as a strange one. *The generation of thy sons*, the contemporary race of true believers, called the sons of God, not only as the objects of his love, but as partakers of his nature (2 Pet. i. 4.) *Treated perfidiously*, proved false to them, by weakening the foundation of their hope, instead of strengthening their faith and allaying their misgivings. See above, on Ps. xxv. 3.

16. *And I meditated to know this ; a trouble (was) it in my eyes.* Although he abstained from openly expressing what he thought, he still did think, he pondered the whole matter, with a view to understand it, to discover some solution of the mystery, which not only puzzled but distressed him. The apparent inequality of God's providential dealings was a toil, a trouble, an unhappiness, in his esteem.



17. *Until I come to the sanctuaries of God, I will consider (or observe) their end.* The futures have reference, as in vs. 3, 5, to the date of the anterior experience here recorded. 'But I said to myself, I will wait till I come into God's presence and inquire of him, and then, or in the mean time, I will look at or attend to the end as well as the beginning and the progress of their lives.' The plural form *holy places*, is the same as in Ps. lxxviii. 36 (35.) It denotes the sanctuary in its whole extent, as the earthly residence of God, and the place where he communed with his people. See above, on Ps. xxviii. 2.

18. *Only in slippery places thou wilt set them, or art setting them, (and now) thou hast let (or made) them fall into destruction.* However honourable and happy their position may appear to themselves, the psalmist can see nothing but its danger, as implied in his use of the word *only*. *Smoothnesses*, smooth or slippery places, where their foot-hold is precarious and their fall inevitable. He sees God, by his providential favours, placing them in this desired but fearful situation, and then allowing them to drop into destruction. The last word in Hebrew occurs only here and in the next psalm, where it means *ruins*. If this sense be adopted here, we must suppose a change of figure and an allusion to the fall, not of a man from a slippery precipice, but of a building crumbled by decay or violence.

19. *How are they (brought) to desolation as (in) a moment! They have ceased, they are consumed with terrors!* He here expresses his surprise at the abruptness and completeness of their ruin. The meaning of the last clause seems to be, that their very apprehensions were sufficient to destroy them, much more the actual experience of what they apprehended.

20. *As a dream on waking, Lord, in waking, their image thou wilt scorn.* The word translated *image* means an appearance, as



opposed to the substance or reality. See above, on Ps. xxxix. 7 (6.) The present prosperity of wicked men will seem hereafter, and to God's eye now seems, like an empty dream, worthy only of contemptuous oblivion. The only dubious expression in the verse is that translated *waking* in the second clause, which is entirely different from the one so rendered in the first clause. The Hebrew phrase (פָּעִיר) is used in more than fifty other places, and in all of them means *in the city*. See, for example, Ps. lv. 10 (9.) This meaning is retained by some interpreters in the case before us. The reference will then be either to the holy city, as in Ps. lxxii. 16, or to the city where the previous scene is supposed to have been laid, as in Ps. xxxi. 22 (21.) The old interpretation takes the word as an infinitive, from a verb which, however, is always transitive and means to *awaken*, except perhaps in Job viii. 6 and in Ps. xxxv. 23 above. To this interpretation it is furthermore objected, that it supposes an unusual contraction (פָּעִיר for פָּהֲעִיר), and that the sense which it conveys is an incongruous one. But that God should despise them *in the act of waking* is, to say the least, as intelligible as that he should despise them *in the city*. In either case, the general meaning of the sentence is too clear to be mistaken.

21. *For my heart is soured, and (in or as to) my reins I am pierced.* The Hebrew verbs are of the future form, although really relating to past time, which the psalmist's memory recalls as a state of things then likely to continue. See above on vs. 3, 5. The verbs are also properly reflexives, *my heart exacerbates itself, I pierce myself*, and are perhaps intended to describe his sufferings as the fruit of his own sin and folly.

22. *And I (am) brutish and know not (the true state of the case); a beast have I been with thee.* The last noun is in the plural number (*beasts*), as if to signify a beast by way of eminence, in which sense it is literally applied to one of the wonders

of the animal kingdom (Job xl. 15.) With the first clause compare Prov. xxx. 2, and see above, on Ps. xlix. 11 (10.) These strong expressions contain an acknowledgment of his own irrationality in questioning God's faithfulness and kindness. In this verse there is an insensible transition from the present to the past, from the ideal to the real time of the events in question. *With thee* suggests an aggravating circumstance, to wit, that this folly was committed in the presence of God, and as it were in his society. See above, on Ps. xviii. 26, 27 (25, 26.)

23. *And (yet) I (am) still with thee ; thou hast held (me) by my right hand.* Notwithstanding his ungrateful and irrational conduct in God's presence, he had not been driven from it, as he justly might have been. The word translated *still* properly means *always*, and denotes that there had been no change or interruption in the previous relation of the parties. There is a perfectly analogous usage of the French *toujours*. In the last clause he seems to return to the metaphor with which he set out. As the fatal error which he had escaped is in v. 2 represented as a fall, so here his preservation from it is ascribed to God's having held him up by his right hand. See above, on Ps. xvii. 5. xli. 13 (12.) lxiii. 9 (8.)

24. *In (or by) thy counsel thou wilt guide me, and after glory thou wilt take me.* The form of the original is such that it may either express consent or confident expectation ; but the latter in this case really includes the former. *By thy counsel*, thy instruction and advice, considered as a means of safety ; or *in thy counsel*, i. e. in the execution of thy plan or purpose, as the end to be accomplished. The last clause is obscure. To the common version (*and afterward receive me to glory*) it has been objected, that it takes the preposition *after* as an adverb, and assumes an unusual sense and construction of the verb, and also that it makes the guidance and the glory too distinct and successive. The con-

struction which it is proposed to substitute is, *thou wilt take me after glory*, i. e. make me overtake it, cause me to attain it, bring me to it. The same construction may be made to yield another sense, to wit, after honouring me here thou wilt receive me to thyself, *after honour thou wilt take me*. This, it is true, is liable to some of the objections brought against the usual construction. But the choice at best is one of difficulties, and some of the objections spring entirely from the wish to exclude a reference to a future state, which, however, is as evident in this verse as it is in vs. 16, 19, if interpreted in any natural and reasonable manner.

25. *Whom have I in heaven? And with thee I have not desired (any) upon earth.* The literal translation of the first clause is, *who (is) to me in heaven*, i. e. what protector or provider? The idea of another besides God may be supplied in this clause from the next, where *with thee* can denote either combination or comparison. I have desired none in addition or in preference to thee; thou art alone and all-sufficient.

26. *Spent is my flesh and my heart; the rock of my heart and my portion (is) God to eternity.* The first clause is by some understood as meaning *even if* or *even when* my flesh, etc. But the Psalmist rather assumes the actual occurrence of the extreme case here described, or places himself in it as an ideal situation. *Flesh and heart*, body and soul, the whole man, or the whole life, outward and inward, bodily and mental. *The rock of my heart*, the support of my life, that on which it rests as on a solid basis. The idea is not simply that of strength but of a strong foundation. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) *My portion*, the source of my subsistence and my happiness. See above, on Ps. xvi. 5, and with the whole verse compare Job xix. 25—27.

27. *For lo, those far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed*



*all (or every one) whoring from thee.* This verse assigns his reason for relying upon God and making him his portion. *Those far from thee*, literally, *thy far (ones.)* They certainly will perish, for all such have perished heretofore. The union between God and his people being often represented by the figure of a conjugal relation, their violation of the covenant is spoken of as spiritual whoredom or adultery. See above on Ps. xlv. 1, and compare Lev. xx. 6. Num. xiv. 33. In the same sense our Saviour calls the unfaithful Israel of his day a wicked and adulterous generation. See Matt. xii. 39. xvi. 4. Mark viii. 38. The persons threatened with destruction here are not merely sinners in general, but the wicked members of the ancient church or chosen people in particular.

28. *And I, or as for me—the approach of God to me (is) good; I have placed in the Lord Jehovah my trust, to declare all thy doings.* The absolute nominative at the beginning puts himself in strong contrast with the apostates of the foregoing verse. Compare the beginning of vs. 2, 23, above. The *nearness* or *approach of God* is an ambiguous expression, as in Isai. lviii. 2, where it may either mean God's drawing near to the people or their drawing near to him. In the case before us both may be implied, as in James iv. 8 both are expressed, *Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.* *To me* may be connected either with *approach*, as in Ps. xxvii. 2, or with *good*, as in v. 1 above. *Good* is here to be taken in the absolute sense of the *summum bonum* or chief good. The meaning is not merely that nearness to God is a good thing in itself, or a useful thing to man, but that it comprehends whatever he can wish or hope for. 'Let apostates wander far from God and perish; I am resolved to seek my highest happiness in being near him.' The *Lord Jehovah* is a combination expressive of God's sovereignty, self-existence, and covenant relation to his people. *My trust*, my hiding-place or refuge. See above, on Ps. xi. 1. The last clause shows that he wishes to be



something more than a mere passive beneficiary. He desires not only to enjoy but to celebrate God's goodness. The word translated *doings* is applied both to acts and to affairs or business.

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## PSALM LXXIV.

THE church prays for deliverance from extreme distress, enforcing the petition, first by a description of the actual state of things, vs. 1—12, and then by an appeal to former mercies, vs. 13—23. The historical occasion is not given, but the terms of the description seem peculiarly appropriate to the state of Judah after the destruction of the temple and the holy city by the Babylonians, as described in Jer. lii. 12—34.

1. *Maschil. By Asaph. Why, oh God, hast thou cast off forever, smokes thy wrath at the flock of thy pasture?* The description of the psalm as a didactic one shows that it was not meant to be used in reference to its original occasion merely, but in every emergency resembling it. For this reason the question, what that occasion was, is of little exegetical importance, although not without interest in connection with the critical inquiry as to the date of composition. The state of things assumed, and indeed described, is so unlike that which existed in the time of David, that we must either make the psalm prophetic, which is arbitrary and without analogy, or no less arbitrarily reject the title as a spurious addition to the text, or understand by Asaph the descendants of David's Chief Musician, among whom the gift and office of their ancestor were hereditary. See above, on Ps.

l. 1, and compare 2 Chron. xxxv. 15. Ezr. ii. 41. iii. 10. Neh. vii. 44. xi. 22. That this title indicates the author, and not merely the performer, can only be inferred from the general fact, that where a single name is given it is usually that of the writer. See above on Ps. xlii. 1. lxxii. 1. The interrogation in this verse does not involve a disavowal of guilt or ill-desert, but is rather a passionate expostulation and indirect petition for deliverance. *Cast off*, a verb implying abhorrence and disgust. See above, on Ps. xliii. 2. xlv. 10, 24 (9, 23.) lx. 3, 12 (1, 10.) As the object is easily supplied, namely, *us* or *thy people*, its omission adds to the strength of the expression. *Cast off forever*, as it seems to us and others. Why hast thou cast us off with what appears to be a final and perpetual rejection? See above, on Ps. xiii. 2 (1.) The interrogation is continued throughout the sentence. (*Why*) *smokes* or *will smoke*? The future form suggests the same idea as the *forever* in the other clause. ‘Why is thy wrath to continue smoking?’ The presence of smoke presupposes that of fire; but the former is particularly mentioned, perhaps for the purpose of adding to the primary idea of distress or destruction the secondary one of gloom and terror. *At* or *against* thy people, literally, *in*, *among* them. See below on Ps. lxxx. 5 (4), and compare Deut. xxix. 19 (20.) *The sheep* (or *flock*) *of thy pasture*, those who feed upon thy pasture, or are fed by thee, a favourite designation of the chosen people, as the occupants of the Land of Promise. The figurative form of the description was originally furnished by the pastoral experience of David, but from him was borrowed by other sacred writers. See below, Ps. lxxix. 13. c. 3.

2. *Remember thy congregation thou hast purchased of old* (and) *redeemed the rod of thine inheritance, this Mount Zion thou hast dwelt in.* The ellipsis of the relative in both the clauses of this verse is common to the Hebrew and the English idiom. The word translated *congregation* is one of those applied in the Old

Testament to Israel as an organized body and the people of Jehovah. See above, on Ps. i. 5. *Purchased*, acquired, made thine own. The word translated *of old* is a noun meaning *antiquity*, but here used as an adverb of time. The full phrase occurs below in v. 12. The next verb contains a specification of the first, to wit, that he *purchased by redeeming* them from bondage, with particular reference to the exodus from Egypt. *The rod of thine inheritance* is a phrase which, to any Hebrew reader, would suggest the twofold idea of a chieftain's staff, the badge of authority in the several tribes, and that of a measuring rod, here put for the portion of land measured. The whole sense conveyed by these associations is that of a definite province, with its population, of which God is the possessor and the sovereign. The last clause applies what had been said of the people and the land still more specifically to the central point of the theocracy. *Mount Zion* may be understood as a description of the whole of Jerusalem, including the temple upon Mount Moriah. *This Mount Zion*, with which the speakers were familiar, and at or near which they are supposed to be speaking. The explanation of *this* as a relative is gratuitous, nor could the idea (*this Mount Zion*) have been well expressed in any other form of Hebrew words. The grand distinction of Mount Zion, in the wide sense just explained, was the inhabitation of Jehovah, which is therefore here expressly mentioned in the closing words.

3. *Lift thy steps to the perpetual ruins, all the enemy has ill done in the holy place.* The first phrase is a poetical expression meaning simply *advance, draw near*, for the purpose of inspection. The word translated *ruins* occurs only here and in Ps. lxxiii. 18. The whole phrase strictly means *ruins of perpetuity*, i. e. such as appear likely to continue forever, and will certainly do so, unless God comply with this request to draw near. The construction of the second clause adopted by some writers, *the enemy has destroyed all (or every thing) in the holy place*, is scarcely grammatical

To express that idea, the word *all* would have the article, as in Ps. xiv. 3, or a suffix, as in Ps. xxix. 9, whereas its intimate connection here with the following verb in Hebrew is equivalent to a relative construction. *Ill done*, injured or destroyed, done mischief.

4. *Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of thine assembly ; they have set their signs (as) signs.* The tumultuous violence of the destroyers is described in the first clause by a figure borrowed from the habits of wild beasts, and elsewhere used as an expression of extreme distress. See above, on Ps. xxii. 2 (1.) xxxii. 3. xxxviii. 9 (8.) The word translated *assembly* is not the same that is rendered *congregation* in v. 2, but one that strictly means a meeting by mutual agreement or appointment, and is specially applied to the meeting between God and his people at the sanctuary, which was therefore designated in the law as the *tent of meeting* (אֶהֱיֶה לָהֶם מוֹעֵד), not merely the tent where the people assembled, but the place where they met with God by previous appointment. See Ex. xxv. 8. xxix. 42, 43, 45, 46. Num. xvii. 19 (4.) The ideas suggested by the etymology and usage of the Hebrew noun are those of previous appointment, the act of meeting consequent upon it, the persons met, and the place where they assemble. The full sense therefore of the phrase here used is, 'in the midst of thy people assembled at the appointed time and place to meet thee.' The exclusive local meaning put by some upon the words is quite gratuitous. The plural form which some assume (*thine assemblies*) varies the meaning only by suggesting the idea of repeated convocations, 'in the midst of thy people, whenever (or as often as) they meet thee thus,' but without at all conveying the idea of numerous or even different places. *Set*, fixed, established; or *set up*, exhibited, exposed to view. See above, on Ps. xviii. 44 (43.) xxxix. 9 (8.) xlv. 14, 15 (13, 14.) The common version of the last words, *ensigns for signs*, conveys a false impression of the form of the original, in which the two



nouns are identical. The word *signs* does not necessarily denote either military or religious ensigns, but rather signifies in general the insignia of sovereignty. For all that once marked the presence and authority of God the impious enemy had substituted the signs or tokens of their own ascendancy. In other words, they had usurped God's place in his very sanctuary, the spot which he had chosen for his earthly residence.

5. *He is known (or shall be known) as (one) raising on high, in the thicket of the wood, axes.* The most probable sense of this obscure verse is as follows: the ruthless enemy is known or recognised as dealing with the sanctuary no more tenderly than a woodman with the forest which he fells. *On high* seems to be added to suggest the force of the blow and the sweep of the arm which deals it. *The thicket* may be mentioned for the purpose of contrasting the delicate and complicated wood-work of the temple with the worthless undergrowth which the woodman cuts away without scruple or discrimination. The word translated *wood* is often used as a collective meaning *trees*.

6. *And now the carvings thereof together (or at once) with sledge and hammers they beat (down).* This completes the comparison begun in the preceding verse, with which the one before us is connected by the phrase *and now*, i. e. in this case. As in the case supposed the woodman deals with trees and thickets, so in the real case the spoiler deals with the costly fruits of art and skill. The word translated *carvings* is expressly used in the description of the temple. See 1 Kings vi. 29, and compare Ex. xxviii. 11. xxxix. 6. The suffix (*thereof*) has no grammatical antecedent in the sentence; the form was probably determined by a word not expressed though present to the writer's mind. *At once* does not mean quickly, suddenly, without delay, but all together, indiscriminately, in confusion.

7. *They have set on fire thy holy place ; to the earth they have profaned the dwelling of thy name.* The literal translation of the first clause is, *they have sent (or cast) into the fire thy holy place.* The construction in the last clause is a pregnant one, *profaned to the earth*, i. e. profaned by casting to the ground a sacred edifice. This form of expression would be inappropriate to mere profanation by defilement, without actual prostration of the edifice itself.

8. *They have said in their heart, let us destroy them together (or at once) ; they have burned all the assemblies of God in the land,* by burning the only place where such assemblies could be held (Deut. xii. 5, 11.) Others, with less probability, suppose that the Hebrew word itself denotes the place of assembly, and that *all* such places means the *only* such place. The translation *synagogues* has no authority from Hebrew usage, or the ancient versions (LXX. ἐογράς Vulg. *dies festos*. Jer. *solennitates*), and has been abused to prove that the psalm was written after the Babylonish exile, before which *synagogues* are commonly supposed to have had no existence.

9. *Our signs we see not ; there is no more (any) prophet, and (there is) not with us (any one) knowing until what time, or how long,* these things are to last. By *signs* we are here to understand the tokens of God's presence and of Israel's peculiar relation to him. One of these is then specified, to wit, the gift of prophecy, which seemed to cease at the time of the Babylonian conquest, although afterwards renewed. Even Jeremiah's ministry may be considered as then closing. The complaint of this, as of a recent loss, shows that the period meant is not that of the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes, when the gift of prophecy had been withdrawn for many generations.

10. *Till when, oh God, shall the foe revile, the enemy contemn thy name forever ?* By making the last clause a distinct interro-

gation (*shall the enemy despise thy name forever?*) we avoid the solecism of combining *how long* and *forever*; but this can occasion no more difficulty here than in v. 1 and in Ps. xiii. 2 (1.) The verb in the last clause means to treat contemptuously, to show contempt by word or deed. *Blaspheme* expresses only one mode of doing this, and that too strongly.

11. *Why wilt thou withdraw thy hand and thy right hand? From the midst of thy bosom* (draw it and) *consume* (them.) The future here includes the present (*why dost thou withdraw thy hand?*) with the additional idea of continuance or perseverance in so doing. The hand, and especially the right hand, is the seat and symbol of strength. The *and* between them is equivalent to the English *even*. To make the hand return, or draw it back, is to cease from action, the continuance of which cessation is described as hiding it in the bosom.

12. *And God (is) my king of old, working salvations in the midst of the land.* Having pleaded the greatness of the danger and distress, as a reason for imploring the divine interposition, the church now pleads her covenant relation to him as her Sovereign and her Saviour in former emergencies, with particular reference to the plagues of Egypt, which makes it probable that *land* and not *earth* is the true translation of the last word. The very form of expression is borrowed from the narrative of Moses. See Ex. viii. 18 (22.) *Doing*, working, as opposed to a mere promise or prediction. The participle signifies continued action, and extends the description beyond the particular occasion specially referred to. God is described as He who, then and ever, works *salvations* or *deliverances*, the plural form implying fulness and variety. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) xxviii. 8. xlii. 6, 12 (5, 11.) xliii. 5. liii. 7.

13. *Thou hast burst, with thy strength, the sea; thou hast bro-*



*ken the heads of dragons on the water.* The word translated *dragons* is applied to the largest class of aquatic animals. Some suppose these to be here emblematic of Egypt and other hostile powers, as in Ez. xxix. 3, 4. Isai. li. 9, 10. Others, with more probability, explain the verse as a description of God's power over nature, and particularly over the sea, as specially manifested in the passage of the Red Sea. The dragons or sea-monsters are then added merely to complete the picture. As if he had said, 'thou hast subdued and crushed the sea and its most terrible inhabitants.' This is described as taking place, not *in* or *under the waters*, the abode of the sea-monsters, but on the surface, where the contest becomes visible. The pronoun at the beginning is emphatic: 'it is thou that hast done all this, and not another.'

14. (It is) *thou* (that) *hast crushed the heads of Leviathan*, (that) *wilt give him* (as) *food to the people, to the wild men*, or the dwellers in the desert. See above, on Ps. lxxii. 9. *Leviathan*, according to its etymology, denotes a coiled or crooked serpent, but like *dragon* in v. 13, is used as a generic term for huge aquatic animals. Having no plural form, it is here used in a collective sense, as appears from the expression *heads*, unless we understand this as denoting a many-headed monster, to which, however, there is no analogy in Scripture. In the last clause, *people* seems to mean *men* in general, and is then rendered definite by the use of the specific term which follows. By the people of the desert some understand the savage beasts, by whom the Egyptians were devoured after the overthrow of Pharaoh; others, with more probability, the wild men living on the shores of the Red Sea, and subsisting on its fish, and hence called by the Greeks the Ichthyophagi. The transition from the past tense to the future seems to represent the scene as actually passing, or the act as one that may be frequently repeated. 'It is thou that hast done all this and wilt do it again.'



15. (It is) *thou* (that) *didst cleave fount and flood*, (that) *didst dry up rivers ever-flowing*. Fountain and flood is a kind of proverbial expression for smaller and greater bodies of water. The primary historical allusion here is to the passage of the Jordan. The original construction of the last phrase is *streams of perpetuity*, perennial or unfailing streams, as distinguished from the winter torrents of the Holy Land, which disappear in summer. The common version, *rivers of strength* or *mighty rivers*, is not sustained by etymology or usage.

16. *To thee* (belongs) *day, yea, to thee night*; *THOU hast prepared light and sun*. From the mention of God's actual control over the elements, as exercised in certain memorable cases, the Psalmist here proceeds to assert his sovereignty by right of creation. Not only day but night, which seems to sense beyond the reach of government or regulation, is subject to God's power. *Thou*, and no other, as in the three preceding verses. *Prepared* for the place which they now fill and the work which they perform. *Light* and *sun* are related as the genus and the species, like *hand* and *right hand* in v. 11, *signs* and *prophet* in v. 9. *Light*, in the local sense of luminary, which the same Hebrew word has in Gen. i. 14—16.

17. *THOU hast set* (or *established*) *all the bounds of earth*; *summer and winter—thou hast formed them*. This is the seventh emphatic repetition of the pronoun *thou*. The bounds of earth are supposed by some to be the limits of the land, by which it is separated from the sea. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 2. The description of God's power over nature is completed by referring to it the revolution of the seasons as not only appointed but created by him. He is not only the ordainer of the change itself, but the author of the causes which produce it.

18. *Remember this*; *an enemy has reviled Jehovah, and a fool-*

*ish people have contemned thy name.* For the meaning of the verbs, see above, on v. 10, where the same facts are alleged, but are here recalled to God's remembrance as a reason for his interposition. *Jehovah* may also be construed as a vocative, which makes the parallelism more exact. *Foolish*, in the strong sense of that word, as used in Scripture, to denote the irrationality of sin. See above, on Ps. xiv. 1, and compare Deut. xxxii. 6, from which place the whole phrase is borrowed.

19. *Give not to the greedy herd thy turtle-dove : the herd of thy afflicted (ones) forget not forever !* The general import of this prayer is obvious, and the only doubtful point is the precise sense of the word (חֲרִית) twice translated *herd* above. It usually means an *animal* or living thing, and more especially a wild beast, as distinguished from domesticated cattle. This would yield a good sense in the first clause (*greedy beast*), but is inadmissible in the other. The same objection lies against the explanation of the first as meaning *life* and the last as meaning *flock*. The only meaning equally admissible in both parts of the sentence is the one just mentioned, that of *animal* collectively, and then a flock or herd of animals, from which it is sometimes transferred to human subjects. See above, on Ps. lxxiii. 11 (10.) *Greedy herd*, literally, *herd of appetite*. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 12. xli. 3 (2.) The *turtle-dove* is here used as an emblem of innocence and helplessness, as well as an expression of affectionate endearment.

20. *Look to the covenant ; for filled are the darkneses of earth with homes of violence (or cruelty.)* The prayer in the first clause is equivalent to saying, Remember thy promise, fulfill thy covenant engagements. The reason assigned is, that the existing state of things is such as to require this fulfilment. The word translated *darkneses* has the form of a local noun, and may therefore mean *dark places*, not in the sense of hiding places, but in that of gloomy dismal places. The same idea, of distress and

gloom, which is always included in the sense of the word elsewhere, may be obtained by making it an abstract, *darkness*, or supposing the plural form to be emphatic, *profound darkness*, not as an attribute of certain places, but of the whole earth. As if he had said, the darkness of the earth, or this dark world, is filled with homes of cruelty. This word (חֲמָצָה), here as elsewhere, comprehends the two ideas of injustice and violence. See above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.) xviii. 49 (48.) The use of the word *homes* (or *habitations*) indicates that violence or cruelty is there domesticated, permanently resident. See above, on Ps. xxv. 13. The meaning of the whole verse, thus explained, is, that the permanent establishment and prevalence of "wrong and outrage" in the darkness of the world may be urged as a reason for the fulfilment of God's promise, nay, his solemn oath, that the whole earth shall be filled with his glory (Num. xiv. 21.)

21. *Let not the oppressed turn back confounded; let the sufferer and the poor (man) praise thy name.* The word translated *oppressed* means strictly broken, bruised, or crushed. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) x. 18. *Turn back*, abandon his pursuit, retire in despair. *Confounded*, disappointed, put to shame, by the frustration of his hopes and wishes. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 4. xl. 15 (14.) lxix. 7 (6.) lxx. 3 (2.)

22. *Arise, oh God! Plead thine own cause! Remember thy reviling by the fool all day!* The first prayer is the common one, that God would put an end to his apparent inaction and indifference to the sufferings of his servants. See above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7.) vii. 7 (6.) ix. 20 (19.) x. 12. xvii. 13. xxxv. 2. xlv. 27 (26.) *Plead thine own cause*, literally, *strive thy strife*. See above, on Ps. xliii. 1. 'Remember how thou art reviled by the irrational transgressor, and arouse thyself to silence his reproaches.'



23. *Forget not the voice of thy foes, the noise of thy assailants, ascending always.* The voice and noise here meant are the clamorous revilings and blasphemies of wicked men, continually going up into the ears of God, and calling down his wrath upon them. This striking figure, representing gross sin as a vocal and audible witness against him who commits it, is a common one in Scripture from the earliest books downwards. See Gen. iv. 10. xviii. 21. xix. 13, and compare Jon. i. 2. *Thy assailants*, or more literally, *thy insurgents*, those who rise up against thee, in the way not only of attack but of rebellion. See above, on Ps. iii. 2 (1.) xviii. 40, 49 (39, 48.) xlv. 6 (5), and compare Ex. xv. 7. Deut. xxxiii. 11. 2 Sam. xxii. 49. All this the Psalmist, or rather the Church, in whose behalf he speaks, recalls to the divine remembrance, as a ground or reason for immediate interference.

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## PSALM LXXV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. Al-tashheth. A Psalm by Asaph.* *A song* (of praise.) See above, on Ps. lxviii. 1. In this psalm the ancient church expresses a confident anticipation of divine assistance and deliverance from the domination of some great hostile power, the catastrophe of which is here foretold. The immediate historical occasion we have no direct means of determining; but the one to which the psalm itself seems most appropriate is the destruction of the Assyrian host in the reign of Hezekiah. See above, on Ps. xlvi. 1, and below, on Ps. lxxvi. 1, and compare Isai. xxxvi and xxxvii. That the psalm has reference to a period of imminent and extraordinary danger, is



moreover indicated by the phrase *al-tashheth*, or *destroy not*. See above, on Ps. lvii. 1.

2 (1.) *We give thanks to thee, oh God, we give thanks ; and near (is) thy name ; they recount thy wonders.* The thanksgiving is in anticipation of some great event, and implies a strong faith in the certainty of its occurrence. *Thy name is near*, a signal manifestation of thine attributes is just at hand, so that men begin already to recount thy wondrous works, as if actually past. Or this may mean that they recount God's former dealings with them, as a reason for expecting like or greater things to come. Another construction of the last clause, perhaps still more natural, is that adopted in the English Bible : *thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.* For the sense and usage of the last word in Hebrew, see above, on Ps. ix. 2 (1.) xxvi. 7. xl. 6 (5.) lxxi. 17.

3 (2.) *For I will take a set time ; I will equitably judge.* The best interpreters are now in favour of explaining these as the words of God himself, containing the promise upon which was built the hope expressed in the preceding verse. *Take* then includes the two ideas of choosing and using for the end proposed. The word translated *set time* is the same that means *assembly* in Ps. lxxiv. 4, 8. The idea of constituted time, which is included even there, is here predominant. The same use of the word occurs in Ps. cii. 14 (13.) Hab. ii. 3. Dan. viii. 19. xi. 27, 35. There is here an obvious allusion to the stated times at which justice is publicly administered. Compare Acts xix. 38. As if he had said, I will appoint a time, and when it comes, I will ascend the judgment-seat. The parties to be tried are the foes and oppressors of God's people. The pronoun is emphatic ; I, and no other, will be judge. See above, on Ps. l. 6. *Equitably*, literally, *equities* or *rectitudes*. See above on Ps. xvii. 2. lviii. 2 (1.) The use of the plural, as an abstract, and that of the noun in

an adverbial sense, are both familiar Hebrew idioms. The judging of the wicked at God's bar implies their condemnation, and, as a necessary consequence, the deliverance of those whom they oppress or injure.

4 (3.) *Melted (are) the earth and all dwelling on it; I have weighed the pillars of it. Selah.* Dissolved with fear, enfeebled, or reduced to nothing. See above, on Ps. xlv. 7 (6.) The figure in the last clause is obscure. The act of weighing may be intended to suggest that of raising, bearing up. Compare Isai xl. 12, 13, 15. Some suppose, however, that it means to measure, estimate, or value, and implies not only perfect knowledge but creative power. As a part of the promise or encouraging assurance begun in the preceding verse, the one before us must mean that God himself will prevent or rectify the evils caused or threatened by his enemies.

5 (4.) *I said to the boasters, Boast not, and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn!* Some regard these as the words of the psalmist, speaking again in the person of the church. The sense will then be that, encouraged by God's promise of protection and deliverance, his people warn their adversaries not to triumph. It seems more natural, however, to explain them as a continuation of the words of God himself, whose very assurance of protection to his people was in fact a warning of destruction to his enemies. The objection, that what follows must then be referred to the same speaker, is of little weight, as the transition from one person to another, in the psalms of a dramatic structure, is not commonly a marked one, and is often quite insensible. The concluding metaphor is borrowed from the habits of horned animals, and nearly equivalent to the act of holding the head high, as a sign of human pride. For a different application of the figure, see above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2.)

6 (5.) *Do not raise on high your horn (and) speak with a proud neck, or speak with (outstretched) neck proudly.* The last word is an adjective meaning insolent or arrogant. See above, on Ps. xxxi. 19 (18.) It may either agree with *neck*, and signify a position and carriage of the neck indicative of pride (Ps. lxxiii. 6) or constitute the object of the verb, in which case *with the neck* may mean *with* outstretched or prolonged neck, not projecting forwards but inclining backwards. See Isai. iii. 16, and compare Job xv. 26 in Hebrew. For a similar ellipsis, see below, Ps. lxxvii. 16 (15.)

7 (6.) *For not from east, and (not) from west, and not from the wilderness of mountains,* is the judgment on these sinners to proceed, but from a very different quarter. The word translated *east* means properly the *sunrise*, or rather the place of his coming forth; the parallel term the *sunset*, or the place of evening. A third point of the compass is denoted by the *wilderness*, the great Arabian desert lying to the south of Palestine. The last word in Hebrew (הָרִים) admits of two entirely different explanations. One of these, given in the English Bible, makes it the infinitive of the verb translated *raise* in vs. 5, 6 (4, 5), and supposes it to mean the act of raising, or a state of exaltation. The sense will then be that promotion cometh not from any quarter upon earth, but from God and God alone. Others object that the question here is not one of promotion but of judgment, as appears from the foregoing and the following context. They accordingly adhere to the ancient versions in making (הָרִים) the plural of the common Hebrew word for *hill* or *mountain*, and explain the whole phrase to mean a *hilly desert* or a *wilderness of mountains*, a description eminently applicable to Idumæa and Arabia Petræa. The essential idea is still that of the *south*, here added to the *east* and *west*, as a general description of the countries contiguous to Palestine. The south is mentioned last, perhaps for the sake of an emphatic reference to Egypt, as the



foreign power, on which the Jews were supposed by the Assyrians to rely with special confidence. Compare Isai. xxxvi. 4—6. The omission of the *north* may either be fortuitous or (as some suppose) intended to suggest that this was the quarter from which the hostile incursion had proceeded, as it was in fact, invaders even from the furthest east commonly entering the country from that side. The meaning of the whole verse then is that the danger which impended from one quarter could not be averted by mere human aid from any other, but only by the means referred to in the next verse.

8 (7.) *For God (is) judge (or actually judging;) this (one) he will humble, and this (one) will exalt.* The *for* at the beginning introduces the reason of the negative statement in the verse preceding. It is not man, *for* it is God, who can perform this. The same relation of the sentences is commonly expressed in our idiom by *but*. The act of judging, or the office of a judge, here implies absolute sovereignty. *This and this* is the idiomatic Hebrew phrase answering to *one and another* in English. See above, on Ps. xx. 8 (7.)

9 (8.) *For a cup (is) in the hand of Jehovah, and the wine ferments, and it is full of mixture, and he pours out from this (cup); only its dregs shall they wring (or suck) out, shall they drink—all the wicked of the earth (or land.)* This is a common figure in the Scriptures for the wrath of God. See above, on Ps. xi. 6. The cup contains the prescribed or allotted portion of the sinner to whom it is administered. *Ferments* or *has fermented*, implying that it is real wine and strong wine. The translation *it is red* is now supposed to rest upon a doubtful etymology. Some interpreters explain the phrase, *it foams with wine*; but this construction is not only in itself less simple, but puts a sense upon the verb not entirely authorized by usage, and requires the noun (כּוּץ) *cup*, which is elsewhere feminine, to be construed as a masculine. *It* (the



wine) is full of mixture, i. e. mixed with spices to increase its strength and stimulating power. *Only its dregs* is an idiomatic Hebrew phrase, which does not mean, as it may seem to do in English, that they shall drink nothing but the dregs. The meaning rather is, that they shall have nothing left for it, no resource, or no alternative, except to drain the cup to the very dregs, i. e. to suffer God's wrath to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 16.) The position given to the subject of the sentence at its close makes it more emphatic. See above on Ps. xl. 15 (14.)

10 (9.) *And I will declare forever, I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.* The emphatic pronoun puts him in opposition to *the wicked of the earth or land*. 'While they are thus destroyed, I will declare' etc. The object of the verb in the first clause is determined by the second. *Sing praise*, make music, as a means of celebrating the divine praise. See above, on Ps. ix. 12 (11.) xxx. 5 (4.) xlvii. 7 (6.) lxvi. 4. *To the God of Jacob*, to him who has proved himself to be such, by fulfilling the promise made of old to Israel. The personal name of the patriarch is poetically substituted for the one which properly belonged to him as founder of the nation. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 6.

11 (10.) *And all horns of wicked ones will I cut off; lifted up shall be the horns of the righteous.* The same noun and verb, that were used in vs. 5, 6 (4, 5), to denote the self-exaltation of the wicked, are here used in a good sense to denote God's gracious exaltation of the righteous. Compare Matth. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14. In the first clause, to the simple correlative idea of humiliation is superadded that of violent destruction. While the horns of the righteous are to be exalted, those of the wicked are not only to be lowered but cut off. The change from the plural (wicked men) to the singular (a righteous man), if meant to be significant at all, may have reference to the speaker as an ideal individual. The construction of these words as those

of God himself is a gratuitous and harsh one. They are rather uttered by the Church, as representing him, or acting in his strength and under his authority.

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PSALM LXXVI.

1. *To the Chief Musician. With (or on) stringed instruments. A Psalm by Asaph. A song (of praise.)* The resemblance of this title to that of the preceding psalm, their juxtaposition in the Psalter, and their internal similarity, all favour the opinion that they had respect originally to the same historical occasion, with this difference, that the first is rather an anticipation of the great deliverance as certain but still future, and the other a commemoration of the same as actually past or really experienced. In this, as in the other case, the event is ascribed to a wonderful divine interposition, and described as one affecting the whole world or the nations generally, which was emphatically true of the great stroke, by which the power of Assyria was broken.

2. (1.) *Known in Judah (is) God ; in Israel great (is) his name.* Known as God, and as the God of Israel, his chosen people, which, after the great schism in the time of Rehoboam, continued to exist in the kingdom of Judah. It was only in the ancient church that his name was fully known, his perfections clearly manifested.

3 (2.) *And in Salem was his tabernacle, and his home in Zion.* This is explanatory of the first verse. He was best known there because it was his chosen earthly residence. *Salem* is evidently used poetically for *Jerusalem*. The former name means peaceful

and secure, and some suppose it to be one of the elements of which the other name is composed, so as to signify a peaceful or secure possession. The same interpreters identify the *Salem* of Gen. xiv. 18 with *Jerusalem*. The word translated *tabernacle* properly means a *booth* or *shed* composed of leaves and branches, in allusion to the moveable and temporary form of the first sanctuary.

4 (3.) *Thither he shattered the bolts of the bow—buckler and sword and battle. Selah.* Some translate the first word *there*, but there is no clear instance of the Hebrew adverb being so used, and the best interpreters suppose the sense to be, that he destroyed them on their way there, while in motion towards the Holy City. The word (שִׁבַּר) translated *shattered* is an intensive species of the common verb (שָׁבַר) to *break*. Both forms occur together in Ps. xxix. 5. See also Ps. iii. 8 (7.) The ambiguous word *bolts* is used to represent a Hebrew one, which properly means thunderbolts or flashes of lightning, but is here applied to the flight of arrows, with or without allusion to the practice of igniting them (Eph. vi. 16.) To the shield and sword, as the most important pieces of defensive and offensive armour, he adds, by a bold and striking figure, war itself, perhaps as a residuary aggregate of all other arms and weapons.

5 (4.) *Bright (art) thou, glorious, more than the mountains of prey.* The object of address is God, who had been previously spoken of, in the third person. The first word in Hebrew is a participle, meaning illuminated, made to shine, and therefore bearing some affinity to our word *illustrious*. The other epithet means grand, glorious, sublime. See above, on Ps. viii. 1. The common version (*excellent*) seems to restrict the praise to moral qualities. As mountains are standing symbols of states and kingdoms, *mountains of prey*, i. e. mountains occupied by robbers, may denote oppressive powers, such as that of Assyria, to which



the Prophets apply similar descriptions. See Nah. ii. 11, 12. iii. 1. To all such hostile powers God is here represented as superior.

6 (5.) *Spoiled are the stout of heart; they have slept their sleep; and all the men of might have not found their hands.* The meaning of the first clause seems to be, that the spoilers are themselves spoiled, by a signal providential retribution. Some, however, explain the first word to mean *snatched away*, caused to disappear or vanish. They have slept their own sleep, i. e. they, like others, in their turn, sleep the sleep of death. See above, on Ps. xiii. 4 (3), and compare Nah. iii. 18. 2 Kings xix. 35. *Stout of heart* suggests the two distinct ideas, courageous and hard-hearted. The same expression is used, in an unfavourable sense, by Isaiah (xlii. 12.) *All have not found* does not imply that some have found, but on the contrary, that none have found, or in other words that the negative proposition is true of all without exception. *Found their hands* is understood by some to mean *regained their strength*. But the direct sense of the words is, that they have not found the use of their hands, or been able to employ them with advantage.

7 (6.) *At thy rebuke, oh God of Jacob, put to sleep (is) both chariot and horse.* The particle at the beginning is both temporal and causal, *post hoc et propter hoc*. After and because of thy rebuke. This noun denotes not merely a verbal but a real or practical expression of the divine displeasure. See above, on Ps. ix. 6 (5.) lxxviii. 31 (30.) *God of Jacob*, see above, on v. 10 (9.) *Put to sleep* is here used to translate a passive participle, denoting not a mere state or condition, but the violence by which it is produced. The sleep meant is of course the sleep of death. The application of this figure to the chariot as well as to the horse, is less paradoxical in Hebrew, where the noun used is sometimes a collective meaning cavalry. See my note on Isaiah xxi. 7.

At the same time, there is beauty in the figure, as suggesting that the noisy rattle of the wheels is hushed in death-like silence.

8 (7.) *Thou (art) to be feared, (even) thou, and who shall stand before thee, when once thou art angry?* The Hebrew passive participle often has the force of the future passive or gerundive in Latin. See above, on Ps. xviii. 4 (3.) The repetition of the pronoun makes it highly emphatic and even exclusive, thou and no other, thou and only thou. *Who shall stand?* includes the kindred question, *who may or can stand?* To stand before God means, in this connection, to stand one's ground in opposition to him, or in independence of him. See above, on Ps. i. 5. The common version of the last words, which is retained above, conveys correctly the idea, but without the peculiar form of the original, which is highly idiomatic, and not susceptible of literal translation. The last word strictly means *thy anger* and the one before it *from then* or *from that time*. The nearest approach to it in English would be *since thy anger*, a construction which is actually given in the latest German versions.

9 (8.) *From heaven thou hast caused judgment to be heard; the earth feared and rested, or, the earth was afraid and was still.* From his throne in heaven God had pronounced judgment on his wicked enemies, the sound of which had struck the dwellers upon earth with awe and calmed their tumult. The last Hebrew verb is especially applied to repose after the noise and agitation of war. See Josh. xiv. 15. Judg. v. 31. Isai. xiv 7.

10 (9.) *In God's arising for the judgment, to save all the humble of the earth.* This completes the sentence begun in the preceding verse, by assigning the date, and at the same time the cause, of the effect there recorded. The earth was awe-struck and reduced to silence when God arose to judgment, i. e. to act as judge or sovereign arbiter. In the last clause, as in many

other places, the judgments of God upon his enemies are represented as occasions of deliverance to his people, here described by one of their characteristic qualities, not merely as the *meek* in temper, but as the *lowly* in spirit, the *humble* in the strong religious sense. See above, on Ps. ix. 13 (12.) x. 12, 17. xxii. 27 (26.) xxv. 9. xxxiv. 3 (2.) xxxvii. 11. lxix. 33 (32.) The last word in the verse has here a kind of double sense, since the promise made directly to *the humble of the land*, i. e. the spiritual Israel, was really intended to include *all the humble of the earth*, i. e. all the truly pious, whether Jews or Gentiles.

11 (10.) *For the wrath of man shall praise thee (or acknowledge thee) ; the remainder of wraths thou shalt gird (about thee.)* The very passions which excite men to rebel against God shall be used as instruments and means of coercion. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 9. And so complete shall be this process, that even the remnant of such passionate excitement, which might be expected to escape attention, will be nevertheless an instrument or weapon in the hands of God. This last idea is expressed by the figure of a girdle, here considered as a sword-belt. So too in other cases the verb *to gird* is absolutely used in the sense of girding on a sword, or the still more general one of arming one's self. See above, on Ps. xlv. 4 (3), and compare Judg. xviii. 11. 1 Kings xx. 11. 2 Kings iii. 21. Others, with less probability, suppose the figure to denote the act of attaching to one's self, as in Ps. cix. 19. Isai. xi. 5. Jer. xiii. 11, and apply it to the future conversion of all remaining enemies. The plural in the last clause (*wraths* or *angers*) seems to be an emphatic designation of abundance or excess. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.)

12 (11.) *Vow and pay unto Jehovah your God, all (ye that are) round about him ; let them bring tribute to the Dread (One.)* The first clause may be understood to mean, pay now what you have vowed before, i. e. before the great deliverance and during



the impending danger. The addition of *your God* shows that the object of address is Israel. Compare Deut. xxiii. 22 (21.) According to the masoretic interpunction, *all that are round about him* belongs to the first clause, and denotes the host of Israel, in the midst of whom Jehovah's tent was pitched (Num. ii. 2.) The English Bible, following the ancient versions, throws these words into the last clause, as the subject of the verb that follows, *let all that are round about him bring presents, or they shall bring presents*. This last word in Hebrew denotes tribute from the conquered or dependent to the conqueror or sovereign. See above, on Ps. lxviii. 30 (29), and compare Isai. xviii. 7. This was literally verified in the case of Hezekiah's rescue from the power of Sennacherib. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 23. God is here called Fear or Terror, as an object to be revered or dreaded. Compare the similar expressions in Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

13 (12.) *He cuts off the spirit of princes, he is feared (or to be feared) by the kings of earth*. The first verb is specially applied to the pruning or cutting of vines. See Jer. vi. 9. xxv. 30. xlix. 9, and compare Rev. xiv. 18, 19. Its future form includes a potential sense. He can do it when he will, and he will do it when he sees occasion. *Spirit* or *breath* is here put for the life or vital principle, to cut which is to kill. He who possesses this alarming power is or ought to be an object of religious fear, not only to ordinary men or to certain great men in particular, but to all the kings of the earth. Compare Matt. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. These expressions show that the historical occasion of the psalm was not an event of merely local interest, but a great historical and national catastrophe, such as the blow inflicted on the power of Assyria by the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's host.



## PSALM LXXVII.

1. *To the Chief Musician over* (the choir or family of) *Jeduthun. By Asaph. A Psalm.* For the meaning of this title, see above, on Ps. lxii. 1. The psalm before us contains a complaint and prayer of the ancient church in times of deep distress. It consists of two parts. In the first, the church describes her sad condition and complains of God's desertion, vs. 2—10 (1—9.) In the second, she encourages herself by the remembrance of former deliverances, and especially of that from Egypt, vs. 11—21 (10—20.) The particular historical occasion is not specified; but if, as some suppose, it be the crisis of affairs in the reign of Josiah, the name *Asaph* must be understood as a description of the family, and not of its progenitor. See above on Ps. l. 1. There are several obvious imitations of this psalm in the third chapter of Habakkuk.

2 (1) *My voice unto God* (I will raise) *and will cry; my voice unto God* (I will raise) *and he will give ear to me.* Some make the last verb an imperative, *and* (when I raise my voice) *do thou give ear.* But besides the sudden change of person, which, though common, is not to be assumed without necessity, the form of the Hebrew verb is that of an infinitive, to be determined by assimilation to the one before it. The last clause then really assigns a reason for the purpose expressed in the first. He would not pray, if he despaired of being heard.

3 (2.) *In the day of my distress the Lord I sought ; my hand by night was spread and grew not numb ; my soul refused to be comforted.* Day is here put for time, but not without allusion to the mention of the night in the clause following, so as to express the idea that he prayed day and night. The verb translated *spread* means strictly spilt, poured out, scattered, but seems to be here poetically applied to the spreading of the hands as a customary gesture of entreaty. See above, on Ps. xliv. 21 (20.) The common version, *my sore ran*, has no foundation in etymology or usage. For the meaning of the next verb, see above, on Ps. xxxviii. 9 (8.) Its form is future, but the copulative particle, though separated from it by the negative, may be considered as exerting a conversive force.

4 (3.) *I remember God and murmur ; I muse, and overwhelmed is my spirit. Selah.* The recollection of God's former kindness, as contrasted with what seems to be his present desertion, extorts from the sufferer an expression of disquietude. The second verb in Hebrew is the same with that in Ps. xxxix. 7 (6.) xlii. 6, 12 (5, 11.) lv. 18 (17.) *My spirit* is not simply equivalent to *myself*, but suggests the additional idea of profound internal agitation.

5 (4.) *Thou hast held fast my eyes ; I am smitten and cannot speak.* The word here rendered *fast* is properly a passive participle meaning *watched, kept*, and here, from the connection, kept awake or open. This circumstance is added to enhance the description of his miserable state.

6 (5.) *I thought on days of old, years of antiquities (or perpetuities.)* The contrast of the present with the past is again urged as an aggravating circumstance in his condition.

7 (6.) *I will remember my song in the night, with my heart will I muse, and my spirit inquires.* The futures of the first clause

have reference to the time of actual suffering. The word translated *song* means strictly a *stringed instrument*, or that kind of music, but is here used more generally to denote the musical expression of thanksgiving. *In the night* qualifies the words immediately preceding (*my song*), not the remoter antecedent (*I remember*.) *With my heart*, i. e. in communion with it, with myself. *My spirit inquires*, i. e. I, from the bottom of my heart, ask the questions recorded in the following verses.

8 (7.) *For ever will the Lord reject, and will he no more favour?* It was thus that the spirit of the sufferer made inquiry. *For ever*, literally, *to eternities* or *ages*. *Reject*, with abhorrence and contempt. See above, on Ps. xliii. 2. xliv. 10, 24 (9, 23.) lx. 3, 12 (2, 11.) lxxiv. 1. The idiomatic form of the last clause is, *will he not add to favour again (or any longer?)*

9 (8.) *Ceased forever has his mercy, failed (his) word to generation and generation?* The general term *word* here denotes specifically a word of promise. See above, on Ps. xviii. 31 (30.) *Generation and generation*, i. e. all generations in succession, are not mentioned as the objects of the promise, to whom God's word was pledged, but as the period of its failure.

10 (9.) *Has the Mighty (One) forgotten to be gracious, or closed in wrath his mercies?* *Selah*. The use of the divine name *El* is here significant, as if it had been asked, does the goodness of God no longer bear proportion to his greatness? The verb translated *closed* is one found only in poetical style. The original expression for *his mercies* suggests the idea of *his bowels*, according to the idiom which represents the viscera as the seat of the tenderest affections.

11 (10.) *And I said, this is my affliction, the years of the right hand of the Highest.* This may be regarded as the turning point



of the entire composition. After all the repinings and misgivings just described, I said, at length, what I might and should have said before. *My affliction*, literally, *my sickness*, that specific form of suffering being put for suffering in general, as inflicted by the hand of God. The use of the word *years* seems to imply that the trial was one of long continuance. The divine name or description (*Most High*) suggests the duty and necessity of yielding to his sovereign pleasure.

12 (11.) *I will commemorate the deeds of Jah; for I will remember thy wonders of old.* The forms of the verb in the two clauses are different though needlessly assimilated by the masoretic critics and the versions. The second is the primitive verb *remember*; the first its derivative, cause to be remembered, commemorate, celebrate. The literal meaning of the last words is *from antiquity thy wonder*, a collective and abstract expression for *thy wondrous works*. For the origin and use of the divine name JAH, see above, on Ps. lxxviii. 5 (4.)

13 (12.) *And I will meditate of all thy work, and of thy doings will I muse.* The original expression is not *of* but *in* them, as if implying a complete absorption of the thoughts and feelings in the object.

14 (13.) *Oh God, in holiness is thy way. What Mighty (One) is great like God?* The common version, *in the sanctuary*, yields a good sense; but the other is entitled to the preference on account of Ex. xv. 11, to which place there is evident allusion. *Holiness* here means the divine perfection, all that distinguishes the Maker from his creatures. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.) *Thy way*, i. e. thy mode of dealing with thy creatures, and particularly with thy people. The use of the name *El* is again significant. Who is there like God, even among the mightiest and most exalted beings?

15 (14.) *Thou (art) the Almighty doing wonders ; thou hast made known in the nations thy strength.* Thou art the true Almighty as distinguished from all counterfeits. *Doing*, i. e. habitually, characteristically, doing wonders. The next word has the singular form but a collective meaning, as in v. 12 (11) above. *In the nations*, not only to them, but among them, in the midst of them, and in their own experience. The display of God's omnipotence had not been confined to his own people, but extended to surrounding nations. This is particularly mentioned in the history of the exodus from Egypt. See Ex. ix. 16. xv. 14.

16 (15.) *Thou hast redeemed with the arm thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.* The particular display of the divine strength just referred to is now specified. *Redeemed*, recovered from captivity or bondage. *With the arm*, i. e. by the exercise of power. See above, on Ps. xlv. 4 (3.) *Joseph* is named as well as *Jacob*, in order to include the ten tribes in the statement, which might otherwise have been applied to Judah only, as the legitimate successor of the ancient Israel. In this clause some interpreters see a distinct allusion to the downfall of the kingdom of the ten tribes, as an event which had already taken place when the psalm was written.

17 (16.) *The waters saw thee, God, the waters saw thee ; they shake, yea, the depths quake.* The historical reference is of course to the passage of the Red Sea, but at the same time with allusion to the symbolical use of seas in Scripture. See above, on Ps. xlv. 3 (2.) The transition from the past tense to the future or present shows that the writer suddenly transports himself into the midst of the events which he commemorates. The *yea* or *na* (𐤊𐤍) in the last clause is emphatic. Not merely the surface of the water moves ; its very depths are agitated and convulsed.

18 (17.) *The clouds poured water ; the skies gave a sound ; yea,*

*thine arrows fly.* These are natural phenomena of storms, here noted as betokening God's presence. See above, on Ps. xviii. 12—15 (11—14.) *The skies*, the vapours constituting the visible heavens. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 35 (34.) *Gave a sound*, uttered their voice, a beautiful description of the thunder. The *yea* indicates a climax. There was not only rain and thunder but lightning, the flashes of which are poetically spoken of as arrows. See above, on Ps. xviii. 15 (14.) The word translated *fly* is an intensive form of the verb to *go*, implying swiftness and perhaps diversity of direction, hither and thither, to and fro. See above, on Ps. xxvi. 3. xxxv. 14. With this verse compare Hab. iii. 11.

19 (18.) *The voice of thy thunder (was) in the whirlwind; lightnings made the world shine; (then) shook and quaked the earth.* The word translated *whirlwind* usually means a *wheel*, but is sometimes applied to any thing whirled or driven round before the wind. See below, on Ps. lxxxiii. 14 (13), and compare Isai. xvii. 13. Hence it may naturally be employed to designate the whirlwind itself as the cause of this rotary motion. This is surely more agreeable to usage than to make it descriptive of mere swiftness or velocity. The common version, *in the heaven*, if not entirely arbitrary, must rest upon a supposed allusion to the convex appearance of the heavens. *Made to shine*, illuminated, lighted up. There is however no affinity between the Hebrew word and that for *lightnings*. The whole description is remarkably like that of the theophany in Ps. xviii. See also Hab. iii. 14.

20 (19.) *In the sea (was) thy way and thy paths in great (or many) waters, and thy footsteps were not known.* This may be understood as a general description of the divine operations as inscrutable, in which case the verbs supplied should have the present form, *is thy way, are not known*. It is more agreeable, however, to the context, and in far better keeping with the vivid

graphic character of this part of the psalm, to understand the verse, at least in the first instance, as referring to the exodus from Egypt, when it might indeed be said that the way of Jehovah, as the deliverer and conductor of his people, was *in the sea*, and that his footsteps and theirs could not be traced, because the waters instantly rolled over them. With this verse compare Hab. iii. 15.

21 (20.) *Thou didst guide like a flock thy people, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* Like a flock, in perfect safety and with perfect ease. The comparison of Moses, at this juncture, to a shepherd, reappears in Isai. lxiii. 11—14. The conclusion of the psalm appears abrupt, but any devout Israelite could draw the inference for himself, that he who had so gloriously saved his people could deliver them again.

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## PSALM LXXVIII.

THIS psalm appears to have been written after David's elevation to the throne, and perhaps before he was acknowledged by the whole race of Israel (2 Sam. v. 5.) Its design is to impress upon the public mind the true grounds of the transfer which had taken place, of the pre-eminence in Israel, from the tribe of Ephraim to that of Judah, as the execution of a divine purpose long before disclosed, and at the same time a just judgment on the sins committed by the people under the predominant influence of Ephraim, from the time of Joshua to that of Eli. The internal character of the psalm determines its external form, which is simple, and admits of no minute division, beyond that afforded by the historical succession of events and the logical design of the



composition, to prove that the Israelites under the ascendancy of Ephraim were similar in character to the elder generation which came out of Egypt.

1. *Maschil. By Asaph Listen, my people, to my law; incline your ear to the sayings of my mouth.* This is eminently a didactic psalm, because it teaches the true meaning of events in the history of Israel which might otherwise seem to be mere matters of curiosity. For the same reason it was necessary that it should be so designated in the title or inscription. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. xlii. 1. lii. 1. etc. The Asaph meant, as we have seen, is probably the contemporary and chief musician of David, but also an inspired psalmist. See above, on Ps. l. 1. In this verse, he invites attention, as if to something strange and unexpected. *My people*, fellow-members of the ancient church, not as individuals, however, but as an organized body. *My law*, my inspired instructions which, as such, have a binding authority and force.

2. *I will open, in a parable, my mouth; I will utter riddles from antiquity.* By a *parable* we are here to understand an analogical illustration of divine truth. An exposition of the true design and meaning of the history of Israel was in this sense a *mashal* or parable. *Riddles*, enigmas, not the events themselves, but their latent import, which escaped a merely superficial observation. See above, on Ps. xlix. 5 (4.) *Of old*, or from antiquity, i. e. belonging to the early period of our national existence. *Utter*, literally, pour forth, cause to flow or gush. See above, on Ps. xix. 3 (2.)

3. *Which we have heard, and have known them, and our fathers recounted to us.* Here, as often elsewhere, the knowledge of God's ancient dealings with his people is ascribed to that national tradition, which they were not only suffered but required to cherish

and perpetuate (Ex. xii. 14. Deut. vi. 20), but which was not at all exclusive of a written and authoritative record.

4. *We will not hide (them) from their sons, to an after generation recounting the praises of Jehovah, and his strength, and his wonders which he did.* The psalmist here recognises the obligation resting on the individual parent, but above all on the church as such, to continue the transmission of this knowledge to the latest generations.

5. *And set up a testimony in Jacob, and a law established in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, to make them known unto their sons.* The essential idea here conveyed still is, that the traditional transmission of God's mighty deeds entered into the very end or purpose for which Israel existed as a nation.

6. *In order that the after generation might know, sons be born, arise, and tell (it) to their own sons.* This prolonged reiteration of the same thing seems intended to preclude the thought or feeling, that the things about to be recounted were mere relics of antiquity, without interest or use to the contemporary race.

7. *And might place in God their hope, and not forget the deeds of the Almighty, and his commandments might observe (or keep.)* The construction is continued from the verse preceding. The recollection thus enjoined was not a mere historical or speculative exercise, but designed to have a practical effect, to wit, that of securing obedience.

8. *And might not be as their fathers, a generation stubborn and rebellious, a generation that did not prepare its heart, and whose spirit was not true to God.* A still more specific purpose is here mentioned, to wit, that of warning by means of bad examples. The *fathers* here meant are the elder race that came out of

Egypt. The description *stubborn and rebellious* is borrowed from Deut. xxi. 18. To *prepare the heart* is to dispose or devote it to God's service. Compare 1 Sam. vii. 3. 2 Chron. xx. 33.

9. *The sons of Ephraim, armed bowmen, turned (back) in the day of battle.* The people, during the ascendancy of Ephraim, proved false to their great mission of subduing Canaan and destroying its inhabitants. This neglect is represented, in the history itself, as the source of all the national calamities that followed. As the bow among the ancients was one of the chief weapons of war, the description *armed bowmen* is equivalent to well armed soldiers, and is added to enhance the guilt and shame of those who thus betrayed their trust, in spite of every external advantage.

10. *They kept not the covenant of God, and in his law refused to walk.* They violated the condition of their national vocation, and refused to do the very thing for which they were brought out of Egypt.

11. *And forgot his deeds and his wonders which he showed them.* The second generation forgot the proofs of God's presence and power, which, in the person of their fathers, they had seen when they came out of Egypt.

12. *Before their fathers he did a wonder, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.* Wonder has here the same collective sense as in Ps. lxxvii. 12, 15 (11, 14,) *Zoan* called by the Greeks *Tanis*, was the ancient capital of Lower Egypt. See Num. xiii. 22. The *field of Zoan* was the country immediately adjacent to it.

13. *He clave the sea, and let them pass, and made the waters*

*stand as a heap.* This last expression is derived from Ex. xv. 8. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 7.

14. *And led them by the cloud by day, and all the night by light of fire.* See Ex. xiii. 21, 22. The original expression, *in the cloud*, may denote something more than instrumental agency, to wit, the personal presence of the Divine Angel in the cloud itself.

15. *He cleaves rocks in the wilderness, and gives them drink as a great deep.* This last is a hyperbolical description of an abundant flow of water in the desert. Some account for it by supposing an allusion to the flood, from the account of which (Gen. vii. 11) some of the expressions are borrowed. The verse has reference to both miraculous supplies of this kind, one in the first, and one in the last year of the error in the wilderness. See Ex. xvii. 6 Num. xx. 8.

16. *And brings out torrents from a rock, and brings down waters like the rivers.* This verse relates to the later miracle, recorded in the twentieth of Numbers.

17. *And they continued still to sin against him, to rebel against the Highest in the desert.* What ought to have been the effect of these divine interpositions, is clearly implied in this description of the actual effect. The very means which should have made them more obedient made them more rebellious. The last word in Hebrew means a desert, properly so called, a dry land, and may here be used to suggest the idea, that they foolishly and wickedly provoked God in the very situation where they were most dependent on him for protection and supplies. The extent of this dependence is implied in the use of a divine name signifying sovereignty, supremacy.



18. *And tempted God in their heart, to ask food for their soul.* To tempt God is to require unnecessary proof of what should be believed without it. Instead of trusting in his bounty to supply them, they anxiously demanded what they looked upon as necessary for their sustenance. *In their heart* describes the first conception of the sin, as distinguished from its outward commission in the next verse. *To ask*, by asking, or rather, so as to ask. Such was their impious distrust of God, that they actually asked, etc. *For their soul*, for themselves; or, for their appetite, to gratify their inordinate desire of bodily indulgence; or, for their life, as absolutely necessary to preserve it.

19. *And spake of God (and) said, Will the Almighty be able to set a table in the wilderness?* This they not only said, but said it speaking of or against God. The unreasonableness of the doubt is aggravated by the use of a divine name which implies omnipotence. As if they had said, Can he do this who can do everything?

20. *Lo, he smote the rock, and waters flow, and streams gush out; (but) can he also give bread or provide flesh for his people?* The same thing is now proved by an appeal to what he had done. The question is reduced to an absurdity by introducing as a kind of preamble, what ought to have prevented its being asked at all. The doubters are described in these two verses as virtually reasoning thus: God is almighty; but is he able to supply our wants? He has given us water; but can he give us bread or meat?

21. *Therefore Jehovah heard and was wroth, and fire was kindled in Jacob, and also anger came up in (or against) Israel.* The first clause exemplifies a common Hebrew idiom, equivalent to saying, therefore when he heard he was angry. *Heard*, not the rumour or report of their offence, but the offence itself, which

consisted externally in speaking against God. The second verb is a reflexive form of one that means to pass out or over, and properly denotes the act of letting one's self out or giving vent to the emotions. *Fire* seems to be a figure for this same wrath, with or without allusion to material fire as a destroying agent. Compare Num. xi. 1. *Came up*, in the mind. See 2 Sam. xi. 20. Or there may be an allusion to the visible ascent of smoke and flame, as in Ps. xviii. 9 (8.)

22. *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.* Compare the terms of the history in Ex. xiv. 13. Num. xiv. 11.

23. *And he commanded the cloud above, and the doors of heaven he opened.* The connection of the sentences is correctly although freely given in the common version, *though he had commanded*, etc. *Above*, literally, *from above*, but see on Ps. l. 4. The whole verse expresses the idea of a copious supply from heaven. In the last clause there seems to be a reference to the opening of the windows of heaven at the deluge. Compare Gen. vii. 11, and see above on v. 15.

24. *And rained upon them manna to eat, and corn of heaven gave to them.* The expression *rained* is borrowed from the history, Ex. xvi. 4. The addition of the words *to eat* may have reference to the primary import of the word (מַן) *manna* as an interrogative or indefinite pronoun, meaning *what* or *somewhat*, so that the words here might also bear the sense of *something to eat*. See Ex. xvi. 15, 31. It is called *corn of heaven* as a miraculous substitute for bread, and also in allusion to its granular form and appearance, Ex. xvi. 31.

25. *Bread of the mighty (ones) did (each) man eat ; victual he sent them to the full.* The first Hebrew word, as appears from the

preceding verse, is used in its specific sense of *bread*, and not in the generic one of *food*, which is otherwise expressed in v. 20. Some explain *bread of the mighty* to mean delicate or costly bread, like that used by the rich and noble. But to these the epithet is nowhere else applied, as a similar one is to the angels in Ps. ciii. 20, a circumstance which favours the old explanation given in the Targum and the Septuagint, according to which manna is called *angels' bread*, not as being their food, but as coming from the place where they reside. *Man* is not used generically in antithesis to angels, which would have required another Hebrew word (מִן), but distributively in the sense of *every one*, as it is in the history of this very miracle, Ex. xvi. 16. The idea then is that enough was sent for all without exception. The word translated *victual* denotes specially provision for a march or journey. See Ex. xii. 39. *To the full*, or *to satiety*, enough and more than enough to satisfy the appetite of every individual; another expression borrowed from the history. See Ex. xvi. 3.

26. *He rouses an east-wind in the heavens, and guides by his power a south-wind.* The first verb is a causative of that used in Num. xi. 31, which strictly means to strike a tent or break up an encampment, and then to set out upon a march or journey, but is there applied to the sudden rise of a particular wind. The east and south are here named as the points from which the strongest winds were known to blow in that part of the world. The history itself contains no such specification. *Guides*, directs it in the course required for his purpose.

27. *And he rained upon them, like dust, flesh, and like the sand of seas, winged fowl (or birds of wing.)* Here, as in the miracle of water, two miraculous supplies of flesh are brought together. See Ex. xvi. 13. Num. xi. 31, 32. To these too is transferred the figure of rain, which in the history is applied only to the manna.

28. *And let it fall in the midst of his camp, round about his dwellings.* The pronoun *his* refers to Israel as a body, and may be rendered clearer by the use of the plural *their*. Several of the terms here used are borrowed from the Mosaic narrative. See Ex. xvi. 13 Num. xi. 31.

29. *And they ate and were sated exceedingly, and (thus) their desire he brings to them.* The first clause is an amplification of the phrase *to the full* in v. 25 above. Compare the history in Num. xi. 18—20. *Their desire*, i. e. the object of it, that which they had longed for.

30. *They were not (yet) estranged from their desire; still (was) their food in their mouth.* This is merely the protasis or conditional clause of the sentence completed in the next verse. The first clause does not mean that the food had not begun to pall upon their appetite, but, as the other clause explains it, that it was still in their possession, in their very mouths, when God smote them. Compare Num. xi. 33.

31. *And the wrath of God came up among them (or against them), and slew among their fat ones, and the chosen (youths) of Israel brought low.* The form of expression in the first clause is the same as in v. 21 above. *Among their fat ones*, i. e. killed some or many of them. The parallel term, according to its etymology, means picked or chosen men, but in usage is applied to young men in their full strength and the flower of their age, and therefore fit for military service. Thus the youngest and strongest are described as unable to resist the exhibition of God's wrath against his people.

32. *For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wonders.* Notwithstanding all these favours and extraordinary interpositions, the generation that came out of Egypt still persisted in



their evil courses. The last clause does not charge them with denying the reality of the wonders which they witnessed, but with refusing to trust God on the strength of them. This appears from the history itself, Num. xiv. 11, to which there is obvious allusion.

33. *And (therefore) he wasted in vanity their days and their years in terror.* As the preceding verse relates to the refusal of the people to go up against the Canaanites in the first year of the exodus, so this relates to the forty years of error in the wilderness, by which that refusal was at once indulged and punished. The fruitless monotony of their existence during this long period, and their constant apprehension of some outbreak of divine wrath, are expressed here by the words translated *vanity* and *terror*. The meaning of the verb is that he suffered or caused their years to be thus unprofitably and miserably spent. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 19.

34. *If he slew them, then they sought him, and returned and inquired early after God.* Whenever, during this long interval, he punished them with more than usual severity, a temporary and apparent reformation was the immediate consequence. The verb in the last clause denotes eager and importunate solicitation. See above, on Ps. xliii. 2 (1.)

35. *And remembered that God (was) their Rock, and the Mighty, the Most High, their Redeemer.* It was only at these times of peculiar suffering that the people, as a body, called to mind their national relation to Jehovah, as their founder, their protector, and their refuge. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2), and compare Deut. xxxii. 4, 15, 18, 31.

36. *And (yet) they deceived him with their mouth, and with their tongue they lie to him.* Even these apparent reformations

only led to hypocritical professions. The verb in the first clause does not describe the effect but the intention. It may therefore be translated *flattered*, although this is not the strict sense of the Hebrew word.

37. *And their heart was not fixed (or constant) with him, and they were not true to (or faithful in) his covenant.* Their obedience was capricious and imperfect, and proceeded from no settled principle or genuine devotion to his service. They were false to the very end for which they existed as a nation. For the meaning of a *fixed* or *settled heart*, see above, on Ps. li. 12 (10), and compare Ps. lvii. 8 (7.)

38. *And he, the Merciful, forgives iniquity, and does not (utterly) destroy; and he often withdrew his anger, and would not arouse all his wrath.* The first clause relates rather to God's attributes, or to his method of proceeding in the general, than to his proceeding in this particular case, which is not brought forward till the last clause. There is obvious allusion to the description of God's mercy in Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. *Forgives* is a very inadequate translation of the Hebrew word, which necessarily suggests the idea of expiation as the ground of pardon. *Often withdrew*, literally, multiplied to withdraw his wrath, or cause it to return without accomplishing its object.

39. *And he remembered that they (were but) flesh, a breath departing and returning not.* Here as elsewhere the frailty and infirmity of man is assigned as a ground of the divine forbearance. Compare Ps. ciii. 14—16. *Flesh*, a common scriptural expression for humanity or human nature, as distinguished from superior beings, and especially from God. See above, on Ps. lvi. 5 (4), and compare Gen. vi. 3. Isai. xxxi. 3. The idea of fragility and brief duration is expressed still more strongly by the exquisite figure in the last clause. The melancholy thought with which it

closes is rendered still more emphatic in Hebrew by the position of the verb and the irregular construction of the sentence, *a breath going and it shall not return*.

40. *How oft do they resist him in the wilderness (and) grieve him in the desert !* Many particular occurrences are summed up in this pregnant exclamation. The future form of the verbs seems to have reference to the ideal situation of the writer, looking forward in imagination to the error as still future, and saying as Moses might have said, if gifted with prophetic foresight of the sins of Israel, Notwithstanding all these favours and these high professions, how oft will they resist his authority and rouse his wrath !

41. *And they turned and tempted God, and (on) the Holy One of Israel set a mark.* Having described the conduct of the first generation in the wilderness, the Psalmist now proceeds to show that the younger generation, after the death of Joshua (Josh. xxiv. 31), were *like their fathers* (v. 57 below.) The first verb may either have the independent meaning *turned away* or *turned back* from his service, or qualify the next verb by denoting repetition of the action ; *and they tempted again*, or *still tempted*. They tempted God by doubting his supremacy, and practically challenging him to the proof of it. See above, on v. 19. The last word in Hebrew is of doubtful meaning. Some explain it, by a Syriac analogy, and on the authority of the ancient versions, to mean *provoked* or *grieved*. In the only other place where the Hebrew word occurs (Ez. ix. 4) it means to set a mark upon a person, which some apply here, in the figurative sense of stigmatizing or insulting. A cognate verb is used by Moses (Num. xxxiv. 7, 8) to denote the act of laying off or marking out a boundary, which is probably the origin of the common version, *limited*, i. e. prescribed bounds to the power of Jehovah in their unbelief. *Holy One of Israel*, see above, on Ps. lxxi. 22.



42. *They remembered not his hand, the day that he redeemed them from distress (or from the enemy.)* The Psalmist still confounds or identifies the several generations as one aggregate or national person. The younger race remembered not the miraculous favours experienced by their predecessors. *His hand*, the exertion of his power, a favourite Mosaic figure. See particularly Ex. vii. 5. xiii. 9. Deut. vii. 8. The last clause admits of two constructions. *The day* may be in apposition with *his hand*, and a collateral object to the verb, as in the common version; or it may be an adverbial expression qualifying what precedes. 'They remembered not how his power was exerted in the day that he redeemed them from the enemy.' The essential meaning is the same in either case.

43. *(He) who set in Egypt his signs and his wonders in the field of Zoan.* The miraculous interpositions at the exodus were signs of God's presence and immediate agency. To *set* these was to hold them up to view. See above, on Ps. lxxiv. 4. The description of Egypt in the last clause is repeated from v. 12 above.

44. *And turned to blood their rivers, and their streams they can not drink.* The general statement of the preceding verse is rendered more specific by the mention of several of the plagues in detail, beginning with the first. See Ex. vii. 18—20. The word translated *rivers* is the plural of one commonly applied to the Nile, and supposed to be of Egyptian origin. It may here be understood as denoting either the natural branches of the Nile or the artificial channels by which its waters are employed in the irrigation of the country. In the last clause, by a very common trope, the writer speaks as he might have spoken at the time of the event.

45. *He sends among them (or against them) flies and they de-*



*vour them, and frogs and they destroy them.* Two of the other plagues are here added, from the narrative in Exodus ch. viii. The first noun in Hebrew was explained by the ancient writers as denoting a *mixture* of noxious animals ; but the best interpreters are now agreed that it means the Egyptian dog-fly, which Philo represents as feeding upon flesh and blood.

46. *And he gave (up) to the caterpillar their produce, and their labour to the locust.* Both the animal names in this verse are really designations of the locust, one meaning the *devourer*, and the other denoting the vast numbers of that insect. *Their labour*, i. e. its effect or fruit. Compare the narrative in Ex. x. 12—19.

47. *He kills with hail their vine and their sycamores with frost.* The destruction of the vines is not mentioned in the history (Ex. ix. 23—32), though it is in Ps. cv. 33. It has even been denied that the culture of the vine was known in ancient Egypt ; but the fact has been fully established by modern investigation and discovery. The last word of the sentence occurs nowhere else. Some of the moderns explain it, from an Arabic analogy, to mean an *ant* ; but the parallelism favours the usual interpretation which is derived from the ancient versions.

48. *And delivered their cattle to the hail and their herds to the flames.* The Hebrew verb strictly means *shut up*, and occurs elsewhere in the combination to *shut up in the hand*, i. e. abandon to the power, of another. See above, on Ps. xxxi. 9 (8), and compare 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. Here, as in Deut. xxxii. 30, the verb is used absolutely in the sense of the whole phrase. The word translated *flames* occurs above in Ps. lxxvi. 4 (3), and is here a poetical description of the lightning. The common version (*hot thunderbolts*) is striking and poetical, but perhaps too strong. This verse does not relate to a distinct plague, but to the effects

of the hail-storm upon animals, as its effect upon plants was described in the preceding verse.

49. *He sends upon them the heat of his anger, wrath and indignation and anguish, a mission of angels of evil.* Before mentioning the last and greatest plague of all, he accumulates expressions to describe it as the effect of the divine displeasure. The slaughter of the first-born is ascribed in the history itself to a *destroyer* or destroying angel (Ex. xii. 23. Heb. xi. 28), which may be a collective as it seems to be in 1 Sam. xiii. 17, or denote the commander of a destroying host (Josh. v. 15,) here called *a mission* or *commission of angels*. The destroying angel reappears in the history of David (2 Sam. xxiv. 16) and of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 35.) The original construction in the case before us is peculiar, *angels of evil (ones).* This cannot mean *evil angels*, in the sense of fallen spirits, who are not described in the Old Testament as the executioners of God's decrees. The best explanation is perhaps to take the plural *evils* in an abstract sense, *angels of evil*, not moral but physical, i. e. authors of suffering or destruction.

50. *He levels a path for his anger; and he did not withhold from death their soul, and their life to the plague gave up.* For the meaning of the first verb, see above, on Ps. lviii. 3 (2.) The meaning of the figure seems to be, that he removes all hinderance to his anger and allows it free scope. Not content with having smitten their possessions and their persons, he now extends his stroke to their lives. The word translated *life* more usually means an *animal* or *animals* collectively. See above, on Ps. lxviii. 11, 31 (10, 30.) lxxiv. 19. If we retain this meaning here, the verse may be referred to the death of the Egyptian cattle by the murrain (Ex. ix. 1—7.) But the parallelism and the context rather favour the translation *life*, and the reference of the passage to the death of the first-born, which was probably oc-

casioned by a pestilence (Ex. ix. 15) and is expressly mentioned in the next verse.

51. *And smote all the first-born in Egypt, the first-fruits of strength in the tents of Ham.* Compare the narrative in Ex. xii. 29, 30. The poetical description of the first-born in the last clause is derived from Gen. xlix. 3 (compare Deut. xxi. 17), and that of Egypt from Gen. x. 6.

52. *And brought out, like sheep, his people, and led them, like a flock, in the wilderness.* For the precise meaning of the first verb, see above, on v. 26, and compare Ex. xii. 37. xv. 22. The guidance in the wilderness includes that on both sides of the Red Sea, as appears from Ex. xii. 37.

53. *And guided them in safety, and they did not fear, and their enemies the sea covered.* They did not fear, because he removed all ground of apprehension. This was especially the case at the passage of the Red Sea, Ex. xv. 19, to which there is clearly a particular allusion.

54. *And brought them to his holy border, this mountain (which) his right hand won.* The bound or border of his holiness, the frontier of the land which he had set apart as holy. *This mountain* may, agreeably to Hebrew usage, mean this hilly country, as it does in Deut. iii. 25. But there is no doubt a particular reference to Mount Zion, in the wide sense, as the central point of the theocracy, designated as such long before the conquest of Canaan. See Gen. xxii. 14, and compare Ex. xv. 13, 17. *His right hand*, the exertion of his strength. *Won*, purchased, not in the restricted modern sense of buying, but in the old and wide sense of acquiring.

55. *And drove out before them nations, and assigned them by*



*measure* (as) *a heritage*, and *caused to dwell in their tents the tribes of Israel*. *Before them*, literally, from their face or presence. *Nations*, whole nations, not mere armies, much less individuals. *Assigned them*, literally, made them fall, by lot or otherwise, a common expression for the distribution and allotment of the land. See Num. xxxiv. 2. The pronoun (*them*) refers to the nations, put for their possessions, and especially their territory. The word translated *measure* means primarily a measuring line, but then the portion of land measured. Hence we may also read, *assigned them as (or for) a hereditary portion*. In the last clause, *their tents* means of course those of the Canaanites, not of the Israelites themselves, which would make the clause unmeaning.

56. *And they tempted and resisted God, Most High, and his testimonies did not keep*. Having brought down the narrative of God's dealings with the older race to the conquest of Canaan, the Psalmist now resumes his charge (against the following generations) of being no better than their fathers. To *tempt* God and *resist* him, or *rebel* against him, has the same sense as in vs. 18, 40. The divine title (עֶלְיוֹן) suggests that their rebellion was against the highest and the most legitimate of all authority. *His testimonies* against sin, contained in his commandments; hence the use of the verb *keep*. The form of expression, in both clauses of this verse, is borrowed from Deut. vi. 16, 17.

57. *And revolted and dealt falsely like their fathers; they were turned like a deceitful bow*. He here resumes the thread dropped at v. 8, for the purpose of relating what *their fathers* did and were, i. e. the older generation who came out of Egypt. Having shown this at great length, he now reiterates the charge that their descendants, after the days of Joshua, were no better, and proceeds to prove it. The first clause describes them both as rebels and traitors. *They were turned*, i. e., as some suppose, turned aside, swerved or twisted in the archer's hand, so as to give a wrong di-



rection to the arrow. Others understand it to mean, *they were converted* (or *became*) *like a deceitful bow*, i. e. one which deceives the expectation, and fails to accomplish the design for which it is employed. By a similar trope, falsehood or lying is ascribed to waters which are not perennial, but fail precisely when most needed. See Isai. lviii. 11. Job vi. 15. The figure of *a deceitful bow* is borrowed from this passage by Hosea (vii. 16.)

58. *And made him angry with their heights, and with their idols made him jealous.* Here, for the first time, idolatry is mentioned as the great national sin of Israel after the death of Joshua and the contemporary elders. This sin is intimately connected with the one described in v. 9, since the failure to exterminate the Canaanites and gain complete possession of the country, with its necessary consequence, the continued residence of gross idolaters in the midst of Israel, could not fail to expose the chosen people to perpetual temptation, and afford occasion to their worst defections. In the last clause, *graven images* are put for the whole class of idols or created gods, of whom the true God must be jealous as his rivals, as well as indignant at the heights or high-places, the hill-tops where these false gods were most usually worshipped. The whole form of expression is Mosaic. See Deut. xxxii. 16, 21, and compare Ex. xx. 5.

59. *God heard and was indignant, and rejected Israel exceedingly.* The same sin is followed by the same retribution as in v. 21. *Abhorred* is an inadequate translation of the last verb, which denotes not merely an internal feeling, but the outward exhibition of it. It means not merely to abhor, but to reject with abhorrence. See above, on Ps. xv. 4. The addition of the intensive adverb, *very* or *exceedingly*, serves at the same time to enhance and to restrict the meaning of the verb which it qualifies. He abhorred them, not a little but exceedingly, and as a token of his doing so, rejected them, exceedingly, yet not utterly or altogether.

As there is nothing to restrict the application of this statement, we must understand it in its widest sense, as meaning that the whole people was regarded with displeasure, and punished on account of its transgressions during the ascendancy of Ephraim.

60. *And forsook the dwelling-place of Shilo, the tent (which) he caused to dwell among men.* The punishment of Ephraim, not as the sole offender, but as the unfaithful leader of the chosen people, consisted in the transfer of the sanctuary, and the manifested presence of God in it, to the tribe which was intended from the first to have that honour (Gen. xlix. 10), but whose rights had been held in abeyance during the experimental chieftainship of Ephraim. The ark, after it was taken by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 17), never returned to Shiloh, but was deposited successively at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 2) and at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4), until David pitched a tabernacle for it on Mount Zion (2 Chron. xv. 1.) See above, on Ps. xxiv. 1. *Caused to dwell* is an expression used in the very same connection in the history. See Josh. xviii. 1, and compare Deut. xii. 11, where the sanctuary is described as the place in which God caused his name to dwell. *Among men* implies that this was his only earthly residence, and hints at the true meaning of the sanctuary, as propounded in the Law (Ex. xxv. 8.)

61. *And gave up to captivity his strength, and his beauty into the foeman's hand.* This is a still more distinct allusion to the capture of the ark by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 17.) The pronouns admit of two constructions, as they may be referred either to God or Israel. In the former case, the ark is called his strength, because it was the symbol of his saving presence and a pledge for the exertion of his power to protect and save his people. It is called his beauty or honour, as it marked the place where God was pleased to manifest his glory. At the same time it was Israel's strength, because it was considered as ensuring the divine

protection (1 Sam. iv. 3), and his glory, because the possession of this symbol was his highest honour (1 Sam. iv. 21.) Both these senses are so perfectly appropriate, that it is not easy to choose either, to the entire exclusion of the other.

62. *And abandoned to the sword his people, and at his heritage was wroth.* For the meaning of the first verb, see above on v. 48, and for that of the second, on v. 21. *To the sword*, to defeat and destruction in war, with particular reference to 1 Sam. iv. 10. The severity of these judgments is enhanced by their having been inflicted on *his people* and *his heritage*.

63. *His youths (or chosen ones) the fire devoured, and his maidens were not praised.* This may either mean that they attracted no attention on account of public troubles, or that they were not praised in nuptial songs, implying what is expressed in the text of the English Bible, to wit, that they *were not given to marriage*. The *fire* may be a figure for destructive war, as in Num. xxi. 28. The pronoun (*his*) refers to Israel as a whole or an ideal person.

64. *His priests by the sword fell, and his widows weep not.* The priests are particularly mentioned because, at the time specially referred to, the chief magistracy was vested in a sacerdotal family, and because Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were among the first victims of the great calamity in question. See 1 Sam. iv. 11, 17. In the last clause there seems to be allusion to the death of Phinehas' wife, whose sorrow for her husband and herself was lost in sorrow for the departing glory of Israel (1 Sam. iv. 21.) In a wider sense, the words may represent the whole class of Israelitish widows as not weeping for their husbands, either because they were engrossed by their own perils and personal sufferings, or, as some interpreters suppose, because the bodies of the slain were absent, and there could not therefore be a formal mourning



accordance with the oriental usage. The last words of this verse are copied in Job xxvii. 15.

65. *Then awoke, as a sleeper, the Lord, as a hero rejoicing from wine.* His apparent connivance or indifference to what was passing was abruptly exchanged for new and terrible activity. *The Lord*, the sole and rightful sovereign, both of men in general and of Israel in particular. *A hero*, mighty man, or warrior. See above, on Ps. xiv. 8. *From wine* is not to be construed with *awoke* or *awakes* understood, but with *rejoicing*, exhilarated, cheered by wine.

66. *And he struck his foes back (and) disgrace of eternity gave them.* The idea of driving his assailants back, repelling or repulsing them, is worthier in itself and better suited to the context than the one expressed in the English Bible. *Perpetual dishonour* was in fact the doom of the Philistines from the time of the events in question. The successes particularly meant are those of Saul and David. *Gave them, or to them*, as their portion.

67. *And rejected the tent of Joseph, and the tribe of Ephraim did not choose.* This is the completion and specification of the statement in v. 60. Even after the punishment of Israel, as a whole, had ceased, Ephraim, though still a member of the chosen people, was deprived of the ascendancy, of which he had proved himself unworthy, and by means of which he had betrayed the whole race into grievous sin. The *tent* or house of Joseph (the progenitor of Ephraim) is particularly mentioned, because the honour taken from that family was the honour of God's dwelling in the midst of them. The last clause might be rendered, *and the tribe of Ephraim no (longer) chose*. But the original contains a simple negative without qualification; and according to the scriptural account, Ephraim never was the chosen tribe, but only allowed to act as such, for a particular purpose, just as the experi-



mental reign of Saul afterwards preceded the commencement of the true theocratical monarchy in David.

68. *And chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved.* He now assigned the visible pre-eminence to Judah, who had long enjoyed it in the divine purpose (Gen. xlix. 10.) Zion is mentioned as the capital of Judah, the place of the sanctuary, and the seat of the theocratic monarchy. The name, as usual in this book, does not signify the single eminence so called, but the entire height on which Jerusalem was built.

69. *And built like high (places) his sanctuary, like the earth (which) he founded forever.* Some give the adjective in the first clause the abstract sense of *heights*, which it never has in usage. Others supply *heavens*, but the construction most agreeable to usage is that which supplies *hills* or *mountains*. The sanctuary is then described as being, not externally but spiritually, lofty as mountains and enduring as the earth.

70. *And chose David (as) his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds.* Having spoken of the tribe and the particular locality preferred to Ephraim and Shiloh, he now brings into view the personal instrument or agent, by whom it pleased God that the theocratic kingdom should be founded. He did not choose David because he was his servant, i. e. a good man, but to be his servant, in the same pregnant and emphatic sense in which the title is applied to him in Ps. xviii. 1. The sovereignty of the choice is indicated by the humble occupation and condition from which he was promoted.

71. *From behind the suckling (ewes) he brought him, to feed Jacob his people and Israel his heritage.* From behind them, i. e. from following and watching them with tender care, one of the chief duties of a shepherd. The next word in Hebrew is a participle,

and means, nursing, giving suck. The sense is incorrectly given in the common version of this place, and ambiguously in that of Isai xl. 11. *To feed* expresses only one part of the meaning of the Hebrew verb, which signifies to do the work or exercise the office of a shepherd. See above, on Ps. xlix. 14 (13.) The contrast presented is, that he who had spent his youth in tending sheep was now to be the shepherd of a nation, nay of the chosen people, of the church, the heritage of God himself. To this passage, and those portions of the history on which it is founded (2 Sam. vii. 8. 1 Chron. xi. 2), may be traced the constant use of pastoral images, in the later Scriptures, to express the relation which subsists between the Church and Christ, as its Chief Shepherd, and his faithful ministers as his representatives and deputies.

72. *And he has fed them after his integrity of heart, and in the skill (or prudence) of his hands will lead them (still.)* This is no sudden interruption of the psalm, but the conclusion to which all was tending from the first. At the same time it implies that when the psalm was written David was still reigning and expected to reign longer. Besides the divine attestation here afforded to his theocratical fidelity, the verse may be regarded as a beautiful tribute to the good and great King from his chief musician and fellow seer. *To lead*, in the last clause, is to lead or tend a flock, and, with the parallel term *feed*, makes up the full description of a shepherd.

## P S A L M L X X I X .

THIS psalm belongs to the same period with Ps. lxxiv, perhaps that of the Babylonish conquest, and contains a description of the sufferings of the chosen people, vs. 1—4, a prayer for deliverance, vs. 5—12, and a promise of thanksgiving, v. 13.

1. *A Psalm. By Asaph. Oh God, gentiles have come into thy heritage; they have defiled thy holy temple; they have turned Jerusalem to heaps.* The intrusion of heathen into the sanctuary was its worst dishonour. They have placed Jerusalem for heaps, or as a heap of ruins. This includes the destruction of the temple. Compare Ps. lxxiv. 4.

2. *They have given the corpse of thy servants (as) food to the bird of the heavens, the flesh of thy saints to the (wild) beast of the earth.* A common description of extensive and promiscuous carnage. The words translated *corpse*, *bird*, *beast*, are all collectives. The last has here its most specific and distinctive sense as denoting beasts of prey. See above, on Ps. lxviii. 11 (10.) lxxiv. 19.

3. *They have shed their blood like water round about Jerusalem, and there is none burying,* or none to bury them. There is no period in the history of ancient Israel, to which these terms can

be applied without extravagance, except that of the Babylonian conquest.

4. *We have been (or become) a contempt to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to those round about us.* See above, on Ps. xlv. 14 (13), where the very same expressions are employed.

5. *Unto what (point), until when, how long, Jehovah, wilt thou be angry forever, will burn like fire thy zeal (or jealousy?)* With the first clause compare Ps. xiii. 2 (1.) lxxiv. 1, 10; with the second, Ex. xx. 5. Deut. xxix. 19 (20.) Ps. lxxviii. 58.

6. *Pour out thy wrath against the nations which have not known thee, and upon kingdoms which thy name have not invoked.* This is commonly explained as a prayer for divine judgments on the nations which combined for the destruction of Judah (2 Kings xxiv. 2). But it seems to be rather an expostulation and complaint that God had made no difference between his own people and the heathen. As if he had said, If thou must pour out thy wrath, let it rather be on those who neither know nor worship thee than on thine own peculiar people.

7. *For he hath devoured Jacob, and his dwelling (or his pasture-ground) they have laid waste.* The singular verb in the first clause relates to the chief enemy, the plural in the last to his confederates. The wide sense of *dwelling* and the narrower one of *pasture* are both authorized by usage. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 2. lxxv. 13 (12.) lxxiv. 20.

8. *Remember not against us the iniquities of former (generations); make haste, let thy compassions meet us, for we are reduced exceedingly.* Against us, literally, as to us, respecting us, which, in this connection, must mean to our disadvantage or our condemnation. *Former iniquities* is scarcely a grammatical construction



of the Hebrew words usually so translated. The adjective, when absolutely used, always refers to persons and means ancestors or ancients. Personal and hereditary guilt are not exclusive but augmentative of one another. The sons merely fill up the iniquities of their fathers. The verb *hasten* (בָּהֵר) may be either imperative or infinitive. If the latter, it qualifies the following verb, as in the English version, *let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us*. For the meaning of this last verb, see above, on Ps. xxi. 4 (3.) *Reduced*, weakened, brought low, both in strength and condition. See above, on Ps. xl. 2 (1), where the cognate adjective is used. It was probably the verse before us that determined the position of this psalm, in close connection with Ps. lxxviii, the great theme of which is the iniquity of former generations.

9. *Help us, oh God of our salvation, on account of the glory of thy name; and set us free and pardon our sins for the sake of thy (own) name.* The title, *God of our salvation*, is expressive of a covenant obligation to protect his people, as well as of protection and deliverance experienced already. *On account*, literally, *for the word*, or as we say in English *for the sake*, which is used above, however, to translate a different Hebrew word. *The glory of thy name*, to maintain and vindicate the honour of thy attributes as heretofore revealed in act. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) xxiii. 3. *Set us free*, deliver us, from our present sufferings and the power of our enemies. *Pardon our sins*, literally, make atonement for them, i. e. forgive them for the sake of the expiation which thou hast thyself provided. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 38. It is characteristic of the ancient saints to ask God's favour, not for their own sake merely, but for the promotion of his glory.

10. *Wherefore should the nations say, Where (is) their God? Known among the nations, in our sight, be the avenging of the*

*blood of thy servants, the (blood) poured out (or shed)*, as was described above, in v. 3. This argument in favour of God's interposition, founded on the false conclusions which his enemies would draw from his refusal, is of frequent occurrence in the Pentateuch. See Ex. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 13—16. Deut. ix. 28, and compare Joel ii. 17, from which the words before us are directly borrowed. *Where is their God*, the invisible, spiritual being whom they worship, but who cannot save them from external dangers? Or the meaning may be, where is the proof of that almighty power, and that love for his own people, of which they have so often and so loudly boasted? The English Bible makes the verb in the second clause agree with God (*let him be known*), and supplies a preposition before vengeance (*by the revenging*.) But the ancient versions, followed by the Prayer Book and the best modern interpreters, construe the verb and noun together (*known be the avenging*.) The diversity of gender may be easily reduced to the general law of Hebrew syntax, that when the verb precedes its subject, and especially when separated from it, the former may assume the masculine form, not as such, but as the primitive and simplest form. *In our sight*, literally, *to our eyes*, just as we say in English *to our faces*. This aggravating circumstance is borrowed from Deut. vi. 22, and the idea of avenging blood from Deut. xxxii. 43.

11. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee, according to the greatness of thine arm, suffer to survive the sons of death* (or of mortality.) The nation is here viewed as an individual captive, not without reference to the literal captivity and exile occasioned by the Babylonian conquest, and with evident historical allusion to the bondage of Israel in Egypt, from the account of which (Ex. ii. 23—25) some of the expressions here are borrowed. *Come before thee*, reach thee, and attract thy notice. Compare the opposite expression in Isai. i. 23. The *arm*, as usual, is the symbol of exerted strength. See above, on Ps. x. 15. xxxvii. 17. xliv.

4 (3.) The whole phrase is a Mosaic one. See Ex. xv. 16, and compare Num. xiv. 19. Deut. iii. 24. The last verb in the sentence means to *leave behind* or *over*, to cause or suffer to remain. See Ex. x. 15. xii. 10. Isai. i. 9. The last noun in Hebrew occurs only here, but is an obvious derivative from (מָוֶת) *death*, bearing perhaps the same relation to it that *mortalitas* sustains to *mors*. According to a well known oriental idiom, the whole phrase denotes *dying men*, or those about to die, or more specifically, those condemned or doomed to death.

12. *And render to our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their contempt (with) which they have contemned thee, Lord!* The first verb is a causative and means to bring back or cause to return. See above, on Ps. lxxii. 10. The neighbours are those mentioned in v. 4, and the allusion here at least includes the expression of contemptuous incredulity in v. 10. *Sevenfold*, a common idiomatic term denoting frequent repetition or abundance. See above, on Ps. xii. 7 (6.) *Into the bosom*, an expression which originally seems to have had reference to the practice of carrying and holding things in the lap or the front fold of the flowing oriental dress, has in usage the accessory sense of retribution or retaliation. See my note on Isai. lxv. 6, 7, and compare Jer. xxxii. 18. Luke vi. 38. The cognate noun and verb, translated *contempt* and *contemned*, denote not the mere internal feeling, but the oral expression of it by revilings, scoffs, and insults. See above, on Ps. xlii. 11 (10.) lxix. 10 (9.) The *Lord* at the conclusion is by no means a mere expletive, but aggravates the sin of these despisers by describing it as committed against their rightful sovereign.

13. *And we, thy people and flock of thy pasture, will give thanks to thee forever, to generation and generation will we recount thy praise.* Some interpreters needlessly make two distinct propositions, *we (are) thy people (and therefore) will give thanks*, etc.



*The flock of thy pasture*, that which thou feedest, that of which thou art the shepherd. See above, on Ps. lxxiv. 1. lxxviii. 70—72. *Forever*, literally, *to eternity*. The following words, though thrown into the first clause by the masoretic interpunction, belong to the second, as appears from the parallel structure of the sentence.

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# PSALM LXXX.

THIS psalm was probably occasioned by the overthrow and deportation of the ten tribes, and expresses the feelings of the ancient church in view of that event. Besides a title or inscription, v. 1, it contains a lamentation or complaint, in reference to the strokes which had befallen Israel, vs. 2—8 (1—7); an exquisite picture of the vocation and original condition of the chosen race, under the image of a transplanted vine, vs. 9—14 (8—13); and an earnest prayer that God would again have mercy on his afflicted people, vs. 15—20 (14—19.) The structure of the psalm is very regular, deriving a strophical character from the recurrence of a burden or *refrain* in vs. 4 (3), 8 (7), 20 (19.) The disputed questions, as to the occasion and design of the composition, will be considered in the exposition of the several verses.

1. *To the Chief Musician. As to lilies. A Testimony. By Asaph. A Psalm.* The first and last of these inscriptions show that the composition was intended to be used in public worship. The preposition before *lilies* indicates the theme or subject, as in Ps. v. 1. *Lilies*, as in Ps. xlv. 1. lx. 1. lxxix. 1, probably means loveliness, delightfulness, as an attribute of the divine favour



which is here implored. *Testimony* is a term commonly applied to the divine law, as a testimony against sin, and in such cases as the present indicates the divine authority under which the Psalmist writes. See above, on Ps. lx. 1.

2. *Shepherd of Israel, give ear, leading Joseph like a flock, sitting (on) the cherubim, shine forth!* The description of Jehovah as the Shepherd of Israel is peculiarly appropriate in this connection because borrowed from Jacob's blessing upon Joseph, Gen. xlviii. 15. xlix. 24. According to some interpreters, *Joseph* is simply a poetical equivalent to *Israel*, the son being put upon a level with the father in the usage of the language, on account of his historical pre-eminence and his being the progenitor of two of the twelve tribes. According to another view, *Joseph* denotes the ten tribes as distinguished from the kingdom of Judah, which is rendered more probable by the specification of certain tribes in the next verse. On this hypothesis, the verse before us is an invocation of Jehovah, as the patron and protector, not of Judah merely but of all Israel, including the posterity of Joseph and the tribes politically allied to them. *Dwelling (between) the Cherubim*, or *sitting (enthroned upon) the Cherubim*, a token of superiority to all his creatures. See above, on Ps. xviii. 11 (10.)

3 (2.) *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh arouse thy strength and come to save us.* The first clause alludes to the encampment and march through the wilderness, in which these three tribes always went together, as the descendants of one mother (Gen. xlv. 20. Num. ii. 18—24. x. 22—24.) It has commonly been inferred from 1 Kings xii. 21, that the tribe of Benjamin adhered to the kingdom of Judah. But Hengstenberg has made it highly probable, at least, that those words relate only to the dwellers in Jerusalem and the immediately circumjacent country; that the tribe, as such, was reckoned one of the ten tribes, among which Simeon was not included, because, in fulfil-

ment of Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix. 7), they had no distinct or compact territory of their own, but certain towns within the boundary of Judah (Josh. xix. 1—9.) Hence we are told expressly and repeatedly that in the great schism after the death of Solomon, but one tribe remained faithful to the house of David (1 Kings xi. 13, 32, 36. xii. 20), i. e. one complete tribe, having a definite and independent share in the allotment of the land. That Benjamin should take part with Ephraim and Manasseh rather than with Judah, might have been expected from the near affinity and mutual affection of the sons of Rachel, and from the jealousy which must have been excited by the transfer of the crown from Saul, a Benjamite, to David, a Jew. The same thing incidentally appears from such passages as 2 Sam. xix. 21 (20), where Shimei, a Benjamite, speaks of himself as representing the whole house of Joseph. If this be admitted or assumed, the mention of Benjamin with Ephraim and Manasseh, in the verse before us, far from invalidating, seems to confirm the application of the passage to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and that of the whole psalm to their overthrow and deportation by the Assyrians. Thus understood, the verse before us is a prayer, that God would again march at the head of the "camp of Ephraim," as he did of old. *Arouse thy strength*, awake from thy present state of seeming inaction and indifference. See above, on Ps. xlv. 24 (23.) lxxviii. 65. *Come*, literally *go*, which may mean go forth, march; but see above, on Ps. xlv. 9 (8.) *To save us*, literally, *for salvation to us*.

4 (3.) *Oh God, restore us, and let thy face shine; and let us be saved!* The verb in the first clause would suggest two ideas to a Hebrew reader, both of which are here appropriate. The first is that of a literal bringing back from exile or captivity; the other that of restoration to a former state, without regard to change of place or other local circumstances. In the case before us, the general and figurative sense of restoration includes that of literal

return. The church prays to be restored to her integrity and normal state, by the redemption of the part which had gone into captivity. This prayer was substantially fulfilled in the return of many members of the ten tribes with Judah from the Babylonish exile, while the tribes themselves, as organized bodies, and the apostate kingdom which they constituted, ceased to exist. The petition, *cause thy face to shine*, i. e. look upon us with a favourable countenance, is borrowed from the sacerdotal blessing, Num. vi. 25. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.) xxxi. 17 (16.) The last verb in the verse may also be explained as an expression of strong confidence, *we shall be saved*, which really involves the subjunctive sense preferred by some interpreters, *that we may be saved*. This sentence, which is solemnly repeated at the close of vs. 4, 20 (3, 19), is thereby marked as the theme or key-note of the whole composition.

5 (4.) *Jehovah, God, (God of) Hosts, how long dost thou smoke against the prayer of thy people?* The accumulation of divine names involves an appeal to the perfections which they indicate, as so many arguments or reasons why the prayer should be favourably heard and answered. See above, on Ps. l. 1, and for the meaning of the third title, on Ps. xxiv. 10. *How long*, literally, *until when?* The verb is preterite in form (*hast thou smoked*,) implying that the state of things complained of had already long existed. *Smoke* is here (as in Ps. lxxiv. 1) put for *fire*, the common emblem of divine wrath, for the sake of an allusion to the smoke from the altar of incense, the appointed symbol of the prayers of God's people. See Lev. xvi. 13, and compare Ps. cxli. 2. Isai. vi. 4. Rev. v. 8. viii. 3, 4. There is then a tacit antithesis between the two significations of the symbol. The smoke of God's wrath, and that of his people's prayers, are presented in a kind of conflict.

6 (5.) *Thou hast made them eat tear-bread, and made them*



*drink of tears a tierce* (or *measure*.) The noun *tear* in Hebrew is commonly collective, but the singular and plural forms are here combined. See above, on Ps. vi. 7 (6.) xxxix. 13 (12.) lvi. 9 (8.) The same strong figure of tears as nourishment occurs above, Ps. xlii. 4 (3.) The last word in Hebrew means a measure which is the third of another measure, thus corresponding to the old and wide sense of the English *tierce*. See my note on Isai. xl. 12. Measure here denotes abundance.

7 (6.) *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, and our enemies amuse themselves* (at our expense.) The future verbs imply a probable continuance of this humiliating treatment unless God interpose to put an end to it, and thus suggest a reason for his doing so. *Makest us*, literally, puttest, settest up. See above, on Ps. xlv. 14 (13.) *A strife*, a subject of contention, perhaps in reference to the emulous desire of their neighbours to insult and aggravate their sufferings. Here, as in Ps. xlv. 14 (13.) lxxix. 4, these neighbours are the circumjacent nations, who always triumphed in the time of Israel's calamities (Am. i. 9, 11. Obad. 12.) The literal translation of the last words is *will mock* (or *scoff*) *for them*, i. e. for themselves, for their own gratification, and at their own discretion, as they will.

8 (7.) *Oh God, (God of) Hosts, restore us, and let thy face shine, and let us be saved!* See above, on v. 4 (3.) The only variation in the case before us is the addition of a second divine title, implying God's supremacy above the hosts of heaven, both material and spiritual, and thus indirectly urging a new argument for being heard and answered. See above, on v. 5 (4.)

9 (8.) *A vine out of Egypt thou transplantest, thou drivest out nations and plantest it.* There is a twofold usage of the first verb in Hebrew, which imparts peculiar force and beauty to the sentence. Its primary meaning, to pluck up, is strictly appropriate



to the act of transplanting, while its secondary but more usual sense of moving an encampment, marching, is equally appropriate to the removal of the nation which the vine here represents, and is actually so applied in Ps. lxxviii. 52 above, as well as in the history itself, Ex. xii. 37. xv. 22. The next verb is also used in Ps. lxxviii. 55 and Ex. xxiii. 28. xxxiii. 2. xxxiv. 11. The figure of planting occurs above, in Ps. xlv. 3 (2), that of a vine in Isai. v. 1—7. The points of comparison are probably assiduous culture, luxuriant growth, and fruitfulness. The argument involved is that by forsaking Israel God would be undoing his own work. Compare Jer. xlv. 4.

10 (9.) *Thou didst clear (the way) before it, and it took root and filled the land.* The first word means to clear by the removal of obstructions. See Gen. xxiv. 31. Lev. xiv. 36, and compare my notes on Isai. xl. 3. lvii. 14. lxii. 10. The sense may here be, *thou didst clear* (the ground), i. e. from weeds and stones (compare Isai. v. 2) *before it*, i. e. to make room for it or prepare a place for it. *Took root*, literally, *rooted its roots*, the cognate verb and noun being combined by a common Hebrew idiom. See my note on Isai. xxvii. 6.

11 (10.) *Covered were the mountains (with) its shadow, and with its branches the cedars of God.* This is an amplification and poetical exaggeration of the last words of v. 10 (9.) So completely did it fill the land that its shadow was cast upon the highest hill-tops, and its tendrils overran the loftiest trees. *Cedars of God*, i. e. in their kind the noblest products of his power, the attribute suggested by (עֵץ) the divine name here used. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 7 (6.) Some interpreters suppose the southern range of mountains west of Jordan, sometimes called *Mount Judah* or the Highlands of Judah, to be here specifically meant and contrasted with the cedars of Lebanon, the northern frontier of the Land of Promise, just as Lebanon and Kadesh are contrasted in Ps. xxix. 5—8. That Lebanon, though

not expressly mentioned, is referred to, appears probable from the analogy of Ps. xxix. 5. xcii. 13. civ. 16. The literal fact conveyed by all these figures is the one prophetically stated in Gen. xxviii. 14. Deut. xi. 24. Jos. i. 4.

12 (11.) *It sends forth its boughs to the sea, and to the river its shoots (or suckers.)* Compare the description in Isai. xvi. 8. If the north and south are indicated in the preceding verse, the other cardinal points may here be represented by the Mediterranean and the Euphrates.

13 (12.) *Why hast thou broken down its walls (or hedges), and all pluck it that pass by the way?* See below, on Ps. lxxxix. 41, 42 (40, 41), and compare Isai. v. 5. The last words are descriptive of the hostile powers of the heathen world, with particular reference to the *neighbours* of v. 6 (5.)

14 (13.) *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the beast of the field feeds upon it.* For the precise sense of the word translated *beast*, see above, on Ps. l. 11, the only other place where it occurs in such an application, being thus peculiar to the psalms which bear the name of Asaph. The essential idea conveyed by the figures of this verse is that of fierce and greedy enemies. If any more specific explanation be admissible, the wild boar may denote the Assyrian power, and the parallel term its allies and dependents. *Feeds upon it*, as a sheep upon its pasture. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 3.

15 (14.) *Oh God, (God of) Hosts, pray return, look from heaven and see, and visit this vine.* The expostulation and complaint are followed by an earnest prayer. *Pray return* is used to represent (שׁוּב) the Hebrew particle of entreaty, expressed in the English Bible by a circumlocution (*we beseech thee.*) The prayer that God will return, implies that the evils just complained

of were occasioned by his absence. *Visit*, manifest thy presence and thy favourable disposition. See above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4.) *This vine*, Israel, the church or chosen people, which, though robbed of some of its luxuriant branches, still lives and is yet to bear abundant fruit.

16 (15.) *And sustain what thy right hand has planted, and over the child thou hast reared for thyself* (do thou watch, or extend thy protection.) The common version of the first words (*and the vineyard*) is countenanced neither by the ancient versions nor by Hebrew etymology and usage. By giving it, as a verbal form, the sense of covering, protecting (which belongs to some kindred roots), the *over* in the last clause may depend upon it, and no verb need in that case be supplied. *Thy right hand* implies an exertion of strength, and at the same time involves an allusion to the name of *Benjamin* (Son of the Right Hand), here perhaps representing the whole race, on account of the connection of that tribe with both the rival kingdoms, its central position, its possession of the sanctuary, and its historical relation to the infant monarchy under Saul the Benjamite. To complete the allusion, the other element in the name (בֶּן a son) is then introduced and metaphorically applied to the vine, which is still the Psalmist's theme, by an assimilation of animal and vegetable life common in all languages. *Reared*, literally, strengthened, made strong, i. e. raised, brought up. See my note on Isai. xlv. 14. *For thyself*, not for its own sake, but as a means of promoting the divine praise and glory.

17 (16.) (It is) *burnt with fire, cut (down or up); at the rebuke of thy countenance they perish*. The prayer is interrupted for a moment by a new description of the evils which occasioned it. The first clause alludes to the destruction of vineyards by fire and steel in ancient warfare, here recognized however as a divine judgment. *At the rebuke*, i. e. at the time, and also as a conse-



quence of it. Any expression of disapprobation and displeasure, whether by word or deed, is a rebuke. See above, on Ps. lxxvi. 7 (6.) The rebuke is here supposed to be expressed in the countenance, a much more natural interpretation than that which makes *thy face* mean *thy presence*. They perish, those who had before been represented by the vine transplanted out of Egypt. The future form implies that it will always be so, when God utters his rebuke.

18 (17.) *Let thy hand be on the man of thy right hand, on the son of man thou hast reared (or made strong) for thyself.* Here again the component parts of the name *Benjamin* are introduced as parallels, precisely as in v. 16 (15.) The *man of thy right hand* may either be the man whom thy power has raised up, or the man who occupies the post of honour at thy right hand. That the words were intended to suggest both ideas, is a supposition perfectly agreeable to Hebrew usage. A more doubtful question is that in reference to the first words of the sentence, *let thy hand be upon him*, whether this means in favour or in wrath. The only way in which both senses can be reconciled is by applying the words to the Messiah, as the ground of the faith and hope expressed. Let thy hand fall not on us but on our substitute. Compare the remarkably similar expressions in Acts v. 31.

19 (18.) *And (then) we will not backslide from thee; thou wilt quicken us, and on thy name will we call.* Forgiveness founded on atonement is the best security against relapses into sin. The first verb is the one used to describe the general apostasy in Ps. liii. 4 (3.) *Quicken*, restore to life, or save alive, or simply make alive. Compare Ps. lxxi. 20. The meaning of the last clause is, *thee (alone) will we invoke*, as the object of our trust and worship, a profession involving the repudiation of all other gods.



20 (19.) *Jehovah, God, (God of) Hosts, restore us, let thy face shine, and let us be saved!* While the prayer in this verse is identical with that in v. 4 (3) and 8 (7), there is a kind of climax in the form of the address. In the first of the three places it is simply *God*, in the second *God of Hosts*, in the third and last *Jehovah God of Hosts*, as if to add to the general ideas of divinity and sovereignty those of self-existence, eternity, and covenant-relation to his chosen people, as additional warrants for the hope and prayer, that he would turn them, smile upon them, save them.

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## PSALM LXXXI.

1. *To the Chief Musician. On (or according to) the Gittith. By Asaph.* For the probable meaning of *the Gittith*, see above on Ps. viii. 1. In the absence of any proof to the contrary, the Asaph of this title must be assumed to be the contemporary of David. See above, on Ps. l. 1. The psalm before us was probably intended to be sung at the Passover, as it consists of an exhortation to praise God for the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, vs. 2—8 (1—7), a complaint of their ingratitude, vs. 9—13 (8—12), and a glowing picture of the happy effects to be expected from obedience and fidelity, vs. 14—18 (13—17.)

2 (1.) *Sing aloud unto God our strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob!* The first verb is properly a causative meaning *make* or *let rejoice*. See above, on Ps. lxxv. 9 (8), and compare Deut. xxxii. 43, in which place, and in this, it is commonly supposed to be intransitive. The parallel verb is a generic term, applied both to shouting and the sound of a trumpet. See

above, on Ps. xli. 12 (11.) xlvii. 2 (1.) *God our strength*, our strong protector and deliverer, in which character he specially revealed himself in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the main theme or subject of this psalm, and thereby proved himself to be indeed the covenant or tutelary God of Jacob.

3 (2.) *Raise the song, and beat the drum, the sweet harp with the lute (or lyre.) Beat*, literally, *give*, i. e. give forth its sound, or sound it. See above, on Ps. xlvii. 7 (6.) lxviii. 34 (33.) lxxvii. 18 (17.) This is to be understood as a mutual exhortation of the musicians to each other during the actual performance.

4 (3.) *Blow, in the month, the trumpet, at the full moon, on the day of our feast.* The month, by way of eminence, was the first month, in which the passover was celebrated (Ex. xii. 1, 2.) Here, as in the Hebrew of Lev. xxiii. 5, the month is first named, then the particular part of it. That this last was no unessential circumstance, appears from the fact, that when an extraordinary passover was kept, it was on the same day of another month (Num. ix. 9—14), and that when Jeroboam changed the feast of tabernacles, he transferred it to the same day of the eighth month (1 Kings xii. 32.) The time thus selected for religious observance seems to have been that of the full moon. Compare the original and marginal translation of Prov. vii. 20. *The day of our festival* or feast, i. e. the great day of the Passover. *Our feast*, if emphatic, is intended to describe it as a distinctive national solemnity. The continued use of instrumental music at this festival appears from 2 Chr. xxx. 21.

5 (4.) *For a law to Israel (is) this, a right (belonging) to the God of Jacob.* The observance of this festival was not a mere matter of usage or conventional arrangement, but binding on the people and due to Jehovah as their God. The personal pronoun (*it*) at the end of the first clause is emphatic, and may be better

expressed in English by a demonstrative. *A right, jus*, that to which he is rightfully entitled.

6 (5.) (As) *a testimony in Joseph he set it, in his coming out over the land of Egypt. A speech I knew not I am hearing.* Besides the constant use of *testimony* in the sense of *law*, Ps. xix. 8 (7.) lx. 1. lxxviii. 5. lxxx. 1, the word is appropriate, in its strict sense, to the Passover, as a perpetual memento or memorial of the exodus from Egypt. *Joseph* is here put for *Israel*, on account of his pre-eminence during the residence in Egypt (Gen. xlix. 26. Ex. i. 8.) *He set it*, i. e. God instituted or ordained the festival. *In his coming*, at the time, or in the very act, of his departure. *Over the land of Egypt* includes the usual expression, *from or out of it* (Ex. xxxiv. 18), but suggests the additional ideas of publicity and triumph. Israel, at the exodus, passed over a considerable tract of the Egyptian territory, and at the same time, as it were, over the heads of the humbled and terrified Egyptians. Compare Ex. xiv. 8. Num. xxxiii. 3. *Speech*, literally, *lip*, a common idiomatic expression for dialect or language. According to the version of this last clause above given, it refers to the words of God that follow, and describes the people as having then heard what they never heard before. Some interpreters, however, understand it as describing the condition of the people while in Egypt, by one of its most marked and painful circumstances, namely, that they there resided in the midst of a foreign and by implication heathen race. This agrees better with the figurative usage of *lip* elsewhere, and is strongly favoured by the analogy of Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15. Ps. cxiv. 1. Compare my note on Isai. xxxiii. 19. Thus understood, the clause may be translated, (where) *I heard a tongue I did not understand.* The future form of the first verb has reference to the actual time of the events, into which the speaker here transports himself.

7 (6.) *I removed from the burden his shoulder ; his hands from*



*the basket escape.* The first verb strictly means *I caused* (or *suffered*) *to depart*. The idea is borrowed from Ex. vi. 6, 7. The specific reference is no doubt to the carrying of bricks and mortar, and the pot or basket of the next clause is the vessel used for that purpose, the form of which has been found delineated in a burial-vault at Thebes. *Escape*, literally, pass away.

8 (7.) *In distress thou hast called and I have delivered thee; I will (yet) answer thee in the secret place of thunder; I will try thee at the waters of Strife.* The secret or hiding place of thunder is the dark cloud charged with tempest which overhung Mount Sinai at the giving of the law (Ex. xx. 18.) This is here anticipated or predicted, as well as the murmuring of the people at Meribah (Ex. xvii. Num. xx.) as a signal instance of their unbelief and disobedience. Thus understood, the verse continues the words of God himself, at the crisis of the Exodus. According to the other exegetical hypothesis already mentioned, there is here a sudden change of speaker, and the future verbs in this verse are to be explained as historical presents.

9 (8.) *Hear, my people, and I will testify against thee, Israel, if thou wilt hearken to me.* There is a strong resemblance between this verse and Ps. l. 7. The conditional particle (*if*) in the last clause is by some taken optatively, *oh that thou wouldst hearken*, or, as we might say in English, *if thou wouldst but hearken*. As examples of this usage, Ps. xcvi. 7. cxxxix. 19. Prov. xxiv. 11, are cited. Other interpreters deny its existence and regard this as an instance of aposiopesis, *if thou wilt hearken to me* (thou shalt do well,) like those in Ex. xxxii. 32. Luke xix. 42. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 13. A simpler and more natural construction than either is to make this the condition of the statement in the first clause. 'I will speak, if thou wilt hear me.'

10 (9.) *There shall not be in thee a strange God, and thou shalt not worship a foreign God.* The divine name here used is the



one denoting power. 'Thou shalt acknowledge no Almighty but the true one.' The prohibitory futures have a stronger sense than that expressed in some translations, *let there be no strange God in thee*, i. e. in the midst of thee, among you. *A strange God*, a God who is an alien to Jehovah and to Israel. *Worship*, literally bow down or prostrate thyself. *A foreign God*, a God of strangeness, or belonging to foreign parts, in other words, a heathen deity. See above, on Ps. xviii. 45, 46 (44, 45.) The specific reason here implied is that expressed in Deut. xxxii. 12. The general principle is the same that is propounded in the first commandment (Ex. xx. 3. Deut. v. 7.)

11 (10.) *I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.* The reason of the precept in the foregoing verse is now explicitly declared. *The (one) making thee ascend*, or causing thee to come up. *Open thy mouth wide*, literally, *widen it*. The supply of food is here put for that of all necessities. The reason here suggested for adhering to Jehovah is, that He not only had delivered them from Egypt, but was abundantly able to provide for them in Canaan and the wilderness.

12 (11.) *And my people did not hearken to my voice, and Israel did not consent unto me.* God having once been introduced as speaking, the description of the subsequent events is still ascribed to him. The phrase *my people* is designed to aggravate the guilt of their rebellion. *My voice* has special reference to the warning in vs. 7—11 (6—10), supposed to be uttered at the exodus from Egypt. Some interpreters, however, make the whole verse a general description. *Consent unto me*, acquiesce in my requirements and agree to do my will. The form of expression is like that in Deut. xiii. 9. (8.)

13 (12.) *And I gave them up to the corruption of their own*

*heart ; they go on in their own counsels.* The first verb strictly means *I sent them forth*, i. e. to walk in the corruption of their own heart. The word translated *corruption* occurs elsewhere only in Deut. xxix. 18, and in Jeremiah's imitations of it (Jer. iii. 17. vii. 24. ix. 13. xi. 8.) According to a Syriac analogy, and the most probable Hebrew etymology, it properly means *hardness*, corresponding to the *πρόσσις* of the New Testament (Mark vii. 5. Rom. xi. 25. Eph. iv. 18.) *In their own counsels*, in the execution of their own evil purposes and unwise plans. The verb in the last clause may be read as a concession or permission, by referring the words to an anterior point of time. 'I gave them up, etc. (saying) let them go on in their own counsels.' As to the fearful kind of retribution here denounced, see Prov. i. 30, 31. Rom. i. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

14 (13.) *If my people would (but) hearken to me (and) Israel in my ways would walk.* The conditional particle at the beginning, although not the same with that in v. 9 (8), is construed in the same way, but with a stronger optative meaning. To listen to God's teaching and commands implies a docile and obedient spirit. To walk in his ways is to act as he approves and has required.

15 (14.) *Soon would I bow down their enemies, and on their foes bring back my hand.* The first Hebrew phrase strictly means *like a little*, but is used like the English *yet a little*, i. e., in a little while. See above, on Ps. ii. 12, and compare Ps. lxxiii. 2. *To draw back the hand*, in Ps. lxxiv. 11, means to withdraw or withhold it from action ; but in this connection it conveys the opposite idea of bringing it again into action, with specific reference, as some suppose, to its use in former exigencies, v. 8 (7.) The phrase itself denotes mere action ; the idea of hostile or destructive action is suggested by the context. See my note on Isai. i. 25.

16 (15.) *The haters of Jehovah should lie to him, and their time should be forever.* The first phrase is intended to suggest the consolatory thought that the foes of God's people are the foes of God himself. There is no need, therefore, of referring *him* to *Israel* or *my people*, as in Deut. xxxiii. 29, from which the clause is borrowed. The plurals before and after render this less natural, and as the interests of God and his people are identical, the meaning is the same in either case. To *lie* is here to yield a feigned obedience to a conqueror or superior enemy. See above, on Ps. xviii. 45 (44.) lxvi. 3. *Their time*, i. e. the continued existence of Israel as the chosen people. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 24.

17 (16.) *And he would feed him with the fat of wheat, and from the rock with honey sate him.* The first verb is a causative and means *would let* (or *make*) *him eat*. The fat of wheat, its richest part or finest quality, another transfer of animal attributes to vegetable objects. See above, on Ps. lxxx. 16 (15.) Honey from the rock, some suppose to mean wild honey; others, with more probability, honey supplied by miracle, like the water from the rock in the desert. All these strong expressions are borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 13, 14, and are imitated likewise in Ps. cxlvii. 14. Isai. xxxiv. 16. Wheat and honey, by a natural and primitive association, are here put for the necessities and the luxuries of human sustenance, and these again for the highest enjoyment and prosperity. The English version refers these four verses all to past time, *had hearkened, had walked, should have subdued, should have submitted, should have endured, should have fed, should have satisfied*. This is in fact the true construction of the similar passage in Isai. xlviii. 18; but there the conditional or optative particle is construed with the preterite, and not with the future tense as here, which makes an essential difference of syntax. See Nordheimer's Hebrew Grammar, § 1078.



## P S A L M L X X X I I .

A BRIEF but pregnant statement of the responsibilities attached to the judicial office under the Mosaic dispensation. After declaring the relation which the judges bore to God, v. 1, he rebukes their malversation, v. 2, and exhorts them to a better practice, vs. 3, 4, and in case of their persistency in evil, v. 5, notwithstanding their acknowledged dignity, v. 6, threatens them with condign punishment, v. 7, to which the church responds by praying God himself to appear as the universal judge and sovereign, v. 8.

1. *A Psalm. By Asaph. God stands in the assembly of the Mighty; in the midst of the gods he judges.* There is no reason for doubting that the Asaph mentioned in this title was the Asaph of the reign of David, in whose times the necessity for such a warning must already have existed, if not in the person of the king, who, perhaps on that account, is not particularly mentioned, yet in his chiefs or nobles, the exalted though inferior magistrates who executed justice under him. The judicial appearance of Jehovah here presented is like that in Ps. l. 1. *Stands*, or, as the participle strictly means, (*is*) *standing*, stationing himself, assuming his position. The word translated *assembly* is one commonly applied to the congregation of Israel, as an organized whole or body politic. See Ex. xii. 3. xvi. 1. Lev. iv. 15. Num. xxvii. 17. *Mighty* is singular not plural in Hebrew, being one of the divine names (אל), and qualifies the congregation or

assembly as belonging to God himself, i. e. instituted by him and held under his authority. The parallel expression, *in the midst of the gods*, superadds to this idea an allusion to a singular usage of the Pentateuch, according to which the theocratical magistrates, as mere representatives of God's judicial sovereignty, are expressly called *Elohim*, the plural form of which is peculiarly well suited to this double sense or application. See Ex. xxi. 6. xxii. 7, 8 (8, 9), and compare Deut. i. 17. xix. 17. 2 Chron. xix. 6. Even reverence to old age seems to be required on this principle (Lev. xix. 32), and obedience to parents in the fifth commandment (Ex. xx. 12), which really applies to all the offices and powers of the patriarchal system, a system founded upon natural relations, and originating in a simple extension of domestic or parental government, in which the human head represents the original and universal parent or progenitor. The remarkable use of the name *God* in Exodus, above referred to, is concealed from the reader of the English Bible, by the arbitrary use of the word *judges*, as a translation of the Hebrew, which of course it cannot be. *He judges*, will judge, is about to judge. The idea is, that as the judges were gods to other men, so he would be a judge to them. Compare Isai. iii. 13—15. Micah iii. 1—4. Jer. xxii. 1—4.

2. *How long will ye judge wrong, and the faces of wicked men accept? Selah.* The question implies that they had done so long enough, nay, too long, since it was wrong from the beginning. *Wrong*, in the strongest moral sense, injustice, wickedness. *Wrong*, in Hebrew as in English, may be construed either as an adverb or a noun or both, i. e. as a noun adverbially used to qualify the verb. See the similar construction of its counterpart or converse, Ps. lviii. 2 (1.) The last clause exemplifies one of the most peculiar Hebrew idioms. The combination usually rendered *respect persons* in the English Bible, and applied to judicial partiality, means literally to *take* (or *take up*) *faces*. Some suppose this to mean the raising of the countenance, or

causing to look up from deep dejection. But the highest philological authorities are now agreed, that the primary idea is that of accepting one man's face or person rather than another's, the precise form of expression, though obscure, being probably derived from the practice of admitting suitors to confer with governors or rulers face to face, a privilege which can sometimes only be obtained by bribes, especially though not exclusively in oriental courts. The *Selah* commends the implied charge of official malversation to the serious reflection of the accused parties.

3. *Judge the weak and fatherless, (to) the sufferer and the poor do justice.* The indirect censure of their evil deeds is followed by a direct exhortation to do well. Compare Isai. i. 16, 17. The verb of the first clause is explained by that of the second, which is a technical forensic term, meaning to make innocent or righteous, i. e. to recognize or declare as such by a judicial act. See Ex. xxiii. 7. Deut. xxv. 1, and compare 2 Sam. xv. 4. Isai. 5. 23. l. 8. The word translated *weak* is applied to the defect both of bodily strength and of property or substance. See above, on Ps. xli. 2 (1.) It is used by Moses in the same connection. Ex. xxiii. 3. The fatherless or orphans are continually spoken of, as proper objects both of mercy and of justice. See above, on Ps. x. 14. lxviii. 6 (5), and compare Ex. xxii. 21 (22.) The word translated *poor* seems strictly to denote one who has grown poor or become impoverished. See the verbal root in Ps. xxxiv. 11 (10.)

4. *Deliver the weak and the needy (man), from the hand of wicked (men) free (him.)* The first verb means originally to suffer or cause to escape ; the second to extricate or disembarass. *From the hand* of the wicked implies from their power, as actually exercised for coercion. The structure of the sentence may be made more regular by disregarding the pause-accent and attaching *the needy*



to the last clause, *and the poor from the hand of the wicked set free.*

5. *They know not and they will not understand ; in darkness they will (still) walk ; shaken are all the foundations of earth.* This is the Lord's complaint of their incorrigible ignorance and indocility, which rendered even his divine instructions unavailing. The object of the first verbs is suggested by the context, as in Ps. xiv. 4. What they did not know and would not understand was their judicial duty and responsibility, the end for which they were invested with authority. *Darkness* is a figure both for ignorance and wickedness. See Prov. ii. 13. The denial or perversion of justice is described as disorganizing society. Compare the figures in Ps. xi. 3. lxxv. 4 (3.)

6. *I have said, Gods (are) ye, and sons of the Highest all of you.* Their sin did not consist in arrogating to themselves too high a dignity, but in abusing it by malversation, and imagining that it relieved them from responsibility, whereas it really enhanced it. They were God's representatives, but for that very reason they were bound to be pre-eminently just and faithful. *I have said*, not merely to myself or in secret, but in my law ; referring to the passages in Exodus already cited. See above, on v. 1. *Ye are gods*, or *God*, i. e. ye occupy his place and are entrusted with his honour as a just and holy God. The pregnant significancy of the plural form is here the same as in v. 1 above. The parallel expression, *sons of the Most High*, denotes the closest and most intimate relation to Jehovah, as the Supreme or Sovereign God. See above, on Ps. ii. 7. This verse is cited by our Lord (John x. 34, 35), to show that if the divine name had been applied by God to mere men, there could be neither blasphemy nor folly in its application to the incarnate Son of God himself.\*

7. (Yet) *verily like mankind shall ye die, and like one of the*

*princes shall ye fall.* Our idiom requires an adversative particle at the beginning, to bring out the antithetical relation of the sentences. But the first word in Hebrew is properly a particle of strong asseveration, *certainly, assuredly*. See above, on Ps. xxxi. 23 (22.) and compare my note on Isai. liii. 4. *Like mankind*, or *men* collectively, or like *a man* indefinitely, i. e. any other man. So in the other clause, *like one of the princes*, i. e. any other prince, or person holding an exalted station. The clauses constitute a climax. The first merely describes them as sharers in the general mortality of man. The second threatens them with death, i. e. violent or untimely death, as a special punishment. *Ye shall fall*, by the sword (Jer. xxxix. 18,) or in some analogous manner. The verb is often absolutely used in this way to denote a violent and penal loss of life. See above, Ps. xx. 9, (8,) and below, Ps. xci. 7, and compare Ex. xix. 21, Jer. viii. 12. The general meaning of this verse, when taken in connection with the one before it, is that notwithstanding their exalted dignity, bestowed and recognized by God himself, they were not thereby exempted from the common mortality of men, nor even from those signal and destructive strokes, with which God often visits men as highly favored and exalted as themselves.

8. *Arise, oh God, judge the earth; for thou art to possess all nations.* This is not, as some interpreters suppose, a mere wish that God would do what he had just threatened; for this would make the psalm end with a feeble anti-climax. It is rather a petition that, since the representative or delegated judges had proved so unfaithful, God would appear in person and reclaim the powers which had been so wickedly abused. And this he is besought to do, not only in Israel, where the proximate occasion of the prayer was furnished, but throughout the earth, over all whose nations he possessed, and was one day to make good, the same hereditary right, i. e. a right continuing unchanged through all successive generations.

## PSALM LXXXIII.

1. *A Song. A Psalm. By Asaph.* To the general description (*mizmôr*), there is here prefixed a more specific one (*shîr*), which designates the composition as a song of praise or triumph. The same combination occurs above, in the title of Ps. xlviii, a composition which, as we have there seen, was probably occasioned by the victory of Jehoshaphat over the Moabites, Ammonites, and their confederates, as described in 2 Chr. ch. xx. This agrees well with the hypothesis, conclusively maintained by Hengstenberg, that the psalm before us has relation to the same event, and that as the forty-seventh was probably sung upon the field of battle, and the forty-eighth after the triumphant return to Jerusalem, so the eighty-third was composed in confident anticipation of the victory. The points of agreement with the history will be indicated in the exposition of the several verses. After a general petition for divine help, v. 2 (1), follows a description of the violence, craft, destructive purpose, and extensive combination of the enemies of Judah, vs. 3—9 (2—8), and then an earnest prayer for the renewal of God's ancient deeds in similar emergencies, vs. 10—15 (9—14), with a view to the promotion of his glory in the destruction of his irreconcilable enemies, vs. 16—19 (15—18.) According to the view of the historical occasion above given, the *Asaph* of the title must denote some descendant of the ancient seer, as it seems to do in several of the preceding psalms. Now it happens, by a singular coincidence, that in the history



(2 Chr. xx. 14), such a descendant is particularly mentioned, Jahaziel, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord came in the midst of the assembly, and prompted him to take a leading part in the preliminary movements which resulted in the triumph of Judah (ib. vs. 15—18.) Compare the similar coincidence in reference to the Sons of Korah, as the authors of Ps. 48, vol. 1. p. 400.

2 (1.) *Oh God, be not silent, hold not thy peace, and be not still, oh Mighty (One) !* This is a general introductory petition, that God would not remain inactive and indifferent to the dangers which environed his own people. The peculiar form of expression in the first clause, *let there not (be) silence to thee*, is copied by Isaiah (lxii. 6, 7.) The next phrase is one that has occurred repeatedly before. See Ps. xxviii. 1. xxxv. 22. xxxix. 13 (12.) The third petition, *be not still or quiet, rest not*, has the same relation to act that the others have to word or speech. The use of this divine name (יְהוָה) involves an appeal to God's omnipotence, as furnishing a reason for his interference. Why should He who is Almighty remain silent and inactive, when his people are in danger and his enemies apparently triumphant ?

3 (2.) *For lo, thine enemies roar, and thy haters raise the head.* The general prayer in the preceding verse is now enforced by a description of the danger, beginning with the violence and confidence of the assailants. The *lo* is equivalent to *see there*, and converts the passage into a description of a present scene. The enemies of Israel are, as usual, identified with those of God, as a reason why he should appear for their destruction. The first verb means to make a noise, and is applied to the roar of the sea in Ps. xlv. 4 (3), as it is to the howl of dogs in Ps. lix. 7 (6), and to internal commotions in Ps. xxxix. 7 (6.) xlii. 6, 12 (5, 11.) *Lift up the head*, as a natural indication of confidence and triumph. Compare the description of a conquered people, Judg. viii. 28.

4 (3.) *Against thy people they take crafty counsel, and consult against thy hidden ones.* To the qualities of violence and arrogance, the description now adds that of treacherous cunning. The construction in the first clause is, *they make (their) consultation crafty*. For the meaning of the Hebrew noun, see above, on Ps. xxv. 14. lv. 15 (14.) lxiv. 3 (2.) *Thy hidden ones*, those whom thou hast hidden for safe-keeping, the objects of thy merciful protection. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 5. xxxi. 21 (20.)

5 (4.) *They have said, Come and let us destroy them from (being) a nation, and let not the name of Israel be remembered any more.* Not only were they turbulent and confident and crafty, but malignant and determined to destroy. The past tense of the first verb represents the combination as already formed. The idiomatic phrase, *from a nation*, is used more than once by Isaiah (vii. 8. xxiii. 1.) The expression for complete extirpation in the last clause is borrowed from the curse on Amalek, Ex. xvii. 14. *Israel*, as the name of the chosen people, was rightfully claimed by Judah after the great schism, even while the rival kingdom still existed.

6 (5.) *For they have consulted heartily together ; against thee a covenant they ratify.* The word translated *heartily* is really a noun meaning *heart*, but here used to qualify the verb by adding the idea, *with the heart, ex animo*, cordially, heartily. The phrase rendered *one heart* in 1 Chr. xii. 38 is altogether different. For the meaning of the last verb, see above, on Ps. 1. 5. The preterite and future tense represent the combination as already formed and still continued.

7 (6.) *The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarenes.* The use of the word *tents* does not necessarily imply a wandering mode of life, as it may mean military tents, or be a figure for dwellings. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 67, and

compare Judg. vii. 8. 1 Kings xii. 16. The Ishmaelites inhabited a part of Desert Arabia (Gen. xxv. 18), as did also the Hagarenes or Hagarites, a people driven from their lands by the tribe of Simeon in the reign of Saul. See 1 Chr. v. 10, 19—22, and compare 1 Chr. xi. 38. xxvii. 31.

8 (7.) *Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre.* Gebal was probably a part of Idumea. Ammon and Amalek are joined in the same manner, Judges iii. 13, as Philistia and Tyre are, Ez. xxxviii. 13, and Philistia, Tyre, and Edom, Am. i. 6—10.

9 (8.) *Also Assyria was joined with them.* (These) *were an arm to the Sons of Lot.* *Selah.* Assyria is put last as the remotest and least interested in this combination against Judah. It had evidently not yet supplanted Babylonia as the dominant power of Western Asia. The last clause refers, not merely to Assyria, as the plural verb shows, but to all the confederates except the Sons of Lot, i. e. Moab and Ammon (Gen. xix. 37, 38), who are here referred to, as the authors and conductors of the expedition.

10 (9.) *Do to them as (thou didst) to Midian, as (to) Sisera, as (to) Jabin, in the valley of the Kishon.* This is a prayer for such deliverances as Israel experienced of old. The examples here selected are the victory of Gideon over the Midianites (Judges vii, viii), and that of Deborah and Barak over Jabin and Sisera (Judges iv, v.) Between the first of these and the event which the psalm before us was designed to celebrate there was this remarkable resemblance, that the enemies of Israel were in both cases made to destroy each other (Judg. vii. 22. 2 Chr. xx. 23.) Compare the allusions to the same event in Isai. ix. 4 (3.) Hab. iii. 7. The Kishon is repeatedly mentioned in the history of Deborah and Barak's triumph (Judg. iv. 7, 13. v. 21.)



11 (10.) *They were destroyed at Endor, they were dung to the earth.* This refers to the second of the battles mentioned in the preceding verse. Endor is not expressly named in the history, but is known to have been in the vicinity of Tabor, which is repeatedly there mentioned (Judg. iv. 6, 12, 14.) The last clause derives illustration from the extraordinary fruitfulness of certain battle-fields in modern times, particularly that of Waterloo. Compare 2 Kings ix. 37. Jer. ix. 21 (22.)

12 (11.) *Make them, (even) their nobles, like Oreb and like Zeeb; and like Zebah and like Zalmunnah all their princes.* He asks not only that the masses of the enemy may fare like those of Midian, but that their chief men may be utterly destroyed as the kings and chiefs of Midian were by Gideon. See Judg. vii. 25. viii. 5—21. The appeal to the historical associations of the people is greatly strengthened by this recital of familiar names. The first word properly means *set* or *place them*, i. e. put them in the same condition.

13 (12.) *Who have said, let us inherit for ourselves the dwellings (or pasture-grounds) of God.* This relates not to the former but to the present enemies of Israel, and assigns the reason why they should experience the same fate with their predecessors. The double meaning of the word translated *dwellings* makes it peculiarly descriptive of the Holy Land, where God dwelt with his people, and where he fed them as a shepherd. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 3. lxv. 13 (12.) lxxiv. 20.

14 (13.) *My God, make them like the whirling chaff before the wind.* Make them, literally, place them, as in v. 11. *Like the whirling chaff*, literally, *like the whirl* (or *whirlwind*), *like the chaff*. See above, on Ps. lxxvii. 19 (18), and compare Isai. xvii. 13.

15 (14.) *As fire consumes a forest, and as a flame kindles mountains.* The original construction is, *like a fire* (which) *consumes, like a flame* (which) *kindles.* By *mountains* we are here to understand what covers them or grows upon them.

16 (15.) *So wilt thou pursue them with thy storm, and with thy tempest scare them.* There is no need of translating these futures as imperatives. It is one of those cases, so frequent in Hebrew, and especially in this book, where the form of direct petition alternates with that of confident anticipation

17 (16.) *Fill their face with shame, and (men) will seek thy name, Jehovah!* With the first clause compare Ps. lxix. 8 (7.) lxxxix. 46 (45.) Some refer the last clause also to the enemies; but their destruction is still anticipated in the next verse, and to *seek the name of God* can hardly be expressive of a compulsory humiliation. The word translated *shame* is very strong, and means contempt, disgrace, or ignominy.

18 (17.) *They shall be shamed and terror-stricken to eternity, and blush and perish.* This no doubt includes a prayer or the expression of a wish, but it also includes a strong and confident anticipation. To discard the future form is therefore at the same time weakening to the sense and destructive of a characteristic feature of the language. With the first clause compare Ps. vi. 11 (10.) The word translated *terror-stricken* is the same that was rendered *scared* in v. 16 (15.) See above, on Ps. ii. 5. vi. 4 (3.) xlviii. 6 (5.)

19. (18.) *And (men) shall know that thou, whose name (is) Jehovah, (art) alone Most High over all the earth.* The reference here, as in v. 17 (16), is not to the impression made upon the minds of those destroyed, but upon men in general considered as spectators of their fate. See above, on Ps. lix. 14 (13), and com-

pare 1 Sam. xvii. 46. 2 Kings xix. 19. Isai. xxxvii. 16, 20. The original construction is peculiar: 'they shall know that thou—thy name Jehovah—thou alone—art Most High over all the earth.' The simple pronoun *thou* is explained and amplified by the addition of the words, *thy name Jehovah*, i. e. thou who hast revealed thyself already as the self-existent and eternal God, and as the covenant God of Israel.

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## PSALM LXXXIV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. On (or according to) the Gittith. By (or for) the Sons of Korah.* The Psalmist celebrates the blessedness of intimate communion with God, vs. 2—8 (1—7), and prays that he may himself enjoy it, vs. 9—13 (8—12.) The resemblance of this psalm, in subject, tone, and spirit, to Ps. xlii, is the more remarkable because each stands at the beginning of a series inscribed *to the Sons of Korah*. The experience here recorded is so evidently David's, that we must either understand the Sons of Korah to be mentioned merely as the musical performers, or suppose that they composed it to express the feelings of the king himself, a hypothesis which Hengstenberg illustrates by the case of David playing and singing before Saul, in order to alleviate his paroxysms of madness. For the arguments on both sides of the question, see above, on Ps. xlii. 1, and for the meaning of *the Gittith*, on Ps. viii. 1. lxxxi. 1.

2 (1.) *How dear (to me are) thy dwellings, oh Jehovah, (God of) Hosts!* The adjective is rendered by the English versions *amiable*, in the sense of the French *aimable*, lovely. But the



usage of the Hebrew word requires it to be understood as meaning *dear, beloved*, which is exactly the idea here required by the context. See above, on Ps. xlv. 1. The plural *dwelling*s has reference to the subdivisions and appurtenances of the sanctuary, and is applied to the tabernacle in Ps. xliii. 3. Compare Ps. lxviii. 36 (35.) The divine titles are as usual significant. While one suggests the covenant relation between God and the petitioner, the other makes his sovereignty the ground of a prayer for his protection. The force of this impassioned exclamation is enhanced by the structure of the sentence, which consists of a single clause, like Ps. xviii. 2 (1.) With the whole verse compare Ps. xxvii. 1—5.

3 (2.) *Longs and also faints my soul for the courts of Jehovah, my heart and my flesh; they sing (with joy) unto the living God.* The first verb is expressive of intense desire, as in Ps. xvii. 12. Compare Gen. xxxi. 30. Instead of *and also* the English Bible has *yea even*, which is perhaps too strong, and indicates a climax not intended by the writer. *Faints*, fails, or is consumed with strong desire. The plural *courts*, i. e. enclosures, is to be explained like *dwelling*s in v. 2 (1.) Solomon's temple had two courts; but one was appropriated to the priests, 2 Chr. iv. 9. The courts of the tabernacle are mentioned as the place where God statedly communed with Israel. See above, on Ps. lxxv. 5 (4), and below, on Ps. xcii. 14 (13.) They are here mentioned merely as a sign of the communion itself, which might be enjoyed in any place whatever. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 4. xxxvi. 9. Soul, heart, and flesh, denote the whole man. See above, on Ps. lxiii. 2 (1.) The Hebrew accents connect *heart and flesh* with the preceding words. A much more natural division is the common one, which construes them directly with the verb of the last clause. That verb elsewhere always denotes a joyful shout or song; but the derivative noun (רִנָּה) is used to signify a cry for help or earnest prayer, which meaning some attach to the verb itself in this place,

so as to make the clauses strictly parallel. If the usual meaning of the verb be here retained, the clause shows that the speaker had already experienced that for which he prays. The *Living God*, really existing, and the giver of life to others. See above, on Ps. xlii. 3 (2.)

4 (3.) *Yes, the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest, (in) which she lays her young, even thine altars, Jehovah, (God) of Hosts, my King and my God.* The first word properly means *also*, as in the preceding verse, and is by some translated *even*, as if he had said, 'the very birds have nests in the sanctuary of God, while I am excluded from it.' Compare Matt. viii. 20. But the fact thus alleged is highly improbable and nowhere recorded. A more natural interpretation is to make the sparrow and the swallow (put for small and helpless birds in general) emblems of the worshipper himself. As if he had said, yes, this wandering bird has at last found a resting-place, or home, both for itself and for its young. That this is perfectly in keeping with Davidic usage, is plain from 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, Ps. xi. 1. lv. 7 (6.) lvi. 1. The translation *even thine altars* supposes the Hebrew particle (אף) to indicate the object of the verb, as it does before the same noun in 1 Kings xix. 10, 14. It may, however, be a preposition meaning *at* or *near*, and this sense is preferred by those interpreters who suppose a literal nestling of the birds in the sanctuary to be here alluded to. The *altars* meant are those of burnt-offering and of incense, as in Num. iii. 31. They are particularly mentioned, because it was by means of sacrifice and prayer that communion between God and man was possible. Compare Ps. xxvi. 6. The young birds are introduced, not only to complete the picture, but to show that the communion and divine protection, which the Psalmist so highly valued, were not merely personal but domestic and social privileges, which he desired both for himself and those dependent on him. The address, *Jehovah (God) of Hosts*, has the same sense as in v. 2 (1.)

The same essential notions of supremacy and covenant relation are conveyed by the parallel expression, *my King and my God*, a combination which occurs only here and in Ps. v. 3 (2.)

5. *Happy the dwellers in thy house, (for) still they praise thee (or will praise thee.)* The first phrase is the idiomatic one with which the book begins, for the peculiar form and sense of which, see above, on Ps. i. 1. ii. 12. xxxii. 1, 2. xxxiii. 12. xli. 2 (1.) *Dwellers in*, inhabitants of, thy house, i. e. members of thy family, as the same words literally mean in Jer. xx. 5. For the spiritual or figurative meaning, see above, on Ps. xv. 1. xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3. xxvii. 4. lxi. 5 (4.) lxxv. 5 (4.) The privilege thus described might be enjoyed in any local situation; but the outward sign of it, under the old economy, was the frequenting of the sanctuary. As inmates, not mere visitors, they will still have occasion and opportunity of doing what they do when first admitted to God's household. *They will still praise*, because they will have renewed cause so to do. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) l. 15, 23. lxxix. 13.

6 (5.) *Happy the man who (has) strength in thee, (who have) highways in their heart.* The original consists of several exclamations or ejaculations—*happy man!*—(there is) *strength to him in thee!*—(there are) *highways in their heart!* This last unusual and obscure expression is supposed by some to mean, in whose thoughts, (or affections) are the highways to Jerusalem, i. e. who still think of going up to worship there. But another explanation, which agrees far better, both with the immediate context and with usage and analogy, supposes the figure to be identical with that in Ps. l. 23. Prov. xvi. 17. Isai. xl. 3, 4, where the removal of all moral or spiritual hinderances to God's revisiting his people and communing with them, is poetically represented as the opening, levelling, and raising of a causeway through a pathless wilderness or otherwise impracticable ground. The word translated *high-*



*ways* is determined, both by etymology and usage, to denote not a mere beaten track or footpath, but a road artificially constructed and raised above the level of the ground through which it passes. The sudden change of number in the last clause shows that *man* is a generic or collective term.

7 (6.) *Passing through the Vale of Tears, a spring they make it; also with blessings is the Teacher clothed.* This is one of the obscurest verses in the book. Interpreters, however, are now commonly agreed as to the first clause. The explanation of *Baca*, as meaning the Valley of Mulberry or Baca-trees (2 Sam. v. 23, 24. 1 Chron. xiv. 13, 14), is now very commonly abandoned for the one given in the ancient versions, the Vale of Weeping or of Sorrow, a beautiful poetical description of the present life as one of suffering. To the *fons lacrymarum* is opposed the fountain of salvation or of joy, a figure so familiar in the Scriptures, as to be readily suggested by the one word *spring* or *fountain*. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 10 (9.) xlv. 5 (4), and compare Isai. xii. 3. The meaning of the clause, as thus explained, is, that the persons pronounced happy in the foregoing verse are a source of happiness, and convert the very Vale of Tears into a fountain of delight. The meaning of the other clause is still disputed. As the first noun, by varying a single vowel-point, may mean either *pools* or *blessings*, and the next, though it commonly means *teacher* (2 Kings xvii. 28. Prov. v. 13. Isai. xxx. 20), has in one other place (Joel ii. 23) the sense of *rain*, or rather of the *early rain* in Palestine, the clause admits of several very different explanations. 1. The rain also covers the pools. 2. The teacher is clothed in blessings. 3. The rain covers it with blessings. In favour of the second is its close adherence to the usage of the three leading words. It is also found substantially in the ancient versions. The meaning then is, that this strange transforming power is exerted by the good man as a teacher of righteousness, in which sense one of the disputed words (מורה) occurs

in Joel ii. 23, which accounts for its being there repeated in the very same sentence, by a kind of paronomasia, in the sense of *early rain*, elsewhere denoted by a cognate form (יִרְיָה). Compare the sentiment with that in Ps. li. 15 (13.) For the neuter or intransitive meaning of the last verb, see Lev. xiii. 45. Mic. iii. 7. Jer. xliii. 12.

8 (7.) *They shall go from strength to strength; he shall appear to God in Zion.* The change of number is the opposite of that in v. 6 (5), but to be explained on the same principle. Or the singular verb in the last clause may refer to the Teacher in v. 7 (6.) The *strength* is that bestowed by God, in the experience of which they make continual advances. The form of expression in the last clause is one used in the Law to denote the stated appearance of the Israelites at the sanctuary. The meaning of the whole verse is, that they who answer to the previous description shall finally attain to the full fruition of that union with God in which their happiness resides.

9 (8.) *Jehovah, God, (Lord of) Hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, oh God of Jacob!* *Selah.* Here begins the second part of the psalm, containing the petition founded on the preceding view of the happiness arising from communion with God. The names applied to him suggest, as usual, the grounds of the petition, namely, his eternity, self-existence, sovereignty, and covenant-relation to his people.

10 (9.) *(Oh) our shield, see, (oh) God, and behold the face of thine Anointed.* Some make the first noun the object of the verb that follows, *see our shield*; but in v. 12 (11) God himself is so described, as well as in Ps. iii. 4 (3.) Gen. xv. 1. Its position, as a vocative, is certainly unusual, but seems to be emphatic. *Behold the face*, i. e. behold it favourably, look upon it graciously.

*Thine Anointed (One)*, i. e. David, by whom, or in whose name, the psalm was written.

11. (10.) *For better (is) a day in thy courts than a thousand ; I have chosen to occupy the threshold in the house of my God, rather than dwell in tents of wickedness.* The comparison in both clauses is expressed, as usual in Hebrew, by the preposition *from*, *away from*. 'Good from, i. e. in comparison with, a thousand.' 'I choose from dwelling, i. e. rather than to dwell.' The first clause of course means that one day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. *I have chosen*, and do still choose, a stronger expression than *I would choose* or *would rather*. The next verb occurs only here and is evidently formed from the noun (שַׁרְיָן) *sill* or *threshold*. *To be a door-keeper* (guard the threshold), and *to lie on the threshold*, are too specific, and appear to add something to the sense of the original. The idea perhaps is, that he would rather stand at the door of God's house and look in (which was all that the worshippers could do at the Mosaic sanctuary) than dwell in the interior of tents or houses where iniquity prevailed. The use of the word *tents* in this clause makes it still more probable that the tabernacle, not the temple, is meant by the parallel expression, *house of God*.

12 (11.) *For a sun and a shield is Jehovah, God ; grace and glory will Jehovah give ; he will not refuse (any thing) good to those walking in a perfect (way.)* The *for* shows that this verse gives a reason for the preference expressed in that before it. God is here called a sun, as he is called a light in Ps. xxvii. 1. Both these figures represent him as a source of happiness ; that of a shield describes him as a source of safety, or a strong protector. *Grace* and *glory* (or *honour*) are related as the cause and the effect. The latter includes all the sensible fruits and manifestations of the divine favour. See above, on Ps. xlix. 17 (16.) *In a perfect* is by some understood to mean *as a perfect person*,



i. e. perfectly, uprightly. See above, on Ps. xv. 2. xviii. 24 (23), and compare Gen. xvii. 1.

13 (12.) *Jehovah*, (Lord of) *Hosts*, *happy the man trusting in thee*. The participle is expressive of habitual reliance. *Trusting in thee*, as I do.

PSALM LXXXV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. To (or by) the Sons of Korah. A Psalm.* On the ground of former benefits, the Church prays for deliverance from present evils, vs. 2—8 (1—7), and joyfully anticipates a favourable answer, vs. 9—14 (8—13.) There is nothing in the title, or the psalm itself, to determine its date or confine its application to any particular historical occasion. It seems to be appropriate to every case in which the fulfilment of the promise (Lev. xxvi. 3—13) was suspended or withheld.

2 (1.) *Thou wast gracious, oh Jehovah, to thy land; thou didst return (to) the captivity of Jacob.* Some interpreters refer these words to favours recently experienced; *thou hast (now) been gracious*, etc. But it is clear from vs. 5—8 (4—7), that the people were actually suffering, and that the acknowledgments in vs. 2—4 (1—3) must relate to former instances of God's compassion. The idea, that the benefit acknowledged was deliverance from the Babylonish exile, has arisen from a false interpretation of the last clause, for the true sense of which see above, on Ps. xiv. 7. Captivity is a common figure for distress, and God's revisiting the captives for relief from it. It is also worthy of remark that

the favour shown was to the *land*, i. e. to the people while in possession and actual occupation of it.

3 (2.) *Thou didst take away the guilt of thy people ; thou didst cover all their sin. Selah.* The same form of expression occurs above, in Ps. xxxii. 1, 5 Both verbs suggest the idea of atonement as well as pardon.

4 (3.) *Thou didst withdraw all thy wrath ; thou didst turn from the heat of thine anger.* There is probably an allusion here to the prayer of Moses in Ex. xxxii. 12. The Hebrew verb of the second clause corresponds strictly to the English verb in its transitive or causative sense. It is used, however, in the same way by Ezekiel (xviii. 30, 32), who, in one place (xiv. 6), has the phrase to *turn away the face*, of which the other may be an abbreviation.

5 (4.) *Return to us, oh God of our salvation, and cease thine anger towards us.* The recollection of former mercies is here followed by a prayer for their renewal. 'As thou hast had pity on thy people heretofore, so have pity on them now.' *Return to us*, revisit us again in mercy. See above, on v. 2 (1), and on Ps. xiv. 7. The verb in the last clause means to annul or nullify, put an end to, cause to cease. It occurs above, Ps. xxxiii. 10. The word translated *anger* is one which properly expresses a mixed feeling of grief and indignation. See above, on Ps. vi. 7 (6.)

7 (6.) *Forever wilt thou be angry at us ? Wilt thou draw out thine anger to generation and generation ?* The first Hebrew word strictly means to *ages* or *eternities*. The verb to *draw out*, protract, continue, is used in a favourable sense, Ps. xxxvi. 11 (10.) The idea here expressed is the opposite of that in Ps. xxx. 6 (5.)

8 (7.) *Wilt thou not return (and) quicken us, (and) shall (not) thy people rejoice in thee?* With the first clause compare Ps. lxxi. 20. lxxx. 19 (18.) Deut. xxxii. 39. Hos. vi. 2. With the second compare Ps. v. 12 (11.) ix. 3 (2.) xl. 17 (16.) ‘Wilt thou not revisit us in mercy, raise us from the dead or dying state in which we now are, and give us, as thy people, fresh occasion to rejoice in our relation to thee, and in our union and communion with thee?’ The construction which continues the interrogation through the sentence is much simpler and more natural than that which makes the second clause contingent and dependent on the first, *that thy people may rejoice in thee*. At the same time, the interrogative form expresses a more confident anticipation than a bare petition.

8 (7.) *Let us see, oh Lord, thy mercy; and thy salvation thou wilt give unto us.* The first petition is, that God would cause them to experience his mercy. In the last clause, as in many other places, the form of petition is insensibly exchanged for that of anticipation. As if he had said, ‘We can confidently ask thee to show us thy mercy, for we know that thou wilt grant us thy salvation.’

9 (8.) *I will hear what the Mighty (God), Jehovah, will speak; for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints; and let them not return to folly.* The first clause expresses the people’s willingness to hear and to abide by God’s decision. The second gives the reason of this willingness, to wit, because they know that the response will be auspicious. The third assigns the necessary limitation to this confidence, by stating the condition of God’s favourable answer. The failure to comply with this condition accounts for the partial fulfilment of the promise, both in the case of individuals and of the church at large. See above, on Ps. lxxx. 19 (18), and compare the promise in Lev. xxvi. 3—13. *His saints*, the objects of his mercy and subjects of his



grace. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) *And let them not turn* is equivalent to saying, *so (or therefore) let them not turn*. The real connection of the clauses might be brought out still more clearly in our idiom by the paraphrase, 'provided they do not return to folly.'

10 (9.) *Only nigh to his fearers (is) his salvation, for glory to dwell in our land*. As the limitation of the promise to those fearing God is an essential stroke in this description, there is no need of departing from the strict sense of (יָסָ) the particle with which the sentence opens. See above, on Ps. lxii. 10 (9.) lxxviii. 7 (6), and compare Ps. lviii. 12 (11.) lxxiii. 1. The meaning then is that salvation is provided by God's mercy for none but those who fear him. The last clause, which is literally rendered above, is equivalent to saying in our idiom, *that glory may dwell in our land*. Glory has the same sense as in Ps. lxxxiv. 12 (11.) *Dwell*, reside permanently, long continue.

11 (12.) *Mercy and truth have met (together); righteousness and peace have kissed (each other.)* By *truth*, we are to understand the truth of God's promises, the divine veracity. See above, on Ps. xxv. 5. The same combination with grace or mercy occurs above, in Ps. xxv. 10. xl. 11 (10.) lvii. 4 (3.) lxi. 8 (7), and below, Ps. lxxxix. 15 (14.) *Righteousness*, considered as the gift of God, justification, whether judicial or providential. *Peace*, immunity from all disturbing causes, which implies prosperity of every kind. See above, on Ps. lxxii. 3. *Have met*, in a peaceable and friendly manner, an idea still more strongly expressed by the kiss of reconciliation or affection in the last clause. A still more pointed and emphatic meaning may be put upon the sentence by supposing it to mean, that God's mercy or free favour to the undeserving is now seen to be consistent with his truth, which was pledged for their destruction, and their peace or safety with his

righteousness or justice, which might otherwise have seemed to be wholly incompatible.

12 (11.) *Truth from the earth is springing, and righteousness from heaven looks down.* The truth of God's promise may be seen, as it were, springing from the earth in its abundant fruits, and his rectitude, or faithfulness to his engagements, looking down from heaven in the rain and sunshine. By this bold and beautiful conception, the certainty of God's providential care is expressed more strongly than it could be by any mere didactic statement. The beauty of the image in the last clause is heightened by the use of a verb which originally means to lean or bend over, for the purpose of gazing down upon a lower object. See above, on Ps. xiv. 2, and compare Judg. v. 28. 2 Sam. vi. 16.

13 (12.) *Jehovah also will give the (material or earthly) good, and our land will give its produce (or increase.)* In other words, the promise shall be verified that stands recorded in the Law (Lev. xxvi. 4), from which the form of expression is borrowed, as it is in Ps. lxxvii. 7 (6.)

14 (13.) *Righteousness before him shall march, and set (us) in the way of his steps.* The verb in the first clause is a poetical intensive form of one which means to walk or go. The idea here expressed seems to be that of public and solemn manifestation. The last clause is obscure and of dubious construction. The latest interpreters understand it as meaning, *and set its steps for a way*, i. e. mark out by its own steps the way in which we are to walk. This yields, in the end, the same sense as the common version above given.

## PSALM LXXXVI.

1. *A Prayer. By David. Incline, oh Jehovah, thine ear (and) answer me, for wretched and needy (am) I.* The whole psalm is called a prayer, because entirely made up, either of direct petitions, or of arguments intended to enforce them. The tone and substance of the composition are well suited to David's situation in his days of suffering at the hands of Saul or Absalom more probably the latter, on account of the repeated allusions to deliverance from former trials of the same kind. Some account for the position of this psalm in the midst of a series inscribed to the *Sons of Korah*, by supposing that the latter composed it in the person or the spirit of David. See above, on Ps. lxxxiv. 1. The same hypothesis is used by these interpreters to explain the many forms of expression borrowed from other psalms of David; as if the *Sons of Korah* meant to comfort him by the repetition of his own consolatory words in other cases. Compare 2 Cor. i. 4. The psalm admits of no minute or artificial subdivision. The only marked diversity of the parts is, that in vs. 1—10, petition is combined with argument, whereas in vs. 11—17, it is more unmixed. The first ground or reason is derived, in this verse, from the urgency of the necessity. At the same time, there is a tacit claim to God's protection, on the ground that he who asks it is one of his own people. According to the usage of the psalms, the afflicted and the needy denote sufferers among God's people. See above, on Ps. x. 2.



2. *Keep my soul, for a gracious one (am) I; save thy servant, even thou, my God, the (servant) trusting in thee.* He prays for the safe-keeping of his soul or life, because it was this that the enemy threatened. See below, v. 14. The grounds assigned are two, or rather one exhibited in two forms. The first is, that he is a (חַסִּיד) saint or gracious one, a merciful object of God's mercy. See above, on Ps. lxxxv. 8 (7.) The other is that, as a servant of Jehovah, he believes and trusts in him alone. The original expression is not *in* but *to* or *towards* thee, as if implying that the believer turns or looks away from every other ground of confidence to God alone. The same construction occurs twice above, in Ps. iv. 6 (5.) xxxi. 7 (6.)

3. *Be gracious unto me, oh Lord, for unto thee will I cry all the day.* The prayer is still substantially the same, but enforced by two additional reasons; one implied in the divine name used, to wit, that God is his sovereign and as such bound to protect his subject; the other expressed, namely, that his subject never ceases to invoke his aid. The future meaning of the verb includes the present, but suggests the additional idea of determination to pursue the same course till the blessing is obtained. Compare Gen. xxxii. 27 (26.) Luke xviii. 1. *All the day* is a common idiomatic phrase equivalent to *all the time* in English, and may therefore be considered as including, though it does not formally express, the idea of *every day* or *daily*. See above, on Ps. xlii. 4, 11 (3, 10.)

4. *Gladden the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, Lord, my soul do I raise.* The first clause is not a mere periphrasis for "make me glad," or "cause me to rejoice." It means "make me heartily rejoice, because I am thy servant," thus suggesting a new ground of his petition, different in form although substantially identical with that in the preceding verse. A similar analogy exists between the second clause of that verse and the second

clause of this, the form of which, however, is borrowed from Ps. xxv. 1. Here, as there, to raise the soul to God is to regard him with affection and strong confidence. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 4. At the same time, there is an allusion to the strict sense of the Hebrew verb, as if he had said, 'make my soul rejoice, since I bring it up or raise it to thee for this very purpose.' The force of the future is the same as in v. 4.

5. *For thou, Lord, art good and forgiving and rich in mercy to all (those) invoking thee.* God is not only the sovereign of his people, and as such bound by covenant to protect them, but benevolent or good in his own nature; and that not merely in the general, or in reference to all his creatures, but especially in reference to the undeserving and the ill-deserving; that is, to such of them as really desire his favour, and evince their willingness to have it by the act of asking for it. *Rich (in) mercy*, literally, *great* (or much, abundant, plenteous, as to) *mercy*. This expression, and indeed the whole description, is borrowed from Ex. xxxiv. 6.

6. *Give ear, Jehovah, to my prayer, and attend (or hearken) to the voice of my supplications.* The same verbs are used in a similar connection, Ps. v. 2, 3 (1, 2.) The last word in Hebrew, according to its etymology, denotes specifically prayers for favour, grace, or mercy. See above, on Ps. xxviii. 6. xxxi. 23 (22.) There is no new ground or argument suggested here, beyond what is implied in the use of the word just explained, and of the divine name in the first clause.

7. *In the day of my distress I will invoke thee, for thou wilt answer me.* The future includes the present, I do and will invoke thee, call thee to my aid, or call upon thee for assistance. The second clause assigns the reason, namely, his conviction that he shall not call in vain. The implied ground of this convic-

tion is, that he never does and never did call, in the exercise of faith, without being favourably heard or answered.

8. *There is none like thee among the gods, oh Lord, and nothing like thy works* (among their works.) This last, which might seem to be needed to complete the sense and the parallelism, was suppressed perhaps in order to suggest the idea, that the gods have no works, even the gentiles who worship them being creatures of Jehovah, as is expressly stated in the next verse. Even the full comparison, however, in the first clause, does not necessarily concede the personal existence of the gods themselves, but only that of their material images, or at most the belief of their besotted worshippers. Compare with this verse its Mosaic models, Ex. xv. 11. Deut. iii. 24, and the Davidic imitations of them, 2 Sam. vii. 22. Ps. xviii. 32 (31.) The exclusive godhead of Jehovah is here urged as a distinct ground or reason of importunate petition to him.

9. *All nations which thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, oh Lord, and give honour to thy name.* The common relation of Jehovah to all men as their Maker, although now denied by most nations, shall be one day universally acknowledged, not in word merely, but in act, the most expressive act of worship, involving a believing recognition of the previous display of God's perfections, in the language of the Scriptures called his *name*. This prospective view of the conversion of the world to the belief and service of its Maker shows how far the Old Testament writers were from cherishing or countenancing the contracted nationality of the later and the less enlightened Jews. See above, on Ps. xxii. 28, 29 (27, 28.) xlv. 13—17 (12—16.) xlvii. 10 (9), and compare Jer. xvi. 19. Zeph. ii. 11. Zech. xiv. 9, 16.

10. *For great (art) thou and doing wonders, thou (art) God alone.* The only new idea here is the evidence afforded of Je-



hovah's sole divinity by his miraculous performances. The *for*, at the beginning of the verse, implies that these proofs of divinity must sooner or later have their full effect.

11. *Guide me, Jehovah, (in) thy way ; I will walk in thy truth ; unite my heart to fear thy name.* The common version of the first verb (*teach me*) is too vague, as it fails to bring out the peculiar suitableness of the term to express the kind of teaching here specifically meant. The original meaning of the Hebrew word is to point out or mark the way. According to the usage of the Psalms, the *way* of God is here the course of his providential dealings, and his *truth* the truth of his promises, to *walk* in which is to assent to them or acquiesce in them and trust them. See above, on Ps. xxv. 4, 5. xxvi. 3. That he may be enabled to do this without distraction or reserve, is the prayer of the last clause. The idea of a united heart is the opposite of a double heart. See above, on Ps. xii. 3 (2), and compare James iv. 8.

12. *I will thank thee, oh Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will honour thy name forever.* The first verb means not merely to praise in general, but to praise for benefits received. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) This verse describes the effect that is to follow from the granting of the prayer at the close of the preceding verse. When his heart is once united to fear God, cordial and perpetual thanksgiving will follow as a necessary consequence.

13. *For thy mercy (has been) great towards me, and thou hast freed my soul from the lowest hell.* The most natural explanation of these words is that which makes them an appeal to former mercies as a reason for expecting new ones. If the psalm belongs to the period of Absalom's rebellion (see above, on v. 1), the reference here may be to David's dangers and deliverances from Saul. *Towards me*, literally, *on me*, with an implication of descent from above. *Hell*, in the wide sense of death or the state

of the dead. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) *Lowest*, or lower, lying under, subterraneous. The expression is derived from Deut. xxxii. 22. With this verse compare Ps. xviii. 6 (5.) lvi. 14 (13.)

14. *Oh God, proud (men) have arisen against me, and an assembly of violent (men) have sought my soul, and have not set thee before them.* Nearly the same words had been used by David in reference to the Sauline persecution, Ps. liv. 5 (3). But instead of *aliens*, he here speaks of *proud ones*, and before the parallel term *violent*, oppressive, or tyrannical (Ps. xxxvii. 35), inserts *congregation* or *assembly*, as if to imply organization, both which variations agree well with the hypothesis that this psalm relates to the revolt of Absalom.

15. *And thou, Lord, (art) a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.* He here appeals to God's description of himself as warranting his prayer for merey. See Ex. xxxiv. 6, and the imitations or quotations of it by Joel (ii. 13) and Jonah (iv. 2.) See also Ps. lxxxv. 11 (10.)

16. *Turn towards me and be gracious to me; give thy strength to thy servant, and grant salvation to the son of thy handmaid.* The first prayer implies that God's face had previously been averted. *Give thy strength*, exercise it for his protection. *The son of thy handmaid* or female slave, i. e. a home-born and hereditary servant, and as such entitled to defence and sustenance. The expression is borrowed from Ex. xxiii. 12, and re-appears in Ps. cxvi. 16. The last verb is the common one meaning *to save*, but here connected with its object by the proposition *to*.

17. *Show me a token for good, and (then) my haters shall see and be shamed, because thou, Jehovah, hast helped me and comforted me.* The phrase translated *show me* strictly means *do with me*,

and is here used because the *sign* or *token* asked is neither a verbal declaration nor a miracle, but a practical or providential indication of God's favour, furnished by his dealings *with him*. The word translated *good* is the one used in Ps. xvi. 2, where as here it has the sense of physical good, welfare, happiness. A *token for good* is a pledge of its possession and enjoyment. The oblique construction, *that my haters may see*, is really included in the direct future. *Shamed*, surprised, disappointed, and confounded. The preterites in the last clause have reference to the time when this effect shall be produced upon the enemy, and when the divine help and consolation shall have been already granted.

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## P S A L M L X X X V I I .

1. *To* (or *by*) *the Sons of Korah. A Psalm. A Song. His foundation (is) in the hills of holiness.* The first title decides nothing as to the date of composition. See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. xlv. 1. xlvii. 1. xlviii. 1. It is not only a *psalm*, a religious lyric, but a *song*, i. e. a song of praise or triumph. See above, on Ps. lxxxiii. 1. This agrees well with the tone of the composition, which seems to indicate some great deliverance as its historical occasion. The only one that can be fixed upon with any great degree of probability is that of Hezekiah from the power of Assyria. See above, on Ps. xlv. 1. lxxv. 1. lxxvi. 1. In view of some such signal intervention in behalf of Israel, the psalm celebrates the actual security of Zion, vs. 1—3, and anticipates its future honours as the spiritual birth-place of the nations, vs. 4—7. *His foundation*, that which he has founded, meaning his



sanctuary and his theocratical kingdom. The plural expression, *hills of holiness*, means Zion in the wide sense, including all the heights on which Jerusalem was built. It was peculiarly appropriate in this case, if the psalm was written in the reign of Hezekiah, because at that time Zion, in the strict sense, was no longer the exclusive residence of God on earth. At the same time, there is particular reference to Zion as the citadel, in which the strength of the royal city was concentrated.

2. *Jehovah loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.* This description of Jehovah's choice of Zion as his dwelling-place is similar to that in Ps. lxxviii. 68. The gates of a walled city give access to it and power over it, and are therefore naturally here put for the whole. The Hebrew participle (*loving*) implies constant and habitual attachment.

3. *Glorious things (have been) spoken in thee, oh City of God! Selah.* Glorious or honourable things, in the way of prophecy and promise, the fulfilment of which is here implied. As if he had said, the promises respecting thee are great, but they are or shall be fully verified. So too in the other clause the meaning is, thou art well called the city of God, for he is in thee, to protect and honour thee. See above, on Ps. xlv. 5 (4.) xlviii. 2, 9 (1, 8.) Instead of *in thee* some read *of thee*, but the former is entitled to the preference; first, because it is the strict sense and therefore not to be rejected without reason; then, because it really includes the other, but is not included in it; lastly, because it suggests the additional idea of the holy city, as the scene, no less than the theme, of the prophetic visions.

4. *I will mention Rahab and Babylon as knowing me. Lo, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia! This (one) was born there.* Interpreters are commonly agreed, that these are the words of God himself, though not expressly so announced. The first verb

in Hebrew is a causative, I will make to be remembered, celebrate, commemorate. See above, Ps. xx. 8 (7.) xlv. 18 (17.) lxxi. 16 (15.) lxxvii. 12 (11.) It here means to announce or proclaim. To know God is to love him and to be his servant. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 11 (10), and compare Isai. xix. 21. Those knowing him in this sense are his people. *As knowing me*, literally, to those knowing me, i. e. belonging to their number. Or the sense may be, *for knowers of me*, I will recognize and reckon them for such. Compare the Hebrew of Ex. xxi. 2, *he shall go out free*, literally, *for free*, i. e. as free. The nations thus announced as belonging to God's people are mere samples of the whole gentile world, those being chosen for the purpose, who were or had been most connected with the history of Israel, and were at the same time ruling powers of antiquity. *Rahab* is an enigmatical name given to Egypt by the Prophet Isaiah. See below, on Ps. lxxxix. 11 (10), and compare my notes on Isai. xxx. 7. li. 9. *Babylon* is named instead of *Assyria*, perhaps because in Hezekiah's reign the former began to supersede the latter as the dominant power of Western Asia. See my note on Isai. xxxix. 1. Compare the prophecy respecting Egypt and Assyria in Isai. xix. 23, 24. Philistia and Tyre are put together, as in Ps. lxxxiii. 8 (7.) As to the latter, see above, on Ps. xlv. 13 (12), and compare Isai. xxiii. 18. The conversion of *Cush* or Ethiopia had already been foretold by David, Ps. lxxviii. 32 (31), and by Solomon, Ps. lxxii. 10. The last words are obscure, but may be rendered clearer by supplying before them, *as to each of these it shall be said*. The pronoun (*this*) is then to be referred not to individual men, but to the nations as ideal persons. The idea of regeneration or spiritual birth, applied in the New Testament to individuals, is here applied to nations, who are represented as born again, when received into communion with the church or chosen people.

5. *And of Zion it shall be said, (This) man and (that) man was born in her, and He will establish her, the Highest.* The strict

translation of the first words is *to Zion*, but the subsequent use of the third person (*in her*) shows that the act described is that of speaking of a person in his presence, yet not directly to him, or, as we sometimes say in English, talking *at him*. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.) lxxi. 10. The idiomatic phrase *man and man* means every one or each one severally. See the Hebrew of Esther i. 8, and compare that of Lev. xvii. 10, 13. The clause may then be understood as asserting of individuals what had just been said of whole communities, or as repeating the latter, in a more emphatic form, for the purpose of connecting it with an additional promise, namely, that the church, thus enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles, shall be permanently established and secured. The pronoun is emphatic and is rendered more so by the epithet attached to it. *He the Highest*, or *the Highest himself*. The protector of the church is neither man nor angel, but the supreme and sovereign God. See above, on Ps. xlvii. 3 (2.) xlviii. 9 (8.)

6 *Jehovah shall count, in enrolling the nations : This (one) was born there. Selah.* The theme or idea of the whole psalm, that Zion should yet be the birth place of all nations, is again repeated, under a new figure, that of registration. Compare Ez. xiii. 9. The meaning is that, as he counts the nations, he shall say of each, in turn or one by one, this one was also born there. *In enrolling*, literally *writing*, i. e. inscribing in a list or register. The common version (*when he writeth up the people*) not only fails to reproduce the plural form of the last word, or to show in any way that more than a single nation is referred to, but ascribes the act of writing to the Lord himself, which, though not so inadmissible in a figurative passage as some writers think it, is not necessarily implied in the original, where the form of expression is *in the writing*, i. e. at the time or in the act of doing so, whether the act be that of God himself or merely done by his authority and under his direction.



7. *And singers as well as players* (shall be heard saying), *All my springs are in thee*. The construction in the first clause is peculiar, *singers as players*. See above, on Ps. xlviii. 6 (5.) The image present to the Psalmist's mind seems to be that of a procession or triumphal march, composed of the nations on their way to Zion. At the head of this procession are the minstrels, who, as the spokesmen of the rest, acknowledge that the source of their happiness is henceforth to be sought in Zion, not as a mere locality, but as the place where God was pleased to manifest his gracious presence. It matters little, therefore, whether the closing words (*in thee*) be referred to God directly, or to Zion, as the channel through which he imparted spiritual blessings to the gentiles. Compare the figure of a spring or stream in Joel iv. 18 (iii. 18.) Zech. xiii. 1. xiv. 8 Ez. xlvii. 1, and see above, on Ps. lxxxiv. 7 (6.) The word joined with singers admits of a two-fold derivation, and may either mean *players upon instruments*, or still more definitely, *pipers*, as the players on stringed instruments are named in the same connection, Ps. lxviii. 26 (25); or as some of the latest interpreters prefer, it may mean *dancers*, as this indication of joy was commonly practised, in connection with singing, not only by women but by men. See above, on Ps. xxx. 12 (11), and below, on Ps. cl. 4, and compare Ex. xv. 20. 2 Sam. vi. 16. The *Selah* at the end of the preceding verse shows that the variations of the main theme are concluded, and separates the body of the psalm from this verse, which contains the words neither of the Psalmist nor the Church nor God himself, but of the converted Gentiles.

## P S A L M L X X X V I I I .

1. *A Song. A Psalm. To (or by) the Sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Concerning afflictive sickness. A didactic Psalm. By Heman the Ezrahite.* The first word of this title elsewhere denotes a song of praise or triumph. See above, on Ps. xlii. 9 (8.) lxxxiii. 1. It is here prefixed, however, to the most despondent psalm in the collection, in which the complaints and lamentations are relieved by no joyful anticipations or expressions of strong confidence. The only satisfactory explanation of these facts is afforded by the supposition, that Ps. lxxxviii and lxxxix were intended to constitute a pair or double psalm, like the first and second, third and fourth, ninth and tenth, forty-second and forty-third, etc. The desponding lamentations of P. lxxxviii are then merely introductory to the cheering expectations of Ps. lxxxix. This supposition also explains the unusual length of the inscription now before us, the first part of which may then be considered as belonging to both psalms, while the last clause corresponds to the title of Ps. lxxxix. *Afflictive sickness*, literally, *sickness to afflict* or *humble*. For the figurative use of sickness, and the sense of this inscription, see above, on Ps. liii. 1. Heman the Ezrahite is mentioned, with Asaph and Ethan, as chief musicians in the reign of David, 1 Chron. vi. 18 (33.) xv. 17. xvi. 41, 42. The Heman and Ethan, spoken of in 1 Chron. ii. 6 as Ezrahites (i. e. sons of Zerab), and in 1 King v. 11 as eminent for wisdom, are supposed by some to be

different persons, because they were of the tribe of Judah, while others suppose that they were Levites adopted into that tribe. The Psalm before us neither requires nor admits of any minute or artificial subdivision.

2 (1.) *Jehovah, God of my salvation, (by) day have I cried, and by night, before thee.* God of my salvation, the God in whom I trust to save me, because he is a saving God, or God my Saviour. See above, on Ps. lxxxv. 5 (4.) *Day* and *by night* are related to each other here, as *night* and *by day* are in Ps. lxxvii. 3 (2.) *Before thee* implies that his cries were not mere instinctive expressions of distress, but prayers addressed to God. With the whole verse compare Ps. xxii. 3 (2.)

3 (2.) *Let my prayer come before thee ; incline thine ear unto my cry.* The first petition is that his prayer may attract the divine attention, which is varied in the last clause by the figure of one bending down to catch a faint or distant cry. See above, on Ps. xvii. 6. xxxi. 3 (2.) lxxi. 2.

4 (3.) *For sated with evils is my soul, and my life to the grave draws near.* *Evils*, sufferings, distresses. As *life* is plural in Hebrew, it can be construed regularly with the plural verb ; but as this is properly a causative, it may also be construed with *evils*, or with men indefinitely, *they have brought my life near to the grave.* The first construction is favoured by the analogy of Ps. cvii. 18. The *grave*, *sheol*, the state of the dead. See above on Ps. vi. 6 (5.)

5 (4.) *I am reckoned with those going down to the pit ; I am (or am become) as a man with no strength.* With the first clause compare Ps. xxviii. 1. cxliii. 7. *With no strength*, literally, (to whom) *there is no strength.* The last word in Hebrew occurs only here, but a cognate form in Ps. xxii. 20 (19.) There is in the



original an antithesis, which cannot be conveyed by mere translation, arising from the fact that the first word for *man* is one implying strength.

6 (5.) *With (or among) the dead, free, like the slain, lying in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and they by (or from) thy hand are cut off.* As to be God's servant is the highest privilege and honour (Ps. lxxxvi. 16), so to be free from his service (Job iii. 19) is to be miserable. The reference is not to death in general, but to death by violence and as a punishment. *The slain*, literally, *the (mortally) wounded*. See above, on Ps. lxix. 27 (26.) The latter half of the verse contains a strong poetical description of the wicked, as no longer the objects of God's protecting care. Of the two translations, *from* and *by thy hand*, the first conveys the same idea with the foregoing words, while the second represents the destruction of God's enemies as the work of his own hands.

7 (6.) *Thou hast placed me in a deep pit, in dark places, in abysses.* A deep pit, literally, a pit of low or under places. See above, on Ps. lxiii. 10 (9.) lxxxvi. 13, and compare Ez. xxvi. 20. The *dark places* are those of the invisible and lower world. *Abysses*, deeps, or depths of water. See above, on Ps. lxix. 3 (2.)

8 (7.) *Upon me weighs thy wrath, and (with) all thy waves thou dost oppress me. Selah.* The word translated *waves* corresponds etymologically to *breakers*. See above, on Ps. xlii. 8 (7.) With the first clause compare Ps. xxxviii. 3 (2.) The verb to *oppress* or *afflict* is applied in historical prose to the oppression of Israel in Egypt, Gen. xv. 13. Ex. i. 12. The infinitive of the same verb occurs in the title of the psalm before us. The *Selah* indicates the depth of his distress, and the necessity of a pause before resuming the description.

9 (8.) *Thou hast put far my acquaintances from me ; thou hast made me an abomination to them ; (I am) shut up and cannot come forth.* The circumstance complained of in the first clause, is one often mentioned as an aggravation of distress. See above, on Ps. xxxi. 12 (11.) xxxviii. 12 (11.) lxix. 9 (8), and compare Ps. xxvii. 10. The next clause shows that he complains of something more than mere neglect. *Made me*, literally, *put or placed me*. See above, on Ps. xxxix. 9 (8.) There may be an allusion to the statement in the history, that the Israelites were an abomination, an object of religious detestation and abhorrence, to their Egyptian masters. See Gen. xliii. 32. xlv. 34. The last clause is by some understood to mean, I am encompassed by inextricable difficulties. Compare Lam. iii. 7. Job. iii. 23. Others, with more probability, connect it with what goes before, and understand the sense to be, that he is not willing to expose himself to this unmerited hatred and contempt. See Job. xxxi. 34, and compare Ps. xlv. 14 (13.) lxxx. 7 (6.)

10 (9.) *My eye decays by reason of affliction ; I invoke thee, oh Jehovah, every day ; I spread out unto thee my hands.* With the first clause compare Ps. vi. 8 (7.) xxxi. 10 (9.) xxxviii. 11 (10.) lxix. 4 (3.) With the last compare Ps. xlv. 21 (20.) The first Hebrew verb is one of rare occurrence ; a derivative noun is used by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 65. The preterites represent the suffering as no new thing but one of long continuance.

11 (10.) *Wilt thou to the dead do wonders, or shall ghosts arise (and) thank thee ? Selah.* The argument implied is that the present life is the appropriate time for those favours which belong to it. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) The word *Rephaim*, in the last clause, is the name of a Canaanitish race of giants, but is applied poetically to the gigantic shades or spectres of the dead. See my note on Isai. xiv. 9. *Do wonders*, literally, *wonder*, as in Ps. lxxvii. 12 (11.)

12 (11.) *Shall thy mercy be recounted in the grave, thy faithfulness in destruction?* The last word (*Abaddon*) appears elsewhere in conjunction with the grave and death, as a poetical equivalent. See Prov. xv. 11. Job. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22.

13 (12.) *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?* These are varied metaphorical descriptions of the state of death, considered negatively as the privation or the opposite of life. *Darkness* is here opposed to the *light of life* or *of the living*, Ps. lvi. 14 (13.) The land of forgetfulness, where men forget, Ecc. ix. 5, 6, 10, and are forgotten, Ps. xxxi. 13 (12.)

14 (13.) *And I unto thee, oh Jehovah, have cried, and in the morning shall my prayer come before thee.* What he has done he is still resolved to do, as the only means of safety. Hence the alternation of the preterite and future. The first verb means to cry for help. See above, on Ps. xviii. 42 (41.) With the last clause compare Ps. v. 4 (3.) lvii. 9 (8.) lix. 17 (16.) The verb has its proper sense of coming before one or into his presence. See above, on Ps. xvii. 13. xviii. 6 (5.) xxi. 4 (3.)

15. (14.) *Why, oh Jehovah, wilt thou reject my soul, wilt thou hide thy face from me?* The first verb means to reject with abhorrence. See above, on Ps. xliii. 2 xliv. 10, 24 (9, 23.) lx. 3, 12 (1, 10.) lxxiv. 1. lxxvii. 8 (7.) The question implies that such rejection would be inconsistent with God's faithfulness, and is therefore not expressive of entire despondence.

16 (15.) *Wretched (am) I and expiring from childhood; I have borne thy terrors; I despair.* Expiring, ready to perish, at the point of death, a strong description of extreme distress. The *childhood* may be that of the individual sufferer, or of Israel as a nation (Hos. xi. 1.) Both applications may have been intended.



17 (16.) *Over me have passed thine indignations ; thy terrors have destroyed me.* The image in the first clause is the same as in Ps. xlii. 8 (7.) *Indignations*, literally, heats or inflammations, but always applied to anger. The plural occurs only here. The unusual form of the last verb is supposed by some to have been coined by the writer, for the sake of an allusion to Lev. xxv. 23.

18 (17.) *They have surrounded me like waters all the day ; they have encompassed me at once (or all together.)* The figure of overwhelming waves is still continued. The subject of the verbs can only be the indignations and the terrors of v. 17 (16.)

19 (18.) *Thou hast put far from me lover and friend ; my acquaintances (are) darkness (or a dark place.)* The first clause is a repetition of v. 9 (8.) The other is obscure, and is supposed by some to mean, my acquaintances vanish, disappear in darkness ; by others, my acquaintances give way to darkness, are succeeded by it ; my only friend is now the dark place, i. e. the grave or death. Thus understood, the sentiment is not unlike that in Job xvii. 14.

## P S A L M L X X X I X .

1 *Maschil.* *By Ethan the Ezrahite.* From the fact that Ethan and Jeduthun are both named with Asaph and Heman, but never named together, it has been inferred that they are two names of the same person, or rather that *Ethan* is the personal name, and *Jeduthun* (derived from a verb which means to *praise*) the official title. Heman and Ethan are both described as Ezrahites, i. e. adopted sons of Zerah, 1 Chron. ii. 5, but by birth were no

doubt both *Sons of Korah*, 1 Chron. vi. 18, 22 (33, 37.) To the lamentations and complaints of Heman in the first part of this double psalm (Ps. lxxxviii) is now added an appeal to the divine promise by Ethan in the psalm before us. The particular promise here insisted on is that in 2 Sam. vii, which constitutes the basis of all the Messianic Psalms. The hypothesis of Hengstenberg and others, that the psalm was composed in the interval between the death of Josiah and the Babylonish exile, by the Korhites of that period, who merely assumed the name and breathed the spirit of their great progenitors, could be justified only by extreme exegetical necessity, which does not here exist, since nothing is more natural than to assume, that these psalms were nearly contemporaneous with the promise itself, and intended to anticipate misgivings and repinings, which, although they existed even then in germ, were not developed till the period of decline began, or rather till it was approaching its catastrophe. By far the larger part of this psalm is occupied in amplifying and expounding the great Messianic promise, vs. 2—38 (1—37), while the remainder, like Ps. lxxxviii, teaches the chosen people how to apply it, in their times of suffering and despondency, vs. 39—53 (38—52), a feature of the composition which fully warrants its description in the title as a *maschil* or didactic psalm.

2 (1.) *The mercies of Jehovah forever will I sing ; to generation and generation will I make known thy faithfulness with my mouth.* The *mercies* particularly meant are the favours promised to David as the progenitor and type of the Messiah. The *faithfulness* mentioned in the other clause is that of God in the fulfilment of these promises. Compare my note on Isai. lv. 3, where the same idea is expressed by *the sure mercies of David*. *Forever*, literally *eternity*, the noun being used adverbially, as its plural is in Ps. lxi. 5 (4.) The promise of perpetual commemoration shows that the Psalmist speaks not only for himself but for the church of which he is the mouth or spokesman.

3 (2.) *For I have said, Forever shall mercy be built up. The heavens—thou wilt fix thy faithfulness in them.* The church will celebrate God's mercy and faithfulness forever, because they will endure forever. *I have said*, i. e. this is the view of the matter I have taken and expressed already. The scheme of God's gracious dispensations is conceived of as a building, already founded and hereafter to be carried up to its completion. The emphatic construction of *the heavens* as an absolute nominative (*as to the heavens, thou wilt fix etc.*) is inadequately represented in the common version (*shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*) For the proverbial use of the heavens and the heavenly bodies as a standard of permanence and immutability, see above, on Ps. lxxii. 5. The idea here is, thou shalt make thy faithfulness as fixed and stable as the frame of nature.

4 (3.) *I have ratified a covenant with my chosen (one); I have sworn unto David my servant.* These are the words of God himself, though not expressly so described, as in v. 20 (19) below. We have here a summary statement of the substance of the promise in 2 Sam. vii, upon which this and the other Messianic psalms are founded. *Ratified a covenant*, see above, on Ps. l. 5. *With my chosen*, literally, *to my chosen*, as in the parallel expression, because what is here called a covenant was really a conditional promise or engagement upon God's part. *My servant*, i. e. my chosen and appointed instrument in executing my designs. See above, on Ps. xviii. 1, and compare Ps. lxxxvi. 16.

5 (4.) *Unto eternity will I confirm thy seed, and build, to generation and generation, thy throne. Selah. Confirm thy seed,* establish thy descendants in the permanent possession of the royal dignity. The same two verbs which, in the foregoing verse, are applied to the divine grace and fidelity, are here applied directly to their objects, the throne and family of David.

6 (5.) *And the heavens acknowledge thy wonders, Jehovah;*



*likewise thy faithfulness* (is acknowledged) *in the assembly of holy (ones.)* The promise just cited is entitled to men's confidence, because the omnipotence and faithfulness of Him who uttered it are thankfully acknowledged by superior beings. The parallelism of *heavens* and *holy ones* shows that the former are here put for their inhabitants. For the true meaning of the first verb, see above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5), and for that of the following noun, on Ps. lxxvii. 12 (11.) lxxxviii. 11 (10.) *Wonders* or *miracles* are here referred to, as proofs of a mighty power. The *and, also*, at the beginning of the clauses, have the force of *even, yea*, in our idiom. The word translated *holy ones* is entirely different from that usually rendered *saints*. The latter is always applied to men, the former usually to superior beings, i. e. angels. See Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3. Dan. viii. 13. Zech. xiv. 5. Job. iv. 18. xv. 15.

7. (6.) *For who, in the sky, can compare to Jehovah?* (Who) *is like to Jehovah among the Sons of the Mighty?* The question involves a strong negation, or an affirmation that there is none like him, even in the orders of existence superior to man. This is given as a reason for the adoring recognition of his power and veracity in v. 6 (5.) The word translated *sky* is elsewhere used in the plural to denote the *clouds* collectively. See above, on Ps. lxviii. 35 (34.) lxxvii. 18 (17.) lxxviii. 23. The singular form, in this sense, is peculiar to the psalm before us. See below, v. 38 (37.) The twofold usage of the English verb *compare*, as active and neuter, corresponds exactly to that of the original expression, for the primary and proper sense of which, see above on Ps. v. 4 (3.) xl. 6 (5.) l. 21. The *Sons of the Mighty, or Almighty* are the angels. As to the peculiar form of the description, see above, on Ps. xxix. 1, from which it seems to be directly borrowed in the case before us.

8 (7.) *A God to be dreaded in the secret council of (his) holy (ones) greatly, and to be feared above all (those) about him.* This

is not a distinct proposition, but a further description of the Being pronounced in the foregoing verse to be incomparable. The divine name (יהוה) here used implies that what makes him so terrible is his infinite power. The angels are again called *holy ones*, but furthermore described as the privy council, the confidential intimates, of God himself. See above, on Ps. xxv. 14. lv. 15 (14.) lxxxiii. 4 (3.) Yet even to these, as being endlessly superior, he is and ought to be an object of adoring fear. The intensive adverb *greatly* is the same with that in Ps. lxii. 3, and like it is placed emphatically at the end of the clause. Compare Ps. xlviii. 2 (1.) lxxv. 10 (9.) *Above* may either mean *more than*, or *by*, with an implication of his vast superiority as the cause or reason. *Those about him*, i. e. those immediately surrounding him, his heavenly attendants, the angels. See the same expression, in a somewhat different application, Ps. lxxvi. 12 (11.)

9 (8.) *Jehovah, God of Hosts, who (is) like thee, mighty, Jah, and thy faithfulness (is) round about thee.* The infinite superiority of God to men and angels is here expressed, or rather indicated, by an accumulation of descriptive titles. We have here the full phrase, *Jehovah God of Hosts*, which occurs so frequently in an abbreviated form. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 10. The word translated *mighty* is used only here; but its sense is clear from the analogy of cognate forms, confirmed by the testimony of the ancient versions. As to *Jah*, the pregnant abbreviation or concentration of *Jehovah*, see above, on Ps. lxviii. 5 (4.) It may here be in apposition either with *Jehovah*, as a vocative, or with *Jah*, as a descriptive title. ‘Who is like thee, a mighty one, oh Jah?’ Or, ‘who like thee is mighty, who like thee is Jah?’ *Faithfulness*, as elsewhere, is veracity or truth in the fulfilment of a promise. The word translated *round about* is the feminine or neuter form of that used in the preceding verse, and there applied to persons. The meaning of the whole clause is that God’s fidelity is never absent from him but appears wherever he does, the proofs

of its existence being visible on all hands. The English Bible supplies a preposition and assumes a second question, 'who is like thy faithfulness round about thee?' But the other construction, which is that adopted in the ancient versions, is much simpler and more natural, the ellipsis of the preposition in such cases being rare, whereas that of the substantive verb is the general rule of Hebrew syntax, to which its insertion is a mere exception.

10 (9.) *Thou rulest the swell of the sea ; in the rise of its waves thou stillest them.* The general declaration of God's power is now rendered more distinct by specifying one of the most striking forms in which it manifests itself. At the same time, there is no doubt an allusion to the scriptural usage of the sea as an emblem of the world and its conflicting powers. See above, on Ps. xlv. 3, 4 (2, 3.) lxxv. 8 (7.) The appropriateness of the words both to physical and moral changes affords an easy and beautiful transition to the latter in the next verse. The verbal form at the beginning is a participle, *thou (art) ruling*, i. e. habitually, constantly. The connective particle may be retained by rendering it *rulest over*. The first noun is applied elsewhere (Ps. xvii. 10) to the swelling or elation of the heart with pride ; but that this is only a derived and secondary meaning may be gathered from the use of the same word to denote the loftiness or majesty of God (Ps. xciii. 1), and also from the application of the verbal root to the rise of water in an inundation (Ez. xlvi. 5.) The parallel term is an abbreviated infinitive used as a noun, and therefore well represented by the English *rise*, which is also both noun and verb.

11 (10.) *Thou didst crush, like the slain, Rahab ; with thine arm of strength thou didst scatter thy foes.* This relates wholly to the sea of nations, in which Egypt stands first, as the earliest national enemy of Israel, and also perhaps because the power of Pharaoh, at the exodus, was literally broken in the sea. The



first verb means to shatter, crush, or break in pieces. See above, Ps. lxxii. 4. The pronoun is emphatic ; (it was) *thou* (and none other that) *didst crush*, etc. The significant name *Rahab*, meaning pride or insolence, corresponds to the swelling of the sea, in the foregoing verse. See above, on Ps. lxxxvii. 4. *Like the slain*, like one mortally wounded, especially in battle. See above, on Ps. lxxxviii. 6 (5.) The point of comparison is the sudden change from overbearing arrogance to helplessness and weakness. *Thine arm of strength*, or *strong arm*, the active exertion of thy power. See above, on Ps. x. 15. xxxvii. 17. xlv. 4 (3.) lxxxiii. 9 (8.) The last verb belongs to the dialect of poetry, and occurs above, in Ps. liii. 6 (5.) See below, Ps. cxii. 9. xli. 7. This verse relates only indirectly to the enemies of God in general. Even the last clause has specific reference to the enemies who perished in the Red Sea.

12 (11.) *To thee (belongs) heaven, also to thee earth, the world and its fulness, thou didst found them.* The power of God is now described as universal and creative. *Heaven and earth* is the usual comprehensive phrase for the whole frame of nature or material universe. The last clause is evidently borrowed from Ps. xxiv. 1. *Its fulness*, that which occupies and fills it, its contents and its inhabitants. The verb to *found* suggests the two ideas of creation and sustentation. He not only called them into being, but made them permanent or lasting. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 69, and below, on Ps. civ. 5. The *world*, the cultivated and productive earth, as opposed to the desolate and barren sea. The English Bible, following the masoretic accents, construes *the world and its fulness* as absolute nominatives. A simpler construction is to put them in apposition with *heaven and earth*, and refer the pronoun at the end to all these antecedents.

13 (12.) *North and south, thou didst create them ; Tabor and Hermon in thy name rejoice.* The pronoun at the end of the first

clause is superfluous in English; the original construction requires *north and south* to be taken absolutely, (*as for*) *the north and south, thou hast created them*. The word for *north* originally means concealment; that for *south* the right hand. The east and west are represented by two mountains on either side of Jordan. As to Hermon, see above, on Ps. xlii. 7 (6.) The points of the compass are here put, like heaven and earth in the preceding context, for the whole world, and described as rejoicing in God's name, i. e. praising his perfections by their very existence.

14 (13.) *To thee (is) an arm with strength; strong is thy hand, high is thy right hand*. This is simply another declaration of the divine omnipotence, under the usual emblems, arm, hand, and right-hand. See above, on v. 11 (10.)

15 (14.) *Justice and judgment (are) the place of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face*. The word translated *place* may also have the more specific sense of dwelling-place. The meaning is that God reigns in the midst of perfect righteousness. See above, on v. 9 (8.) The verb in the last clause always means to *go* or *come before*, sometimes in the sense of coming into one's presence, sometimes in that of meeting or encountering, sometimes (as here) in that of being a forerunner. See above, on Ps. lxxxv. 14 (13.)

16 (15.) *Happy the people knowing joyful noise; Jehovah, in the light of thy face they shall walk*. The unusual expression in the first clause seems to mean those who know how and have occasion to rejoice in the experience of God's favour. The last noun in Hebrew denotes any loud expression of exultation, either by voice or instrument. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 6. The light of God's face is the cheering expression of his countenance as indicating favour or benignity. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.)

xliii. 3. xliv. 4 (3.) To walk in this light is to live in the habitual enjoyment of it. This last clause gives the reason for their being pronounced happy in the first.

17 (16.) *In thy name they shall rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall be exalted.* In thy name, in the display of thy perfections. In thy righteousness, i. e. in the exercise of that essential rectitude which secures the performance of God's promise and thereby the salvation of his people.

18 (17.) *For the beauty of their strength (art) thou and in thy favour thou wilt lift our horn.* God is at once their mighty ornament and their glorious protection. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 61. *In thy favour*, at the time, and by the means, of thy experienced favour. *Lift our horn*, enable us to triumph in security. See above, on Ps. lxxv. 11 (10), and below, on Ps. xcii. 11 (10.)

19 (18.) *For unto Jehovah (belongs) our shield, and to the Holy One of Israel our king.* Our protectors are themselves protected by Jehovah. This construction is much simpler and more natural than that adopted in the English versions, which entirely overlooks the preposition in both clauses, or arbitrarily regards it as a sign of the nominative case. A better construction, although not precisely the true sense, is given in the margin of the English Bible.

20 (19.) *Then thou spakest in vision to thy gracious one and saidst, I have laid help on a Mighty (Man); I have raised one chosen from (among) the people.* The Psalmist here returns to the vocation by David and the promise made to him. See 2 Sam. vii. 17 (compare 1 Chron. xvii. 9), where the divine communication made through Nathan to David is called a *vision*. *Thy saint* or *gracious one* may signify either of these persons.



The ancient versions, followed by the Prayer Book and some eminent interpreters, have the plural form instead of the singular, *thy saints*, meaning Israel at large, to whom the promise was truly addressed. See 2 Sam. vii. 10. 1 Chr. xvii. 9. *To lay help upon* one is to impart it to him, with a strong implication of descent from above. See above, on Ps. xxi. 6 (5.) The gift in this case was not merely for himself, but for others through his agency. God helped him to help the people. *Chosen* has here its strict sense, but not without allusion to its specific use as signifying a young warrior. See above, on Ps. lxxviii. 31, 63.

21 (20.) *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.* This verse removes all doubt as to the person primarily intended in the foregoing verse, but without excluding his successors, and especially the last and greatest of them, to whom the royal dignity was given in the unction of David. See 1 Sam. xvi. 13. This act denoted not only consecration to the divine service, but the spiritual gifts required in order to its right performance. See above, on Ps. ii. 2.

22 (21.) *With whom my hand shall be ever present; also my arm shall strengthen him.* Ever present, literally, established, permanently fixed. See below, v. 38 (37), and above, Ps. lxxviii. 37. The hand and arm, as usual, are emblems of strength. See above, on vs. 11, 14 (10, 13.)

23 (22.) *The enemy shall not vex him, and the son of iniquity shall not afflict him.* The verb in the first clause means specifically to annoy or persecute as a creditor his debtor. The second clause is copied, almost word for word, from 2 Sam. vii. 10. Compare 1 Chr. xvii. 9.

24 (23.) *And I will crush before him his foes, and his haters I*

*will smite.* The last verb is especially applied to strokes inflicted by the hand of God.

25 (24.) *And my faithfulness and my mercy (shall be) with him, and in my name shall his horn be high.* See above, on vs. 17, 18 (16, 17.) Faithfulness and mercy are combined, as in Ps. lxxxviii. 12 (11.)

26 (25.) *And I will set in the sea his hand, and in the floods his right hand.* I will cause him to lay hands upon them, and exercise authority over them, as his own possession and domain. *Hand and right hand*, as in v. 14 (13.) *Sea and floods*, streams, or rivers, as in Ps. xxiv. 2. The watery parts of the earth are here put for the whole. Compare 1 Chr. xiv. 17.

27 (26.) *He shall call me (or cry unto me), Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.* The emphatic pronouns in the original bring out more clearly the mutual relation and reciprocal action of the parties. With the first clause compare 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chr. xxii. 10. Job xvii. 14. With the second compare Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) xxxi. 3 (2.) *The rock of my salvation*, the rock that saves me, the hiding-place and stronghold where my safety lies.

28 (27.) *Also I (as my) first-born will give him, higher than kings of the earth.* He shall be treated not only as the son but as the eldest son of God himself. The same description is applied elsewhere to Israel (Ex. iv. 22), to Ephraim (Jer. xxxi. 9), and to Christ (Heb. i. 6.) The last clause is borrowed, both in form and substance, from Deut. xxviii. 1 (compare xxix. 16); but instead of *high above*, we have here *high as to*, in reference to (or in comparison with) the kings of the earth.

29 (28.) *Forever will I keep for him my mercy, and my cove-*

*nant is sure to him. Forever*, literally, to eternity. *Keep*, i. e. keep it in reserve for him. *My covenant*, or conditional promise. See above, on v. 4 (3.) *Sure*, or more exactly, made sure, ratified, confirmed. Compare Isai. lv. 3.

30 (29.) *And I will establish forever his seed, and his throne as the days of heaven.* See 2 Sam. vii. 12. The promise is now extended from David to his posterity. *Establish*, literally, set or place. The pronoun in the second clause may refer either to David or his seed. In the latter case, it might be rendered *its* or *their throne*. The question, however, is purely grammatical, since the throne of David and the throne of his descendants are identical. In the last clause the idea of duration is again expressed by a reference to the stability of nature. See above, on Ps. lxxii. 5, 7, 17, and compare Deut. xi. 21.

31—33 (30—32.) *If his sons forsake my law, and in my judgments will not walk; if my statutes they profane, and my commandments will not keep; then will I visit with a rod their transgression, and with stripes their guilt.* The promise of perpetual favour to the house of David was not intended to ensure impunity to its unfaithful members. To *profane* God's statutes is to deny in theory or practice, their sacred obligation and divine authority. The *and* at the commencement of the last verse is equivalent to *then* in English after a conditional clause. The whole passage is an amplification of 2 Sam. vii. 14.

34 (33.) *And my mercy I will not withdraw from him, and will not prove false (or deal falsely) in my faith.* Our idiom requires a *but* to render clear the relation of this sentence to the foregoing context. The verb in the first clause means to break or violate, but construed, as it here is, with the preposition *from*, suggests the idea of breaking an engagement by withdrawing what was stipulated to be given and secured. *Faith* in the last clause



means fidelity or truth, as in the phrases, *good faith, keep faith*, etc. See above, on Ps. xlv. 18 (17.) The promise in this verse is not to *them* but *him*, not to the sinning individuals mentioned just before, but to the family or race as such, to David as still living in his natural descendants. Compare 1 Kings xi. 36. 2 Kings viii. 19. 2 Chr. vi. 42. Isai. xxxvii. 35.

35 (34.) *I will not profane my covenant, and the utterance of my lips I will not change.* In the first clause there is obvious allusion to v. 32 (31.) What God requires of them he renders to them. The engagement is reciprocal. As they are not to profane his covenant by breaking it, neither will He. The obligation is a sacred one on both sides. See below, on the next verse, and above, on Ps. lv. 21 (20.) The *utterance* or *outgoing* of the lips is a technical expression of the Law, in reference to oral vows and other engagements. See Num. xxx. 13 (12.) Deut. xxiii. 24 (23.) It is a stronger expression than *that which I have said* or *promised*, although this is really the meaning here. *I will not change*, evade the execution of my promise by altering its terms or its conditions. Compare the form of expression in Ps. xv. 4.

36 (35.) *One (thing) have I sworn in my holiness, I will not lie unto David.* The first word in Hebrew is not an adverb of time (*ἅπαξ, semel*, once), but a numeral adjective in the feminine form, used as the neuter is in Greek and Latin. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 4. 'Whatever else may fail, there is one thing that cannot, for I have sworn that it shall come to pass.' *In my holiness*, as a holy God, including all divine perfection, but with special reference to moral rectitude. See above, on Ps. lx. 8 (6.) The last verb might be rendered, *I cannot lie*. See Num. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29, and compare Heb. vi. 18. vii. 20, 21. The form of the original is highly idiomatic, *if I lie* unto David. Compare the Hebrew of 1 Sam. xxiv. 7 (6.) 2 Sam. iii. 35.

37 (36.) *His seed to eternity shall be ; and his throne as the sun before me.* See above, on v. 30 (29), and compare Ps. xlv. 7 (6.) *Shall be*, shall continue to exist. Or the whole phrase may mean, *shall be eternal.* *As the sun*, see above, on Ps. lxxii. 5, 17. *Before me*, in my sight and under my protection.

38 (37.) *As the moon is fixed eternally, and the witness in the sky is sure.* The verse, thus translated, does not repeat the promise in the one before it, but merely confirms it by a further reference to the course of nature, as the customary standard of duration. It is equally grammatical, however, to translate, *as the moon it* (the throne) *shall be fixed forever, and (as) the witness in heaven is sure.* In either case the witness is the moon. See above, on v. 7 (6), 29 (28), and compare Ps. lxxii. 5.

39 (38.) *And (yet) thou hast cast off and rejected ; thou art wroth with thine Anointed.* Having fully recited and expounded the great promise to the house of David, the psalm now contrasts it with the present reality, and seems to complain that it had not been verified. For a similar transition, see above, Ps. xlv. 10 (9.) There is no need of confining this description to the last days of the kingdom of Judah, or to any other period of its history exclusively. If the psalm was really composed by Ethan, as we have no sufficient ground for doubting that it was, he may have designedly so framed it as to suit any season of distress and danger, in which the theocratic sovereign seemed to be forsaken of Jehovah. Both verbs in the first clause signify abhorrent and contemptuous rejection. See above, on Ps. xv. 4. xliii. 2. xlv. 10 (9.) lxxviii. 59, 67. lxxxviii. 15 (14.)

40 (39.) *Thou hast broken the covenant of thy servant ; thou hast profaned to the earth his crown.* The first verb in Hebrew occurs only here and Lam. ii. 7. The usual explanation is conjectural, or founded on the ancient versions. A cognate verb in Arabic

means to *abhor*, which would be appropriate in this place. *The covenant of thy servant*, i. e. thy covenant with thy servant. See above, on vs. 29, 35 (28, 34.) The pregnant construction, *profaned to the ground*, i. e. profaned by casting to the ground, occurs above, Ps. lxxiv. 7. The theocratical crown was a sacred or religious dignity, any contempt of which might therefore well be called a profanation. Compare what is said of the priestly diadem, Ex. xxviii. 36. xxix. 6.

41 (40.) *Thou hast broken down all his walls ; thou hast made his defences a ruin.* As the word translated *walls* is commonly used to denote the enclosures of vineyards, whether walls or hedges, this may be the figure here intended, which is then exchanged, in the last clause, for that of a walled town, with its *defences* or defensive works, its fortifications. See above, on Ps. lxxx. 13 (12.) Some interpreters allege that the last word always has the sense of *terror* ; but it may be doubted whether it ever has, whereas that of *ruin* often occurs, particularly in the Book of Proverbs.

42 (41.) *All spoil him that pass by the way ; he has become a contempt to his neighbours.* With the first clause compare Ps. lxxx. 13 (12) ; with the last, Ps. lxxx. 7 (6.) These resemblances prove nothing as to the relative antiquity of the two psalms, or the date of either. The figure is more fully carried out in Ps. lxxx, but this no more proves that to be the original than it proves it to be the copy. If any such conclusion were legitimate, it would be easier to account for the amplification of the hint here thrown out by a later writer, than for the omission, in the case before us, of so many fine strokes in that admirable apologue. *A contempt*, an object of supercilious pity and disdainful wonder.

43 (42.) *Thou hast lifted the right hand of his foes, hast caused*



*to triumph all his enemies.* As the hand, and especially the right hand, is the symbol of exerted strength, and a high hand that of triumphant superiority, especially in war, so to raise the right hand in the first clause of the verse before us, really means nothing more than the literal expression (*caused to triumph*) in the other. This seemed to be in direct contradiction to the promise in vs. 23, 24 (22, 23), as well as to the prayer in Ps. xxv. 2.

44 (43.) *Also thou turnest the edge of his sword, and dost not allow him to stand in the battle.* The particle (הֵן) at the beginning indicates a climax. Not only was his enemy superior, but himself delinquent and disgraced. *Edge*, literally *rock*, of *his sword*. The idea suggested may be that of hardness, as a hard edge is essential to a serviceable weapon. See my note on Isai. xxvii. 1. Some interpreters, however, think it best to adhere to the ordinary usage of *rock* in Hebrew as an emblem of strength, and to understand the whole phrase as meaning *the strength of his sword*, either in the strict sense or in that of *strong sword*, both of which are here appropriate. See above, on v. 27 (26.) The construction in the last clause is ambiguous, as the pronoun may refer to *sword* or *rock*, no less grammatically than to its possessor. The general sense remains the same, however, as in the similar case above, v. 30 (29.)

45 (44.) *Thou hast made (him) to cease from his brightness, and his throne to the earth cast down.* *Brightness* is in various languages a figure for distinction, eminence, celebrity, or glory. Compare with the last clause what is said of the crown in v. 40 (39), and of the throne itself in v. 5 (4.)

46 (45.) *Thou hast shortened the days of his youth; thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.* *His youth*, his youthful energy and vigour. See Job xxxiii. 25. Thou hast made him an object of contempt by cutting short his vigorous career and rendering

him prematurely old. This might be said of certain individual kings, as well as of the kingdom when approaching its catastrophe. *Covered him with shame*, literally, *covered shame upon him*, i. e. heaped it on him so as to cover him.

47 (46.) *How long, Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself forever? (How long) shall burn, like fire, thy wrath?* On the doubtful construction of the first clause, and the meaning of the combination, *how long forever*, see above, on Ps. xiii. 2 (1.) lxxix. 5. *How long*, literally, *until what*, i. e. until what point (*how far*), or until what time (*how long*)?

48 (47.) *Remember what duration I have; why (for) nought hast thou created all the sons of Man (or Adam)?* The construction in the first clause is obscure and broken, as if it consisted of incoherent exclamations. *Oh remember—I—what—duration.* For the meaning of the last word, see above, on Ps. xvii. 14. xxxix. 6 (5), and with the whole clause compare Ps. lxxviii. 39. cxix 84. Job vii. 6. xiv. 1. The last clause is to be hypothetically understood. ‘Why hast thou made all men in vain, as must be the case if their short life is entirely filled with suffering?’ Or, ‘why dost thou give colour and occasion to the charge of having made men to no purpose?’ *Why*, literally, *on what* (account), or *for what* (reason)? The next word in Hebrew (שָׁוְיָהּ) is a noun meaning vanity, nonentity, or nothing, here and in Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2, used adverbially in the sense of vainly, to no purpose, or for nought.

49 (48.) *What man shall live and not see death (but) rescue his soul from the hand of Sheol? Selah.* An indirect assertion of the melancholy fact that all must die, rendered still more pointed by the use of a word for *man* implying strength. See above, on Ps. lxxxviii. 5 (4.) As if he had said, what man is so strong as to live forever and escape the common destiny of

mortals? This allusion cannot be preserved in any mere translation. *Rescue*, literally, cause to escape. *His soul*, considered as his life or vital principle. *Hand* may be here, as often elsewhere, a figure for power; or it may have its proper sense and denote the hand of *Sheol*, the *Grave*, *Mortality* or *Death*, as an ideal person. The *Selah* has the same force as in Ps. xxxix. 6, 12 (5, 11.)

50 (49.) *Where are thy former mercies, Lord, thou didst swear unto David in thy truth* (or *faithfulness*.) The *first* or *former mercies* of the Lord are those which he promised of old, especially to David, as expressly mentioned in the other clause. See above, on vs. 4, 36 (3, 35.) The inquiry where they are implies that they have vanished, or that the fulfilment has not become visible. The last clause may be closely united with the first by supplying a relative between them, as in the common version, *which thou swarest unto David*. A simpler and more emphatic syntax is to make it a distinct proposition: *thou didst swear unto David*, and thy oath cannot be broken. See above, on v. 36 (35.) This last idea is involved in the concluding words, *in thy veracity* or *faithfulness*. What God, as a God of truth, has sworn, not only will but must be executed.

51 (50.) *Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants, my bearing in my bosom all the many nations*. The form of address is the same as in v. 48 (47.) *The reproach of thy servants*, the contempt and disgrace to which they are subjected. *Thy servants*, of whom I am one. Or the sudden transition to the first person singular may show that the petitioner, in this whole context, is not an individual believer, but the Church at large. *In my bosom* may denote good measure or abundance. See above, on Ps. lxxix. 12. Or *bearing in my bosom* may mean *feeling in my heart*, i. e. intensely, exquisitely, in which case *nations* must be put for the contempt of nations. More probable than either



is the figure of gestation, according to which Zion, although now despised or hated by the nations, is one day to be their spiritual mother or their spiritual birth-place. See above on Ps. lxxxvii. 4, 6. The Hebrew adjective (רַב־מִן) may mean either *great* or *many*; but the latter sense is more agreeable to usage and the collocation of the words in this case. The idiomatic phrase, *all many nations*, is equivalent to saying, *all the nations who are many in number*. The word *all* might be used, however small the number of the nations. To express the whole idea, therefore, both words were required.

52 (51.) *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, Jehovah, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine Anointed.* The connection indicated by the relative at the beginning is by no means clear. The common version, above given, makes *reproach* in v. 51 (50) the antecedent. Some interpreters connect the relative with the verb at the beginning of that verse, and give it the force of a conjunction, ‘remember that (or how) thine enemies have reproached.’ Its proper meaning as a relative pronoun may be retained by referring it to different antecedents. ‘(I) whom thine enemies have reproached, (thine enemies) who have reproached the steps of thine Anointed.’ This last expression seems to mean that they had tracked or followed him, wherever he went, with calumny and insult.

53 (52.) *Blessed (be) Jehovah to eternity. Amen and Amen.* This is commonly regarded as no part of the psalm, but a doxology marking the conclusion of the third book. See above, on Ps. xli. 14 (13.) lxxii. 18—20, and compare the Preface, vol. 1, p. xi.

## P S A L M X C.

THE Fourth Book, according to the ancient traditional division of the Psalter, opens with the oldest psalm in the collection. Or rather the author of the present arrangement, who was probably no other than Ezra, placed this sublime composition by itself, between the two great divisions of the book, containing respectively the Earlier and Later Psalms. See the Preface, vol. i. p. xiii. It may therefore be regarded as the heart or centre of the whole collection, and indeed as the model upon which even David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1), formed that glorious body of psalmodic literature or hymnology, which, with its later but inspired and authoritative imitations, constitutes the present Book of Psalms. The date of the composition, though uncertain because not recorded, may with most probability be fixed near the close of the Error in the Wilderness, when the dying out of the older generation on account of their transgressions, and the threatened exclusion of Moses himself from the Promised Land, were exactly suited to produce such views of man's mortality and sinfulness as are here presented, but without destroying the anticipation of a bright futurity, such as really ensued upon the death of Moses, and is prospectively disclosed in the conclusion of this psalm. Its great theme is the frailty and brevity of human life, considered as the consequence of sin, and as a motive to repentance and obedience. He first contrasts the eternity of God with the mortality of man, vs. 1—6, which is then described as the effect of the divine wrath on account of sin, vs. 7—11, and made

the ground of a prayer, with which the psalm concludes, for the speedy restoration of the divine favour, vs. 12—17.

1. *A Prayer. By Moses, the Man of God. Lord, a home hast thou been to us, in generation and generation.* The psalm is called *a prayer*, because the petition at the close (vs. 12—17) contains the essence of the composition, to which the rest is merely preparatory. For another case precisely similar, see above, on Ps. lxxxvi. 1. The correctness of the title which ascribes the psalm to Moses is confirmed by its unique simplicity and grandeur; its appropriateness to his times and circumstances, as already stated; its resemblance to the Law in urging the connection between sin and death; its similarity of diction to the poetical portions of the Pentateuch, without the slightest trace of imitation or quotation; its marked unlikeness to the psalms of David, and still more to those of later date; and finally the proved impossibility of plausibly assigning it to any other age or author. The arguments against its authenticity have commonly been framed by a preposterous inversion of the evidence, converting into proofs of later date the very points of similarity which prove that this was the original and model psalm, the primeval basis upon which even David reared a noble superstructure of his own. The title *Man of God* is given to Moses, in Deut. xxxiii. 1. Josh. xiv. 6. Ezr. iii. 2, and is often applied to later prophets, especially Elijah and Elisha. See 1 Sam. ii. 27. 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24. xx. 28. 2 Kings i. 13. iv. 9, 21, 27, 42. It is here significant, implying that Moses wrote the psalm in this capacity. See above, on Ps. xviii. 1. xxxvi. 1, where David is in like manner called the *Servant of Jehovah*, a title given to Moses himself in the account of his death, Deut. xxxiv. 5, as David, on the other hand, is called the *Man of God*, 2 Chr. viii. 14. Instead of *hast been* some read *art*; but though the preterite of other verbs may be used to express general truths, the present of the substantive verb is so commonly suppressed, that its form, when inserted, must



have some significance. The truth seems to be, that the verse expresses only what God had been, but implies what he still was and still would be. *A home*, a fixed or settled dwelling, even while they wandered in the desert. The same noun is used by Moses, Deut. xxvi. 15, and a kindred form, Deut. xxxiii. 27. *In generation and generation*, in all successive generations. See above, on Ps. x. 6. xxxiii. 11. xlv. 18 (17.) xlix. 12 (11.) lxi. 7 (6.)

2. *Before mountains were born, and (before) thou hadst brought forth earth and land, and (indeed) from eternity to eternity, thou (art) God.* The mountains are first mentioned according to a scriptural usage which describes them as the oldest portions of the earth. See Gen. xlix. 26. Num. xxiii. 7. Deut. xxxiii. 15. Hab. iii. 6. By a strong but common and intelligible figure, creation is here described as generation. This is true not only of the first verb but of the second, which is too vaguely rendered in the common version (*thou hadst formed.*) *Earth*, as opposed to heaven; *land*, as opposed to sea. These are separately mentioned, as in the account of the creation. See Gen. i. 1, 9. The last clause may also be translated, *thou art, oh God!* It then simply asserts his existence from eternity. According to the other and more usual construction, it likewise asserts his omnipotence, the attribute denoted by the divine name here employed. This is the fuller and more comprehensive sense; but in favour of the other may be urged, that it is simpler and agrees best with the proximate design of the Psalmist to contrast the eternal God with short-lived man.

3. *Thou turnest man even to dust, and sayest, Return, sons of Man (or Adam)!* The evident allusion to Gen. iii. 19, which is also found in Job x. 9. xxxiv. 15, and re-appears in Ps. civ. 29 (compare Ps. ciii. 14), may serve to determine the meaning of the word translated *dust* in the first clause, but which is properly an adjective signifying *crushed*, broken to pieces, ground to powder,

and is figuratively applied, in Ps. xxxiv. 19 (18), to brokenness of heart. Compare Isai. lvii. 15. The Hebrew preposition (עַד) is stronger than our *to*, and means as far as, even to. The full sense of the whole phrase is, even to the state of one completely crushed or ground to powder, even to a pulverized condition. The shortness and fragility of human life is thus brought into the strongest contrast with the eternity of God.

4. *For a thousand years in thine eyes (are) as yesterday when it is past and a watch in the night.* However long human life may appear to man himself, it is in God's sight evanescent and contemptible. Even the patriarchal measure, which so often approximated to a thousand years, was in God's sight like a single day in man's, or rather like a mere subdivision of it, a third part of the night, which was divided by the ancient Hebrews into three watches. See above, on Ps. lxiii. 7 (6.) That this division was as old as Moses, may be seen from Ex. xiv. 24. *When it is past or passing.* It might also be translated, *for it passes*, i. e. no less hastily and swiftly. This verse is quoted and amplified, but without any change of meaning, 2 Pet. iii. 8.

5. *Thou sleepest them away—a sleep are they—in the morning, like the grass, they pass away.* The first Hebrew verb has no equivalent in English; it means to sweep away or carry off, as by a driving rain. The supposition of a reference to the flood is not necessary though admissible. A derivative form of the same verb occurs above, Ps. lxxvii. 18 (17.) The comparison of human life to a sleep or dream is common in all languages. The morning is mentioned as the time of waking, the time when we are most impressed with the unsubstantial nature of our dreams. See above, Ps. lxxiii. 20, and compare Ps. xxxix. 7 (6.) The *grass* is an additional but obvious emblem of caducity. The last verb is not a plural form in Hebrew, but agrees with *sleep*, or

rather with *man*, in the generic sense, whose life is here compared to sleep.

6. *In the morning it blooms and (then) passes away, (for) at evening he mows and it withers.* The mention of the morning, in v. 5, as following the night, suggests the mention of the morning here, as followed by the evening. The first verb means not merely to flourish in the wide sense, but to bloom, as plants do. See above, on Ps. lxxii. 16, and compare Num. xvii. 23 (8), which proves it to be a Mosaic expression. The verbs may agree with *grass*, or with *man* whom the grass represents, more probably the latter. The idea conveyed by supplying *then* is really involved in the grammatical relation of the Hebrew verbs, the second of which never means to grow or sprout, but always to pass or undergo a change. The third verb is active but may be construed with an indefinite subject, and is then equivalent in meaning to a passive, *he is mown and withers*. The withering is not here referred to as the effect of natural decay but of violent excision. With the whole verse compare Ps. xxxvii. 2. ciii. 15. Job xiv. 2.

7. *For we fail in thine anger, and in thy wrath are we affrighted.* The natural decay or violent interruption of man's life is the effect of God's displeasure. The first verb means to waste away, decay, wear out, cease to exist. Compare its use in Ps. lxxi. 9. lxxiii. 26. The other verb is very inadequately represented by the English *troubled*. It means shocked, confounded, agitated, terror-stricken. See above, on Ps. ii. 5. vi. 3, 4 (2, 3.) xlviii. 6 (5.) lxxviii. 33. lxxxiii. 16 (15), and below, on Ps. civ. 29, and compare my note on Isai. lxxv. 23. It here denotes the natural instinctive dread of death. There is here a very sensible progression in the thought. Thus far the Psalmist had insisted merely on the frailty and brevity of human life; but now he proceeds further and propounds the fearful doctrine, that this



sorrowful mortality is not an accident but an infliction, the direct effect of the divine wrath. Whatever instrumental agencies may be employed to kill us, our real destroyer is the anger of our Maker.

8. *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret (sins) in the light of thy countenance.* As man's mortality is the effect of God's wrath, so this wrath itself is the effect of sin. And this sin becomes the cause of death. See Gen. ii. 17, and compare Rom. v. 12. The verse before us represents God in the act of shortening man's life, and gives the necessary explanation of what might otherwise have seemed at variance with his infinite benevolence. The Bible, as an eminent interpreter has well said, throws the blame of death entirely on man himself. When God slays man, he puts his sins before him, looks directly at them; not only those which are notorious, but those which are concealed from every eye but that of omniscience. See Jer. xvi. 17. Heb. iv. 14, and compare Ps. xix. 15 (14.) 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. Another reading in the last clause, and most probably the true one, makes *secret* or *concealed* a singular and not a plural form, *our secret*; but the reference is still to sin. The word translated *light* does not properly denote the element itself, but that from which it is derived, a *luminary*, just as we call a candle or a lamp *a light*. See above, on Ps. lxxiv. 16. The precise sense seems to be, that God holds our sins to the light of his own countenance, and therefore cannot fail to see them.

9. *For all our days are gone in thine anger; we spend our years like a thought.* The *all* in the first clause is emphatic. What he says is true of our whole life. *Are gone*, literally, *turned away*, as an act preparatory to departure. The word translated *anger*, though synonymous, is not identical, with either of those used above in v. 7. It occurs, however, in Ps. vii. 7 (6), and according to its derivation properly denotes an outbreak of

angry feeling. *Spend*, not as a mere synonyme of *pass*, but in the strong sense of consuming, wasting, as in Job. xxxvi. 11 (compare xxi. 13.) The Hebrew verb is the causative of that translated *fail* in v. 7. The use of *years* as a parallel to *days* gives the sentence a climacteric effect. The word translated *thought* is elsewhere applied to audible sound (Ez. ii. 10. Job. xxxvii. 2), but only as the natural spontaneous expression of the thoughts and feelings, not to others but one's self. See above, on Ps. lxiii. 7 (6.) lxxvii. 13 (12.) By some strange misapprehension the Septuagint and Vulgate make it mean a *spider*, and the English versions have the singular periphrasis, *a tale that is told*.

10. *The days of our years! In them* (are contained) *seventy years, and if with strength eighty years, and their pride (is) trouble and mischief, for he drives (us) fast and we fly away.* The parallelism of *days* and *years* in the preceding verse suggests their combination here, a combination used by Moses elsewhere in describing the long lives of the patriarchal history. See Gen. xxv. 7. xlvii. 8, 9. The words may here be taken simply as an absolute nominative, (*as for*) *the days of our years, in them etc.* See above, on Ps. lxxxix. 3 (2.) But it adds to their significance, as well as to the beauty of the sentence, to explain them as a kind of wondering exclamation, as if such a term scarcely deserved to be computed. *In them are seventy years*, this is what they comprise or comprehend, it is to this that they amount. The life of Moses was much longer (Deut xxxiv. 7), but even in the history appears to be recorded as a signal exception to the general rule. *If with strength*, if accompanied with strength, or, as some prefer to construe it, if (the person be endued) with (more than usual) strength. The plural (*strengths*) may be an idiomatic form of speech, simply equivalent to the singular, or an intensive term denoting extraordinary strength. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) *Their pride*, the best part of our days or years, the part in which we are most confident or most contented.

The words translated *trouble and mischief* are in usage both applied to suffering at the hands or through the fault of others. The common version of the next verb (*it is cut off*) rests upon a doubtful etymology. In the only other place where the Hebrew verb certainly occurs (Num. xi. 31), it is applied to the driving of the quails by a strong wind over the camp of Israel. It may here agree with God himself, or with a subject undefined, *one drives* (us), which is tantamount to saying, *we are driven*. *Fast*, literally, (*in*) *haste* or *hastily*. *And*, as a necessary consequence, *we fly* before the propellent power.

11. *Who knows the power of thine anger and, according to thy fear, thy wrath?* The separation of the clauses as distinct propositions makes the last unmeaning. The whole is one interrogation, implying strong negation, as if he had said, no one knows the power of thine anger. See above, on Ps. xiv. 4. liii. 5 (4.) The sense is not that no one can, but that no one will know it, as he might and ought. *Knows*, literally, *knowing*, i. e. habitually. See above, on Ps. i. 6. *The power of thine anger*, its degree and the extent to which it operates. *According to thy fear*, as true piety or reverence for God demands. *Thy wrath*, the same word that is used in the first clause of v. 9 above.

12. *To number our days thus make us know, and we will bring a heart of wisdom.* The verb translated *make us know* is the causative of that in the preceding verse, to which there is an obvious allusion. It is therefore probable that they were meant to govern the same object. 'Who knows the power of thine anger?' 'So make us know (the power of thine anger.)' The first words of the verse before us are then not immediately dependent on the phrase *make (us) know*, but merely indicate the end for which the knowledge was desired. 'In order that we may number our days, i. e. know and feel how few they are, thus make us know, i. e. give us this knowledge of the connection between God's wrath



and our own mortality.' The common version of the last clause (*that me may apply our hearts unto wisdom*) is forced and ungrammatical, without an arbitrary change of pointing. The only admissible construction of the masoretic text is that first given, which may either mean, as some of the rabbinical interpreters suppose, 'we will bring into ourselves (i. e. acquire) a heart of wisdom,' or, 'we will bring (as an offering to thee) a heart of wisdom,' with allusion to Gen. iv. 3, 4, where the same verb is absolutely used of Cain and Abel's offerings.

13. *Return, Jehovah! How long (wilt thou forsake us)?—And repent as to thy servants.* To the prayer that the people may understand the causes of God's wrath is now added a prayer for its removal. The loss of God's favour is, as usual, represented as his absence. The aposiopesis in the question (*how long?*) is like that in Ps. vi. 4 (3.) xiii. 2 (1.) This clause being parenthetical, what follows is connected by the copulative particle with the imperative at the beginning. The meaning of the last clause is, so change thy dealing with thy servants as if thou hadst repented of afflicting them. The same bold form of speech is used by Moses elsewhere. See Ex. xxxii. 12. Deut. xxxii. 36, and compare the imitations in Judg. ii. 18. Jer. xv. 6. Joel ii. 13. Jon. iv. 2. Ps. cxxxv. 14.

14. *Satisfy us, in the morning, with thy mercy, and (then) we shall rejoice and be glad through all our days.* God's grace is here presented as the food required for the sustenance of his people. *Satisfy* or *sate us*, i. e. fill us, abundantly supply us. *In the morning*, early, speedily, perhaps with an allusion to the night as a common figure for affliction. See above, on Ps. v. 4 (3.) xlv. 6 (5.) xlix. 15 (14.) lix. 17 (16.) lxxxviii. 14 (13.) The oblique construction of the last clause, *that we may rejoice etc.*, is really involved in the direct one, which is much more pointed and emphatic. *In or through all our days*, i. e. throughout the remainder

of our lives. The English idiom allows the suppression of the particle, as in the common version.

15. *Make us glad according to the days thou hast afflicted us, the years we have seen evil.* According to, literally, as or like. The meaning is, compensate all our sufferings by proportionate enjoyments. The ellipsis of the relative is common in both idioms. The English Bible, by supplying it, enfeebles the expression without making the sense clearer. *Days* and *years*, as in v. 9. The plural forms in the Hebrew are unusual and borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 7, a Mosaic feature of the psalm which cannot possibly be reproduced in any version.

16. *Let appear unto thy servants thy doing, and thy glory on their sons (or children.)* He prays that even to the elder generation there may be vouchsafed a *token for good* (Ps. lxxxvi. 17), i. e. some assurance of the favours to be actually bestowed upon their children. Thus understood, the use of the two prepositions, *to* and *on*, is not unmeaning or fortuitous. God's *work* or *doing* is the course of his providential dealings, as in Ps. xcii. 5 (4) below; his *glory* the manifestation of his divine perfections in external act. See above, on Ps. viii. 6 (5.) xlv. 4 (3.) This was to appear not only *to* but *on* the younger race, i. e. in their own experience.

17. *And let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us, and the work of our hands establish upon us, and the work of our hands, establish thou it.* While the glory of Jehovah is expected to be fully revealed only in his dealings with the next generation, he is still besought to grant their fathers the experimental knowledge of his *beauty*, loveliness, or all that renders him an object of affection. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 4. The work of our hands is a favourite Mosaic phrase for all that we do or undertake, all our affairs and interests. See Deut. xiv. 29. xvi. 15. xxiv. 19. xxviii.

12. xxx. 9. To *establish* or *confirm* it is to prosper and succeed it, to bring it to a favourable issue. The expression *on us*, as before, suggests the idea of an influence exerted and a favour granted from above. The *yea* of the common version is substituted for the idiomatic repetition of the copulative *and* in the original.

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### PSALM XCI.

AN amplification of the theme, that God is the dwelling-place and refuge of his people. This and other points of contact with the Prayer of Moses seem to mark it as an imitation of that psalm, and thereby account for its position in the Psalter. The most remarkable peculiarity of form in the psalm before us is the frequent change and alternation of the persons. The only division which can well be made is that into two stanzas or strophes, supposed to be marked by the recurrence in v. 9 to the theme propounded in v. 1.

1. *Sitting* (or *dwelling*) *in the secret place of the Most High, in the shadow of the Almighty he is lodged.* The common version seems to make this an identical proposition, amounting really to this, that he whom God protects is protected by him. To avoid this, some make the whole verse a mere description of the person speaking in the next verse, and as this seems to be forbidden by the use of the first person there, they either make an arbitrary change of pointing (אַמֵּר for אֲמִר), or suppose a sudden change of person, as in other parts of this same psalm. Better than either of these constructions is a third, which makes the parallel clauses of this first verse descriptive of an ideal person, with whom the speaker is then tacitly identified. As if he had said, ‘happy



the man who dwells, etc.,’ and then added, ‘such is my condition; I can say, etc.’ For the figure of a secret place or covert, see above, on Ps. xxvii. 5. xxxi. 21 (20.) xxxii. 7; for that of a shadow, on Ps. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 8 (7.) lvii. 2 (1.) The divine titles, *Highest* and *Almighty*, suggest the reason of this perfect safety. The latter is the patriarchal title mentioned in Ex. vi. 3, where it is combined with (יְהוָה) a more familiar name denoting the same attribute. The last verb is strictly a reflective, and as such means to take up one’s lodgings, to domesticate one’s self, implying a voluntary choice more clearly than the primitive verb, as used above, in Ps. xxv. 13. xxx. 6 (5.) xlix. 13 (12.)

2. *I will say to Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress, my God, I will trust in him.* The first verb, while it expresses purpose or determination, includes both a present and potential meaning. *I can say*, I have reason and a right to say; and *I do* (habitually) *say*. In order to avoid another change of person, the common version and some others read *of the Lord*, which is admissible but needless. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.) Compare the other figures here used to denote divine protection with those in Ps. xviii. 3 (2) lxxi. 7. In the last clause, *I will trust in him*, there may seem to be another sudden change of person; but these words are really equivalent to a relative construction, *in whom I trust*, and may therefore be used even in a direct address.

3. *For lo, he will free thee from the fowler’s snare, from the plague of mischiefs.* The confiding soul is now addressed directly in the tone of promise. The supposition of responsive choirs is a gratuitous refinement. The *fowler’s snare* is a figure for insidious and complicated dangers. See above, on Ps. xviii. 6 (5), and below, on Ps. cxxiv. 7, and compare 2 Tim. ii. 26. The parallelism requires *plague* or *pestilence* to be taken as a metaphor, no less than *snare*. Both probably denote dangers arising from the craft of wicked enemies, to which the word translated *mis-*

*chiefs* is peculiarly appropriate. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) lii. 4, 9 (2, 7.) lvii. 2 (1.)

4. *With his pinion he will cover thee, and under his wings thou shalt find shelter ; shield and buckler (is) his truth.* Compare the figure of an eagle, Deut. xxxii. 11. For the meaning of the first noun, see above, on Ps. lxviii. 14 (13.) *Cover thee*, literally, *cover* (or *provide a covering*) *for thee*. *Find shelter* or *take refuge*, see above on Ps. ii. 12. The word translated *buckler* is properly a participle and means *surrounding*. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 2.

5. *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, for the arrow (that) flies by day.* Shalt not fear, i. e. shalt have no reason for alarm. *Terror by night*, literally, *of night*, i. e. nightly or nocturnal terror. There is no need of restricting this expression to any particular form of danger or distress, since all are usually aggravated by their occurrence in the night. Should any specific sense be put upon the figure of an arrow, from analogy and usage, it would be that of human enmity. See above, on Ps. lviii. 8 (7.) The Hebrew preposition, in both clauses, properly means *from*, i. e. arising or proceeding from, occasioned by, in consequence of, something else.

6. *For the plague (that) in darkness walks, for the pestilence (that) wastes at noon.* Here the words are to be taken in their proper sense, and not as in v. 3, where they are figures for a different kind of danger, or for danger in the general.

7. *There shall fall at thy side a thousand, and a myriad at thy right hand ; to thee it shall not come nigh.* This is equivalent to saying in our idiom, *though a thousand fall*, etc., which, however, would not be an exact translation, as it substitutes a hypothetical for an affirmative proposition. For the double sense and usage of the word translated *myriad* see above, on Ps. iii. 7 (6), and com-

pare the cognate form, Ps. lxviii. 18 (17.) *Myriad* represents the original term better than *ten thousand*, because it is wholly different, in form and etymology, from that translated *thousand*.

8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and the recompense of wicked (men) see.* The *only* puts mere sight in opposition to experience or participation. Compare Deut. xxxii. 35, 41. As usual in such cases, it is implied that the destruction of the wicked and deliverance of the righteous will be coincident and simultaneous. See below, on Ps. xcii. 12 (11.)

9. *For thou, Jehovah, (art) my refuge. The Most High hast thou made thy home (or habitation.)* The construction adopted in the English Bible is a forced one, only assumed in order to avoid the *enallage* or sudden change of person, which, however, is characteristic of this psalm. Equally needless and objectionable is the supposition of responsive choirs.

10. *There shall not happen to thee (any) evil, and a stroke shall not approach into thy tent.* The first verb is a causative passive and strictly means shall not be suffered or allowed to happen. *Evil*, i. e. natural evil, suffering or distress. The word translated *stroke* is very commonly applied to God's strokes or afflictive judgments. See above, on Ps. xxxviii. 12 (11.) xxxix. 11 (10.) *Into thy tent* is an expression apparently intended to qualify the promise, which might otherwise have seemed too absolute and inconsistent with the context from which we learn that danger was to draw nigh, even to the righteous, but not so as actually to enter his tent, and take up its abode with him.

11. *For his angels he will charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* The plural *angels* shows that there is no allusion to a guardian spirit attending the individual believer, but merely to the angels collectively, as ministering spirits, the instrumental agents



of God's providential care over his people. See Heb. i. 14. The promise here given does not extend to dangers rashly incurred or presumptuously sought, and was therefore no justification of the act to which our Lord was tempted by the devil, Matth. iv. 6. That the mere omission of the phrase *in all thy ways* was a part of the temptation, seems to be a gratuitous refinement, as our Lord himself makes no such charge; as the first words of the sentence would of course suggest the rest; and as *ways*, in the usage of the Psalms, does not mean ways of duty, but the ways in which a man is led by Providence. Neither the tempter's argument nor our Lord's reply to it would be at all affected by the introduction of the words suppressed.

12. *Upon (their) hands shall they bear thee, lest thou strike against the stone thy foot.* The dual form, denoting *both hands*, might be regarded as emphatic and suggestive of peculiar care; but the Hebrew noun has no other plural form in common use. A smooth path and unimpeded walk is a common figure for prosperity and safety. Compare Prov. iii. 23.

13. *On lion and adder thou shalt tread; thou shalt trample young lion and dragon.* These are commonly supposed to be strong figures for the two kinds of danger from which men need protection, open violence and secret treachery. The last word denotes a serpent, as in Ex. vii. 9. The specific meaning of the parallel term is unimportant. The young lion (not the lion's whelp) is mentioned as peculiarly fierce and greedy. See above, on Ps. xvii. 12. xxxiv. 11. xxxv. 17. From this verse our Lord derived the terms in which he promised protection to his followers, Luke x. 19.

14. *For he has set his love upon me, and I will rescue him; I will set him on high because he knows my name.* The first verb is a very strong expression for the warmest and most violent attach-

ment, corresponding in part with our idiomatic phrase *to fall in love*, and followed by a kindred preposition. It seems to be here used to describe God as an object of supreme devotion to the true believer. *Rescue him*, cause him to escape. *Set him on high*, i. e. beyond the reach of danger. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) 49 (48.) xx. 2 (1.) lix. 2 (1.) lxix. 30 (29.) *Knows my name*, has already experienced my goodness and seen the evidence of my perfections. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) ix. 11 (10.)

15. *He shall call me and I will answer him. With him (am) I in trouble. I will deliver him and honour him.* The meaning of the first clause is essentially the same as if he had said, *when he calls I will answer*, but with much more directness and force in the expression. *Calls me* to his aid, invokes me, prays to me. *Answer him* by granting his request, the idea commonly conveyed by the Hebrew verb here used. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4.) The futures have their proper sense, as this is a direct and formal promise. *I will be with him* would have been expressed in the same manner; but *I am with him* is still stronger, for it describes God as already present for the protection and deliverance of his people. *Deliver him*, extricate him from his embarrassments and dangers; and lest the promise should be thought to ensure mere safety, it is added, *I will honour him*, procure for him the respect of others by showing that I favour him myself.

16. *(With) length of days will I satisfy him, and will show him my salvation.* With the first clause compare Ex. xx. 12. Deut. v. 16. Ps. xxiii. 6. *Satisfy* or *satiate*, i. e. abundantly supply and fully gratify his largest wishes. With the last clause compare Ps. l. 23, where we have the same idiomatic construction of the verb *to see* with the preposition *in*, meaning to behold with strong emotion, and especially, emotion of a pleasurable kind. For a different application of the same phrase, see above, on Ps. xxxvii. 34. In the last three verses, God is him-

self the speaker, although not expressly so announced. See above, on Ps. xlv. 11 (10.) lxxv. 3, 4 (2, 3.) lxxxvii. 4.

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### PSALM XCII.

1. *A Psalm. A Song. For the Sabbath-Day.* The second title designates the Psalm as one of praise, in strict conformity to its contents. The immediate subject of the praise is the exhibition of God's power and wisdom in his providential dealings both with the wicked and the righteous. As one main design of the sabbath was to afford an opportunity for the admiring contemplation of God's works or doings, the psalm before us was peculiarly appropriate at such a time, and the third clause of the inscription is evidently correct.

2 (1.) *Good (is it) to give thanks unto Jehovah, and to make music to thy name, Most High!* The duty about to be performed is here described as not only right but pleasant. For the meaning of the two verbs, see above, on Ps. vii. 18 (17.)

3 (2.) *To declare in the morning thy mercy, and thy faithfulness in the nights.* The sentence is continued from the preceding verse, the infinitive with which this opens being governed by the phrase *it is good*. *In the morning*, taken by itself, implies eagerness and promptness, and with the parallel phrase (*in the nights*) unremitting diligence and constancy. See above, on Ps. xvi. 7. xlii. 9 (8.) lxxvii. 7 (6.) lxxxviii. 14 (13.) xc. 14 (13.) *Faithful-*



ness in the fulfilment of promises. Faithfulness and mercy are here combined like truth and mercy in Ps. lxxxix. 15 (14.)

4 (3.) *On decachord and on lyre, on meditation with a harp.* The first word in Hebrew means a decade, a group or set of ten, and then an instrument of ten strings. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 2. In the last clause, by a bold but intelligible figure, *meditation* is referred to as an instrument, precisely as the lyre and harp are, the latter being joined with it as a mere accompaniment.

5 (4.) *For thou hast gladdened me, Jehovah, with thy work; in the doings of thy hands I will rejoice.* This verse introduces the theme or subject of the praise proposed, to wit, the work and doings of the Lord, i. e. his providential dealings. See above, on Ps. xc. 16, 17. The last verb denotes properly the vocal expression of an inward joy.

6 (5.) *How great are thy doings, Jehovah, (how) exceedingly deep thy thoughts!* Thoughts and doings are correlative expressions, signifying plan and execution. *Deep*, not mysterious, but vast, immense, and inexhaustible, corresponding to *great* in the other clause. With this verse, compare Ps. xl. 6 (5.) Isai. lv. 9. Rom. xi. 23.

7 (6.) *A man-brute will not know, and a fool will not understand this.* The compound term at the beginning means a man who is no better than a brute, i. e. equally irrational. See above, on Ps. xl. 21 (20.) lxxiii. 22, and below, on Ps. xciv. 8. *Will not*, cannot, or does not know. *This*, i. e. what has just been said as to the depth of God's providential plans and purposes.

8 (6.) *In the springing up of wicked (men) like grass, and (when) all the doers of iniquity bloom, (it is) that they may be de-*

*stroyed forever.* The infinitive, as well as the future, indicates the time of action. The literal translation of the last words is, *for them to be destroyed until eternity.*

9 (8.) *And thou (art) Most High to eternity, Jehovah!* This brief but pregnant proposition is the centre of the psalm, and at the same time a summary of its contents. The superlative expression *Most High* is here used to translate a single Hebrew word which strictly means a height or high-place, but here denotes that which holds the highest place in the scale of being. For other applications of the same word, see above, on Ps. vii. 8 (7.) x. 5. xviii. 17 (16.)

10 (9.) *For lo, thine enemies, Jehovah—for lo, thine enemies shall perish; dispersed shall be all the doers of iniquity.* Jehovah must be the Most High, because his enemies not only yield to him, but perish in his presence. Here, as in Ps. lxxxix. 11, 52 (10, 51), the enemies of God and of his people are identified. The last verb is properly a reflexive, and may be translated, *they shall scatter* (or *disperse*) *themselves*, implying more activity and eagerness than the simple passive, *shall be scattered*. Compare Job iv. 11.

11 (10.) *And thou hast raised, like the unicorn's, my horn; I am anointed with fresh oil.* He now contrasts his own experience with that of his enemies and God's. With the figure of the first clause compare Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) lxxv. 5, 6, 11 (4, 5, 10.) lxxxix. 18, 25 (17, 24.) *I am anointed* or *I anoint* (my head), the Hebrew verb being elsewhere always active. The figure is borrowed from the ancient custom of anointing the head on festive occasions. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 5. *Fresh oil*, literally, *green*, i. e. verdant, a quality properly belonging to the tree being here transferred to its most valuable product.

12 (11.) *And my eye has looked upon my enemies ; of those rising up against me, evil-doers, my ears shall hear.* The sense is that he sees and hears what is become of them. Their destruction is implied, though not expressed. The word translated *enemies* occurs only here. According to the most probable etymology it means *watchers*, liers in wait or ambush. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 11. liv. 7 (5.) lvi. 3 (2.) lix. 11 (10), where a cognate form occurs. *My insurgents*, or those rising up against me, expresses the accessory idea of rebellion against rightful authority. See above, on Ps. iii. 2 (1.) liv. 5 (3.) lxxxvi. 14. The addition of *malefactors*, evil-doers, shows that it is not merely as his enemies, but on account of their transgressions against God, that he expects his foes to perish.

13 (12.) *A righteous (man) like a palm-tree shall sprout, like a cedar in Lebanon shall grow.* Some suppose an allusion to the fact that these trees thrive even in the most unfavourable situations. All that it is necessary to assume, however, is that as trees in general are natural and common emblems of a prosperous existence, so the same idea is conveyed with still more emphasis by the noblest species. The supposition of a reference to the decorations of the temple is gratuitous and far-fetched.

14 (13.) *Planted in the house of Jehovah, in the courts of our God they shall bloom (or flourish.)* See above, on Ps. lii. 10 (8), where the same image is presented, in a still more specific form, the olive-tree being there particularly mentioned.

15 (14.) *Still shall they bear fruit in old age ; fat and green shall they be.* In old age, literally, in grey or hoary hair. Of the epithets in the last clause one properly denotes an animal, the other a vegetable quality. The essential idea is that of the foregoing verse carried out into detail.



16 (15.) *To declare that Jehovah is just—my Rock—and no unrighteousness in Him.* See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2), and compare Deut. xxxii. 4. The epithet *just* denotes the essential rectitude of God, including his veracity and faithfulness to his engagements. See above, on Ps. xxv. 8. *My Rock* may be simply in apposition with *Jehovah*, *Jehovah my Rock is just*, or a second predicate, *Jehovah is just (and) my Rock*.

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## PSALM XCIII.

THE theme of this psalm is God's superiority to all opposing powers and the consequent safety of his church and people. There are strong reasons for believing that it was designed, with the one before it, to form a pair or double psalm. Besides those drawn from the number of verses and of the divine names, this whole psalm may be described as an amplification of the laconic dictum in Ps. xcii. 9 (8.) There is nothing to determine its precise date; but there seem to be expressions in it, which imply the existence of imminent danger to the theocracy from some great hostile power.

1 *Jehovah reigns; (with) majesty he clothes himself; Jehovah clothes himself with strength (and) girds himself; also established is the world, it shall not be moved.* The first clause does not simply affirm Jehovah's sovereignty as a general truth, but announces the fact that he has just become king or begun to reign, i. e. manifested himself anew in his regal character. The same form of the verb is used in reference to the accession of earthly

monarchs, 2 Sam. xv. 10. 1 Kings i. 11, 13. 2 Kings ix. 13. The word translated *majesty* is the one applied in Ps. lxxxix. 11 (10) to the swelling of the sea. Its use here may be intended to suggest the superiority of God to the powers of this world. *Clothes himself with*, literally, puts on, wears. The other verb is reflexive in form. The *also* introduces the consequence of this exaltation. See below, Ps. xevi. 10. xcvii. 1. xcix. 1, and compare Isai. xxiv. 23. Obad. 21. Zech. xiv. 9. Rev. xi. 17. xix. 6.

2. *Fixed (is) thy throne of old ; from eternity (art) thou.* *Fixed*, firmly established, permanently settled. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16. 1 Kings ii. 45. *Of old*, literally, *from then*, as in the margin of the English Bible. Compare Prov. viii. 22. Isai. xlvi. 3. v. 7. With the last clause compare Ps. xc. 2, and with the whole verse Rev. i. 17.

3. *The floods have raised, Jehovah, the floods have raised their voice ; the floods will raise their crash*, or crashing noise. The last Hebrew word occurs only here, but its etymology is obvious and perfectly analogous to that of waves or *breakers* in the next verse. The idea here conveyed is that of the noise made by the dashing of waves against each other or upon the shore. The preterite and future forms include the present, but suggest the additional idea of what has been heretofore and may be expected to continue hereafter. The emphatic repetition of the verb is like that in v. 1, and reappears in this whole series (Ps. xci—c) as a characteristic feature.

4. *More than the voices of waters—many—mighty—sea-billows—mighty in the high-place (is) Jehovah.* *More than*, literally, *from, away from*, the particle by which comparison is commonly expressed in Hebrew. The common version of the next clause, *mighty waves of the sea*, is scarcely grammatical, as the adjective, according to analogy and usage, cannot agree with the noun fol-

lowing, but must be in apposition with the adjective before it, and agree with the same object. The word translated *mighty* corresponds, in part, to our epithets, *sublime* and *grand*. See above, on Ps. viii. 1. *Sea-billows*, literally, *breakers of the sea*. Compare Ps. xlii. 8 (7.) lxxxviii. 8 (7.) Jon. ii. 4 (3.) That the comparison was meant to be between the noise of the sea and that of thunder considered as the voice of God, is an admissible but not a necessary supposition. See above, on Ps. xxix. 5.

5. *Thy testimonies are sure, very (sure) ; to thy house suits (or is becoming) holiness, Jehovah, unto length of days*. The testimonies of God are all the provisions of his Law, as in Ps. xix. 8(7.) xxv. 10, but with special reference, in this as in several other cases, to its promises. See above, on Ps. lx. 1. lxxx. 1. The verb here used is a passive, meaning strictly to be founded, settled, or secured. From this clause is borrowed the form of expression in Rev. xix. 9. xxi. 5. xxii. 6. The intensive adverb *very* or *exceedingly* has the same effect as when in English we use an epithet and add *extremely so* or *very much so*. The verb translated *suits* (or *is becoming*) is the root of the adjective used in Ps. xxxiii. 1. Compare my note on Isai. lii. 7. *Holiness* is by some understood to mean *sacredness*, immunity from profanation, and of course from violent intrusion. See above, on Ps. lxxiv. 3. The house of God is here referred to, as the place where he dwelt with his people, and they with him. *To length of days*, see Ps. xxiii. 6.



## P S A L M X C I V .

THIS psalm may be divided into two parts, in the first of which the ancient church complains of Jehovah's absence and apparent desertion, and of the consequent triumph of his enemies, vs. 1—11, while in the second she asks and confidently looks for his return and their destruction, vs. 12—23. There is nothing to determine the precise date of the composition, much less to restrict it to any particular historical occasion. Though some things in it seem peculiarly appropriate to the state of Judah on the eve of the Babylonish conquest, it is so constructed as to be a vehicle of pious feeling to the church in various emergencies.

1. *God of revenges, Jehovah, God of revenges, shine forth!* Some interpreters, following the ancient versions, make the last Hebrew word a finite verb, as it certainly is in Deut. xxxiii. 2. Ps. 1. 2. lxxx. 2 (1.) The meaning then is, *he has shined* or *shines*, and the psalm opens with a confident anticipation of God's intervention, as in Ps. xciii. 1. xcvii. 1. xcix. 1. In this case, however, the tone of confidence does not reappear until v. 12, and the imperatives in v. 2 make the similar construction of the verb in this case much more natural, though less agreeable to usage, than the other. The terms of this verse are borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 35. xxxiii. 2. See above, on Ps. 1. 2. The plural form (*revenges*) denotes fulness and variety. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) This expression, with the two divine names (*El* and *Jehovah*) recognize God as almighty, eternal, self-existent,

bound by covenant to his people, and alone entitled to take vengeance.

2. *Raise thyself, Judge of the Earth, return a recompense upon the proud.* The first verb is equivalent in meaning to the more familiar term *arise*, i. e. arouse thyself from inactivity, address thyself to action. See above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7.) The specific sense, which some interpreters assume, 'ascend the judgment-seat,' is not expressed by this verb, but suggested by the context. The word translated *recompense* strictly means the treatment of one person by another, to return which is to retaliate or recompense it. See above, on Ps. vii. 5 (4), and compare Ps. lxxix. 12. The use of the particle *upon* implies the inequality of the parties or the superiority of the avenger, from whom the recompense, as it were, comes down upon the guilty.

3. *How long shall wicked (men), Jehovah, how long shall wicked (men) triumph?* The question, as usual in such cases, implies that they have already triumphed long enough or too long, and therefore really involves a prayer that they may triumph no longer. The interruption and resumption of the sentence is like that in v. 1, and in Ps. xcii. 9 (8.) xciii. 1, 3.

4. (How long) *shall they pour forth, utter insolence, talk of themselves—all the workers of iniquity?* This is usually taken as an independent proposition, *they pour forth, etc.* But it seems a more natural construction to continue the interrogation from the other sentence. *Pour forth* is a figure for excessive and unadvised speech. See above, on Ps. lix. 8 (7), and compare Ps. xix. 3 (2.) *Utter* in words, speak, talk. *Insolence*, arrogance, as in Ps. lxxv. 6 (5.) The last verb is a reflexive form of the verb (אמר) to say, occurring only here. According to the general analogy of those forms, it may mean to talk to one's self, or

of one's self, or with each other. The second agrees best with what is said just before of their insolent or arrogant discourse.

5. *Thy people, Jehovah, they grind (or crush), and thy inheritance they humble (or afflict.)* The first verb means to bruise, break in pieces, or reduce to powder. The *people* and *heritage* of God are synonymous expressions, the people being so called because they belonged to him, and were possessed by him, from generation to generation. The terms of this verse seem to point out foreign persecutors or oppressors as the subject of complaint.

6. *Widow and stranger they kill, and orphans they murder.* The strongest description of injustice and violence is given by saying, that they not only wrong but murder the very classes of sufferers, who in the Law are constantly exhibited as objects of compassion. See Ex. xxii. 20—23 (21—24.) Deut. x. 18.

7. *And they say, Jah will not see, and the God of Jacob will not attend.* The same impious presumption is expressed in Ps. x. 11, 13. xiv. 1. lix. 8 (7.) The divine names are, as usual, significant. That the self-existent and eternal God should not see, is a palpable absurdity; and scarcely less so, that the God of Israel should suffer his own people to be slaughtered without even observing it. The last verb means to mark, note, notice.

8. *Attend ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye act wisely?* See above, on Ps. lxxiii. 22. xcii. 7 (6.) The first verb is the same with that at the end of the preceding verse. It is stronger than the English word *attend*, implying in all cases, an intelligent attention, so that it may be rendered, as it is by many, *understand*. The word translated *brutish* is a participle, denoting habitual conduct or a permanent condition. The question in the last clause is a virtual exhortation to begin at once. The verb in this clause has its usual active meaning. See above,



on Ps. ii. 10. xiv. 2. xli. 2 (1.) *In* (or *among*) *the people* no doubt means in Israel itself, as in Judg. v. 9, where the form of expression is the same.

9. *Shall the planter of the ear—shall he not hear? Or the former of the eye, shall he not see?* The words translated *planter* and *former* are active participles, and denote something continually going on. The figure of planting suggests the two ideas of formation and insertion. By a similar figure we might speak in English of *implanting* the faculty or sense of hearing. The act denoted by the parallel Hebrew word is that of shaping, moulding. The participle here used, when employed as a noun, means a *potter*. See above, Ps. ii. 9. The peculiar form of the translation of the first clause is intended to represent that of the original, in which the interrogative but not the negative particle is repeated. This may be reckoned as another instance of the reduplicated forms by which this series of psalms is characterized.

10. *Shall the reprover of nations—shall he not chastise—he that teaches mankind knowledge?* The antithesis is not between Israel and the Gentiles, but between whole nations or all mankind and individual offenders. *Reprover*, the one reproving or accustomed to reprove, warn, or admonish. See above, on Ps. ii. 10. xvi. 7. The parallel term is nearly synonymous and means to correct by word or deed. The structure of the first clause is the same as in the verse preceding. In the last clause, by an aposiopesis not uncommon in the Hebrew idiom, the parallelism is left to be completed by the reader. The full sense seems to be, *is he who teaches all mankind not competent to teach men individually? He that teaches, literally, the (one) teaching.*

11. *Jehovah knows the thoughts of mankind, that they (are) vanity.* The verbal form is still that of a participle, *knowing*, habitually knowing, what they are and what they deserve. Such

knowledge carries with it, as a necessary consequence, condemnation and punishment. See above, on Ps. i. 6. *Thoughts*, purposes, designs. See above, on Ps. xl. 5 (4.) Instead of *that*, some give the particle its usual sense of *for*, *because*, without a material change of meaning. The pronoun *they* seems in English to relate necessarily to *thoughts*; but in Hebrew the more natural antecedent is *man* as a generic or collective term, because the pronoun is masculine and *thoughts* feminine; because the same thing is predicated, in the same form, of men themselves, Ps. xxxix. 6, 12 (5, 11); and because this idea is better suited to the context here.

12. *Happy the man whom thou warnest, Jah, and from thy law teachest him.* This is the turning point, at which the tone of the composition becomes more encouraging. The word for *man* is the one implying strength, and here suggesting the idea, that he is truly fortunate whose strength arises from the divine counsel and control. *Warnest* and wilt warn, or admonish, the same verb that occurs in the first clause of v. 10. *From thy law* may be partitively understood, as meaning something of thy law, a part or portion of it. But it more probably means *out of, from, thy law*, as the source of consolation and instruction. See above, on Ps. xxii. 26 (25.)

13. *To give him rest from days of evil, until a pit be digged for the wicked.* Compare Ps. xlix. 6 (5.) cxii. 8. The first verb is a causative, *to make him rest*. *From days of evil* does not mean merely after them, but so as to escape them. The last clause ensures the safety of the righteous even during the prosperity and triumph of the wicked.

14. *For Jehovah will not forsake his people, and his inheritance he will not leave.* The reason why they are happy who confide in and obey the divine instructions is that God can never utterly for-

sake those who thus trust him, although he may leave them for a time when they leave him. See Deut. xxxii. 15. Judg. vi. 13. Isai. ii. 6.

15. *For unto righteousness shall judgment turn, and after it (shall go) all the upright in heart.* The apparent disturbance of the divine administration is to cease, and justice to return to its accustomed channels. In the last clause the righteous are described as following in its train or attending its triumphal march.

16. *Who will arise for me with evil-doers? Who will stand up for me with workers of iniquity?* Arise, address himself to action. See above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7.) *For me*, for my support in my defence. *With*, in conflict or contention with. *Stand up*, take a stand, assume a position. See above, on Ps. ii. 2. *Evil-doers*, as in Ps. xcii. 12 (11.) *Workers of iniquity*, as in v. 4 above. The interrogation in this verse prepares the way for the expression of confidence in that which follows.

17. *Unless Jehovah (were) a help for me, soon would my soul inhabit silence.* The phrase *a help for me* occurs above, Ps. lxiii. 8 (7), and a similar one, Ps. xlv. 27 (26.) For the meaning of the phrase translated *soon*, see above, on Ps. ii. 12. lxxxi. 15 (14.) To *dwell in* (or *inhabit*) *silence* is to be constantly surrounded by the silence of the grave or of death. See above, Ps. xxxi. 18 (17), and below, Ps. cxv. 17.

18. *If I say, My foot slips, thy mercy, oh Jehovah, holds me up.* If at any time my hope of safety from the Lord's protection yields to fear, his grace sustains and reinvigorates it. The preterites in the Hebrew of the first clause imply that such lapses or temptations have occurred in his experience, when his foot seemed to have swerved or slipped already; while the future at the close



represents the act of sustentation as one which he expects to be continued or renewed hereafter.

19. *In the multitude of my cares within me, thy comforts cheer my soul.* The second noun, which is of rare occurrence, does not mean thoughts in general, but uneasy, anxious thoughts, solitudes, or cares. The addition of *within me* renders still more prominent the idea that it was not mere external troubles that disturbed his peace. *Thy comforts*, the consolations of thy word. See above, on v. 13. *Cheer* or *shall cheer*, gladden, or exhilarate. *My soul* not only completes the parallelism, but suggests the idea of a cordial genuine exhilaration. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.)

20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law.* This, which is the version in the English Bible, yields a good sense, and the one preferred by some of the best interpreters. Others explain the last clause, *framing mischief against law*. In either case, *framing* means contriving, plotting. The first verb in Hebrew is supposed by some to be a passive form, *shall it be associated or allied (with) thee*, the connective particle being omitted by a common poetic license, for another instance of which see above, Ps. v. 5 (4.) Others explain it as an active verb corresponding with the dubious English verb *to fellowship* a person. *Iniquity*, or more exactly, *crimes*. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) xxxviii. 13 (12.) lii. 4, 9 (2, 7.) lv. 12 (11.) lvii. 2 (1.) xci. 3. Both this word and its parallel translated *mischief* are applied in usage to the sufferings brought upon one person by the misconduct of another. With respect to the second term (לִמְדָּה), see above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.)

21. *They crowd upon the soul of the righteous, and innocent blood they condemn.* The first verb means to rush in crowds or troops, and may therefore be expressed in English by the verbs, *to crowd*, *to troop*. *Condemn*, literally, make guilty, i. e. recognize

and treat as such. The futures, as usual, suggest the probable continuance of the evil in question.

22. *And (yet) Jehovah has been to me for a high-place, and my God for the rock of my refuge.* Our idiom would require *but* at the beginning of this sentence. The verb *to be* followed by *for*, is sometimes used in Hebrew to express the meaning of our verb *become*, which may here be considered as at least included. *A high-place*, beyond the reach of danger. *My rock of refuge*, the rock where I take refuge from my enemies. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) xviii. 3 (2.) xlv. 8, 12 (7, 11.) xlviii. 4 (3.) lix. 10, 18 (9, 17.)

23. *And he returns upon them their iniquity, and in their wickedness he will destroy them, (yes) destroy them will Jehovah our God.* The first verb denotes retaliation or requital. The preposition *upon* suggests the idea of infliction by a superior power. *Iniquity* expresses their misconduct towards others, *wickedness* the general depravity which prompted it. *In their wickedness*, i. e. in the midst of it, and by implication on account of it. The verb *destroy* is the one used in Ps. liv. 7 (5.) lxix. 5 (4.) ci. 5. The repetition of the last verb with its object is like that in Ps. xc. 17. Compare Ps. xcii. 8 (7.) xciii. 4. xciv. 1. The force of this emphatic repetition may be partially secured in English by a particle of affirmation, *yea* or *yes*.

## P S A L M X C V .

THIS psalm contains, first, an exhortation from the Psalmist to praise God as the creator and the sovereign of the earth, vs. 1—8, and then, a warning from God himself to his people not to imitate the obstinate unbelief of their fathers in the wilderness, vs. 9—11. The psalm is quoted in the New Testament (Heb. iv. 7) as what God said *in David*, which may either mean the Book of Psalms, so called from its chief author, or this particular psalm, as actually written by him. The latter supposition, although not necessary, is entirely admissible, because, however suitable the psalm may seem to particular junctures long posterior to David, the very generality of its expressions makes it probable that it was not composed in the midst of the events, but long beforehand.

1. *Come, let us sing unto Jehovah, let us shout unto the rock of our salvation.* The first verb properly means *go*, but is constantly used like *come* in other languages, as a formula of invitation, in summoning others to participate in some act of the speaker. The two verbs in this verse are those commonly applied to the vocal expression of joy and triumph. *The rock of our salvation*, the strong ground of our confidence, the basis upon which our hope of safety rests. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2), and compare Ps. lxii. 8 (7.) xcii. 16 (15.) xciv. 22.

2. *Let us come before his face with thanksgiving, and in songs let us shout unto him.* The first verb is here used in its primary and proper sense. See above, on Ps. xvii. 13. That of sur-



prising, or taking by surprise, upon which some interpreters insist, is neither intelligible in itself, nor suited to the context, nor justified by usage. To *shout in songs* is to sing aloud and with a voice of triumph.

3. *For a great God (is) Jehovah, and a great King above all gods.* This is not inconsistent with the doctrine elsewhere taught, that other gods have no real existence. See below, Ps. xcvi. 4, 5, where both truths are asserted together. The very name of God used in the first clause is expressive of omnipotence.

4. *In whose hand are the depths of the earth and the strength of the hills (belongs) to him.* God's possession of the whole earth is so asserted as to leave no room for other gods. The word translated *depths* means, according to its etymology, places to be searched into, i. e. requiring search to find them, inmost recesses. The word translated *strength* is plural in Hebrew, and seems properly to mean fatiguing exertions, from which some derive the idea of strength, others that of extreme height, which can only be reached by exhausting effort.

5. *To whom (belongs) the sea, and he made it, and the dry land his hands did form.* The land and water are here put together, as the depths and heights are in v. 4, to describe the earth in its whole extent as subject to Jehovah, by virtue of his right as its creator.

6. *Come, let us bow down and bend, let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker.* The *come* at the beginning of this verse is not a mere particle of exhortation, as in v. 1, but an invitation to God's presence. The Hebrew verb is one that strictly means to *come*, and sometimes to *enter*. See above, on Ps. lxxi. 16. This verse requires the external indication of devout emotion, and not the

mere internal feeling, although the latter is the most essential, as appears from what follows.

7. *For He (is) our God, and we (are) the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, to-day, if to his voice ye will hearken.* The people of his pasture are those fed and nurtured by him. The sheep of his hand are those led and guarded by him. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 3, 4. lxxiv. 1. lxxx. 13 (12.) We not only have been so, but are so now, *to-day*, provided we obey him. The last clause contains the condition of the first, precisely as in Ps. lxxxi. 9 (8.) In both cases this construction is more natural and satisfactory than either of the others among which interpreters have been divided; some making *if* an optative particle, 'if ye would only hear!'—some supplying an apodosis, as in Ex. xxiii. 21, 22, to which there seems to be an obvious allusion;—some continuing the sentence into the next verse, which is forbidden by the change of person there. This last construction is adopted in the Septuagint, as quoted in Heb. iii. 9; but this decides nothing as to the Hebrew syntax. To hear (or hearken to) God's voice is a common Hebrew phrase for obeying his commands.

8. *Harden not your heart like Meribah, like the day of Massah in the wilderness.* Be not wilfully and obstinately insensible. *Your heart*, in the singular number, because the people are addressed as an ideal person. *Like Meribah*, i. e. as your fathers did at Meribah. *Like the day of Massah*, as they did at that period of your national history associated with the name of Massah. The reference is to Ex. xvii. 7. The incident there recorded is here specified, for the sake of the significant names given to the place, *Meribah* (strife) and *Massah* (temptation.) God himself is here abruptly introduced as speaking. See above, on Ps. xlv. 11 (10.) lxxv. 3, 4 (2, 3.) lxxxvii. 4. xci. 14.

9. *When (or where) your fathers tempted me; they proved me*

(and) *also saw my work*. The first word in Hebrew is the relative pronoun, *which* for *in which*, as in Ps. lxxxiv. 4 (3.) This may either mean in which place (where), or at which time (when), more probably the former, as the preceding verse is full of local nouns. *Tempted me*, see above, on Ps. lxxviii. 18, 41. *Proved me*, put me to the proof of my existence, presence, and power, by requiring me to work, i. e. to act in an extraordinary manner. And this desire, unreasonable as it was, I gratified. They not only demanded but they likewise (וַיֵּדְעוּ) saw *my work*, i. e. what I could do. Some restrict these last words to the previous displays of God's almighty power, especially the plagues of Egypt. 'They proved me, or put me to the proof, although they had seen my work.' But neither the sense thus put upon the *likewise*, nor the pluperfect meaning of the verb, should be assumed without a greater necessity than here exists.

10. *Forty years I am vexed with a (wicked) generation, and say, A people of wanderers in heart (are) they, and they do not know my ways*. The first verb strictly means to be sick of, or disgusted with, a thing or person. The future form expresses more distinctly the idea of protracted trial and annoyance. *A generation*, or contemporary race, as distinguished from mere individuals. This expression is the more appropriate because the threatening was fulfilled, with scarcely an exception, in the whole generation that came out of Egypt. The qualifying epithet supplied in the translation is derived from Deut. 1. 35 (compare Deut. ii. 14.) *I say* or *said*, i. e. I had occasion or good cause to say, I could have said with truth, or I was compelled to say. The next clause contains an allusion to their twofold wandering or error. They were not only wanderers in body but in heart, i. e. they erred from the path of duty, truth, and safety. This allusion seems to be continued in the last clause. They were not more bewildered in the mazes of the trackless waste, than ignorant of God's ways, i. e. of the meaning and de-



sign of his providential dealings with them. Compare Deut. xxix. 3.

11. *Unto whom I swear in my wrath, If they shall come into my rest* (or *resting-place*.) Here again the first word is a relative pronoun, and may either be a dative, as in the common version of the first clause above given; or an adverb of time or place (*when* or *where*) as in v. 9 above; or a conjunction (*so that*) as the latest interpreters prefer. The conditional clause, with which the sentence closes, is the strongest form of negation, being that employed in the most solemn oaths. See above, on Ps. lxxxix. 36 (35.) It is here equivalent to saying, *they shall not come, etc.* The form of speech is that actually used in the original threatening, as recorded by Moses, Num. xiv. 23, 30. Deut i. 35. The word for *rest* is not an abstract but a local term as indicated by its form. It is here applied to the Promised Land, as in Deut. xii. 9. There is something unusual and abrupt in the conclusion of this psalm, without any cheering prospect to relieve the threatening. This may be best explained by assuming, that it was not meant to stand alone, but to form one of a series.

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## PSALM XCVI.

A JOYOUS celebration of the universal spread of the true religion and conversion of the Gentiles. The structure of the psalm is perfectly simple, and all attempts at artificial subdivision and arrangement are either wholly arbitrary or founded upon dubious hypotheses. The marked resemblance of the diction to that of

Isaiah in his later prophecies, has been thought to fix the date of the composition as posterior to that Prophet. This seems indeed to be forbidden by the fact that in 1 Chr. xvi, as commonly interpreted, this psalm, with portions of others, is said to have been sung at the dedication of the tabernacle on Mount Zion in the time of David. But according to Hengstenberg, the true sense of that passage is, that David instituted the musical service of the sanctuary, of which samples are then given, taken not from the most ancient psalms, but from those most familiar to the people when the history was written. See below, the prefatory note to Ps. cv and cvi. The psalm before us seems to form a pair or double psalm with that preceding, the Jews and Gentiles being then successively addressed, as in Isai. ii. 3—5, but in an inverted order.

1. *Sing unto Jehovah a new song ; sing unto Jehovah all the earth.* A new song implies fresh occasion to praise God, not for the mere repetition of his former favours, but for some new dispensation of his grace. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 3. xl. 3 (2.) The one here meant is the extension of his favour to the nations, who are therefore summoned in the last clause to celebrate his praise themselves. Compare Isai. xlii. 10. Rev. v. 9, 10.

2. *Sing unto Jehovah, bless his name, proclaim from day to day his salvation.* To bless his name is to praise him for the manifestation of his attributes. The verb translated *proclaim* is constantly applied to joyful tidings. See above, on Ps. xl. 10 (9.) lxviii. 12 (11), and compare Isai. lx. 9. lii. 7. lx. 6. The phrase *from day to day* implies that the occasion of the praise required is not a transient one but permanent and perpetual. *His salvation*, that which he has wrought, provided, and revealed, not for the Jews only but for the Gentiles also. With this and the preceding verse compare 1 Chr. xvi. 23.

3. *Recount among the nations his glory, among all the peoples his*

*wonders.* The use of *glory*, to denote the special manifestation of God's attributes, is a characteristic feature of Isaiah's later prophecies. To preclude all doubt as to the extent of the invitation, the ambiguous expression *all the earth*, in v. 1, is here explained to mean *the nations*, and then still more absolutely *all the peoples*. The only variation of the parallel passage (1 Chr. xvi. 24) is the insertion of the objective particle (ל) in the first clause.

4. *For great (is) Jehovah and to be praised exceedingly ; to be feared (is) He above all Gods.* He is not a mere local deity, as the heathen were disposed to imagine, even in reference to their own divinities. With this verse compare Ps. xlvii. 3 (2.) xlviii. 2 (1.) lxxvii. 14 (13.) lxxxvi. 8. xc. 3. xcii. 8. xcix. 2.

5. *For all the gods of the nations are nothings, and Jehovah the heavens did make.* *Nothings*, nonentities, a favourite description of idols in Isaiah's later prophecies. See e. g. Isai. xli. 24, and compare Lev. xix. 4. xxvi. 1. 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. x. 19. A less probable etymology of the Hebrew word makes it a diminutive of (על) *El*, analogous to *godlings* as an expression of contempt. The contrast intended is extreme and absolute. He called the world into existence ; they do not even exist themselves. See above, Ps. xc. 4.

6. *Honour and majesty (are) before him, strength and beauty in his holy-place.* The first combination occurs above, Ps. xlv. 4 (3.) *Before him*, as his constant attendants or forerunners. *Beauty*, all that is lovely and admirable. See above, on Ps. lxxi. 8. *His holy place*, his earthly residence, regarded as a radiating centre even to the Gentiles ; or the place where God reveals himself, whatever it may be.

7. *Give to Jehovah, ye families of nations, give to Jehovah glory and strength.* Compare Ps. xxix. 1. Here, as there, to *give* is



to ascribe or recognize as belonging to him. The expression *families of nations* is Mosaic. See Gen. xii. 3. The parallel passage (1 Chr. xvi. 27) has, *strength and joy (are) in his place*.

8. *Give unto Jehovah the glory of his name ; take an offering and come to his courts.* With the first clause compare Ps. xxix. 2. The verb translated *take* includes the ideas of taking up and carrying. See above, on Ps. lxviii. 30 (29.) lxxii. 10. lxxvi. 12, and compare 2 Sam. viii. 2. The word *offering* is the one used to denote the bloodless or vegetable oblation of the Mosaic ritual. *His courts*, see above, on Ps. lxv. 5 (4.) lxxxiv. 3 (2.) xcii. 14 (13.) The parallel passage (1 Chr. xvi. 29) has *before him*.

9. *Bow down to Jehovah in beauty of holiness ; tremble before him, all the earth !* The first verb denotes the act of bowing to the ground, as practised in the East. For the meaning of the next phrase, *beauty of holiness*, see above, on Ps. xxix. 2, from which place it is borrowed here. The last clause enjoins the reverential awe due to the exhibition of the divine majesty. Compare Ps. ii. 11. The plural form of the verb (*tremble ye*) shows that *the earth* is put for its inhabitants. *Before him*, literally, *from his face*. The parallel passage (1 Chr. xvi. 30) has a double preposition, a Hebrew idiom which cannot be reproduced in English, and which does not in the least affect the sense. We also find there added to the verse before us the middle clause or member of the next verse.

10. *Say ye among the nations, Jehovah reigns ; likewise fixed is the world, it shall not be moved ; He will judge the peoples in rectitude.* The object of address can only be the nations themselves, as in the foregoing context. They are therefore summoned to announce the joyful news to one another. *Jehovah reigns*, has begun to reign, i. e. visibly. See above, on Ps. xciii. 1, and compare Isai. xxiv. 23. lii. 7. As in Ps. xciii. 1, the conservation

of the world is ascribed to God's power, so here to his justice. Compare Ps. lxxv. 4 (3.) *He will judge the nations* : see above, on Ps. vii. 9 (8.) lxxii. 2, 4, and compare Isai. xi. 4. *In equities*, see above, on Ps. lxxv. 3 (2.) It may here mean *impartiality*, without distinction between Jew and Gentile. This last clause is omitted in the parallel passage (1 Chr xvi. 31) which also has instead of *say ye, they shall say*, and joins it to what is here the next verse.

11. *Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult ; let the sea roar and its fulness.* The optative form of the second verb determines the meaning of the other futures, which, however, really include a prediction or, what here amounts to the same thing, a confident anticipation. *Its fulness*, that which fills it, its contents. This verse does not necessarily imply a participation of inferior creatures in God's favour to his people (Rom. viii. 21), but may be understood as a strong poetical description of events so joyous that even the inanimate creation breaks forth into singing. Compare Isai. xlv. 23. lv. 12. The verb translated *roar* is a cognate form of that which means to *thunder*, Ps. xxix. 3.

12. *Let the field exult and all that (is) in it ; then shall sing for joy all the trees of the wood (or forest.)* The strict sense of the future, which was latent in the preceding verse, here, by a beautiful transition, reasserts itself. See below, on Ps. cxxvi. 2, and compare Isai. xxxv. 5, 6. *The field* is the cultivated and productive portion of the earth. *All that is in it*, with particular reference to its productions. *Sing for joy* is the translation of a single verb in Hebrew. See above, on Ps. xcv. 1. The parallel passage (1 Chr. xvi. 32, 33) has precisely the same sense, but with two slight variations in the words, a less familiar form being substituted in one case, and a more familiar form in the other.

13. *Before Jehovah, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world in righteousness, and nations in his truth (or faithfulness.)* The rejoicing described in the preceding verse is to take place in the presence (literally, to the face) of God when he assumes his universal sovereignty, the judicial function of which is here made prominent, in order to suggest the moral perfection of his reign. *In righteousness*, not merely in a righteous manner, but in the exercise of his inherent and essential justice. The use of the word *people*, in the common version of the last clause, obscures the sense, by seeming to apply the verse to Israel, whereas it is expressly applied in the original to the nations generally. Even the *truth* or *faithfulness* of God, which commonly denotes his veracity in fulfilling his promises to the chosen people, has here a wider sense, as opposed to the dishonesty or partiality of human judges. In the parallel passage (1 Chron. xvi. 33) the emphatic repetition in the first clause, and the whole of the last clause, are omitted, perhaps because so striking and sonorous a conclusion would not have been appropriate, when another psalm was to be added.

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## PSALM XCVII.

ANOTHER exhibition of Jehovah's universal sovereignty, in which his judicial functions are again made prominent, but with special reference to the condemnation and destruction of the unbelieving nations. The structure of the psalm is remarkably like that of the second, consisting of four stanzas of three verses each. The first describes the Lord's appearing as the Judge of the Nations, vs. 1—3. The second, its effects upon inanimate creation, vs. 4—6. The third, its effects upon idolaters and Israel respectively,



vs. 7—9. The fourth applies it as a present warning and encouragement to true believers, vs. 10—12. The characteristic feature of the psalm is its frequent citation of older scriptures, all anterior to the Babylonish exile, from which Hengstenberg infers, not only the date of this composition, but the fact that all the sacred writings of the ancient Hebrews are now extant in the Bible.

1. *Jehovah reigneth, let the earth exult ; glad be the many islands !* For the meaning of the first clause, see above, on Ps. xciii. 1. xvi. 10 ; for that of the second, on Ps. xvi. 11. The manifestation of the divine royalty is often represented as a cause for universal joy, even when attended by direct advantage only to the chosen people, and by fearful judgments to mankind at large. See above, on Ps. xviii. 50 (49.) xlvii. 2 (1), and compare Deut. xxxii. 43. The last clause bears a strong resemblance to Isai. xlii. 10, 12, the use of the word *isles* in both, to designate the Gentiles, being founded upon Gen. x. 5. See also Ps. lxxii. 10. *The many islands*, see above, on Ps. lxxxix. 51 (50.)

2. *Vapour and gloom (are) round him ; righteousness and judgment (are) the place of his throne.* The images and terms in the first clause are borrowed from Deut. v. 22. Compare Ex. xix. 16, 18, and see above, on Ps. xviii. 10, 12 (9, 11.) With the last clause compare Ps. lxxxix. 15 (14.) Righteousness and judgment seem to be here related as the attribute and act. The word translated *place* has, from its very derivation, the specific sense of a permanent or fixed place, and especially a dwelling-place. Compare 1 Kings viii. 13. The figures in the first clause are expressive of concealment or mystery, but only as a source of solemn awe, as in the great theophany on Sinai.

3. *Fire before him goes, and burns up around (him) his foes.* With the first clause compare Ps. l. 3 ; with the last, Isai.

xlii. 25. See also Ps. lxxxiii. 15 (14.) The future form is used because the verb describes not what the wrath of God is doing or has actually done, but what it will do when provoked by obstinate resistance.

4. *His lightnings made the world shine ; (then) saw and trembled the earth.* Compare Ps. lxxvii. 17, 19 (16, 18.) Here begins the second stanza, in which, as in most cases of the same sort, inanimate creation is described as sharing in the powerful effects of the divine epiphany. See above, on Ps. xviii. 8 (7.) xevi. 11, 12, and compare Judg. v. 4. Nah. i. 5. Hab. iii. 6. Isai. lxiv. 1.

5. *Mountains like wax are melted from before Jehovah, from before the Lord of all the earth.* Compare Mic. i. 4. iv. 13. As in all such cases, while mountains are mentioned as the salient points of the earth, they suggest, at the same time, the idea of great states and kingdoms, of which they are a standing symbol. See above, on Ps. xxx. 8 (7.) xlvi. 3 (2.)

6. *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the nations see his glory.* With the first clause compare Ps. l. 6, and with the last Isai. xl. 5. lxvi. 18. See also Isai. xxxv. 2. lix. 19. The manifestation of Jehovah's glory to the Gentiles is a favourite conception of Isaiah, and particularly frequent in his later prophecies.

7. *Shamed shall be all serving a graven image and boasting themselves of idols. Bow down to him, all ye gods !* The first word means not merely ashamed, but disappointed, defeated, and confounded. *All serving* or *all servers* (i. e. worshippers) *of a graven image.* *Boasting themselves*, exulting in the knowledge and possession and imagined favour of material images. *Idols*, nothings or nonentities, as in Ps. xevi. 5. The use of this word

shows that in the following clause the false gods are invested with existence only to be treated with the more contempt. Compare Ex. xii. 12. Num. xxxiii. 4. Isai. xix. 1. xlii. 17. xliv. 9. The verb in this clause might be taken as a preterite, *worship* or *have worshipped*; but the imperative construction seems to be required by the analogy of Ps. xcvi. 9. These words are not applied to Christ directly in Heb. i. 6. It is merely said that when God sends his son into the world, he may be understood as saying again (*πάλιν*) of him, what is here said of himself, to wit, that even the false gods are required to worship him, much more the angels who have real existence. The passage was no doubt suggested to the mind of the New Testament writer by the fact that the Septuagint renders *gods* by *angels*, though he does not copy this erroneous version.

8. *Zion hears and rejoices, and glad are the daughters of Judah, because of thy judgments, Jehovah!* While the heathen are confounded, the people of God rejoice. The terms of the verse are borrowed from Ps. xlviii. 12 (11), in the note upon which the ambiguous phrase, *daughters of Judah*, is explained. The judgments here particularly meant are those inflicted on the unbelieving Gentiles.

9. *For thou, Jehovah, (art) Most High above all the earth; greatly art thou exalted above all gods.* Jehovah's infinite superiority to idols and their worshippers is once more solemnly asserted. With the first clause compare Ps. lxxxiii. 19 (18); with the second Ps. xlvii. 10 (9.) It is remarkable that two psalms are here put together in quotation, which there is strong internal reason for supposing to have been occasioned by a victory of Jehoshaphat.

10. *Lovers of Jehovah, hate evil! He keeps the souls of his gracious ones; from the hand of wicked (men) he will set them*



*free.* The people of God are now exhorted not to do evil in the hope of thereby being safer. *Evil*, in the moral sense of wickedness, and more especially injustice. See above, on Ps. vii. 10 (9.) xxxiv. 14, 15. With the first words of the verse compare Ps. v. 12 (11.) *He keeps*, or rather, *he (is) keeping*, i. e. habitually constantly preserving. The danger, against which they particularly need protection, is distinctly mentioned in the last clause, namely, that arising from the enmity of wicked men. *Gracious ones*, objects of God's mercy, subjects of his grace, a favourite description of the righteous or true believers, as a class. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.)

11. *Light (is) sown for the just (man), and for right-hearted (men) joy.* The figurative term *light* is explained by the literal one *joy* or *gladness*. Its being *sown* suggests the two ideas of diffusion and productiveness. Compare the similar and parallel expression, Ps. cxii. 4. The alternation of the singular and plural number shows that the just man of the first clause is an ideal person, representing a whole class.

12. *Rejoice, ye righteous, in Jehovah, and give thanks to the memory of his holiness.* Since joy is the portion of the righteous, let them accept it and make use of it, but only in the Lord, i. e. in reference to the possession and enjoyment of his favour, as the reason and the warrant for rejoicing. At the same time let them testify their gratitude to that divine perfection which is treasured in their memory and suggested by the name of God. See above, on Ps. xxx. 5 (4.) xxxii. 11, from which the language of this verse is borrowed.

## P S A L M   X C V I I I .

THIS psalm is similar, in tone and structure, to the one before it, containing three stanzas of three verses each. The first propounds the subject of the praise to which the whole world is exhorted, vs. 1—3. The second prescribes the form in which it shall be rendered, vs. 4—6. The third determines its extent, or in other words, requires it to be universal, vs. 7—9.

1. *A Psalm.* *Sing ye to Jehovah a new song, for wonders he has done ; his right hand has wrought salvation for him, and his holy arm.* This is the only case in which the word *psalm* (מְזִמֹּר) stands by itself as a complete inscription. This fact has been ingeniously explained by supposing, that the word was intended to distinguish this, as a purely lyrical composition, from the one before it, which has more of the prophetic character and style. The first clause after this inscription is like Ps. xevi. 1, where the words have been explained already. *Wonders*, or wondrous deeds, things wonderfully done, as in Ps. xcvi. 3. *Wrought salvation*, literally, *saved for him*, i. e. enabled him to save his people. The idea and expression are both found in Isai. lix. 16. lxiii. 5, as the expression *arm of holiness* (or *holy arm*) is in Isai. lii. 10. This is one of the cases in which *holiness* has the wide sense of divine perfection, as opposed to what is finite or belongs to the creature. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.) With the whole verse compare Judg. vii. 2. The allusions to Isaiah, or quotations from him,

show that the *wonders* to be celebrated are like those which constitute the theme of his later prophecies, namely, Jehovah's interpositions for the deliverance and protection of his people.

2. *Jehovah hath made known his salvation, to the eyes of the nations he hath revealed his righteousness.* He has shown the world his power and his willingness to save his own people according to his promise, with respect to which *his righteousness* and *his salvation* are related to each other as cause and effect. With this verse compare Isai. lii. 10.

3. *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth for the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* The common version connects *to the house of Israel* with what immediately precedes, the mercy and truth which he formerly exercised towards the house of Israel. But according to the Hebrew idiom and the usage of the Psalms, the preposition is dependent on the leading verb; 'he has called to mind his mercy and truth for the present benefit of the house of Israel.' Truth, fidelity to his engagements. See the same combination in Ps. xcii. 3. The last clause is another citation from Isai. lii. 10, which shows that the salvation primarily meant is that of Israel. This, however, is closely connected in prophecy with that of the Gentiles.

4. *Shout to Jehovah, all the earth! Burst forth, and sing, and play!* The second stanza prescribes the form or manner of the praise. This verse accumulates the verbs denoting joyful noise, whether inarticulate, articulate, or instrumental. The first clause differs from Ps. xvi. 1, only by substituting one divine name for another. See also Ps. xlvii. 2 (1.) The verb (פצח) to burst forth (into praise or singing) is almost peculiar to Isaiah (xiv. 7. xlv. 23. xlix. 12. liv. 1.) This very combination with the verb *to sing* occurs in Isai. lii. 9.



5. *Make music to Jehovah with a harp, with a harp and a musical voice!* The first verb is the one translated *play* in the preceding verse. Its repetition is like that in Ps. xlvii. 2 (1.) It is strictly applied to instrumental music, but often extended to any musical expression, especially of praise to God. A *musical voice*, or a voice of singing, as distinguished from the voice of speech. The phrase occurs in Isai. li. 3. The repeated introduction of the verb זמר or its derivatives is supposed by some to be the reason of the title מזמור. See above, on v. 1.

6. *With trumpets and sound of cornet, shout before the King Jehovah!* The first noun is supposed to denote the long straight trumpet, the other the cornet or curved horn of ancient music. These are named as the accompaniments of the act described in the other clause, where the verb may therefore have the sense of shouting, which it has most generally in these psalms. The act described is the joyful acclamation at the accession or public recognition of a sovereign. *King Jehovah* is a combination found in Isai. vi. 5. Compare Ps. xcv. 3. xevi. 10. xevii. 1. The whole is equivalent to saying, hail him who has now become your king!

7. *Let the sea thunder and what fills it—the land and those dwelling on it.* The last stanza represents the praise as universal. For the meaning of the first clause, see above, on Ps. xevi. 11; for that of the second, on Ps. xxiv. 1. The word there translated *world* is here used in opposition to *sea*, and therefore rendered *land*. See above, on Ps. xc. 2.

8. *Let rivers clap the hand; together let mountains sing* (or shout for joy!) This bold but beautiful personification is also found in Isai. lv. 12, the only other place where the clapping of the hands is ascribed to lifeless objects. This was a customary sign of joy, especially when joined with acclamation in honour

of a sovereign, as it is not only here, and in Ps. xlvii. 2(1), in highly figurative poetry, but also in historical prose, e. g. the account of the coronation of Joash, 2 Kings xi. 12. *Together*, not merely with each other, but at the same time and in concert with the applauses of the floods or rivers.

9. *Before Jehovah, for he cometh to judge the earth; he will judge the world in righteousness and nations in equity.* The acclamations must be uttered to Jehovah, not only as a sovereign king, but as a righteous judge. The first clause is like Ps. xevi. 13, except that it omits the emphatic repetition, which is also the case in 1 Chr. xvi. 33. The first verb might, in all these cases, be more exactly and emphatically rendered, *he is come*. *In equity*, literally *equities* or *rectitudes*, the plural form denoting fulness and perfection. See above, on Ps. xevi. 10.

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## PSALM XCIX.

THE theme of this psalm, as of those immediately preceding, is the kingship of Jehovah, v. 1. The remainder falls into two stanzas of four verses each. In the first, Jehovah's goodness to his people is propounded as a subject of applause to all mankind, vs. 2—5. In the second, the same duty is enforced by an appeal to historical examples, vs. 6—9. The strophical arrangement is marked by the resemblance of vs. 5 and 9. The psalm is related in the closest manner to those before and after it, as forming one connected series. See below, on Ps. c.

1. *Jehovah reigns, the nations tremble; sitting on (or dwelling*

*between) the cherubim* (he reigns), *the earth quakes*. The second member of each clause describes the effect produced by the disclosure of the fact that God has begun to reign, is actually reigning. For the meaning of the phrase *sitting on* (or *dwelling between) the cherubim*, see above, on Ps. lxxx. 2 (1.) As used in history, it always presupposes the presence of the ark as symbolizing that of God himself. See 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 Kings xix. 15. Its use here, therefore, shows that the psalm before us, and by necessary consequence, the series to which it belongs (Ps. xci—c), and by parity of reasoning, the later prophecies of Isaiah, were all composed before the Babylonian conquest, when the temple was destroyed and the ark lost sight of. The futures have their strict sense, as this is a prediction. If they were optative (*let the nations tremble*, etc.) one of the verbs at least would have that form.

2. *Jehovah in Zion (is) great, and high (is) he above all nations*. Compare Ps. xlviii. 2 (1.) xcv. 3. xevi. 4. xevii. 9. The addition of the qualifying phrase *in Zion* shows that the reference is not to God's absolute essential greatness, but to some signal manifestation of his greatness to his people. The word translated *high* is originally a participle, and may be likened to our English *towering*.

3. *They shall acknowledge thy name, great and terrible: Holy (is) He!* The subject of the first verb is *the nations* mentioned in v. 2. See above, Ps. xevi. 9. xevii. 7. xeviii. 1, 4. The verb itself means to acknowledge thankfully, to thank, to praise for benefits received. See above, on Ps. vi. 5 (4.) *Thy name*, the evidence already furnished of thine infinite perfection. *Great and feared*, or *to be feared*, epithets derived from Deut. x. 17. xxviii. 58. In the last clause some would read, *Holy (is) it*, i. e. thy name. But the sense is determined by the analogy of vs. 5, 9, and the obvious allusion to Isai. vi. 3. This allusion is by



some supposed to be the reason of the sudden change of person, *He* instead of *Thou*. But this may be still more readily accounted for, by making these the very words in which God is acknowledged by the nations: (saying) *Holy is He! Holy*, in the wide sense which it has in the Old Testament, and more particularly in the Psalms. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.)

4. *And the king's strength loves judgment; thou hast established equity; judgment and justice in Jacob thou hast done.* Some continue the construction from the preceding sentence; *they shall acknowledge thy name and the king's strength loving judgment.* But as sentences of this length are unusual in Hebrew, and as וְיָדָה is not elsewhere a participle or verbal adjective, the best construction is the old one which makes this an independent proposition. The meaning of the first clause seems to be, that God's power is controlled in its exercise by his love of justice. To *establish equity* is to give it permanence by a habitually pure administration of justice. The terms of the last clause are the same by which the history describes the judicial fidelity of David, 2 Sam. viii. 15, as if to indicate that it was a mere type of God's more perfect and infallible administration of impartial justice.

5. *Exalt ye Jehovah our God, and prostrate yourselves to his footstool. Holy (is) He!* With the first clause compare Ps. xxx. 2 (1.) xxxiv. 4 (3); with the second, Ps. xevi. 9. xcvii. 7. As in those cases, the address is to the nations. *Bow down* (or *prostrate*) *yourselves*, as an act of worship. Not *at his footstool*, as the mere place of worship, but *to it*, as the object, this name being constantly given to the ark, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Lam. ii. 1. Ps. cxxxii. 7. Isai. lx. 13. Even in Isai. lxvi. 1, there is allusion to the ordinary usage of the terms. The ark is here represented as the object of worship, just as Zion is in Isai. xlv. 14, both being put for the God who was present in them.

6. *Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those calling on his name—calling to Jehovah, and he answers them.* The structure of the sentence is elliptical, and may be completed either by supplying *are* or *were* before *among*, or by making the participle *calling* mean *are calling*, call. In explaining the sentence due regard must be had to its parallel structure. As Moses and Aaron are evidently meant to be included among those who called upon the name of the Lord, so Samuel must be comprehended *among his priests*. Moses and Samuel are so described because they were theocratic mediators between God and the people, and as such performed occasionally what were strictly sacerdotal functions. See Lev. viii. 15—30. 1 Sam. ix. 13. The prayers here referred to are their intercessions for the people. See Ex. xviii. 19. xxxii. 11—30. Num. xi. 2. xiv. 9. xxi. 7. Deut. v. 5. ix. 18, 19. 1 Sam. vii. 9. xii. 23. Ps. cvi. 23. The connection of this verse with the foregoing context is obscure, but the idea seems to be, that as even the chiefs of the theocracy were under the necessity of seeking the divine favour, such prayer must, to say the least, be equally necessary in the case of others.

7. *In a pillar of cloud he speaks to them. They kept his testimonies and the statute he gave unto them.* The first clause may be figuratively understood as denoting any special divine communication, or what was literally true of Moses and Aaron (Ex. xxxiii. 9. Num. xii. 5. Deut. xxxi. 15) may be here applied to all three indiscriminately. The verse contains a second lesson drawn from the history of the theocracy, to wit, the necessity of obedience no less than of prayer. It was true, God spoke to these men in an extraordinary manner; but it was for the purpose of making known his will, and that will they obeyed. For the meaning of *testimonies*, see above, on Ps. xciii. 5. The last clause may be construed as an independent proposition, *and he gave a statute to them*, i. e. he rewarded their obedience by re-

vealing to them new laws. But the sense thus obtained is not so clear or natural as that afforded by the relative construction, *and the statute (which) he gave them.*

8. *Jehovah our God, thou didst answer them ; a forgiving God wast thou to them, and (a God) taking vengeance on their crimes.* The apostrophe to God himself adds solemnity and tenderness to the discourse. The pronoun is emphatic, *they called and thou didst hear or answer.* The following description is borrowed from Ex. xxxiv. 7. The divine name (יהוה) implies that he had infinite power to destroy and yet forgave them. The last Hebrew word in the verse is used of God in a good sense, and of man always in a bad one. See above on Ps. ix. 12 (11.) xiv. 1. lxxvii. 13 (12.) There is here a beautiful transition from the representatives of the people to the people themselves. The pronoun in the first clause (*them*) can refer only to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel ; in the second, it is applicable both to them and to the people ; in the third, it relates to the latter exclusively.

9. *Exalt ye Jehovah our God, and bow down to his holy hill ; for holy (is) Jehovah our God.* See above, on v. 5, from which this differs only in the substitution of the holy hill for the equivalent expression *footstool*, and in the more distinct assertion of God's holiness as a reason for the worship thus required.

## PSALM C.

THIS psalm is related to the ninety-ninth as the ninety-eighth is to the ninety-seventh. The prophecy there latent is here



clothed in a genuine lyrical form. There is also the same likeness as to structure and arrangement. The theme, propounded in v. 1, is amplified in two short stanzas, of two verses each. In both these an exhortation to praise God is followed by a reason for so doing. Men ought to praise him as their creator and preserver, vs. 2, 3. They ought also to praise him for his infinite goodness, constancy, and faithfulness, vs. 4, 5. Besides completing the foregoing psalm, it closes the whole series or cycle of harmonious addresses to the nations or the world at large.

1. *A Psalm. For thanksgiving. Shout unto Jehovah, all the earth!* The title resembles that of Ps. xcvi., but is rendered more specific by the addition *for thanksgiving*. The version *praise* is too restricted. See above, on Ps. xcix. 3. The rest of the verse is identical with Ps. xcvi. 4. See also Ps. ii. 11. lxi. 1.

2. *Serve Jehovah with joy, come before him with singing!* Since he is the king of the nations, they are his subjects, and as such bound to serve him. What they are required to do in Ps. ii. 11 with fear and trembling as repentant rebels, they are here invited to do with joy and gladness as his willing subjects.

3. *Know ye that Jehovah is God; (it is) He (that) made us, and not we (ourselves), his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* This is the first reason given for acknowledging Jehovah's sovereignty, to wit, that he has made his people what they are. With the first clause compare Ps. xli. 11 (10.) Instead of *and not we ourselves*, the *keri* or masoretic reading in the margin of the Hebrew Bible has, *and his we are*. These phrases, though so unlike in English, differ only in a single letter, *and not* (לֹא) *we*, *and to him* (לֵּוּ) *we*. The first is adopted by the Septuagint and Vulgate, the second by the Targum and Jerome. In favour of the latter is the similar construction of the pronoun (אֲנִי) *we* with (עַמִּי) *his people* in Ps. lxxix. 13. xcvi. 7. In favour of the

other is its antiquity, and its greater significancy and appropriateness to the context. Some who adopt it read, *it is he that has made us* (to be) *his people, the sheep*, etc. But besides the violence of this construction, *he made us* has no doubt the same sense as in Ps. xciv. 6, and *his people* must mean *us who are his people*. *Sheep* (or *flock*) of *his pasture*, as in Ps. lxxiv. 1. lxxix. 13. xciv. 7.

4. *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise ; give thanks unto him, bless his name !* Compare Ps. lxxxiv. 3 (2.) xcii. 14 (13.) xciv. 2. xevi. 2, 8. xcvii. 12. The substance of the exhortation is, join in the worship of his people. That the reference to the sanctuary at Jerusalem is merely typical or metaphorical, is clear from the analogy of Isai. lxvi. 23, where all mankind are required to come up every sabbath, a command which, if literally understood, is perfectly impracticable. The combination of the verb to *thank* (הודֶה) with its derivative noun (תִּהְדֶּה) may throw some light upon the title, a *psalm for thanksgiving* (תְּהִלָּה).

5. *For good (is) Jehovah, to eternity his mercy, and even to generation and generation his faithfulness* (or *truth*.) This verse assigns a second reason for the invitation to praise Jehovah, namely, the goodness, truth, and constancy of the divine nature. With the first clause compare Ps. xxv. 8. xxxiv. 9 (8.) lxxxvi. 5 ; with the second, Isai. liv. 8, 10 ; with the third, Ps. lxxxix. 2 (1.) xcii. 3 (2.)

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Here ends what Hengstenberg describes as a decalogue of Psalms (xci—c), all intended to exhibit the relation between Israel and the world at large ; all of a cheering and triumphant character, without the slightest intermixture of complaint or lamentation ; all crowded with citations from the older Scriptures, or al-

lusions to them ; almost all pointing to a glorious theophany still future ; and almost all distinguished by emphatic repetitions, and the frequent use of musical terms, especially the names of instruments. That these psalms are not thrown together at random, is apparent from the fact that the series begins with a general assurance of divine protection (Ps. xci.), and of God's power both to save the righteous and destroy the wicked (Ps. xcii), followed by variations on the grand theme that THE LORD REIGNETH (Ps. xciii—xcix), and closing with an earnest exhortation to the whole world to receive him as their sovereign (Ps. c.) The mutual relation of the several psalms has been already indicated in the exposition. According to Hengstenberg, these ten psalms are in Psalmody what the later chapters of Isaiah (xl—lxvi) are in Prophecy ; and as the former are undoubtedly anterior to the exile, they confirm the genuineness of the latter.





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