

ARTICLE III.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE PSALTER TO A LEVITICAL SYSTEM.

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THE Book of Psalms ought, according to widespread recent theories, to mark a great advance on the ante-Babylonian prophets in the evidence of Levitical ordinances, their value and obligatory character—not of course as set forth in formal detail, but as extolled in religious sentiment. Of those prophets Prof. Robertson Smith, whom I have already taken as a representative advocate of those theories, remarks,¹ that, whereas “in the Levitical system access to God . . . was only attained through the mediation of Aaronic priests at the central sanctuary,” and whereas “the ordinary Israelite meets there with God only on special occasions, and during the greater part of his life must . . . stand afar off,” the “reformers of Israel [i. e. the prophets aforesaid, pp. 266, 267] strove against the constant lapses of Israel into syncretism, or the worship of foreign gods; but they did not do so on the ground of the Levitical theory of Israel’s absolute separation from the nations, or of a unique holiness radiating from the one sanctuary, and descending in widening circles through priests and Levites to the ordinary Israelite. The history itself does not accept the Levitical standard. . . . Nowhere does the condemnation of the popular religion rest on the original consecration of the tabernacle, the brazen altar, and the Aaronic priesthood as the exclusive channels of veritable intercourse between Jehovah and Israel.”

¹ Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 242.

But the prophets, it was further urged by the professor, give no testimony to a written code of law, and depreciate or even denounce all such elements of ceremonial as form the prominent feature of the Levitical law, and further rebuke contemporary Israel and Judah, *not* for abandoning those Levitical elements, but for neglecting moral duties and spiritual dispositions, these latter alone being that which Jehovah regards.

I have endeavored in an earlier essay¹ to show that the above-quoted statements do not square with the facts, or do so to a far less extent than is supposed by the learned professor. But I am now going to assume, for argument's sake, that the facts are at any rate defective in the evidence which they give both to a written law and to a Levitical system and theory. In order to test the trustworthiness of this assumption, I proceed now to compare the similar evidence given by the Psalter, which we are expressly told by the same learned authority was "the service-book of the second Temple," i. e. of the Temple as restored after the return from Babylon. If this be so, we ought, on his view, to find that recognition of those elements in the Psalter which, according to him, are absent in the prophets. But if no such great advance in that recognition can be traced in the Psalter, the argument founded on the supposed silence of the prophets may be dismissed as untenable. It will be more convenient to postpone to the end the consideration of evidence in the Psalter to a written code of law; and to take, first, the question of exaltation of moral duties, etc., either absolutely, or as compared with ritual generally, and Levitical sacrifices and ceremonies in particular; and this question will be found to run into and involve those further ones of Israel's absolute separation, of a unique holiness radiating, etc., and descending, etc., as above-said, and of any original

¹ See *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January and April, 1892, in which two numbers the essay above referred to appeared.

(by which I suppose auto-Mosaic is meant) consecration of tabernacle, brazen altar, and Aaronic privilege. .

1. As regards the requirement of moral, etc., dispositions, as preferred to outward rite, etc., I adduce Ps. iv. 5, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness;" xv. 1 *seq.*, "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart" —and so on throughout; repeated with details slightly retrenched in xxiv. 3 *seq.*, which latter derives significance from the tradition of this psalm having been used at the dedication of the Temple. Again, in the first prolonged meditation on "the law of Jehovah" (xix. 7 *seq.*), its moral qualities are exclusively selected as the means and condition of human perfection. That "law is perfect, restoring the soul, . . . sure, making wise the simple, . . . right, rejoicing the heart, . . . pure, enlightening the eyes. His judgments are true and righteous altogether." Of course the language is largely general and partly figurative; but it would strain that language and trouble the even tenor of the passage to find anywhere in it any suspicion of ceremonial allusion. The sense of divine supervision and control is singularly prominent in verses 12 and 13; as is the presentment of outward words and inward thoughts for divine acceptance. In short we have here the real consecration-prayer of a spiritual sacrifice. Consider next the challenge given in xxxiv. 12 to seekers for human happiness, "who desire life and (many) days, that they may see good," and the means to that end as propounded here, and quoted by St. Peter (1 Pet. iii. 10-12): "Keep thy tongue . . . thy lips . . . ; depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." The "meek" are singled out for God's favor, our Lord borrowing one of his beatitudes (Matt. v. 5) from the Psalter here (xxii. 26; xxv. 9; xxxiv. 2). I can similarly find room for one only of the scores of correspondent negative passages: God has no

pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil sojourn with him; nor the arrogant in his sight. He hates workers of iniquity, etc., abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men (v. 4 *seq.*; cf. l. 14-22). The solemn self-imprecation of vii. 3, "If there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rewarded evil," etc., is also noteworthy. Still more so is the extension of the sphere of God's moral government to the outside nations: "Let the congregation of the peoples compass thee about. . . . Jehovah ministereth judgment" to them; "Let the nations be judged in thy sight, . . . and know themselves to be but men" (vii. 7, 8; ix. 19, 20; cf. also largely xcvi., xcvi., xcvi.)—all samples merely of a bulk surpassing limits of quotation here.

The significance of these last passages is greater than a cursory student might perceive. In the sphere of divine government, all nations without respect of differences are included. Its basis lies in the moral law, on which are founded his dealings with those without, as with those within, the pale of covenant. "He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity" (xcviii. 9): but also, "Thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness *in Jacob*" (xcix. 4). On the same majestic footing his own "peculiar people" stand linked with the heathen races around them. All that barrier of Levitical ceremony which fenced Israel with exclusiveness seems to disappear. It is the inclusive, not the exclusive, aspect which meets us. In no way could the secondary and inferior character of the ordinances which differentiated the Jew be more emphatically declared, than in the service-book of that second Temple, in which we are assured they first had the force of positive law through the then recent enactment of a "Priestly Code."

The passages just cited do not assuredly make for "Israel's absolute separation from among the nations." It

is of course possible to prove a complete negative only by the impracticable course of examining every passage. But, I think, the strongest passage in the Psalter for the unique relation of Israel to Jehovah is Ps. cxiv. 1, 2, "When Israel went forth out of Egypt, . . . Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion;" and in l. 5, "those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" are expressly summoned. But, on the other side, in cxv. 10-13, the "house of Israel" and the "house of Aaron," called on to trust in Jehovah and share his blessing, widen into "them that fear him, both small and great." Nor do I think the whole Psalter contains any such express testimony to this point of absolute separation, as that of the prophet Amos, who again referring, as Ps. cxiv., to the "bringing up out of Egypt," says, "*You only* have I known of all the families of the earth" (Am. iii. 1, 2).

I pass on to xxvi. 6, "I will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar," and xxvii. 6, "I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of a joyful cry; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises." So in xxviii. 2, the Psalmist appeals to be heard. "When I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle (i. e., the adytum of thy sanctuary¹)," but wholly omitting any conditions of Levitical sacrifice or hieratic ritual. Take, again, xxxii. 1-6, a passage partly quoted in Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8; verses 5 and 6 run, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Here nothing can be added to the vivid directness of a heart's own outpourings to God, the Father-Confessor of the penitent. I do not infer from this the absence in fact of all such *media* as the Levitical routine prescribes, but I urge their utter absence in thought so far as expression guides us. Forgiveness is contemplated as the

¹ The word here, *dybhr*, is found in Kings and Chronicles only, and *not* in the Pentateuch.

absolute correlative of simple confession, wholly apart from the "the blood of calves and goats." This is the key in which the whole penitentiary of the Psalter is pitched; to be traced not only in the so-called "penitential" psalms, but recurring constantly, as it were the theme of an oratorio. So xxxiv. 18, "Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." The expressions of this spiritual passport to divine acceptance are far more copious and intense in the Psalter than in the prophets. Both alike uphold the same principle of inwardness, which is conspicuous in xxxvii. 31, "The law of his God is in his heart." But the Psalter is incomparably richer in its charter of absolution to him who simply says, xxxviii. 18, "I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin." The crown of creation placed on the brow of man by his Maker, and brute nature his subject sphere, as he walks on earth, but as it were with his head among the stars (viii. 4-8), may be contrasted with his "altogether vanity" when finding in himself his nature's aim and end; and with the blows of chastisement which rebuke that vanity (xxxix. 5, 6, 11). But these themes are the spontaneous outcome of meditation and experience. "When I consider thy heavens" (viii. 3); "While I was musing the fire kindled, (then) spake I . . . I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner . . . O, spare me" (xxxix. 3, 12, 13). They are intensely personal and have nothing of the phylacteries of the legalist in them.

But to come to the question of the Levitical standard compared directly with the moral, in xl. these rival elements, so to speak, and as indeed St. Paul views them (Gal. iii. 2, 3; iv. 9), are set in contrast. We read in verses 6-8: "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required." Self-sacrifice is what is called for: "I, O, I come . . . to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within

my heart," and this inward devotion is followed by outward witness. God's servant confesses him before man (verses 9, 10): "I will not refrain my lips . . . have not hid thy righteousness . . . have declared thy faithfulness; . . . I have not concealed . . . thy truth from the great congregation." With the utterance above cited from Ps. xl. (Messianic in its final realization, but that fact in this and perhaps other cited passages does not concern us now), may be coupled closely l. 8 *seq.*, in which Jehovah solemnly testifies to his people: "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifice, nor for thy burnt offerings; . . . will take no bullock . . . nor he-goat. . . . If I were hungry, I would not tell thee. . . . Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High." The similar utterances of the prophets (Isa. i. 12; cf. lviii. and lxvi. 3; Micah vi. 6, 8; Hosea vi. 6; Jer. vii. 22, 23) on the same subject, will readily occur to students of the Old Testament, declaring the transcendent superiority of the inward over the outward—in short, proclaiming our Lord's lesson of "the cup and platter" and the "whited sepulchre." In short, the standpoint of prophets and Psalmist is identical here.

With the *piacula* of the law its priesthood is closely connected. The "house of Aaron" is, as will be further noticed, recognized in the Psalter, as are Zadok and Abiathar, its members, in the History. But side by side we have in the former (cx. 4) the assertion of "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek;" Messianic, of course, ultimately, but transiently exhibited in David, when he assumed the ephod and blessed the people (2 Sam. vi. 14, 18), perhaps with a thought at one time of continuation in his sons (2 Sam. viii. 18, R. V.). This non-legal priesthood is idealized in this psalm.

The jubilation of praise and its exaltation as the prime element of worship sound again and again in all the five

books into which the Psalter is divided. Take in the First Book (i.-xli.) Psalm xxix. as a specimen, in the Second xlvii., in the Third the opening verses of lxxxii., in the Fourth take xcvi., in the Fifth the "Hallelujah" Psalms, which close the collection. A few only of the vast repertory of such psalm-odic phrases can here be cited. The *Venite* with its "song to Jehovah" and its "joyful noise;" the *Fubilate* bespeaking "song, thanksgiving, and praise;" the 105th detailing the "marvellous works" and "wonders" of his love from the Abrahamic covenant onward; the noble ode of the 107th with its varied refrain, especially that of verses 21 and 22, "O that men would praise . . . and let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with singing"—all carry on the strain which reaches heaven from earth and eclipses all propitiation by sacrifices or recognition of material oblations.

We change to a minor key, and Ps. lxxix. pleads the desolation of the sanctuary, "Jerusalem in heaps," and cries to God for salvation and for retribution upon the enemy (ver. 9-12), and concludes, "So we thy people . . . will"—no word of sacrificial dues or Levitical standard—"give thee thanks forever, . . . praise to all generations." In cvi. we have a solemn confession and indictment of the people, not personal but public. There is not a word in the whole of it of Levitical rites neglected. Even the sin of Dathan and Abiram is denounced on the ground of "envy": "They *envied* Moses in the camp," etc. (ver. 16, 17). Faithlessness, idolatry, innocent blood, and the pollution of the land therewith, from the Exodus and onward throughout, are the sole charges brought, just as by the prophets before the Captivity.

And while touching on this psalm one should notice that in it, as in Deut. xi. 6, the rebellion "of Korah" is not expressly mentioned. The critics of the so-called "Priestly Code" (in which are included the portions

alleged to be interpolated in the narrative of Num. xvi., which relates to Korah and the Levites) will have it that Deuteronomy is, by the fact of the omission of Korah, shown to be an older work than those portions, and they, by their insertion of the same, are shown to be later. But here in the "service-book of the second Temple" we find the same omission, which therefore equally proves Num. xvi. in its present form later than that service-book—that is to say, no other conclusion than this absurd one can follow from the premises assumed by the "higher criticism." But this psalm itself contains a notice which shows that the omission of Korah's name here, and therefore in Deuteronomy, does not imply the absence in fact of a Levitical element in the rebellion. It is the phrase added in verse 16, "*and Aaron, the holy one of Jehovah.*" It is against Aaronic privilege that the Levitical faction are insurgent; and the inclusion of Aaron's name in the psalm, although that of Korah is omitted, clearly recognizes the Levitical insurgents, and implies that in Deut. xi. 6 *seq.*, the same omission need not be taken as a ground for inferring that no Levitical faction could have been present to the mind of the Deuteronomist. Num. xvi. 3 is part of what is so charged as a later interpolation. Its phrases are, "And they mustered against Moses and against Aaron, and said . . . all the people every one of them are *holy* and *Jehovah is among them.*" The mention of "the holy one of Jehovah," applied to Aaron in the psalm, shows that the italicized phrase of Num. xvi. 3 was present to the mind of the Psalmist, and therefore may have been equally so to that of the Deuteronomist.

Ps. li. is so familiar that I need not cite its words at length; but, reserving the incidental allusion to "hyssop" (ver. 7), will draw attention to verses 16 and 17, "Thou delightest not in sacrifice, . . . hast no pleasure in burnt offering," with which are set in contrast (ver. 17) the "broken

spirit" and the "contrite heart." I will refer later to verses 18 and 19, which look as if added in adapting the psalm to some later occasion. To pass on, in lvi. 12, we read, "Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render thank offering unto thee." Of course a ritualistic victim *may* here be part of the thought, but the repetition of "In God I will praise his word" (ver. 4 and 10), shows that the leading idea is "thanks and praise;" and this is confirmed by lxi. 8, "So will I sing praise unto thy name forever, that I may daily perform my vows." In lxvi. 15, we have a promise of "burnt offerings of fatlings and incense of rams, . . . bullocks with goats;" but this is presently qualified by verse 18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." More decided still is the tenor of lxix. 30, "I will praise the name of God with a song, . . . magnify him with thanksgiving: and it shall please Jehovah better than an ox or a bullock," etc. Again, commenting on the prosperity of the wicked, the Psalmist says in lxxiii. 13, "Surely in vain I have"—not slain victims or performed rites, but—"cleansed my heart and washed my hands in innocency." And although in cxii. 1, the description of "the man who feareth Jehovah" recognizes a "great delight in his commandments," yet the duties and dispositions enumerated in the following verses are as wholly moral and spiritual as if no law of rite or ceremony had ever been given. More intensely affirmative is cxvi., which, after enumerating mercies of deliverance, proceeds to ask (ver. 12), "What shall I render unto Jehovah for all his benefits?" and answers, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Jehovah. I will pay my vows . . . I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call. . . . I will pay my vows unto Jehovah" (ver. 14-18). And this discharge of obligation is to be "in the presence of all his people, in the courts of Jehovah's house, in the midst of . . . Jerusalem" (ver. 19). We cannot doubt, therefore, that the spirit designed to inspire

and govern solemn public acts is represented here. It is not the isolated act of private adoration, but the outspoken recognition *coram populo*, which is here described. Not the "closet" (Matt. vi. 6), but "the courts of Jehovah's house" form the scene.

Ps. cxix., the longest, is one of the latest contributions to the Psalter. But no one could prove the existence of a Priestly Code from it. Close and firm as is the Psalmist's footing in every step and footprint which law has set for him, and exhaustively as he runs up and down the gamut, if I may so phrase it, from octave to octave, of "word, commandments, covenant, statutes, testimonies," and the like, it is ever on the inward essence, on the spiritual harmony of his own heart with every note of it, that he seems moved to dwell. The chord which he strikes by outward contact he echoes within. There is no word to suggest slavish obedience to the letter. His life, his light, his meditations, his songs, his heritage, his comfort, his hope, his delight, his liberty, his abhorrence of falsehood, his indignation at the wicked, his patience under the persecution of the proud, form the inward register, which this grand study of God manifested in law vocalizes outwardly. But of slain beasts, of incense, of priesthood, of the efficacy, however temporal or vicarious, of the sacrificial fat and blood,—in short of all the appointed Levitical *media*, we find no word through all the strophes of this divine monologue. And as "the house of Aaron" and "the house of Levi," touched upon once and again in "the great Hallel" and elsewhere (Ps. cxv. 10, 12; cxviii. 3; cf. cxxxv. 19, 20), are here not found, so there is nothing which we can claim as distinctly Messianic. On its positive and its negative side, in its exuberance and yet rigid limitation, the line of thought is equally remarkable. It expresses ample satisfaction in the stage of spiritual development already reached. It contemplates no larger glory or grander manifestation. The Psalmist sees (ver. 96) "the

end of all perfection, for¹ thy commandment is exceedingly broad." That word which binds heaven and earth together, and by which "all things serve" the Maker, is the Psalmist's personal portion. In this complete stay of the soul upon the law and its Giver, as well as in the absence of future outlook, he is true to his key-note. He has no eye for the great epiphanies of the future, nor exclaims with Isaiah, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence;" nor has, with Joel, a vision of "the spirit poured out upon the flesh;" nor, with Ezekiel, of the "dry bones" recalled to life (Isa. lxiv. 1; Joel ii. 28; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14). The law, as a present fact, is to him all-sufficient.

But it is the law in this spiritualized aspect, "restoring the soul, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes," and thus precious above "much fine gold," "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb," as we read in Ps. xix. 7-10,—a nucleus, of which Ps. cxix. is the expanded outgrowth, as that nucleus itself has its initial point of growth in i. 2. And here I venture to quote the words of Prof. R. Smith² in a new application. This sublime meditation is pursued, "not on the ground of the Levitical theory . . . of a unique holiness radiating from the one sanctuary, and descending in widening circles through priest and Levite to the ordinary Israelite." As little "as the history" of First and Second Samuel, and of First and Second Kings, does the Psalmist "accept the Levitical standard;" as little as the prophets, does he "rest on the original consecration of the tabernacle, the brazen altar, and the Aaronic priesthood, as the exclusive channels of veritable intercourse between "Jehovah and Israel;" as little as the reformer Samuel does he "know of a systematic

¹ There is no conjunction here in the Hebrew. Our versions insert "but." The asyndeton character of the clauses seems to me to favor the above interpretation.

² The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, p. 266.

and exclusive system of sacrificial ritual confined to the sanctuary" (p. 263), which "must have influenced at least the *élite* of Israel." I take the author of this psalm as a specimen of that *élite* in the post-Babylonian period, when the whole theory of "exclusiveness" had been newly emphasized by the rejection of the Samaritans, when the total of the complex Levitical machinery of atonement and propitiation had been accepted and was fully established *in viridi observantia*. Yet he sinks it out of sight. For him all the *media* vanish, and he stands face to face with Jehovah under the spiritualized aspect of the law. In a meditation so long drawn and systematic, and so completely centralized round a few grand ideas, it is surely remarkable that the whole of what, on the professor's theory, ought to be present and prominent, is utterly absent. As regards limitations of locality, although the central sanctuary is always viewed as normal, yet the exile from it "cries unto God from the ends of the earth" (*a finibus terræ clamavi*, Vulg.) and still feels that he "abides in his tabernacle" (lxi. 2, 4). The votary in enforced and remote seclusion on the northeastern frontier, recalling the happier days of free resort to the sacred shrine, yet "praises God for the help of his countenance," and looks forward with confidence to the restoration of that privilege (xlii. 3, 4).

The only remaining passage under this branch of the subject is Ps. cxli. 2, "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." This can only mean that, though incense and sacrifice were wanting, yet the prayer and the gesture of earnest adoration will be accepted. The material elements of worship are here of course recognized, but the teaching surely is that they are not indispensable. The Psalmist (ver. 1) takes his stand simply as one who "calls upon" Jehovah and pleads that he may at once be heard, and then at once (ver. 3) follows a deprecation of the evil, if allowed

on his lips and in his heart, as that which alone could bar his prayer's acceptance. It is the doctrine of lxvi. 18, 19, already referred to, "If I regard iniquity . . . the Lord will not hear. But verily, God hath heard; he hath attended to . . . my prayer."

There are, just as in the prophets, so here, a few passages to be set, not against these, but side by side with them, as recognizing the material form of worship, although the only all-important efficacy is ascribed by the Psalmist to the spiritual essence of it. Such is xx. 3, where, praying for the king apparently on the eve of a battle, he says, "Jehovah . . . remember all thy offerings and accept [lit. "treat as fat"—the sacrificial element—] thy burnt sacrifice." But in the sequel, the salvation of victory in the name of God, the grace of "petitions" accepted, and of "God answering from his holy heaven with saving strength," the "mention of his Name" as against those who boast "in chariots and horses," come all equally into view; and the next following psalm (xxi.), also regarding "the king" as Jehovah's anointed and privileged *protégé*, appears to proceed wholly on spiritual grounds, and to recognize, as one of "the blessings of goodness," the victory for which the previous psalm had prayed. Again, notice l. 5 *seq.*, where a great theophany has just before been proclaimed from Zion (ver. 2). Jehovah comes "to judge his people," to sit as "judge himself" (ver. 4, 6). "Gather," he says, "my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." But then at once follows the passage in which material sacrifice and animal victims appear to be renounced, at any rate depreciated, in favor of that "sacrifice of thanksgiving" by which he prefers to be "glorified" (ver. 14, 23). And thus, to return to the close of Ps. li., in verses 18 and 19 the sentiment is not really opposed to that of verse 16. The qualifying words "of righteousness" added to "sacrifice" are emphatic and prevent such collision. We may understand

verse 16 as of "sacrifice" purely material and outward, without the inward heart of penitence. Or we may understand the negatives "delightest not . . . hast no pleasure" as negatives of preference merely; of which idiom the typical instance is Hos. vi. 6, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." These verses (li. 18, 19) are probably the surviving fragment of some distinct song of dedication, perhaps by Haggai, from whom we know that, long after the altar worship had been resumed by the returned exiles, the Temple rebuilding lingered, and the "walls of Jerusalem" were a still later work (Ezra iii. 1-3; Hag. i. 4, 14; Neh. iv. and vi. 1). But by what accident these verses became attached here it is impossible now to say. "Sacrifices of righteousness" occurs in Ps. iv. 5 and Deut. xxxiii. 19; and the last words of verse 19 closely echo those of Deut. xxxiii. 10.

Again, lxvi. 13 *seq.*, "I will come into thy house with burnt offerings, . . . pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered; . . . will offer burnt offerings of fatlings, . . . rams, . . . bullocks with goats." I have already cited this, with the qualification of acceptance which follows (ver. 18); but it seems also proper to set it down for whatever it may be worth on the side of material sacrifice, here. Again, in lxxvi. 11, we read, "Vow and pay unto Jehovah," where, as "bring presents" in the next clause shows, material offerings may reasonably be included. Again, in xcvi. 7, 8, "Give unto Jehovah glory . . . due unto his name: bring an offering and come into his courts," where, as before, the material dues are not excluded. In cxviii. 27 we read, "Bind the sacrifice with cords;¹ even unto the horns of the altar." The spectacle of the animal thus tethered, awaiting

¹ The novel interpretation of Dr. Cheyne (noticed in these pages p. 298 of *Bib. Sac.* for April, 1892), "Bind the procession with branches," seems untenable. The words *'asar* and *'abothim* clearly imply *cords* as used for binding; as in Judg. xvi. 11, 12, and cf. Ps. ii. 3.

the blow, was of course a common one in the Temple court. The "incense" and "evening sacrifice" of cxli. 2, being on different altars, could not be in fact united, but might be idealized in union, as noticed already. And as here material *media* are volatilized into the inward energy and the outward posture, which unite soul and body in worship; so in the "purge me with hyssop" of li. 7 we do not drop down to a material level. Jehovah is the purifier, as, in vi. 2; cxlvii. 3, he is the healer. God takes the willing spirit in hand and from his spiritual process it returns pure. The "hyssop" is therefore ideal only. Like the "whetted sword" and "bended bow" of vii. 12, it is only the vehicle¹ to human thought of a purely divine agency. There is no need here to strain language or to minimize facts. Neither in the Psalter, nor, as admitted above, in the prophets, are material *media* of worship disowned or rejected. They have their place; but, beside the moral and spiritual requirements that place is infinitely low. The voice, man's noblest organ, his "glory," the praise of God its noblest exercise, are the elements which ever take precedence of those grosser ones which savor of the shambles. That voice of course is itself the result of the human physical structure, but it must be the vehicle of the heart, and that a "pure heart," or it too is a thing of naught. All the Godward graces and virtues—faith, love, trust, hope, patient waiting, humility—must tune it, or it dies into empty sound. Of course we have also the sanctuary, the temple, the oracle, the house, and the practice of distant worship directed, as in Solomon's prayer, towards it, the courts of it, the privilege of "one day" there, the preferential position of the humble keeper of its door, the blessedness of the servants who minister therein, the ark, the altar, the priests—to "be clothed however with righteousness" and "with salvation"

¹ So in Isa. vi. 6, 7, the coal from the altar and the ministering seraph of the prophet's vision are at once the symbol and vehicle of a similar purifying agency, realized in the consciousness of the recipient.

—Aaron's priesthood and his holy unction, but, as said before, side by side with that "of Melchizedek." All these are too well known for me to need to quote them. But all these are also familiar to us from the history and the prophets,¹ and all that is not the outcome of devotional sentiment, and therefore the speciality of the Psalter, is from them largely confirmed. But it is noteworthy that in this "service-book of the second Temple," no mention occurs of those special rituals of sin offering and trespass offerings, (save once in Ps. xl. 6, and there only to pronounce it "not required") which some would have us regard as priestly accretions of Ezra's time or later, and which, one would think, in such a "service-book" should somewhere find a place. If they are there, like so much else, "conspicuous by their absence," I see not how any argument can lie against their auto-Mosaic authority for lack of mention in the history and the prophets.

As we find, in the Psalter as in the prophets, no insistence on the special features of the Levitical system, so we do find denunciations in both of idolatry. It may be worth while to note a few, e. g. xvi. 4-5, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another (god); their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take their names upon my lips. Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance." Again, in lxxviii. 58, we read, "They provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images;" lxxxix. 9, "There shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any;" xcvi. 7, "Ashamed be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols." In cvii. 28, "Baal-pe'or" is noted, and in cxv. 4-8, and more briefly in cxxxv. 15-18, idolatry is derided in a strain resembling the utterances of Isaiah—too well known

¹ The "court" or "courts" occurs 2 Kings xx. 4; xxi. 5; xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 14; xxvi. 2; Ezek. viii. 7; x. 3; "Maaseiah the son of Shallum" is "keeper of the door," Jer. xxxv. 4; see also 2 Kings xxii. 4; xxiii. 4; xxv. 18 and cf. Jer. lii. 24 for other door keepers. It is superfluous to quote history in support of the other items.

to need reference here. The "lying vanities" of xxxi. 6, and perhaps the "vanity" of xxiv. 4, glance less broadly at the same sin.

2. I pass on from this longer *résumé* of miscellaneous elements, all exalting the spirit above the letter, the moral above the ceremonial, to the question of what testimony to a written code is afforded by the Psalter. This question lies in a much smaller compass, for that testimony is absolutely *nil*. It is remarkable, too, that amidst the copious reminiscences of the Exodus and the forty years' wandering, especially in the designedly historical psalms, the giving of the law on Horeb, or *any Mosaic legislation whatever*, is left a total blank. There is nothing approaching to the charge of Mal. iv. 4, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments." If we had the Psalter alone to guide us, we should rate Moses as one indeed who received inspired guidance, was leader, priest, and mediator,¹ but who had no necessary connection with the law, whether in its narrower or its wider sense. There is not even such testimony to his legislation as we derive from the Books of the Kings.² Take the following, which seems a crucial instance, from xcix. 6, 7, "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon Jehovah and he answered them. He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud; they kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them." But not a word is here of Moses' giving the law, much less a written law, to the people. He and Aaron are paired and apparently equated as "priests," and it is their personal obedience to the divine oracle (qualified however by the next verse, but again equally

¹Ps. ciii. 7; cv. 26; cvi. 16, 23, 32; xcix. 6; lxxvii. 20.

²1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Kings xxiii. 25. The theophany on Sinai occurs in Ps. lxxviii, 7 *seq.*, but the law-giving finds there no place.

for both), that is alone dwelt upon here. The Psalmist here stands on the very edge of opportunity, as it were, to specialize the law-giving function of Moses, but only to neglect it and turn his thought in another direction. Nay, further than this, the sole reference in the Psalter to any actual "book" is that in Ps. xl. 7, "Then said I, lo I come; in the roll of the book it is written of me."¹ But this is evidently a prophecy, not a code. It may of course possibly refer to Deut. xviii. 15, where the "prophet like unto me" (Moses) is promised, or to any other Messianic prediction; but *qua* code its testimony is valueless. The most express reference in the whole Psalter to the existence of the law as a regulative *depositum* is that of lxxviii. 1-7. "Give ear . . . to my law, . . . which we have *heard* and known . . . our fathers have *told* us. We will not hide them from their children, *telling* to the generation to come . . . He established a testimony . . . and appointed a law . . . commanded our fathers, that they should make them known . . . that the generation to come might know them . . . who should . . . *tell* them to their children; that they might . . . not *forget* . . . but keep his commandments." Here every phrase which carries distinctness points (as in the words italicized above) to purely oral tradition, and a mere memory preserved from mouth to ear, and again from ear to mouth.² This, too, is the psalm which gives, of course with devotional comments, a close *résumé* of the Exodus, and, in outline, of the subsequent history down to David. Of the former there is not a single memorable incident omitted, except that greatest of all, the giving and the writing of the

¹ The "book" of lvi. 8; lxix. 28; cxxxix. 16 is an ideal book only, like Malachi's "book of remembrance," Mal. iii. 16.

² No doubt the intention is to trace the origin of Israel's law back anterior to Moses into patriarchal times; see Gen. xxvi. 5. But the omission of any mention of a written code, or of a code given by Moses, is not the less significant.

law in the wilderness¹—a remarkable fact surely in our estimate of negative evidence. If this was so amidst the ritualistic strictness of the second Temple, how much more may it have been so in the more free-handed laxity of the pre-Babylonian period. The dates of individual psalms are not often easy to settle even approximately. But in the case of the sixty-eighth, we may say that the collective mention of Judah, Benjamin, Zabulon and Naphthali (ver. 27), as leading members of a political whole, points to the period of the integral monarchy, while the mention of the "Temple in Jerusalem" (ver. 25), and of the organized Temple service, including women (ver. 25), rather points to the period of David himself. The rugged, abrupt style of most of the transitions and departures also bespeaks an early date. I incline to assign it to David's period; and from its tone of military enthusiasm and martial triumph, to David himself, warrior, poet, and prophet. The prominence given to Bashan is also against any date later than the dominance of Syria beyond Jordan. The facts which it best fits are David's trans-Jordanic triumphs over Syria and Ammon. But it opens with an invocation which, but for the name *El-ohim* in the place of *Jehovah* (which latter occurs, however, in verses 16 and 20, besides *Jah* in verses 4 and 18), is identical with that of Num. x. 35. To reply that the latter is borrowed from the psalm, would virtually imply that the history in Num. x. 29–36, of which it is part, is as a whole a later fabrication, and I suppose also that of Num. xi. which forms a continuous context with it; but the names and some of the facts of the Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah episode are among the best attested in desert nomenclature and memory.

¹ The only phrases at all approaching this are, "Neither were they faithful in his covenant" (ver. 37), and "kept not his testimonies" (ver. 56). But that the "covenant" and "testimonies" were then given, much less written, is left an absolute blank.

The mention, moreover, of "Hobab,¹ the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law" (x. 29), is surely a token of primitive and genuine tradition. There is no part of the entire Exodus, in fact, better confirmed by external attestation than Num. x., xi.² I therefore without hesitation set down this psalm as quoting it.

And, in conclusion, one ought to notice—so far from "the ordinary Israelite meeting with God only on special occasions"—the emphatic directness of personal access to God which is the uniform burden of these divine songs—the current diapason of their testimony. It breathes really the same sentiment of acceptance insured which we find in Heb. iv. 16, "Let us . . . draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." It is this perfect sense of being face to face with the great Object of all worship, which has formed, more than any other of its attributes, the passport of the Psalter to Christian use. It is in this respect as completely independent and unconscious of peculiar requirements as though the One Perfect Sacrifice had already been offered. To exhibit this by quotation would be to transcribe a large portion of its five sections. I will give a few references to the first of them only: Ps. iii. 4; iv. 3; vi. 9; xvi.; xvii. 6; xviii. 6, 25, 26; xxii. 5, 24; xxiii.; xxv. 4, 5, 11; xxxi. 22; xxxii. 1, 2, 5; xxxiv. 4, 5, 15, 17, 18; xli. 1–3. In further confirmation of this, the mention, where it occurs, of Aaron, or his house, or that of Levi, gives no occasion to expatiate on their functions. In xcix. 6, 7, we have seen already, that it is not in their official character,

¹ "Hobab," see Dict. of Bible *s. v.*, has given nomenclature to the desert under the Arabic form of the name, viz. *Sho'eb*.

² See History of the Jewish Nation, by E. H. Palmer, pp. 32, 33. '*Ain Hudherah* is the Arabic designation of Hazeroth. And midway between Sinai and that station the writer believes he discovered "the real vestiges of an Israelitish camp, . . . just the position which the Bible assigns to Kibroth-hattaavah.'

but their personal examples, that "Moses and Aaron" are named. The remaining occurrences of priestly, etc., designations in the Psalter are parallel to this, in the utter absence of officialism or exclusiveness which marks them. "O house of Aaron" stands between two similar calls on the "house of Israel" and on "ye that fear Jehovah," to "put your trust in" him (cxv. 9-11). So (cxviii. 2, 3) the same triad is invoked to attest "his mercy" as "enduring forever." "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness and thy saints shout for joy," is from the song of the installation of the ark itself (cxxxiii. 8, 9; cf. 16). David and his recorded vow, and the promise of perpetuity to his royal house (ver. 1-6, 11-13, 17, 18) are the prelude and the finale. He and his faithful comrades seem to be the devotees who claim, having now "found a place for Jehovah," to "go into his tabernacle and worship at his footstool." You cannot gather from the earliest and simplest aspects of patriarchal worship, or from the most unfettered examples of prophetic freedom in approaching Jehovah, a passage more effectively purged of "the Levitical theory" than this. So, where the "servants of Jehovah" (Levites, or Nethinim, we should suppose) are invoked, not a word of their special duty and exclusive function is let fall. They are merely called upon, as though the fittest *choregi* of the grand office of praise, which soars above the smoke of sacrifice and the cloud of incense;—"Bless ye Jehovah with uplifted hands in the sanctuary. Praise ye him, ye that stand in his house" (cxxxiv. 1, 2; cxxxv. 1, 2). And thus I conclude the testimony of the Psalter with the remark that, if the prophets, as alleged, have little to show in the way of testimony to the requirements of a code, the Psalter has equally little. If direct and positive evidence to a written *corpus juris* is not easily deduced from their writings, in the Psalter that evidence is a total blank, and the presumption deducible from its silence and, where it speaks, from its language, is rather against than for the ex-

istence of such a document in the period of "the second Temple." But as we know from independent testimony that existence, and as it is on all hands admitted that such a *corpus* had in that period a popularity and an influence which it never had before attained, we dismiss that presumption, as in the face of such testimony we are bound to do. And further, as the evidence from the Psalter for such a written *corpus* is thus weak precisely at the period when it might be expected to be the strongest, we may safely dismiss also any presumption against that written *corpus*, as existing in the time of Amos and Isaiah, which arises from the evidence presented by them. The lesson to be learned from the whole array of evidence in the prophets and in the Psalter alike, is in fact the weakness of negative evidence, and of *obiter dicta*, in writers whose minds at the time were filled with other ideas than those involved in the question, to settle which that negative evidence and those *obiter dicta* are adduced. Those who deny the existence of a written law and a Levitical practice conformable to it in the pre-Babylonian period, on the ground that the prophets do not recognize the one and depreciate, so far as they recognize, the other, are therefore in the logical error of proving too much.